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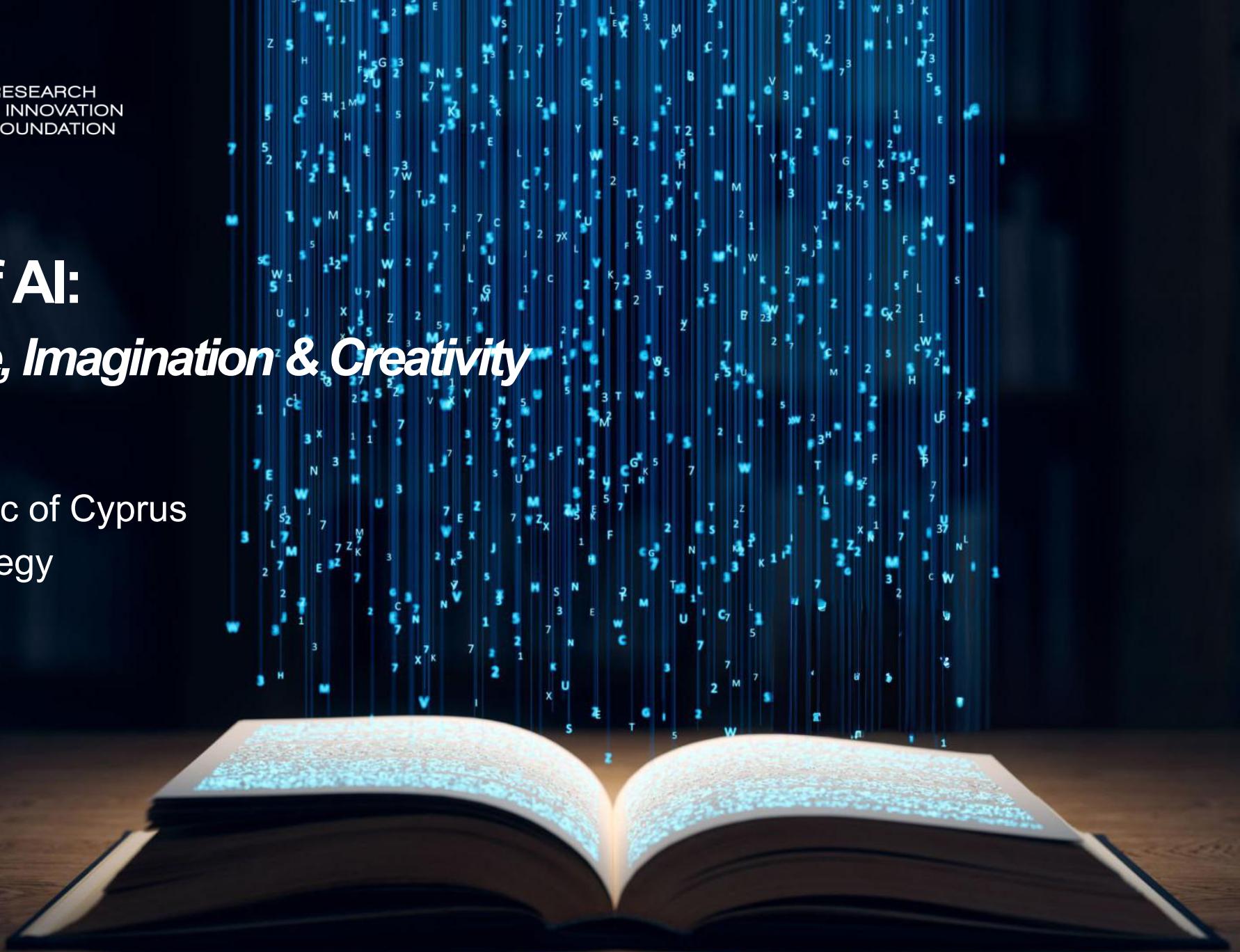
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# Books in the Age of AI: *Rethinking Knowledge, Imagination & Creativity*

**Demetris Skourides**

Chief Scientist of the Republic of Cyprus

Chair of the National AI Strategy



As Chief Scientist, I have the responsibility to shape an AI strategy that protects and empowers our young generation. My mission is to ensure that books evolve in ways that expand imagination, inspire creativity, and strengthen the love of reading.

