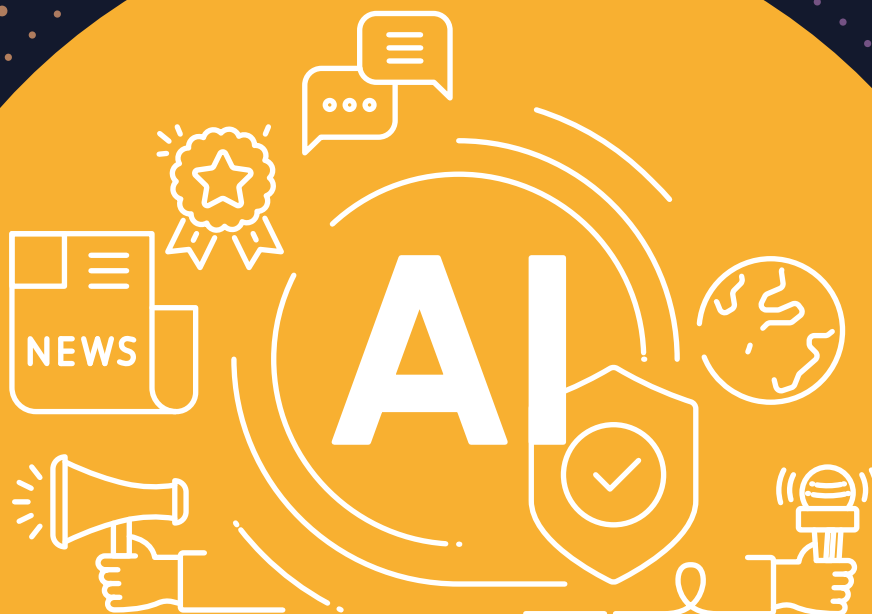


AI4Media Results in Brief: **Policies for a responsible future of AI and journalism**

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This factsheet provides insights into the needed policies for a responsible future of AI and journalism. During the Joint Computation + Journalism European Data & Computational Journalism Conference 2023 AI4Media organised a workshop focusing on the question of 'What policies do you need to build a better future for AI and Journalism?' The workshop included participants from journalistic organisations and researchers within the field of journalism, who participated in two different exercises aimed at qualifying the Pilot Policy Recommendations produced by AI4media.



A ranked regulation wishlist



Based on the participants' discussions of needed regulation to ensure responsible use of AI in the media



1

Responsible funding: The need for regulation aimed at securing responsible forms of funding to assist media organisations in developing responsible AI systems, new ethical standards and upskilling staff in AI.



2

Data access: The need for regulation to support open data access and open API's for research or investigative purposes (e.g., training data or algorithmic accountability reporting).



3

Transparency and disclosure: The need for regulation to support transparency practices both internally in the media organisations (e.g., intelligibility of applications) and externally to the audience so that it is disclosed when and how an AI was used. Independent, responsible, legal and ethical certification or guidelines can help in this regard.



4

Bias reduction and model parameterization: The need for regulation that incentivizes or demands bias reduction and requires a more democratic process in deciding what biases matter in the system as well as regulation that delimits the number of parameters models should be trained on.

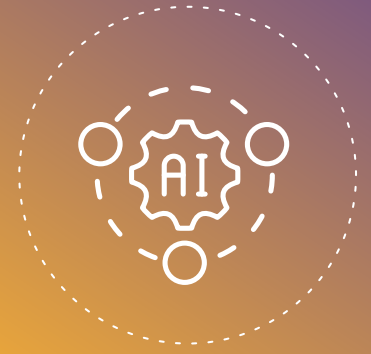


5

Better Governance: The need for more/better regulation of large private platforms if they make changes to their AI systems that produce negative effects on the circulation of information including via competition rules. Regulation protecting intellectual property in the AI era is needed including protection of content, training data as well as IP elements in the prompts produced by media organisations. There is also a call to make innovation more democratic as it deeply impacts society but political conversation comes only when a new innovation is already ramping on the market.



Tensions around AI across three landscapes



Based on the participants' discussions of several provocative statements regarding AI's role in the media sector and the role of regulation, we here summarise the debates and what was highlighted as problematic and potential solutions. The discussions are divided into three landscapes:



The media
landscape



The research
landscape



The regulatory
landscape

Media landscape



Statement one:

Generative AI should increasingly be used to write news

A few **strongly disagreed** with this statement, highlighting the poor quality of AI generated content and how its template style might be boring for readers over time.

Most emphasised that it **depends** on the context of use and that it would be appropriate, for **some** news, such as hyper local news, for rewriting existing stories for specific audiences or in the ideation and copy-editing process (e.g., brainstorming or for writing first drafts).

A limited number of participants pointed to the need to have **humans-in-the-loop** to review the content, **transparency disclosures** and proper **mitigation measures** in place in cases of error.

Statement two:

Editorial content from media organisations should never be removed by private platforms if not illegal

This statement produced much contestation amongst participants, who highlighted that **legal does not equate ethical** content and that hate speech should always be suppressed/ removed even if it originated from media organisations.

The issue of **defining illegal** was also highlighted and who should decide this (e.g., national or EU legislators). Only one participant expressed that private platforms should have the **right to act as they want**.

