

Network Session Report

2024

AI Thinking Session

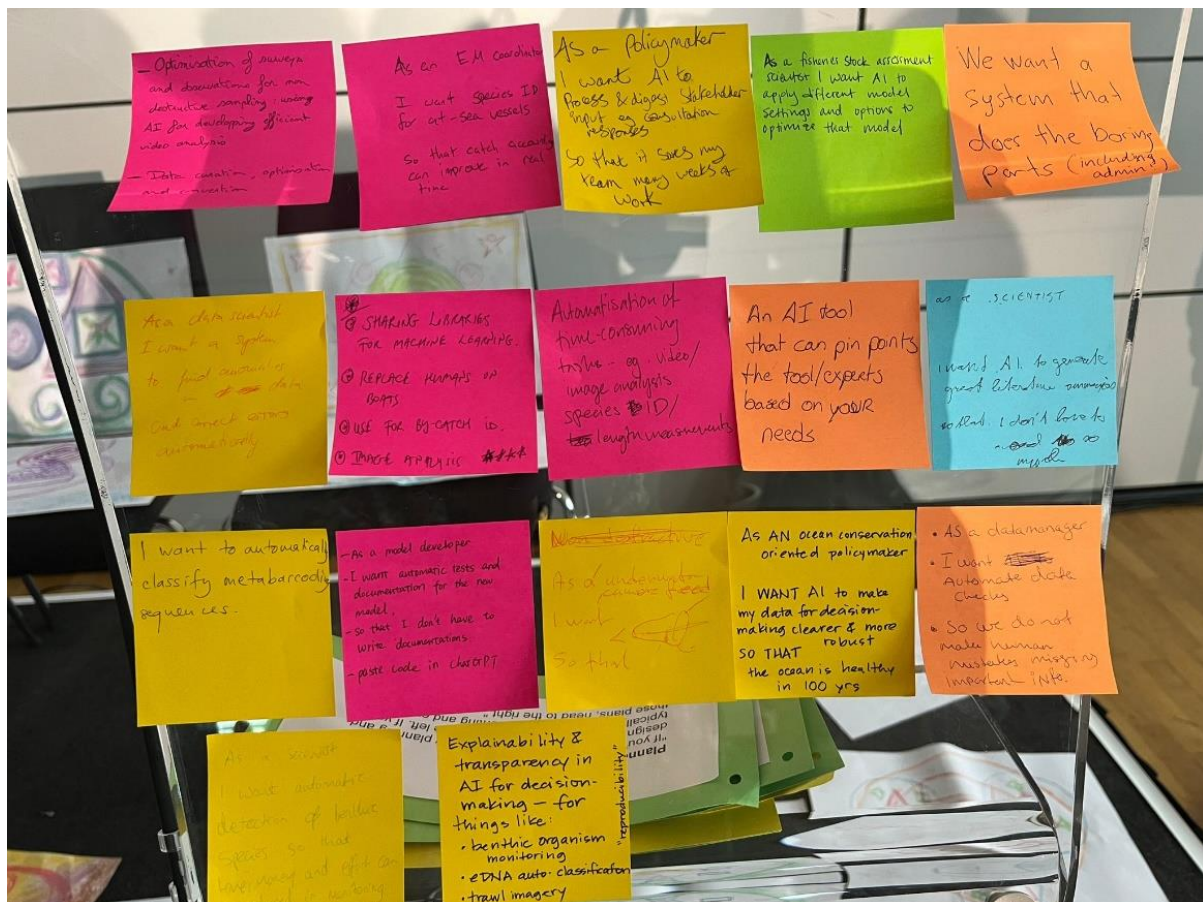
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Session synopsis

We organized an artificial intelligence (AI) thinking session aimed at fostering collaboration within the AI community focused on fisheries research. To facilitate engagement and build trust among participants, we utilised the Liberating Structures framework.

The session was divided into four sections. We began with an icebreaker, asking the group a series of questions to help them connect and engage with one another. In the second part, participants took part in a drawing exercise where they were tasked with drawing a fish multiple times, each time with less time available. This exercise was designed to encourage creative thinking and prepare them for the final two sections.

In the third section, we asked participants to individually answer the question, "Where do you need AI?". Afterward, they paired up to discuss their answers. These pairs then joined with another pair, forming groups of four. In this larger group, each participant shared their partner's ideas with the others. Finally, each group of four selected one idea, and a selection of these ideas was shared with the entire room.

