

EIDOSMEDIA

The Impact of AI on the newsroom

FROM PRESENT PRACTICE TO FUTURE PROSPECTS



Sofia Giannuzzi

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Preface

About the Author

Sofia Giannuzzi is a graduate student at the University of Oxford, where she is pursuing an MSc in Digital Scholarship as an Ertegun Scholar. Her research explores how emerging technologies, particularly artificial intelligence, reshape the ways we tell stories, spanning areas such as AI-generated fiction and newswriting. Sofia's work has appeared in *IEEE Computer Architecture Letters* and *Smithsonian Magazine*, and she presented at the 2024 ACM Conference on Equity and Access in Algorithms, Mechanisms, and Optimization.

Defining AI for Report Purposes

In this report, the term “artificial intelligence” (AI) is used to refer to generative systems based on large language models, or LLMs. The report also includes discussions of tools, platforms, and applications that are built on top of these models.

The report is the product of an independent study carried out by the author during an internship at Eidosmedia in summer 2025.

1. Introduction

“AI has the potential to be more transformative than electricity or fire,” said Sundar Pichai, the CEO of Google.¹

Though perhaps erring on the side of melodrama, Pichai’s quote feels true in regard to the recent AI inferno that has engulfed publishing companies worldwide. David Caswell, AI and digital media expert, has said that AI has brought us to a threshold of massive change comparable to the introduction of the iPhone, the internet, and even the printing press.² Similarly, a recent report by the Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism at Oxford University found

that 87% of digital leaders believe the newsroom is being transformed by AI.³

“Transformative” is exactly the right word when it comes to how AI is affecting news media. According to the World Press Freedom Day 2025 executive summary, it is redefining how we discover, interact with, and distribute information, as well as how journalists practice the profession.⁴

It is even revolutionizing reader preferences, with audiences increasingly moving over to AI applications to receive news.⁵ As a result, Gartner predicts that traffic for a more traditional route of consuming news—through online search engines—will fall 25% by 2026.⁶ This trend is especially noticeable

¹ Dominique A. Harroch and Richard Harroch, “15 Quotes on the Future of AI,” *Time*, April 25, 2025, <https://time.com/partner-article/7279245/15-quotes-on-the-future-of-ai/>.

² Alexandre Gravel, “AI and Journalism: 11 Learnings and 11 Questions for Content Marketers,” *Toast Studio*, April 1, 2024, <https://www.toaststudio.com/en/articles/ai-and-journalism-11-learnings-and-11-questions-for-content-marketers/>.

³ Nic Newman and Federica Cherubini, “Journalism, Media, and Technology Trends and Predictions 2025,” *Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism*, January 9, 2025, <https://reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk/journalism-media-and-technology-trends-and-predictions-2025>.

⁴ UNESCO, *World Press Freedom Day 2025: Reporting in the Brave New World: The Impact*

of Artificial Intelligence on Press Freedom and the Media; Concept Note; Executive Summary, World Press Freedom Day International Conference, 2025 (Paris: UNESCO, 2025), 1, https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf00003_92965.locale=en.

⁵ Nic Newman, with Amy Ross Arguedas, Craig T. Robertson, Rasmus Kleis Nielsen, and Richard Fletcher, *Digital News Report 2025* (Oxford: Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism, 2025), 11, <https://doi.org/10.60625/risj-8qqf-jt36>.

⁶ Gartner, “Gartner Predicts Search-Engine Volume Will Drop 25 Percent by 2026 Due to AI Chatbots and Other Virtual Agents,” press release, February 19, 2024, <https://www.gartner.com/en/newsroom/press-releases/2024-02-19-gartner-predicts-search-engine-volume-will-drop-25-percent-by-2026-due-to-ai-chatbots-and-other-virtual-agents>.

amongst young people, many of whom prefer the ease of access and personalization that comes with AI-driven news content.⁷

“... younger audiences and their evolving preferences are driving this new, technologically savvy bus.”

Through these shifts, one fact is clear: AI is reinventing the wheel when it comes to how news is created and consumed. And if AI is reinventing the wheel, younger audiences and their evolving preferences are driving this new, technologically savvy bus.

But, while AI’s influence on media may feel unprecedented, it reflects a much

longer history of audiences, especially young people, forcing journalism to adapt to new formats.

Since the printing press first began replacing hand-copied manuscripts, media groups have learned to embrace technological change as opportunities for new kinds of journalism.⁸ In the 1920s, radio news became popular, pushing media organizations away from print journalism.⁹ In the 1970s, televised network news became more popular than newspapers, the dominant form of news consumption since the mid-1950s.¹⁰ Then, as the internet gained traction, digital media began to pull audience attention away from print or broadcast news.¹¹ Only a few years later, young audiences moved to social media, forcing news outlets to once again

⁷ Newman et al., *Digital News Report 2025*, 11.

⁸ Javier Díaz Noci, “A History of Journalism on the Internet: A State of the Art and Some Methodological Trends,” *RIHC. Revista Internacional de Historia de la Comunicación* 1 (2013): 253–72, at 257, <https://doi.org/10.12795/RiHC.2013.i01.12>.

⁹ Michele Hilmes, “The Broadcast Radio Era,” in *A Companion to the History of American Broadcasting*, ed. Aniko Bodroghkozy (Hoboken, NJ: Wiley-Blackwell, 2018), <https://doi.org/10.1002/9781118646151.ch2>; Edward Bliss Jr., *Now the News: The Story of Broadcast Journalism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010), 41.

¹⁰ Kristen Heflin, “The Future Will Be Televised: Newspaper Industry Voices and the Rise of Television News,” *American Journalism* 27, no. 1 (2010): 87–110, <https://doi.org/10.1080/08821127.2010.10677774>.

¹¹ Joanne Teoh Kheng Yau and Suliman Al-Hawamdeh, “The Impact of the Internet on Teaching and Practicing Journalism,” *Journal of Electronic Publishing* 7, no. 1 (August 2001), <https://quod.lib.umich.edu/jjep/3336451.0007.102/-/impact-of-the-internet-on-teaching-and-practicing-journalism?rgn=main;view=fulltext>.

change how they approached reporting.¹²

The underlying principle is always the same: tech advancements catch the attention of (often younger) audiences, forcing media companies into new formats and innovations. Like Sisyphus with the boulder, as soon as news organizations reach the heights of mastering a new technology trend, some emerging innovation sends it back to the bottom.

While these changes are disruptive and may even seem insurmountable to the journalism world, they have yet to break it—the same holds true in the age of AI. Once again placed at the bottom of the hill, media organizations have already begun pushing this autonomous, algorithmic boulder back up.

“It only took news organizations a few months to introduce AI to the newsroom,” said Benoît Georges, head project manager of AI at *Les Echos*. “The thing

is, we’ve done digital disruption before. We’ve adapted to social networks, to the Internet, and we’ve gotten better as we go.”¹³

“The transition from print to online journalism gave us the ability to manage content in unique ways and tell stories however we wanted,” said Nathalie Malinarich, Executive Editor in Digital Development and AI at the BBC. “It’s the same thing with AI—we can use AI to tell stories and reach people differently than ever before.”¹⁴

Artificial intelligence will undoubtedly transform the media world—it is doing so already. However, it will not break out like the fire Pichai described. Rather, it will consist of a slow, steady reinvention in the way that we tell the news, and a natural progression into the next phase of journalism.

¹² Jane Wakefield, “Social Media ‘Outstrips TV’ as News Source for Young People,” *BBC News*, June 15, 2016, <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-36528256>; Nieman Lab Staff, “For the First Time, Social Media Overtakes TV as Americans’ Top News Source,” *Nieman Journalism Lab*, June 16, 2025, <https://www.niemanlab.org/2025/06/for-the-first-time-social-media-overtakes-tv-as-americans-top-news-source/>; Nic Newman, *The Rise of Social Media and Its Impact on*

Mainstream Journalism (Oxford: Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism, 2009), 3, <https://reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk/sites/default/files/2017-11/The%20rise%20of%20social%20media%20and%20its%20impact%20on%20mainstream%20journalism.pdf>.

¹³ Benoît Georges, interview by author, Microsoft Teams, July 11, 2025.

¹⁴ Nathalie Malinarich, interview by author, Microsoft Teams, July 18, 2025.

... we can use AI to tell stories and reach people differently than ever before.

Nathalie Malinarich, BBC Executive Editor in Digital Development and AI.

In the following report, we explain some ways that AI has already affected the journalism ecosystem, as well as predictions and recommendations for how news organizations can adjust to these changes in the next few years. It is our intention to help media companies and Eidosmedia clients develop a roadmap that can help them step into this new age of AI in the newsroom. In particular, this report is authored both by and with an eye towards younger audiences, who will soon become the main consumers of news.

In pursuit of this work, we conducted interviews with industry experts, AI technologists, media consultants, and news leaders, and drew on surveys and data from reputable sources. For questions about our work or predictions, please contact author Sofia Giannuzzi or Eidosmedia.

2. Threats and opportunities

When OpenAI launched ChatGPT-3 in November of 2022, consequently “bringing generative AI into the public consciousness,” the entire media industry felt the shift.¹⁵ Though Natural Language Processing (NLP) tools have been used to assist journalism since the 1980s, this new form of general-purpose chatbot changed conceptions as to how AI could assist writing, or even fully automate it.¹⁶

While this capacity for human-less writing struck fear into the hearts of some, it put dollar signs in the eyes of many others. Despite initial trepidation, media companies soon jumped on the bandwagon, hoping to cut costly corners by implementing AI into their own newsrooms.

“There was a really interesting moment in a meeting where it became clear that the policy had just flipped overnight,” said an anonymous digital media executive in *Journalism Zero*.¹⁷ “Previously it had been, ‘Hey, we’re researching and approaching this with caution’... Then overnight it was, ‘Your 2024 goal is to use AI as much as you can.’”¹⁸

The numbers reflect a change in mentality, too. AI spending in 2024 was over six times that of 2023, jumping from \$2.3 billion to \$13.8 billion.¹⁹ While only 20% of newsrooms even had AI guidelines in place in May 2023, The World Association of Newspapers and News Publishers’ (WAN-IFRA) *World Press Trends Outlook 2024-2025* found that a whopping 87% of senior media

¹⁵ Peter Brown and Klaudia Jaźwińska, *Journalism Zero: How Platforms and Publishers Are Navigating AI* (New York: Tow Center for Digital Journalism, Columbia Journalism School, May 15, 2025), 5, https://www.cjr.org/tow_center_reports/journalism-zero-how-platforms-and-publishers-are-navigating-ai.php.

