

AI+Us Alliance Festivals Pilot Report – Glasgow Feb 2026

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Introduction

The AI+Us Alliance is a nationwide initiative initiated by the Skills Pillar of Responsible AI UK (RAi UK). The AI+Us Alliance promotes education everyone urgently needs to understand how AI systems actually work (including their data requirements and decision-making processes), to question assumptions and biases embedded in AI tools, and to recognise the broader societal implications of AI implementation.

AI+Us Festivals aim to develop and pilot annual interactive hands-on, family-friendly, public events with a festival feel, dedicated to fostering and developing critical thinking, algorithmic and data literacy, and sociotechnical awareness of artificial intelligence's impact on lives and societies. The universities involved in designing and piloting AI+Us Festival events are part of a movement to help communities understand the real-world implications of AI, shaping a more responsible future. They are King's College London, the University of Nottingham (UoN), University of Glasgow (UoG), University of Southampton, and the University of Sheffield.

Members of the AI+Us Alliance have worked together to develop and adapt educational resources so they may be made available so other groups and institutions can easily reuse them. Some AI+Us activities and resources originated in prior RAi UK's Skills projects.

This report summarizes our experiences and outcomes from the second pilot event held at University of Glasgow, following a successful first pilot at University of Nottingham.

Target audience and advertising

Unlike the event at UoN, the Glasgow event was targeted at its own student body, with a focus on early year and non-computing students. The poster and Eventbrite page were based on the template used for the UoN event with small adaptations.

Reaching out to our own student body to publicize an event like this turned out to be trickier than we anticipated. For good reasons, one cannot simply send out broadcast emails to students across the University or in particular years or Schools. We were eventually able to reach out to a subset of the student body through a combination of the following means:

- Posters on boards at a few high traffic areas across the campus
- UoG's official events listing page
- Some relevant social media channels

- For one School only (School of Computing), via a message board that goes out to all students at the School (we noticed a clear uptick in the registrations after this)
- Email messages to relevant administrative staff at multiple schools with request to share onwards (typically “Student Experience Managers”)

We eventually reached 55 registrations, and although that’s not a bad number for a pilot event, we feel more students may have opted to join if the publicity message had made its way to a larger part of the entire student population.

The pilot event at Glasgow: On Wed, 18th February 10:30am and 1:30pm, we piloted the Glasgow chapter of the AI+Us Festival on the main campus of the University of Glasgow, in the Sir Alwyn Williams Building - home to the School of Computing Science. The event was bookable with free tickets on Eventbrite. We had 30 participants against the 55 registrations. Although we had targeted our publicity at our student body, we also got a few participants from the general public, including parents with primary school children (thanks to the half-term school break).

Activities

The activities at Glasgow were more or less on the same pattern as those in Nottingham. On arrival, each attendee was given a ‘passport’, and they got a stamp on their card when they completed one of the activities on offer. Everyone who completed three or more activities could participate in a prize draw by writing their email address on their passport and putting it into the prize draw bag. The University catering services provided tea, coffee, juice, and snacks for all participants.

The following AI+Us activities were advertised on Eventbrite and facilitated by the core RAI team at Glasgow, student volunteer helpers, and Dr Pepita Barnard and Bogna Liziniewicz visiting from the University of Nottingham.

1. **Paper Avatars** invites attendees to step into the world of “Paper Avatars”: create and bring your own character to life and explore how they (and you!) interact with AI. Create, imagine, and see how your story changes when told by a machine!
2. **Machine Seeing - Inside the Black Box** asks what hidden processes, assumptions, and decisions lie behind AI? How do they shape the images, narratives, or ideas it produces? Attendees create drawings to spark discussions about concerns and imaginative possibilities.
3. **How is AI trained (Oranges)** is a card game where players teach an AI model to identify and classify oranges. Players learn about a machine learning method called supervised training and the data used for this, as well as to understand why AI sometimes gets the answers wrong.

4. **Types of AI (Foods)** is a card game to learn about different types of AI such as Generative AI, Recommender AI and Decision-Making AI, and how they are used to support our everyday decision-making, like choosing what to eat or watch.
5. **Lo-fi Turing Test** is an activity to test whether you can tell the difference between a human and an AI, or not!
6. **CulturAI** shares AI-generated images like those found everywhere in our digital and physical worlds, and asks how well do they depict different cultures? In this activity, you will evaluate a set of AI-generated images, learning and reflecting on appropriate cultural elements but also stereotypes reproduced by AI image generators.

More information about these activities and links to available resources can be found at the end of this report.

