

# Exploring AltNarrative in HCI Imagery and Comics

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## ABSTRACT

It is often assumed that imagery provides an easy or universal mode of communication, but when we imagine our worlds through sketches, visualizations, and comics are we leaving anyone behind? The visual world is rich, it transcends boundaries and connects us... but not all of us. To be able to create an image or visualize something is a skill, but to be able to view and interpret that image is a privilege: how can we bridge the gap between visual and textual interpretation? We propose that alt-narrative could bridge the gap between visual communication and imagery to connect everyone in storytelling, visualization, and thought. This AltCHI paper puts forward exploration of the AltNarrative method in HCI imagery and comics. To engage with this research, the reader should either activate their computer or smart device screen reader or open in Adobe Acrobat in Mac or Windows then activate Read Out loud.



Figure 1: Page 1 of 2: Read between the lines, drawn by Miriam Sturdee, 2021.

## CCS CONCEPTS

• Human-centred computing; • Visualization; • Visualization techniques;

## KEYWORDS

Drawing, Visual Thinking, Accessibility, Alternative Text, HCI

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Figure 2: Page 2 of 2: Single page comic strip introducing the anthology of AltNarrative comics and the overarching inspiration and drive for this paper. Drawn by Miriam Sturdee, 2021.





Figure 3: Page 1 of 3: Four panel comic strip of Sketching in HCI special interest group at CHI 2019 focusing on the location and special interest group welcome and instructions, drawn by Makayla Lewis, 2021.





Figure 4: Page 2 of 3: Three panel comic strip depicting the discussions and ‘Show and Tell’ activities at the CHI 2019 Sketching in HCI special interest group followed by the creation of sketching in HCI manifesto, drawn by Makayla Lewis, 2021.



