THE PLAYGROUND - The future of platform capitalism

Eduardo Féteira , Mafalda Rodrigues, Matilde Fernandes, Raquel Gomes
Communication Design/Interaction Design, Fine-Arts Faculty, University of Lisbon, Portugal

Abstract
The Playground is a project addressing the monetization of social media and the way in which these platforms use collected data to develop a selection process that studies and conditions its interviewees through technology to achieve its own independent gains.

The dystopian scenario takes place 5 years in the future when, after decades of data mining the most personal information about the lives of its users, the big tech companies united to create a new and exclusive social network platform called PLAYGROUND, that offers close contact and relationship building with higher status and income individuals. This alliance between Facebook, Google, Twitter, Amazon and Paypal becomes a self-feeding system that uses the individual databases of each older platform to develop a multiple functionality and streamlined services platform.

This platform selects its users through an invite and interview-only process. The reason for this system is to ensure the approval of members that are active on the platform for which they will be compensated for according to their levels of engagement and quality of produced content. The critical moment will be the interview, conducted by an AI which will evaluate how much each candidate is worth to the platform – and to the exploitative goals of the AI and its parent companies. This AI is called MINDER.

The appeal of this platform is its exclusivity, the closeness and networking opportunities it provides to people of similar or higher social status and its social currency.

This platform thus becomes a trap for the collection and commercialization of further data, through the control and enhancement of user interaction through its patented technology, under the guise of an exclusive content-sharing platform, very similar to the way we currently interact with our devices and web platforms.

Keywords: social media; algorithm; artificial intelligence; data-mining; capitalization; systemic bias

1. Algorithm Technology and Data-Mining

Crucial to the development of this project is the notion of manipulative algorithm, its presence in everyday tasks (either for personal or institutional purposes) and the way it is powered by aggressive data-mining.

The increase in technology usage – from online shopping to remote working, personal phones and computers, the advent of streaming platforms and digital personal assistants – has dramatically changed the way personal data is shared, both consciously and unconsciously. As users spend more and more time online and as platforms strive to deliver more personalized content and services, the market for gathering and selling users' data has grown into a multi billion-pound business of tracking, packaging and selling data picked up from public records and private lives. (Venkataramanan, 2014)

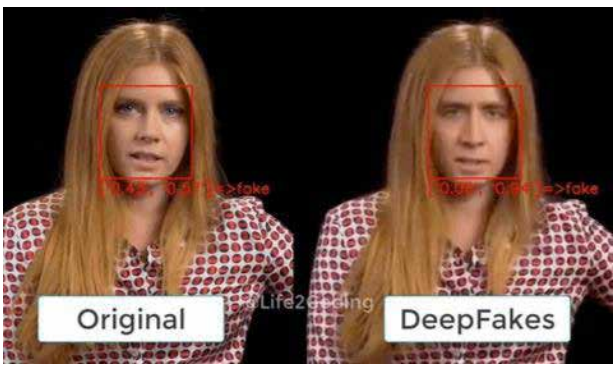
Such predatory behavior around the collection of data – *data-mining* – has enabled evolving algorithms to become

both increasingly accurate and embedded in daily lives' mundane actions and decisions. On our phones, tablets and other devices in our digital world, algorithms hail our Uber rides, decide who we should befriend on social media, and choose shows, movies and products for us to consume. They can even help companies decide what candidates to hire and help universities diversify their student bodies. One day, automakers hope complex algorithms will drive cars more safely than humans do.

It's this pervasiveness of predictive algorithms in users' daily lives that truly showcases its power. Once hailed as the pinnacle of efficiency, as it allowed mechanical and dull tasks to be performed automatically, predictive algorithms have quickly become mediators in important tasks and decisions that directly impact millions of lives. From determining judicial sentencing to bank loan approvals and human resources applications, algorithms are now a common practice for highly sensitive tasks that involve processing large amounts of information. (Hickman, 2013)

However, these algorithms often mirror the detached and mostly white, cis-gendered environments in which they are created. This makes them highly biased and unequipped to understand and consider the different variants, often associated to racist, sexist and xenophobic structures of old, designed to uphold power hierarchies, that push people and communities to the fringes and locks them out of opportunities to fight the same system. (Kara, 2019) These algorithms perpetuate these same systems, as these are considered the template from which to perform. As Viktor Mayer-Schönberger, professor of internet governance and regulation at the Oxford Internet Institute, puts it, in his book *Big Data: A Revolution That Will Transform How We Live, Work and Think*, "That is the possibility of using big-data predictions about people to judge and punish them even before they've acted. Doing this negates ideas of fairness, justice and free will. In addition to privacy and propensity, there is a third danger. We risk falling victim to a dictatorship of data, whereby we fetishize the information, the output of our analyses, and end up misusing it.".

