

Public service media, responsible AI and user needs

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1

Introduction

Introduction

Following the massive response to the launch of ChatGPT in late 2022, news organisations have published artificial intelligence (AI) ethics charters and intensified their experimentation with a panoply of AI tools, while journalists and audiences have responded with some ambivalence to these emerging practices. Public service media – by virtue of their mandate, but also thanks to their relative financial stability and higher audience trust (Newman 2024) – are uniquely positioned to respond to the complex and rapidly evolving challenges posed by generative AI¹ to information quality and to the future of newswork. The ‘user needs model’ pioneered at the BBC and adapted by numerous other news organisations shows promise for regaining the trust – and attention – of audiences in alignment with public service values and journalism ethics, while integrating responsible AI principles.

A literature review of public service media artificial intelligence charters and initiatives was produced specifically for this report by Yonn Calvez, MA Public Communication student at Laval University. The analysis also builds on original insights from academics and expert practitioners from Europe and Canada² who took part in a workshop meeting hosted by the Quebec Government Office in London on February 26, 2025.

Clearing the fog of AI hype

The advent of generative AI is often described as a major potential disruption for journalism (Arguedas & Simon 2023), presenting both opportunities and risks, as well as a high level of uncertainty and a lack of concrete, specific solutions from both AI pessimists and AI optimists (Caswell 2025).

Generative AI raises important concerns about quality and reliability of online information, as the content produced is prone to biases and ‘hallucinations’ (distortions or inaccuracies presented as fact) (Bender et al., 2021; Sun et al. 2024). Generative AI also facilitates the production and dissemination of highly deceptive manipulated content, including video and audio deepfakes. There are also implications for audience engagement with news content, as AI chatbots are already being used to this end (Adami et al. 2025) although this method also produces inaccuracies even with a ‘live internet’ dataset (Rahman-Jones 2025; Fletcher et al. 2024). These issues arise in a context where recommendation systems of major digital platforms have already radically transformed access to news, enabling a high degree of personalization with potentially negative consequences for democratic processes, such as filter bubbles, fragmentation and polarization (Stray et al. 2023).

The ‘gold rush’ metaphor has been used to describe the AI frenzy of recent years, a combination of “surprise, information spreading, and impatient economic actors” (Greenstein 2023). But in a gold rush, few of those who arrive earliest make a profit; many of those who benefit are those who invest in more traditional means or supply essential equipment and services. News organisations, and public service media specifically, have mostly responded with relative caution to the AI hype; it is still too early to determine how they will fare in this new environment (Simon 2024).

¹ Terms in blue are defined in Appendix 1, Glossary.

² Names of participants are provided in Appendix 2. As the workshop was held under Chatham House Rule, specific contributions and ideas are not attributed to individuals in this report.



Participants at the “Public Service Media, Responsible AI & User Needs workshop”, Québec Government Office in London, February 26, 2025.

Floridi (2024) argues that AI hype has allowed to emerge what can be described as a tech bubble, especially with the launch of ChatGPT “*creating a perfect storm (still ongoing at the time of writing, though it seems to be abating) of inflated expectations and speculative investment.*” (p. 127-128)

The hype cycle of generative artificial intelligence may well have passed the peak of the “*unrealistic expectations*” phase, and could be entering its “*trough of disillusionment*” phase (Gartner 2024). This means that the technology will generate less excitement and speculation and more experimentation to confirm whether it delivers on all the promises made³.

It should be noted that a major factor of hype and financial bubbles is intensive media coverage – for AI specifically, the media is both a contributor and prey to exaggerated hopes and fears (McKelvey et al. 2024). It is likely that whatever productivity gains are to be obtained in journalism – as in other fields – through use of AI will be staggered over time; it should not be considered a panacea (Simon 2024).

³ On AI hype, see also La Grandeur (2024).

2

Uses and risks of AI in journalism

Uses and risks of AI in journalism

AI systems, including generative AI, are increasingly used in newsrooms to increase efficiency and combat misinformation. AI content generation (written text as well as still images, audio, and video) remains controversial due to use of outdated information, opacity of sources, fabricated facts and other inaccuracies (Zagorulko 2023; Verma 2024; Dierickx et al. 2024a). In all cases, human oversight is considered essential by journalists – as well as audiences, as we will see in the next section. The most commonly-cited uses are presented in Fig.1. Most of them are considered low-risk (on AI risk analysis and regulation, see Floridi 2022; Novelli et al. 2023; on risks of generative AI for journalism standards, see Jones et al. 2023). “Web scraping, social media monitoring, image generation, recommendation systems, and other distribution tools” are considered particularly successful, although continually tested and improved (Beckett & Yaseen 2023: 22).

Figure 1. AI in the news workflow

Newsgathering: Cast a wider net	Production: Improve efficiency, accessibility	Verification & moderation: Detect, debunk misin- formation for/with audiences	Distribution: Optimise dissemination and user experience
- Find story ideas and angles - Monitor and generate alerts - Identify trends and weak signals - Collect and analyse data	- Spell checking - Translation (still improving) - Audio transcription or text to audio - Headlines and summaries (some errors)	- Image/video authentication - Live monitoring of broadcast debates - Assistance for claim detection	- Automated content distribution, SEO - Personalisation - Highlighting content - Notifications - Targeted advertising

Data quality is a concern especially in smaller news markets, particularly for digitally-disadvantaged (or low-resource) language groups (Jones et al. 2023).