***Cyprus has always been a nation of storytellers, and I am committed to ensuring our stories continue to flourish in the age of AI.***



# Why This Matters



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## AI can write faster than any human

With AI's ability to generate text at a rapid pace, the traditional role and value of books is being challenged



## Text is abundant, but meaning is not

The sheer volume of text generated by AI algorithms raises questions about the authenticity, depth, and significance of the content



## Reading habits are evolving

The rise of digital formats, short-form content, and audio experiences is changing how people engage with books and stories

***As AI continues to transform the landscape of content creation, we must rethink the role and value of books in order to preserve the essence of storytelling, imagination, and human connection.***



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The power and importance of reading is highlighted in this thought-provoking video from TEDxYouth speaker Luke Bakic. The video explores how reading can expand our minds, cultivate empathy, and inspire us to become better versions of ourselves.

# **TEDx** Youth@TBSWarsaw

x = independently organized TED event



**Luke Bakic-Pawlak**

The Power of Reading

# Story: Two Worlds of Reading

During a school visit, a teacher told me about an 8-year-old boy. In class, he reads a physical book — real pages, real storytelling. But at home, an app generates endless AI-created fairy tales.

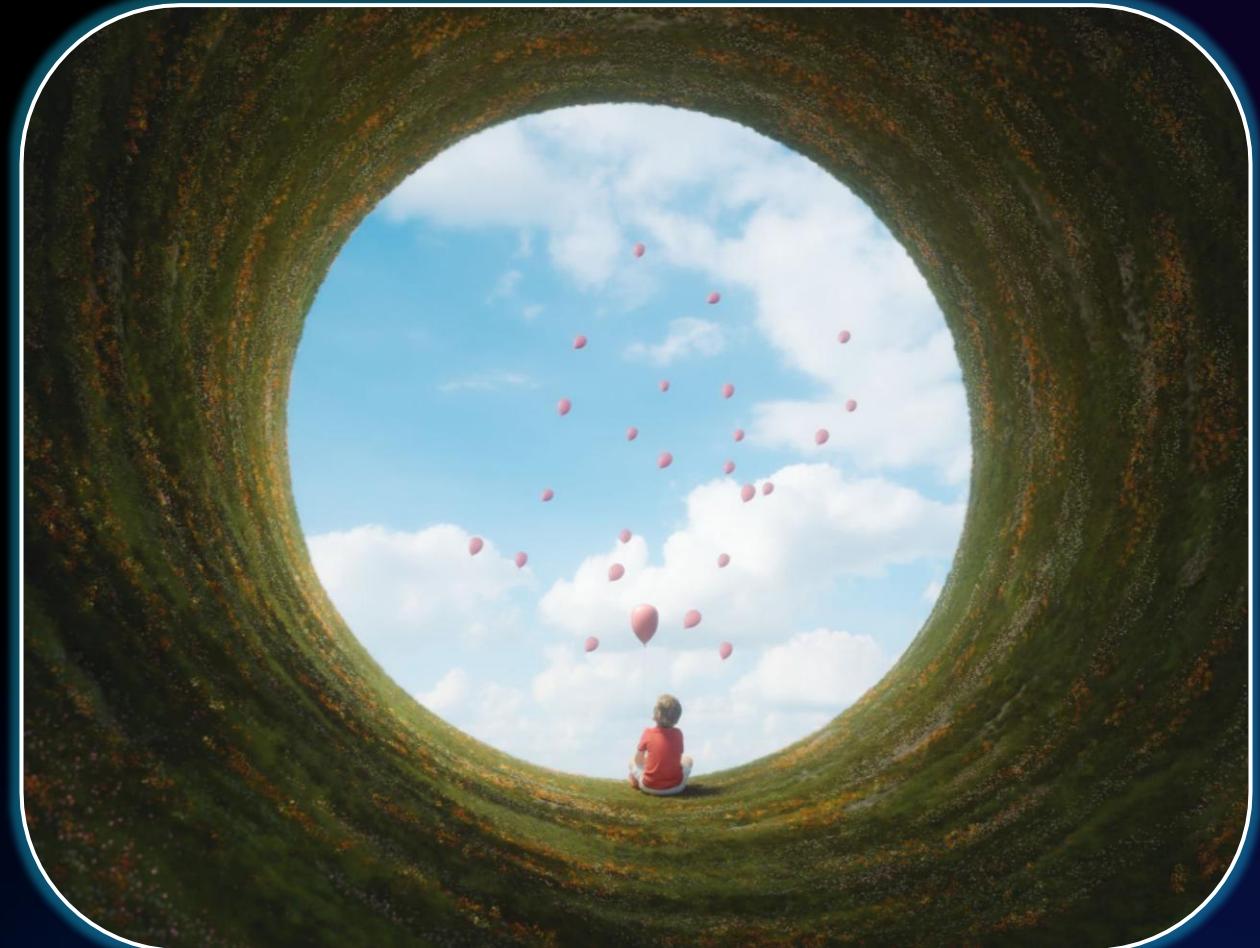
She asked: *Which stories will shape his imagination — those written by authors or those written by algorithms?*



