

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE IN JOURNALISM: CHANGING THE NEWS

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**Tony Silvia (2025) *Artificial Intelligence in Journalism: Changing the News*.
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Social meanings related to technology are a determining force that influences the values of individuals and society and effect our communication habits. Due to the symbiotic relationship between the news industry and technology, professional and existential issues related to journalism are becoming increasingly complex. Meanwhile, the flow of information and the production of content are constantly changing. Artificial intelligence (AI) is transforming our lives on a global scale, includng the world of journalism. The conceptual ambiguity surrounding AI and the challenges journalism as a profession faced since its inception in defining itself, setting boundaries, and understanding the role of journalists are further complicated by the enourmous scale of technological development. However, we must recognize that technology is a catalyst, rather than a cause, of the moral and existential crisis affecting an increasing number of professions.

In his book, Tony Silvia examines the relationship between artificial intelligence and journalism. He explores the roles of AI in news production and its adoption in journalism, as well as the professional, social and cultural challenges facing the news industry. The formulation of ideas and questions arising in connection with the topic is significantly contributed to scientific research findings and collaborative work with media researchers, university lecturers and renowned news agency experts who are well versed in the subject. He supports the relevance and significance of the topic by listing numerous American and international examples. Tony Silvia is a professor emeritus of journalism and digital communication at the University of South Florida. He worked for CNN as a correspondent and spent years in television journalism. He has also published ten books, including two on subjects unrelated to journalism, such as the history of baseball. His latest work, entitled *Artificial Intelligence in Journalism: Changing the News*, can serve as a signpost not only for professionals working in the news industry, but also for researchers and everybody who feel alone with their fears, questions, and everyday dilemmas arising from technological changes.

The author begins his argument by providing an overview of the historical context of artificial intelligence. He mentions the early ideas about the technology that led to the creation of the first AI programs in the 1950s. He points out that widespread public awareness of artificial intelligence only emerged a few years ago with the release of ChatGPT. For many people, ChatGPT is synonymous with artificial intelligence. Since then, AI has been surrounded by widespread fear. The author also points out that fear of new technologies is a human reaction to novelty and change that can be traced well through history of media and humanity. He adds that we are actually afraid of the unknown and the loss of control. We only need to think of the

automation of the textile industry during the Industrial Revolution, when the emergence of new technology was met with machine destruction. Similarly, print media fearful of losing its monopoly, viewed the emergence of the radio as a threat to the new mass medium. Later, with the advent of television and then the internet, people talked about their mind-numbing and dehumanizing effects. Despite its ambivalent social reception over time, the internet has become embedded in our everyday lives and has become one of the most important publishing platforms. In the digital age, fears related to artificial intelligence can be traced back to similar reasons, primarily, the fear of the unknown. What is new in the case of AI is its rapid development compared to other media. That is why it is important to examine the role of journalism in the digital age, especially now on the threshold of the AI era.

As the author of the study and an experienced media professional, Tony Silvia poses the important question of whether the fundamental principles of journalism, such as objectivity, accuracy and responsibility, which function as value-based norms, can continue to prevail. Furthermore, does it help increase trust in the media, or does it actually reduce it? Despite the fact that acceptance and willingness to adapt the technology vary greatly among news organizations and journalists, more and more news organizations are using it in their various fields of work. Regarding the role of artificial intelligence in editorial offices, the author uses the term "higher-impact journalism" to point out one of the most important advantages of the technology, namely the more efficient use of time and energy. He also highlights the replacement of repetitive, monotonous work with the help of AI as an important advantage of the technology, which makes it possible to perform more complex journalistic tasks and faster work processes. However, he also points out that AI can only benefit us if we use it properly.

The author highlights an unavoidable factor that must also be kept in mind, which is the profit motive of media companies. When lower costs and higher profits are prioritized, essential elements of journalism, such as human creativity, emotion, and inspiration – which distinguish humans from machines – can lose their essence. However, he acknowledges that arguing against economic considerations is difficult.

