

Reflection on audience engagement

Sharing my platform on forums such as Reddit's r/Art, r/Poetry, r/CreativeCoding, and r/Design offered extensive insight into audience engagement and the practical and conceptual challenges of participatory digital work. The platform invites users to read a haiku and then translate their mental image into a written description, which is visualised using my database of illustrations. By engaging a wider audience, I was able to observe how users approached this task, how they interpreted the poem, and what factors influenced their creative input.

One key insight was that the platform currently lacks enough data to produce diverse and distinctive visual outputs. Many participants' inputs were brief, repetitive, or overly simple, often resulting in similar images. This highlighted the limitations of both the system and the dataset. While the rules and structure ensure consistency and preserve my role as mediator, they also constrain creative variance if the underlying database is too small. Moving forward, I aim to expand the dataset with additional images and include a broader range of textual prompts. Introducing longer or more descriptive poems, beyond a single haiku, could provide richer material for users and encourage more nuanced responses.

Another challenge revealed through sharing the platform was user motivation and understanding. Many participants did not know why they were contributing or how their inputs would be used. Some were unsure of the project's aim or the relevance of their participation, which limited engagement. Providing clear context through an introductory page and highlighting the community archive as a visible outcome helps establish purpose and encourages meaningful contributions. Explicit guidance, including segmented prompts for atmosphere, weather, movement, and creatures, has improved the quality and detail of user descriptions, allowing the system to generate more distinct and interpretable images.

Ethical considerations also emerged through reflection on design and language. The project communicates through my own language and aesthetic choices, raising questions of accessibility and interpretation. By translating user perceptions into visual form, there is a risk of oversimplifying or unintentionally privileging certain perspectives. Not all users may feel represented, and cultural, linguistic, or accessibility barriers could limit participation. I also considered the lineage of illustration and generative practice, ensuring that my methods do not inappropriately appropriate other design cultures, and that participants' contributions are respected and credited. If the platform were expanded collaboratively, contributors should benefit proportionally from the work, and the archive should remain ethically curated.

Sharing the project also revealed new opportunities for future development. I can refine the prompt system further, expand the database, introduce multiple poems, and explore ways of visualising cumulative user contributions over time. Observing participant engagement helped me evaluate which elements of guidance, interface design, and system feedback most effectively support meaningful interaction. Ultimately, these insights reinforce my position as a mediator.