¹⁶ George Ogola, “Between Fear and Hope: Generative AI, ChatGPT and Journalism,” in *The Palgrave Handbook of Global Digital Journalism*, ed. Scott Eldridge II and Farida Vis

(Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2024), 214, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-59379-6_13.

¹⁷ Brown and Jaźwińska, *Journalism Zero*, 20.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Tim Tully, Joff Redfern, and Derek Xiao, with Claude Sonnet 3.5, *2024: The State of Generative AI in the Enterprise* (Menlo Park, CA: Menlo Ventures, November 20, 2024), <https://menlovc.com/2024-the-state-of-generative-ai-in-the-enterprise/>.

executives were “invest[ing] heavily in areas such as AI and automation.”²⁰

Dr. Felix Simon, Research Fellow in AI and News at the Reuters Institute, writes in *Artificial Intelligence in the News* that this quick shift towards AI innovation was likely a symphony of several factors—the ongoing, forceful waves of new tech, intense market pressure, competition to innovate, and some combination of hope, fear, and excitement.²¹ But the external and internal stressors to speedily innovate without any clear end goal led many organizations astray.

Katharina Schell, the Deputy Editor-in-Chief of the Austrian Press Agency, notes that experimentation with AI in the newsroom often felt like it led nowhere.

“You have shiny prototypes, proofs of concept and so on,” Schell said at AI and the Future of News 2025, “and then you don’t know what to do with them.”²²

Media’s hunt for AI uses in the newsroom quickly devolved to a dog chasing its tail—though valiant efforts at innovation were made, no one was quite sure what to do with the results. In the process, newsrooms discovered that blindly integrating AI is not inherently transformative.²³

Instead, new technology should be used to keep up with the evolving needs of consumers. Importantly, the needs of consumers *are* changing, especially as a younger generation of readers takes center stage.

²⁰ Teemu Henriksson, “New Survey Finds Half of Newsrooms Use Generative AI Tools; Only 20% Have Guidelines in Place,” *WAN-IFRA*, May 25, 2023, <https://wan-ifra.org/2023/05/new-genai-survey/>; WAN-IFRA, *World Press Trends Outlook 2024–2025* (Frankfurt: WAN-IFRA, January 2025), 40.

²¹ Felix M. Simon, *Artificial Intelligence in the News: How AI Retools, Rationalizes, and Reshapes Journalism and the Public Arena* (New York: Tow Center for Digital Journalism, February 6, 2024), 3, https://www.cjr.org/tow_center_reports/artificial-intelligence-in-the-news.php.

²² Marina Adami, Gretel Kahn, and Eduardo Suárez, “AI and the Future of News 2025: What We Learnt About How Its Impact on Coverage, Newsrooms and Society,” *Reuters Institute*,

March 27, 2025, <https://reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk/news/ai-and-future-news-2025-what-we-learnt-about-how-its-impact-coverage-newsrooms-and-society>.

²³ Neha Gupta, “‘No Longer Optional’: Why AI Is Now a Strategic Priority for Journalism,” *WAN-IFRA*, April 10, 2025, <https://wan-ifra.org/2025/04/no-longer-optional-why-ai-is-now-a-strategic-priority-for-journalism/>; David Caswell, “We Need to Bridge the Fault Line Emerging in Debates About AI and the Future of News,” *Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism*, April 17, 2025, <https://reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk/news/we-need-bridge-fault-line-emerging-debates-about-ai-and-future-news>; Georges, interview by author, July 11, 2025.

As previously stated, young audiences have been increasingly migrating to AI-powered search applications or platforms to stay informed.²⁴ They are also increasingly using social media, with users under 35-years-old predominantly citing social media as their main source of news.²⁵ The movement to these platforms reflects preferences for new forms of content, such as short-form videos, audio, podcasts, and “news influencers” or creators.²⁶

That is to say, if these audiences still choose to interact with the news at all. News consumption, in general, is declining amongst younger generations—an International News

Media Association (INMA) report describes this trend as a reflection of “news fatigue, trust issues, and the overwhelming nature of digital content,” with 39% of global news consumers feeling “worn-out.”²⁷

Interestingly, many experts argue that the solution to these problems lies in the capacities afforded by AI. For instance, the Reuters Institute’s *Digital News Report 2025* stated that, with the increase of news avoidance, there are benefits in using AI to personalize content specifically for young people.²⁸

²⁴ Newman et al., *Digital News Report 2025*, 11, 12; Jack Benjamin, “Publishers Say Google’s AI Overviews Have Reduced Traffic Potential,” *The Media Leader*, November 26, 2024, <https://uk.themedialeaders.com/publishers-say-googles-ai-overviews-have-reduced-traffic-potential/>; Newman and Cherubini, “*Journalism, Media, and Technology Trends and Predictions 2025*”; Felps, *As Search Ends for News*.

²⁵ Newman et al., *Digital News Report 2025*, 12; Felps, *As Search Ends for News*; Paula Felps, *How Media Companies Can Combat News Avoidance* (Minneapolis: International News Media Association [INMA], February 2025), <https://www.inma.org/report/how-media-companies-can-combat-news-avoidance>.

²⁶ Newman et al., *Digital News Report 2025*, 10; Newman and Cherubini, “*Journalism, Media, and Technology Trends and Predictions 2025*”;

Aliya Itzkowitz, Ben Whitelaw, Daisy Donald, George Montagu, Jeremy Gilbert, Joe Germuska, Lamberto Lambertini, Liat Fainman-Adelman, and Tran Ha, *Next Gen News: Understanding the Audiences of 2030* (Next Gen News, supported by the Google News Initiative, 2024), <https://www.next-gen-news.com/downloadreport.pdf>.

²⁷ Felps, *How Media Companies Can Combat News Avoidance*, 4, 5; Newman et al., *Digital News Report 2025*, 28; C. T. Robertson, “People Are Turning Away from the News. Here’s Why It May Be Happening,” *Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism*, April 3, 2025, <https://reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk/news/people-are-turning-away-news-heres-why-it-may-be-happening>.

²⁸ Newman et al., *Digital News Report 2025*, 10; Felps, *How Media Companies Can Combat News Avoidance*, 29.

“GenAI opens the door to a whole other level of personalisation. For the first time, the user can pick how they would like to receive content.”

Sonali Verma, Generative AI Initiative Lead at
INMA.

In other words, AI affords news organizations the capacity to meet young consumers in the modes that they prefer—such as through social media, podcasts, or summarized texts—as a result of AI’s ability to make content liquid, or easily adaptable across format and style. In fact, leveraging AI “to ‘hand over’ control of formats to consumers” is one of the main suggestions made by FT Strategies and the Knight Lab in the recently published *Next Gen News* report.²⁹

“GenAI opens the door to a whole other level of personalisation,” writes Sonali Verma, Generative AI Initiative Lead at INMA. “For the first time, the user can

pick how they would like to receive content.”³⁰

In other words, while AI might not be the Band-Aid that blindly solves all of the issues that newsrooms face, it can help media companies adjust to the changing preferences of young consumers—but only if done right. In the following section, we discuss how newsrooms have already started using AI.

²⁹ Itzkowitz et al., *Next Gen News: Understanding the Audiences of 2030*.

³⁰ Sonali Verma, *How News Publishers Are Using GenAI Right Now* (Minneapolis:

International News Media Association [INMA], April 2024), 30, <https://www.inma.org/report/how-news-publishers-are-using-genai-right-now>.

3. AI in the newsroom – the state of play

AI integration has already made waves in how newsrooms operate, from internal administrative tasks, to writing and researching processes, and more. In this section, we describe how AI and the news are actively being brought together, as well as how audiences feel about it.

There's no question that the relationship between journalists and AI is, at best, fraught. A recent Pressat survey found that 57.2% of journalists worry that AI will replace jobs in journalism in the next few years, with 2% stating that they have already lost their jobs because of AI.³¹

Despite these journalistic trepidations, many media executives and leaders see value in the technology. An FT

³¹ Pressat, "57.2% of Journalists Fear AI Could Replace More Jobs in the Coming Years," *Pressat*, May 1, 2025, <https://pressat.co.uk/releases/572-of-journalists-fear-ai-could-replace-more-jobs-in-the-coming-years-800ea0a0e5a526d0df7cb1a4bbb1509d/>.

³² FT Strategies, "Behind the Headlines: How Journalists Really Feel About AI," *FT Strategies*, accessed September 13, 2025, <https://www.ftstrategies.com/en-gb/insights/behind-the-headlines-how-journalists-really-feel-about-ai>.

³³ Josh Dickey, "CEO of Europe's Largest Publisher Mandates AI Use in Newsrooms: 'You

Strategies report found that 57% of senior leaders are optimistic about AI's potential, while only 36% of editorial staff share their outlook.³²

But the tides have turned in alignment with leadership, and newsrooms are charging full steam ahead. Plainly put, journalists no longer have a choice—the mentality seems to be that if journalists do not employ AI in their work, entire news organizations will be left behind.³³ Nikita Roy, founder of Newsroom Robots Labs, argued in the "AI Trends in Journalism 2025" webinar that "every journalist needs to understand AI" because it is "as transformative as when computers first arrived in newsrooms."³⁴

To catch this innovation train, AI implementation in the newsroom has mainly centered on reducing inefficiencies, particularly around time

Only Have to Explain if You Didn't," *TheWrap*, July 16, 2025, <https://www.thewrap.com/ai-newsroom-mandate-publishing-mathias-dopfner-axel-springer/>; Brian Veseling, *AI in Action: 10 Global Use Cases* (Frankfurt: WAN-IFRA, May 2024), 4, <https://wan-ifra.org/insight/wan-ifras-fifth-ai-report-10-use-cases/>.