Human (journalist) in the loop

In a recent survey, 80% of Australian journalists said they used at least one generative AI tool, but 70% didn't trust the results and 50% didn't trust the technology. (Thomson *et al.* 2025) Indeed, attitudes of journalists vary regarding integration of AI in their daily practices. Their overall response can be described as ambivalent, even among the most seasoned users. Early adopters of AI in journalism have expressed awareness of “*perils and possibilities*” of AI for their craft (Cools & Diakopoulos 2024); fact-checkers who use AI tools regularly “*remain critical and cautious*” (Dierickx *et al.* 2024b).

It is helpful to consider the ‘**user needs**’ of **journalists themselves** in the development of AI systems designed for their work (Dierickx & Lindén 2023).

Factors of resistance (or non-use) include lack of interest; aversion to new technology; lack of understanding or interest in a data-driven approach; criticism of management-led innovations and perceived threat to one's job and professional identity. Acceptance of AI innovations in newsrooms is driven by a combination of practical factors and representations, as well as individual background (including AI literacy) and organisational culture that encourages technological innovation. Trust in developers, alignment with journalistic standards, direct involvement in the design process, as well as agile managerial methods can also facilitate adoption (Dierickx 2020).

Re-skilling journalists

Journalism education and training for working journalists will need to address the growing role of AI in newswork. This requires a combination of conventional and new – or reinvented – journalistic skills to maintain a ‘human-in-the-loop’ approach.

Contextual knowledge, **critical thinking** and evidence-based analysis are paramount for fact-checking in particular (Dierickx & Lindén 2024: 464). **Technological adaptability** includes prompt engineering, data science literacy and programming skills.

Finally, “[e]ssential soft skills such as creativity, empathy, and personal integrity” (Dierickx & Lindén 2024: 456) as well as **ability to collaborate** across disciplines and areas of expertise, specifically between journalists and developers, are also cited as key skills for journalists in the AI age.



3

Connecting with audiences

Connecting with audiences

Faced with declining trust and visibility, especially on social media platforms, as well as the growing challenge of news avoidance, news organisations are using AI to better connect with audiences. Many AI solutions are designed to maximize retention, increase subscriptions and user engagement (JournalismAI Collab 2025). Public service media have used such methods as well, but must also ensure that innovations comply with their mandate to ensure “*impartiality, fairness, balance, diversity, and universality*” (Jones et al. 2023: 3).

Audience perceptions of AI in news

A survey in six countries found that audiences rarely use generative AI to access news (Fletcher et al. 2024). Most respondents (66%) expect a large impact of the technology on media in the next five years, but generally do not trust them to use it responsibly, compared to other fields like science (p. 21). “[P]eople tend to expect [news produced with AI tools] to be less trustworthy and less transparent, but more up to date and (by a large margin) cheaper for publishers to produce. Very few people (8%) think that news produced by AI will be more worth paying for compared to news produced by humans.” (p. 4) Audiences remain generally more comfortable with content produced by human journalists rather than AI. Finally, a large majority of respondents expect some form of disclosure or labelling (p. 32) but there is no clear consensus on which AI-assisted practices should be labelled.

Responding to audiences’ user needs

Uses and gratifications (U&G) research from the 1940s onward led to a better understanding of people’s motivations for interacting with different types of media content and formats, as well as varying levels of (in)activity among users (Ruggiero 2000). The user needs model shares with U&G theory “*the core idea that people want a variety of things from the news media, and they might want different things at different times.*” (Fletcher 2024: 44)

The needs and behaviours of online audiences can also be considered through the broader lens of user experience (UX) and user-centred design, central to the study of human–computer interaction (HCI)⁴. The International Standards Organisation defines a human-centred design approach as one

that aims to make systems usable and useful by focusing on the users, their needs and requirements, and by applying human factors/ergonomics, and usability knowledge and techniques. This approach enhances effectiveness and efficiency, improves human well-being, user satisfaction, accessibility and sustainability; and counteracts possible adverse effects of use on human health, safety and performance. (ISO 2010)

A review of BBC World Service online news content in 2016 found that a majority of stories provided ‘updates’ but accounted for a very low level of engagement⁵. This led the newsroom to rethink its production strategy (Smartocto 2021). Dmitry Shishkin developed a machine learning algorithm to analyse large sets of stories and classify them by user needs. The initial list of eight user needs was based on survey findings; each need was associated with a type of story treatment. The model has since been refined and reorganised into four broad types of needs as shown in Fig.2.

⁴ Human-machine interaction (HMI) and computer-human interaction (CHI) are related approaches. See Dierickx & Lindén (2023) and Simonsen (2018) for a fuller discussion of user experience.

⁵ In one station the proportion of content was 70%, for only 7% of total traffic.