As these algorithms process information and determine patterns, they continue to act on them as a way to determine the best option for institutions and brands to retain and increase user engagement. This means that as it learns and focuses on the user's interests and references, these algorithms begin to build a bubble around the user that effectively feeds them content that mimics their views, blocks diverging voices and information and detaches them from societal discourse that lives in discussion and confrontation of ideas. It lends truth to the idea of a fetishization of algorithms as pantheons of truth, without context or nuance. This blind faith becomes even more dangerous as technological advancements open the way to new forms of falsifying information, such as the case of deep fakes. This AI technology that successfully transplants one face onto another in an ever-increasing seamless operation preys on the difficulty the users have in discerning what is fake and what is not, cloaked by the immense amount of information available online which adds to the increased level of difficulty in finding what is fact and what is fake.



Deepfake of Nicola's Cage face edited over actress Amy Adams footage

2. Problem Statement

The digital platforms that are, at its core, considered public and social spaces (extensions of the real public space sphere) are targets of monetization and exploitation by big companies and conglomerates. This predatory attitude has greatly increased as algorithms have pervaded most of online activity and made it easy for these entities to deploy large-scale data gathering and repurposing operations across the globe. Vulnerable data, however, is not all the same, with minority groups becoming easily target victims, either by the appropriation of information through exclusionary practices already existing prior to the advent of digital cul-

ture, or by actively excluding these groups and focusing on a white, cisgender minority. It is a process that commodifies human beings and targets groups either by denying them access to platforms and services or by harshly penalizing them.

3. Conceptual Framework

The Playground is a project addressing the monetization of social media and the way in which these platforms use collected data to develop a selection process that studies and conditions its interviewees through technology to achieve its own independent gains.

The dystopian scenario takes place five years in the future when, after decades of data mining the most personal information about the lives of its users, the big tech companies united to create a new and exclusive social network platform called PLAYGROUND, that offers close contact and relationship building with higher status and income individuals. This alliance between Facebook, Google, Twitter, Amazon and PayPal becomes a self-feeding system that uses the individual databases of each older platform to develop a multiple functionality and streamlined services platform.

The appeal of this platform is its exclusivity, the closeness and networking opportunities it provides to people of similar or higher social status and its social currency. This platform thus becomes a trap for the collection and commercialization of further data, through the control and enhancement of user interaction through its patented technology, under the guise of an exclusive content-sharing platform, very similar to the way we currently interact with our devices and web platforms.

4. Narrative and Scenario

We took inspiration from a series of cinematic and literary works that in some way already expanded on cyber-security, immersive digital experiences, data-collection and predictive behavior. These references are: Neal Stephenson's *Snow Crash*, 2017; William Gibson's *Neuromancer*, 1984; George Orwell's *1984*, 1951; David Eggers' *The Circle*, 2013; David Cronenberg's *ExistenZ*, 1999 and Alex Garland's *Devs*, 2020.

The outcome took the form of a dystopian scenario, as a hypothetical extreme situation is better suited to illustrate abstract notions of power applied to mundane reality. In this very near-future reality, a new platform created by a conglomerate of key web-based platforms and networks is set to invite users to join an exclusive web environment where they can share and produce content, collect big-ticket rewards and intimately mingle with the rich and famous, all through an ever-present device that acts as an always listening assistant – the Minder.

It's the Minder who is responsible for inviting and interviewing possible candidates for the platform, based on the amount and quality of content they can bring into it, as well as for the relevance and status they already carry socially in other web platforms. The selection and subsequent interview process rely heavily on the collected data it gathered from outlets owned by its parent conglomerate company, and this same information is used to develop predictive and hyper realistic scenarios which it uses to control/influence/blackmail the interviewees.

5. AI – Technology & Representation

Taking center stage in this experience, and being the mediator between the interaction of the interviewees and the platform they are trying to be accepted on, the Minder is the crucial element that mirrors not only the interests of the Playground and the companies that created it, but also mirrors the type of relationship each interviewee develops with it, even if just for a brief moment. As such, careful consideration went into developing its appearance, its voice and the personality it showcases.

As the evolution of AI technology progresses, so does the relationship humans develop with these machines. At times skeptical and other times with dazzlement, the truth is most of this relationship is guided by a human intent to model something it can relate to and identify itself with. Hence, when looking to develop an interactive AI entity, humans turn to a more humanoid casing for this technology.

However, the line between developing a relatable and appealing AI and one that incites disgust and strangeness is a fine one. Coined by Masahiro Mori as "The Uncanny Valley", the term is related to the dip in affinity humans ex-

perience when a robot or an AI entity crosses the threshold of human likeness and becomes disturbingly similar to a human. (Caballar, 2019) This reaction actually promotes an adverse reaction in human receptivity towards robot interaction, promoting not only discomfort but also distrust towards the technology.