³⁴ Neha Gupta, "'No Longer Optional': Why AI Is Now a Strategic Priority for Journalism," *WAN-IFRA*, April 10, 2025, <https://wan-ifra.org/2025/04/no-longer-optional-why-ai-is-now-a-strategic-priority-for-journalism/>.

and money drains.³⁵ Journalists are using AI for repetitive processes such as transcription, translation, fact-checking, tagging metadata, editing, or generating story ideas and headlines.³⁶

Another popular use of AI in journalism is to provide summaries for longer texts. Nearly 40 newsrooms have adopted the IBM-developed AI tool called “Djinn,” which filters through swaths of documents to identify news-worthy events.³⁷ Reuters, on the other hand, has developed the Reuters’ Fact Genie, which scans longer documents and

suggests potential news alerts to journalists.³⁸

AI summarizations are also being offered on the user side, with the BBC recently announcing it will start publicly testing an AI tool which will help journalists provide “At a Glance” bullet-point summaries to longer articles, something that audiences—especially younger people—seem to enjoy.³⁹ Similarly, South Africa’s *The Daily Maverick* has offered “Daily Maverick Summaries” for the past few years, which uses OpenAI tools to provide summaries of their content.⁴⁰

³⁵ Felix M. Simon, *No Turning Back: AI’s Growing Role in News* (London: Aspen Digital, a program of the Aspen Institute, June 2025), 6, https://www.aspendigital.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/06/Aspen-Digital_No-Turning-Back_June-2025.pdf.

³⁶ Simon, *No Turning Back*, 7; Verma, *How News Publishers Are Using GenAI Right Now*, 14-16; Sonali Verma, “10 Problems GenAI Solves for News Media Companies,” *INMA*, August 22, 2024, <https://www.inma.org/press-release.cfm?article=Ten-problems-GenAI-solves-for-news-media-companies-focus-of-new-INMA-report>; Sonali Verma, “GenAI Tool Saves €500,000 Annually at OVB Media,” *Generative AI Initiative Blog*, INMA, May 13, 2024, <https://www.inma.org/blogs/Generative-AI-Initiative/post.cfm/genai-tool-saves-500-000-annually-at-ovb-media>; Georges, interview by author, July 11, 2025; Paula Felps, “Der Spiegel, The Times Share How They Put GenAI Tools to Work in the Newsroom,” *Generative AI Initiative Blog*, INMA, June 12, 2024, [\[AI-Initiative/post.cfm/der-spiegel-the-times-share-how-they-put-genai-tools-to-work-in-the-newsroom\]\(https://www.inma.org/blogs/Generative-AI-Initiative/post.cfm/der-spiegel-the-times-share-how-they-put-genai-tools-to-work-in-the-newsroom\).](https://www.inma.org/blogs/Generative-</p></div><div data-bbox=)

³⁷ Anabelle Nicoud, “Why Some Journalists Are Embracing AI After All,” *IBM Think*, May 29, 2025, <https://www.ibm.com/think/news/ai-responsible-profitable-media>.

³⁸ Neha Gupta, “From Lab to Newsroom: How Reuters Builds AI Tools Journalists Actually Use,” *WAN-IFRA*, April 14, 2025, <https://wan-ifra.org/2025/04/from-lab-to-newsroom-how-reuters-builds-ai-tools-journalists-actually-use/>.

³⁹ BBC, “BBC to Launch New Generative AI Pilots to Support News Production,” *BBC Media Centre*, July 2025, <https://www.bbc.com/mediacentre/2025/article/s/bbc-to-launch-new-generative-ai-pilots-to-support-news-production>.

⁴⁰ Lucinda Jordaan, “AI Use Cases: How GenAI Summaries Are Boosting Daily Maverick’s Readership,” *WAN-IFRA*, September 29, 2023, <https://wan-ifra.org/2023/09/ai-use-cases->

Some organizations have additionally been experimenting with personalized news playlists, or articles that can be read aloud with the help of AI text-to-speech tools.⁴¹ User-interactive chatbots, meant to help readers figure out what they want to read or glean specifics about articles, have also been gaining traction as of late, and are currently being developed or are in production at *The Washington Post*, *Forbes*, *Financial Times*, and *Bild*.⁴²

Some other examples of AI technology in the newsroom include things like live captioning, email marketing, customer

[how-genai-summaries-are-boosting-daily-mavericks-readership/](#).

⁴¹ Verma, “10 Problems GenAI Solves for News Media Companies,” 7; Sonali Verma, “Schibsted Is Making Audience Gains With AI-Driven Personalised Audio Playlists,” *Generative AI Initiative Blog*, INMA, August 18, 2024, <https://www.inma.org/blogs/Generative-AI-Initiative/post.cfm/schibsted-is-making-audience-gains-with-ai-driven-personalised-audio-playlists>; Georges, interview by author, July 11, 2025; TIME Staff, “How the TIME AI Audio Brief Was Built,” *TIME*, June 16, 2025, <https://time.com/7294142/time-ai-audio-brief/>; Business Insider Press Room, “Business Insider Launches AI-Powered Audio Briefing,” *Business Insider*, June 12, 2025, <https://www.businessinsider.com/business-insider-launches-ai-powered-audio-briefing-2025-6>.

⁴² WashPostPR, “The Washington Post Launches ‘Ask The Post AI,’ a New Search Experience,” *The Washington Post*, November 7, 2024; Eike Mitte, “Hey, what’s up?,” *Corporate Blog*, Axel Springer, September 6, 2023, <https://www.axelspringer.com/en/inside/hey-whats-up>; Carolyn Mahr and Sam Gould, “Ask

service calls, coding, game development, image generation, social media prompting, interactive texts, and related article algorithms.⁴³

Beyond these one-stop-shops, however, AI is also more broadly used to make content liquid. For instance, Particle, an app that pulls news stories from multiple sources, allows users to choose the mode by which they want to consume their content—whether through chatbot interactions, important quotes, or with answers to common questions.⁴⁴

FT,” *Financial Times*, accessed September 13, 2025, <https://ask.ft.com/signed-out?signin-url=https://accounts.ft.com/login?location=https://ask.ft.com/>; Verma, “10 Problems GenAI Solves for News Media Companies,” 5; Lamberto Lambertini, “Two Months In, What Has the FT Learned about Launching Its Own Generative AI Tool, AskFT,” *FT Strategies*, accessed September 13, 2025, <https://www.ftstrategies.com/en-gb/insights/what-has-the-ft-learned-about-launching-its-own-generative-ai-tool/>.

⁴³ WAN-IFRA, *World Press Trends Outlook 2024–2025*, 48; William Reed, “How William Reed Will Use Generative AI Tools,” *William Reed*, November 2023, <https://www.william-reed.com/how-william-reed-will-use-generative-ai-tools/>; Malinarich, interview by author, July 18, 2025; Verma, *How News Publishers Are Using GenAI Right Now*, 14–16; Steven Johnson, “Try Featured Notebooks on Selected Topics in NotebookLM,” *Google Blog*, *Google Labs*, July 14, 2025, <https://blog.google/technology/google-labs/notebooklm-featured-notebooks/>.

⁴⁴ Anabelle Nicoud, “Particle – a New Player in the AI News Game,” *WAN-IFRA*, November 18, 2024, <https://wan-ifra.org/2024/11/particle-a->

However, despite the many examples of AI usage in the newsroom, that does not mean that media companies are comfortable leaving AI applications to their own devices. Many media executives stress the importance of human editors working hand-in-hand with AI tools.⁴⁵ Without this oversight, AI news products can go astray—for example, Bloomberg’s “AI-Powered News Summaries” tool, launched in January 2025, has forced the company to issue over three dozen corrections.⁴⁶

“The younger you are, the more likely you are to trust AI, but there is a huge level of distrust in older generations.”

Nathalie Malinarich, BBC Executive Editor in Digital Development and AI.

Understandably, many media companies

[new-player-in-the-ai-news-game/](https://www.bloomberg.com/company/press/bloomberg-launches-gen-ai-summarization-for-news-content/); Particle News. *Particle News – Understand More, Faster*. Accessed September 13, 2025. <https://particle.news/>.

⁴⁵ Juan Señor and Jayant Sriram, eds., *Innovation in News Media World Report* (WAN-IFRA / Innovation Media Consulting, 2024–25), 44.

⁴⁶ Katie Robertson, “Bloomberg Has a Rocky Start With A.I. Summaries,” *The New York Times*, March 29, 2025 (updated April 2, 2025), <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/03/29/business/media/bloomberg-ai-summaries.html>; “Bloomberg Launches Gen AI Summarization for News Content,” *Bloomberg*, January 15, 2025,

have hold-ups when it comes to making AI tools user-facing, as the kind of blunders seen at Bloomberg can majorly work against a brand’s validity.⁴⁷

Furthermore, audience trust in AI-powered news products is fickle and varies across generations.

“The younger you are, the more likely you are to trust AI,” Malinarich explained,

“but there is a huge level of distrust in older generations.”⁴⁸

Beyond trust concerns, media executives are not sure audiences yet expect to see AI products in their newsfeeds, and studies suggest that readers prefer when AI use is guided by human oversight.⁴⁹

But, like all things AI in the newsroom, this data is further complicated by the rising number of users who are turning to AI platforms and applications to get their

<https://www.bloomberg.com/company/press/bloomberg-launches-gen-ai-summarization-for-news-content/>.

⁴⁷ Robertson, “Bloomberg Has a Rocky Start With A.I. Summaries”; Brown and Jaźwińska, *Journalism Zero*, 18; Elizabeth Blair, “How an AI-Generated Summer Reading List Got Published in Major Newspapers,” *NPR*, May 20, 2025, <https://www.npr.org/2025/05/20/nx-s1-5405022/fake-summer-reading-list-ai>.

⁴⁸ Malinarich, interview by author, July 18, 2025.

⁴⁹ Brown and Jaźwińska, *Journalism Zero*, 18, 19; Newman et al., *Digital News Report 2025*, 11.

news.⁵⁰ Understandably, this particular trend is causing many publishers to panic, in part because of the decrease in revenue—referrals to news sites from AI platforms have not been enough to offset the loss in search engine traffic—and in part because of the detriment to direct relationships between news organizations and their audiences.⁵¹

“AI platform companies are tethering audiences even more strongly to the ecosystems outside of the news,” Dr. Simon explained. “It accelerates and, in some cases, causes the fraying of the direct audience relationship news media has had.”⁵² As a result, Dr. Simon says we are seeing even more power concentrated in the hands of technology companies and a greater dependency of the news on them.⁵³

Klaudia Jaźwińska, a journalist and researcher at the Tow Center for Digital Journalism, creatively uses Thomas Edison as a mechanism to make sense of the weakening ties between media companies and their readers.⁵⁴

When Edison invented the phonograph, she explains, he listed only his own name on the music records, believing that his invention of the phonograph was more relevant than the contributions of the musicians.⁵⁵ “That’s what’s happening with AI and the news,” Jaźwińska said. “People will get news content from an AI platform and think that the information just comes from that platform—all of the layers of the newsroom and the journalists’ contributions will completely fall away.”⁵⁶

⁵⁰ Newman et al., *Digital News Report 2025*, 11.