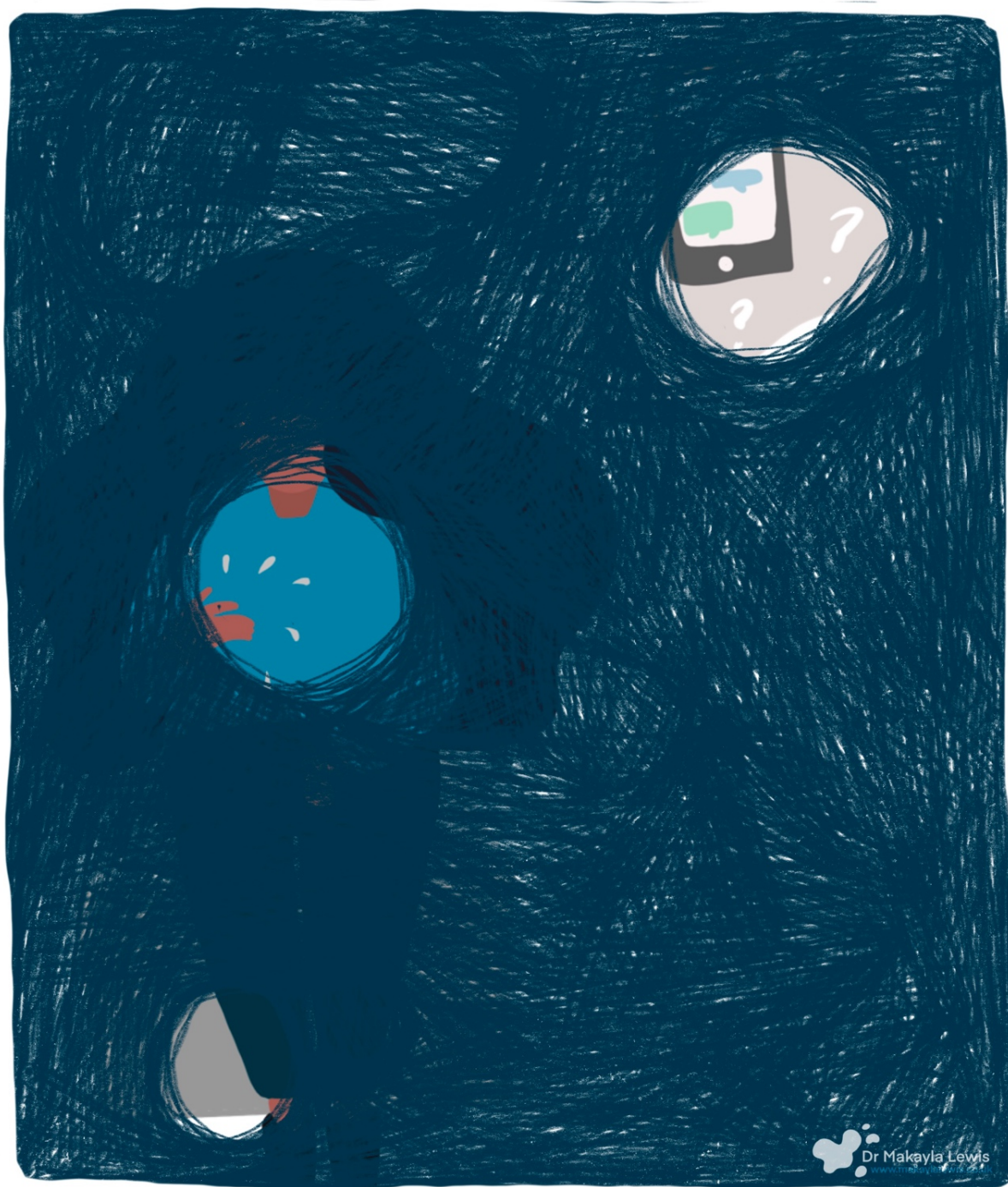


Figure 5: Page 3 of 3: One panel comic strip depicting AltText, drawn by Makayla Lewis, 2021.



Figure 6: Page 1 of 3: Links the creative use of alt-text by web cartoonists to older traditions of textual playfulness by cartoonists and scribes. Drawn by John Miers, 2021.