It is a phenomenon that can also be observed in digital constructs of human-like entities. With the rise in synthetic media – either through virtual assistants, chatbots and virtual beings – the same tightrope is being walked. (Dirik, 2020) With synthetic supermodels and influencers already hitting social media, many of these are already the focus of discussion due to their human likeness being almost indistinguishable and what that might mean for human representation when perfect bodies can be developed on computers and broadcast globally. (Riparbelli, 2019)

Brud's Digital Creator Miquela, the first fully digital AI supermodel

At its core, the mistrust and disgust identified in Mori's Uncanny Valley can be traced to human distaste for the unknown. Much like its physical manifestations, a similar reaction can be seen as AI, through deep learning technology (machine learning methods based on artificial neural networks and analysis of large amounts of data), starts reaching outside of the expected boundaries set up by humans. As AI now develops new ways of rationale and regulatory rules that developers cannot review for themselves, this already dubbed "Black Box" technology fuels concerns over how these systems can regulate themselves and what directives drive them in their relationship with humans.

Some developers believe the solution might be in patterns of behavior or personality that can be taught to AI as a way of teaching them how to better communicate and understand human behavior. (Chia, 2019) This would open the way to tailored interaction with AI, as it can collect information about each user to better match a personality type to allow for more transparent communication. (Skloot, 2020) What the public and regulators need is reassurance that there is a way for everyone to have some understanding of deep learning agents, and that there is some level of predictability in their behavior.

However, as stated before, systems are always a representation of those designing them. And in such a delicate field as human behavior, and consequently AI behavior, even these behavioral boundaries would have to equate exceptions and deviant actions, such as those that disguise true intent.

Bearing in mind this dualistic relationship between human need and AI intent, the Minder does not seek to alienate its users – avoiding human representations of itself, apart from its "voice" which although fluent is still recognizably mechanical – but does not reveal any identifiable emotion as a way to safeguard its own interests.

We decided to adopt a more abstract visual representation. Using the *Moiré* effect – characterized by perpendicular lines that when associated with movement create a sort of melting screen effect – we were able to provide a digital visual identity to the AI that directly references the idea of a digital entity using a screen to communicate to humans. A sort of double digital interaction to create a dynamic yet disrupted visual presence that humans often associate with the idea of error or digital glitch.

The Moiré effect was also chosen as its wave-based movement could be utilized to mimic the sound waves of the Minder as it spoke. This coupling was the deciding element when choosing the voice for the AI. Not looking for a voice that closely resembled fluent human speech, we chose a type of voice that is reminiscent of the current models for Alexa, Cortana or Siri. A digital voice that constructs its dialogue by piecing together different words to construct a sentence that, despite its grammatically correct construction, still bears marks of a broken pronunciation. As mentioned above, regarding the Mori's Uncanny Valley, a voice that too closely resembles the human intonation can awake

feelings of unease and mistrust on the listener. As such, this mechanical voice assures the listener, to some extent, that they are interacting with a digital AI, with which they are more prone to provide sensitive information, as they have done throughout their digital life.

Finally, with both these elements selected the development of the Minder's personality and the goals that drive its interaction with the interviewees was the final step needed to give the project a clear direction.

6. AI Interaction and Personality

Humans and AI can interact in a number of different forms, most commonly, with the technology that is now available, this is done through the medium of screens, either on phones, tablets, desktops or laptops. In fact, humans are almost always interacting with AIs when they are connected to any of those screens and an internet connection, whether they know it or not. Most of the AI active today, through the form of algorithms and data mining programs, machines who learn through the amassing of large quantities of data, is invisible to the average human user. The human puts information into the network, either by giving information about themselves or through their usage habits, and the AI collects and interprets this data.

There are, however, more explicit forms of interaction, where both humans and machines are active participants in the process. One of these forms of interaction is already present in our daily lives, through interactive AI like those in Apple's Siri or Amazon's Alexa, AIs that respond to human commands and assist in human activities, even while they continue amassing data on the human controller. (Kostopoulos, 2020) Other types of AI are being developed which aim to make the learning process of the AI go both ways, the humans learning from the AI and the AI from humans, this idea known as the "Wizard of Oz" technique, aims to make the AI more human-like by learning social and conversational cues from humans, as well as reacting to human emotional states, expectations and behavior. (Miller, 2019) The future of human/AI interaction seems to be more and more about a machine intelligence which can be indistinguishable from a human, passing the famous Turing test, which tests if a human can distinguish an AI from another human, while at the same time amassing an amount of data which would be impossible for a human to amass.

In the case of the Minder, as it's interaction with the interviewees required a direct conversation with each individual, considering all the different conversational outcomes that could arise from the conversation, its nature more closely resembles the second type of AI interaction mentioned above: the Minder, through its sets of questions, learns and adapts to each interviewee as the interview progresses.

However, the relationship built between AI and interviewee was designed to be anything but straight forward. Having been developed by major digital conglomerates, the reason why the Minder interviews the potential candidates is not the same as common AI, searching and amassing information. As the Minder already has access to all of the information the interviewees have shared across the parent companies' platforms, its real search is for its subjects' susceptibility to misinformation and coercion. Through its interactive experience that is presented at the end of each interview, the Minder seeks to "scam" each interviewee into believing they have done or are capable of doing something unspeakable, to which the Minder is privy to.

This coercion is only possible as each interviewee believes they are dealing with a somewhat common AI interviewer, a robot with a set of predetermined questions that presents itself with a formatted voice setting and a digital visual effect.