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# What AI Actually Changes



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## AI doesn't 'write' - it predicts

AI models are trained to generate text by predicting the most likely next word based on patterns in data, rather than truly 'writing' in the creative sense.



## Authored → Synthesized

Books written by human authors are being replaced by AI-generated content that synthesizes information rather than conveying a unique creative vision.



## Infinite text → scarce meaning

While AI can generate vast quantities of text, the meaning and depth of that content is often lacking, as it is based on patterns rather than true understanding.

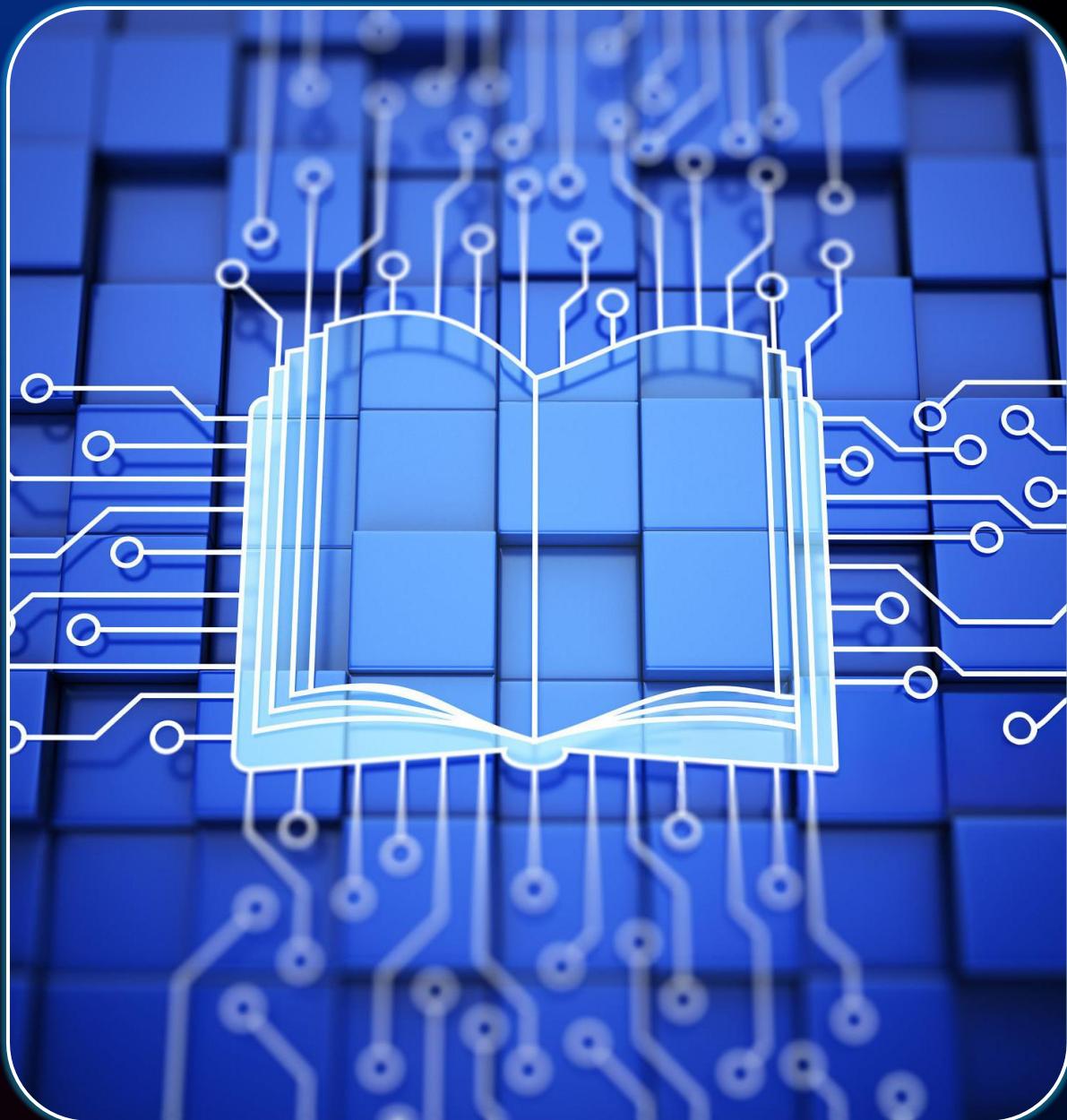
*AI fundamentally changes the nature of text production, shifting from the unique creative expression of authors to the synthetic generation of content by algorithms. This raises important questions about the role of meaning and depth in the age of abundant, but often superficial, text.*