⁵¹ Felps, *As Search Ends for News*; Simon, *No Turning Back*, 1.

⁵² Simon, interview by author, Microsoft Teams, July 15, 2025.

⁵³ Simon, interview by author, July 15, 2025; Simon, *Artificial Intelligence in the News*, 4.

⁵⁴ Klaudia Jaźwińska, interview by author, Microsoft Teams, July 24, 2025.

⁵⁵ Library of Congress, “History of the Edison Disc Phonograph,” *Inventing Entertainment: The Early Motion Pictures and Sound Recordings of the Edison Companies*, Digital Collections, accessed September 13, 2025, <https://www.loc.gov/collections/edison-company-motion-pictures-and-sound->

[recordings/articles-and-essays/history-of-edison-sound-recordings/history-of-the-edison-disc-phonograph/](https://www.loc.gov/collections/edison-company-motion-pictures-and-sound-recordings/articles-and-essays/history-of-edison-sound-recordings/history-of-the-edison-disc-phonograph/); Victoria & Albert Museum, “Edison Gold Moulded Records (Wax Cylinder Record), Edison, Thomas Alva,” *V&A Collections*, accessed September 13, 2025, <https://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O321500/edison-gold-moulded-records-wax-cylinder-record-edison-thomas-alva/>; National Park Service, “The Phonograph,” Thomas Edison National Historical Park, U.S. Department of the Interior, accessed September 13, 2025, <https://www.nps.gov/edis/learn/kidsyouth/the-phonograph.htm>; Jaźwińska, interview by author, July 24, 2025.

⁵⁶ Jaźwińska, interview by author, July 24, 2025.

She continues to explain that, though AI platform companies may cite publisher content in their responses, users have less incentive to visit that source, ultimately weakening the connection between newsrooms and audiences.⁵⁷

In response to this disintermediation of publishers and consumers, many in the industry are calling for movement away from AI, citing the importance of “humanness” in journalistic writing. In “No Turning Back,” a report by Dr. Simon, media executives argue that journalists should embrace something called “distinctive journalism,” or reporting that “AI cannot easily replicate.”⁵⁸

“We consistently hear that people want to hear a human voice, and that there’s no substitute for human connection,” Sam Gould, AI lead at FT Strategies, said. “They want to know: who is the journalist that’s telling me this story?”⁵⁹

In this vein, some news companies are attempting to better tailor their journalism to consumer needs by pivoting to strengthening trust with audiences, embracing human voices, and just building a better user experience.⁶⁰

⁵⁷ Jaźwińska, interview by author, July 24, 2025.

⁵⁸ Simon, *No Turning Back*, 1.

⁵⁹ Sam Gould, interview by author, Microsoft Teams, July 17, 2025.

⁶⁰ Jodie Hopperton, *How News Organisations Should Work With AI Companies* (INMA,

However, as Dr. Simon points out, while this might help retain audiences, it won't necessarily build new ones.⁶¹

It seems as if news organizations are going to have to get very creative, very quickly. In the following sections, we explain what this might look like.

“We consistently hear that people want to hear a human voice, and that there’s no substitute for human connection,”

Sam Gould, AI lead at FT Strategies,

January 2025), 33, accessed September 13, 2025, <https://www.inma.org/report/how-news-organisations-should-work-with-ai-companies>.

⁶¹ Simon, *No Turning Back*, 15.

4. Looking to the Future: four predictions

Through conversations with industry leaders and academics, we have put together a set of emerging trends and predictions for the future of news over the next few years, both in relation to AI and the shifting influence of younger audiences. Not every interviewee stood behind each of these predictions, but broadly, sentiments swayed in the same general directions.

To preface this section, we emphasize that these predictions are not set in stone. Things change, and when it comes to AI and tech, things change quickly. During the very first interview for this project, Benoît Georges was encouraging, but also cautioned that we will likely get some things wrong. “What I've learned after covering tech for 20 years and AI for 10,” he said, “is that you never know. You can never predict anything because it's always wrong in one way or the other.”⁶²

And yet, despite the fact that no one knows what is going to happen, news companies are forced to gamble with their guesses. Predicting the future of

news, though impossible, is also essential.

To aid in this endeavor, here are our predictions for the next three years of news.

⁶² Georges, interview by author, July 11, 2025.

Prediction #1

Youth demand will drive AI uptake

User needs, especially those of younger consumers, are not being met. Though this phenomenon has not been deadly for newsrooms so far, it will become cataclysmic as AI becomes more popular

One of the frameworks that was repeatedly mentioned in interviews was Dmitry Shishkin’s “User Needs” model. Shishkin, a BBC journalist for 20 years, proposed that there are six reasons why a consumer reaches for the news: 1) to keep them on trend, 2) to inspire them, 3) to divert them, 4) to educate them, 5) to give them perspective, and 6) to update them.⁶³ However, as shown in an FT Strategies experiment, news organizations almost never produce the category of content that users are looking for—there is a “misalignment” between what is offered in news and what readers actually want to read.⁶⁴

⁶³ Aliya Itzkowitz, “‘User Needs’: A Way for Newsrooms to Do More With Less,” *FT Strategies*, accessed September 13, 2025, <https://www.ftstrategies.com/en-gb/insights/user-needs-a-way-for-newsrooms-to-do-more-with-less>.

Professor Charlie Beckett, Director of The Journalism AI Project, explains that this is, in part, the fault of journalists:

“Journalists, especially quality journalists, like to write about politics and complicated things,” Professor Beckett explained. “They don’t like to do useful news. And it’s clear that that’s what people want.”⁶⁵

Similarly, Sonali Verma thinks that this issue relates to how editors, not audience preferences, often determine which stories are covered. “The news industry is sometimes less about being relevant as much as it is about a group of people deciding what people should know,” Verma said.⁶⁶

“Young people are definitely interested in news. They’re even interested in paying for news.”

Sonali Verma, Generative AI Initiative Lead at INMA.

⁶⁴ Itzkowitz, “‘User Needs’: A Way for Newsrooms to Do More With Less.”

⁶⁵ Charlie Beckett, interview by author, Microsoft teams, July 30, 2025.

⁶⁶ Sonali Verma, interview by author, Microsoft Teams, August 1, 2025.

But with AI, this journalist/reader relationship is entirely flipped on its head. It is no longer a question of newsrooms deciding what stories to run—instead, consumers can use AI platforms to choose exactly what they want to be informed about.⁶⁷

This is reason for both celebration and despair. Celebration because, as Verma points out, this does not mean that people—young people in particular—do not want to interact with or pay for news.⁶⁸ Instead, their needs are just not being met by the current product.⁶⁹

“Young people are definitely interested in news. They're even interested in paying for news,” Verma said, noting how young people pay for other subscription services like Spotify or Netflix. “They just have to get it from somewhere that makes it relevant to them, and that makes it easy for them to consume.”⁷⁰

On the flip side, this also means that whatever news organizations are doing right now is not working. And,

unfortunately, AI is a better-positioned alternative to meet user needs, giving newsrooms competition that they have never had previously.

Change in the news process is essential—in what is reported, how it is presented, and how user needs are conceptualized. Interviewees threw out what these evolutions might look like:

“The news is going to have to have a lot more utility,” said George Montagu, Senior Manager and Head of Research at FT Strategies. “We have to give people reasons for optimism. We have to equip people with information that's useful to their lives.”⁷¹

“News is going to have to be much more expert,” Professor Beckett predicted. “News organizations can't just tell consumers what's happening—that's too easy. They've got to have much more to offer.”⁷²

“The question is, how do you get to where people already are? Understand consumer habits, understand their needs, and then get out there and serve them,”

⁶⁷ Charlie Beckett, Gina Chua, Astrid Maier, and Richard Socher, “Journalism in the Age of AI: Agents, Answers and Accuracy,” panel discussion at the *International Journalism Festival*, Sala Raffaello, Hotel Brufani, Perugia, Italy, April 10, 2025. Accessed September 13, 2025.

<https://www.journalismfestival.com/programme>

[/2025/journalism-in-the-age-of-ai-agents-answers-and-accuracy](#).

⁶⁸ Verma, interview by author, August 1, 2025.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ George Montagu, interview by author, Microsoft Teams, July 25, 2025.

⁷² Beckett, interview by author, July 30, 2025.

Verma said. “Don't be the editor sitting in the ivory tower—get your hands dirty, come down to the level of the people.”⁷³

“The news is going to have to have a lot more utility ... We have to equip people with information that's useful to their lives.”

George Montagu, Senior Manager and Head of
Research at FT Strategies.

⁷³ Verma, interview by author, August 1, 2025.

Prediction #2:

AI will become trusted and familiar

Audiences may currently distrust an “AI label” on news products, but this distrust will diminish, especially as younger audiences take center stage

My hackles were immediately raised the first time I saw an “AI Overview” at the top of my Google Search page. It was a physical (or digital) testament of our movement into an AI-laden reality, something that felt both off-putting and intriguing.

A few months later, I grew to expect it. Then I became bored with it, as well as its occasional inaccuracies.

AI is now a common component of the user experience. With its increased presence in both internal systems and user-facing tools, consumers will no longer think twice about encountering an AI label—even when that label is accompanying something important, like a news product.

As Alan Soon, co-founder and CEO of Splice Media, put it: embracing AI will not even be a question in five years.⁷⁴

“In sociology, we call that domestication theory,” Dr. Simon explained. “Technology becomes domesticated as we become more used to it, and our resistance to it trends downwards.”⁷⁵ Dr. Simon points out examples like smartphones or televisions, all of which consumers initially distrusted, all of which eventually resulted in near blind acceptance and integration.⁷⁶

Interestingly, however, while consumers will come to accept AI’s fingerprints on their newsfeeds, that does not mean that the technology itself will be flawless.

“Technology becomes domesticated as we become more used to it, and our resistance to it trends downwards.”

Dr. Felix Simon, Reuters Institute Research Fellow in AI and News .

⁷⁴ Alan Soon, email to author, July 7, 2025.

⁷⁵ Simon, interview by author, July 15, 2025.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

Florent Daudens, Press Lead at Hugging Face, reminds us that perfection is impossible when it comes to AI-generated responses.⁷⁷ He explains that, with abundant time and resources, a solid model might achieve 98% accuracy—though he notes that new research focuses on teaching models to recognize their limitations so they can refrain from answering and instead choose not to fabricate facts.⁷⁸ However, Daudens also emphasizes that inaccuracies have always been a part of the news equation, and that human reporters aren't perfect, either.⁷⁹

Despite AI's flaws, many interviewees believe that consumers will prefer an AI-assisted news experience that is accessible and fast, taking their inaccuracy lumps (and trust faults) with it.