Figure 2. The user needs model 2.0

Fact-driven I want <i>to know</i> something	Context-driven I want <i>to understand</i> something	Emotion-driven I want <i>to feel</i> something	Action-driven I want <i>to do</i> something
Update me	Educate me	Inspire me	Help me
Provides breaking news and timely updates to keep readers informed about current events.	Often journalists underestimate how little their audience knows about (complex) topics. Explaining the essentials can be a powerful way to engage with your audience, and when done right, these types of articles could easily turn into evergreen content.	Provides motivational, uplifting stories that inspire action or reflection.	Delivers practical solutions and advice to help readers solve specific problems.
Exemple: "Iceland volcano erupts."	Exemple: "Why so many people still live around volcanos."	Exemple: "Hero saves entire family after volcano erupts."	Exemple: "These volcanos are dangerous to climb."
Keep me engaged	Give me perspective	Amuse me	Connect me
Helps the audience to participate in a public debate on the topic by broadening their view on the issue and the surrounding discussions.	Contextualises stories, often through the use of experts and analysts, helping readers to better understand the alternative perspectives, the pros and the cons, within a complex issue and supporting them to form their own opinion.	Offers light-hearted or entertaining content for enjoyment and relaxation.	Helps readers connect with communities, ideas, or people with shared interests or experiences.
Exemple: "Politicians react to volcano eruption."	Exemple: "Volcanos are getting more dangerous due to climate change."	Exemple: "Incredible footage of an erupting volcano."	Exemple: "Volunteers needed after volcano erupts."

Source: FT/Smartocto 2025

Editorial dashboards are created in collaboration with editors and journalists as a decision-making tool, based on real-time large language model (LLM) data analysis, to better serve a diversity of user needs.

Figure 3. An editorial dashboard for user needs



Source: FT/Smartocto 2025

The European Broadcasting Union's PEACH (Personalisation for Each) system to enhance user experience was designed as a collaborative solution and is used by public service media organisations in Ireland, Sweden, Germany, Lithuania and Portugal. Many other news organisations have designed their own version of the user needs model and editorial tools, adapting them to their specific mission, audience, and organisational culture.

A machine learning model was developed at YLE in Finland to “categorise news articles based on audience insight experts’ assessments of user needs” (Kuuluvainen 2023: 3). The study concludes that more balanced datasets are required to better ascertain certain categories of user needs and suggests that human labelling of user needs by journalists could be complemented by an AI tool. Newer LLM models could also be tested for better performance (p. 78).

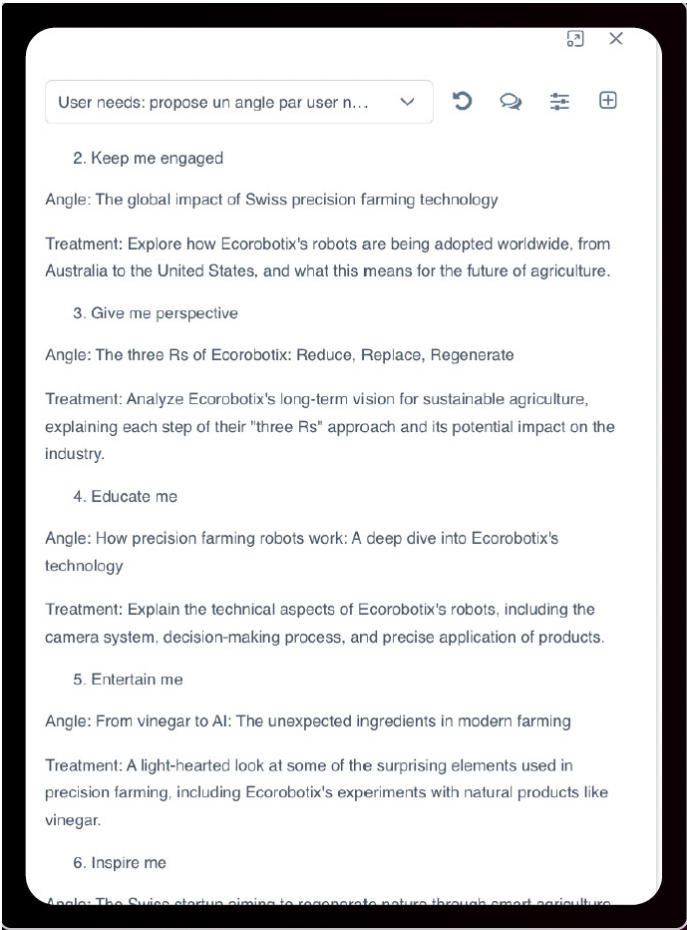
RTS : generating new story angles

A survey of the francophone Swiss audience identified a new user need, ‘Comfort me’, named by respondents as a key motivation for use of platforms such as Spotify, Netflix, YouTube and Instagram. *Radio Télévision Suisse* (RTS) has developed a ‘story angle generator’ called BakerStreet (Borchardt 2025: 40–41) and is working to integrate this user need into its model.

