

MAKING MAGIC WITH

The central focus is the text 'AI' in a clean, white, sans-serif font. It is surrounded by several glowing, overlapping orbits in shades of purple and blue, creating a sense of motion and energy. The background is a dark blue gradient with a pattern of small, light blue dots, resembling a starry sky or a digital data field. There are also several digital-style patterns of vertical lines and dots scattered around the central text, adding to the futuristic aesthetic.

AI

EXPERIENCED CREATORS WEIGH IN ON THE AI TOOLS THEY USE—AND WHY YOU SHOULDN'T FEAR THEIR CAPABILITIES.

WRITTEN BY EVE WESTON

WHAT DO WE CALL SOMETHING THAT POSSESSES WISDOM AND PHILOSOPHY? SOMETHING THAT ALLOWS THE PERFORMANCE OF MYSTERIOUS TRICKS, LIKE MAKING THINGS DISAPPEAR AND REAPPEAR? SOMETHING THAT MIGHT BE FRAUDULENT, UNCONVENTIONAL AND DANGEROUS? HISTORICALLY, WE'VE CALLED IT MAGIC. IN 2024, IT'S AI.

For something that is by definition not human, artificial intelligence does a great job at stirring up strong emotions, both in general and in Hollywood. Proponents of using AI in filmmaking wax poetic about how AI can increase efficiency, enhance creativity, reduce costs, personalize content and improve decision-making. AI's detractors rail at the potential job displacement, loss of human touch, dependence on technology, and ethical and legal concerns. Both camps have valid points.

AI does not mark the first time Hollywood has grappled with the arrival of new technologies. Matt Nix, creator and showrunner of *Burn Notice*, who's been experimenting with AI, takes comfort in looking back to the '90s when the first digital instruments were coming out. Some studio musicians lost their jobs, but the amount of money studios put into scores has gone up, and so has the need for talent who know how to work with digital instruments.

"When the machine gun was invented, they didn't say, 'This machine gun can shoot as many bullets as 50 soldiers, so let's just send one guy out with one machine gun and send everybody else home,'" Nix says. "Everybody got a machine gun."

But to embrace that metaphor—even if everyone's telling you that the machine gun can help you do your job—it's scary to pick up and mess around with a machine gun if you've never used one. It's far too easy to shoot oneself in the foot. The AI "machine gun" doesn't come with an instruction manual. Or does it?

During the recent Produced By Conference, the Guild presented two sessions in which experts discussed how producers can make AI work for them. On a panel titled Elevating Your Project Using AI, Souki Mansoor, creator community specialist at OpenAI, shared, "I have, in so many moments, said (to ChatGPT), 'Hello, my name is Souki. This is what I'm working on. I would like some help

with X thing. What can you help me with here?'"

AI isn't your average tech innovation. It's an appliance that can tell you how to use it.

Mansoor encourages new users to recognize that these AI models—programs that have been trained on a set of data to recognize certain patterns or make certain decisions without further human intervention—are conversational. "They're not designed to be just a one-shot, 'Here's an idea; now do it,'" she says.

But as has always been the case in Hollywood, who you talk to matters. So how do you know which AI to converse with?

Produced By asked media creators about what tools they're using, how they're using them and what they're using them for. Tools are grouped by which part of the production process they lend themselves well to, though some tools may readily be useful across the workflow, while others may cross over in cases of user creativity.

This is not an exhaustive list of the AI products out there, and PGA is not specifically endorsing any one tool listed here. Before using any of these products, please confirm how they work in the context of your production and consult with your legal and other advisors regarding how their use can affect your legal rights in the content.

PREPRODUCTION

ChatGPT: Best suited for generating humanlike text based on user prompts. Useful for creating dialogue, answering questions and providing writing assistance in a variety of contexts. Free and paid plans are available.

Dream Machine: An AI tool designed for producing imaginative and surreal artwork, often used for artistic experimentation and unique visual creations.

Firefly: Not to be confused with AI notetaker Fireflies,

Top: An image generated by Midjourney in response to the prompt, "Using AI is like hiring a cleaning lady to come to your house; she just makes it better."

Bottom: A ChatGPT-generated scheduling demo.



this AI tool is used for generating and enhancing vibrant and dynamic graphics, illustrations, and animations. **Leonardo:** Best suited for assisting artists in creating detailed digital art and complex illustrations.

