

OpenAI's Whisper is another case study in Colonisation | Papa Reo

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On 21 September OpenAI dropped Whisper, a speech recognition model trained on 680,000 hours of audio taken from the web. The highlight:

it enables transcription in multiple languages, as well as translation from those languages into English. We are open-sourcing models and inference code to serve as a foundation for building useful applications and for further research on robust speech processing.

The ability for a single model to transcribe in multiple languages is ground-breaking for natural language processing (NLP) technologies. With such bold statements, why didn't we hear more about Whisper from news outlets or social media? Twitter was instead dominated by critiques about Stable Diffusion and other generative art models that are infringing on copyright and appropriating the work of artists. Even big-name late-night hosts covered these models. John Oliver's foray into generative AI ultimately led him to marry a cabbage and Trevor Noah's more serious interview with OpenAI's CTO Mira Murati exposed the view that there were mostly positive outcomes from this technology with no critical discussion about the potential harm it could cause, making statements that images created from DALL-E were indeed art created not by a brush but by a digital tool.

[...]

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