The author highlights the distinction between machine intelligence and human creativity, a topic that sparks ongoing debate. He asks whether machines can be creative and if what they create from human-provided data can truly be considered creative. Another important question is whether AI can enhance human creativity and inspire us to develop our own skills. Numerous scientific studies have been conducted on this topic as well. The author cites a 2023 Harvard Business Review article as an example. The article states that AI enhances human creativity by involving users in innovation processes. At the same time, the author also raises the question of whether human creativity can directly influence AI's ability to improve. In the introductory thoughts of the book, the author approaches the social and cultural impacts of technological changes as a one-way process, referring to fears about the future triggered by successive innovations. This may suggest that technology is behind social and cultural changes. However, it is important to note that the relationship between technology and society is reciprocal. As Tamás Tófalvy puts it: Technology is used in a way that is deeply rooted in culture, and the impact of technology is shaped by the social values associated with it. According to McLuhan's long-standing theory of technological determinism, technology alone shapes culture and society. However, this is not entirely accurate. The culture of journalism is not solely determined by technology because the values and culture of journalism also determine the possibilities of technology (Tófalvy 2015: 55–56). However, in the following chapters, the author clearly refers to the role of humans in influencing the effects of technological change. No matter how rapidly AI develops and spreads, it is likely that the turmoil it causes, as well as the fears of journalists, will be temporary. The author also points out that we are not afraid of new technology itself. Rather, the new often causes temporary uncertainty, triggering anxiety and a sense of incomprehension (6). The advent of computers and the internet represented

cultural and functional value and gradually became an indispensable part of editorial offices. The obvious questions then are how to collaborate with artificial intelligence and how to most effectively integrate and utilize it in society and journalism.

Technological changes are always accompanied by economic issues, which profoundly impact the development of the business model of journalism. In a separate chapter, the author explores this topic using American journalism as an example. The author points out that artificial intelligence has only exacerbated the media industry's pre-existing crisis symptoms. Here, he explains that the traditional sources of income for journalism, namely advertisements and commercials, on which the news industry has always been most dependent, have declined dramatically with the advent of the internet. These changes have caused a crisis in the business model, which has manifested itself, for example, in less adaptive newspapers having to reduce their editorial staff or simply cease to exist. The rise of AI is also prompting news organizations to rethink their funding strategies for journalism. They need to find ways to stay financially sustainable and avoid cutting editorial positions. Particular attention should be given to the interdependent relationship between journalism and the advertising industry. In times of crisis, issues affecting social and cultural aspects come into sharper focus, including the economic implications of the news media. The author makes it clear that the symbiotic yet inequitable connection between the news media and the advertising industry became evident during the Covid-19 pandemic, marked by a significant decrease in advertising revenue and widespread job losses. In his 2022 essay collection entitled *Journalism and the Pandemic: Essays on Adaptation and Innovation*, the author examined the impact of the pandemic on American journalism. Advertising and marketing companies had their hands tied, as the number of consumers of traditional news portals also declined, and thus most advertising money went to digital platforms. Quoting the author from his latest book on artificial intelligence: "Ironically, artificial intelligence has actually put news media and the advertising industry on which it depends in nearly the same position in 2024. While journalism jobs were already in decline prior to AI's ascendancy, the advertising industry has suffered many of the same job losses" (48).

We can interpret the general technopessimistic attitude arising from the spread of new technologies as a crisis. This occurred with the advent of radio, television, and the internet, and it is now evident in the case of AI. However, as the author explains, the news and advertising industries seem to have only one reasonable option, and that is to adapt to the technology. It will be unavoidable for journalism, no matter how hard we try to find a way around it.

In the following, the author draws attention to one of the most important tasks of journalism. This is finding and retaining audiences and subscribers in the competition for attention, which remains one of the keys to the future of journalism and the journalistic profession. This is where artificial intelligence can help. By producing personalized content and targeted advertising, as well as speed and accuracy, AI will be among the most important factors in the future. Among the concerns surrounding the use of artificial intelligence is one of today's most pressing challenges, which is the production and dissemination of misinformation, whether it stems from deliberate manipulation or human or system error. The author draws attention to the highly relevant issue of the growing difficulty in distinguishing real from fake content. The author also notes that AI can be used to both spread manipulation and combat it. Political reporting and politically themed advertisements can be misleading and provide opportunities for deception. Currently, there are no real regulations in place to address this issue, although initiatives to create a legal framework have already been launched around the world. One of the most important missions of journalism, and perhaps also the key to its survival, is to strengthen public trust, support a transparent democratic system, and ensure its credibility in the eyes of the public. Artificial intelligence should be viewed as a partner, not an

enemy, while retaining human control over critical and final decision-making. According to the author, all of this is vital to maintaining both journalism and democratic culture.

