Artificial Intelligence as Ken Kesey: A computer goes on a cross-country novel writing trip

On March 25, 2017, a black Cadillac with a white-domed surveillance camera attached to its trunk departed Brooklyn for New Orleans. An old GPS unit was fastened atop the roof. Inside, a microphone dangled from the ceiling. Wires from all three devices fed into Ross Goodwin's Razer Blade laptop, itself hooked up to a humble receipt printer. This, Goodwin hoped, was the apparatus that was going to produce the next American road-trip novel.

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Using neural networks, he generates [poetry](#), [screenplays](#), and, now, literary travel fiction.

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The aim was to use the road as a conduit for narrative experimentation, in the tradition of Kerouac, Wolfe, and Kesey, but with the vehicle itself as the artist.

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Along the way, the four sensors—the camera, the GPS, the microphone, and the computer's internal clock—would feed data into a system of neural networks Goodwin had trained on hundreds of books and Foursquare location data, and the printer would spit out the results one letter at a time.

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The machine received its first jolt of inspiration just as soon as Goodwin and his traveling companions fired it up in Brooklyn. It wrote: "It was nine seventeen in the morning, and the house was heavy." For an opening sentence in a book about the road, it's apropos, even poignant.

Read full, original post: [When an AI Goes Full Jack Kerouac](#)