Trend	Percentage Change
80% of all book revenue still comes from printed books	Print remains the core of the European reading culture —but digital habits and new purchasing channels are reshaping behaviour.
Reading Time in the EU	~20% over the last decade
Audiobook Consumption	rising at 25–30% year-on-year
Short-form Content Consumption-feeds, social apps, chat (Youth)	Increased Dominance
E-book Sales	~7% CAGR

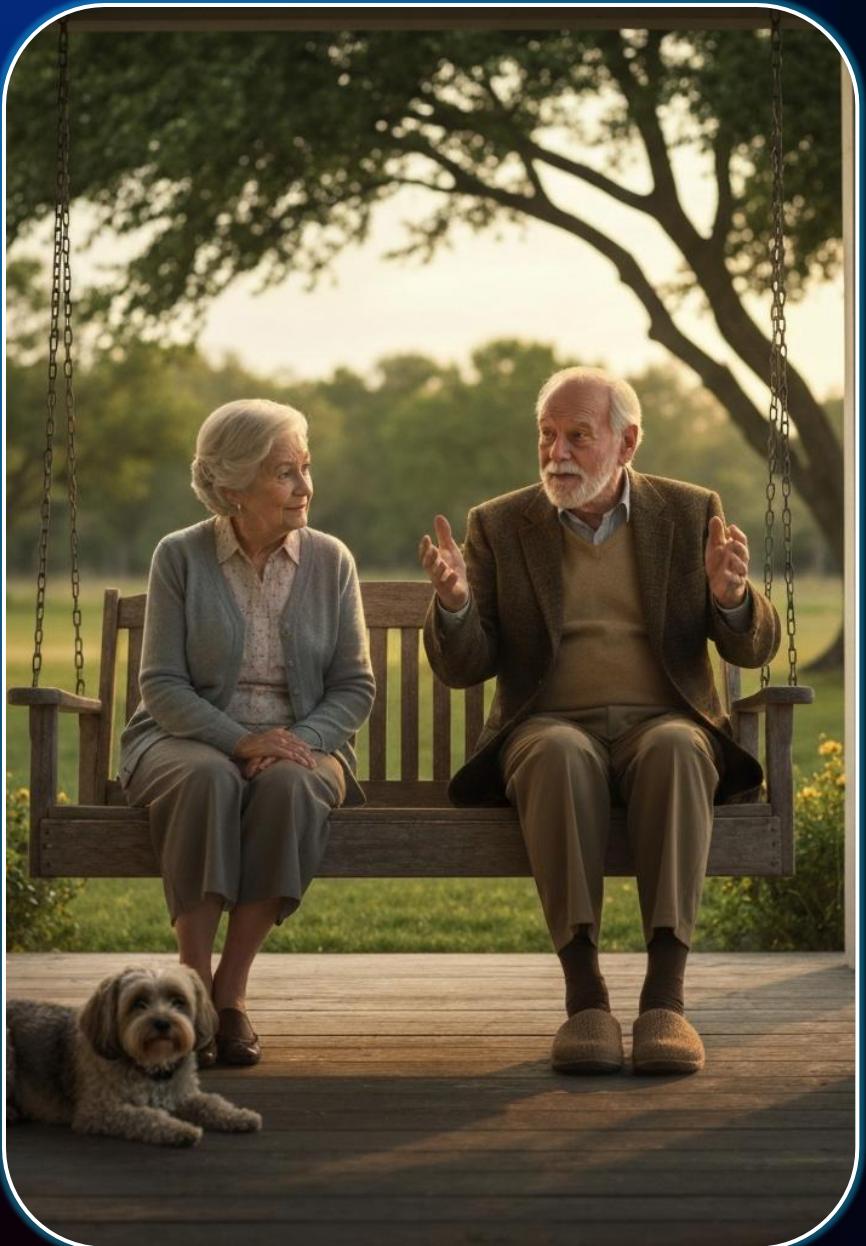
\*Euromonitor International, European Book Publishing Statistics

