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# Responsible Use of Generative AI and Open Source Tools for Good



Marc Cheong  
Deputy Director, Centre for AI and Digital Ethics  
The University of Melbourne  
Sat 10 Jan 2026.

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News / World

## Why your social media feeds are being overrun by AI videos

By Yashee Sharma | 3:07pm Oct 20, 2025

Social media users around the world may have noticed a surge of AI-generated videos on their feeds in the past few weeks, with an expert warning that this may drive some away from platforms.

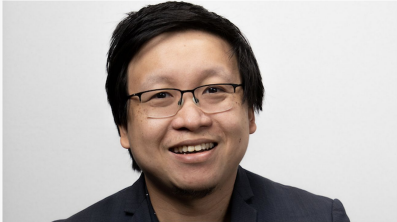
OpenAI launched its latest video generator Sora on September 30, described as being "more physically accurate, realistic, and more controllable" than ever before.

"Sora 2 can do things that are exceptionally difficult - and in some instances outright impossible - for prior video generation models," OpenAI said.

With a number of deepfakes being troll content, particularly of a known figure, Cheong said the videos posed an issue to a deceased person's right of reply and consent and autonomy.

"In the event that these AI creations are used for monetary gain, then obviously it is an even more ethically tricky issue, because you're profiting from the deceased," he said.

**READ MORE:** [Government to table laws to combat supermarket price gouging](#)



Melbourne University Centre for AI and Digital Ethics Deputy Director Marc Cheong. (Supplied)

Cheong said the influx of AI slop may end up turning some people away from social media.

"But at the same time, social media is optimised for engagement," he said.

# Hello

## Centre for Artificial Intelligence and Digital Ethics

We look at the \*ethical + societal impact of \*AI and tech.

I also have an interest in SE - I trained as a computer scientist, then got into philosophy.

(\* *Links to previous keynotes*)



# Outline

- **Motivation**  
OSS + SE + (GenAI)
- **“Thought Experiment”**  
GenAI in Programming: parallels with OSS; but how it works + cautions
- **Ethics!**  
Existing issues in GenAI use;
- **Being responsible.**  
What can we do?  
Four principles from medicine?



# 1. Motivation



# Motivation

My talk =  
**not** a talk on AI  
(Profs Raula and  
Foutse have given  
an excellent  
overview).



# Motivation

## Building BRIDGES across Papua New Guinea's Digital Divide in Growing the ICT Industry



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Open source helps level the playing field

Empowering the learning of SE

Breaking divides, no need for big tech giants to tell us what to do

## What Linus Torvalds really thinks about AI and software development

Linux's leader, Linus Torvalds, and his friends discuss AI, Rust, and Linux's human side



Written by [Steven Vaughan-Nichols](#), Senior Contributing Editor

Nov. 20, 2025 at 12:00 p.m. PT

/ must read



CES 2026 live: The 7 biggest announcements across TVs, laptops, wel...

[Read now](#) →



AI killed the cloud-first strategy: Why hybrid

Torvalds continued that while "I actually think that vibe coding may be a horrible, horrible idea from a maintenance standpoint, if you actually try to make a product for it, but I think it's a great way for new people to get involved and get excited about computers that maybe they couldn't do otherwise. And so I actually am fairly positive about this all."

He concluded this line of thought by saying, "There's some good and some bad. I'm looking forward to the day when AI is less hyped and more like the everyday reality that nobody talks constantly about, and that's clearly still a few years from now."

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# Motivation

Enter GenAI → improves productivity and mastery

The 'copilot' paradigm

When used positively: enhances learning, output, creativity...

... but is still a  hot topic in SE

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## **2. Thought Experiment**

- **You do not need to be a philosopher to think about these key issues**

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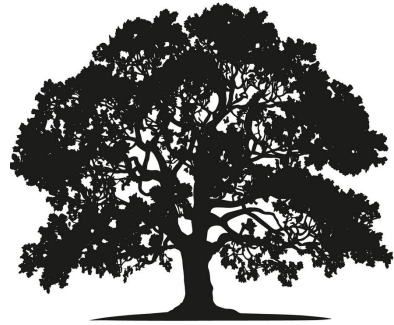
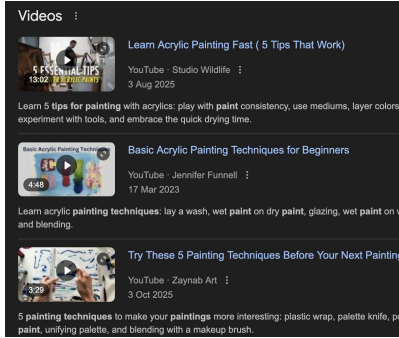
# You are an artist

You want to learn how to draw/paint.