BakerStreet explained by Jean-Paul Persiali, AI product manager at RTS

[The] BakerStreet RTS tool [implemented in 2023] by the Sherlock team – hence the name! – which I was responsible for (...) is now maintained by a team of three data scientists, three developers and a scrum master. Our primary objective was to give our editorial teams easy access to artificial intelligence functionalities via a single web application, to better support our digital transformation. (...) Based on text, audio and video content, the application allows employees to transcribe, translate, summarise or interact with this content using a library of prompts shared across the entire SRG via an AI assistant. Each prompt describes the role of the assistant, the rules and the tasks that the AI system must follow in order to process the content and provide optimised responses for the editorial teams. This is particularly useful for isolating quotations, identifying key extracts, generating sub-headings, summaries, article bases or identifying angles and treatments thanks to the integration of user needs, a strategic model describing which audience needs our content covers. An example of this use of AI at RTS would be the summaries of RTS Info articles generated thanks to a prompt created and validated by a journalist. BakerStreet can also be used to analyse the tone of comments left on our platforms to detect trends such as news fatigue or, on the contrary, a strong commitment to certain themes. There are many possibilities, and they are being developed all the time. (Prongué 2025⁶)

Figure 4. BakerStreet user needs assistant



Source: RTS presentation at London workshop, February 26, 2025

6 Translation with DeepL.com (free version), edited by author.

NPO: Value of news for society

The Dutch public broadcaster NPO's adaptation of the user needs model integrates **societal needs** in addition to individual user needs:

- 1 **Discover** – Information must be made accessible to society, both information that is already out there and that which isn't yet (exposés, doing research).
- 2 **Set the agenda** – Information must be selected and lines of thought must be outlined. How are topics and items weighted? What are prevailing and new opinions – and possible solutions?
- 3 **Represent** – It's important that all voices in society are heard. Balanced representation also means that those who are not automatically heard are given a place.
- 4 **Confront** – Those with power and responsibility (politicians and companies, but also citizens themselves) must be held accountable. Journalism is society's watchdog and doesn't look away when power is abused. (Olij & Mink 2025)

Figure 5. Societal and individual user needs model, NPO



Source: Olij & Mink 2025



4

Rethinking news values

Rethinking news values

The use of algorithmic solutions in newsrooms – particularly those grounded in metrics-based analysis of user demand, in particular recommender systems and personalisation of content – is already transforming journalistic culture. Ethical issues have become in the past few years a ‘central task’ of AI in journalism (Corlezza & Schapals 2024: 360). As selection, production, and distribution of news become partly automated, the gatekeeping role and related notions of editorial judgement and professional autonomy are challenged (Mitova et al. 2023: 86, 90; Cools & Diakopoulos 2024). The opacity of AI systems (black-box effect) – and resulting inaccuracies, biases and plagiarised content – is perceived as a risk for organisational and professional integrity (Jones et al. 2023: 3) as well as accountability (Corlezza & Schapals 2024: 359).

In addition, lack of transparency by news organisations in their use of AI⁷ can undermine public trust (paradoxically, disclosing use may have a similar effect as it draws attention to these practices). Limited explainability of AI systems and low AI literacy can produce opposing negative outcomes in newsrooms: uncritical use and overreliance, or refusal to engage with AI tools altogether (Jones et al. 2023: 4–5).

A human-centred approach in developing AI systems can help mitigate these risks: for example, involving journalists from the initial stages to implementation, as well as studying audiences’ needs and expectations through surveys – as in the initial BBC model or at RTS – or more intensively through participatory design, with special attention to news avoidance and marginalised voices (see for example Jones & Jones 2025; Hayat et al. 2025).

Diakopoulos et al. (2024:20) argue for building domain-specific AI ethics, using as a starting point the four key principles of the Society of Professional Journalists in the United States: “*seek truth and report it, minimize harm, act independently, and be accountable and transparent*”. Such a value-driven design process can help ensure ethical principles are enforced “at each stage of the Machine Learning development pipeline” (Porlezza & Schapals 2024: 362).

Also worth exploring further is the addition of responsible AI principles (and AI ethics) such as user agency, privacy, environmental sustainability, and bias/diversity to conventional journalism norms. While these add complexity and therefore difficulty of application, they can help to address specific challenges such as audience trust and the socio-technical environment.

Public service broadcasters’ AI ethics charters include new interpretations of public service values as well as emerging principles not traditionally associated with journalism.

Figure 6. Emerging principles in public service media AI charters and initiatives

Clear benefit	Accessibility	Linguistic & regional diversity	Sustainability
Responsible use of AI, data and production in order to promote the public interest within the framework of the public service mission (Südwestrundfunk 2023; ZDF 2023a, 2023b; PTS 2023)	Developing AI tools to better serve users with disabilities (Radio France n.d. 2024), automatic transcription of audio content at Sveriges Radio (Zachrisson & Padalko 2024), simplified summaries and improved readability (VRT International 2023; BBC 2021)	“AI assisted but human-verified” translation into local minority languages (Borchardt 2024: 11–12); regional customization of content at BR (p. 12) and gathering audience questions from diverse regions for an interview with the prime minister at Radio France (p. 13)	Commitment to minimise environmental impacts (YLE 2023).

