

A.I. as a Medium: The Curation and Consumption of Online News Against the Background of Media Convergence

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Abstract: In recent years, with the rapid development of Artificial Intelligence (AI) technology (SAS,2023), the journalism industry has gradually produced a new mode of operation which, coinciding with the Covid-19 period (WHO,2020), has led to the explosive growth of the online news industry. People are beginning to popularize and follow up their attention to online news. In particular, the category of news media with the background qualities of integrated media is gradually entering into the public's view and becoming an important part of people's lives. On current social media platforms, the constructs of online news consumption and curation have rapidly evolved to become an important part of journalism. This development has to some extent contributed to the progress and reform of 'online news' in the context of integrated media in the age of AI. In contrast, there are also potential online news consumers and curators in the journalism industry who are exhibiting new characteristics and working modes in line with the AI era.

Keywords: Online News; Artificial Intelligence Age; Curation and Consumption; Media Convergence.

1. Introduction

The content of this research is to investigate the development and change of online journalism's curation and consumption patterns in the age of AI. Nowadays, Online News is the main provider of information that reflects the values of public society; With the advent of the AI era, Online News media presentation is becoming more and more diversified, technology gaming on the rise with 5G, cloud data, AR/VR and AIGC and other modes of media models frequently appearing in front of potential consumers. (Huawei, 2023) [3]. AI and other interactive intelligent technology constantly update iterations of online journalism in the context of the media convergence of new technology, as well as the reform of the work technology model in the current curation of online news. This proposal will research the context of the melting media of online news's intelligent upgrading, transformation and development, and the traditional news model. It will include comparing online news in the AI age with online news technology working models; Secondly, examining the consumption of online news from the perspective of AI as a mediating medium as well as consumption patterns; Thirdly, considering ethical issues that AI journalism will face (AI hosting / AI news anchor / AIGC)[4] and also legal definitions

Furthermore, this research will extract authoritative case studies from Chinese and Western journalism markets to analyse the trends and development in terms of AI technology as well as government policies and market regulations.

2. The Development of Global AI Technologie has been in a Rapid Upward Trend

In recent years, the development of global AI technology has been in a rapid upward trend (Deloitte, 2022) [5], which has also made online news tend to be open, sharing a type of

rapid news production state. At the same time, mass consumers and potential viewers are also affected by the network news information dissemination environment gradually changing consumption habits, with more and more people involved in the production and sharing of news and information. The development of online news is gradually showing the characteristics of autonomy, interactivity and even pan-entertainment. In the era of AI media, the ways of interaction between news producers and news consumers are becoming more and more diversified. AI as a medium plays an increasingly large role in the online news industry, as well as giving rise to richer online news consumption characteristics/models.

In this research proposal, we will investigate the data of the following questions:

- i , Who should bear the legal responsibility for online news aired using AIGC?
- ii. The granting of AI personality rights should be taken with a grain of salt and how should the intellectual property rights of news products involving AI technology be defined?
- iii. With the gradual evolution of personalised virtual AI news anchors, will real news anchors be marginalised or even eliminated (replaced)?
- iv. Is it ethical to use AI technology as a medium to deliver a message to an audience in the online news market? Is this use in line with the original intent of the curation of online news?
- v. What kind of consumption patterns/models of the online news market will change in the AI era?
- vi. What is the difference in the main aspects of news curation as a result of the AI services introduced by Chinese and Western news media organisations?

To summarise, this proposal conforms to the changing needs of reform and change in the technological era and puts the research focus on AI technology in the online news industry in the development stage of Web 2.0 to Web 3.0(Kadlaskar, 2022) [6]. This research is meaningful as

sociology believes that news is a practice of power to explain reality and we are in the era of AI under the background of the convergence of media. Both newsmakers and news consumers need to enhance and comply with journalism literacy (UNESCO, 2019) [7]. In fact, the development of news literacy can help people to understand the role and effect of news in democratic progress (in western countries) and socialist ideological awareness (in socialist countries) in terms of mass and social stability.

In addition, compared with traditional news curation, in the AI era, the model of human-computer co-production of news will become a dominant trend in future development and become the most direct and prominent definer of news. Therefore, defining the academic boundaries and ethical boundaries before the AI model completely covers the traditional journalism industry is also a necessary research topic.

After my recent research, there is still a gap in the academic watershed regarding online news consumption and the curation of AIGC. In particular, there is a lack of scholarly reports on the comparative study of the models of Chinese and Western online news media during the AI period.

