**Generative AI in Journalism: a threat and friend? An Exploration into Adoption and Ethical Considerations among Journalists**

The advent of generative artificial intelligence (genAI), exemplified by ChatGPT, Microsoft Copilot, or MidJourney, has marked a pivotal moment in journalism. While some (Diakopoulos et al., 2024) suggest that generative AI will usher in a golden age for journalism, others (Fletcher et al., 2017; Jones et al., 2023, Schapals & Porlezza, 2020) foresee a future dominated by deepfakes, disinformation, and increasing distrust in journalism. In light of the growing influence of emerging technologies on the journalism industry (Pavlik, 2000), this study explores the adoption of genAI among journalists, specifically in the context of news reporting.

Using a mixed-methods approach, this study examines the use of genAI among journalists, their perceptions, and attitudes towards the responsible use of AI in news reporting. A quantitative survey of journalists (N = 286) was conducted in Belgium and the Netherlands, complemented by semi-structured interviews with journalists (N = 10) to gain a deeper understanding of the perceived benefits, challenges, and ethical considerations of using genAI in news reporting. Given the relative newness of this topic, this study contributes to journalism studies by providing valuable insights into the current role of genAI and associated ethical issues within news organisations.

The results of this study reveal that while genAI is already being used in newsrooms, it remains a controversial topic. Notably, 39% of respondents expressed uncertainty about how widely their colleagues are adopting it. While journalists recognise the benefits of genAI, such as increased efficiency and cost savings, journalists in both the survey and interviews expressed concerns about its potential impact on journalism. In particular, they expressed fears that the use of genAI could lead to a loss of authenticity, creativity, and originality in news reporting. Participants highlighted that the lack of training on genAI presents a significant challenge to its integration into journalistic workflows.

Moreover, many journalists are unaware of the ethical guidelines on genAI, whether set by the industry or their own news organisation(s). However, considering developing ethical guidelines, the journalists in this study emphasise the critical role of editors and news organisations in ensuring the responsible use of genAI in journalism. To gain deeper insights into the varying perspectives among journalists, we also explored their AI literacy (Deuze & Becket, 2022). Through a cluster analysis, we developed a typology that identifies three distinct profiles based on journalists’ use, attitudes, and knowledge of AI: Experienced AI enthusiasts, Undecided observers, and Uninformed dystopians. The experienced AI enthusiasts are those who have incorporated genAI into their work. They demonstrate a strong understanding of AI concepts and maintain a positive attitude towards its use in journalism. The second group, Undecided observers, neither use genAI in their work nor possess significant knowledge about it. Their attitudes towards AI are somewhat reserved, reflecting a level of hesitation or uncertainty. Finally, the Uninformed dystopians, are journalists who do not engage with genAI and have limited knowledge of the technology. Consequently, they tend to hold a more negative perspective of its application in the field.

**Keywords**

Digitalisation, Ethics, Generative artificial intelligence, Journalism, Newsrooms, Transparency

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