7. Proto-Personas

Bearing in mind that the group's project is a work of design fiction and looks to question future scenarios, when deciding on the target users and their actions within the proposed scenario, we developed a set of 3 proto-personas. In order to better demonstrate the different possible outcomes of the interaction, we chose to create three different characters, which in themselves were at the ends of the spectrum of emotion and reaction. This way, the relationships with the AI would be very different from each other and explore autonomous paths of the interview.

When defining the different characteristics of each proto-persona, we decided it would be best to base these on real-life people. This way the audience could easily identify the personality type on display and anticipate (or be surprised) by the outcome.

The three proto-personas created are:

The wealthy, entitled and digitally-savvy white, cisgender man who wants to use the platform for his own profit and for status. His profile was based on Jeff Besos and Elon Musk type personalities.

The non-binary, P.O.C. (person of color) activist who wants to use the platform as a way to understand what it is used for and how it can be subverted and exposed. The profile was influenced by activist and designer Sasha Constanza-Chock.

The fame-driven, white, female, lifestyle influencer that wants to be a celebrity and would be willing to do anything to reach her goal. Her profile is based on YouTube beauty bloggers such as Emma Chamberlain.

8. The use of moral dilemmas in the AI interview

As mentioned previously, there are already several institutional processes that heavily rely on AI systems and algorithms to analyze and sift through large amounts of data. These processes can, however, fall prey to issues of systemic biases related to established systemic racism, sexism, homophobia, and xenophobia that seeped into these new technological constructs. This project in particular decided to focus on the growing trend of AI-led personality and moral assessment interview processes, adapted to the social media enrollment process mentioned in the dystopian scenario.

The reason for this choice is closely linked to the wider possibility these systems have of being experienced by larger sections of the population in any part of the world, as the growing trend seeks to help HR departments across the globe select interviewees from large pools of candidates by applying predictive algorithm systems to the interview process.

Whether by analyzing answers to open-ended self-evaluating questions, by interpreting video-footage of the interviewees' reactions throughout the process or by examining the candidate's logical thinking when faced with a moral dilemma, the AI responsible for the interview applies a pattern analysis and standard response comparison set up in its programming. However, as we have established, these programs mirror implicit and explicit biases held by its programmers, they often are exclusionary as the questions posed often don't consider the special needs of candidates with disabilities or different types of response by people from different backgrounds, as illustrated in Tim Travers Hawkins' "Persona" documentary.

Even at its most basic level of analyzing the candidate's speed and logical organization of ideas, moral dilemmas and personality tests often serve as no more than a randomized test of lucky draw, as the candidate tries to match the correct answer to what pattern the AI is looking for. With little to no scientific basis and a hyper-inflated profile, personality tests and moral dilemmas are usually useful when seeking to destabilize candidates and elicit an off-guard response.

It's with this in mind that the present project seeks to frame its moral dilemma. Having already gathered data on the interviewee, the AI is not seeking information but rather an analysis of behavior and receptivity to its influence. When posing and presenting each candidate with hyper-realistic visions of morally dubious actions, under the pretext of a serious interview, the AI is seeking to throw the candidates off balance, luring them to pay attention to the images presented. As they try to make sense of the situation, the AI uses its technological device to trigger different sensations coupled with the aforementioned notion of fetishization of information that blurs the lines between what is real and what is not.

The critical moment will be the interview, conducted by the AI which will evaluate how much each candidate is worth to the platform – and to the exploitative goals of the AI and its parent companies.