⁷ Specifically, “disclosing how algorithms operate, the sources of data, the criteria used for information gathering, news curation and personalization, and labeling AI-generated content.” (Corlezza & Schapals 2024: 359)

Public service media and the innovation imperative

There is an expectation that public service media should lead the way in responsible innovation in a disrupted and constantly changing information ecosystem. As *“a strategic driver and the only sustainable alternative for their survival, repositioning and renewal”*, innovation priorities set by public service media include AI, user experience and reconnecting with audiences, especially young people (Fieiras-Ceide et al. 2024). Many organisations have created in-house labs which have experimented with dozens of AI projects since 2020 through collaborations between journalists and technologists or engineers; across news, digital and other departments; and with external partners, such as tech firms and academics. One study found that innovation projects in public service media were still more tech-centric than user-centric (Direito-Rebolai & Donders 2023).

There is still good reason to exercise caution in deploying AI in public service media. To this end, sharing of expertise and lessons learned from AI experiments between organisations with varying resources, in different national contexts, is extremely valuable.

The EBU’s **News Integrity in the Age of AI** initiative *“aims to establish a set of basic principles of engagement between professional media and technology companies for the “safe and reliable” deployment of AI as it impacts on news and information.”* (Borchardt 2024 : 8) Another example is the **Public Spaces Incubator**, an international partnership between six public service media organisations and Eli Pariser’s New York-based non-profit tech incubator New_ Public, which develops prototypes *“for digital conversation spaces that offer a healthy forum for connection and increase engagement in civic discourse.”* (PSI 2024)

Organisational processes and challenges

Experts consider that the biggest challenges to responsible AI innovation in news organisations are not technological but organisational (Beckett & Yaseen 2023; Roy 2025). News organisations seek to reduce dependency on external AI providers, to develop and sustain AI expertise, as well as to determine which core tasks must remain under editorial control and which can be outsourced (Simon 2024; Cools & Diakopoulos 2024). There is strong pressure to move as quickly as the technology itself. But *“[e]valuation, testing, and implementation take time”* and keeping a human in the loop is a major obstacle to the scalability offered by AI (Borchardt 2025: 3).

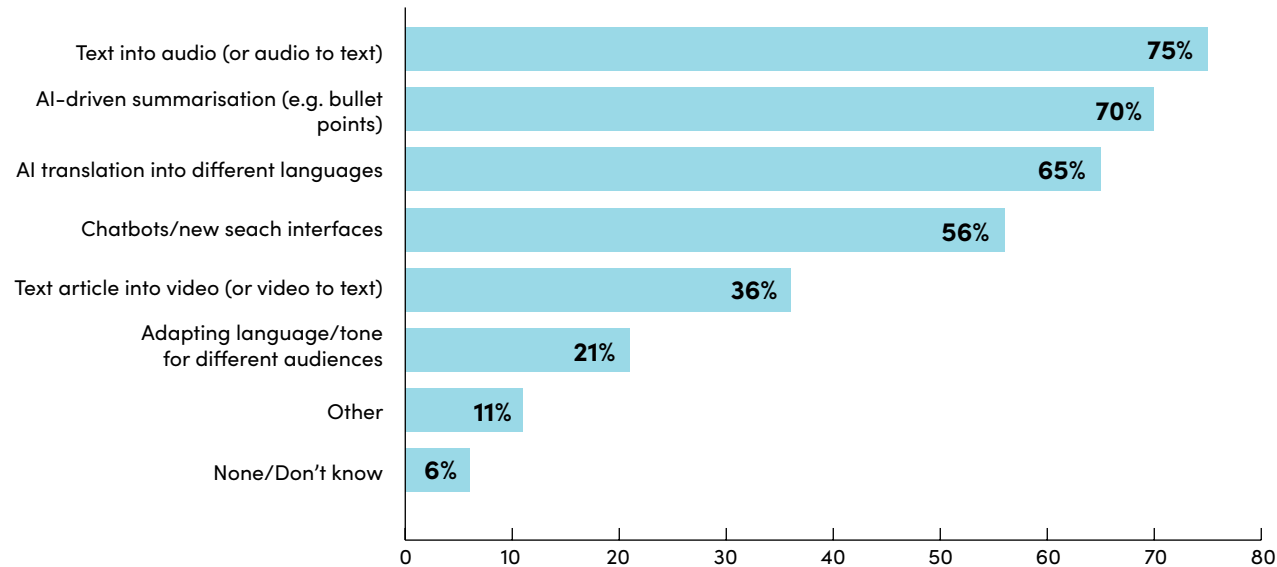
Some news organisations have chosen to block AI crawlers and several lawsuits by news organisations (starting with the New York Times and including coalitions in the USA, India, and Canada) are pending against AI companies for unauthorised use of their content to train their models. Yet many more content-licensing deals have been signed (and others are still in negotiations), in exchange for compensation and use of the technology to develop in-house solutions. (Tobitt 2025)

There is also a capacity gap between AI “winners”, usually large organisations that *“have been able to invest in research and development, devote staff time, attract and retain talent, and build infrastructure”* who are in a better position to negotiate with tech companies and platforms (Simon 2024: 37), and smaller, less agile newsrooms that rely on external providers and have limited expertise. This gap is expected to grow as well as within newsrooms, between experts and nonexperts of AI (Borchardt 2025: 15). In addition, managers tend to be more favourable to these opportunities than employees, who are concerned about inaccuracies and opacity (p. 11). Another challenge is the lack of cost-benefit evaluation and impact measurement of AI tools in newsrooms (Borchardt 2025: 3).

