

Editing in the Age of AI: How Smarter Times Are Changing Draft Setup and Revisions

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Abstract. Artificial intelligence technology is driving a profound transformation in the editorial paradigms of the news publishing and media industry. This paper takes manuscript allocation and editing as entry points, combining innovative practices from multiple organizations to systematically analyze how AI reshapes editorial workflows, resource allocation, distribution mechanisms, and content revision directions. The study finds that AI pushes editorial processes from sequential to collaborative, material management from static to intelligent, and distribution from broad to precise; the core function of editors shifts from proofreading text to digging deeper into value. This paper argues that AI does not diminish the professional value of editors but, by removing repetitive tasks, allows them to return to areas that cannot be replaced, such as making meaningful judgments, controlling value, and creative expression. Editors need to transition from being word craftsmen to content architects.

Keywords: Artificial intelligence, editorial transformation, manuscript allocation, manuscript editing, human-machine collaboration.

1. Introduction

With the wave of artificial intelligence technology sweeping across the globe, the news publishing and media industry is undergoing a comprehensive transformation. Everything from the everyday tools used in production to the underlying core ways of thinking is being redefined. In the past, editorial work largely relied on experience and judgment: how to arrange the manuscript, how to tweak the headlines, all depended on personal accumulation. The three reviews and three checks process not only consumed time but also had standards that were easily blurred, making it hard to keep up with today's fast-paced dissemination demands. But now, AI technology is deeply integrated into editorial work, gradually changing traditional work patterns and shifting the industry from experience-based to a data-driven and intelligent collaboration model. Understanding exactly how the editor's role is changing is meaningful not only for industry transformation but also for personal growth. Next, by looking at several innovative industry cases, we can analyze new changes in manuscript arrangement and new directions for content editing [1,2].

Before delving into specific transformation paths, it's necessary to clarify one premise: the core value of AI technology is not to replace editors but to free them from repetitive tasks so they can return to content creation itself. This understanding runs through all the case analyses in the text. From production processes to resource allocation, from distribution mechanisms to content editing, AI involvement is causing a structural shift in the editor's role — from a text processor to a content architect, from just a node in the workflow to the leader of human-computer collaboration. This shift doesn't diminish the editing profession; instead, it refocuses and strengthens its core capabilities.

2. How Smart Technology is Reshaping Manuscript Management

Manuscript management is the first step in editorial work and also determines whether the content will ultimately turn out well and reach a wide audience. The addition of AI technology has broken the past limitations of relying on experience to assign manuscripts and brings new changes mainly in three ways.

2.1. Process Reconstruction: From Linear Workflow to Human-Machine Collaboration

Previously, in publishing or releasing news, the process was linear: first pick a topic, then review, edit, proofread, and finally print, step by step. Any stage could get stuck, and quality depended entirely on the editor's personal skill, with no standardized criteria. Now with AI, the whole process is standardized, traceable, and much more efficient. For example, Shaanxi Normal University Publishing Group uses the Shouyang Wenzheng AI Publishing Collaboration Platform, applying AI to every step from topic selection to printing. A 300000-character manuscript can have its theme summarized, logic checked, and compliance reviewed by AI in 3 minutes, whereas it would take human editors 3 working days. Proofreading a 10000-character manuscript, AI can finish in 10 seconds with 98% accuracy, not only catching typos but also deeper issues like incorrect technical terms or inaccurate data. This shortens the entire editing cycle by over 60%, and different review standards can be set based on the type of manuscript, eliminating reliance on personal experience and unifying quality standards across the whole company. Notably, AI hasn't put editors out of work; instead, it frees them from tedious proofreading and checking, allowing them to focus on more creative tasks like topic planning and in-depth content development.

On a deeper level, this reconstruction isn't just about efficiency; it fundamentally changes the quality control mechanism. Traditional triple review and triple proofreading relies on personal experience and responsibility, making quality fluctuations inevitable. With AI, review standards are quantified into executable technical parameters, every check is recorded and traceable, shifting quality control from being human-dependent to system-guaranteed. When editors are freed from tedious proofreading, their professional judgment is more fully utilized—this is a typical example of technology empowering people rather than replacing them.

2.2. Resource Allocation: From Static Storage to Smart Production

Before AI appeared, editors had to store text, images, and videos separately in a library, and whenever they needed something, they had to search for it manually, which was very inefficient. AI technology turns these dead materials into live resources that can be automatically recognized, called up with one click, and can even actively generate new materials [3].

The Yueqing Media Center built a local news material library, using AI to automatically tag and categorize materials. Editors can quickly find the images and videos they need just by entering keywords. The multimedia systems at the Central Conservatory of Music and Zhaoqing University work the same way, using AI to keep image libraries well organized, making it easy to insert images and add captions. AI can also generate materials in real time. When reporting on a marathon, Yueqing Media's AI system can automatically analyze the 3D race course and interpret athletes' results based on real-time data, making content richer and more timely.