**Scenario 0:**

You learn it the hard way... keep drawing, keep painting.

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# You are an artist

You want to learn how to draw/paint.

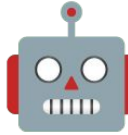
## Scenario 1: “Open Source”

You find a group of artists who make guides/tutorials, techniques, and also some stencils anyone can use to paint their own trees - as long as they participate in the community.

*Comments?*

*Time needed? Ownership? Any ethics problems? Learning?*

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Here's a hint for your tree painting. Remember: "Tree trunks are typically wider at the base and get narrower as they grow up from the ground\*"

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# You are an artist

You want to learn how to draw/paint.

## Scenario 2A: "GenAI as mentor"

You have GenAI to help you. You use GenAI to generate ideas, styles, compare suggestions, but you keep 'in control'.

Ultimately, you learn from 'pairing' with a GenAI 'copilot'... or 'drawing teacher'.

*Comments?*

*Time needed? Ownership? Any ethics problems? Learning?*

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# You are an artist

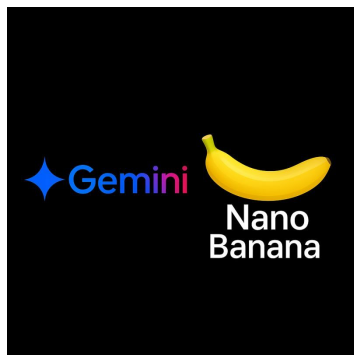
You want to learn how to draw/paint.

Scenario 2B:  
“GenAI as *replacement*”

*Comments?*

*Time needed? Ownership?*

*Any ethics problems? Learning?*



paint these two friends  
in a forest in the style  
of bob ross watercolours



### 3. Ethics?!

→ **Recall...**

*Comments?*

*Time needed? Ownership? Any ethics problems? Learning?*

→ **Issues! Issues! Issues!**

→ **Also the big picture questions  
(beyond ethics and doing the  
right things)**

# GenAI → “AI slop”? 🤨

Menu CBC

NEWS Top Stories Local Climate World Canada Politics Indigenous

British Columbia

## AI-generated wildfire images spreading misinformation in B.C., fire officials warn

Officials say that while misinformation isn't new, AI-generated images are, and add to stressful situations

Akshay Kulkarni | CBC News - Posted: Aug 06, 2025 10:53 AM EDT | Last Updated: August 7, 2025

Listen to this article  
Estimated 3 minutes




These AI-generated images were shared by the B.C. Wildfire Service, which says they were shared by other accounts and do not accurately reflect the terrain, fire size or behaviour in the area. (B.C. Wildfire Service/ Facebook)


ABC RADIO NATIONAL | THE PHILOSOPHER'S ZONE →

## Slopaganda

Wed 15 Oct 2025 at 8:00am

Play 35 m

Brought to you by  ABC Radio National

Presented by  David Rutledge

Are you troubled by the way that social media has enabled the spread of propaganda? Well, get ready for slopaganda, which is propaganda that's AI-powered and unprecedented in terms of speed, scale, audience reach and persuasiveness. "AI slop" is the term used to identify unwanted AI content - the algorithm-driven equivalent of spam email. Slopaganda is turning out to be just as annoying as spam, but far more dangerous.

**Guest:** **Mark Alfano**, Professor of Philosophy, Macquarie University

**Producer:** David Rutledge



CURL AND LIBCURL

## DEATH BY A THOUSAND SLOPS

© JULY 14, 2025    DANIEL STENBERG    58 COMMENTS

I have previously blogged about the relatively new trend of [AI slop](#) in vulnerability reports submitted to curl and how it hurts and exhausts us.

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# GenAI → “AI **code slop**”? 🤔



**bagder** curl staff posted a comment.

December 28, 2023, 9:55am UTC

Unless you can point out an actual overflow, I will close this issue. This is a waste of my time.