Statement three:

Media organisations should simply use easily accessible AI solutions (like OpenAI) rather than open source in-house development

Some participants strongly disagreed, highlighting issues of the **minimal transparency** of these systems regarding training data and **lacking reliability**.

Several pointed to the tension of **lacking funding and resources** within media organisations to develop AI systems. Many suggested a **diverse ecosystem** would be the ideal solution, so that open-source tools were used when appropriate/ethical and that training and resources in-house was used to upskill employees in using and customising these tools, while also having space to develop in-house for critical/sensitive tasks.

Some suggested more **cross-organisational collaboration** as a way to ensure resources and the need for incentives to make in-house solutions **open-source** for other newsrooms to benefit from.

Research landscape



Statement one:

API privatisation like on Twitter will become standard practice and research access will be lost

This was one of the statements that produced most agreement, namely that privatised APIs and lack of access to data will be highly **detrimental for research and journalism**.

Participants highlighted the business model of data and the economic motives of private companies as barriers for open APIs and suggested that **research/investigative access should be mandated by law**.

Statement two:

Training data becomes a problematic trade-off - either you cannot get the data you need due to strict regulation or you have to use illegal/unethical datasets

Many found the statement too simplistic, highlighting how good regulation should enable **appropriate data access, data ethics and mandate use of ethical datasets**, rather than illegalize data.

Some suggested the need of intermediaries, such as **data brokers** who can provide anonymised data and **extending creative commons to reputable datasets** as potential solutions.

Statement three:

AI development/research should never rely on funding from big tech (e.g. Google DNI, Meta)

None of the participants could imagine a way around Big Tech funding and also mentioned the positive role they have played in innovating media, but highlighted the needs for more **regulation and standards for such funding**.

Others suggested that there is a need for **other players to fund media innovation** who would be controlled by ethical committees, to ensure that Big Tech only funds a minor part of what is being developed and that responsible and independent innovations are prioritised.

Regulatory and policy landscape



Statement one:

Big tech wants strict regulation of AI to eliminate small competitors, such as small media organisations or start-ups

This was one of the most consensus creating statements, generally the participants did not agree that Big Tech wants regulation to illuminate smaller players, rather they argued that they want **open frameworks for the industry**.

Statement two:

The use of AI should always be transparently disclosed - this should be a strict regulatory demand

This was the second consensus making statement, as almost all participants agreed that **disclosure of AI should be mandatory**, but they questioned to whom and to what degree AI should have been used to warrant disclosure.

Some highlighted the importance of having **meaningful disclosures** and not simply making disclosures for disclosures sake.

Statement three:

All applications of AI in media should be high risk in the AI Act

Here several argued for the need for a more **nuanced and flexible approach** that not all, but only some applications should be high risk.

Some highlighted the difficulty of **maintaining media independence** with very strict regulation.



The media landscape



"...but still needs human editing/checks"



"Avoid monopolies at all costs!"



"Who are these in-house developers at media organisations?"



The research landscape



"Maybe we need a World Data Bank"



"Without open data the AI world is lost and broken"



"But who will fund AI then? Academia has no money"



The regulatory landscape



"Big Tech does not fear small competitors"



"It's all about transparency"



"We need flexibility and shades of grey"



BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The Joint Computation + Journalism European Data & Computational Journalism Conference 2023 took place from June 22-24 in Zürich, Switzerland and included presentations from both practitioners (e.g., investigative journalists and newsrooms) and researchers (e.g., data scientists, journalism scholars and legal scholars). Many of the talks and panels are available online here:

<https://www.datajconf.com/schedule>.

The workshop took place on the first day of the conference hosted by Tamedia, a local news organisation in Switzerland and had a high attendance of around 25-30 participants. The participants came from varying organisations including smaller specialised newsrooms, large prominent global newsrooms and researchers from a variety of European institutions. The workshop was held under the Chatham House Rules, meaning that participants are free to use the information received, but neither the identity nor the affiliation of the speaker(s), nor that of any other participant, may be revealed. The AI4Media team behind the workshop were Anna Schjøtt Hansen from the University of Amsterdam (UvA), Noémie Krack and Aleksandra Kuczerawy from KU Leuven (KUL).

1. NOTES ON METHODOLOGY

2. The workshop was divided into three parts that are outlined below:
3. First the participants were given a presentation of the pilot policy recommendations produced by AI4Media.
4. Second, they engaged in the first exercise titled 'Prototyping Policies'. This exercise was inspired by the use of prototypes within participatory design which are understood as: "types' that embody tensions surrounding an area of interest, in order to support collaborative analysis of that area and to collaboratively explore design possibilities". The participants were asked to move to three different corners of the room, which represented the media landscape, the research landscape and the regulatory and policy landscape. In each corner they were presented with three provocative statements that were aimed at highlighting specific tensions in the current AI and media landscape. The participants would spend ten minutes in each corner and were asked to read, react and discuss the statements and provide post-its, where they would highlight their agreement or disagreement with the statements.
5. Third, they were introduced to a last exercise 'The Wishing Well', where they were asked to first write down three wishes for policies that they felt were highly needed. These could be based on the previous discussions or personal experience within their field. Once everyone had written three wishes, they were divided into smaller groups and asked to group the wishes into themes. As the last part of the exercise they were asked as a group to rank each of the overarching themes from most important to least important and finally present this to the other groups.