

I spoke to Maddy Brown[1], Neyomi Parikh[2], and Stephanie Piper[3] (you can read all three interviews on my blog: *Positions through contextualising: Written Response(s)*) for their input on my Unit 2 project, which centred women and marginalised representation in tech. I wanted to draw from their own experiences in the field, as well as the general attitude towards it given the introduction of AI.

After diving into the deep end of these conversations and examining the increasingly visible presence of women in creative tech on social media, I started to feel as though I was awarding women a rather belated participation trophy for entering a field in which they had already been doing the foundational work.

I brought this up in my conversation with Jazmin Morris[4], talking about how I felt the whole "women in tech" song and dance on social media can be reductive of their work. The "girl tech" industry sounds progressive, but can quietly spread the false narrative that women are only catching up now. She simply agreed, which was both satisfying and slightly inconvenient because I had been prepared for a debate.

Another grievance with the project was my own limitation with mediums. I kept finding myself able to illustrate ideas only through publications or websites. Jazmin encouraged me to look elsewhere, suggesting physical computing, or even sculpture. Something I am looking forward to exploring in my upcoming work.

The reasons I picked the largest language model in existence, ChatGPT[5], are many. 1. I couldn't quite decide who I wanted to speak to regarding my practice. 2. I think I didn't want to speak to anyone, but look within after having multiple dialogues throughout the previous project. 3. I wanted to transcend my enquiry of women + tech into something more substantial, but didn't know how to frame those questions for a human being. 4. I genuinely wanted AI's take, given I've had so much input about it already, and, well, it can speak.

My conversation with ChatGPT was the most fruitful so far, and I pushed it as hard as I wanted to, much like a confirmation bias with a feedback loop. I'm aware that ChatGPT is not a real person with thoughts, but rather a translucent mirror. We discussed women in tech and ChatGPT, given the amount of work it has plagiarised from writers and thinkers, brought up the foundations of computational practices, saying:

> *…And there's something almost poetically strange about the history: programming was initially associated with forms of clerical, mathematical and organisational labour that were culturally feminised. Then computing became strategically and economically important. As the field gained prestige, money and institutional power, its social status changed. Computing became increasingly professionalised and male-dominated.*

This spiralled into a conversation about the internet and its extractive ways of functioning, how it mirrors Western imperialism, and what a post-extractive internet might look like if it were designed around "care rather than capture". We discussed how the internet can profit from conflict without caring which side wins, and whether dialogue still facilitates change in the way it once did. We also arrived at the idea that we may have started mimicking the apathy of machines, subconsciously abandoning some of our more animalistic instincts in the process.

This debate was satisfying because it opened up several new avenues for my enquiry. I can see myself returning to internet culture and recognising patterns from my own positionality. This is where I had originally started with my *Positions through iterating* project, where I built speculative futures: a museum of artefacts from now. It is a direction I prefer, as it feels more nuanced and leaves more room for experimentation, particularly with medium. And, The Medium is the Massage.

EVERYONE I SPOKE TO

1 Maddy Brown — PhD in Maths, University of Washington; data collector for the WNBA
2 Neyomi Parikh — Creative technologist; MA Central Saint Martins
3 Stephanie Piper — Content creator and creative technologist; runs a library makerspace at the University of Southern Queensland
4 Jazmin Morris — Associate lecturer, Central Saint Martins
5 ChatGPT — a large language model

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