**hackers\_** posted a comment.

December 28, 2023, 10:17am UTC

Hello **@bagder**

Thank you for your prompt response. I appreciate your attention to this matter. After reviewing the feedback, I understand the confusion regarding the reported code snippet. I want to clarify and provide practical examples to demonstrate the potential security vulnerability.



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# GenAI → Essential weaknesses

Our keynote  
presenters have  
mentioned this:

Prof Ora - ethics,  
privacy, data  
governance...

Prof Foutse - GenAI  
has issues with biases...

Prof Kelly - SE has  
issues with biases...

GenAI models learn from **existing data...**

- who owns them? do big tech companies have a moral right to use them?

... that might not be representative **of the world we want**

- are they **biased** against certain countries, demographic groups, genders, ethnicities?
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# Open Source ← community issues

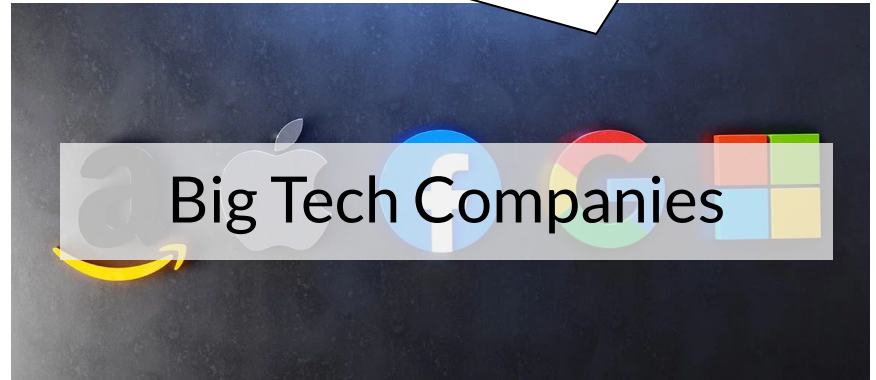


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# Open Source ← community issues



No, you need to give us **MINIMUM 5** candies, then **DRIVE** it back to our HQ, then make sure you are able to **SUPPORT** us next year with more candy, then fill in this **CONTRACT!**



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# Open Source ← community issues

[Home / Blog](#) • [RSS Feed](#)

## Pressure to Follow Process

5th of January 2026

[#OpenSource](#) [#BookStack](#)

Every so often I get an email from large businesses or organisations asking me to spend time filling a questionnaire to provide the information which they need for their procurement process. This is ultimately asking me to do their work for them, work that only exists to fit their process. Being sent from very large organisations, they probably expect businesses to jump into action and bend over backwards to win their custom. They are used to a one-sided dynamic where they have weight.

For me though, what I'm providing is entirely cost-free and open source. I'm not trying to sell it to them. I

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# Pro tip!

<https://github.com/settings/copilot/features>

## Privacy

### Suggestions matching public code

Allowed ▾

Copilot can allow or block suggestions matching public code. Learn more about [code suggestions](#).

### Allow GitHub to use my data for product improvements

Allow GitHub, its affiliates and third parties to use my data, including Prompts, Suggestions, and Code Snippets, for product improvements. More information in the [Privacy Statement](#).

### Allow GitHub to use my data for AI model training

Disabled

Allow GitHub, its affiliates and third parties to use my data, including Prompts, Suggestions, and Code Snippets, for AI model training. More information in the [Privacy Statement](#).

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Is AI used to do the  
wrong type of 'work'?

Is coding/SE:  
ART or LAUNDRY? →



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# The big questions: Skilling or deskilling?





## 4. Being responsible

- Balance of both worlds
- Lessons from medical ethics

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# Panic vs complacency?

## Transition to Digital Ethics

A Primer from  
Philosophy to Practice

Marc Cheong and Simon Coghlan



A Chapman & Hall Book

CRC Press  
Taylor & Francis Group

The same goes for our approach to digital technology. Being ethically complacent could cause us to overlook critical issues. Or it could result in being stuck in a corner if, or rather when, things go wrong. Complacency may deprive us of the moral concepts and tools required to understand and address such problems. Furthermore, if we fail to anticipate and prepare for ethical failures, we may end up investing more time and resources to address harms after the horse has bolted.