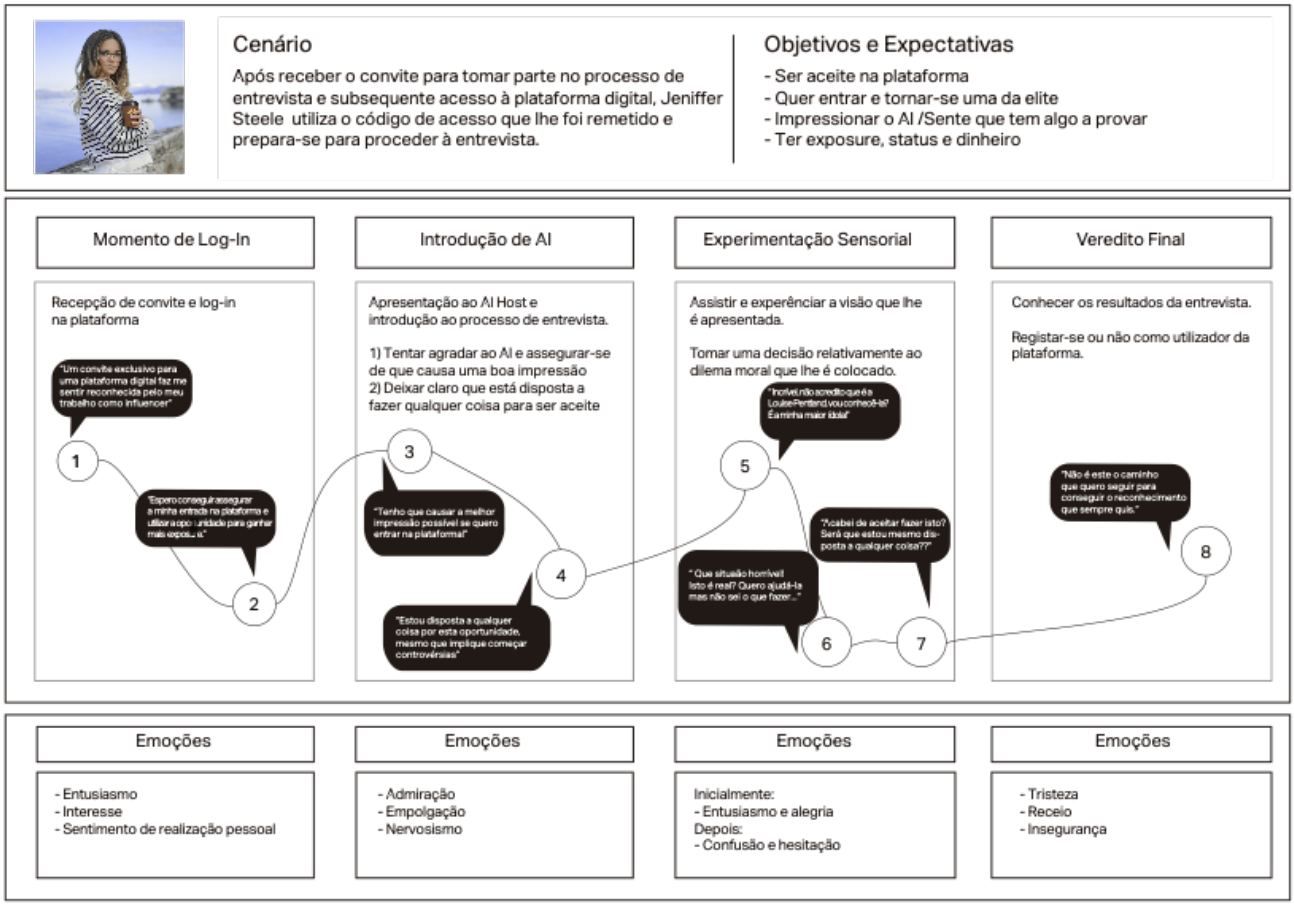
The Minder, due to the directives and preconceptions which inform its 'personality', is inherently biased. After a formal introduction on the part of the AI, in order to leave the user at ease, it will present a dilemma, in the shape of an ultra-realistic projection, in which the user will see themselves projected on the screen in the middle of an experience which they have never had and in which their actions leave them disturbed and in a state of confusion. All of this experience is enhanced and exponentialized through the earpiece technology which induced feelings of nervousness, irritation and excitement (as described previously) at strategic points in the dystopian narrative presented by the AI. The reactions to this experience are also monitored and evaluated by the AI and will contribute to the acceptance or rejection of the user in the platform, as it is in this way that the AI analyses each potential user, in conjunction with the information previously collected in other digital platforms.

As each interviewee watches the unique, hyper-realistic scenario unfold in front of them, their belief in the information presented to them by the AI, preying on their faith in data-driven technology, the AI manipulates their emotions in order to enhance their credibility. Once they have been coerced into believing they could do any of the unspeakable actions they witnessed the AI will know their level of receptivity to the information (true or not) the platform might feed them in the future.

9. User Journey

After creating the proto-personas and defining the crux of the interaction between the AI and each interviewee, we created individual user journeys to help create and polish each interaction in order to create the script that details the interviewees' experience with the AI. By understanding how each would react to the AI's questions and actions and how the AI would assess their replies, we were not only able to pin-point which moral dilemma would best suit and engage with each interviewee, but also which scenario would prove to be the best fit to showcase in the final film.

In the end, the proto-persona and the subsequent moral dilemma we chose to portray was the one belonging to Jennifer Steel, in her quest for fame even if it meant crossing her own moral threshold. As presented in the chart above, and in the individual scrips which were annexed to this paper, Jennifer's experience is filled with fluctuating emotions. As her eagerness to please the AI in order to en-



ter the Playground is exploited by the AI, she is already and unknowingly providing the Minder with the information it needs about her level of ease in accepting the false scenario it created.

10. Accessing the Interview

The whole interview process takes place in a purpose-built digital place designed by the Playground to serve as a sort of limbo where each interviewee awaits judgement by the AI. However, the first point of contact with the experience starts at their home's door, as an invitation is delivered.