In this context, implementation of innovation requires further development of specialized units ('AI task forces') as well as broader newsroom experimentation and efforts to improve AI literacy and intelligibility (Cools & Diakopoulos 2024: 13; Corlezza & Schapals 2024: 363-364).

Kasper Lindskow, Head of AI at the JP/Politiken Media Group in Denmark, recommends a multistep process to ensure tools are created to meet newsroom needs: “first testing with a small internal team to refine the concept, then conducting focused workshops with a limited group of journalists to get editorial feedback, and finally rolling out to the entire newsroom with ongoing training and support.” (Roy 2025)

Figure 7. Top audience-facing AI initiatives planned by publishers in 2025



Q18. Which of the following audience focused AI initiatives, if any, will you be actively exploring in 2025? Please select all that apply.
Base = 297.

Source: Newman & Cherubini (2025: 34)

5

Conclusion

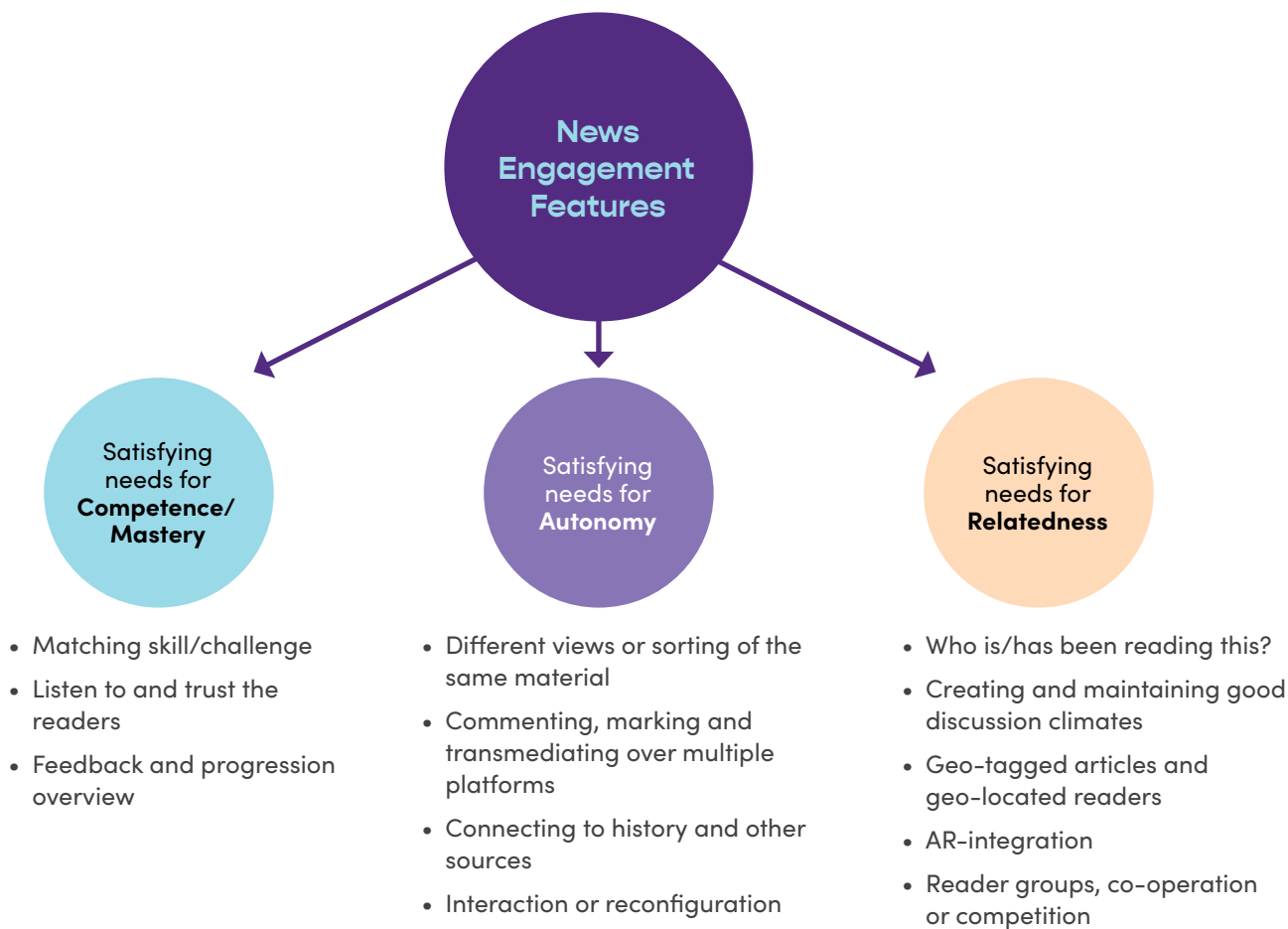
Conclusion

The future for uses and development of generative AI is highly uncertain. “The big issues about data usage, copyright claims, and participation in potential economic gains of the AI economy have remained largely unsolved, as have concerns about resource and energy usage.” (Borchardt 2025: 3) News publishers worry that AI aggregations will replace traditional search and social referrals to their content (Newman & Cherubini 2025: 40). The role of the most powerful tech firms in political decision-making and design of regulatory frameworks is also a major cause for concern⁸.

