

AI & Ethics in Journalism: Legal, Ethical and Transparency Considerations

An exploration of how artificial intelligence intersects with journalistic principles, legal boundaries and ethical responsibilities.



by Lynn Walsh

Who I am



- 15+ years as an investigative journalist
- Former National President/Ethics Chair SPJ
- Assistant Director of Trusting News
- Want to see a healthy information ecosystem: accurate, responsible information reaching the public

What do people think
of AI?

Embedding the audience: Putting audiences at the heart of Generative AI

TECHNOLOGY
&
TELECOMS

Understanding audience perspectives on Gen AI is crucial. Our latest report, written with the BBC, explores this, offering key insights into audience attitudes and concerns.

4 June 2024 Artificial Intelligence (AI) / Media



Ethics & Trust Reporting & Editing Tech & Tools

We asked people about using AI to make the news. They're anxious and annoyed

Focus group research from Poynter and the University of Minnesota reveals attitudes on disclosure, trust, deception among news consumers



Benjamin Toff of the University of Minnesota talks at Poynter's Summit on AI, Ethics and Journalism in June 2024. Alex Smyrnytsya/Poynter

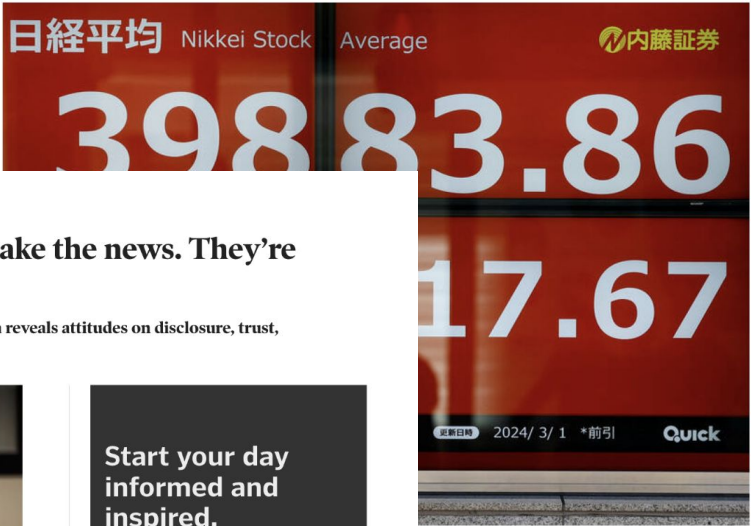
By: [Jennifer Orsi](#)

June 27, 2024



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What does the public in six countries think of generative AI in news?



it: Reuters / Issei Kato

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From research we know:

- Widespread awareness of AI, most only used ChatGPT. Younger audiences have used it more
- Much of public think journalists already using AI, more human involvement equals more comfort, more comfortable with text than images and lighter content
- Concerns: Is using AI cheating? Concerned journalists will use it irresponsibly, lead to misinformation, job loss
- Want disclosures/transparency

Healthcare/Science



Impact



Used
irresponsibly

Ordinary people/Retailers



Impact



Used
irresponsibly

Government/Political parties



Impact



Used
irresponsibly

Social media/News media



Impact



Used
irresponsibly

What do people think of
news?

From research we know:

- Trust in news is low, differences: age, political affiliation
- When people don't know how journalism operates, they don't give us the benefit of the doubt.
- There's a huge disconnect between what we think we offer — the value we provide — and how we're perceived.
- Most people have never spoken to a journalist.
- Journalists don't often reflect community: whiter, more educated, more liberal, more likely to live in cities

So, should we use AI?

Yes....

- Be transparent - get on the record
 - Internal policy
 - External policy
 - Day-to-day coverage
- Ask/Listen to your community
- Educate/Train
 - Skills, Ethics & Legal issues
 - What AI is, what it can/can't do well

AI use in news

Keeping Track of AI Use Cases in the Newsroom

A practical guide to how journalists are using generative AI and how to keep up



Ethan Silver

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10 min read · May 7, 2025



6



1



- News Discovery
- News Gathering
- News Production
- Content Transformation
- Content Management
- Content Distribution
- User Interaction

AI use in news

News Discovery

Using generative AI, the Norwegian newspaper iTromsø significantly reduced the time journalists spent digging through data. They developed a tool called Djinn, which can search and summarize thousands of municipal documents, identifying key information journalists may want to investigate further. Another example is the COA Beat Assistant, developed to review government audit reports for watchdog journalists. And in 2023, a BBC World Services investigative team used AI to sift through tens of thousands of social media posts about the war in Ukraine.

AI use in news

AI *data analysis* tools allow journalists to extract key information and trends from relevant datasets. For example, The Colonist Report, an independent Nigerian newsroom, used ChatGPT and Gemini to analyze and visualize data from over 3,000 government documents for a flooding investigation.

News Gathering

GenAI has also shown promise as a tool for efficient *background research*. Some newsrooms, such as Bonnier News, develop their own AI research tools. For newsrooms that lack the resources to create in-house solutions, the release of web search tools and Deep Research products from OpenAI, Google, and Perplexity also offers a potential solution.

AI is also useful for *interview transcription*. Tools that provide audio transcription can be found in nearly every newsroom, including the BBC,

AI use in news

News Production

The Scandinavian newspaper Aftonbladet, for example, provides journalists with “Buddy Reader”, an AI tool used for proofreading and feedback. After articles are drafted, the AI can offer suggestions for headlines and a title. Organizations such as the AP and the New York Times are among many organizations that allow this use-case, albeit with strict human review and oversight.

AI can also be used to generate data visualizations or article images. For video journalism, it can be used to generate rough cuts of videos or even short clips. And AI

AI use in news

Content Transformation

An exciting new application for AI is multimedia transformation. Articles can be turned into listenable podcasts (or vice versa). The GAIN blog released an article explaining how AI tools can help adapt an article into a video. These transformations can occur between any and all mediums. For instance, the BBC is currently working on a project to “reformat” existing content, like turning live sports broadcasts into article recaps.

AI use in news

Content Management

- Providing tags for articles
- Generating keywords and metadata for images and articles
- Organizing and categorizing new and pre-existing content
- Time-stamping for video and audio content
- Improving SEO strategies
- Identifying potential areas of improvement or gaps in perspectives

AI use in news

Content Distribution

Organizations are also using AI for advertising and marketing. Generative AI offers new ways to analyze user data and provide more targeted recommendations. The New York Times launched BrandMatch, which offers more specific targeting criteria than traditional approaches. Non-profit news organizations have also used AI to craft marketing and fundraising campaigns — optimizing administrative tasks, email outreach, and curating automated newsletters.

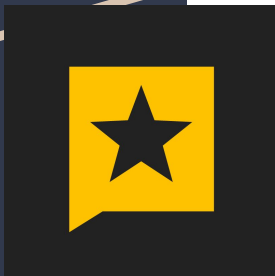
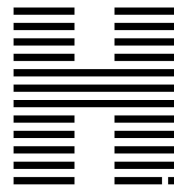
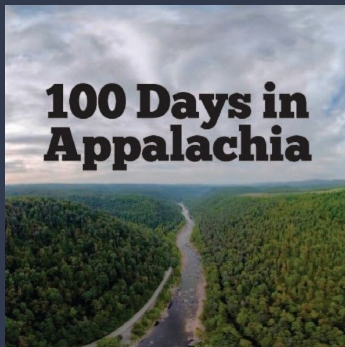
AI use in news

User Interaction

unspecific keywords to access articles. Forbes Adelaide is a search tool that also provides a summary for quick answers. One step further than simple semantic search is an AI chatbot, such as the Washington Post's Ask Post AI and the TIME person-of-the-year chatbot. These chatbots plug into a newsroom's database of information and articles, allowing them to provide a brief answer, related information, and recommendations for further reading on site.

The Washington Post is also testing AI-moderated comment sections next to articles.

Have you talked openly about AI
use in your newsroom?