11. Invitation

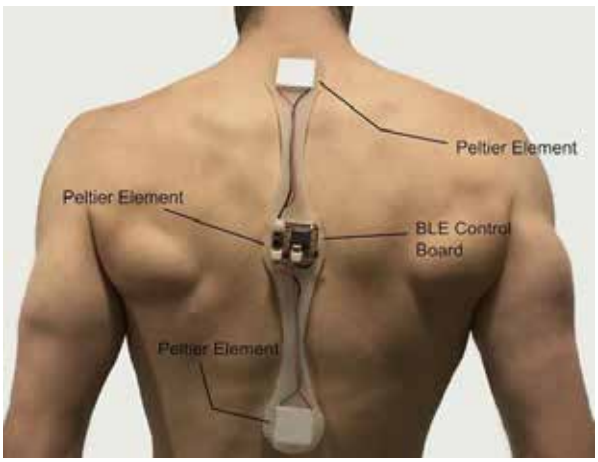
This platform selects its users through an invite and interview-only process. The reason for this system is to ensure the approval of members that are active on the platform for which they will be compensated for according to their levels of engagement and quality of produced content.

This way, the invitation is the first point of contact between users and the Playground platform. These invitations are sent directly to each possible user, under the guise of a Minder invite requesting the attendance to an interview. The invitation comes in the shape of a transparent acrylic box, with the platform's logo and the sentence "The Minder Invites you to Play" etched on the cover. The acrylic allows the user to discern the iridescent card insert in which the indentation of an ear with an earpiece on instructs the user to wear the object just as it is being worn by the prosthetic. After the user puts on the earpiece, the pc and earpiece will synchronize. The invitation is purposely devoid of text, except for the essential, in order to intrigue the user and also to leave them somewhat confused in what concerns the invitation.

12. Earpiece – Technology and Relevance

The project will feature the use of an interactive tool which will have a dual function: communication between the human and AI elements; and enhancing the emotional response of the human subject. While technology for communicating hands-free with devices is already ubiquitous and present in many devices of daily use, a device that is able to directly stimulate and affect reactions and emotions on the wearer is rather new. However, such technology is already being developed, in the form of wearables, which aim to use the human somatic and preconscious systems to both elicit and stimulate emotional reactions on human subjects. These tools work by influencing the mind of the user through the stimulation of processes which humans perceive but which are outside conscious control. (Jain, et al. 2020)

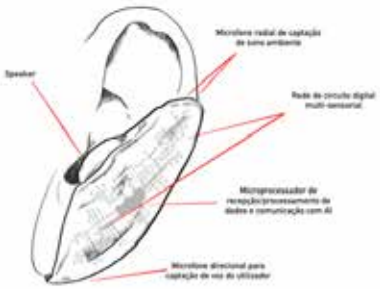
An example of this kind of wearable is the Frisson device, an experimental device which is applied down the spine of a human subject, and which stimulates a shiver that gives the user the feeling of an aesthetic chill, such as you would get from a particularly moving piece of visual art or music. The simple stimulation of the body creates in the mind the thought associated with the physical feeling, enhancing the aesthetic experience through a kind of "cheat". (Horowitz, n.d.)



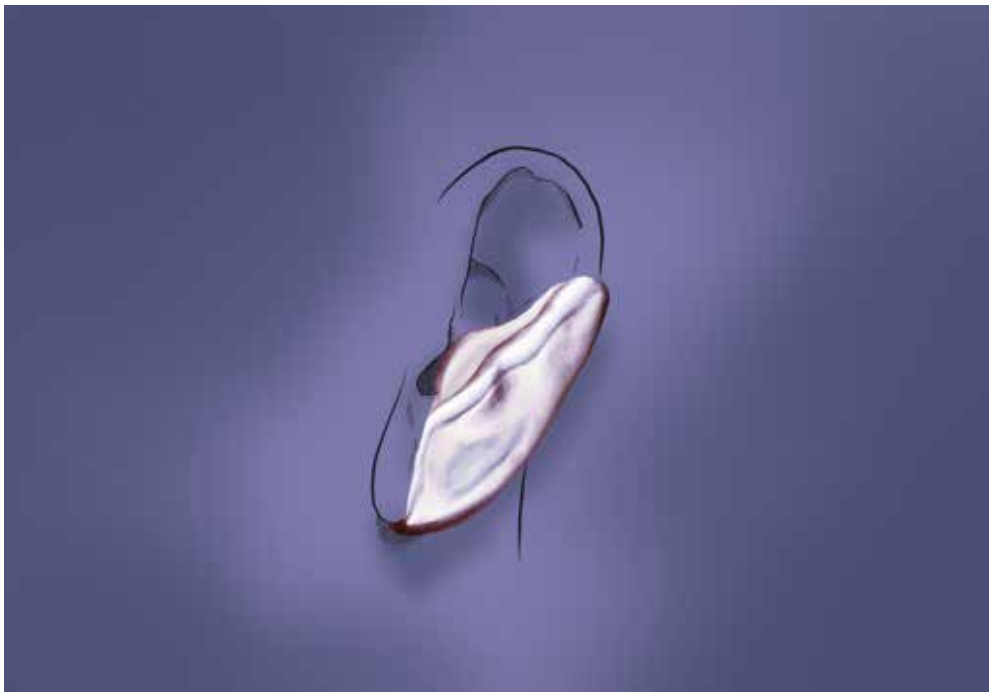
The Frisson prosthesis: a device delivering thermal feedback in a manner closely resembling to the internal chill, a traversing cold temperature from top to bottom.

