Inspire-a-thon

INFORMATION PACKET

April 12th, 2025
Rockwell Integrated Sciences Center
9 AM - 4 PM (come anytime!)

NSBE

LAFAYETTE
HANSON CENTER
FOR INCLUSIVE STEM EDUCATION

Lafayette Data
Community

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Challenge Description

At this moment in human history, we are faced with a new and powerful technology whose disruptive pace seems to be moving faster than any before: Generative AI. Its rapid evolution is reshaping science, problem-solving, policing, healthcare, education, the job market, and innovation at an unprecedented speed. While AI promises groundbreaking discoveries and solutions to complex challenges, it also raises urgent concerns. Will it erode human creativity, diminish agency, and deepen societal inequalities?

As we navigate this technological revolution, we are urged to stop and ask important questions: How do we respond to the encroachment of AI on the things that we hold dear? How do we make sure these technologies are designed to equally meet the needs of the marginalized and minority as it does for the majority? How do we ensure AI advances equity rather than perpetuates systemic inequities? How do we envision our future, and what role do we want AI to play? How do we celebrate the irreplaceable "human touch"?

Inspire-a-Thon is a campus-wide multidisciplinary challenge that will inspire critical dialogue about the future we want to shape. However, this isn't just about discussion - the all-day event is about collaborating in teams to create and design projects that respond to the complex conversations about Artificial Intelligence in dynamic and meaningful ways. **Start from your interests and expertise and develop a project that challenges biases, amplifies diverse voices, and shapes AI's role in a more just world.**

Teams and individuals will compete in one of four tracks:
- **(1) Expression:** Use a creative artistic form to express evocative ideas and spotlight a concern of AI to which you want to call attention. Projects can be written or art sketches.
- **(2) Policy:** Develop a policy addressing a relevant societal or socio-technical issue.
- **(3) Tech solutions:** Develop prototype code scripts, engineering designs, or simply pseudocode to tackle AI's challenges or create equitable applications.
- **(4) The Da Vinci:** Bring to life a message or solution that combines art and technology.

Note: The Dyer Center Makerspace will be available for all participants to use from 11 am to 2 pm.

Official Schedule

We'll keep you posted on any changes through the Inspire-a-Thon GroupMe.

Time	Activity	Description	Location
8:45 AM - 9:45 AM	**Welcome to Inspire-a-Thon**	Kick off: Breakfast, event run-down, and inspiration!	Eco-Cafe (RISC Atrium)
9:45 AM - 10:15 AM	**Workshop #01**	The Powers and Perils of AI (Elise Exson '28 and Paris Francis '26)	RISC 362
10:15 AM - 10:45 AM	**Challenge Part 1**	Form teams, brainstorm your idea, and devise a plan for working on it within the time constraints.	Find a spot to discuss this with your team!
10:45 AM - 11:15 AM	**Checkpoint # 01**	Teams share their idea/plans, receive feedback from other students, and recruit interested teammates still looking for a group	RISC 330 (Dyer Center for Innovation and Entrepreneurship)
11:15 AM - 12:45 PM	**Challenge Part 2**	Goal: Work on Part 1 of your proposed plan.	Find a spot to work on your project!
	Concurrent Workshop #02 (11:15 AM - 11:45 AM)	The Future of AI: A Thought Experiment (Kwame Otoo Appiah '27 and Swetha Tadisina '25)	RISC 362
12 PM - 12:45 PM		**Lunch at RISC 330 (Dyer Center)**	

	Checkpoint # 02	Checking in! Is the project going as planned, or are you facing challenges? Do you need to restructure the plan? Open discussion: teams present challenges, brainstorm solutions, and refine projects.	RISC 330 (Dyer Center for Innovation and Entrepreneurship)
12:45 PM - 1:15 PM			
1:15 PM - 2:45 PM	Challenge Part 3	Finalize and polish your project. Check out the Presentation Guidelines (below)	Find a spot to work on your project!
	Concurrent Workshop #03 (1:15 PM - 1:45 PM)	Advocacy and Preparation (Kwame Otoo Appiah '27 and Kusum Subedi '26)	RISC 362

Deadline to submit your work: 2:30 PM (Form will be shared on GroupMe)

2:45 PM - 3:30 PM	Presentations	Teams showcase their projects in concurrent category presentations.	RISC 360
3:30 PM - 3:50 PM	Work Display & Judging	Participants view each other's work and receive constructive feedback from judges.	RISC 360
3:50 PM - 4:00 PM	Awards & Closing	Winners are announced, feedback is shared, and participants leave inspired!	RISC 330 (Dyer Center for Innovation and Entrepreneurship)

Brainstorming Inspiration

Below are just some of the questions and ideas you can explore during Inspire-a-Thon. Feel free to use any of these for your project! Of course, you are also encouraged to think beyond these as well.