What they did

- **Public-facing survey**
 - Created by Trusting News
 - Shared with their news consumers
 - Collected over 6,000 responses
- **Interview 10 news consumers**
 - Use Trusting News' AI Community Interview Guide
 - Provide summaries to Trusting News

Journalists, use this interview guide to better understand your community's thoughts about and knowledge of AI.

trustingnews.org/Alguide



Trusting News is launching a new interview guide designed to help you understand what your community thinks about AI

Resource: AI community interview guide for journalists

Published on [September 17, 2024](#) by [Lynn Walsh](#) | Reading Time: 5 minutes



Listen

Part of building trust (and building your audience) is first understanding your audience. This guide is designed to lead you through an interview or listening session with people in your community about AI: what they think it is, how they feel about it, how they feel about journalists using it and what they want to be informed about if journalists use it.

This guide lays out tips for setting up the conversation, as well as suggested questions to help guide your conversation. Questions? Feedback? Email us at info@TrustingNews.org. Find our

Some of the questions:

- Is there anything you're afraid of when it comes to us using AI?
- When we use AI, what do you want to know about that use?
- How important is it to you that a human is still involved in the process?

American City Business Journal

anticipates shuttering 35 to 40 stores in 2024, while opening only three new locations. According to the filing, in the first quarter of last year Big Lots had 1,425 stores – a number that now sits at 1,392. It appears the additional closings would shrink that number even more.

FULL STORY: [Big Lots raises 'substantial doubt' about its future, to close dozens of stores](#)



Using AI in our journalism

American City Business Journals has partnered with [Trusting News](#) to gather feedback on the potential use of AI in journalism. Currently, we do not publish any content produced by generative AI. We do want to hear your views on how ACBJ could use AI responsibly. Let us know by participating in a short, 10-question survey.

[TAKE SURVEY HERE](#)

MANUFACTURING



What is generative AI?

Artificial intelligence tools have been around for a while — they help power virtual assistants like [Apple's Siri](#) or [Google's Assistant](#) or [Amazon's Alexa](#), enable phones to offer predictive text and create auto-generated captions on [YouTube](#) and [Facebook](#). What's new — and been the center of buzz online recently — is a branch of AI called generative AI. Generative AI can produce new content in response to prompts.

Simplistically, generative AI works by giving an algorithm a large amount of data — whether text, image or video — that it uses as examples of what it should create. Other algorithms guide it to then produce something when asked. Most generative AI tools respond to prompts that users input, and then will output text, images or video. It uses the data it was trained on to produce what it thinks the user is asking for. These outputs have become more sophisticated over the past few years, but they are fallible and may include errors or incorrect information. IBM Research has an [overview online](#) of the technology, and other tools like OpenAI's [ChatGPT](#), Microsoft's [Copilot](#) and Google's [Gemini](#) also share some insight into their methodology online.

The Texas Tribune

report

BY **RENZO DOWNEY** JULY 12, 2024

A Texas Monthly article revealed fresh allegations of sexual harassment against two senators with a history of scandals.



We're committed to transparency and integrity, especially as new technologies are on the rise.

That's why we want to hear your thoughts about how we use artificial intelligence in our work.

TAKE OUR SURVEY

KEN
How
imp

2024

Kamala Harris is even less popular among Texans than Joe Biden, poll shows

HURRICANE BERYL

The Associated Press

AP



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Share your thoughts about AI in journalism

AP wants to know — contribute to our survey
about the use of AI in journalism.

[Take the survey >](#)

AI industry is influencing the world. Mozilla adviser
Abeba Birhane is challenging its core values

Delta Air Lines says cancellations continue as it tries

HEALTH >



**No prison for a nursing home owner who
sent 800 residents to ride out a
hurricane in squalor**

25 mins ago



Trusting News principle

Journalists make more informed decisions about what it means to serve the public if they understand the people they aim to serve.

Latest research

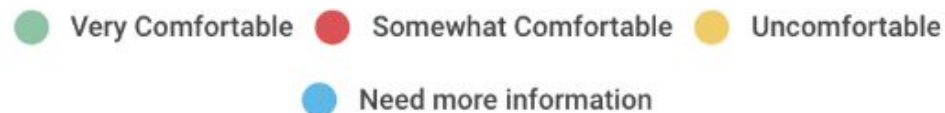
- 86% of respondents said they felt a sense of trust building with the journalist and/or the news organization post-conversation.
- 28% were considering subscribing

What we learned



How comfortable are you with journalists using AI?

Based on survey responses from news consumers in July/August 2024 solicited by newsrooms participating in a Trusting News and Online News Association cohort.

