# AI4Media Results in Brief: **What policies do we need to ensure a responsible future for AI and Media?**

Authors:

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Insights from the workshop at the AI, media and democracy Lab

The University of Amsterdam together with KU Leuven organised a workshop at the AI, Media and Democracy Lab in Amsterdam, which is an interdisciplinary research centre focusing on the implications of AI for media and democracy. The workshop focused on the question of 'What policies do you need to build a better future for AI and media?' The workshop included the members from the lab who are researchers in the fields of law, social science, journalism and data science. The workshop was aimed at qualifying the Pilot Policy Recommendations produced by AI4Media.
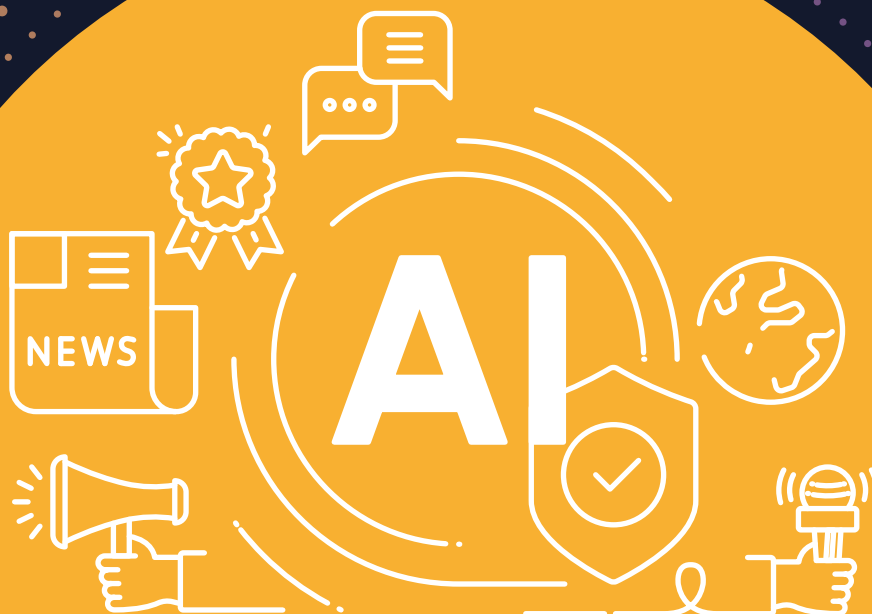
A regulation wishlist

Based on the participants' discussions of what regulation is needed to ensure the responsible use of AI in the media sector, we have distilled the following six predominant regulatory wishes among the participants.

1 **Democratic participation and value-based tech regulatory framework:** The regulation of AI should ensure the respect of fundamental rights and values and put them at the centre of future regulation design. The risks caused by AI to the protection of the environment, equality and worker's rights were particularly underlined. There is a need to have meaningful cultural and social representation and participation of underrepresented or vulnerable communities in technology and policy discussions.

2 **Address power concentration related to AI and technology:** Regulation should limit the power of big tech companies, concerning computational power (infrastructure), market power, and data power, as having a high market concentration in these areas raises a lot of concerns regarding, for example, monopolisation, dependencies and homogenisation. To achieve this, an efficient antitrust/competition policy is needed to ensure that the development of societally impactful technologies like AI is not left in the hands of the few.

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Support and develop counter power and external accountability: Regulation should foster smaller open-source initiatives, and investigate the possibility of having AI commons initiatives. It also should ensure that researchers and civil society can play their part in tech regulation assessments by explicitly giving them appropriate means to do so. For instance, ensuring and protecting data access, promoting transparency mechanisms, developing publicly accessible and contestable impact assessments of AI applications and imposing on providers to offer alternative recommendation systems were put forward.

Ensure trust through transparency and consumer protection: The regulation should protect consumers by improving transparency around the use and functioning of AI systems. Participants mentioned the need for a strong auditability scheme, transparency about the training data for models, transparency features linked to AI-generated outputs and the need for strong protection against addictive design in choice architecture.

Support media actors in the AI & digital transformation: Regulation is needed to ensure effective support for journalists in the evolving technology landscape to make sure that media independence and journalistic ethical standards are respected. Increasing funding and initiatives are needed to ensure the resources to develop journalistically and culturally appropriate technologies.
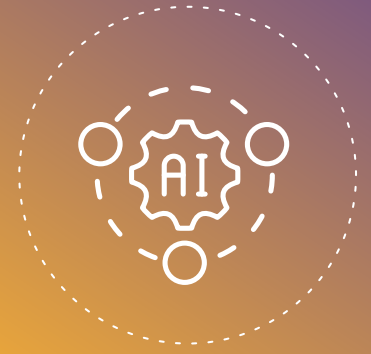
Address the copyright issues: Regulation should protect artists, and human creativity as well as ensure the protection of IP rights-protected data used for AI training purposes.

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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

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Media
landscape

Statement one:

Generative AI should increasingly be used to write news

All agreed that this statement had to be nuanced and toned down, particularly the words should and increasingly triggered reactions.

Many underlined the importance of explaining and deciding **which tasks the technology would be applicable for but also to what extent.**

Others also mentioned the need to use the technology with **full disclosure** to ensure people are correctly informed and can opt out or make an **informed decision and assessment** of the content they see.

Lastly, some indicated the need to use the technology under **human supervision**, following **fact-checking** principles and **editing** reviews.