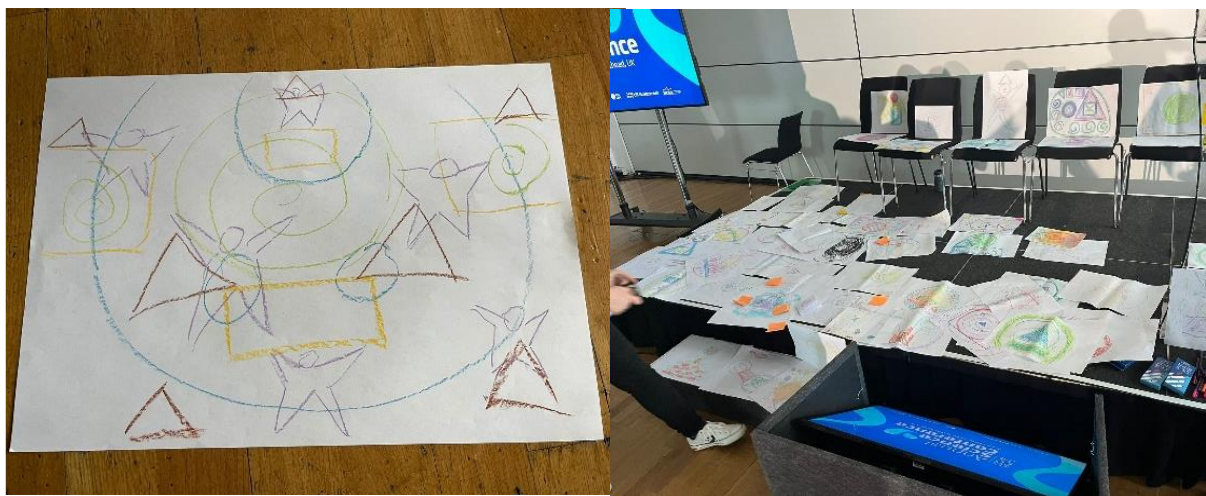


The final part of the session was another drawing activity. This time, participants were asked to visually represent their answer to the question, "What inspires you to use AI in marine research?", using a set

vocabulary of five symbols. First, each participant created their own individual drawing. Then, in pairs, they explained their drawings to one another. Afterward, they formed groups of four where each drawing was interpreted by the other members of the group.

Scoring

Scores were generated by placing development tokens on different areas of the map. Each area would have a positive or negative impact on one of the four scoring criteria. Ecological health, food security, economic benefit, and social wellbeing. Four key areas of effective fisheries management, but these areas naturally have parallels across other areas of marine science and beyond. This was the key part of the game, as it forced players to discuss the strategic overview of the map i.e., how to balance the trade-offs of developing certain areas, following specific sets of core values, as well as the priorities of different disciplines.



The session was attended by over 70 people and was very well received. We organized a session poll with the question, “*Do you already work with AI?*”. We received 106 responses, of which, 68 answered yes and 38 answered no.

Conclusion

At the start of the session, people were prompted to move to several sides depending on the roles they identified with, and subsequently introduced themselves to their nearest neighbour. The intention was to warm people up to the concept of dialogue, which was to be prevalent in this session.

After quick introductions to their neighbours, we quickly painted a picture of the potentials of technology and the hidden opportunities that historically have been presented to unlock them.

To invite more out-of-the-box thinking, we let the participants partake in an energizer where they had to draw a fish multiple times, each one different and with less time for each drawing. This also had the function of not only introducing them to the concept of drawing, which this session heavily relies on, but also encouraging more tangential thinking. After each drawing, they also had to display their creation to the people next to them, encouraging further interaction between participants.

Now that the attendees were warmed up in several aspects, we asked them to write down their most critical need in their everyday work life on a Post-it Note. We followed this by having them pair up with a stranger in the room and interview each other. This in turn was followed by the pair finding another pair, where they shared each other's idea with the other pair. Ultimately, we went around

the room and asked each group to pick and present what they found to be the most important need to the entire room.

After this penultimate exercise, we concluded with "Drawing Together". Here, the participants were instructed to draw a picture using only five symbols, after practicing this on paper. These symbols stand for several concepts, which in turn had to be drawn together to create a story. Just like in the last exercise, the attendees were instructed to pair up and present their story to a stranger in the room. For the next step, joining pairs with other pairs, we asked them to interpret each other's drawings, which resulted in a warm and pleasant ambiance.



At the end of the whole session, we invited everyone to place their drawing at the front of the room, and then we, the presenters, picked several drawings and had the artists come forward to explain their story.

In the end, the main idea was to have people engage in dialogue with each other and go beyond surface-level conversation. We also planned on collecting the needs and compiling them into a list, with the top ones being displayed front and centre. This list, along with the pictures, will be shared with those who were interested and provided their contact information.

Our second aim was to encourage lateral thinking about the application of AI and to break stereotypical thinking patterns, using not only drawing exercises, but also dialogue inspired by these exercises.

All in all, we found that the attendees enjoyed the session, not only afterward but also during it. We saw that many creative ideas emerged through conversation.

Feedback

We have no critical feedback to provide. All was well organized, and the help was tremendous from the volunteers.