Despite this uncertainty and the important challenges of AI for news media, or perhaps because of them, many experts call for increased efforts to better connect with audiences, including the promotion of AI literacy (Poynter 2025), which can lead to fuller citizen engagement in AI issues. There appears to be room for improvement in this area. A critical analysis of AI discourse, including media coverage, found that it “generally draws on four frames: hype, scandal, inevitability, or silence”, focusing on a small group of experts and marginalizing public participation in democratic debates on regulation and governance (McKelvey et al. 2024:4).

The user needs model shows that audiences expect more than traditional fact-based reporting, especially when faced with complex, anxiety-provoking, or polarizing issues. Indeed, they might respond more favourably to “democratically committed and explanatory constructive [solution-oriented] journalism” (Ekström & Patron 2024: 164-165).

Figure 8. News engagement features to satisfy basic needs



Source: Svensson (2024: 196)

⁸ See Judge et al. (2025) for broad regulatory issues of generative AI, and Borchardt (2025: 7) for a summary of the recent political shift.

Another promising avenue builds on user engagement models developed in effective game design to drive motivation in engaging with news (Svensson 2024). Based on self-determination theory, gamification systems include motivators designed to support relatedness, autonomy, and competence or mastery (p. 91). They also take into account a variety of motivational profiles (p. 115). In a local news setting, for example, relatedness needs could be satisfied through interactions with editors and cooperation with other users (p. 186). To help users meet their autonomy needs, news organisations could *“provide support structures that help the reader place themselves in relation to the news narrative”* (p. 178).

In brief, public service media’s ongoing experiment with AI should aim to *“serve the public by listening to communities rather than broadcasting to them”* (David Caswell, cited by Borchardt 2025 : 29).

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Appendix 1: Glossary

Many of the terms used throughout this document refer to highly complex and rapidly changing realities. The definitions offered below are meant to facilitate a common understanding across disciplines and should not be considered conclusive or exhaustive.

Artificial intelligence (AI)

The design and study of machines that can perform tasks that would previously have required human (or other biological) brainpower to accomplish. AI is a broad field that incorporates many different aspects of intelligence, such as reasoning, making decisions, learning from mistakes, communicating, solving problems, and moving around the physical world. AI was founded as an academic discipline in the mid-1950s, and is now found in myriad everyday applications, including virtual assistants, search engines, navigation apps and online banking. (Alan Turing Institute 2025)

AI literacy

"[T]he ability to understand AI systems' history, capabilities and limitations, critically evaluate their impact, and effectively use or interact with AI tools in a way that serves one's purposes while recognizing ethical considerations, potential benefits and risks." (Poynter, 2025: 5)

Generative AI

"An artificial intelligence system that generates text, images, audio, video or other media in response to user prompts. It uses machine learning techniques to create new data that has similar characteristics to the data it was trained on (...), resulting in outputs that are often indistinguishable from human-created media (...)." (Alan Turing Institute 2025)

Human-in-the-loop

AI is a technology that is programmed to make partially or fully autonomous decisions that can have a direct impact on the people concerned. However, these decisions can contain errors, biases or misinformation, which can have a direct impact on the well-being and safety of the people concerned. To promote responsible and inclusive AI, it remains essential for humans to be part of the AI decision-making loop. This allows AI systems to be supervised, particularly for critical tasks such as supporting medical diagnosis or assisting with legal decisions. (OBVIA & RECIT 2024⁹)

Large language model (LLM)

A type of foundation model that is trained on a vast amount of textual data in order to carry out language-related tasks. Large language models power the new generation of chatbots, and can generate text that is indistinguishable from human-written text. They are part of a broader field of research called natural language processing, and are typically much simpler in design than smaller, more traditional language models. (Alan Turing Institute 2025)

Machine learning (ML)/Deep learning (DL)

Even though often referred to as AI itself, machine learning is merely a subfield of artificial intelligence, one that is focused on developing computer programmes that learn from data without being explicitly instructed what to do. The learning is driven by algorithms and statistical models that allow the machine to analyse and predict outcomes from data patterns. (...) [Deep Learning] uses Neural Networks (NN) with multiple layers to understand complicated, hierarchical data structures. DL has achieved notable success in a variety of fields, including image recognition and natural language processing. (LeCun et al. 2015,¹) (Kuuluvainen 2023: 14)

Participatory design (PD)

[I]ncorporating diverse voices in design in order to challenge power structures. In contrast with UCD and service design, PD is designed to enable non-expert stakeholders to provide direct input on technology design (...). PD provides guidance for practitioners to create a hybrid space (i.e., neither in the stakeholders or the designers' domain) that allows diverse non-expert stakeholders to meaningfully contribute, while uncovering and challenging the power dynamics between stakeholders and designers, as well as within groups of stakeholders (...). (Delgado et al., 2023)

⁹ Translation with DeepL.com (free version), edited by author.