The Shanxi Daily takes it even further. From finding topics and writing content to choosing images, AI does most of the work. Editors only need to fact-check, refine perspectives, and guide the direction, creating a new AI-generated, human-optimized model. The significance of this model is that it frees editors from the traditional path of creating content from scratch and allows them to look at and optimize AI-generated drafts with a curator perspective, pushing the starting point of content production forward and speeding up iteration significantly.

2.3. Distribution Upgrades: From Casting a Wide Net to Precise Delivery

The ultimate goal of drafting content is to get good content seen by more people. In the past, content was just cast wide—pushed to everyone the same way. Now, AI can analyze users' browsing history and interaction data, creating detailed user profiles to know who cares about the economy, who likes local culture, and who is interested in education, and then deliver content they'll actually be interested in.

This means editors need to think like users when distributing content and can't just produce one type of content. For instance, when explaining the same policy, you'd prepare in-depth articles for professionals but also short videos or infographics that are easy for the general public to understand.

Using a combination of content formats helps more people see and understand the material. In the process, the editor's role evolves from a content publisher to a content service provider—not just thinking about what content to make, but also who it's for, in what format, and in which situations it will be most effective. This user-oriented mindset shift is another key capability that AI gives editors [4] (See Table 1).

Table 1. Comparison of Differences Between Traditional Content Curation and AI-Assisted Content Curation

Comparison Criteria	Traditional Content Curation	AI-Assisted Content Curation
Key Basis	Personal experience, subjective judgement	Data analysis, algorithmic recommendations, human-machine collaboration
Process Characteristics	Sequential progression, with each stage operating independently	Parallel collaboration, standardised and traceable
Use of Materials	Static inventory, manual retrieval and selection	Intelligent classification and management, one-click retrieval and automatic generation
Quality Standards	Dependent on individual proficiency, with inconsistent standards	System-preset thresholds, with a traceable process allowing for review
Distribution Method	Indiscriminate push notifications, offering broad coverage but low precision	Precise matching of user profiles, tailored to the needs of different communities

3. New Directions for Article Editing in the Age of AI

If AI-assisted article assignment solves the efficiency problem, then editing determines the quality of the content. Nowadays, AI can produce smooth text, so editing is no longer just about fixing typos. It's more about focusing on four directions: deepening value, optimizing narrative, human-AI collaboration, and upgrading visuals. This is also where human editors remain irreplaceable.

3.1. Deepening Value: From Stating Facts to Constructing Meaning

With the overwhelming amount of information today, good content is not just about stating facts clearly but also helping readers understand the meaning behind them and resonating emotionally. This type of editing essentially adds value to an article: moving from simply recording what was done to explaining why it matters and what changes it brings, making originally professional or obscure content understandable and relatable to more people. This is one of the core values of editors.

In practice, this value-deepening often involves a dual effort of translation and condensation: on one hand, editors need to transform professional jargon into language that the public can grasp; on the other hand, they need to extract the most explanatory core logic from complex information. AI can handle information sorting and summarization, but deciding what deserves emphasis, what context needs to be added, and what emotions should be triggered—these meaning-based judgments can still only be made by editors who deeply understand readers' psychology and social context [5].

3.2. Optimizing Narratives: From List of Information to Story Construction

Everyday news and case analysis pieces often suffer from messy information and unclear logic, which makes people lose patience when reading. When Zhejiang University of Finance and Economics was compiling a collection of career guidance cases, they pointed out a direction for revisions: if the text is awkwardly connected or logically broken, use a three-point structure with first-person narration, focus on the core events, remove unnecessary information, and highlight the process and results; if the text shows obvious signs of AI, such as lacking real details, add interactive scenes from actual practice and the characters' psychological activities, control the length, and make the content more real and engaging.

This shows that even if AI can write fluent text, it can't replace the authentic experiences, rigorous logic, and warm character portrayals that humans bring—these are the key to good content. At its core, narrative optimization is about finding the best balance between readability of information and

authenticity of content—AI is great at making language flow smoothly but struggles to capture the atmosphere of the scene and the complexity of characters, which is precisely where editors give the text its soul [6].

3.3. Human-AI Collaboration: Clear Division of Labor to Achieve Both Efficiency and Quality

Nowadays, many editors work with AI to revise drafts, and the key is to get the division of labor right: AI handles quick processing, while humans focus on precise polishing. For example, editors at Shaanxi Normal University Press use AI's speed-reading system to generate mind maps of manuscripts, quickly spotting issues like which parts break the logic or where the key points are unclear, and then make targeted adjustments. Yueqing Rongmei Media lets AI write the first draft, and editors then add local information and optimize the language to make the content feel warmer.