*Reminds us how deeply physical books remain woven into our culture.*



# Story: Finland's AI Reading Coach

In Finland, researchers developed an AI-powered reading companion to help improve children's reading comprehension and motivation. The AI system, designed to adapt to each child's individual needs, was able to **increase reading comprehension by 40%** and significantly boost student engagement with reading.



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# Story: South Korea's AI Grandparent Voices

In South Korea, an innovative AI project aimed to preserve the storytelling voices of grandparents for future generations. By recording and digitizing the unique speech patterns and inflections of elderly family members, this technology allowed children to experience the warmth and emotional connection of their grandparents' voices while listening to traditional folktales and bedtime stories.

# Why Books Still Matter



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## Cultivate Deep Attention

Books require focused, sustained attention, allowing for deeper engagement and understanding



## Build the Mind

Reading books stimulates cognitive development, strengthening critical thinking and imagination



## Preserve Intention

Books convey the author's intentional narrative, unlike the unpredictable output of AI-generated content

***Books remain essential in the age of AI, cultivating deep attention, building the mind, and preserving the intentionality of human-authored narratives.***

# Why Books Still Matter



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## Books spark imagination

Books open up new worlds, allowing readers to explore beyond their own experiences and foster creative thinking



## Books build empathy

By immersing readers in different perspectives, books cultivate understanding, compassion, and a greater connection to the human experience



## Books protect culture

Books serve as repositories of knowledge, traditions, and stories, preserving cultural heritage and passing it on to future generations

***Books are not just vessels of information, but powerful tools that ignite our imagination, foster empathy, and safeguard the rich tapestry of human culture. As we navigate the age of AI, the role of books in shaping our minds and hearts becomes even more crucial.***

# What AI Can Offer Books



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## Adaptive reading

AI can personalize content and reading experience to individual needs and preferences



## Multilingual translation

AI-powered translation can make books accessible to readers worldwide in their native language



## Co-creative storytelling

AI can assist authors in ideation, character development, and plot generation to enhance the creative process



## Multimodal experiences

AI can integrate books with interactive visuals, audio, and even virtual/augmented reality to create immersive storytelling

*By leveraging AI's capabilities, we can expand the boundaries of traditional books, creating new formats, modes of interaction, and creative possibilities that captivate readers and unlock the full potential of the written word in the digital age.*

# The Risks



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## Algorithmic Sameness

AI-generated content may lead to a homogenization of stories, reducing diversity and creativity



## Misinformation

The ability of AI to create highly convincing but inaccurate or misleading content poses a risk to the credibility of information



## Decline of Deep Reading

The rise of short-form, AI-generated content may contribute to a decline in the practice of deep, immersive reading, impacting cognitive development and emotional engagement

***As AI advances, we must carefully navigate the potential risks to ensure that books continue to serve as reliable sources of knowledge, inspiration, and cultural preservation.***

# The Opportunities



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## More formats

AI can enable new formats like interactive, personalized, and multimodal books that blend text, audio, and visual



## Increased access

AI-powered translation and accessibility features can make books more available to diverse global audiences



## Global circulation

AI can facilitate the distribution and discovery of books across borders, connecting readers worldwide



## Hybrid creativity

AI can enhance human-authored books through co-creation, ideation, and adaptive storytelling experiences