Midjourney: An industry favorite for generating high-quality, stylized images based on text prompts, often used for artistic and creative visuals.

Stable Diffusion: A powerful AI model for generating high-quality, coherent images from text that can run on most consumer hardware equipped with a modest GPU.

Viggle: Specializes in speeding up the process of creating animatics and previsualization, helping animators and filmmakers quickly develop storyboards and visual sequences.

Write With Laika: A writing assistant platform that helps generate creative content, offering tools for brainstorming, story development, and improving writing productivity.

Here is the film rehearsal schedule in a spreadsheet format for the month of July.

Date	Time	Mark	Tony	Tina	Sherry
July 1, Mon	10 AM - 12 PM	X	X		
July 2, Tue	10 AM - 12 PM	X	X		
July 3, Wed	10 AM - 12 PM			X	X
July 4, Thu	10 AM - 12 PM			X	X
July 8, Mon	10 AM - 12 PM	X	X		
July 9, Tue	10 AM - 12 PM	X	X		
July 10, Wed	10 AM - 12 PM			X	X
July 11, Thu	10 AM - 12 PM			X	X
July 15, Mon	10 AM - 12 PM	X	X		
July 16, Tue	10 AM - 12 PM	X	X		
July 17, Wed	10 AM - 12 PM			X	X
July 18, Thu	10 AM - 12 PM			X	

Since her win at the world's first creative AI eSports Tournament held at the 2024 National Association of Broadcasters (NAB) Show, Jagger Waters has been running workshops and otherwise advising people who are curious about embracing AI tools for filmmaking workflows. She remarks, "These tools are perfect for creating proof-of-concept materials, storyboards, previsualizations and even short teaser trailers."

In Waters' opinion, this type of preliminary work is the best use of AI tools for writers, directors and producers at this time. AI can enhance an average

pitch deck and help sell pitches without stepping into a minefield of legalities around AI use that need to be figured out before generative AI can be used in a final creative product.

Chundria Brownlow, founder/CEO/director at Chundria Brownlow Film Studios, has been using AI for two years. "It's like hiring a housekeeper to come to your house. It's still your house; they just make it better," Brownlow explains.

She uses AI for a variety of tasks, from research to writing emails.

Demonstrating her technique for drafting casting notices and rehearsal schedules, Brownlow fed ChatGPT obvious project-specific information, like the description of the role that was casting. Then ChatGPT took the initiative to include casting submission specifics in the draft, such as asking for headshots, résumés and relevant reels. It requested that the actor prepare a short monologue and mentioned that diversity is highly encouraged.

When drafting a rehearsal schedule,

A still from *Love at First Bite* by Nem Perez, Jagger Waters and Adriana Vecchioli, which won AI on the Lot's Cinema Synthetica film challenge. The film used live action and AI tools including Midjourney, Runway and Magnific.



ChatGPT saved Brownlow from having to look up the specific dates of all the Tuesdays and Thursdays in July. It formatted the schedule in a call sheetlike grid, indicating which actors were expected at which rehearsals.

PRODUCTION

Cuebric: Able to turn a text prompt into a virtual movie set, this AI platform is also known for streamlining the postproduction process, using AI to automate repetitive tasks and improve efficiency.

ElevenLabs: Specializes in text-to-speech (TTS) technology, offering highly natural and expressive voice synthesis for various applications, including audiobooks and virtual assistants.

Kaiber: An AI tool designed for creating dynamic visual content from text inputs, particularly animations and video clips suitable for marketing and creative projects.

Luma AI: Luma Dream Machine is an AI model that makes high-quality, realistic videos from text and images very quickly.

Magnific AI: A highly advanced AI upscaler and enhancer that can reimagine as many details in your image

or photo as you wish, guided by your prompt and parameters.

Runway: A versatile AI platform for video editing, image manipulation, and multimedia content creation, featuring a wide range of tools for artists and designers.

Suno: A generative artificial intelligence music creation program designed to generate realistic songs that combine vocals and instrumentation or are purely instrumental.

Udio: A generative artificial intelligence model that produces music based on simple text prompts. It can generate vocals and instrumentation.