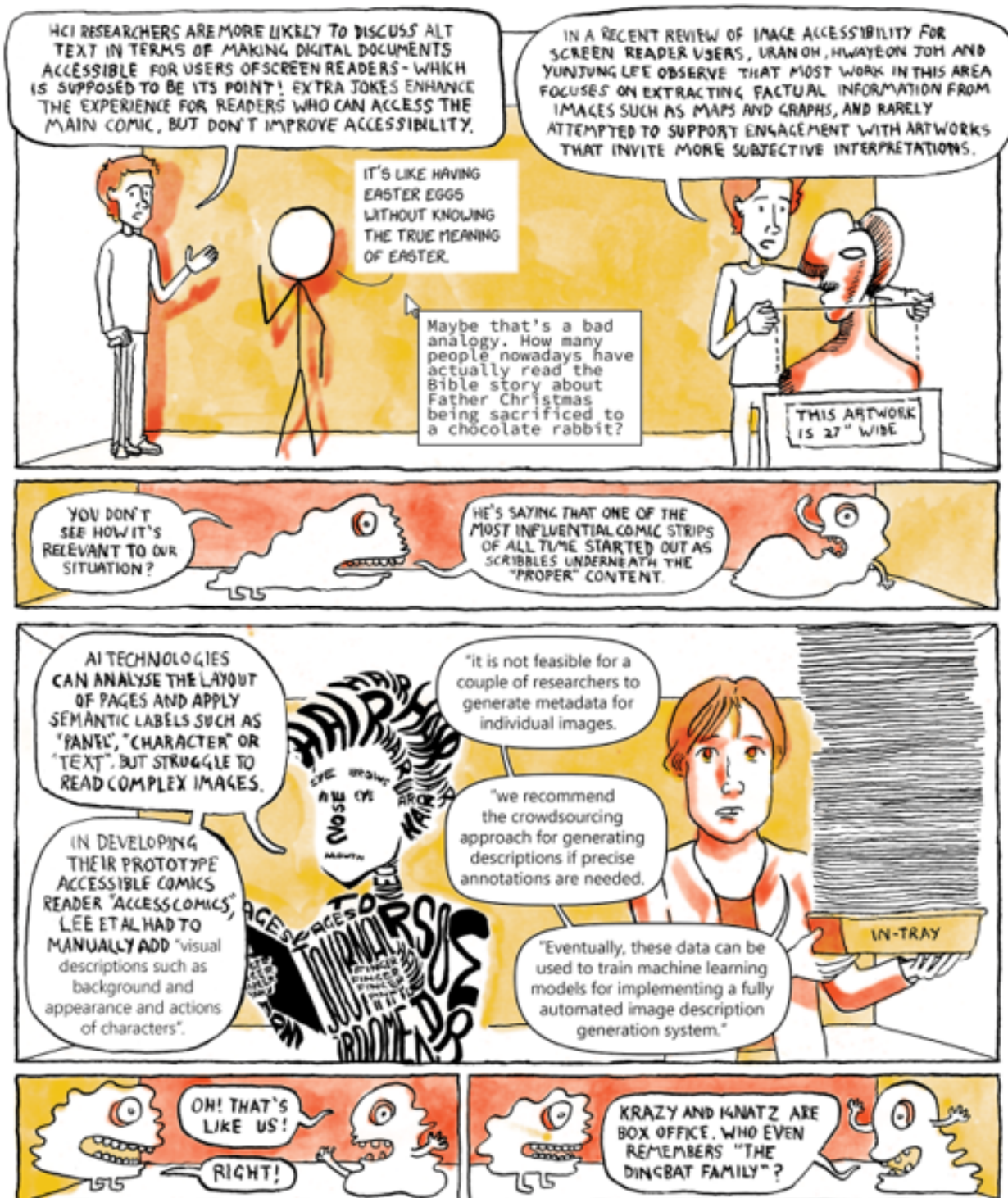


Figure 7: Page 2 of 3: Introduces some difficulties in making comics accessible to automated screen readers. Drawn by John Miers, 2021.



Figure 8: Page 3 of 3: Suggests that fan-made adaptations could provide useful data for training AI to read comics. Drawn by John Miers, 2021.



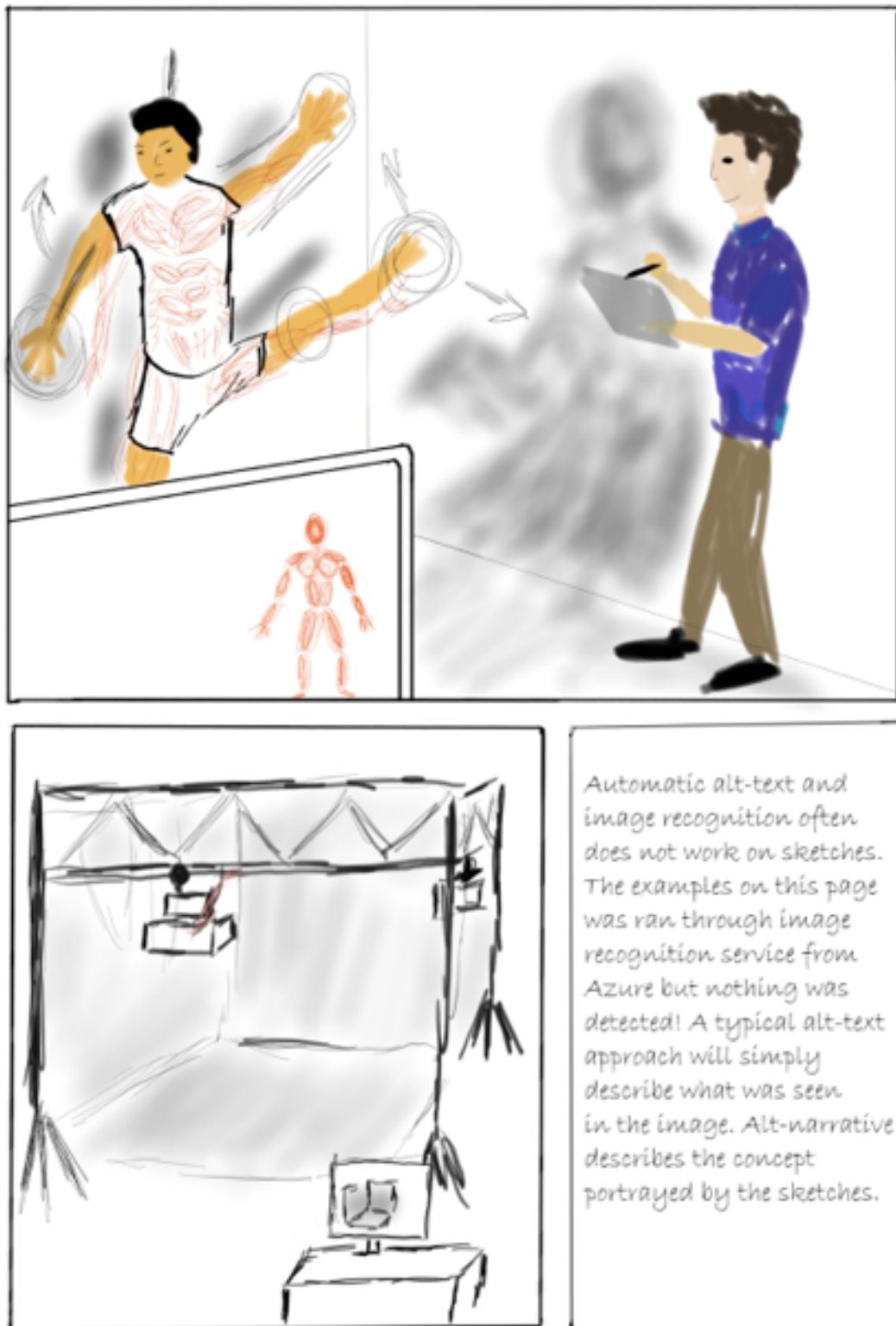


Figure 9: Page 1 of 2: An example from prior work where alt-narrative is required to describe the concept. Drawn by Thuong Hoang, 2021.

