

Easy and fast? Rethinking The future of content creation tools

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Abstract

Easy and fast have been the guiding principle in content creation tools. Now it is almost achieved by generative AIs. What shall we work on next? This exploration led me to a realization that easy and fast actually have many significant downsides. We need to rethink the goal of content creation itself, rather than blindly pursue easy and fast. I would suggest three possible directions as a starting point for further exploration.

Keywords

Creativity support tools

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1 Introduction

Our group has been developing content creation tools—ranging from 2D images and animation to 3D modeling—for more than thirty years. In addition to digital content, we have also explored authoring tools for functional physical objects, such as furniture and garments. Our guiding principle has always been “easy and fast,” enabling novice users to create quickly and with minimal training. This approach has been well received by both the research community and society at large, as people appreciate being able to accomplish tasks that were once difficult with ease and speed.

Today, however, generative AI is fundamentally transforming this landscape, allowing anyone to produce visually compelling images and models with unprecedented ease and speed. At first glance, it seems the long-standing problem is solved. But this raises an important question: what remains to be done? While immediate technical challenges persist—such as improving output quality and increasing controllability—these are already the focus of many researchers in graphics and vision. The more pressing question for us, as members of the human–computer interaction (HCI) research community, is how to make a distinct and fundamental contribution to the future of content creation tools.

This reflection forces us to reconsider the very premise of our work. Is “easy and fast” truly the ideal goal? Unfortunately, the

answer appears to be “not really.” The pursuit of ease and speed has significant downsides. First, simplicity often comes at the cost of quality and flexibility. To make tools accessible, their scope is narrowed and functions highly constrained, which inevitably limits creative potential and leads to user boredom. Second, ease and speed diminish user involvement, reducing agency and the sense of control—ultimately lowering satisfaction and responsibility. Third, such tools can amplify problems of bias and misuse, enabling malicious actors to create harmful content effortlessly. Finally, the proliferation of “easy and fast” tools risks flooding our world with low-quality digital and physical outputs.

2 Rethinking easy and fast

So, how can we move beyond “easy and fast” while addressing these challenges? These problems are deeply fundamental and may even exceed the scope of HCI research. Nevertheless, I would like to propose a few possible directions as starting points for further exploration.

One direction is to focus on the value of the creative process. In many forms of creativity, the process itself matters more than the final output. Children, for instance, delight in the act of drawing, enjoying the tactile interaction between hand, pen, and paper. Professional designers and artists sketch extensively to explore ideas, with the process itself shaping their thinking and externalizing imagination. Similarly, collaborative creation fosters communication and shared understanding. In short, content creation changes not only what is produced, but also how people perceive the world and themselves. We should identify and enhance these intrinsic values of the creative process.

Another direction is to critically examine the purpose of content creation. Under the “easy and fast” paradigm, the purpose was rarely questioned; we assumed content creation to be inherently valuable and focused on making it efficient. However, this naïve assumption no longer holds. We now need to ask: what value should content creation deliver to individuals and to society? How can user interfaces maximize that value while minimizing harm? For instance, how can tools promote personal and collective well-being? How can they contribute to happiness, inclusivity, or sustainability? Authoring tools could, for example, be designed to minimize material waste, encourage reuse, or extend durability. Some research in this direction already exists, but much more remains to be explored.

A further challenge emerging from “easy and fast” generative AI is global uniformity: the loss of diversity in creative outputs worldwide. The internet has already accelerated uniformity by synchronizing access to the same information everywhere, but interpretation and creation were still mediated by diverse human perspectives. With generative AI, however, interpretation and production are increasingly handled by monolithic systems, inherently limiting diversity. While global uniformity may have some positive

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aspects, I believe it poses a serious threat to cultural richness. A lack of diversity makes societies both fragile and dull. Ideally, we should create tools that encourage joy and fulfillment by supporting originality and rewarding the effort of being unique.

3 Conclusion

I have outlined three directions for moving beyond the limitations of the “easy and fast” principle: valuing the creative process, redefining the purpose of creation, and counteracting global uniformity. These are not problems that current machine learning techniques can easily solve, since they lack both relevant training data and straightforward evaluation metrics. How do we capture data about artists’ thinking behind the creative process? How do we measure its benefits? How can we quantify originality or diversity?

To answer these questions, we must engage directly with people, learning from their experiences and aspirations. This is precisely where purely technical approaches fall short and where the HCI community can play a transformative role. There remains much important work to be done, and I look forward to advancing it together with you.

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