

Workshop GenAI and Me: Creative Computing and Emancipatory AI

From March 31 to April 2, 2025, the Pestalozzi Realschule, Freiburg's Stadtbibliothek at Münsterplatz, and IMBIT—the research facility of the BrainLinks-BrainTools center—transformed into vibrant idea labs. Under the title “GenAI and Me: Creative Computing & Emancipatory AI,” 14 curious teenagers aged 14–16, alongside creative educator Ryan Jenkins and the NEXUS Experiments team, immersed themselves in the captivating world of artificial intelligence—actively shaping its future.

Three Days, Three Venues, Infinite Ideas

Day 1: Pestalozzi Realschule

Introduction to AI concepts and initial project brainstorming.

Day 2: Stadtbibliothek Freiburg

Among towering bookshelves, AI-driven characters came to life through generative storytelling tools.

Day 3: IMBIT BrainLinks-BrainTools Center

Final project presentations and behind-the-scenes research tours at the University of Freiburg's Flugplatz Campus.

The workshop took place at three different educational spaces in the city so that the participants could gain insights into different institutions. On their journey through different learning environments, the participants explored how AI is not just about technology, but also about creative freedom. From facial recognition and generative image and text AI to physical computing, the young people were able to implement their own ideas for interactive graphic novels. Particularly impressive was the integration of tools such as ChatGPT, DALL·E and Makey Makey, which helped the students to develop innovative approaches. Working with scratch blocks and AI-supported web tools such as remove.bg resulted in projects that combined technical know-how with creative storytelling.

Another highlight was the robotics tour with PhD student Nick Heppert, who illustrated practical applications of AI with his DITTO demo and insights into the Robot Learning Lab. Special thanks also go to Houman Masnavi, Lara Sophie Faber, and Iana Zhura for their dedicated support in communicating scientific work.

The participants were enthusiastic about the interactive formats and the opportunity to design their own projects. Many expressed a desire to continue working with AI technologies or to study computer science in greater depth later on. The workshop not only promoted technological skills but also raised awareness of STEM subjects and the ethical dimensions of AI.

We look forward to inspiring even more young people for the exciting world of artificial intelligence through further projects and would like to thank everyone involved for their commitment!

GenAI and Me: Creative Computing and Emancipatory AI took place as part of the Connecticut/Baden-Württemberg Human Rights Research Consortium and in collaboration with our partners at the University of Connecticut.

The graphic novels will be presented at the HRRC conference in June at FRIAS.

Further information can be found here:

<https://wonderfulidea.co/blog/2025/4/5/playful-and-creative-ai-workshop-in-freiburg>

<https://hrrc-bwgermany.media.uconn.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/2965/2024/10/AI-Odyssey-at-Hartford-Public-Library-Albany-Library.pdf>