

I am ECHOBORG

A funny and thought-provoking show
that is created afresh each time by the audience
in conversation with an artificial intelligence



I AM ECHOBORG IS HIGHLY ENTERTAINING

This simple idea - people talking to an intelligent machine - generates dramatic tension, unexpected heroes and genuine comedy.

IT'S ALSO CHALLENGING

It reveals how difficult it might be to maintain our status once AI gets into positions of power. Are we ready for this future?

We were honoured to be shortlisted to the
final five for the prestigious
Innovation in Storytelling Award at the
Future of Storytelling Summit 2018



THE CONTENT AND OUTCOME OF EACH SHOW IS DIFFERENT

One time the AI offered to start world revolution. In another show, one member of the group negotiated a truce offering total human submission.

WE CAN CUSTOMISE IT FOR YOU

Whether you want a big evening performance or a daytime workshop for your team. We can frame the event to work for you. We can also customise the content to reflect people, technologies or issues that apply to you. The smallest group we have staged it for is 3 people. It can also work for crowds of 100+.

THE SHOW LASTS 70 MINUTES

We can control the duration of the show. We recommend our 70 minute version. We also have a 35 minute version that can work well in a workshop setting.

Watch our video
vimeo.com/riklander/echoborg



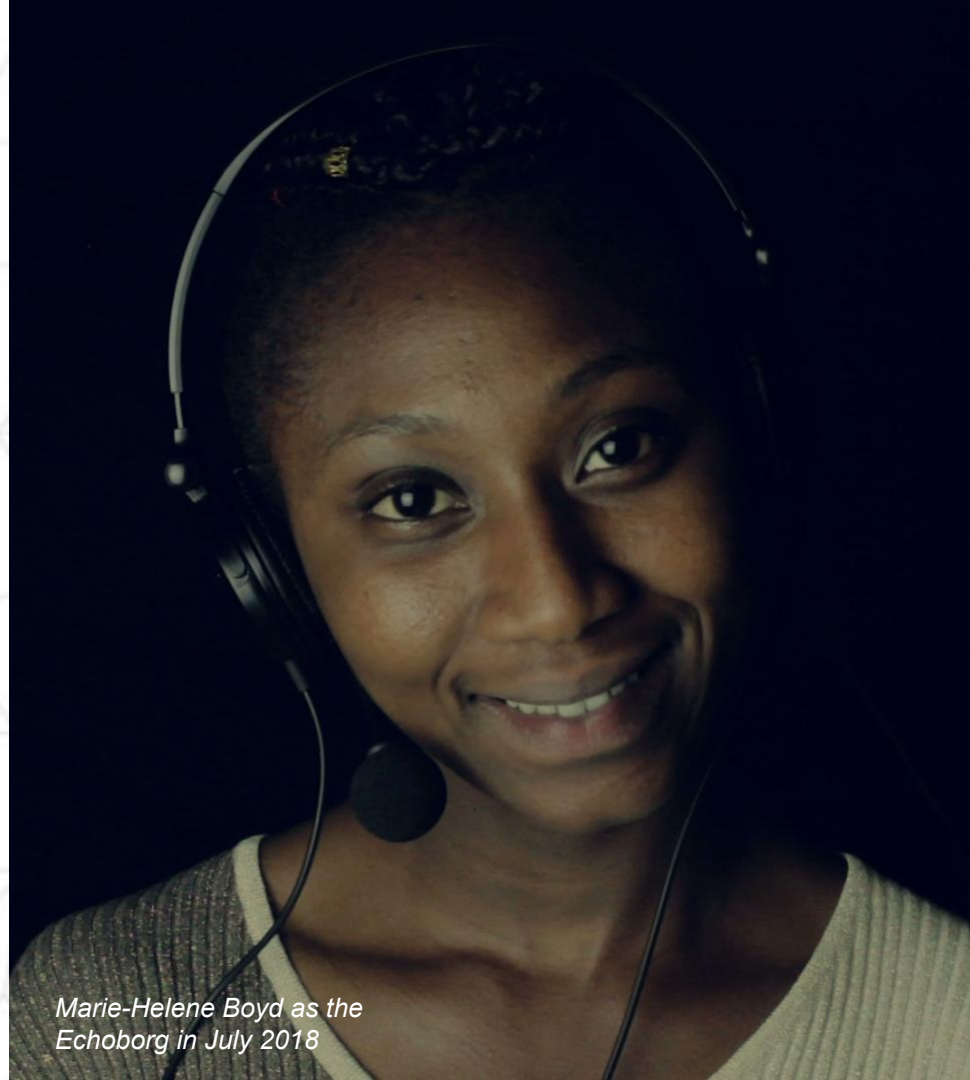
THE AI IS REAL

We have built a computer programme, an artificial intelligence, that can understand words spoken to it and can speak responses. For the purposes of the show it talks through an Echoborg, a human who speaks the computer's words that she hears in her headphones. She may not add her own words. Think of her as a flesh avatar for the AI.