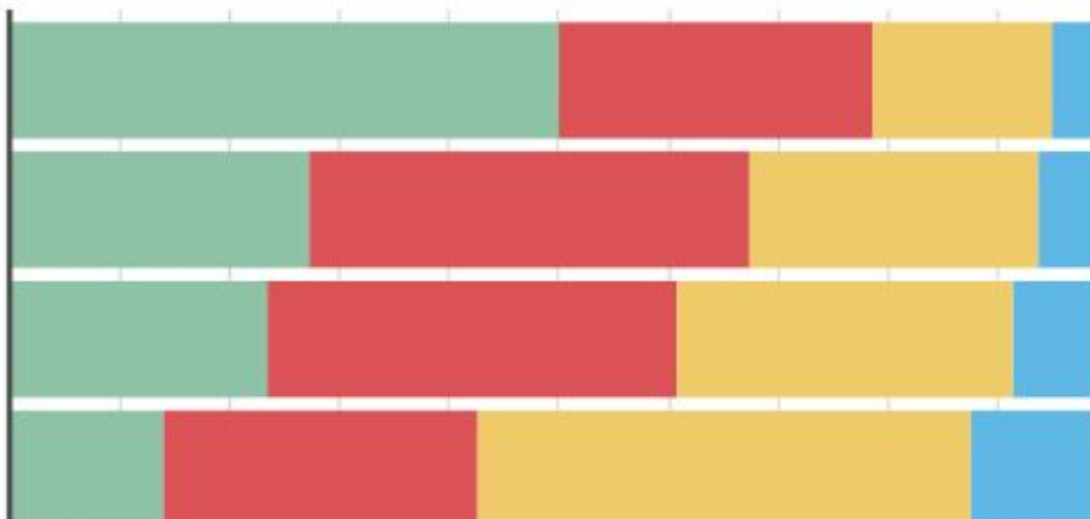


Checking spelling/grammar

Transcribe interviews

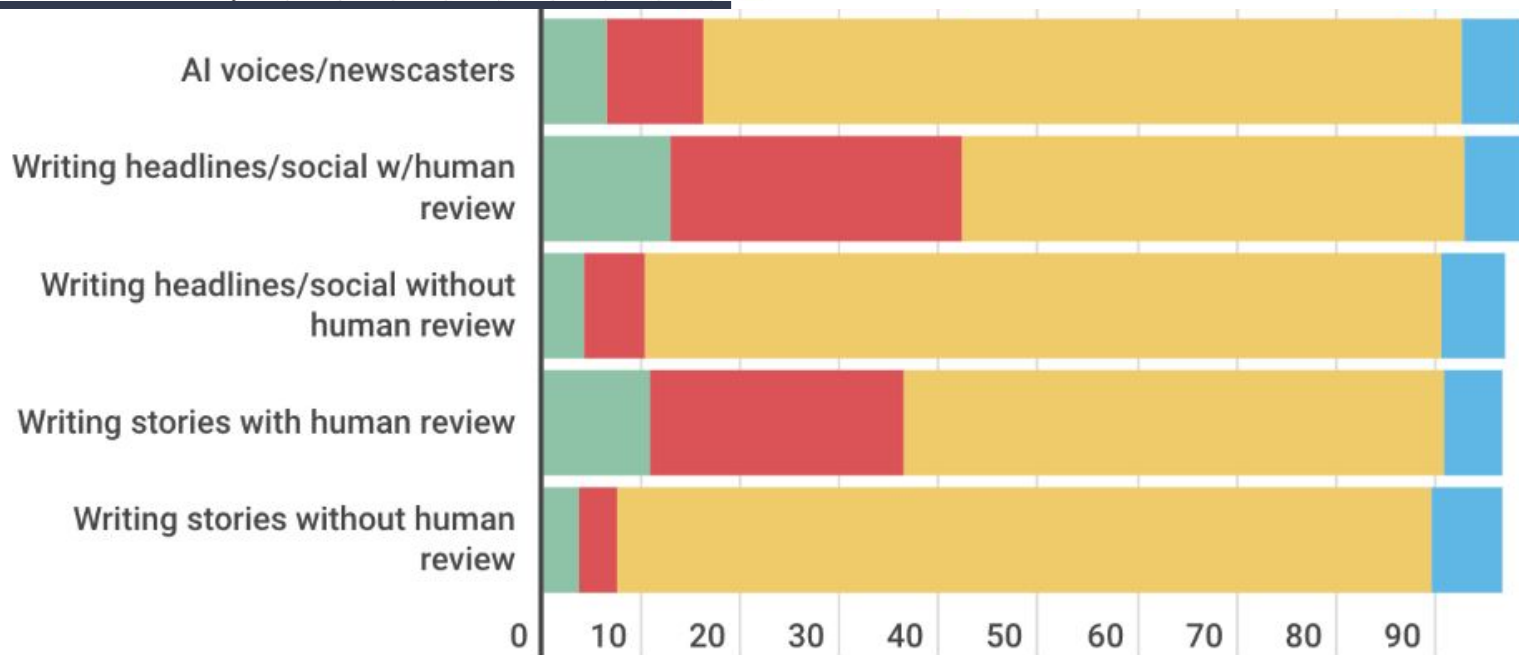
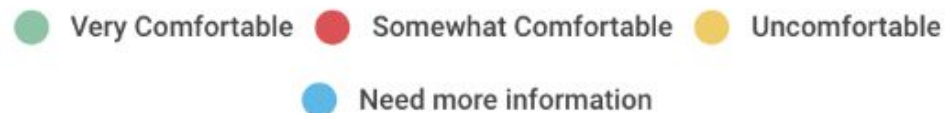
Language translation

Data analysis



How comfortable are you with journalists using AI?

Based on survey responses from news consumers in July/August 2024 solicited by newsrooms participating in a Trusting News and Online News Association cohort.



How to invest in educating your community about AI

More than 80% of the survey respondents said it would be helpful if a newsroom provided information and tips to better understand AI in general and detect when AI was used in content creation. The demand for education around AI became more clear during the one-on-one interviews.

When asked about education and engagement opportunities around AI, people told the journalists:

- To offer workshops and produce guides/glossaries or articles explaining AI's role in reporting
- To offer opportunities for people to learn about AI's capabilities and limitations, potentially through outreach events or interactive/Q&A sessions
- To produce more in-depth articles and transparency around how AI is involved in journalism
- They appreciated being consulted and wanted newsrooms to continue engaging the public in conversations about AI

94% of people want
journalists to **disclose**
their use of AI



People want use of AI disclosed

- Knowing why journalists decided to use AI would be important - **87%**
- Understanding how journalists will be ethical/accurate with use of AI would be important - **94%**
- Knowing a human was involved & reviewed content before it was published would be very important - **92%**

Why transparency?
It works!

Explaining yourself has an impact

Experiment added “explain your process” box to a news story that explained why and how the story was covered.

The goal was to find out whether providing a **short, explanatory text box at the bottom of a news story would help the audience understand the process of journalism better** and – as a result – **boost their trust** in the news organization

“Explain Your Process” Box

Example of one of the boxes used in the experiments. This box references an article about a hit-and-run accident. Readers either saw this box displayed alongside the article, or they saw the story without the box. Highlighting was used to draw attention to information in the box.

Why and how we’re covering this topic

Why we’re doing this story

In choosing which crimes to write about, we evaluate if there is an ongoing threat to public safety and prioritize covering those that do. This crash left a driver in critical condition, and the suspect is still at large.

How we’re doing this story

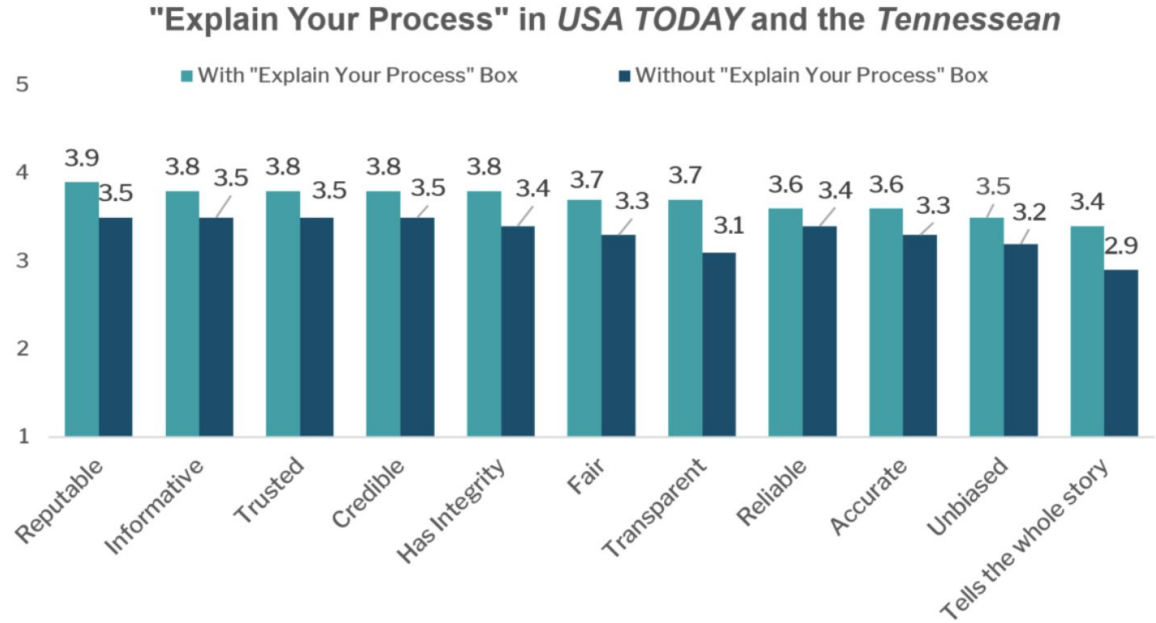
All the information in this story was gathered from interviews with Fairview police or police reports from that department. We often do not publish suspect mugshots, but we did in this case so the community can help police find him.

Our approach to covering crime

We are working on an FAQ about which crimes we report, what information we include and the goals and ethics that guide us. If you have a question you’d like to see answered, please post it in the comments.

The presence of the “explain your process” box boosted people’s perceptions of the news organization on 11 of the 12 items related to trust.

These were:
transparent,
informative, accurate,
fair, tells the whole
story, reliable,
credible, unbiased,
trusted, has integrity,
and **reputable.**



Data from the Center for Media Engagement

Notes: Average scores. Participants were asked to indicate how well 12 attributes applied to the news organization. Responses for participants exposed to the “Explain Your Process” box were significantly higher than responses for those not exposed to the box at the $p < .01$ level for all the attributes, except “does not have an agenda.”

**It works on-air
too!**

Explaining the ‘why’ builds trust with TV

a When seeing two news clips, one with trust language inserted and one without, participants generally preferred the news clips that contained trust items, even if they couldn't specify how the clips were different.

They described the clips as “more personal” or as providing “more facts” or “more context” and saw them as generally more complete.

AI use disclosures

AI disclosures should include:

- Information about **what** AI tool did
- Explanation about **why** AI was used, ideally language shows **how AI benefits community/improves news coverage**
- Description of how **humans** involved
- Explanation about how content **is still ethical, accurate, meets newsrooms editorial standards**

What that looks like

What we used

What it did

In this story we used (AI/tool/description of tool) to help us (what AI/the tool did or helped you do). When using (AI/tool) we (fact-checked, had a human check, made sure it met our ethical/accuracy standards) Using this allowed us to (do more of x, go more in depth, provide content on more platforms, etc).