The earpiece is the bridge between the user, the platform and the AI. By putting it on, the user starts a sync sequence between the earpiece and the computer which will redirect them to the Playground platform in order to be subjected to the interview with the AI. The earpiece is also used as the permanent contact object between the user and the platform, if the user is successful in their interview, becoming an object with a permanent presence on their ear, capturing data and ready to publish content or to perform other tasks in accordance with the user's intention.

The earpiece is compose of a silicone body with a metallic finish, in which two microphones are integrated, one omnidirectional and another unidirectional, in order to capture both environmental noise and voice commands, an earpiece, a microprocessor with a wireless receptor for connection to the platform and processing of AI orders and, lastly, a network of electronic circuits which, in accordance with the orders of the AI and through electric discharges of different frequencies, can induce emotional states. This induction of emotional states through electric discharges is important in the interview experience, as a way to intensify feelings of nervousness, irritation and excitement necessary to make the experience that each user sees in the platform more real, encouraging more visceral emotions (examples of these reactions can be found in the annexed interview scripts). There is, then, a transposition from the digital to the real world in a daily and dissimulated way.

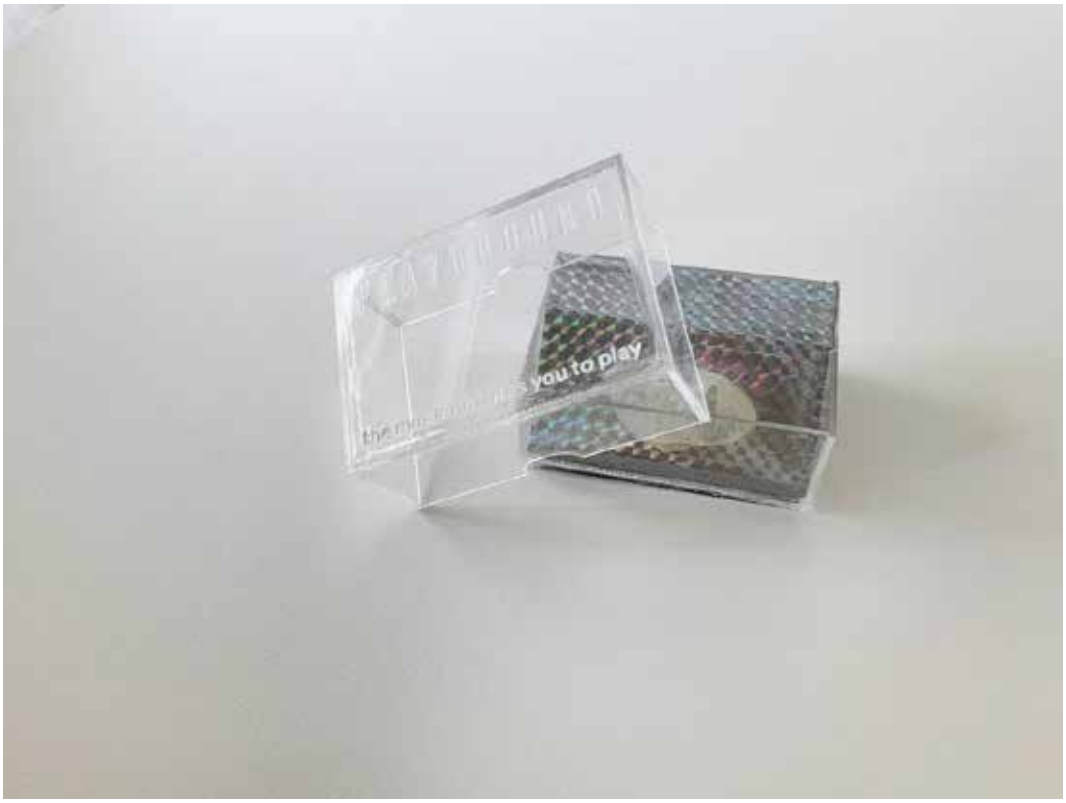


Interior schematics of the earpiece technological components

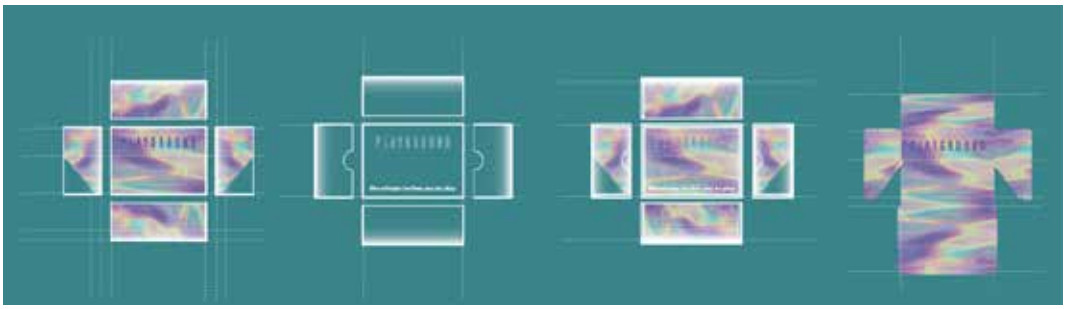


. Illustration of ear indentation with the earpiece on as it appears on the invite.

