

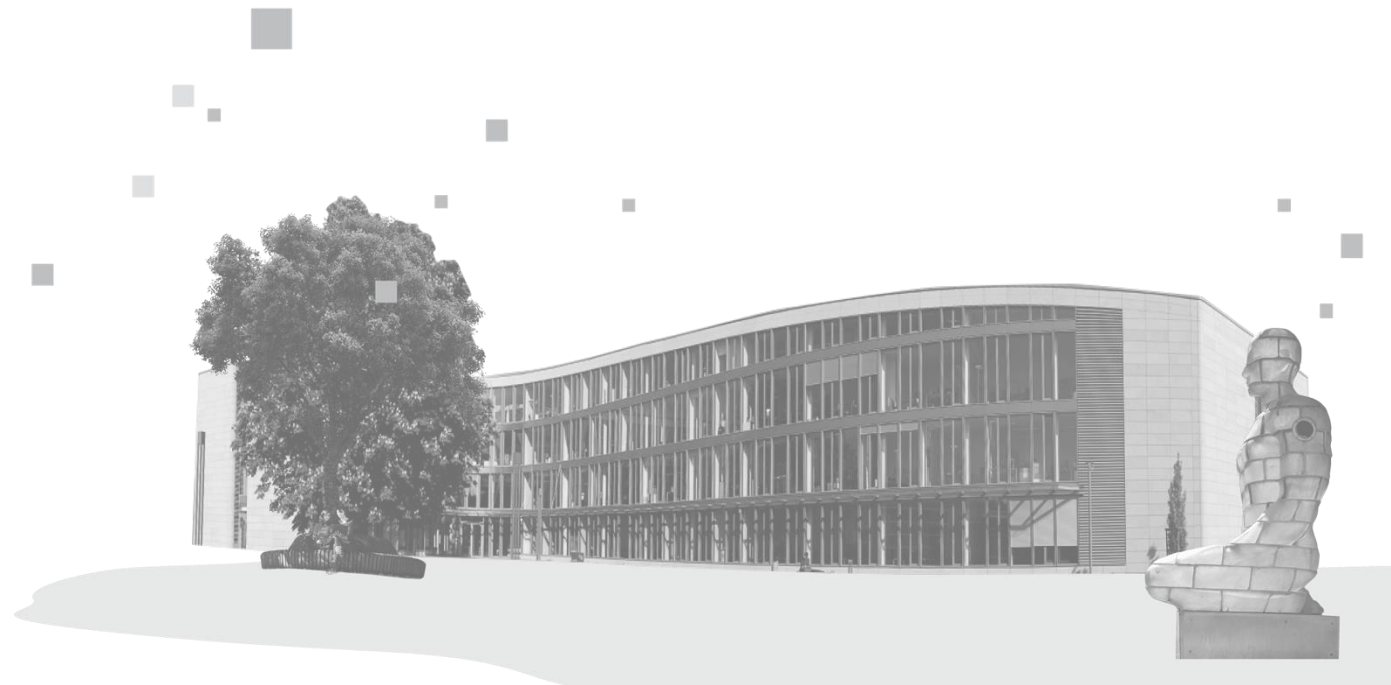
# Panic as a Service

## Accountability in AI

Pit Buttchereit

**Design IT.  
Create Knowledge.**

[www.hpi.de](http://www.hpi.de)



## Introductory Example

## Main Part

- Definition
- Why is it important?
- Panic Distribution & Leverage
- Historical Pattern
- AI amplifying panic
- AI as the object of panic

## Discussion

What is your opinion?

“I am personally worried about  
what AI will do to society”

*Do you agree? (1-5)*



What is your opinion now after the video?

“I am personally worried about  
what AI will do to society”

*Do you agree? (1-5)*

# Definition: Panic as a Service

- A **term** that has emerged in the age of technology-driven anxiety.
- It refers to the increasing dominance of platforms, services, and technologies that exploit, amplify, or profit from societal fears, uncertainties, and doubts.