Iris Schmidt is a film director in Copenhagen, Denmark, who specializes in virtual production. She has used AI software to produce short films by leveraging Midjourney to create photos through prompts and later bring them to life. Schmidt also uses AI to optimize her 3D animations for virtual production. Last year she collaborated on a Swedish music video with Marionette XR, which provides AI software that filmmakers can use to extract, edit, clean and retarget motion to their 3D character.

“It meant the animation was a lot easier to do, and the singer’s movements were put into the performance instead of hand-animating it,” Schmidt explains.

Mark Goffman, writer and showrunner for *Limitless* and *Umbrella Academy*, points out that it’s possible to create a custom model, particularly in ChatGPT, by feeding in a set of instructions and rules for, say, a television show—like the show’s worldview, how the act breaks go, how a character behaves or how the two main characters interact with each other.

“You can say something like, ‘OK, our main character is a behavioral psychologist; now tell me a psychological experiment that’s fairly obscure and has a surprising result.’ And it’ll spit out a bunch of them,” he says.

For a story, Goffman might dig down more into one of the results that ChatGPT has delivered. Around two more iterations in, he’ll be able to see how he can relate that specific hypothesis to the show’s main character. It’s very much the same process that he might go through with somebody on staff.

“The difference is that you can do the research a lot faster,” he explains. “But

the other thing is, it might be 3 in the morning and my wife's gonna punch me in the face if I wake her to talk about any of this. If I try calling anyone else, they're asleep and I'll get punched the next morning. AI is always awake, and it's endlessly positive and patient with me."

POSTPRODUCTION

Adobe After Effects Rotoscoping: Utilizes AI to streamline the rotoscoping process in Adobe After Effects, making it easier to create precise masks and track objects in video.

Adobe Music Remix: Uses Adobe Sensei to intelligently retune music clips to match video content. Helps remix and adjust music tracks to fit different lengths and styles.

Adobe Enhance Speech: Uses AI to magically remove noise and improve the quality of your dialogue clips so they sound like they were recorded in a professional studio.

DaVinci Voice Isolation: An AI-powered plug-in for DaVinci Resolve that isolates and enhances voice tracks in audio, useful for improving dialogue clarity.

Photoshop Generative Fill: Powered by Adobe Firefly, this tool enhances Photoshop's image editing capabilities with content-aware fill, object removal and image synthesis.

Quicktune: An AI editing tool for unscripted content that integrates with Adobe Premiere Pro and Avid Media Composer and is designed for content such as reality TV, documentary, news, sports, industrials, etc.

Sora: A text-to-video model that can generate videos of realistic and imaginative scenes up to a minute long from text instructions while maintaining visual quality and adherence to the user's prompt.

Topaz: Professional-grade photo and video editing powered by AI. Best known for its suite of enhancement tools, including image upscaling, noise reduction and sharpening.

In addition to the above resources, Meagan Keane, director of product marketing for Pro Video Strategy at Adobe—who spent about a decade working as an editor and producer in documentary features—points out that a new feature called Generative Extend will be coming to Premiere Pro later this year.

"If you've edited video, you know this experience. You're cutting something, you come to the end, and you think, 'I really want to let this have a long fade to black as the music is coming to an end,'" she says. "All of a sudden, you get an alert: Insufficient Media. You think,

'If I only had a couple more frames a couple more seconds, I could really pull out this pacing perfectly.'

"Or, you have an interview subject and they make this really poignant comment—and then they continue talking. You're like, 'If I could just have them sit on that comment for a moment of breath.' With Generative Extend, you will be able to pull out for a few frames, a few seconds, to really hit your pacing perfectly."

In the past, doing something like this would have taken hours to figure out. You would either find single frames that could be duplicated in order to add a little bit more time, or you'd go through the footage archive to look for another clip that could be used. Now it might just take seconds.

As the industry grapples with how it is going to use AI in creating film and TV, it's worth remembering that while AI may not be magic, it's not that dissimilar. Magic requires specific ingredients for a potion, the right words for a spell. AI likewise requires our input and is about harnessing unprecedented and powerful tools to help us create.

So AI remains a tool, dependent on human input and imagination. Richard Jenkins, president and CEO of I2A2 Technologies, sums it up: "AI generates, but it's humans who create." ■

Still from *Love at First Bite*.