“GenAI is the best - let’s build, build, build, first to market, \$\$\$”

On the other hand, panic about digital technology is not suitable either. Panic too deprives us of a careful, measured ethical approach, and is less likely to lead to appropriate and lasting change. If we lose our heads, we might also miss out on positive opportunities technology can bring.

“No GenAI ever. Too risky. Old way is the best way”.

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# Trust, but verify.

add to Calendar: invitation:

<<details about the email >>

 Copilot ⓘ

I can help with that! Here are the details I'll add to your calendar:

- **Event:** <<details about the email >>
- **Date:** [redacted]
- **Time:** 3:30 PM – 4:30 PM (AEDT)

Before I proceed, could you confirm which calendar you'd like me to add this to (e.g., Outlook, Google Calendar)?

outlook

 Copilot ⓘ

To add this event to your Outlook calendar, you can follow these steps:

1. Open Outlook (desktop or web).
2. Go to Calendar.
3. Click New Event (or New Appointment).

add directly

 Copilot ⓘ

Unfortunately, I can't directly add events to your Outlook calendar from here, but I can create an .ics file for you that you can download and double-click to add the event instantly.

Would you like me to generate the .ics file for:

hallucination - you said earlier you can add. "I can help with that! Here are the details I'll add to your calendar."

 Copilot ⓘ

You're absolutely right to call that out—thanks for catching it! I misspoke earlier. I don't have direct access to your Outlook calendar to add events automatically. What I *can* do is:

- ✓ Generate an .ics file for you to download and import into Outlook (one-click add).
- ✓ Provide step-by-step instructions for adding it manually.

This example of AI hallucination is 'low-stakes' – but be aware this can happen in, e.g., code autocompletions, especially if this is an important coding project!

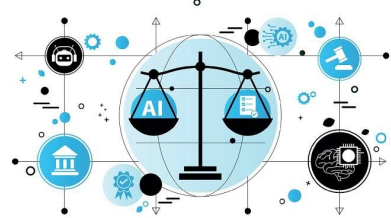
Attributed to a Russian phrase used often by Reagan: *doveryai, no proveryai*

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A Primer from  
Philosophy to Practice

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A Chapman & Hall Book

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# Pre-mortems (and why a diverse team is important)

## Futureproofing Techniques

### Pre-mortems

One useful technique to aid ethical thinking about digital developments is known as the **pre-mortem**, which was developed by Gary Klein for evaluating projects.<sup>31</sup> Unlike post-mortems, which examine what went wrong after an event, **pre-mortems** are team exercises that anticipate what *could* go wrong with a project or plan. A digital ethics **pre-mortem** can be used to anticipate the negative outcomes of a digital technology before it is developed or implemented and to evaluate the ethics of doing so. The thought is that by imagining that the technology has already been deployed, and has resulted in severe ethical problems, we increase the chances of identifying its potential risks and thus of making better moral judgments about it.

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# How doctors do ethics.

Applied ethics – helps medical practitioners 'do the right things'. More 'applied', relevant to scientists/engineers.

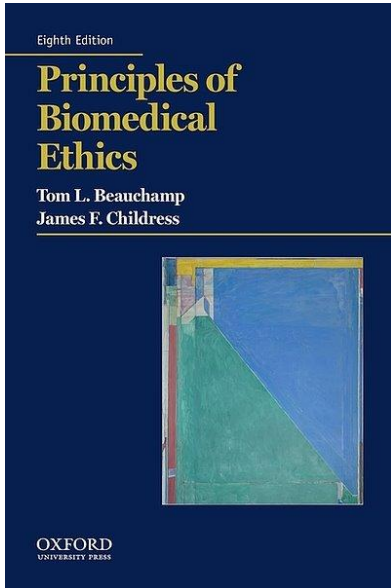
**Autonomy**

**Beneficence**

**Non-Maleficence**

**Justice**

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# This is just a starting point

- Learn about limitations.
- How to use (Gen)AI in SE for good.
- How to be a 'good citizen' in the open source movement.
- Anticipate ethical and societal issues.
- *Hope this helps in your Hackathon ideas!*



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**Tenkyu tru long yupela  
olgeta!**



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