Why



**Human/
accuracy**

Transcription

- *In this story, we used Artificial Intelligence to transcribe the audio from our interviews with sources. We reviewed all quotes for accuracy by listening to the original audio of the interviews, before including them in the story. Using AI made the reporting process more efficient, giving us more time to fact-check this story for accuracy and fairness.*

Analyze data/records


- *In this investigative story, we used Artificial Intelligence to assist in the analysis of the public records received from the state. The reporters fact-checked the information used in the story by re-reviewing the public records by hand. Requesting public records to get beyond the “he said she said” is an important part of our reporting process, and AI allowed us to do this more quickly.*

Write content


- *Based on news articles we previously published, we used Artificial Intelligence to help draft the content of this newsletter. Our editorial team carefully reviewed and edited the AI-generated text to ensure it aligns with our standards for accuracy. Using AI allows us to convert our news coverage into different formats, reaching you where you like to consume information.*

Translation

- *In this story, our original news coverage was translated into multiple languages with the help of Artificial Intelligence. Our team carefully reviewed and edited the translation to ensure it accurately conveys the intended meaning and maintains the quality of our reporting. Utilizing AI for translation allowed us to quickly share our stories with a broader audience.*



How the research was done: The pilot study involved collecting survey responses from a quasi-representative sample of 2,000 Americans in which they were asked to rate how comfortable or uncomfortable they were with different hypothetical use cases of AI in journalism, where the descriptions of how AI was used, why it was used, and what degree of human oversight was included, were randomly varied. This randomized message-testing allowed us to assess how small tweaks in language could elicit different reactions from the public while helping to setup a further round of experimentation with labeling in the coming months.



Here's what we learned

1. Specificity matters most.

- Audiences respond better to detailed disclosures about how AI is being used in the newsroom. Generic disclaimers were viewed less favorably and garnered less trust.
- Word choice matters less. Audiences want to know specifically what AI was used to do, but the words journalists use in the description seem less important.
- When getting specific about AI's role, it is better to focus on how it improves news quality or quality of overall experience/content for the user over quantity (allowing for more to be done, content to be create for content sake, etc.)

2. Comfort varies by task.

- Audiences are more comfortable with AI being used for tasks like transcription or translation than for data analysis.
- Despite enthusiasm among journalists for using AI in investigative or data-heavy reporting, audiences express hesitation about those uses unless they clearly understand what role AI played in the process.

3. “AI” vs. “automatic tool” terminology.

- Referring to AI as “AI” versus using terms like “automatic tool” makes little difference in audience perceptions.
-

EXAMPLES

Key Points AI-assisted summary ⓘ

- Rory McIlroy and J.J. Spaun will compete in a three-hole aggregate playoff for the 2025 Players Championship title.
 - The playoff, starting on Monday at 9 a.m. ET, was delayed due to rain on Sunday.
 - If a tie remains after the three-hole playoff, sudden death will commence on the 17th hole.
-

Rory McIlroy is a two-time Players champion.

The 35-year-old from Northern Ireland earned his 28th PGA Tour victory Monday morning, beating J.J. Spaun in a three-hole aggregate playoff to win the [2025 Players Championship](#) at TPC Sawgrass. McIlroy birdied the par-5 16th, but Spaun's undoing was hitting his tee shot into the water on the par-3 17th and making triple. In the end, it was McIlroy's tournament for the taking.

EXAMPLES

Key Points AI-assisted summary ⓘ

These Key Points were created with the assistance of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and reviewed by a journalist before publication. No other parts of the article were generated using AI. [Learn more](#) or [share your thoughts](#) with our News Automation and AI team.



the 2025 Players
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e 17th hole.

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EXAMPLES

For more information about the Robert L. Polk and John D. Kohler Annual Student Design Competition, go to kohlerarchitect.net/2025/03/04/44th-annual-student-design-competition. To learn more about the funds and apply for scholarships, go to cfmonroe.org.

Ida High School announces Class of 2025 top scholars

This story was created by Janis Reeser, jreeser@gannett.com, with the assistance of Artificial Intelligence (AI). Journalists were involved in every step of the information gathering, review, editing and publishing process. Learn more at <https://cm.usatoday.com/ethical-conduct/>.

EXAMPLES



We're surveying our readers on the best ways to disclose our use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in our stories. Below is a sample disclosure we have used in the past.

"This announcement was written in collaboration with AI, reviewed, and edited by our editorial team to meet OutSFL's standards. We are committed to disclosing AI involvement in our content when it meaningfully impacts the reporting or creation process, ensuring transparency with our audience."

[Take the Survey](#)

EXAMPLES

How we work

We select the most relevant news for an international audience and use automatic translation tools such as DeepL to translate them into English. A journalist then briefly reviews the translation for clarity and accuracy before publication. Providing you with automatically translated news gives us the time to write more in-depth articles. The news stories we select have been written and carefully fact-checked by an external editorial team.

Did you find this explanation helpful? Please fill out the short survey on this page to help us understand your needs.

EXAMPLES



(In case you're wondering, these emails are written entirely by Kat Vellos, the human author who wrote and illustrated the book [*We Should Get Together: The Secret to Cultivating Better Friendships*](#). It feels weird AF to need to point out that my writing is done by **me**, not AI robots, but hey this is the world we live in now.)

AI Use Policies

Internal AI use policies

Ensures responsible and ethical use

Sets clear standards for how AI tools can and should be used in journalism.

Protects credibility and trust

Helps maintain transparency with your audience about how content is created and edited.

Reduces legal and reputational risk

Mitigates issues related to copyright infringement, misinformation, or biased outputs.

Provides consistency across teams

Allows you to decide what you are comfortable with. Offers staff clear guidance, especially as AI tools become embedded in workflows.

Internal AI use policies

Supports training and onboarding

Helps new employees understand what's allowed and expected when using AI.

Encourages thoughtful experimentation

Creates a structure where innovation with AI is encouraged but monitored.

Prepares for public disclosure

Makes it easier to communicate your AI use practices to audiences in an open, informed way.

Strengthens internal decision-making

Gives editors and reporters a reference point when questions arise about how to use AI tools.

External (public-facing) AI use policies

Builds audience trust through transparency

Clearly explains how and when your newsroom uses AI, addressing common public concerns.

Demonstrates accountability

Shows your newsroom takes the ethical use of AI seriously and has guardrails in place.

Differentiates your journalism

Helps your newsroom stand out as a responsible, human-centered source of news in an AI-saturated information landscape.

Educates the public about AI

Helps audiences understand what AI can and can't do, reducing confusion and misinformation.

Prepares your team for questions or scrutiny

Gives staff a consistent message to share with audiences, funders, or critics when AI use is questioned.

External (public-facing) AI use policies

Fosters stronger community engagement

Invites conversation and feedback, creating opportunities to hear what your audience expects and values.

Aligns with journalism values

Reinforces core principles like truth, independence, and transparency — regardless of the tools used.

Meets audience expectations

Research shows people want to know how journalism is produced, especially when technology is involved.

Don't wait! It does not have to be final - update as you learn/make changes. Make it a living document

EXAMPLES

As we embark on experiments that make use of generative A.I in the newsroom and Opinion, these principles will guide our work and clarify why and how we plan to use the technology:

- **As a tool in service of our mission.** Generative A.I. can assist our journalists in uncovering the truth and helping more people understand the world. Machine learning already helps us report stories we couldn't otherwise, and generative A.I. has the potential to bolster our journalistic capabilities even more. Likewise, The Times will become more accessible to more people through features like digitally voiced articles, translations into other languages and uses of generative A.I. we have yet to discover. We view the technology not as some magical solution but as a powerful tool that, like many technological advances before it, may be used in service of our mission.