Statement two:

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

This statement triggered many reactions and input. Many asked the question of **what is illegal content** and according to whom. It was highlighted that what is illegal differs from one country to another which makes it challenging in an online environment. Similarly, some wondered how to define clearly **what is considered as media/editorial content.** They pointed out that today everyone can make an account on social media or create a page, so the boundaries are very blurry.

Some warned that **removal measures/moderation** could also have adversarial effects.

Several **highlighted the issues of granting political power to platforms in their role of monitoring and moderating public opinion** and potentially diminishing private freedoms.

Statement three:

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

This statement was one of the few where there was **clear agreement that this would be highly problematic.**

They highlighted the **need to have tech alternatives** and that media organisations should **put efforts into understanding and pursuing different kinds of AI solutions available** and not only the ones coming from prominent AI developers such as OpenAI.

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Research
landscape

Statement one:

API privatization like on Twitter (now X) will become standard practice and research access will be lost

There was strong agreement amongst the participants that this is problematic, while some noted that unfortunately, this might be the reality.

Participants generally agreed that there is a need for strong regulation and effective enforcement aimed at ensuring data access for research.

Some hoped that there would be examples of companies valuing open science and open data practices that will have open APIs as good practices. Others warned that this approach would not meet the commercial interests of companies. One responded that payment to some extent could be envisaged.

Statement two:

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

Several **disagreed** with the statement and pointed out that it was more about **creating clarity on the limitations, identifying the blind spots and how to address them, thereby, creating good practices towards responsible use of data sets.**

Others pointed to the role of **regulation in providing alternatives** to this statement and ensuring the creation of strong tools for **data access** in regulation (for instance in the AI Act, DSA) to ensure to have alternate data or datasets.

Statement three:

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

This statement led to varying responses from the participants. Some mentioned that "never" is too strong and many agreed that **research should never "fully" rely on big tech funding.** Additionally, transparent **disclosure** and academic independence were mentioned as crucial values to respect when it comes to funding.

Others pointed out that it was not only about the funding but also about the **transfer of knowledge,** broadening the scope of the statement and debating the links between research institutions and companies.

Another point of view was that **independence needed to be ensured no matter where the funding comes** from because risks of influence and interference can come not only from private actors but **also from public ones.**

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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

While they agreed that the elimination of competitors leads to market concentration, this statement **produced some dissensus.**

Some agreed with the statement and indicated that big tech indeed **holds significant power over AI regulation.** On the contrary, others indicated that big tech companies **actually don't want to be regulated to eliminate their competitors.**

The question of **lobbying** and whether big tech companies should be allowed to lobby was raised. Participants wondered how this could be better regulated and monitored especially in light of the considerable impacts of AI on society. They also advocated for equal lobbying opportunities for civil society and underlined the importance of having these actors be heard in the tech policy discussions.

Statement two:

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

There was a **consensus that disclosure is vital. However,** varying opinions on **when, to whom and how disclosure** should be done. The question of AI types, the risks triggered by the AI systems, definitions, audiences, and contexts were raised.

The question of **user control and the need for transparency-inducing visualisations** was raised when debating how to provide meaningful disclosure and transparency.

Some mentioned that for media and information providers, this should always be the case.

Statement three:

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

This was a strong consensus-making statement as **the vast majority disagreed with the statement.** Some warned against the risks that this categorisation could lead to such as **stifling innovation and leaving small media at a competitive disadvantage.**

Others highlighted the **need to assess the impact, the context of use, and the definition of AI.** The question of **balancing different AI impact assessments** was raised (for instance fundamental rights assessment, ethical, data protection assessment).

However, others also pointed out that having at least some AI media applications included in the **high-risks** category could be welcomed as for the moment none are present while the sector is crucial for democracy. Here they **mentioned AI generated content as an example.**

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Statements from participants

The media landscape

"VISUALISATION, how should disclosure look like?"

"They want NO regulation to eliminate competitors"

"Sometimes impact assessments are not needed"

The research landscape

"It is also about the transfer of knowledge not only about the funding"

"Yes, BUT capitalism (about having open API as best practices)"

"'We need tech alternatives"

The regulatory landscape

"Removal can have adverse effects"

"With full disclosure so people can opt-out"

"Regulation but also effective enforcement in a way that works for researchers"

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BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The workshop at the AI, media and democracy Lab took place on 28th November in Amsterdam. The participants were researchers from the lab with expertise in law, social science, journalism and data science. The workshop had an attendance of around 10 participants.

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 included Anna Schjøtt Hansen from the University of Amsterdam (UvA), Lidia Dutkie-wicz and Noémie Krack from KU Leuven (KUL).

NOTES ON METHODOLOGY

The workshop was divided into three parts that are outlined below:

1. First the participants were given a presentation of the pilot policy recommendations produced by AI4Media.

2. Second, they engaged in the first exercise titled 'Prototyping Policies'. This exercise was inspired by the use of provotypes within participatory design, which are understood as: "'types' that embody tensions surrounding an area of interest, to support collaborative analysis of that area and to collaboratively explore design possibilities" (add reference). 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.

3. 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 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.

CONTACT AND MORE INFORMATION

This one-pager was produced by Noémie Krack & Anna Schjøtt Hansen, for more information or questions feel free to contact them.

To cite to this document: N. Krack & A. Schjøtt, 'What policies do we need to ensure a responsible future for AI and Media? Insights from an internal workshop in AI4Media' (Workshop Report), AI, media and democracy Lab, January 2023, AI4Media.

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