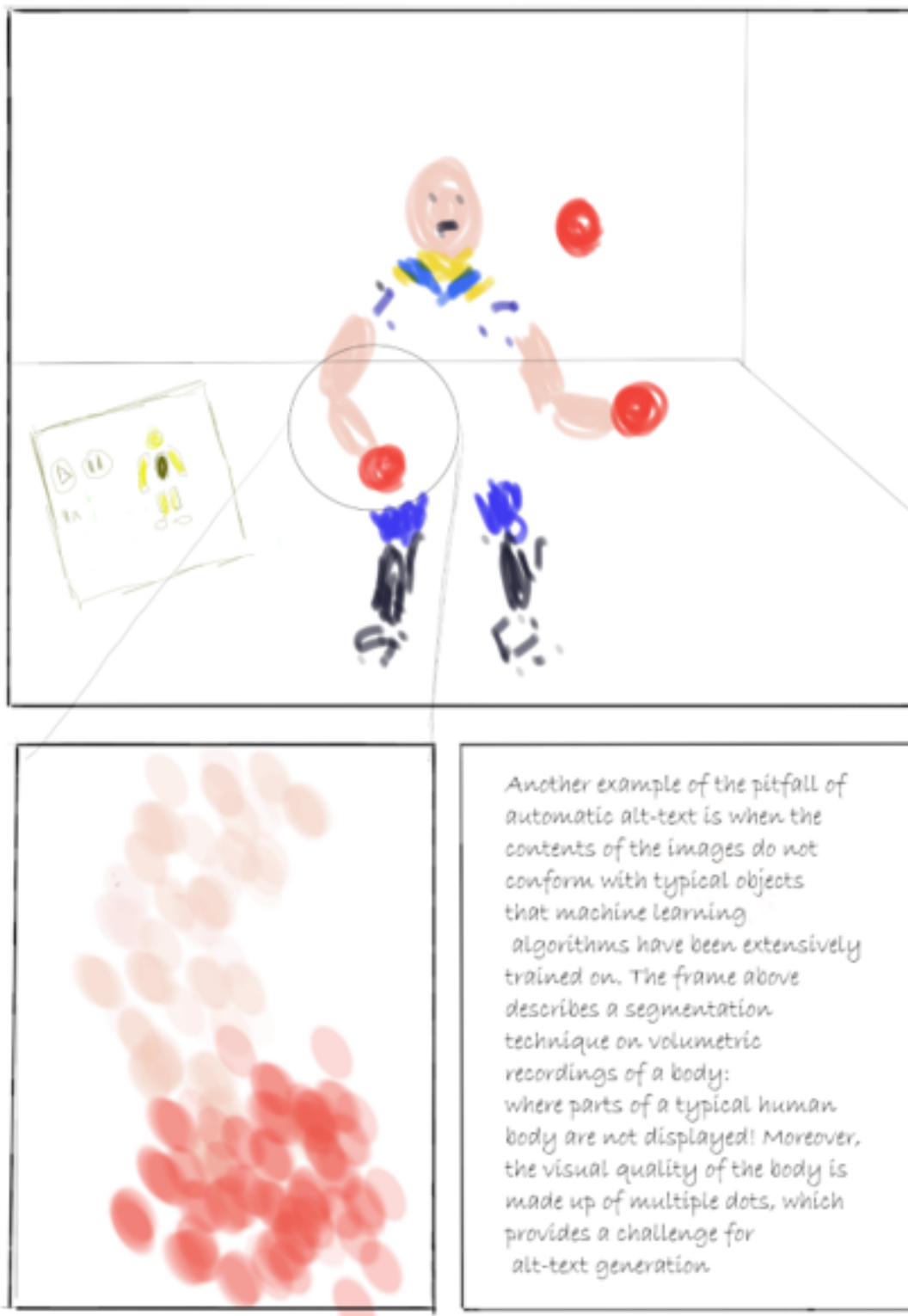
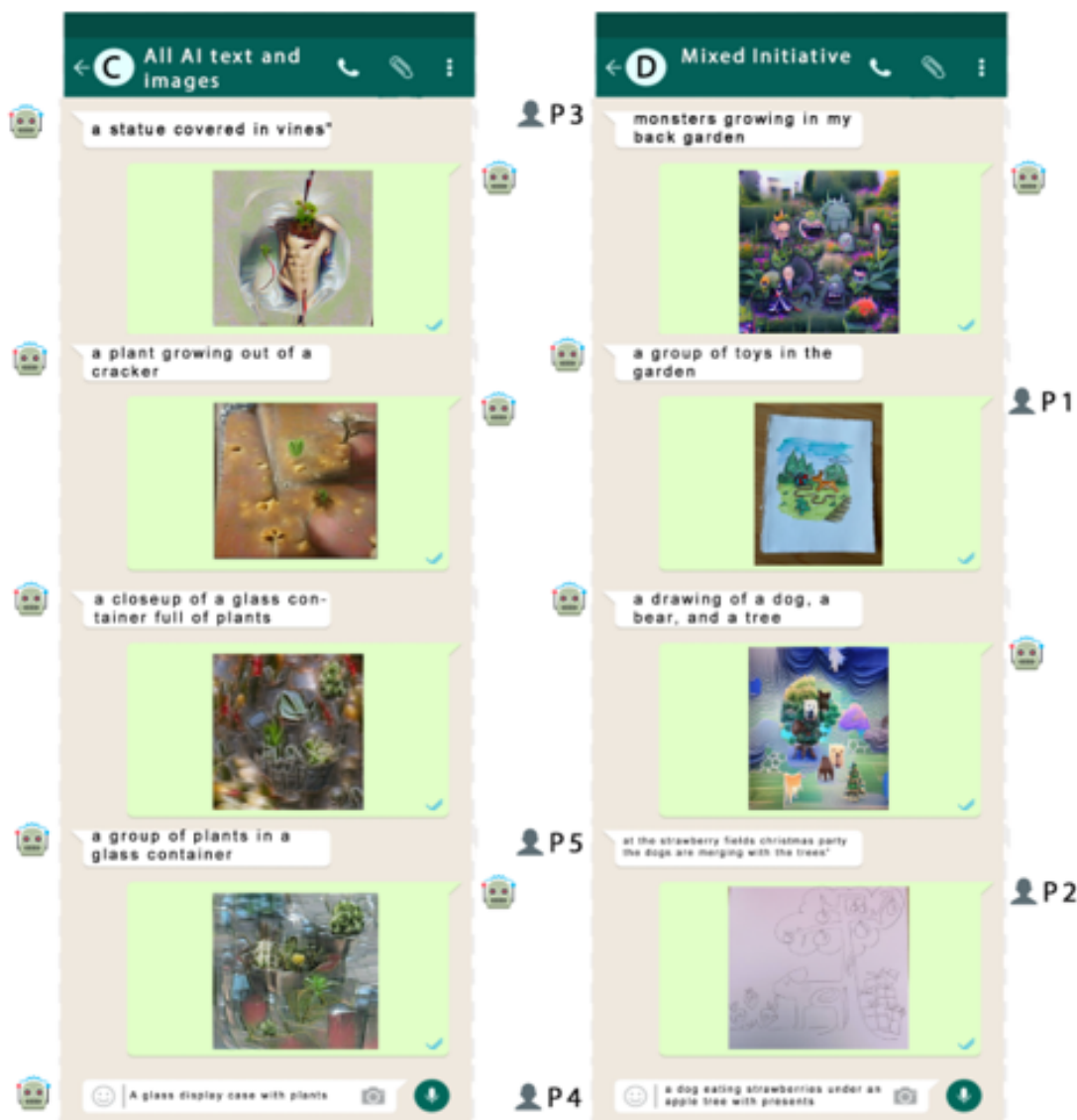


Figure 10: Page 2 of 2: An example from prior work where alt-narrative is required to describe the visual quality of the image. Drawn by Thuong Hoang, 2021.





Figure 11: Page 1 of 2: Two of the AI/Human games of Telephone. Game A (left) depicts a game where text was generated by humans and all images were generated by machines. Game B (right) depicts a game where all text was generated by machines and all images were generated by humans. Drawn by Josh Urban Davis, 2021.



# THE END

**Figure 12: Page 2 of 2: Another two of the AI/Human games of Telephone. Game C (left) depicts a game where all text and images were generated by machines. Game D (right) depicts a mixed-initiative game meaning text and images were generated by alternating humans and machines. Drawn by Josh Urban Davis, 2021.**

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