The AdAi Toronto Conference, for the second year in a row, returned to the iconic Globe and Mail Centre on September 24, 2024. Building on the success of its debut, this year's event once again offered a visionary blend of Artificial Intelligence and OOH advertising. Chaired by Farrokh Mansouri, Head of Data Science at COMMB, the conference provided a vibrant platform for over 250 AI innovators and OOH professionals to explore the exciting intersection of cutting-edge technology and impactful outdoor media.

The day began with a warm welcome from Lara Menzies, Director of Marketing at COMMB, setting the stage for an exhilarating lineup of presentations to come. Farrokh Mansouri then introduced the concept of AdAi, highlighting how artificial intelligence is transforming the OOH landscape.

To start, Juan Tubert from Tombras set the tone for the day with a captivating keynote, where he dazzled the audience with live demonstrations of advanced Deepfake technology and unveiled the groundbreaking "Impossibly Smart Billboard" powered by Google's Gemini. Tubert's presentation showcased how billboards can now utilize comprehensive neighbourhood databases to dynamically adapt to real-time consumer and environmental information, like location, weather, traffic, and more–leaving the audience in awe of the transformative possibilities for digital advertising and the future of AI-driven OOH campaigns.

This was followed by Lisa Covens, SVP at Leger, who explored the public's growing receptiveness to AI-driven ads in the OOH space. Covens presented compelling research from her recent studies, revealing that while Gen Z and urban audiences show notable openness to AI-powered campaigns, consumers still favour personalized OOH ads that leverage real-time data and retain a human touch over purely AI-generated content. Her talk emphasized the importance of integrating AI into campaigns rather than relying solely on it, urging advertisers to consider how AI solutions may impact consumer engagement. Additionally, she highlighted that those who are cautious of AI, may not necessarily realize how often it has been integrated in their day-to-day, meaning education and understanding around AI and it's capabilities a necessity.

Next, a series of Tech Flashes electrified the room with rapid showcases of AI innovations for the OOH industry. Chris Gadek and Arsalan Nasir of AdQuick showcased Generative AI applications, demonstrating how AdQuick's diffusion-model AI simplifies the campaign planning process by intuitively understanding various media types. Their technology can intelligently recommend budgets and strategies aligned with the user's specific campaign goals, offering a streamlined, data-driven approach to creating effective OOH strategies with precision and ease. Following this, Michael Colson of Locala demonstrated how real-time, data-driven scoring can boost campaign effectiveness. Locala's advanced data panels, equipped with SDK integrations and capable of tracking cross-visitations,

capture dynamic geolocation data to answer the crucial question, "Who is passing by?" By linking brand affinity with behavioural traits, these panels allow for continuous weekly optimizations, ensuring campaigns remain targeted and effective based on the real-time data gathered from audience movements. The final Tech Flash by Remco Dolman of Spotzi introduced TargetFlow and offered a glimpse into the future of AI-powered OOH planning tools. Their new AI chatbot, Spotty AI, allows for the real-time measurement of campaign impact on exposed audience movement.

AdAi's second half opened with a deep dive on AI-powered audience measurement. Jonathan Laflamme of Cineplex Media and Mitch Wade of Quividi spoke on how they are bringing a measurement focus to place-based environments like the Mall space. Their cutting-edge digital screens in malls, products of years of development, capture real-time data and enable advertisers to optimize content and connect with audiences more precisely. They explained how their approach is bottom-up, employing AI sensors to anonymously detect body and face data for impression counts. This data then becomes automated insights on their dashboard, with rapid local processing at 10 times/second. The conversation also included highlighting the collaboration with COMMB on the development of the new mall methodology finally bring them on board as approved measured members. Their conversation, moderated by Alessia Di Cecco, positioned Cineplex Media and Quividi as trailblazers in OOH advertising.

The second Tech Flash session brought further AI innovation into the spotlight, first featuring Sam Rowe of Docma, who demonstrated how AI can drive revenue growth through keeping the three central aspects of audience, planning and performance at the forefront. Next, Jennifer Copeland of COMMB introduced Billbot, an AI-powered chatbot employing an LLM model for real-time Canadian OOH insights. With the chat's newly integrated technology (RAG) from Liquid Metal, Billbot is able to find and retrieve relevant COMMB materials to the individual prompting – an exciting way to find COMMB materials with ease. The chat bot's capabilities are endless: with a demo highlighting current OOH trends, creative campaign ideas utilizing the media, and the retrieval capabilities with COMMB materials – the chat bot is a must use for individuals that are yearning to learn more about OOH or need inspiration. An upcoming update to Billbot will incorporate a large, comprehensive database that allows for Billbot to achieve even more. Bill Scolinos of SingleStore rounded off the session with his presentation on unlocking real-time intelligence using AI. Particularly, SingleStore's technology focuses on transactions, analytics, and context to inform their real-time intelligence, allowing the user to "chat with their data".

As the afternoon continued, attendees were captivated by a presentation from Tessa Ohlendorf and Liz Oke of Fabric Folk, who illustrated how AI is streamlining back-office operations and empowering media companies to thrive amidst financial challenges. Their session was a masterclass in harnessing

AI to maintain efficiency without sacrificing creativity, while also teaching the audience practical strategies to overcome potential challenges in Finances, HR and more.

The conference culminated with an expert panel chaired by Farrokh Mansouri and featuring industry leaders like Ali Satchu of Branded Cities, Karla Congson of Open Gravity (Agentiiv), and Kari Clarke-Zemnickis of the Vector Institute. This closing discussion tied together the day's key insights, exploring the future of AI in OOH advertising and how today's innovations are shaping tomorrow's advancements. This conversation provided valuable insights and laid the groundwork for the future of OOH innovation, highlighting the pivotal role AI will play in shaping the next generation of advertising strategies. Congson predicted that by the 3rd annual AdAi conference in 2025, truth in AI will have become even more of a central topic of conversation than it already is today.

The day wrapped up with a vibrant late networking and happy hour, giving attendees the chance to reflect on the wealth of knowledge shared throughout the event and interact and dive deeper into the tech flash products and sponsor content at the exhibitor booths. AdAi 2024 gave us all a glimpse into the future of advertising, where AI's potential is set to revolutionize the industry as long as we know how to harness it.