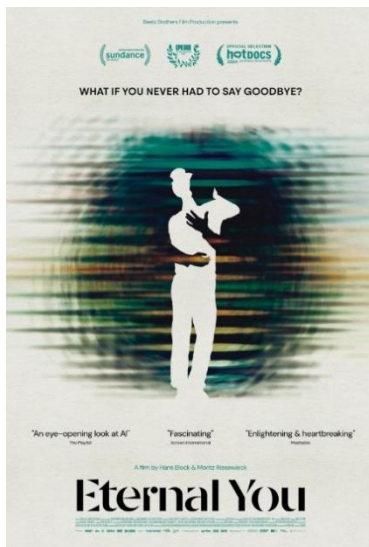


ETERNAL YOU

Outcome report: Film screening and panel discussion on AI, digital immortality, and information integrity



On Tuesday, 10 September, the Office of the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media (RFoM) in collaboration with the Austrian Federal Ministry of European and International Affairs (MFA), organized a screening of the documentary film *Eternal You* directed by filmmakers Moritz Riesewieck and Hans Block. The documentary explores how generative AI is used to create applications to “communicate” and “stay in contact” with individuals after death, highlighting the power of this technology to mimic human speech and simulate human interaction. It sheds light on the rapid development of a digital immortality market – an industry that profits from grief and situations of vulnerability while lacking adequate, appropriate human rights safeguards, risk assessments, transparency, and accountability.

In his opening remarks, RFoM Officer in Charge and Director Philippe Tremblay emphasized that technological advancement must not come at the expense of human rights. During an introductory conversation, film director Moritz Riesewieck highlighted his intention to draw attention to the intersection of technology, society, and human rights with the goal of preventing harm and driving positive change – with a particular focus on the consequences of commodifying the deep human desire for immortality. The documentary powerfully illustrates the complexities of individual and societal impacts of deploying AI to “talk” with loved ones after death. Julia Haas of the RFoM urged the audience to consider the broader risks of blurring the line between reality and simulation, between fact and fiction, beyond the documentary’s specific focus on the “afterlife” industry.



Following the screening, a panel including Prof. Christiane Wendehorst from the University of Vienna, Thomas Lohninger from epicenter.works, Eugen Dolezal from the University of Graz,

and Moritz Rieseewieck, moderated by Claudia Reinprecht explored the implications of AI-driven impersonation from a legal, human rights, and ethical perspective.

Eugen Dolezal opened the discussion by stating to the fact that “all of generative AI is hallucination; AI does not calculate truth, but at best only correctly computes correlations and probabilities”.

Thomas Lohninger highlighted that while it can be tempting to trust and humanize AI tools, “there is a massive risk of exploitation and manipulation when emotionally vulnerable people encounter an unregulated and overzealous AI industry driven by financial interests”.



Beyond the specific context of mourning and remembrance, generative AI also raises broader questions about data protection and the datafication of our everyday lives, and how to evolve legal frameworks to keep pace with the rapid development of this technology. Prof. Wendehorst stressed that “the emerging afterlife industry is just the tip of the iceberg that our societies may soon be bumping up against, and we have to be prepared and discuss now what kind of future we want to live in”.

With generative AI being increasingly used to generate and access content and information, addressing the pervasive lack of transparency on and accountability for how algorithms and data are used becomes urgent. The same urgency holds for addressing the technology’s risks of manipulation, discrimination and surveillance.

In closing, the RFoM Office emphasized that States, as primary human rights duty bearers, have to “ensure that technology is centred on human rights and public interest to empower people and strengthen democratic resilience”.