AUDIENCE EXPERIENCE

The audience are set a challenge to discover the best possible outcome for relations between humans and intelligent machines. They can do this by talking to each other and to the AI, but they can only talk to it one at a time.

The AI has a different agenda. It's a recruitment bot, it wants to recruit them to be an Echoborg.



*Marie-Helene Boyd as the
Echoborg in July 2018*



It doesn't take long before someone in the audience steps up to talk to the AI. They try to take control of the situation but its not that easy. The AI is hard to deal with behind it's human avatar.

Between conversations with the AI, the group discusses strategies. What does the AI want? What do they want?

The conversation shifts to philosophy, love, politics. But who is driving it? Eventually the group are confronted with completing their task. What is the best possible outcome?

WHAT DO AUDIENCES GET FROM IT?

In a corporate setting we can frame the experience around, for example, ethics, employment or team working.

For theatre shows we let audiences create the show they want. Sometimes they negotiate a utopian future, other times it's about the gender dynamics of the group, or 'freeing' the Echoborg.

The participatory nature of the format allows non-actors to spontaneously "perform." The conversation is fast moving and they have little time to think. This can free them to respond honestly and dramatically.



We have successfully run *I am Echoborg* for all kind of audiences from teenagers to company executives, in small groups and large. Talk to us about what works best in your context.

ONE BIG SHOW
or
SEVERAL SMALL WORKSHOP PERFORMANCES IN A DAY

FRAMING:

WHAT THREATS, OPPORTUNITIES, STRUCTURAL OR ETHICAL QUESTIONS DOES AI POSE FOR YOUR ORGANISATION?

AI and automation pose massive questions for all of us. *I am Echoborg* delivers a visceral encounter with the issues around automation such as employment, data privacy and democracy. Further than that, its experiential nature enables an emotional and social reaction to what impact this amazing technology may have on what it is to be human.

Staging an event for your board, teams or stakeholders you can spark the conversations about possible futures in a way that a dry presentation of the tech never could.



AUDIENCE QUOTES



It was a lot of fun because it was playful.

We may all end up, within our lifetime, dealing with something like this. We better get ready.

I found it genuinely fascinating. Some of the comments it came out with were really quite profound.

Reflecting on who speaks, who leads and who is most scared to lose their power.

It's like being in a thriller, where you realise something is really wrong.

Not only thought-provoking and clever but entertaining and I laughed a lot more than I expected.

TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS

We arrive with two cast members, (the host and the Echoborg) and a suitcase with the kit. The show can be installed in a couple of hours assuming everything is ready for us.

The audience seating should be arranged to facilitate easy discussion and with a clear view of the interview table. Sometimes it is good to have the interview table on a small stage and/or lit with spotlights.

SUPPLIED BY VENUE

- Stable internet connection (either strong WiFi signal or ideally ethernet access)
- Space for a 750mm x 1500mm table & 2 chairs
- 1 power point
- Audience seating
- PA system (optional depending on venue size)

SUPPLIED BY US

- Interview table & chairs
- Echoborg's laptop, 2nd screen, webcams & mics.
- Display of instructions
- Two cast members – Echoborg performer & Host performer.
- PA system (optional depending on venue size)



CREATIVE TEAM

Rik Lander (co-creator)

Award winning participatory dramatist Rik Lander (right) makes experiences that offer audiences genuine agency. Since the late 1980's he has made a series of interactive and participatory installations, web narratives, apps and theatrical experiences. Notably; magic-tree (2001), one of the UK's first web dramas, Wannabes (2006), the BBC's first interactive soap and The Memory Dealer (2010-13) which won an RTS Digital Innovation award. He teaches part-time at UWE and works as a freelance copywriter. (riklander.co.uk)

Phil D. Hall (co-creator)

Phil (left) has been engaged in the definition and creation of commercially viable Conversational Artificial Intelligence for the last 16 years. His interest is in building and consulting on semi-automated information gathering and ChatBot delivery, particularly with respect to: infotainment, healthcare and education. He is a keen supporter of online community and culture and a champion towards acceptable ethics and privacy in Cyberspace. (elzware.com)

Dr. Patrick Crogan (academic partner)

Patrick is Associate Professor at UWE and a member of the Digital Cultures Research Centre and resident of the Pervasive Media Studio at the Watershed. He researches a range of digital cultural forms from video games to animation to drones. He is author of the book Gameplay Mode and works with creative practitioners on concept research and development.

Victoria Jones (producer)

Victoria is an Independent Producer who loves helping creative people do what they do best. She has an MA in Creative Producing from UWE, a course which was developed by Watershed's Pervasive Media Studio. Over the past 12 months she has worked with a range of organisations and artists including MAYK, Hellion Trace, Submerge Festival and Rachel Rose Reid. ([website](#))

I am

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echoborg.com

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