**Panic as a Service  
(PaaS)**

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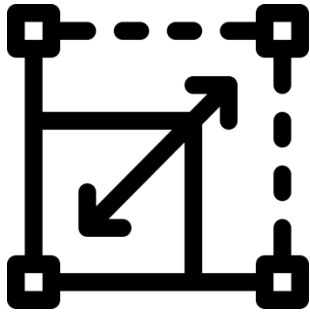
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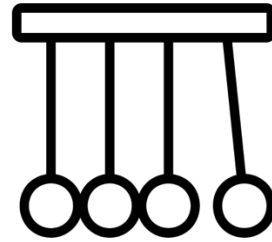
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# Why it is important to talk about



**It is already  
happening at scale<sup>1</sup>**

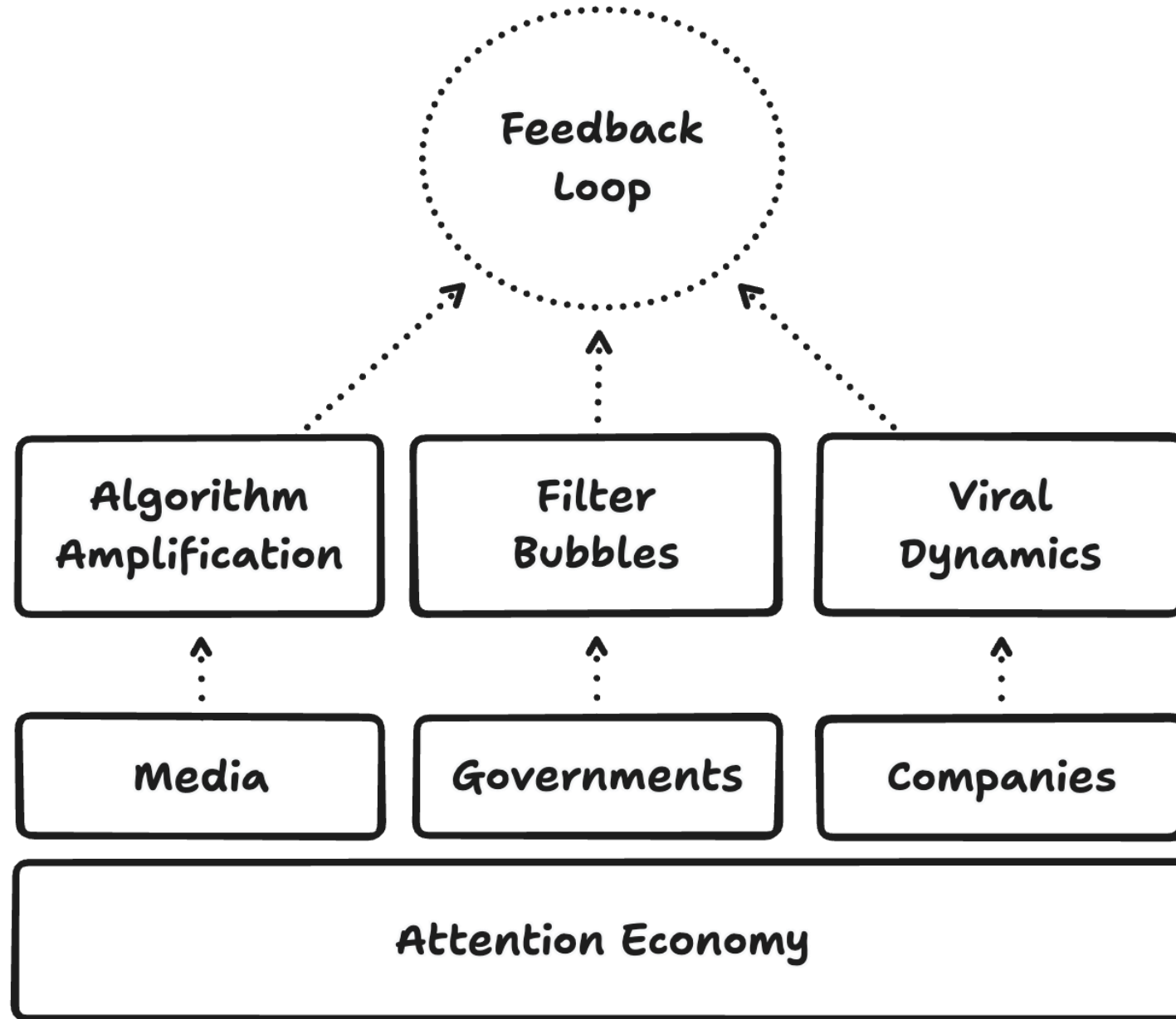


**Panic has real  
consequences<sup>2</sup>**

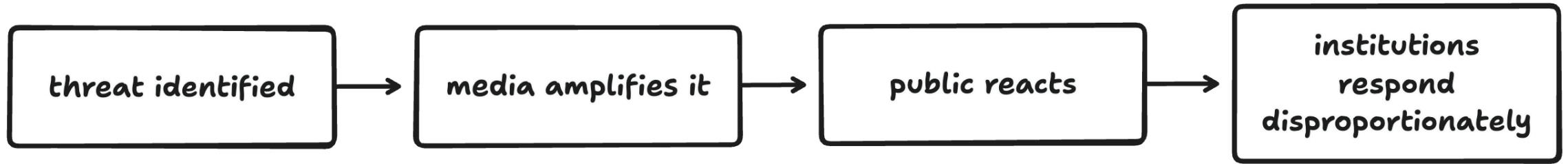


**We are bad at  
recognizing it<sup>3</sup>**

# How is panic distributed & leveraged?



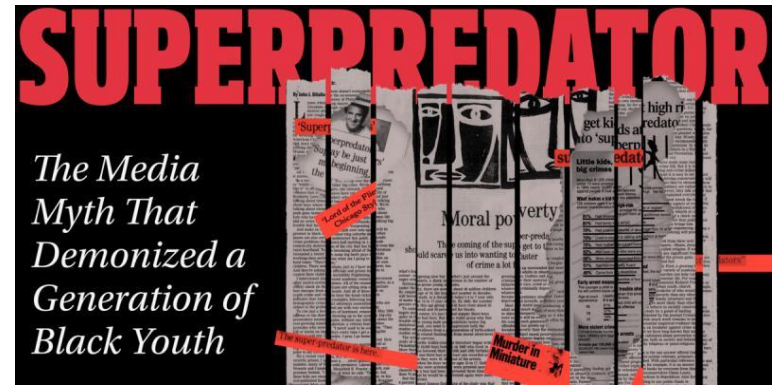
# Historical pattern



<https://l1nq.com/b4ep4p9>



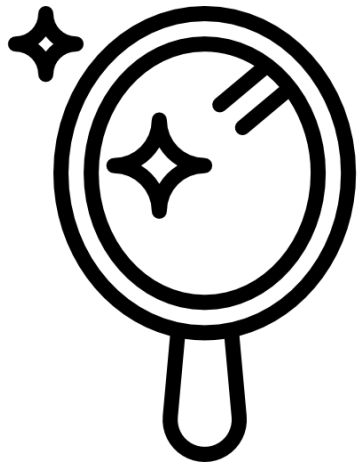
<https://sl1nk.com/86of1v5>



<https://l1nq.com/5u9j2xo>

Stanley Cohen's concept of "moral panic" from 1972<sup>7</sup>

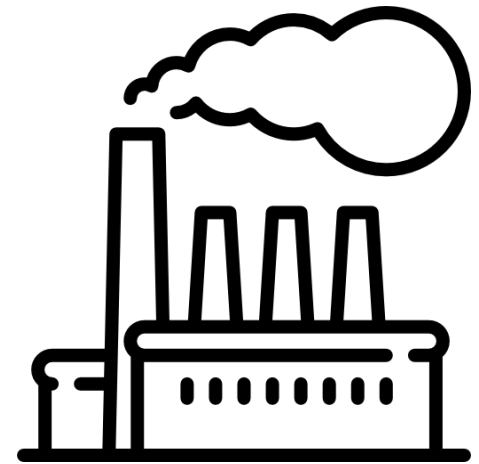
# AI amplifying panic



**Mirror**



**Megaphone**



**Factory**

# AI as the object of panic

People's response<sup>8</sup>:

1. Fear of being useless and powerless
2. Moral ambiguity of AI worship
3. Choice between giving up and fighting back
4. Media's role in making fear worse
5. Humor to stay emotionally strong

Academia's response<sup>9</sup>:

1. Recognizes that AI has the potential to disrupt academia in a multitude of ways
2. Need to identify how AI can contribute to teaching and learning



## The uselessness of AI ethics<sup>10</sup>

- 1. Meaningless principles**
  - 2. Isolated principles**
  - 3. Toothless principles**
- **Principal-practice gap**

## In defense of ethical guidelines<sup>11</sup>

- Principles are a starting point but must be put into practice with ethical guidelines**
  - Principles are defined widely so everyone can adapt to their own needs**
  - Principles may be isolated but that illustrates the need for enforcement**
- **Most pressing issues of AI ethics are enforcement and operationalization**

# A Taxonomy of AI Panic Facilitators



## The Promoters of AI Panic

## Anti-AI Panic

### Panic-as-a-Business

### AI Panic Marketing

### Concerned Experts

### AI Ethics

Panic = our product

Panic = helps us sell our products

Panic = helps us raise the alarm

Panic = distracts us from the real harms



<https://x.com/DrTechlash/status/1675155157880016898>

## Discussion

**1. Did the opening poll work on you?**

**2. Do you find it okay to profit from panic?**

**3. Are ethical guidelines a solution to AI panic, or a product of it?**

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