Technology Solutions

How can AI encode equity? Can there be code that can detect bias instead of perpetuating it? What limits can be placed on environmental effects through technical interventions? Are there engineering solutions to the environmental impacts of computing, and how can they be established within modern society? AI serves as a band-aid to countless problems; how can we redesign those solutions? Can we design a tool that audits the carbon footprint of algorithms? What might AI tools look like if they were specially designed as solutions to community needs? What might a search engine optimized for truth and context look like?

Policy Interventions

What would a college-wide policy on learning and Artificial Intelligence look like? Should there be an opt-in approach instead of an opt-out approach for facial recognition technologies? The European Union's General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) sets strong standards for data privacy, transparency, and accountability in algorithmic processing—if the United States were to adopt a similar policy, what principles or protections should it include and why? What jobs might you create that are especially resilient to automation? What are new ways for humans to create value within society? Could there be a "right to explanation" law for all algorithms affecting the public? What frameworks could promote open-source AI development over proprietary models? What would a global treaty on AI environmental impact look like? Should we require corporations to publish "impact statements" for new AI tools, like environmental impact reports? Should institutions like Lafayette College initiate AI preparedness programs? How can education systems build agile and thoughtful leaders in the age of AI? How can we counter the apparent inevitability of this technology? Can we create policies that delay implementation of new AI until communities are consulted?

Artistic Expression

How might you use artistic expression to reveal hidden biases, amplify marginalized voices, or imagine more just futures in a world increasingly shaped by generative AI? How can we convey the environmental impacts of AI through art? What does original art mean to you, and how can you represent *that* through art? How can poetry or spoken word respond to the displacement caused by automation? How can we celebrate human agency, resilience, and agility in the context of this moment? What if we designed an interactive art piece that reacts

to real-time emissions information from data centers? How can we remix historical artworks or protest posters to comment on the AI age? What would a sci-fi story about AI look like that doesn't end in doom? Could we create a generative art piece that becomes more or less "human" based on user interactions? How do we enable connection based on the shared experiences of using, not using, or building algorithms?

The Da Vinci
What does it look like to treat coding as a craft or a "labor of love"? How can poetry speak to computer scientists who are designing algorithms? What is a more systemic way of engaging technologists in dialogue about social justice and the environment? How could we build physical artifacts from code (e.g., 3D printed sculptures, written poems) – and should we? Can musical improvisation inform how we design human-in-the-loop AI systems? What would it look like to teach ethics and software development in the same space as poetry and sculpture? What intersections of art and technology can reveal human nature and its relationship with information technologies? What intersections can reveal something about the environment and its relationship with human-made technologies? Can we build a monastery for technologists—a quiet space to reflect and write? What happens when you treat debugging as a form of philosophical inquiry?

Presentation guidelines

For participating teams and individuals, we ask that you present your work in one of the following ways:

1) 4-to-5 minute presentation with slides (explaining the problem you are tackling and the details of your proposal)
2) A poster-style document
3) Whichever physical form your art takes (along with a well-crafted description).

These materials will be displayed in the final showcase at the end of the event and be judged by our panel for the award.

Rubric

Criteria	Guiding Criteria	Thoughts and Feedback *Comments will be shared with participants*	Score
Originality	Unique, bold, and forward-looking?		__ /10
Relevance to current A.I. issues	1. Directly tackles an emerging or existing AI issue? 2. Scope is clear?		__ /15
Impact	1. Directly and positively affects one or more social groups or the environment? 2. Considers the socio-technical nature of AI technologies?		__ /15
Vision and Effectiveness A solution/piece need not be fully implemented in order to be considered. (E.g. pseudocode, sketch, framework, etc.)	**Artistic Expression** 1. Intellectually or emotionally engaging? 2. Could spark critical reflection or dialogue on AI? **Technology Solutions** 1. Implementation clear? 2. Realistic, technically feasible, and scalable? **Policy** 1. Engages multiple stakeholders within community/society? 2. Issues of equity and equality addressed? **The Da Vinci** 1. Both function and form come together effectively? 2. Envisions an idea beyond our time?		__ /10
Total			__ /50

Contact

Please feel free to reach out to us (Kwame, Swetha, Elise, or Dr. Wendy Hill) on GroupMe, Instagram, or Email with any questions throughout the day.