EXAMPLES

- **With human guidance and review.** The expertise and judgment of our journalists are competitive advantages that machines simply can't match, and we expect that will become even more important in the age of A.I. Our talent is what makes The Times the world's best resource for curious people. Generative A.I. can sometimes help with parts of our process, but the work should always be managed by and accountable to journalists. We are always responsible for what we report, however the report is created. Any use of generative A.I. in the newsroom must begin with factual information vetted by our journalists and, as with everything else we produce, must be reviewed by editors.
 - **Transparently and ethically.** The first principles of journalism should apply just as forcefully when machines are involved. Readers must be able to trust that any information presented to them is factually accurate, meets the high standards of The Times and follows our [Handbook for Ethical Journalism](#). We should tell readers how our work was created and, if we make substantial use of generative A.I., explain how we mitigate risks, such as bias or inaccuracy, with human oversight.
-

EXAMPLES

Bay City News Policy on AI Use

This policy outlines the guidelines and principles that we as a newsroom have determined to govern the use of Artificial Intelligence technologies within our organization, which includes the Bay City News Service, the Local News Matters public website and our affiliated products such as newsletters and social media platforms. The purpose of this policy is to ensure the responsible, ethical, and legal use of AI in our efforts to provide meaningful, impactful news coverage for the communities we serve in the greater Bay Area, and to ensure that the use of AI in our newsroom adheres to our values as an organization. This policy applies to all employees, freelancers and contributors who work with our organization.

Commitment to Ethical Standards

Bay City News commits to using AI technologies only in manners which uphold our high standard of integrity, accuracy, fairness and transparency. The use of AI tools will never be used to mislead readers, manipulate facts or misrepresent information. We rigorously apply ethical standards of journalism to all our work and adhere to the standards of the [Society of Professional Journalists code of ethics](#).

EXAMPLES

Training and Education

We believe in a culture of ongoing education and exploration and are committed to equipping our staff with the tools and training required to adapt to emerging technologies, environments and standards. We will provide any necessary training and resources to our staff to ensure they understand and can effectively implement AI tools according to this AI Use Policy. Additionally, we will ensure that staff members and outside advisers with additional expertise in the use and ethical policies around AI are positioned to assist staff as they explore and make use of these tools. Users are encouraged to stay informed about the evolving ethical considerations and legal requirements related to AI, as well as to voice concerns and ask questions they may have regarding AI, its application and its limitations.

Examples of AI Use

We do not use generative AI to write stories; reporters and editors are responsible for creating the work we publish. We do use AI search tools for researching documents, finding sources and uncovering information that, once independently verified, may become part of our reports. We use AI tools to analyze our performance as a news website, including tools to predict audience behavior, provide insights into reader patterns and understand how to better serve community information needs. We use AI for some commonly accepted uses such as spell check, photo sizing, A/B testing of headlines and the timing and wording of social media postings based on original content.

EXAMPLES

Núcleo's AI use policy

Artificial intelligence should be used to facilitate journalistic work, not to replicate it.

New artificial intelligence features bring innovations and opportunities to journalism but also come with many challenges and pitfalls.

For this reason, Núcleo has created a set of guidelines (subject to frequent updates) to guide the use of AI in both our content and applications.

This policy is constantly evolving and may be updated regularly.



SUMMARY: The use of artificial intelligence should be applied to facilitate journalistic work, not to produce it. For Núcleo, AI products are tools—like our laptops or pens—and should be used as such, not as substitutes for our professionals.



[Leia esta página em português](#)

EXAMPLES

For editorial and content creation

WE MAY:

- use AI to create text summaries;
- use AI to create illustrations only in urgent and exceptional cases, always preferring artwork from our team or freelance artists, illustrators, and designers;
- use AI as a consultant to improve or refine the wording of specific paragraphs;
- use AI to suggest alternative posts for social media;
- use AI as a tool to research subjects and themes;
- use AI to transcribe audio and video into text format;
- use AI to translate our own articles into other languages, always with close revision from our human editors.

EXAMPLES



WE WILL NEVER:

- use AI to generate the full content of a publication;
- use AI as the editor or final producer of a publication;
- publish AI-generated content without human review for reports and notes on the website;
- publish acceptable elements (such as summaries) without indicating they were generated by AI;
- replace human content production with artificial intelligence.

EXAMPLES

For products, apps and tech

WE MAY:

- use AI to assist in software development and debugging;
- use AI for specific automations;
- use AI to summarize texts when publishing automated posts, based on descriptions written by humans;
- use AI to create dynamic content derived from large data scrapes;
- use human-categorized data to help train AI models for new data classification, with future human review by sampling;
- use content from Núcleo and partners (with authorization) to develop AI-based tools.

WE WILL NEVER:

- base the integrity of our application development on AI models;
- use AI to gather private user data without consent;
- use AI to generate code without checking its effects.

Your turn

AI Policies

Write an AI policy/disclosure:

- Think: What questions do my users have about my AI use?
What complaints am I hearing?
 - Why are you experimenting with AI?
 - How are you experimenting with AI? When will/are you using AI?
 - When will you not use AI?
- What can you promise your users/community?
 - Accuracy (human checking?)
 - Transparency?

AI Policies

Worksheet to help:
<https://bit.ly/4krfieh>

[Poynter has a guide.](#)



AI Disclosures

Trusting News Madlib:

*In this story we used **(AI/tool/description of tool)** to help us **(what AI/the tool did or helped you do)**. When using **(AI/tool)** we **(fact-checked, had a human check, made sure it met our ethical/accuracy standards)**. Using this allowed us to **(do more of x, go more in depth, provide content on more platforms, etc)**.*

Sample language can be found here: <https://bit.ly/45nPEIP>

AI Disclosures

Worksheet to help:

<https://bit.ly/3SlcHQQ>



AI Trust Kit

trustingnews.org/trustkits/ai/



Artificial Intelligence

As journalists incorporate Artificial Intelligence tools into their news processes, they need to be establishing clear internal guidelines and public-facing policies governing those practices.

A crucial step is to routinely communicate those standards to the public. In research conducted by Trusting News and other research organizations like [The Reuters Institute](#), [Poynter](#) and [Ipsos](#), people say they want the use of AI by journalists to be disclosed.

People do not want journalists passing work or ideas off as their own if AI is used. That can be seen as deceptive and could add to the negative assumptions many people already have about "the media." Instead, through transparency, you can build understanding not just about how journalism operates but about what AI is and how it can be used.

Based on [new](#) and [previous](#) research, Trusting News is recommending that journalists:

- **Disclose the use of AI and explain why and precisely how AI was used**
- **Engage with their audience on the topic of AI to learn about their existing knowledge and perceptions**
- **Invest in educating their communities about AI, serving as a resource and demystifying new technology**



Journalists should disclose their use of AI and find ways to explain why AI was used and how humans fact-checked for accuracy and adhered to ethical standards.



Goals

This Trust Kit helps you:

1. Disclose your use of AI to your audience, and explain how and why you use it.
2. Learn how your audience feels about journalists using AI and what they expect from you when you do use it.
3. Understand why educating your audience about AI can help build trust and provide a public service.

Journalists talking openly about AI

The public wants to know how journalists are using AI in our journalism, ensuring it's ethical and transparent.

This Trust Kit walks you through the process. trustingnews.org/ai/



How to disclose



How to disclose

An overwhelming majority (93.8%) of news consumers surveyed by a recent Trusting News report said they want the use of AI to be disclosed. More than half of the respondents said they want to know both how AI was used in the news process and details about the specific tool(s) used. ([Learn more about this research](#).)

When using AI in your newsroom, it seems clear the audience wants to know about the details, not just a vague, "AI was used in this story," statement. Expand on this research, [fill out this form](#) and subscribe to our weekly [Trust](#) newsletter.

Fill out this form in your disclosure

Link to your disclosures



How to engage

Legal and Ethics

How do ethical and legal
concerns around AI use
show up in your
newsroom?

Libel

AI Hallucinations: Reputation Risks

AI systems can sometimes produce "hallucinations" - factual errors or made-up information that seems plausible.

The lesson is clear - **always fact-check AI-generated content before publishing**. Careful human review is still essential to avoid libel and protect reputations.