***As AI transforms the book landscape, we must seize the opportunities to expand the reach, relevance, and creative potential of this timeless medium, empowering readers and writers alike.***



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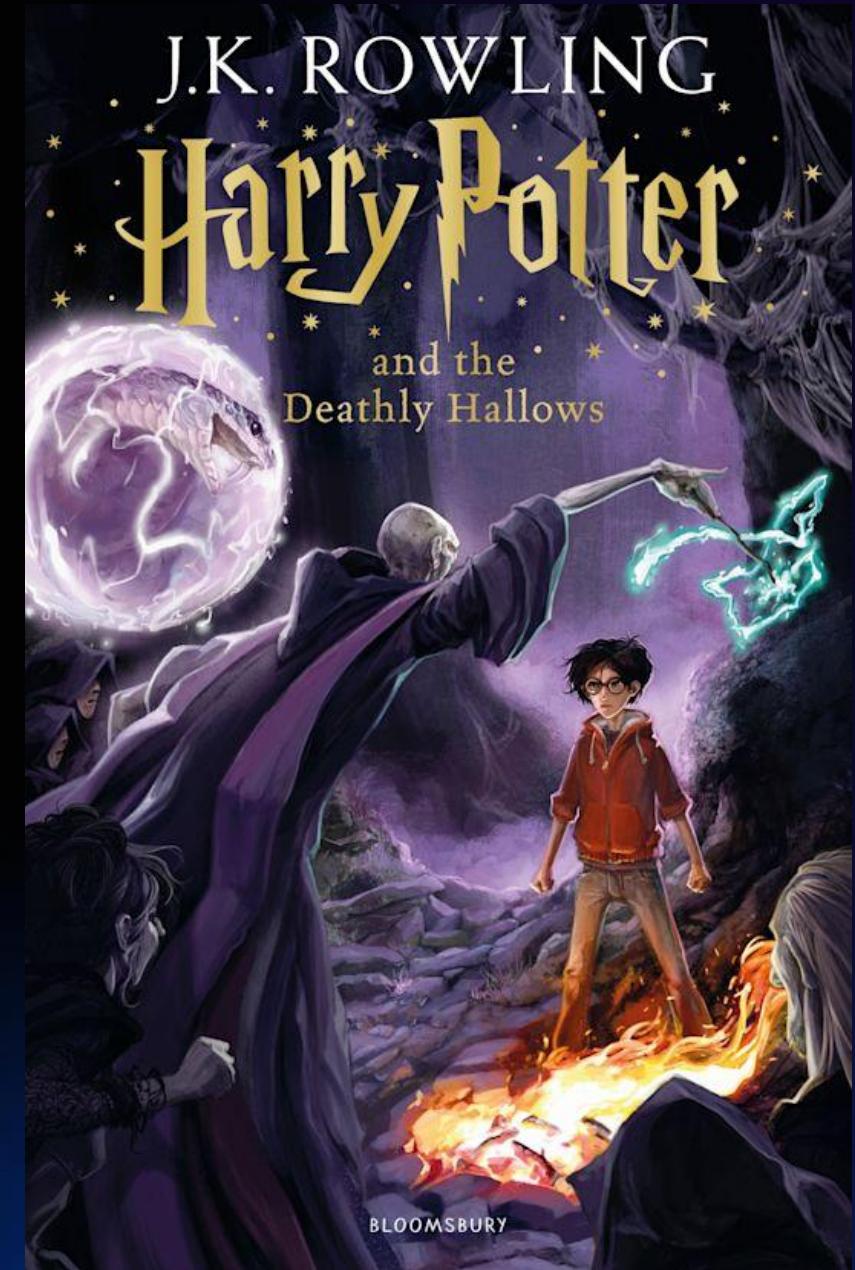


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## Closing Reflection

When machines generate 10,000 books a day... what makes one worth reading?

*Books are essential anchors of meaning  
— the future of books is the future of  
human imagination*





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**As AI transforms the publishing landscape, we have a responsibility to ensure that books remain a powerful force for cultivating imagination, fostering empathy, and preserving our cultural heritage. By embracing the opportunities that AI presents, while mitigating the risks, we can unlock new frontiers of creativity and inspire generations to continue to read, imagine, and create.**