But that is not to say that audiences are entirely passive, either. The experts I spoke to explained that consumers prefer accessibility over accuracy when it comes to AI-generated news because they, in a large part, believe in their ability to detect misinformation. However, this is not necessarily the reality.

⁷⁷ Florent Daudens, interview by author, Microsoft Teams, July 16, 2025.

⁷⁸ Daudens, interview by author, July 16, 2025.

Many pointed out the danger of this false user confidence, especially as consumers may believe content to be accurate when it is not. As such, news organizations must remain committed to ensuring that the content they share is correct, even if filtered or created by AI tools. Gould speaks to this effect:

“I think if the way that news companies adopt AI continues to be responsible, and they stick to their journalistic integrity—which is how the vast majority of them are doing it—then trust will follow,” he explained.⁸⁰

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ Gould, interview by author, July 17, 2025.

Prediction #3:

Personal news brands will grow

We will continue to see a rise of individual brand over company brand

I recently read a LinkedIn essay by Mili Semlani that begins with a very fitting quote:

“The world doesn’t need journalism. The world needs relationships with journalists.”⁸¹

Historically, the journalist was a figure shrouded by their news organization’s larger brand, with the name in the byline operating secondarily to the publication’s title. However, in the past few years, this relationship has shifted—largely because of increasing trust in the “brand of the individual.”

This trend is hard to ignore given the recent rise in popularity of news content creators. News creators generally seem to be of two flavors: they are either established journalists who put out

content on social media platforms, often separate of a larger news organization, or individuals without a journalistic background who frame (or reframe) news stories for their audience.

Either way, as David Caswell points out, these news influencers are particularly good at developing a “connection” with audiences.⁸² “They build a brand that’s based on trust and authenticity,” he explains, regardless of whether or not the information they share is actually correct.⁸³

Partiality to these news creators is skewed generationally, and they tend to attract younger audiences.⁸⁴ Sara Inkeri Vardar, Innovation Manager at JP/Politikens Hus, argues that this stems not from a lack of interest in major brands, but from the new ways young generations engage with them.⁸⁵

⁸¹ Mili Semlani, “Journalism’s future lies in relationships,” *LinkedIn*, August 8, 2025, accessed September 13, 2025, <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/journalisms-future-lies-relationships-mili-semlani-x6cxf/>.

⁸² Caswell, interview by author, July 22, 2025.

⁸³ *Ibid.*

⁸⁴ Newman et al., *Digital News Report 2025*, 12; Felps, *As Search Ends for News*; Felps, *How Media Companies Can Combat News Avoidance*, 5.

⁸⁵ Sara Inkeri Vardar, interview by author, Microsoft Teams, August 8, 2025.

“...we connect more strongly with brands that cultivate genuine relationships with their audiences.”

Inkeri Vardar, Innovation Manager at JP/Politikens

“Our generation still cares about brands, but in a different way,” Inkeri Vardar said. “It’s less about the big name itself, and more about feeling in control of who and what we follow. What matters most is feeling seen and included, which is why we connect more strongly with brands that cultivate genuine relationships with their audiences—or with news influencers.”⁸⁶

But this relationship—in which audiences develop a connection with an individual, rather than the brand that that individual is a part of—isn’t unheard of. In fact, other industries have operated along similar axes for a long time.

In an interview with INMA, Axel Springer CEO Matthias Döpfner points to the music industry as an example.⁸⁷ Record labels, he explains, are broad

organizations that partner with individuals, or musicians, much like media companies do with journalists. While a record label provides the musician with certain benefits, the audience connection is almost entirely between fan and musician, while the record label is just a helping hand in the background.⁸⁸

Döpfner plans to adopt a similar model in his own company, in which Axel Springer promotes and supports journalists in order to establish those journalists’ personal brands.⁸⁹ No longer, Döpfner seemed to suggest, would journalists operate behind the banner of the news organization—in fact, he was betting on the exact opposite.⁹⁰

However, many experts expressed concerns about Döpfner’s model. One mentioned the complexities that could arise in the case of disagreeing brands, in which influencers or journalists put forth an image that the larger news organization does want to associate with, ultimately damaging that organization’s brand. Others argued that relying on individuals could endanger the news

⁸⁶ Inkeri Vardar, interview by author, August 8, 2025.

⁸⁷ Greg Piechota, “Could the Newsroom of the Future Look More Like a Record Label?”, *INMA – Readers First Initiative Blog*, April 13, 2025, [https://www.inma.org/blogs/reader-](https://www.inma.org/blogs/reader-revenue/post.cfm/could-the-newsroom-of-the-future-look-more-like-a-record-label)

[revenue/post.cfm/could-the-newsroom-of-the-future-look-more-like-a-record-label](https://www.inma.org/blogs/reader-revenue/post.cfm/could-the-newsroom-of-the-future-look-more-like-a-record-label).

⁸⁸ Piechota, “Could the Newsroom of the Future Look More Like a Record Label?”

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

organization, as that individual could always leave—something that notably just occurred in the case of Dave Jorgenson and *The Washington Post*.⁹¹

“... news organizations have to decide whether their brand is better when associated with strong, independent news creators and journalists, or without them.”

Jeremy Gilbert, Knight Chair in Digital Media Strategy, Northwestern University

Another said that the value of content creators is the speed with which they can put out content and respond authentically, something that would be thwarted when mixed with editorial overview.

When I mentioned these objections to Professor Jeremy Gilbert, the Knight Chair in Digital Media Strategy at Medill, Northwestern University, he simply responded that news organizations have to decide whether their brand is better when associated with strong, independent news creators and journalists, or without them.⁹² In other

⁹¹ Benjamin Mullin, “Can The Washington Post’s TikTok Guy Make It Without The Post?” *The New York Times*, July 22, 2025, <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/07/22/business>

words, while these concerns are valid, the benefits may outweigh the risks.

“We are now at an inversion, where the brand’s identity is a reflection of the individuals affiliated with it, rather than the individuals being given credibility because of the brand’s identity,” Professor Gilbert continued.⁹³

Therefore, despite concerns and potential dangers, the preference for the individual is here to stay—and it will continue to impact how consumers get their news.

</media/dave-jorgenson-video-washington-post.html>.

⁹² Jeremy Gilbert, interview by author, Microsoft Teams, August 12, 2025.

⁹³ Gilbert, interview by author, August 12, 2025.

Prediction #4:

Beyond efficiency

An agentic-news future is still a few years off. But that doesn't mean AI use in the newsroom will stop evolving—the “efficiency paradigm” won't cut it for much longer

Most news organizations currently employ AI toward what Dr. Simon calls the “efficiency paradigm,” in which AI is used to complete menial tasks and accelerate existing workflows.⁹⁴ Oftentimes, this simply enables the organization to pump out more content.

But just because AI is good at making things more efficient, that does not mean that increasing output is necessarily the best use of the technology. In fact, consumers do not actually seem to be asking for more content.

“Consumers already say they are overwhelmed by the amount of material available, and that they struggle to find the right content,” Grzegorz Piechota, researcher-in-residence at INMA, said.⁹⁵ He goes on to explain that this means news organizations are using AI towards the wrong end: “The question is not,

How do I make more content? The question becomes, What can I do that will remain valuable in a world where there are unlimited creative results?”⁹⁶

Efficiency is undoubtably helpful, but it will no longer be the end goal. As Dr. Simon writes in *No Turning Back*, the low-hanging fruits in terms of how to make things run faster in the newsroom have at least been identified, if not already picked—AI tools will now be used to disrupt existing systems that are not working, rather than just helping them along.⁹⁷

“... the low-hanging fruits in terms of how to make things run faster in the newsroom have at least been identified, if not already picked.”

Dr. Felix Simon, Reuters Institute Research Fellow in AI and News .

⁹⁴ Simon, interview by author, July 15, 2025.

⁹⁵ Grzegorz Piechota, interview by author, Microsoft Teams, August 7, 2025.

⁹⁶ Piechota, interview by author, August 7, 2025.

⁹⁷ Simon, *No Turning Back*, 9.

Interestingly, several interviewees pointed to an emerging future of AI-driven agentic news. Rather than aiding in the creation of more content and working towards the efficiency paradigm, these agents would instead help users filter the vast amount of online data. More specifically, they could ensure the delivery of content that is relevant and specified to a consumer's individual interests.

In "So How Would You Like Your News?," Director of Data and AI at Schibsted News Media Juan Carlos Lopez Calvet imagines that these agents would have access to a person's history, preferences, and even their current mood or health data from devices like fitness trackers.⁹⁸ Based on this, the agent could determine what kind of news to share with a user, and when.⁹⁹ As Lopez Calvet describes, "the AI will consider that I'm too tired to receive news about negative world events, but I'm sufficiently alert to receive information about a new breakthrough in physics, which is something that usually will get me excited."¹⁰⁰

⁹⁸ Juan Carlos Lopez Calvet, "So how would you like your news?", LinkedIn, July 16, 2025, <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/so-how-would-you-like-your-news-juan-carlos-lopez-calvet-twuof/>.

Most interviewees saw an agentic-news future like the one Lopez Calvet describes as a very real possibility, though many conceded that it is not likely to happen soon.

"That's a bit of a future view," Gould predicted. "I wouldn't really expect that to happen in three years."¹⁰¹

Nonetheless, even if personalized news agents are unlikely to be deployed in the next few years, news organizations and technology companies will likely continue experimenting with these more passive forms of AI. As a result, newsrooms will move beyond the AI efficiency paradigm, and instead look for ways to create content better suited to consumers.

⁹⁹ Lopez Calvet, "So how would you like your news?"

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰¹ Gould, interview by author, July 17, 2025.

5. Embracing the Future: five recommendations

This section discusses how newsrooms can actually operationalize around these shifting trends, with specific recommendations we gathered through conversations with experts. However, rather than choosing a single method, the best approach would be to incorporate several of these strategies, allowing for variety. In other words, it may be time to have your hands in quite a few buckets, given that we cannot be sure which model will dominate yet.

Strategy #1:

Embrace distinctive journalism

Earlier, we mentioned “distinctive journalism,” a term that refers to a kind of journalism that is not easy for AI to impersonate.¹⁰² More specifically, distinctive journalism utilizes authentic voice and experience—it just *feels* more human.