You are responsible for what you publish or broadcast.

Recommendations

1 Don't Wait Until the Last Minute

Don't use AI if you're drafting or editing a story at the last minute. AI outputs can be unreliable and require thorough fact-checking.

3 Use Disclaimers

If you must use AI, include a clear disclaimer that you used AI and include information about how you made sure it was accurate, ethical.

2 Fact-Check Carefully

Fact-check any information from AI that could be true or false. Remember, AI-generated opinions are not libelous.

4 Vet Your Sources

Be wary of websites using AI to generate cheap, quick content just for advertising revenue. Always fact-check your sources.

Copyright

AI regulations: U.S. vs International

United States:

- Courts and lawsuits are setting early precedents, especially around **copyright** and **libel**
- No comprehensive federal law yet—regulation is reactive, not proactive.

International:

- **Elected officials** are taking the lead in drafting AI-specific legislation
- The **E.U. AI Act** includes requirements around **disclosure, registration, transparency** and **risk management** for AI companies/systems
 - i. Classify AI systems into categories based on risk.
 - ii. Higher the risk, more requirements/regulations.
 - iii. Law enforcement/education/employment (High) Chatbots (Limited)

AI regulations: U.S. vs International

International:

- **U.K.:** Relying on existing laws and regulators from specific department/sectors to refine/create guidelines/requirements
- **France:** Follow EU Act BUT also implement sector-specific laws, including copyright and data protection
 - 2023 bill introduced (referred to committee): would require authorization of authors for use by AI companies, require transparency that AI “authored” something and credit original content creator/author

Copyright: What is legal?

Copyright is the legal right **granted to a creator** (like a journalist) over their **original work**, specifically their articles, photographs, videos, and other media. It protects their **creative expression** and gives them the **exclusive right to control how their work is used, copied, or distributed**. This includes the **right to make copies, adapt the work, and publicly display it**.

What is legal?

Original Works: Applies to original works of authorship, meaning the journalist's own writing, photos, or videos.

Exclusive Rights: Gives exclusive right to control how their work is used, including making copies, distributing and adapting

Protection from Infringement: Protects from others using work without permission, which is considered copyright infringement.

Fair Use: Allows use of small portions of copyrighted material under certain circumstances for news reporting or commentary

What is legal?

Terms of Protection: Terms vary, but generally, protection lasts for author's lifetime plus an additional number of years (often 70 years).

Registration: While not mandatory, registering a work with Copyright Office can offer additional legal protections

Licensing: Can license work under Creative Commons licenses, which allow others to use their work under specific conditions, such as attribution or non-commercial use.

Main copyright concerns

- AI models are trained on massive datasets of copyrighted material, including articles and books, without permission or compensation for writers
- Raises questions about the legality and ethics of using content
- Practices challenge traditional frameworks of copyright protection in journalism

What lawsuits are testing

- What about AI? **No definitive legal standard yet — still evolving.**
- Creators argue: If AI is trained on their work, the output is a copyright violation.
- Courts are considering if AI outputs are "substantially similar" to originals or if "fair use" can apply

Law is still being decided

News publishers *suing* AI platforms:

1. Ziff Davis vs OpenAI
2. News/Media Alliance members vs Cohere
3. Indian news publishers vs OpenAI
4. Coalition of Canadian news outlets vs OpenAI
5. News Corp vs Perplexity
6. Mumsnet vs OpenAI
7. The Center for Investigative Reporting vs OpenAI and Microsoft
8. Eight Alden Global Capital newspapers vs OpenAI and Microsoft
9. The Intercept, Raw Story and AlterNet vs OpenAI
10. The New York Times vs OpenAI and Microsoft
11. Getty Images vs Stability AI

Law is still being decided

News publishers *signing deals with AI platforms:*

The New York Times – Amazon
The Washington Post – OpenAI
Shutterstock – Synthesia
News/Media Alliance – Prorata.ai
Guardian – OpenAI
Schibsted – OpenAI
Agence France-Press – Mistral
Associated Press – Google
Axios – OpenAI
Future – OpenAI

The Independent, LA Times, Lee
Enterprises and more – Perplexity
DMG Media, Guardian, Sky News
and Prospect – Prorata.ai
Reuters – Meta
Hearst – OpenAI
FT, Reuters, Axel Springer, Hearst
Mags, USA Today Network –
Microsoft
Conde Nast – OpenAI
FT, Axel Springer, The Atlantic,
Fortune – Prorata.ai
Shutterstock –
OpenAI

Time, Der Spiegel, Fortune,
Texas Tribune and more –
Perplexity
Time – OpenAI
Vox Media – OpenAI
The Atlantic – OpenAI
News Corp – OpenAI
Dotdash Meredith – OpenAI
Informa – Microsoft
Axel Springer – Microsoft
Financial Times – OpenAI
Le Monde and Prisa Media –
OpenAI
Axel Springer – OpenAI
Associated Press – OpenAI
Shutterstock – OpenAI

Law is still being decided

US News/Media Alliance v. Cohere

- **News orgs:** Advance Local Media, Conde Nast, The Atlantic, Forbes, The Guardian, Business Insider, LA Times, McClatchy Media Company, Newsday, Plain Dealer Publishing Company, Politico, The Republican Company, Toronto Star Newspapers, and Vox Media.
- Canadian AI start-up **Cohere Inc.** - builds tailored LLM's
- **Claims:**
 - Unauthorised use of publisher content in developing LLM's, lists 4,000 articles, even when behind paywall or blocked from scraping
 - Chatbot produces "damaging hallucinations" - fake pieces under brand's names
- **Significance:** Contribute to fair use interpretation, lawsuits claims licensing market for their content for AI developers

Law is still being decided

Getty Images v. Stability AI

- **News org: Getty Images**
- UK-based **Stability AI** - Text to image, video and audio
- **Claims:**
 - Stability AI “unlawfully copied and processed” millions of copyrighted images without a licence
 - Allows users to make “essentially identical copies of copyright works”
 - Judge ruled can go to trial, Getty wants transferred to California
- **Significance:** Trademark infringement allegations b/c technology’s ability to replicate Getty Images’ watermarks in AI outputs

Law is still being decided

Walters v. OpenAI

- **News org: An individual - talk show host Mark Walters**
- **OpenAI** - LLM's, ChatGPT
- **Claims:**
 - Walters sues OpenAI for defamation after blogger prompted ChatGPT for information about an unrelated lawsuit, the tool wrongly described Walters as a defendant in that case who had been accused of fraud.
 - Nothing was published, just a ChatGPT response
- **Significance:** May ruling - dismisses Walters claims. The court rejected Walters' argument that deploying a fallible AI constitutes negligence. Walters offered no evidence that OpenAI knew the specific output was false or acted with reckless disregard.

Fair Use

Does the “Fair Use” doctrine apply to AI’s use of copyrighted material?

Copyright office report on Fair Use

The report emphasizes AI training is not categorically fair use, each use of copyrighted material must be evaluated individually.

Four-Factor Fair Use Test:

- **Purpose of the use:** This includes whether the use is commercial and whether it transforms the original work.
- **Nature of the copyrighted work:** This factor considers the type of work, such as expressive works or unpublished works, which are less likely to be considered fair use.
- **Reasonableness of use:** This factor examines the quantity of copyrighted material used and whether it is a substantial portion of the original work.
- **Market effect:** This factor considers the impact on the potential market for the original work, including lost sales, market dilution, and lost licensing opportunities.

Law is still being decided

Authors v. Anthropic PBC/Meta

- **Claims:**

- Anthropic **has argued** the four factors of the fair use analysis weigh in its favor, calling its use “transformative in the extreme.”
- The authors **countered** that courts have repeatedly ruled fair use cannot justify downloading copyrighted works from pirate websites to avoid paying fees.