Shanxi Daily has pioneered a double-blind verification: beyond the traditional three rounds of review and editing, AI-generated content is independently fact-checked by two editors to ensure accuracy and proper guidance. To sum up: AI excels at speedy processing and broad coverage, while editors are strong in deep judgment, value control, fact-checking, and creative revisions. Editors no longer have to start polishing word by word from scratch; instead, they focus on refining AI drafts and managing risks. The genius of this human-AI division of labor is that it maximizes AI's efficiency and editors' judgment, avoiding letting machines run on auto-pilot or dragging editors back to the manual workshop, effectively creating a highly efficient and safe collaborative production line [7].

3.4. Upgrading the Visuals: From Text Editing to Full-Sensory Storytelling

Nowadays, spreading content isn't just about the text. Whether the visuals are good or not directly affects how well it spreads, and can even be considered a kind of secondary editing. The art editors at Southern Daily have a lot of practical approaches: when covering major topics like the construction of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area, they use cartoons as the main thread, paired with text, photos, and data to make the content more structured and easier to read; if there are no on-site photos, they use infographics as the main visual, making abstract data and logical relationships more intuitive; for specialized topics like air show specials, they use gradient tones and layout sections to highlight a sense of technology, creating a strong visual impact.

Yueqing Media even tries converting text articles directly into AI virtual anchor videos, complete with subtitles, background music, and dynamic visuals, so the content is both written and video. This means that editors today can't just understand text – they also need to think visually, knowing when to use infographics or create short videos to keep readers more engaged. The deep logic behind this visual upgrade is that in an age of information overload, readers' attention is the scarcest resource. Precisely using visual elements is essentially competing for the chance for content to be noticed—a well-placed infographic can outweigh a thousand words of text, and a striking layout design itself is the most effective communication strategy [8].

4. Summary

From these cases, it's clear that AI technology hasn't weakened the value of editors—in fact, it has made their core role even more prominent. In summary, there are a few key points:

4.1. Editors' Role Shifts from Wordsmith to Content Architect

AI handles basic, repetitive tasks like proofreading and fact-checking, so editors no longer need to grind word by word. Instead, they become content architects: planning topics based on data, designing diverse forms of content, digging deeper into content value to make pieces more meaningful, coordinating the division of labor between AI and humans, and even understanding visual design to make content look better and spread more effectively. This shift brings the editor's core value back to creation itself. Looking ahead, the skill set of editors needs to expand from just language training

to a combined framework of content judgment, data literacy, aesthetic ability, and technical understanding. Only then can they maintain irreplaceable competitiveness in a media environment with deep AI involvement.

4.2. Human-Machine Relationship: AI as Co-Pilot, Editor Always in Control

AI is like an efficient co-pilot—it helps editors improve efficiency and expand capabilities but cannot replace them in taking final responsibility. The truthfulness and direction of content, as well as whether it resonates emotionally or inspires thought in readers, still ultimately rely on the editor's judgment. For example, the AI collaboration platform at Shaanxi Normal University Publishing House doesn't aim to replace humans but to free up human labor, allowing editors to focus more on creative innovation—that's the core logic of human-AI collaboration. It's important to highlight that the co-pilot metaphor isn't just a figure of speech but also defines a framework of responsibility: no matter how many options or suggestions AI provides, the ultimate right to decide, judge, and take responsibility always rests with the editor. This is the non-negotiable bottom line of human-AI collaboration.

4.3. Be Wary of AI Dependence and Protect Authenticity and Originality

Although AI-generated text is smooth, it can hide factual errors. Over-reliance on AI can also make content repetitive and kill creativity. So when editing, it's essential to fact-check carefully and make sure no false information gets out. At the same time, you need to actively go to the frontlines, dig for unique details, and form your own viewpoints to maintain originality and personalization in your content. In an era where AI-generated content is becoming widespread, authenticity is becoming the rarest mark of high-quality work—readers might not be able to tell exactly which part is AI-written and which is human-written, but they can definitely sense whether the content has warmth, unique insights, and trustworthy facts. This is exactly what AI can never replace in an editor, and it's the professional conviction editors should hold onto in this intelligent age.

In the end, being an editor in the AI era isn't a zero-sum game between humans and machines; it's about reorganizing roles and returning to real value. AI handles the basic labor of information processing but can't judge meaning; AI can optimize distribution efficiency but can't replace emotional resonance. What's truly irreplaceable is the editor's understanding of human cognitive needs, commitment to social values, and uncompromising professional passion for quality content—this is the core of what it really means to be an editor in the age of AI, profound and enduring.

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