¹⁰² Simon, *No Turning Back*, 1.

¹⁰³ Jason Koebler, “The Media’s Pivot to AI Is Not Real and Not Going to Work,” *404 Media*,

In a world where AI produces an onslaught of low-value news content, distinctive journalism is a way for organizations to set their work apart.

“The only AI-related business strategy that makes any sense whatsoever,” Jason Koebler, a journalist and co-founder of 404 Media, writes, “is one where media companies and journalists go to great pains to show their audiences that they are human beings.”¹⁰³

While Koebler’s statement airs on the side of over-exaggeration, interviewees tended to agree that emphasizing human voice is a valuable way to connect with readers, especially as AI-generated content becomes more ubiquitous in the news. At least, I find this true of my own news reading experience.

At risk of wading into the anecdotal, I recently read a newsletter piece by Adam B. Kushner in *The New York Times* called “Jury Duties” about the shortcomings of the American jury duty system. Kushner begins the article with a paragraph describing how, despite

July 14, 2025, <https://www.404media.co/the-medias-pivot-to-ai-is-not-real-and-not-going-to-work/>.

always secretly hoping to, he has never been picked for jury duty.¹⁰⁴

“In a world where AI produces an onslaught of low-value news content, distinctive journalism is a way for organizations to set their work apart.”

Kushner's personal tangent lasted two sentences and was somewhat of a diversion from the article's main topic, but it screamed human. After all, what could be more human than sheepishly confessing a desire to serve jury duty?

Professor Gilbert mentioned that this kind of self-injection of a journalist into their piece is something that sports and entertainment writers have historically found success in—he believes that this gives readers a more personal connection to a journalist's work.¹⁰⁵ But the casual insertion of the authorial character into an article is becoming important in all areas of journalism, even

¹⁰⁴ Adam B. Kushner, “Jury Duties,” *The Morning* (newsletter), *The New York Times*, August 10, 2025, <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/08/10/briefing/jury-duty-mental-health-trauma.html>.

¹⁰⁵ Gilbert, interview by author, August 12, 2025.

in a piece about the injustices of the jury duty system.

Inkeri Vardar believes that there are an A team and a B team emerging in the news ecosystem as a result of AI.¹⁰⁶ The B team, she explained, is the cold hard information, the facts of what has happened—something that AI is very good at presenting.¹⁰⁷ The A team, on the other hand, is “more of a cultural product,” or a means of human connection.¹⁰⁸

If the B team's bench is populated by AI tools, it makes sense that journalists should instead strive for the A team.

In any case, the facts are relatively straightforward—both to find and read about. “Lots of people have access to the same statement of fact,” Professor Gilbert explained. “What they don't have is individual perspective, a relationship with the author, and a journalist's understanding of the reader.”¹⁰⁹

Furthermore, as Professor Beckett put it, the world is not made up of pure data—often, journalists must write about things that are unstructured and

¹⁰⁶ Inkeri Vardar, interview by author, August 8, 2025.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

¹⁰⁹ Gilbert, interview by author, August 12, 2025.

messy.¹¹⁰ Leaning into this mess is another way to foray into distinctive journalism.

According to Gould, distinctive journalism will increasingly become a selling point of news organizations:

“I believe there will be pockets that emerge of non-AI content that are marketed on being ‘human products,’” Gould said, “something that will really lean into that trend of human connections.”¹¹¹

However, even embracing something like distinctive journalism has its drawbacks. The most successful organizations will not only feature articles that sound and feel more human, but will be able to protect these pieces from data scraping, ensuring that their unique voice remains their own.

“Lots of people have access to the same statement of fact. What they don't have is individual perspective, a relationship with the author ...”

Jeremy Gilbert, Knight Chair in Digital Media
Strategy, Northwestern University

¹¹⁰ Beckett, interview by author, July 30, 2025.

¹¹¹ Gould, interview by author, July 17, 2025.

¹¹² Montagu, interview by author, July 25, 2025.

To some extent, creating these distinctive stories and, more importantly, protecting them, will be a rich organization's game. As Montagu predicts, high-value companies will invest heavily in their reporting, produce information that is scarce, and protect that scarcity by preventing scraping.¹¹²

These kinds of “high-value” organizations have already emerged and are easy to name. For example, interviewees threw out companies like *The New York Times*, *Le Monde*, and the BBC, to name a few.

“The human voice will be priced at a premium, and will only be available to a very specific audience. It would be like a collector's item,” Jaźwińska predicted.¹¹³ Those without access, Jaźwińska said, will likely be stuck with a heavily AI-influenced version of the news.¹¹⁴

To return to Inkeri Vardar's A team and B team metaphor: an A team of distinctive, cultural news will emerge, but it will be harder to access—and many consumers will be limited to the minor leagues.

¹¹³ Jaźwińska, interview by author, July 24, 2025.

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

Strategy #2:

Liquify, personalize, localize

Professor Beckett drew an analogy that stuck with me:

“Journalism is like a restaurant with quite a short menu. We have some small plates and some big plates, but we’re not going to give you something in a way that perfectly suits your appetite.”¹¹⁵

AI, he said, is a way to expand on that short menu.

“AI can be really helpful in changing the journalism to something that the user wants,” Beckett explained. “That could be format, it could be by just giving headlines, or it could be by making an article into an hour-long podcast. At the moment, that’s something we don’t offer very well.”¹¹⁶

This section is called liquify, personalize, and localize because it explores three different ways in which the “menu” of news coverage can be broadened—not simply by just creating more content, but in providing greater optionality to users.

¹¹⁵ Beckett, interview by author, July 30, 2025.

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

Liquify

As previously discussed, AI is increasingly being used to hand over control of the final format of news to the reader, whether that is as an article, a summary, an audio clip, etc. This kind of easy transformation from one news configuration to another based on user preferences will soon be a base expectation of newsrooms.

As Malinarich said, “You have to adapt your storytelling to whatever people are willing to consume, because people don’t have to consume it in the first place.”¹¹⁷

“AI is increasingly being used to hand over control of the final format of news to the reader, whether that is as an article, a summary, an audio clip...”

¹¹⁷ Malinarich, interview by author, July 18, 2025.

This idea speaks to something that David Caswell calls “access as a service.”¹¹⁸ According to Caswell, we will begin to see more liquidity of data such that content and stories easily flow from one format to the next.¹¹⁹

“In order for that to happen, somebody, preferably some trusted organization with editorial values, needs to actually create and maintain the systems to accomplish that,” Caswell said.¹²⁰ It would make sense, he continues, for journalistic organizations to pick up this mantle.¹²¹

Therefore, not only is variety and liquidity of news content something that consumers are going to come to expect from news, but it makes sense for news organizations to establish themselves as the “keepers” of this content liquidity—to position themselves as entities that ensure that every step of AI mediation or transformation of an original piece of data is done fairly.

So how can news organizations start positioning themselves as such “keepers”? As Caswell mentioned, this means shifting focus from “discrete artifacts, like articles,” and instead

managing “systems and semantic information.”¹²²

One manner by which journalists might achieve this could be by shifting their focus away from the actual writing of an article. Instead, their responsibility will be to capture and package the “information core” of a story. An information core could include data such as facts or findings, interview quotes, some kind of narrative arc, metadata, etc. These cores should be structured in a way that is accessible and readable by AI-powered conversion tools, allowing for easy translation of the same central story into several different formats.

In this method, the priority of journalists will shift from writing completed stories to instead gathering information that can be repurposed for other forms of storytelling. While this is not to say that journalists will stop writing articles—few interviewees felt that there is value in AI tools producing finalized news stories independently—the process of writing will become inherently more data-fied.

¹¹⁸ Caswell, interview by author, July 22, 2025.

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

¹²⁰ Ibid.

¹²¹ Ibid.

¹²² Ibid.

Personalize

Users choosing whatever format they prefer for a piece of content obviously allows for a more personalized news experience. However, there are also other ways to personalize—the content, itself, could be tailored for specific consumers.

“... a single story could have varying lengths, linguistic complexities, or levels of background information according to user needs.”

Jeremy Gilbert, Knight Chair in Digital Media Strategy, Northwestern University

In the age of AI, the news is shifting from what Professor Gilbert calls a “one-to-many model,” in which stories are written to appeal to as many people as possible, to a “one-to-one-for-many model,” where content can be adapted based on individual audience needs.¹²³

This could mean format preferences, Professor Gilbert said, but it could also

¹²³ We. Talk, “AI with Jeremy Gilbert, Journalist & Professor of Media Strategy, Northwestern University,” YouTube video, 7:02, November 4, 2024, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kHdy9jTTA>lg; Gilbert, interview by author, August 12, 2025.

mean content.¹²⁴ For instance, a single story could have varying lengths, linguistic complexities, or levels of background information according to user needs.¹²⁵

Many interviewees, like Daudens, believe that tailoring a news experience to an individual could be a way to get weary consumers invested in the news cycle again.¹²⁶

Daudens gives a simple example: imagine a user has stock in Uber.¹²⁷ When a news organization publishes a story regarding tariffs on a material used for autonomous vehicles, they should alert that user, perhaps even including a message explaining how this story is applicable to them.¹²⁸

“Basically, you could articulate why this news is important to a person because they’re ‘understood’ in some deeper way,” Daudens explained.¹²⁹

This breaks into the idea of ambient agents, or AI tools that no longer put cognitive load and effort on the user side, like a chatbot might. Instead, ambient

¹²⁴ Gilbert, interview by author, August 12, 2025; We. Talk, “AI with Jeremy Gilbert.”

¹²⁵ We. Talk, “AI with Jeremy Gilbert.”

¹²⁶ Daudens, interview by author, July 16, 2025.

¹²⁷ Ibid.

¹²⁸ Ibid.

¹²⁹ Ibid.

agents could “anticipate and initiate the discussion” of whether and how a user would like to consume their news.¹³⁰

While Daudens’ example requires a decent amount of background data on a user—something that, as many interviewees mentioned, news organizations are not poised to collect in the same way that technology companies are—some interviewees threw out other ways newsrooms could personalize based on user data.

For instance, Pete Pachal, founder of The Media Copilot, mentioned that editorial teams could adopt a similar model to the commercial side of news.¹³¹

“If I listen to a podcast when I’m in Colorado as opposed to New Jersey, I’m going to get different ads,” Pachal explained. “That’s a form of personalization done through AI—it knows my location. It’s adapting and making choices based on my data.”¹³²

Similarly, if a news organization has access to a subscriber’s location data, AI tools could detect when someone is traveling. As per Pachal’s example, if a user who usually logs in from New Jersey is now in Colorado, their news

website might surface different relevant content, such as an article like “The 10 Best Things To Do in Denver.”