The potential for effective collaboration between humans and artificial intelligence is well illustrated by data journalism and investigative journalism. In these areas, machine intelligence can play a significant role, for example, in saving time and energy. The author uses the term "scrape" to refer to the nature of machine intelligence, which collects and analyzes all the knowledge it finds on the internet and is able to process it in a fraction of a time it takes a journalist. The speed of the machine and human experience were able to produce results that would probably never have been achieved without each other. As an example, the author mentions the Panama Papers scandal, which caused a huge stir when millions of confidential corporate legal and financial documents were leaked in the form of several terabytes of computer data. Through this example, the author highlights the importance of machine intelligence. However, it's important to note that this project required computers with enormous data processing capacity as well as journalistic experience and expertise.

The author examines another important topic when he scrutinizes the relationship between artificial intelligence and journalism in another chapter, namely social media, which has become an integral part of journalism since its emergence. He emphasizes that journalists must now predominantly use social media platforms to reach news consumers, which places even more demands on the journalists and negatively affects the visibility of traditional media. In recent years, content generated by artificial intelligence has proliferated on social media platforms. The author reflects on research findings showing that, although most journalists recognize the useful potential of social media in journalism, they nevertheless have ambivalent feelings about it. It is generally considered an advantage because it allows for stronger connections with the audience, helps build public trust, and prompts stories for articles. However, there are drawbacks to this approach. The uncontrolled nature of news sources can lead to inaccuracies and a lack of credibility. Additionally, there are concerns about impartiality and ethical implications. The author reflects on a study that examined whether readers could distinguish disinformation from truth and determine whether content was written by a machine or a human. The results were surprising. The majority of research participants thought that most content generated by AI was the result of human work. In 2023 Fox News also referred to the research published in the scientific journal *Science Advances*. "AI appears more human on social media than actual humans do" (87). Keeping artificial intelligence under human control will be a key task in journalistic practice. Although the integration of machine intelligence offers many functional advantages, it should not jeopardize the fundamental principles of journalism because these principles are not technological issues. Journalists must address a number of ethical concerns. Considering the problem of fake news, for example, the spread of fake news can undermine not only the credibility of journalism and public trust in the media, but also the democratic values, ethics, and social norms.

Answers to questions arising from the use and exploitation of artificial intelligence can be found on both sides. The author also emphasizes this point when discussing the importance of media consumption awareness. Media and digital literacy must be emphasized more than ever before. Responsible use of technology must be implemented on both the content creator and user sides. Conscious decisions must be in our hands. Journalists are responsible for providing authentic, objective and transparent information, while users are responsible for consuming and distributing content consciously. In addition to technological adaptation and integration, human skills, responsibility, and ethical challenges are being viewed in a new light. People are fundamentally afraid of change. We fear automation and anything new. In his book, the author refers to this phenomenon as "automation anxiety" (15). We fear losing control. We are also concerned that technological change will present too great a challenge to traditional work because this change also entails a change in the nature of work. In agreement with the

author, we may ask whether artificial intelligence will prioritize speed and efficiency over quality and precision, the fundamental principles of journalism, and thus the values of human knowledge and creativity, or whether we will sacrifice all of this on the altar of technology for the sake of corporate profit (116). While keeping all this in mind, we can also choose to overcome our fears and use new technologies to our advantage. Stephen W. Song, assistant professor in the Department of Journalism and Digital Communication at the University of South Florida, draws attention to the importance of human connection, and the author quotes Song's following thought: "One of the reasons we consume media and most importantly, the news is because we want to feel safe. We want to know our surroundings. To do that correctly, we need to know that the person, the entity, that's serving us is, has to have the same thought process that we do." (123) In overcoming our fears, we must maintain our human presence and values, even if the machines are faster and more efficient than us. As Song points out: "...AI is learning from us, not the other way around." (124) I think we should not fear technology, but rather what will happen when we lose human values and relationships. We should not resist technological change or defeat technology, but rather confront our own fears for the sake of our own potential for development. As we treat technology, so it will treat us. Most importantly, we cannot afford the luxury of losing the human control for financial, convenience, or any other reason." „Automate what computers do best, let people do the rest." (Diakopoulos 2019:13-16). Tony Silvia, does not merely convey information; he shares valuable insights in each chapter of the book, encouraging reflection and inviting for a dialogue, and involving the reader in answering questions. The task is shared and we must find the answers together. The reasoning of the book highlights that journalism is not only a victim of the challenges brought by technological change, but also a shaper of these changes. Throughout its history, journalism has always been able to adapt to the emergence of the latest media technology. At the same time, questions have always arisen as the result of the changes, but these changes have ultimately opened up opportunities for adaptation. Questions are still being raised about artificial intelligence, but the answer to these questions is the same now as before: adaptation.

References

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