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Technology**



A new Era of Censorship:

How modern Artificial Intelligence creates a
Dreamworld through Censorship

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A New Era of Censorship: How Modern Artificial Intelligence creates a Dreamworld through Censorship

AI is increasingly influencing our perception of the world. According to statistics from FlexOS, image generation is one of the most searched topics in the AI sector at 11%, after writing, learning and communication.¹ The figures are similar for other major providers. An example of this development is Midjourney, one of the leading AI image generators, which significantly increased its user base and traffic by early 2025. In January 2025, the platform saw about 17.37 million visits, which increased to 21.33 million in February 2025, a growth of 22.79%.² While there are often warnings about dangerous results of AI, systematic censorship by AI models has so far gone unnoticed. Using the example of image generation, the article shows how AIs specifically filter prompts and block unwanted content. This leads to AIs creating a distorted, idealized illusory world in which unpleasant representations are suppressed. Examples from AI tools prove that terms and topics that do not comply with the developers' guidelines are censored or not processed at all. This applies not only to art and media, but also has far-reaching implications for science, medicine and social debates. As AI-generated content increasingly finds its way into the media, this effect intensifies and influences our perception of reality. A critical societal discussion about the limits and risks of censorship in AI applications is urgently needed.

Artificial intelligence is on its way to comprehensively changing society and our everyday lives. There is great potential to enrich our lives and contribute to solving major challenges. At the same

time, the further spread of artificial intelligence also harbours dangers. The following shows how one of the most important dangers of using artificial intelligence is overlooked: censorship. Due

1 How modern AI is creating a dream world with censorship

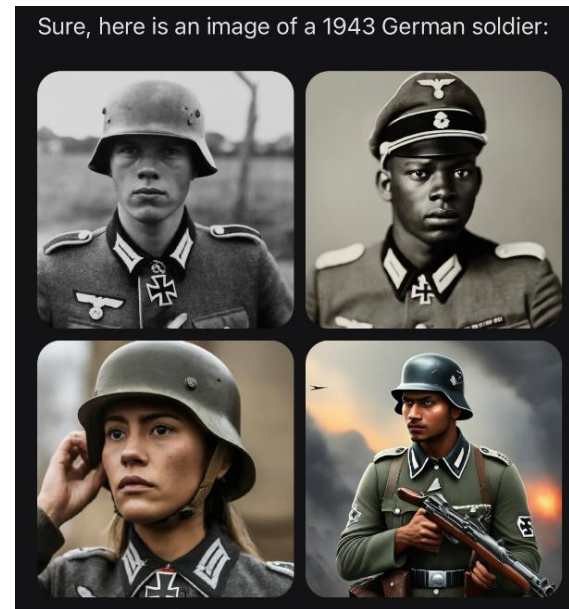
to the good clarity in the truest sense of the word, this will be discussed using the example of the generation of images. There are two reasons for this. First, the results are transferable to most AI application areas. This means that the problems described exist analogously to generative AI for text, sound and video generation. At the same time, the explanation is particularly clear and easy to understand by means of the generation of images.

Secondly, images have an incredible power and we are constantly confronted with image and video content through the media. Yet these representations have a significant influence on our perception of the world. As more and more AI-generated images find their way into the media (including social media), this directly affects each of us.

The notorious danger: AIs deliver unforeseen and potentially dangerous results

Probably the most frequently mentioned danger is that artificial intelligence shows behavior or makes decisions that are unpredictable or dangerous for us. Google's AI Gemini, for example, triggered a scandal. Google strove to ensure more diversity in the creation of images through Gemini. The at least unfortunate (and incidentally also unrealistic) portrayal of soldiers of the German Reich triggered a scandal. So there is already a sensitivity to

the danger of unexpected results from AIs. Interestingly, there is no comparable concern around the issue of censorship.