Obviously, users may not be comfortable with news organizations collecting copious amounts of their personal data. There are certain ways, however, to be upfront about this kind of data collection in a manner that includes the user, such as through direct questions about what users want to be seeing when they subscribe to a news service.

For example, a newsroom could offer a preliminary questionnaire to subscribers with questions like: “Do you prefer short morning updates, or long weekend reads?,” “Would you like to see news localized to your area?,” or “Would audio briefings be helpful during hours you might commute to work?”

From this beginning data, newsrooms could personalize an app or website’s landing page to that subscriber. If the user states that they prefer shorter reads on a workday, the articles surfaced on a Wednesday morning could be summary pieces that include simple language. Importantly, news organizations should flag why users are seeing what they are

¹³⁰ Ibid.

¹³¹ Pete Pachal, interview by author, Microsoft Teams, August 19, 2025.

¹³² Pachal, interview by author, August 19, 2025.

seeing, as well as offer users an option to edit or reset their settings.

As the user continues to develop patterns, this can shape other parts of their news experience. For instance, a daily newsletter with headlines of the day could be sent at the time the user most frequently opens their news app.

There are obviously ethical concerns that each organization will have to consider when dealing with these individual news specifications. For instance, Jaźwińska raises concerns of AI filter bubbles or echo chambers, while Pachal questions the validity of serving two people two different versions of the news.¹³³

These concerns are valid and deserve heavy contemplation when it comes to integrating personalization practices into news. However, in a news environment in which user needs are not being met, this kind of candid, optional personalization could help consumers stay more engaged.

Localize

¹³³ Jaźwińska, interview by author, July 24, 2025; Pachal, interview by author, August 19, 2025.

¹³⁴ Caswell, interview by author, July 22, 2025.

Another possible route for news organizations is what Caswell terms “listening as a service,” in which journalists are tasked with actively listening to community members in order to be more embedded in that community.¹³⁴ Through this “listening,” news organizations can become better versed in what is expected from them and, in turn, use AI to help meet those needs.¹³⁵

Caswell explains that this is a diversion from current journalism roles—more specifically, while journalists are often charged with gathering information and verbalizing a story to the audience, when it comes to listening as a service, “that role reverses, and the job of the journalists becomes understanding and appreciating.”¹³⁶

We know how AI can help find or generate a story, as well as personalize a newsfeed to better suit a reader’s needs. However, as Pachal put it, “AI can’t call sources, it can’t go to a location, it can’t cultivate trust.”¹³⁷

In other words, AI can’t really listen.

David Cohn, the Senior Director of AI at Advance Local, describes this shift as a

¹³⁵ Ibid.

¹³⁶ Ibid.

¹³⁷ Pachal, interview by author, August 19, 2025.

return to an older model of journalism. In the past, he said, an article was often produced by two people: the reporter, who gathered information by attending events, and the writer, who turned the reporter's notes into a finished story. Over time, those roles merged into one: the modern-day journalist.¹³⁸

But Cohn believes the field is now reinstating the reporter role, where the journalist's main job is to build trust, know their community, and collect information.¹³⁹ The actual writing, he argues, will increasingly be handled by AI.¹⁴⁰

Professor Gilbert said something similar: "It is the job of journalists to be part of the fabric of the communities that they cover," he explained. "I think we've gotten away from that lately."¹⁴¹

In utilizing AI for parts of the workflow, time is freed up for journalists to reintegrate themselves into wider community dialogue, or even create a journalistic presence in spaces for which they did not have the capacity previously.

¹³⁸ David Cohn, "AI Helps Us Revisit Old Journalism Territory," *Nieman Journalism Lab*, December 2024, <https://www.niemanlab.org/2024/12/ai-helps-us-revisit-old-journalism-territory/>; David Cohn, interview by author, Microsoft Teams, August 15, 2025.

¹³⁹ Cohn, interview by author, August 15, 2025.

More specifically, several interviewees mentioned using AI to cover "news deserts."

"News deserts exist because covering certain areas is not economically feasible," Cohn writes in *Nieman Lab's Predictions for Journalism, 2025*. "AI could lower the cost, allowing teams of one to three people to successfully cover an area without additional or back-office support."¹⁴²

"... the field is now reinstating the reporter role, where the journalist's main job is to build trust, know their community, and collect information."

David Cohn, Advance Local, Senior Director of AI

Cohn further explains that research or fact-finding for local "daily churn articles" could be automated by AI, freeing up

¹⁴⁰ Cohn, interview by author, August 15, 2025; Cohn, "AI Helps Us Revisit Old Journalism Territory."

¹⁴¹ Gilbert, interview by author, August 12, 2025.

¹⁴² Cohn, "AI Helps Us Revisit Old Journalism Territory."

time and capacity.¹⁴³ Pachal states something similar, mentioning that AI could be used to scan local resources (community sites, Facebook, etc.) to offer research or article ideas to journalists, once again enabling news organizations to cover areas that they could not previously.¹⁴⁴

AI's introduction into news is therefore also an opportunity for journalism to push back into local communities, whether geographically or interpersonally.

¹⁴³ Cohn, interview by author, August 15, 2025.

¹⁴⁴ Pachal, interview by author, August 19, 2025.

Strategy #3:

Restructure your content to be scrapable

AI models will continue to require fresh, accurate news content.¹⁴⁵ Some interviewees suggested that the best way for news organizations to serve these needs is by making their content easily scrapable—not only does this pave the way for deals with AI platforms, but it also solidifies relevance in an increasingly AI-agent future.

Caswell calls this system “grounding data as a service,” where news organizations provide content mainly or solely intended for AI purposes.¹⁴⁶ In the example Caswell gives, this would look like news organizations essentially providing fact-checked, reliable data to some kind of AI agent, which in turn decides how to repackage the information to create an experience for end users.¹⁴⁷

¹⁴⁵ Klaudia Jaźwińska, “Traffic Apocalypse: Google’s AI Overviews Are Killing Click-Throughs to News Sites,” *Columbia Journalism Review*, July 31, 2025, <https://www.cjr.org/analysis/traffic-apocalypse-google-ai-overviews-killing-click-throughs-news-sites.php>; Balasaravanan Venugopal, “How Custom RAG Is Revolutionizing the News and Media Industry,” *Net Solutions*, updated July 11, 2025,

Caswell explains that this is, in large part, already happening, giving the example of OpenAI’s deals with publishers.¹⁴⁸

While not all news organizations have access to these kinds of partnerships (as Rasmus Kleis Nielsen writes, “We are talking dozens of deals in a world with many thousands of news publishers”), Caswell explains that the ones that do are widely seeing their articles parsed for data.¹⁴⁹

“OpenAI isn’t using those articles as articles,” he said. “They’re just stripping them for informational parts, then creating new experiences from those parts.”¹⁵⁰

“... news content in general will need to evolve to be more AI-friendly”

<https://www.netsolutions.com/insights/custom-rag-news-media-industry/>.

¹⁴⁶ Caswell, interview by author, July 22, 2025.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid.

¹⁴⁹ Señor and Sriram, *Innovation in News Media World Report*, 15; Caswell, interview by author, July 22, 2025.

¹⁵⁰ Caswell, interview by author, July 22, 2025.

To take advantage of the “grounding data as a service” model, Caswell recommends that news organizations experiment by setting up Model Context Protocol (MCP) servers, which act as intermediaries between generative AI tools and content and can ensure fair data retrieval.¹⁵¹ Monetarily speaking, organizations could then either charge through micropayments per MCP visit, or via larger catch-all deals with technology companies.

Beyond MCP servers, Gould notes that articles that contain certain structural cues are more likely to be scraped and repurposed by AI. “In particular, we’re finding that if you have well-structured, quantitative information that is particularly unique, this will help your content to be embedded in AI products and experiences,” he explained.¹⁵² However, Gould cautions that while this strategy seems generally effective, it’s “not black and white.”¹⁵³

Alan Soon mused along similar lines, predicting that news content in general will need to evolve to be more AI-friendly:

¹⁵¹ Caswell, interview by author, July 22, 2025; Oren Ezra, “What Is an MCP Server?”, *K2View Blog*, September 4, 2025, <https://www.k2view.com/blog/mcp-server/>.

“The new shift is about writing and creating data that machines will understand,” Soon writes. “Journalism first needs to understand how to take these observations and record them as data so that AI can do its work.”¹⁵⁴

“As an industry, we need to find the right way for our content to interact with LLMs, because that improves accuracy”

Nathalie Malinarich, BBC Executive Editor in Digital Development and AI.

In the same vein, Daudens suggests that news organizations adopt a system that mimics code documentation—in which explanatory notes accompany pieces of code—so that each piece of news content comes with guidance on how AI should interpret it.¹⁵⁵ He specifies that this should not only exist for text articles, but all content formats, like videos or podcasts.¹⁵⁶

There are obviously risks to making news content more AI-accessible, none

¹⁵² Gould, interview by author, July 17, 2025.

¹⁵³ Ibid.

¹⁵⁴ Soon, email to author, July 7, 2025.

¹⁵⁵ Daudens, interview by author, July 16, 2025.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid.

the least of which is that user click rates to articles from AI summaries and platforms have been shown to be incredibly low.¹⁵⁷ However, there may still be some revenue available to newsrooms whose content surfaces on AI platforms.¹⁵⁸

Furthermore, making reliable news content scrapable will help combat a wider issue: the deep inaccuracies in AI-driven news. Right now, inadequate or imperfect RAG operations often deliver incorrect information to end users.¹⁵⁹

“As an industry, we need to find the right way for our content to interact with LLMs, because that improves accuracy,” Malinarich stated.¹⁶⁰

However, despite these benefits, few interviewees believe that this system could stand as a business model on its own. Partnerships between news organizations and tech companies may help, but they are not always dependable or particularly profitable. While it may be useful preparation for an

increasingly AI-agent future, relying on providing scrapable content is a risky primary revenue stream, and will reinforce news organizations’ dependence on external tech companies.

¹⁵⁷ Athena Chapekis and Anna Lieb, “Google users are less likely to click on links when an AI summary appears in the results,” *Pew Research Center*, July 22, 2025, <https://www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2025/07/22/google-users-are-less-likely-to-click-on-links-when-an-ai-summary-appears-in-the-results/>; Jaźwińska, “Traffic Apocalypse.”

