

## Remembering and interpreting Parkville through artificial eyes

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Could we conjure up an accurate vision of a time or a place if we had never been there? Could we then envisage such a place through another's eyes? What if we could delve into entire world's collective understanding of a place or perspective and extract an example of that representation? Would such a vision be robust, believable, or in any way meaningful? What effect might extracting such a scene have on our own understanding of empathy, creativity, imagination, possibility, or design practice?

To date, a limiting feature of artificial intelligence (AI) in applications ranging from those used in financial markets to health, object detection, and design has been their reliance on vast historical datasets from which they build perceptions and projections of the world before relaying this information back to humans. This reliance has so far left scant room for apparent understanding, interpretation, or imagination of the sort truly recognised as 'intelligence' by humans. Such limitations, however, are perhaps drawing to a close with the advent of text-to-image generators(1). Text-to-image generators are opening the door for AI applications to reach human levels of conceptual creativity resembling considered integration, interpretation, and genuine imagination – with the capacity to even build memories of their own.

Contemporary text-to-image generators are now enabling designers to combine and re-imagine features, objects, locations, times, scenes, and styles that can generate unique visions spanning anywhere from reality to impressionism to bizarre fiction. In doing so, they can lead us on an exploration of an alternate and at times fascinating potential world of how others might have seen or interpreted a place like Parkville.

In this presentation we demonstrate a re-imagining of Parkville and surrounds through capturing the collective hive-mind of the world-wide web using modern text-to-image generators. We demonstrate an interpretation of Parkville under conditions where the features we desire and the lens we peer through are selected, combined, and balanced. We ask for consideration of what the model really understands, what the images convey, and leave open a discussion of the aesthetics, ethics, and meaning of artificially generated design to the audience. We show how artificial design resembling imagination, will be a feature of our future and perhaps eventually, even our history.



Figure 1. Four scenes from Parkville, Melbourne understood through a combination different styles and mediums, generated using both MidJourney and DALLE-2 text to image generators.

## References

1. Fitzgerald M, Boddy A, Baum SD. 2020 survey of artificial general intelligence projects for ethics, risk, and policy. 2020.