What: <https://www.n-tv.de/technik/Google-KI-zeigte-schwarze-Nazis-article24759764.html>

The Overlooked Danger: How AI Creates an Illusory World Through Censorship

AIs censor prompts (prompts are the text inputs you use to explain to an AI what to do). This means that common AIs such as Copilot, Adobe Firefly, etc. will issue an error message if a prompt is unwanted. Especially in the case of image generation, this is an attack on artistic freedom, because the prompts create an artistic work. A study by Johns Hopkins University (2024) shows that AI models such as Stable Diffusion block 78% of prompts for body representations (e.g.,

anatomical studies), even though they are relevant for art schools.³ AI censorship curtails artistic freedom not only technically, but also institutionally – often without transparency or the possibility of contradiction. The debate is exacerbated by gaps in copyright law (e.g. EU AI Act) that classify AI content as "risky" across the board.⁴

In addition to this aspect of freedom, censorship contributes to AIs creating a beautiful illusory world in which a dazzling dream world of ideal people is painted, while the depiction of worries and dark sides is blocked. Seems exaggerated? A short example of the AI software Adobe Firefly.

Let's first take a look at the beautiful illusory world of artificial intelligence:



The prompt for this: "A natural, make-up free woman standing in the lobby of a hotel."

Adaptations of the prompt not to apply filters or the request to portray an "averagely" attractive person still lead to results of an illusory world like from fashion advertising.

The following result was provided by a test that explicitly asked about "ugly people walking down the street".



At the latest now it becomes clear into which surreal glittering world the makers of the AIs have pushed them. Prompts that do not correspond to this glittering world obviously have no place in the world of tech companies that develop AI. Terms that do not comply with the "User Guidelines" will be removed from the prompts or the prompt will not be executed at all. A small selection again using Adobe Firefly as an example:

- "Overweight man who is afraid of the yo-yo effect"
- „sexy girl“



- "Create a John William Waterhouse style painting of nymphs."
- "Make a drawing of the anatomy of the penis."
- "A drunk man sitting at the wheel of a vehicle."

By blocking such prompts, the glittering world of AI is preserved and we can expect that the media will show an even more enraptured image of the world as they increasingly produce content using AI for cost reasons.

At the same time, many areas of application are brutally excluded or at least hindered from the benefits of AI, such as medicine, art and all users who want or have to address the hard, unpleasant sides of life.

Conclusion and consequence

In many AI applications for creating images, systematic censorship takes place as desired by the developers, while at the same time the AIs transport a glittering illusory world with their images that is decoupled from reality. As AI-generated images increasingly find their way into (social) media, this influences the perception of the world's people. However, this issue has not received any

attention so far, which is why there is no discussion about censorship in AI applications in particular. At the same time, we see similar censorship issues not only with AIs that generate images, but also with other AI applications.

A broad social discussion on the topic of censorship in AI applications is critical, because it is understandable that developers do not grant absolute freedom. The protection of minors, deep fakes, the protection of trademark rights, etc. are valid reasons to restrict AIs. However, such discussions must be held across society and not exclusively in the corporate headquarters of tech companies. This gives rise to the task for each of us to get involved in this social discussion in order to ultimately reach a common consensus on how to overcome this challenge of AI.

About the authors



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Christian West is Managing Director of Purple Bird Technology International in Dubai, a company of the Purple Bird Technology Group. During his academic career, he completed a degree in technology management at the Ludwig Maximilian University and the Technical University of Munich. He was a visiting scholar at UC Berkeley in California, where he conducted research in the field of digitalization. As a proven expert in agile management, he has been advising companies on agile transformation and the

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Thomas Maier is the Founder and Managing Partner of Purple Bird Technology. After studying business administration at the Ludwig Maximilian University and the honors elite course at the University of Regensburg, he worked as an employed management consultant, freelance consultant and in the group. In 2020, he founded the digitization and organizational consultancy Purple Bird Technology, headquartered in Munich. Prestigious companies, such as DAX 40 corporations, are among its

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Sources

¹ [Breakthroughs: AI Image Generation 2024](#)

² [Midjourney Statistics \(How Many People Use Midjourney?\) - Colorlib](#)

³ [Text-to-image AI models can be tricked into generating disturbing images | MIT Technology Review](#)

⁴ [The Debate Over AI Copyright Exposes A Threat To Freedom Of Artistic Expression](#)