Responsible AI

Responsible AI is human-centred and ensures users' trust through ethical ways of decision making. The decision-making must be fair, accountable, not biased, with good intentions, non-discriminating, and consistent with societal laws and norms. Responsible AI ensures, that automated decisions are explainable to users while always preserving users' privacy through a secure implementation. (Göllner et al. 2024: 7; emphasis in original)

Ethics are a set of principles to which we have subscribed in order to ensure the best possible living conditions in our society. Ethics is also a reflexive process in which we must engage to determine how established principles can be respected in various contexts. In the case of AI, since it is a technology that can learn and operate in partial or complete autonomy, we need to reflect on the ethical issues it generates, such as the black box phenomenon, cognitive biases and respect for privacy. (OBVIA & RECIT 2024)

User-centred design (UCD)

[A] design approach that grounds the characteristics of an innovation in information about the individuals who use that innovation, with a goal of maximizing "usability in context." The closely related approach of human-centred design more explicitly seeks to integrate an innovation into human activities and systems by considering individuals beyond primary users (including those who interact indirectly with the innovation, such as clinic leaders who oversee implementation, as well as those who are unintentionally affected by it, such as family members of patients) in the design process. Both approaches involve design thinking— a solution-focused, action-oriented approach to solving problems through the application of user/human-centred design strategies—and user research— data collection and analysis that are meant to understand the needs, desires, preferences, values, experiences, and recommendations of people who will use a particular innovation. (Dopp et al. 2019)

User experience

The concept of user experience is derived from the human-computer interaction (HCI) field. It relates to overall user satisfaction when confronted with an information system and its usability. Encompassing the cognitive process at work and the emotions derived from the use, it goes beyond the concept of usability, which covers the methods for improving the ease of use during the design process. Usability is also defined as the extent to which the use of a product or a service allows one to achieve specific objectives with effectiveness, efficiency, and satisfaction in a specified context of use. (Dierickx & Lindén 2023: 6)

User needs

[P]roduct and editorial teams have been embracing 'user needs' models and 'jobs to be done' methodologies to help identify opportunities. These processes ask searching questions about what role publisher products can play in a world of abundant media choices. They drill down, for example, into specific problems that audiences have and think about different ways these could be solved. (...) The new model is both more comprehensive and more actionable than those before it, and its visualisation is strikingly clear. One of the original user needs has been reframed; two new user needs have been added. At the heart of the visualisation, are four drivers that will be instantly recognisable to content creators: fact-driven [know], context-driven [understand], emotion-driven [feel] and action-driven [do]. (Smartocto 2023)

Appendix 2: London workshop



Workshop participants were hosted by the Responsible Innovation Centre (RIC) at BBC Broadcasting House and met with BBC R&D and News staff, as well as BBC research fellows from UK universities.

A group of academics and public service media leaders from Canada, Europe, and the UK met in London on February 26–27 to share research findings and lessons learned from newsroom initiatives using artificial intelligence..

Public service media have committed through their AI charters to play a leading role in responsible innovation, and to use these technologies for ‘clear benefit’ of a broad and diverse public. But as participants in the research workshop noted, there are several challenges in achieving these goals, such as high development costs and uncertainty, as well as dependency on commercial service providers and the difficulty of sustaining in-house expertise.

Including news teams from the beginning and breaking down organisational barriers were also mentioned as essential to successful innovation. Some of the initiatives showcased at the workshop were inspired by the user needs model pioneered at the BBC.

Participants also noted the role of public service media in fostering AI literacy through their programming and outreach activities, including in local communities with reduced news coverage.

The research workshop was funded by the FCDO Evidence Fund and was hosted at the Quebec Government Office in London.

Workshop participants

Nom	Organisation	Title
Alexandre Bouillon	Laval University	MA Student, Political Science
Kati Bremme	France Télévision	Innovation Lead & Editor, Méta-Media
Colette Brin	Laval University	Professor, Dept. Information & Communication
Laurence Dierickx	ULB/U.Bergen	Lecturer/Postdoc
Flavie Durette	Laval University	BA Student, Public Communication/Journalism
Richard Fletcher	University of Oxford	Director of Research, Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism
Bronwyn Jones	University of Edinburgh/BBC	Research Lead, Responsible Innovation Centre
David Jones	British Consulate-General Montréal	Consul General
Rhianne Jones	BBC	Lead, Responsible Innovation Centre
Richard Khoury	Laval University	Professor, Dept. Software Engineering
Joanie Lavoie	Radio-Canada	Project Lead, Development & Business Strategy
Xavier Lindsay	Laval University	MA Student, Computer Science & AI
Jean-Paul Persiali	RTS	Digital Product Manager
Dmytro Petruk	EBU	PEACH Product Owner, software engineer
Samuel Profumo	RTBF	Chief Data Officer
Line Rivard	Québec Office in London	Agent-General
Mario Rivero-Huguet	British Consulate-General Montréal	Head of Science and Technology/ National AI Lead
Remy Rouillard	Québec Office in London	Research and Innovation Attaché
Georgia Watson	Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office	Senior Social Researcher

The Obvia logo features the word "obvia" in a white, lowercase, sans-serif font. The letter "o" is stylized with a small white dot above it. The logo is positioned in the bottom left corner of the page, which has a solid purple background. A large, light purple circular shape is partially visible on the left side of the page, overlapping the logo.

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