¹⁵⁸ Gould, interview by author, July 17, 2025.

¹⁵⁹ Alice Gomstyn and Amanda Downie, “RAG Problems Persist – Here Are Five Ways to Fix Them,” *IBM Think*, July 8, 2025, <https://www.ibm.com/think/insights/rag-problems-five-ways-to-fix>.

¹⁶⁰ Malinarich, interview by author, July 18, 2025.

Strategy #4:

Build programming around live events

Something that co-hosts Marion Ranchet and Evan Shapiro both predicted for 2025 in “The Media Odyssey Podcast” was the growing importance of live events, something Shapiro claimed would happen in all areas of media—sports, game shows, TV shows, and finally, news.¹⁶¹

Ranchet believes the value of live events will increase as a result of the influx of AI content. “It’s going to be difficult to distinguish what is AI produced and what is not,” she explained.¹⁶² In-person or live events, however, are a solution to this problem—they allow users to develop real, unfiltered connections with people and content.¹⁶³

To take advantage of this growing appetite, news organizations should use their platforms to support the coverage of live events.

For instance, AI tools could help news organizations offer real-time analytics or commentary for sports games that are not covered by major platforms. Similarly, news websites could include instantaneous biographies of award winners during red carpet events, or synopses of important moments in long-awaited TV show finales.

However, beyond offering coverage of live events, some interviewees mentioned the value of news organizations offering their own events. For instance, subscribers may find value in things like live podcasts or interviews, talks with popular journalists, debates, explainer sessions, trivia nights, and more. While the initial appeal may be the ticketed in-person event, these events could also be livestreamed to new organizations’ websites or social media pages, creating an incentive for virtual subscribers to tune in.

Piechota believes that live events could provide the same benefits to news as they have to the music industry.¹⁶⁴ More specifically, he explained that, in a

¹⁶¹ The Media Odyssey, “PREDICTING 2025 MEDIA (PART 2): Who Will Dominate 2025? – The Media Odyssey Podcast Ep. 3,” YouTube video, 27:06, January 16, 2025, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5fWOQzr4Pbk&list=PLeJPbkis0Tk1d8Jzy8U9KF9uwL0dgoO9&index=30>.

¹⁶² The Media Odyssey, “PREDICTING 2025 MEDIA (PART 2).”

¹⁶³ Ibid.

¹⁶⁴ Piechota, interview by author, August 7, 2025.

landscape where everyone can access music for free on platforms like YouTube or Spotify, recorded music is no longer as lucrative for artists.¹⁶⁵ As a result, musicians have turned to concerts.

“There’s enormous value in live events for news organizations, whether those events are geographically specific, topically specific, or identity-oriented.”

Jeremy Gilbert, Knight Chair in Digital Media Strategy, Northwestern University

Concerts are a means of creating scarcity—and “scarcity results in increased economic value,” Piechota said.¹⁶⁶ He continued to explain that news organizations could host live events to create the same effect, causing news content, of which there is an abundance, to become scarce.¹⁶⁷ Furthermore, through sponsorships and ticket sales, newsrooms would be granted an additional revenue stream.

As we see the continued rise of individual news personalities or influencers, these live events could be

¹⁶⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid.

a way for audiences to further foster a connection with their favorite journalists.

Professor Gilbert said something to this effect:

“There’s enormous value in live events for news organizations, whether those events are geographically specific, topically specific, or identity-oriented,” he explained. “I think the value in live events is the connection to an individual’s brand, and then the positive affinity that that creates for an institutional brand.”¹⁶⁸

Simply put, live events are a lifeline for consumers in an increasingly AI-slop dominated landscape, and are a valuable avenue for publishers to foster connections with audience members.

¹⁶⁸ Gilbert, interview by author, August 12, 2025.

Strategy #5:

Invest in the brand of the individual

David Caswell offered interesting insight into the panic that newsrooms are feeling as they try to cope with how young people are consuming news:

“These news-producing organizations can see AI coming for them from one direction, and they’re realizing that these machines can do all the stuff humans can do. As a result, their plan is often to become more human and more authentic,” he explained.¹⁶⁹

“The problem is, you’ve also got this enormous news influencer community coming from the other side. These content creators’ main product is authenticity,” Caswell continued.¹⁷⁰

Distinctive journalism, in other words, may be a solution for an increasingly AI-laden news landscape, but that doesn’t mean it will beat out the rise of news content creators.

The popularity of news influencers is in large part due to the younger generation’s increased trust in individuals. The question is, how can

news organizations work this to their benefit?

Interviewees generally boiled down how the relationship between news institutions and creators should change in two ways: 1) with an increased allegiance between news organizations and external content creators, and 2) with an evolution of the role of journalists within news institutions.

The popularity of news influencers is in large part due to the younger generation’s increased trust in individuals.

In the first scenario, interviewees imagined an increased partnership between news organizations and pre-established creators, where the newsroom feeds the creator some kind of sponsored content. The creator could independently structure a story surrounding the findings—either through personal framing or format—then post the content to their already-popular social media channels. The story would be credited to the news organization, and the content creator could relate interested viewers back to

¹⁶⁹ Caswell, interview by author, July 22, 2025.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid.

the organization’s website or a specific article for more information.

In the second scenario, news organizations would help to prop up their own journalists’ individual brands, encouraging them or offering higher compensation for those that amass followings on various platforms. Like in the first scenario, while the content they post would be credited back to the news organization, it would clear a path for a more solid connection between consumers and journalists.

While the route may be different, the end result would be the same: with the “journo-influencer” —a term from Salla-Rosa Leinonen’s *Can Journalists be Influencers?*—reframing newsroom-provided content on whichever social platform allows for maximum reach.¹⁷¹

As discussed previously, news influencers already exist. However, they widely operate outside of the media company umbrella, a system that majorly disadvantages outlets. An increased partnership between the two will allow newsrooms to grow in ways they have not yet been able to.

¹⁷¹ Salla-Rosa Leinonen, *Can Journalists Be Influencers? How to Engage Hard-to-Reach Audiences on Social Media* (POLIS, London School of Economics, June 2022), 12–13, accessed September 13, 2025, <https://blogsmedia.lse.ac.uk/blogs.dir/19/files/2>

Partnering with journo-influencers could allow newsrooms to occupy cultural spaces that they otherwise would not be able to reach. For instance, Dr. Simon points out that news influencers are embedded in interpersonal social networks, something media outlets have not yet successfully broken into.¹⁷²

Similarly, journo-influencers would help news organizations to provide content in the easy-to-scroll format required to keep young people’s attention.

“Users and viewers want you to keep giving them content, like Spotify,” Professor Beckett explains. “On Spotify, you just press play. It plays one song, and then it plays another.”¹⁷³ On social media platforms populated by journo-influencers, consumers would similarly get sucked into endless scrolling and absorption of news content.¹⁷⁴

News institutions can ... provide journo-influencers with stability, benefits, and informational access that they currently lack.

[022/06/22_0295-POLIS-Report-Journo-Influencers-V4.pdf](#).

¹⁷² Simon, interview by author, July 15, 2025.

¹⁷³ Beckett, interview by author, July 30, 2025.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid.

Additionally, this system would enable newsrooms to take advantage of the need for human interaction in an AI-laden news landscape.¹⁷⁵ As Jaźwińska pointed out, there's "an increased appetite for a face that users recognize and a voice that they trust to deliver information."¹⁷⁶

But that is not to say that news organizations would be the only ones to benefit from a partnership between newsrooms and journo-influencers. News institutions can also provide journo-influencers with stability, benefits, and informational access that they currently lack.

For instance, Montagu points out the financial possibilities. "Most news creators need a salary," he explained. "They don't make enough reliable recurring revenue to pay the rent, and many of them have side jobs."¹⁷⁷

Similarly, Jaźwińska notes the dangers of news influencers having to rely on an algorithm to show content to consumers, especially given shifting patterns in both audience behaviors and platform preferences.¹⁷⁸ Professor Beckett also

explains that audiences are fickle, and an influencer with a wide following today might not have the same following in a year.¹⁷⁹ However, Beckett believes that a way to keep an audience's attention may be through exploring a wide variety of material and topics—something that news organizations have always been able to provide.¹⁸⁰

But the value in this partnership is not always well-articulated by news organizations, resulting in a lot of news influencers going out on their own. Professor Gilbert argued that, for this new model to work, newsrooms are going to have to become much clearer about the benefits and what they can offer journo-influencers.¹⁸¹

¹⁷⁵ Jaźwińska, interview by author, July 24, 2025.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷⁷ Montagu, interview by author, July 25, 2025.

¹⁷⁸ Jaźwińska, interview by author, July 24, 2025.

¹⁷⁹ Beckett, interview by author, July 30, 2025.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid.

¹⁸¹ Gilbert, interview by author, August 12, 2025.

6. Conclusion

News production and consumption are evolving—both as a result of AI’s encroachment on the field as well as younger audiences’ preferences. With this report, we hope to have provided some insight into what media companies can expect from the next few years, including:

1. A renewed importance in meeting user needs,
2. An increase in trust in AI labels,
3. The continued rise of individuals’ brand, and
4. A movement beyond the efficiency paradigm.

We also hope to have offered meaningful avenues as to how newsrooms might stay on top of these trends, namely:

1. Embracing distinctive journalism,
2. Restructuring content to be AI-ready,
3. Liquifying, personalizing, and localizing content,
4. Building functionality around live events, and
5. Investing in individuals’ brands.

¹⁸² Mark Challinor, *The News Media Advertising Newsletter, July 2025* (London: News Media UK Consultancy, July 2025), 1.

However, in light of these pathways for change, it is essential to mention that interviewees on the whole were broadly optimistic about the future of news.

“For all the noise (and worry) around AI..., the deeper story is more hopeful.”

Mark Challinor, *The News Media Advertising Newsletter*

In fact, the sentiments that emerged widely echoed those of Mark Challinor’s in his *The News Media Advertising newsletter*.¹⁸²

As Challinor writes, “For all the noise (and worry) around AI..., the deeper story is more hopeful.”¹⁸³

This is not, as we mentioned at the beginning of the report, a moment for panic. Rather, it is a moment for evolution. With this research, we hope news organizations can more assuredly step into an AI future, advancing boldly toward new horizons.

¹⁸³ Challinor, *The News Media Advertising Newsletter*, 1.

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