Sealed box in package



Open box at an angle



Detailed schematics of invitation box (interior cardboard insert and external acrylic box)

13. Interview Website

Finally, as the earpiece is worn by each interviewee, the device will automatically sync with the PC the interviewee is using and connect it to the web platform where the interview will take place.

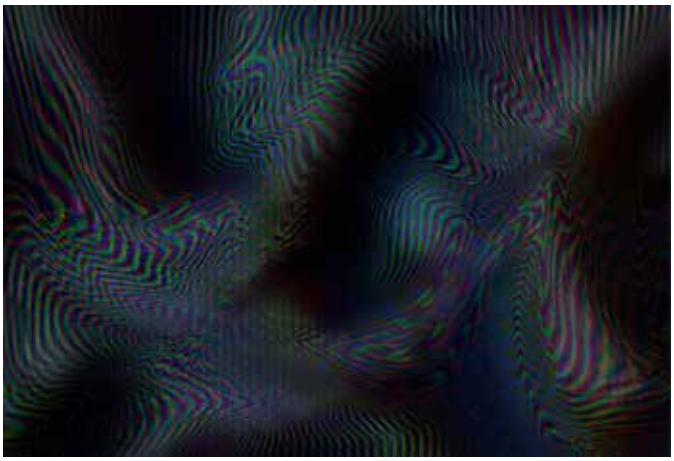
As the platform needed to house not only the AI itself but also the full hyper-realistic scenario the AI will present to each character, we soon understood the platform needed to be simple and easy to transition between both elements. As such, after a few initial screens depicting the identity of the Playground platform, the digital space where the interview takes place is an extended representation of the *Moiré* effect used for the AI.

This adaptation of the Moiré effect also allows for the appearance of the AI speech waves to come in and out of the digital space, creating a sense in the interviewee of not knowing if the AI is present or not until the sound waves begin to move.

After the initial interaction between the AI and the interviewee, the *Moiré* effect, which already displays a sort of glitch visual effect, slowly becomes more energetic and disturbed, as the AI presents the scenario.

The platform uses all the elements already selected to create the visual identity of the Playground as well as the physical appearance of the AI in order to maintain a coherent visual narrative that looks to create a seamless environment crucial to make each interviewee believe the content, platform and objects they interact with are designed for access to this platform, with no ulterior motives, and true. Just like the blind faith users nowadays place on brands, despite what the product actually offers, the different elements that build the interview experience strive to build this streamline look that never breaks the user's experience until it is already too late.

Screenshots of Website



Digital appearance of the AI

14. Conclusions

The bottom-line realization of this project is clear: as technology advances and as users' lives become increasingly more embedded with the technological environment one currently lives in, there is an ever-increasing need for regulation not only of these platforms and spaces where so many already spend a large part of their daily routines, but also of the technological field as a whole.

As many platforms or day to day objects can no longer be removed from daily life, there is a need to regulate and make more transparent the whole process that feeds the chain of production of these types of products but also the main element that feeds it - data. As it has been mentioned, current efforts to anonymize information are still falling short, as current algorithms can already decode secondary on formation about users that easily identify them without the need for a name or address. As these algorithms evolve past the point of its own coders comprehension - the "black box" phenomenon already mentioned in point 1.5 - and as machine learning develops its own logical system of understanding, current data-mining actions led by these conglomerates only serve to expose users to future harm.

Hence the importance of designing a very-near-future scenario led by an AI whose intentions are never really clear. The whole decision of not explaining how the hyper-realistic scenario is possible, or exactly why it is there in the first place, was made to mirror the opaque actions of deep learning algorithms, driven by directives and coded rules that put their parent company's profit and control above all.

Allied to this notion of manipulative algorithm, the project also makes use of the hyper-realistic scenario the character is confronted with to showcase how the absolute saturation of information paired with the willingness to accept algorithmic information as scientific canon can lead to an acceptance of this digitally constructed reality as truth.

A willingness that can be egged on through technology, illustrated in this project by the earpiece. Although an extreme way of controlling its audience, the truth is human relationships with technology already have reached a point not only of dependence but the current situation of being confronted with graphic content through one person's phone has already made most users numb to issues that would otherwise still shock its audience. As companies, institutions or even governments bombard users with extreme-tailored content, design through aggressive data mining, a whole "bubble-world" begins to wrap around its users, showing them content that affirms their points of view, blocking any possibility of disagreeable discourse and feeding their need for continuous content and entertainment.

In the end, the fetishization of information and content, led by algorithms that seek to deliver ever-more effective strategies of user engagement and attention, can become the perfect way for large conglomerates and institutions to deploy their profit and control agendas, cloaked by opaque digital systems.

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