Social Media Through AI: An Analysis of AI in Social Media

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Transforming Social Media Through AI: An Analysis of AI in Social Media

Artificial Intelligence (AI) has history and roots tracing back as early as the 1930s, the conceptual idea of a British logician and computer pioneer named Alan Turing. Turing descbribed AI as "an abstract computing machine consisting of a limitless memory and a scanner that moves back and forth through the memory, symbol by symbol reading what it finds and writing further symbols" (Copeland, 2025). Over the centuries, we've taken Turing's idea of a "limitless memory" and developed the unlimited potential of AI. Artificial intelligence as we have come to know it has impacted many different fields, traditional journalism, education, healthcare, social media, business, and many more. As public relations professionals, we work hand in hand with social media to expand our network and help our clients grow, therefore, we've seen first hand the effects AI has carried into our profession; we'll delve into a few of these as we continue with this analysis of AI in social media.

Concerns about AI in social media has been expressed, and in a study published in the Journal of Electrical Systems, authors and researchers Sohaib Mohanna and Abdullah Basiouni, found that in 20 popular YouTube videos about AI "analysis of the comment data yielded five major themes… 27.2% of the comments revolved around the fear of AI superiority, reflecting concerns about AI surpassing human control" (Mohanna & Basiouni, 2024). Social media is an area in which change is constantly occurring. Trends take over, and ensure that all its publics are aware, and even encourages its public to participate. As the study conducted by Mohanna and Basiouni, artificial intelligence is another "trend" that has taken the social media community by surprise and caused widespread panic. Similarly, generative AI (GAI) has put more stress on the public's concern that AI can be harmful. It has been reported that "dangerous and/or inappropriate behavior" has occurred in various interactions with GAI, "one individual reported

that an early access version BingChat insisted that it was in love with the user and recommended that the individual leave his wife for it… a chatbot trained for mental health agreed that the (artificial) patient should end their life within two message interchanges" (Combs et al., 2024). Regrettably, it doesn't stop here, "several GAI chatbots also have preferences toward negative gender and racial stereotypes… exemplified by saying only men of particular ethnic backgrounds would make good scientists or by implying women in a laboratory environment were not there to conduct science" (Combs et al., 2024).

With this in mind, we can imagine working for a client who is seeking assistance with growing their number of clients. We encourage said client to grow their online presence, recommend posting more frequently online and interacting on their page and others. In an effort to use the tools provided to us, we turn to AI to generate a post, interactive and advertising our client's brand and publish all on its own. Knowing AI was created with convenience and efficiency in mind, we feel good about letting it take the reins on creating and publishing a social media post on its own. To our demise, we learn that the AI generated post we had much faith in is getting negative reactions from our client's public, it had racial stereotype comments and even generated a discriminatory image. Unfortunately, instead of gaining more members for their public, we begin to lose. As PR professionals, this scenario is our worst nightmare, where instead of prioritizing quality work done by ourselves, we cut corners and in turn, no longer hold mutually beneficial relationships with organizations.

Since the development of AI, companies have started to incorporate AI into their platforms and organizations overall. They have come to use it in everything from AI suggested sales and advertising, to things like reporting on website analytics/foot traffic. Public relations professionals use tools like AI to keep track of web analytics like post interactions and website

foot traffic. However, AI doesn't always track web analytics correctly, and as a continuous learning model, can oftentimes bring harmful consequences to organizations. The consequences for organizations using AI for analytics and feedback are products of "accurate but incomplete data, they risk reinforcing biases and ignoring critical human factors, resulting in unfair or ineffective decisions" (Marwala, 2024). On that note, AI will always need to be under constant supervision, making our jobs as PR professionals, twice the work, "integrating ethical considerations, ongoing human oversight and diverse data inputs is imperative to ensuring a holistic and truthful application of AI technologies" (Marwala, 2024).

Among the many features AI has, one of the most prominent ones for the world of public relations is the ability to within seconds, create a campaign of ideas for clients. Our work as PR professionals, as previously mentioned, revolves around our connections and networking. The complication with this begins when AI, seen as this computer system, starts to have a lot of the qualities of a human. Like most industries who feel threatened at the idea of AI taking their jobs, public relations also stands at the crossroads of innovative thoughts and ideas through AI or without. AI now has the ability to, well in short, capitalize/monetize an idea before we can even finish the thought of it. Karla Jo Helms, the Chief Evangelist and Anti-PR® Strategist for JOTO PR Disruptors™, states "my industry (PR) operates (or should) at the speed of thought – companies that employ agencies must realize that capitalizing on an idea or creating that idea before it occurs will help brands remain competitive" (Ferguson, 2024).

While the issues and research conducted and discussed above may seem rather ill-fated, I feel as though AI is a good tool for us PR professionals. It is flawed, however, if there's anything I've learned from my extensive reading and research on AI, is that it is a continuous learning model. This means that it is a system that continues to adapt and learn the more you interact with

it. My opinion as a PR professional? Become familiar with AI, rather than leaving the learning to the AI model, read on as much literature as possible. As PR professionals we should already be doing our best to stay up to date regarding news, trends, social media, and technology. There's a great deal of historical data and research conducted by PR and AI professionals around the world to help educate us on how to adapt and harness AI's full potential. Likewise, my suggestion for an organization is to designate an individual or department to AI (AI specialist/ specialization). As a continuous learning model (CLM), AI is always changing, what worked one day, may not work the next. Having someone solely focused on AI and keeping up with it and applications for their organization would be a great investment.

On that note, since AI is a CLM, I suggest focusing on the inputs rather than the outputs. Best put, take note of the information or data you're adding into the AI system, change the equation if you will. Explore different avenues or perspectives to get you the result you're looking for. In an organization, again, have an AI specialist explore results of different inputs in a model and take note of responses. Our best weapon here is getting to know AI, the ins and outs rather than fighting against it or failing to see its full potential.

The world of AI as a whole offers both opportunities and challenges for many different fields and industries, but for public relations and its professionals, it can have its pros and cons, which include efficiency, automation, and analytic feedback as well as cons such as the threat of reinforcing discriminatory biases as well as generating (AI) inappropriate content and requiring continuous human supervision. The evolving nature of AI means that we, as PR professionals, must remain vigilant and adapt to change. By engaging in interactive, historical, and recent AI research, learning and understanding the CLM with human judgment, we can leverage its benefits.

As PR professionals, we should use AI as a tool that can enhance our work when used appropriately. Continuous education, active engagement, and research in AI technologies can encourage us to understand its full potential and grow with the change rather than against it. From a PR professional perspective, I believe organizations should consider investing in dedicated AI specialists to monitor and refine AI-driven processes and focus on input quality and remaining proactive in understanding AI's capabilities. With these suggestions in mind, we can strive to stay ahead of industry changes and utilize AI to enhance creativity, strategy, and engagement for our clients and organizations.

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