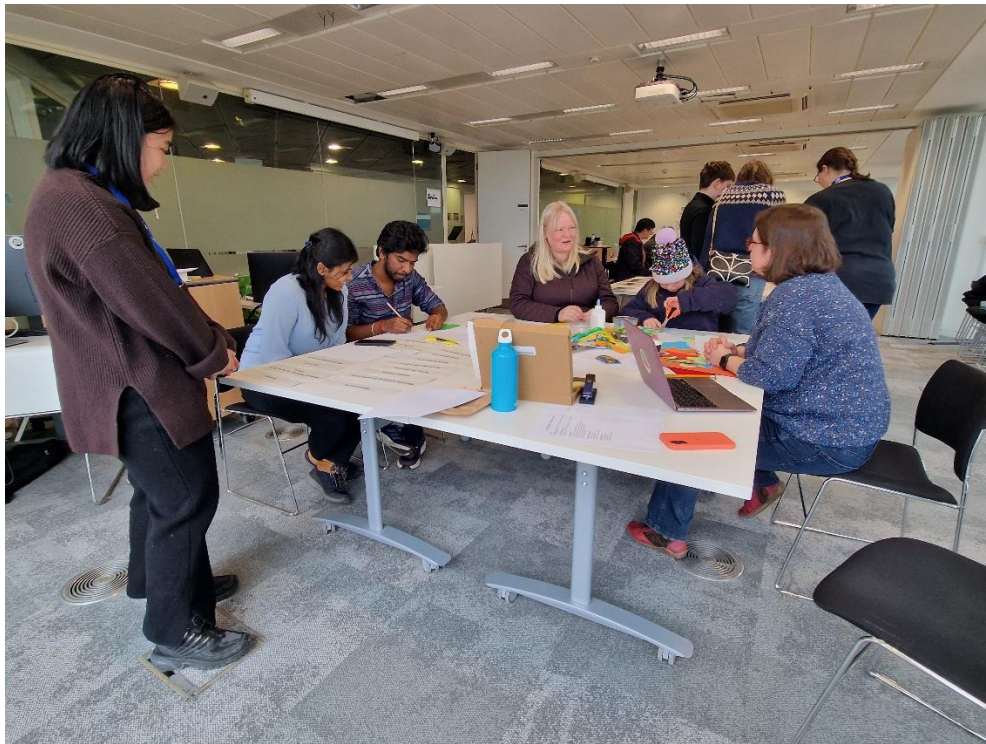
AI+Us Glasgow Chapter Snaps



Poster explaining difference between how humans and AI produce language, at the hall entrance



Main hall with four of the five activities taking place concurrently



Paper Avatars



Lo-Fi Turing Test



Types of AI



Machine Seeing - Inside the Black Box



CulturAI



The publicity poster

Feedback from Attendees

The attendees were asked to fill a short feedback form after the activities, which asked them three short questions: what activity they liked the most, what they learnt, and what they would like to see next.

The choice of favourite activity had a wide spread across the six activities. Many participants noted that understanding how AI and LLMs work was one of the main things they learned.

Some noted their realization of how similar AI and human generated outputs can be.

Understanding that there are different types of AI, not just Gen AI, was also noted.

Some relevant quotes from the feedback form:

“I learnt about how AI generates. I also learned about how much AI answers can be closer to human answers.”

“I learned that you need to train AI to learn things and distinguish difference.”

“Robot can mimic as human”

In response to the question about what they would like to see next time, we had some very interesting recommendations. E.g.:

“How to trick AI’s”

“More activities maybe a little more complicated activities for people with intermediate knowledge”

“I want to see some discussions on topics, such as new usage methods and ethical crises.”

“Maybe ai robot”

Some Reflections

For the Glasgow chapter of the festival, we primarily targeted our own student body on a weekday (unlike Nottingham which was aimed at the general public and was held on a weekend day). In part, this was due to practical constraints around a venue that could be used for general public vs for university students, and then likelihood of students turning up on a weekday vs a weekend. However, given how pervasive Gen AI has become in university education across disciplines, university students are an important target audience in their own right. Realizing that the activities were aimed at non-specialists, we specifically reached out to non-computing students, or early year computing students. The aim of the Glasgow chapter however is to eventually roll this event out to the general public, with the venue and timing adapted accordingly.

The activities themselves came across as very good for purpose. While the activities address the understanding of AI at a very basic level, we found that they provided opportunity for interactions for a very diverse range of participants: children, university students from various domains including computing, academics. The activities might evolve and adapt in future iterations, but in general we felt they are already quite well suited for different levels and nature of host-participant interactions.

As noted earlier, publicizing the event was not that straightforward, even though the target was our own student body. We were eventually able to reach out to a large number of students, but more upfront planning will be needed if we repeat the event for the same audience. If we hold the next event for the wider public, then we will be able to learn from experiences of the Nottingham chapter of the event. Either way, and unsurprisingly, publicity is something that should be given due attention, and well in advance of the event date.

We saw some deep and long conversations between organizers and participants, exploring challenging questions and wide-ranging aspects related to AI. Almost all hosts were effectively busy throughout the 3-hour duration of the event, even though only around 30 participants turned up. While we would eventually want to reach out to more people for such festivals, there is something to be said about the quality of interactions you can have when you have relatively small participant-host ratio (3:1 in this case). It is worth considering how we can maintain this quality to some degree at least, while also reaching out to more people for future events.

The AI+Us Alliance has just begun to tackle some of the existing gaps in AI literacy, with plans for future events to expand our impact in our communities.

Next Steps

We have an effective team of organizers at Glasgow, enthusiastic student volunteers, excellent support from colleagues in the wider AI + Us alliance, and observations from a pilot run of the festival behind us. Building on that, we will aim for a larger event at the next iteration, likely aimed at the general public.

AI+Us Resources

- **Paper Avatars** is an activity developed by Caitlin Bentley (King's College London).
- **Machine Seeing - Inside the Black Box** is an activity created by the Skills project "[ways of \[machine\] seeing](https://waysof.net/machine-seeing/)" led by Geoff Cox (London South Bank University). Find the resources: <https://waysof.net/machine-seeing/>
- **How is AI trained (Oranges) and Types of AI (Foods)** are activities created by the Skills project "[Misinformation/Disinformation and Generative AI: Building Young Refugees' Skills and Capacities](https://tinyurl.com/ai-media-literacy)" led by Reem Talhouk (Northumbria University). Find the resources: <https://tinyurl.com/ai-media-literacy>
- **Lo-fi Turing Test** is an activity created by Waqar Syed Nabi (University of Glasgow).

- **CulturAI** is an activity created by the Cornerstone project “[CulturAI: Informing Cultural Alignment for Text to Image Generators](#)” led by Gisela Reyes-Cruz (University of Nottingham)