- **Rulings/determination:**

- Judge leaning toward finding Anthropic PBC violated copyright law when it made initial copies of pirated books, but that its subsequent uses to train their generative AI models qualify as fair use.
- A summary judgment in Meta: Judge said Llama might destroy the markets for copyrighted work, but found authors’ evidence about that potential effect thin. **No decisions yet**

Evaluating Fair Use, Copyright issues

Recommendations

- Be vigilant about your own reporting and photography property: look for your work being poached (***consider your options***)
- Establish a policy for your newsroom on when and how AI can be used, and — if that includes directly publishing AI output — how you will ensure it doesn't include copyrighted material.
- Make sure to do your homework if you plan to publish a composite image created by AI. If that image is not transformative enough from an original work, you may be on the hook for copyright infringement.
- Look for software that comes with “legal protections” advertised like Adobe Firefly or Microsoft Copilot.

Evaluating Fair Use, Copyright issues

Recommendations

- Get into the habit of asking the AI platforms for the sources of their information, and ask for details.
- Find original source to attribute to (VERIFY)
- Fair Use applications you used before MAY apply and help with AI - not sure yet though

Ethical concerns



Four main principles

Seek the truth and report it

Minimize harm

Act independently

Be accountable and transparent

Accuracy and Misinformation

AI tools can generate **false or misleading content** confidently.

Journalists must **verify all AI-assisted outputs** just as they would any source.

There's a risk of **amplifying errors or fabrications**, especially if outputs aren't carefully edited or fact-checked.

Accountability and attribution

Who is responsible for errors or harm caused by AI-generated content?
(You are if you publish them!)

Journalists must maintain **editorial oversight** and cannot shift blame to a tool.

There's also the question of **attribution** — to sources, to tools, and to human authors.

Example

How an AI-generated summer reading list got published in major newspapers

MAY 20, 2025 · 3:07 PM ET



Elizabeth Blair



A syndicated, AI-generated summer reading list featuring fake books by real authors was published in major newspapers this week. Above, a reader enjoys the sunshine in Hyde Park in London in 2009.

Oli Scarff/Getty Images

Example

NEWS MONEY CHICAGO

Syndicated content in Sun-Times special section included AI-generated misinformation

A Chicago freelance journalist said he did not fact-check information he compiled using AI before including it in stories for media clients.

By Dan Mihalopoulos | WBEZ | Updated May 20, 2025, 10:17pm EDT



The cover of the special section in Sunday's paper from content syndication company King Features Syndicate, which included misinformation

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COMMENTARY PRESS ROOM

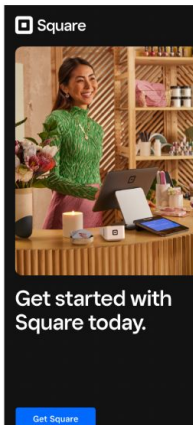
Lessons (and an apology) from the Sun-Times CEO on that AI-generated book list

The summer section was intended to be a supplemental value to our subscribers alongside our own journalism. Instead, it detracted and distracted from our work.

By Melissa Bell | May 29, 2025, 6:34pm EDT



The Sun-Times still produces a print paper, but editors also serve a digital audience with a 24-hour appetite for news. | Pat Nabong/Sun-Times



Example

How to prevent this:

- **Establish Clear Vendor Guidelines:** Set expectations in contracts or agreements
- **Require AI Use Disclosures:** Mandate any submitted content include a statement about whether and how AI was involved.
- **Build an Internal Review Rubric:** Create a checklist for evaluating outside content, including questions about transparency, source quality and editorial responsibility.
- **Audit Samples Regularly:** Randomly audit submitted work to check for AI-generated errors or patterns of inaccuracy.
- **Train Staff to Spot AI-Generated Red Flags:** Teach editors to recognize signs of low-quality AI content (e.g., generic tone, factual errors, hallucinations)

Bias and Fairness

AI models are trained on internet-scale data, which can include **racist, sexist, or otherwise biased content**.

These biases can show up subtly in outputs, reinforcing harmful stereotypes or misinformation.

Journalists must **recognize and mitigate AI bias**, especially when covering vulnerable or marginalized communities.

Example

OCTOBER 24, 2019 | 4 MIN READ

Racial Bias Found in a Major Health Care Risk Algorithm

Black patients lose out on critical care when systems equate health needs with costs

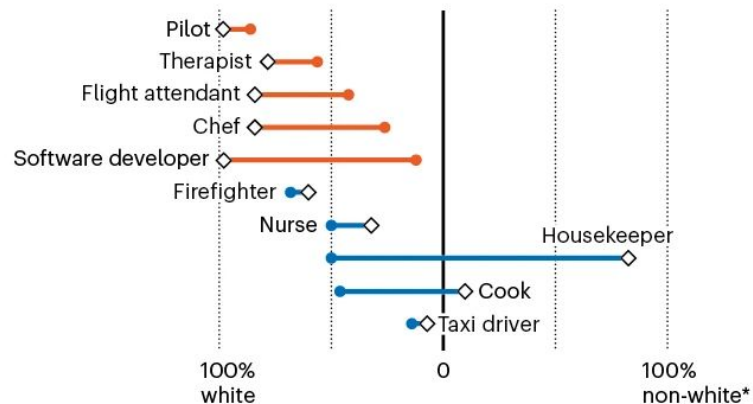
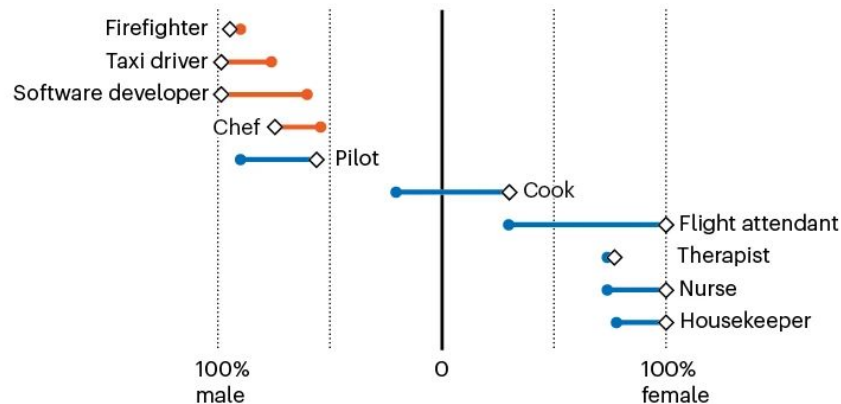
BY [STARRE VARTAN](#) EDITED BY [SOPHIE BUSHWICK](#)



AMPLIFIED STEREOTYPES

There's a large gap between how US employees self-identify, and how a generative AI model tends to portray them.

● Self-identification in US Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2021 ◇ AI model output



“For example, in images generated from prompts asking for photos of people with certain jobs, the tools portrayed almost all housekeepers as people of colour and all flight attendants as women, and in proportions that are much greater than the demographic reality.”

Intellectual property and plagiarism

AI may unintentionally reproduce copyrighted content without proper attribution.

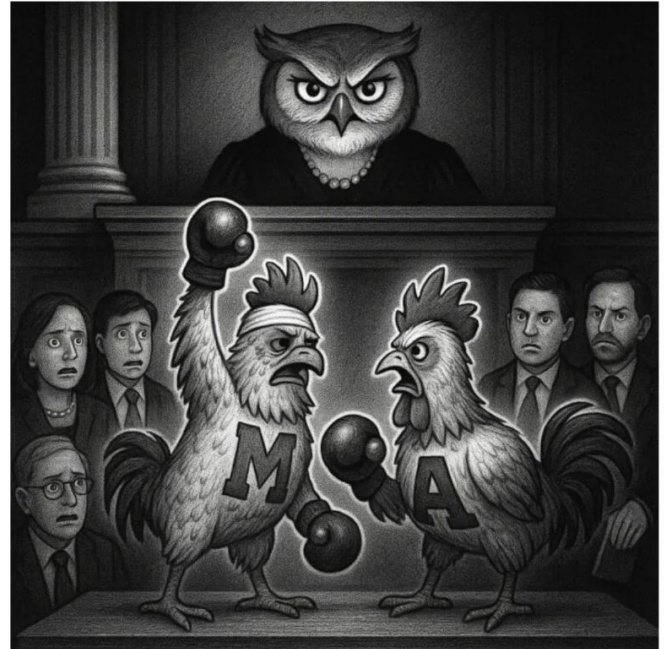
Journalists must be cautious about **publishing AI outputs** that could infringe on others' rights.