3. Aims and Objectives of Investigation of the Curation and Consumption of Online News in AI

In recent years, due to the rapid development of technology (the web 3.0 period), many new media have emerged at a rapid pace. Most audience groups have a vague concept of the various forms of new media and online news and one of the potential expected research aims of this project is to clarify academic definitions and help audiences understand and learn to use these new types of media in the age of AI. Therefore, it is necessary to systematically summarise and anchor the impact of the online news industry's renewal on people's lives in the AI era, as well as to clarify the changes in the practical applications of the shift from traditional to new journalism in public society.

I have done some research on this project of funding issues. Recently, in western societies/ countries, most AI news projects rely on funds from tech companies such as Google (Santons, 2022) [11]. Thus, this limits AI's potential to a small number of players in the news industry in the West. On the other hand, there was a policy published in China in October 2021 by the State Administration of Radio and Television of China entitled the "14th Five-Year Plan for Scientific and Technological Development of Radio, Television and Network Audiovisual"[12]. This policy plan clearly proposes to promote the wider application of AI virtual anchors and animated sign language in the program production of TV stations such as news broadcasting, weather forecasting and a variety of science and education programs. It can be seen that the government will provide rich resources to support and apply AI technology in the news industry and promoting the technology of AI virtual anchors to disseminate content in China's news industry is a big development trend.

Through these investigations on resources, I have deeply reflected on the different directions of resource sources in China and the West regarding the whole AI news project. In my future research, I will also take advantage of my bicultural background to comply with different national conditions and policies to obtain resources for this project and endeavour to complete the academic objectives within my ability.

4. Proposed Methodology/ Proposed Mode of Research:

This project will collect data in various ways, verifying and analysing it from many aspects.

(a.) Literature/journalism approach: The project will include an extensive review of relevant literature, summarising existing research findings on the Online News, finding suitable entry points, providing ideas for solving real-life problems, and investigating information and data from authoritative media online reports, books and literature.

(b.) Empirical research method: The subject will also be studied theoretically, via continuous learning and an investigation of interactive online news and journalistic practice. It will be based on the results of empirical testing, adjusting research ideas, and revising and improving research methods to achieve the research objectives.

(c.) Comparative research method: Using the creative practices and classic cases from different historical periods and regions, the project will analyze the trends of the creation of Online News in the technology genre in the era of consumer culture by comparing them vertically and horizontally, respectively.

(d.) Intertextual research method: This will combine the technological development law of AI and the creation and consumption of humanities Online News to find the necessary connection and causal relationship between the two, and explore the development direction of AI News creation/curation in the era of consumer culture.

5. Work Plans

January 2024 – June 2024: Early stages of research

(1) Quickly adapt to the first research-level curriculum, intellectual framework and academic norms according to the supervisor's guidance, revise the research plan and actively consult with my supervisor associate professor Tim Dwyer.

July 2024 – December 2024: Research preparation phase / preparation of Data and Surveys.

(2) Design a research proposal: clarify the research direction and research focus of media transformation in the AI era and determine the research framework.

(3) Collect research materials: collect relevant authoritative papers on this project. This includes reading and accumulating comprehensive and authoritative global media news, accumulating thematic papers and focusing on investigating research developments in Global in areas related to AI media transformation.

January 2025 – June 2025: Project implementation phase

(4) Actively communicate with my supervisor, collate information and prepare a first draft.

July 2026 – December 2026 Empirical testing phase

(5) Combine the theoretical research knowledge gained in the early stages and enter the media work studio with equipment and instruments (AI outfit, VR/AR glasses, etc.). The results of the previous phase will be tested, revised and summarised in the context of the practical use of AI media.

(6) Based on the test results, revise the research thesis and publish the phase academic research results.

January 2027 – June 2027: Research completion stage

(7) July 2025 – December 2025: Refine and revise the thesis and publish the phase results of the academic research.

(8) July 2027 – December 2027: Produce a comprehensive summary of the research and the collection and collation of relevant materials.

6. Conclusion

This project had theoretical implications for the transformation of Online News curation and consumption in the age of AI. Compared to traditional journalism industry, research on emerging forms of Online News in the AI era is scarce and fragmented and lacks authority and scholarship. This is because this is a media era that is changing dramatically. Most academic theories remain controversial, leaving many scholars, media industry workers, Publisher Journalism and potential audience groups in an age of confusion, making the detail studies of professional research reports necessary.

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