Twitter Thread by François Chollet



François Chollet
@fchollet

A GAN-generated image has been auctioned for a high price tag. The people selling it might have reused a piece of code taken from GitHub, with limited changes. Should you be outraged? Well, no.

As someone who does open-source, on many occasions my work has been monetized with only thin packaging around it, & not credit. I don't actually have a problem with that -- it's right there in the license terms. It's part of what OSS means: you create more value than you capture.

Is it in bad taste to monetize open-source without giving back? Absolutely. Protesting it is just as bad, though. If you don't want people to reuse your code (and implicitly, profit from it), don't open-source it.

As for whether a generic, low-quality GAN-generated image is worth money -- obviously the content itself is worthless, but the act of putting it up for auction (with great success!) is a kind of a masterpiece of performance art, unironically.

It's like Banksy's shredder -- I don't think the manufacturer of that shredder deserves much credit.

Anyway, the author of that GAN piece of code used open-source packages to code an implementation of an algorithm they didn't invent, & train it on a dataset they didn't collect. In most cases, your work is a link in a long chain. You are rarely the center of the universe.