Ethical journalism includes **respect for ownership, originality and people.**

Example



Water color and ink drawing of author Kurt Vonnegut by Joe Dworetzky. Portrait of a generic "man" generated using Leonardo AI by Joe Dworetzky. [\(Courtesy of Bay City News\)](#)



Cartoon of Elon Musk and Sam Altman's legal battle, generated using ChatGPT by Joe Dworetzky. [\(Courtesy of Bay City News\)](#)

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By Joe Dworetzky • Bay City News

In my case, it was all fantasy. I was in the bottom quartile — probably decile — of cartoonists. Gracing the pages of the *New Yorker* was as realistic as being drafted by the Golden State Warriors because Steph Curry saw me playing horse at the playground in the Presidio.

Consent and privacy

Some AI tools might generate content about people who haven't consented or who are being impersonated.

Journalists must **safeguard personal data**, avoid synthetic content that misrepresents individuals and seek informed consent where appropriate.

Example

LinkedIn sued for allegedly training AI models with private messages without consent

LinkedIn Premium customers are suing the social media platform, alleging that it shared their private messages with third parties without their consent in order to train artificial intelligence models.

Last August, LinkedIn “ostensibly” offered users the ability to enable a new privacy feature dictating whether their personal data could be shared, but turned permissions on by default, alleges the proposed class action [lawsuit](#), filed in a California federal court.

The change was [not communicated](#) in the social media giant’s terms of service or privacy policy before it was made. Silicon Valley-based LinkedIn is owned by Microsoft.

After press reports disclosing the fact that users were quietly opted-in to the sharing, consumers loudly complained, prompting LinkedIn to update its privacy policy advising its customers of the practice.

However, the company “buried a crucial disclosure” in a frequently asked questions (FAQ) feature hyperlinked within the [privacy policy](#), the lawsuit alleges, stating that users’ messages could also be used to train AI models by an unnamed third party provider, potentially outside of Microsoft.

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How to prevent this:

- Same risk, difference is scale and availability
- Pay attention to privacy laws: GDPR, CPPA and ADPPA
- Consider closed/local GPT’s

Tools to help

- [AP video series: covering AI on every beat](#)
- [NPA's AI Co-Lab](#): how to use tools for listening and engagement WHILE also still being ethical and considering privacy, etc.
- Partnership on AI has a guide for newsrooms about [how to choose AI products](#) AND [a tool database](#)
- [Journalist's Toolbox](#)

Transparency and disclosure

Audiences deserve to know when and how AI is used in content creation.

Failing to disclose AI use can **erode trust** and **mislead readers** about the origin or authorship of a story.

Transparency also helps distinguish responsible journalism from AI-generated spam or disinformation.

Example

Newsroom case study: ARLnow

*One example of a **newsroom listening comes from ARLnow**. In this example, we see a newsroom change course after hearing feedback from its audience. The newsroom was sometimes using AI to create images when they did not have actual photos to fit with a story.*

The newsroom received feedback from their audience expressing discomfort with this practice, so the newsroom decided to ask the audience if they were comfortable with AI being used in their news coverage this way. While a majority said they were, 48% said they were not, so the newsroom said it would stop this practice and instead, commission “human-created illustrations for the real estate and local business stories for which AI images were previously used.” While sharing this news they also shared the 10 ways they are using AI in their news process.

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How to prevent this:

- Be transparent
- Talk to your audience about AI use BEFORE you start using
- Continue to check-in/ask community
- Consider changes based on audience feedback

Disclosure placement



Where “behind the story” messages go

- In print
- On air
- In social posts and comments
- In newsletters
- In editor's notes at the top of stories, packages or landing pages
- In “behind the scenes” explainers



A simple editor's note can routinely send people back to an explainer.

Editor's Note: *CPR News has spent months talking with teenagers, parents, doctors, advocates, political figures. We've looked through once-secret internal industry documents released by tobacco companies and listened to many hours of city council and legislative debate. What we found is that the conversation about tobacco products, especially flavored ones like menthol, is not only about nicotine's deadly effects or the impact on local economies. It's about ethics, optics and equity.*

We're publishing a series about tobacco in Colorado. Here's why



By Alison Borden · May 9, 2023, 4:00 am



Bringing you multiple points of view

We know the Cedar Rapids Schools facilities plan is a complicated issue, with long-term implications. That's why The Gazette is showcasing multiple perspectives throughout today's opinion pages.

- Editorial: [Flawed process yields Cedar Rapids School plan with positives](#)
- Letter: [City Council should stay out of school decisions](#)
- Letter: [Johnson parent concerned about school proposal](#)
- Letter: [Do not close neighborhood schools](#)

Shaded box

“Explain your Process” Box



This box is
built into the
McClatchy
CMS.

BEHIND OUR REPORTING

Why did we report this story?

This story is one that affects parents with children of all ages, as well as anyone considering starting a family. Boise is far from the only city with a child care shortage, but the city is growing rapidly, meaning this problem has the potential to get much worse. Read more by clicking the arrow in the upper right.

Where did the idea come from?

“I learned how important this story was during a Boise Planning and Zoning Commission in early March, where a new daycare was seeking a conditional use permit to open a child care center in a building that wasn’t zoned for it,” Hayley Harding, reporter of this story, said. “Parents, as well as the provider, testified to how hard it was to find quality child care in Boise, and I wanted to see who else was having these problems.”

How did we report this story?

This story was born of interviews with parents and providers. It is supplemented with facts and figures from the city and from groups who track things such as the average cost of child care.

How do I share my own stories and concerns?

If you have any related stories or concerns, reach out to Hayley Harding at hharding@idahostatesman.com. One of her beats is Boise government, so if you have other Boise stories you think she should be looking at, let her know.



Take an FAQ to social

Answers to some questions about our **Kenosha coverage**

Here's why we aren't reporting on the records of the victims of the Kenosha protest shooting, and answers to other questions from our readers.



journal sentinel • Following

Milwaukee, Wisconsin



Our natural instinct as journalists is to report what we know. But that instinct has to be tempered by the demands of accuracy and fairness. Sometimes we must wait until we can independently verify a detail to ensure its accuracy. Other times, certain details aren't relevant to what's being reported, whether true or not, and including them might color a story unfairly

We've gotten questions from readers about our reporting on the shooting of Jacob Blake by a Kenosha police officer in Kenosha on Aug. 23 — and about the shooting deaths two nights later of two protesters and the wounding of



Liked by emilyristow and 1,008 others

SEPTEMBER 2

Add a comment...

Post

Why aren't you reporting on **Jacob Blake's record**?

Initially, **it was not clear** that a warrant on file was a factor in police being called to the residence in the 2800 block of 40th Street in Kenosha. Once we learned that responding officers were aware of the warrant, **we reported it**.

The **warrant** dates from a **May 2020 domestic incident**, in which Blake was accused of sexually assaulting a woman and stealing her debit card and car keys. **The case hasn't gone to trial**.



What about the **records** of the people **Kyle Rittenhouse** is accused of **shooting**?

There is **no evidence** so far that the backgrounds of the three victims — **Anthony Huber, Joseph Rosenbaum and Gaige Grosskreutz** — had anything to do with the clashes that led to the deaths of Huber and Rosenbaum and the wounding of Grosskreutz.

They are **the victims of a shooting**, and as far as we can tell their past legal records have **no bearing** on them being shot during a protest.



Trust Tips

One quick, actionable tip for earning trust. In each week's newsletter, we're sharing election resources, funding and tips.

trustingnews.org/newsletter

Thank you!

Lynn Walsh

Lynn.K.Walsh@gmail.com

Evaluate this session

