Rethinking Newspaper Survival in the Era of Artificial Intelligence

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Abstract
Artificial intelligence and the rise of other technologies have redefined the future of journalism. In all societies today, newspapers are merely struggling to survive, but the potential consequence of technology on the print media differs with the society's technological history and awareness. AI have made information readily available to the public who were once the audience of newspapers. This paper looks at the potential challenges offered by AI to the traditional newspaper organisations, while also examining the prospect for the future, and calling for new strategies for print media to adapt and thrive in the era of AI. Using Critical Literature Review Approach (CLRA), the paper reviews from existing literature, and the opinions of other scholars about the consequences of AI on the survival of newspaper with focus on Nigeria. The paper concludes that newspapers in Nigeria have continued to survive because of the low level of AI adoption and use in Nigeria and Africa at large, which has made the public to continue to seek information from existing media platforms, but the rise of knowledge will offer severe consequences in the future.
Keywords: Newspaper, Survival, Artificial Intelligence.

INTRODUCTION

The world is evolving with technology, and Artificial Intelligence (AI) is the most threatening to the future of man. AI has revolutionised numerous sectors with journalism undergoing a major professional evolution. From automated content generation, to sophisticated data analysis, AI is reshaping newsroom activities – the way news is gathered, produced and distributed (Ugwuogbo, 2024). The most contending issue, facing journalism in the era of Artificial Intelligence is survival. The emergence of AI has been quite challenging for the print media business until they began to seek a new way to survive and remain in business. Many in the past had predicted print media mortality and the extinction of the newspaper and magazine before the fall of the decade, but it appears like the force of change vary with countries' history, technology adoption strength and education (Etifit, 2024) Ogbodo (2023) notes that Artificial Intelligence (AI) is transforming the global media ecology and other spheres of life. From automated newsgathering and reporting to fact-checking and distribution of media content using audience preferences, AI's incursion into professional journalism practice is gaining momentum among scholars in Nigeria and other countries other countries of the world. While the degree of integration of AI into the African newsrooms vary from country to country, there is fear of its impact on the survival of newspaper. Newspapers have been very useful to society for over a Century, and they have remained the most veritable means of information dissemination among the literate audience. They have survived times and wars, and have brought societies out of social collapse (Etifit, 2024). The imports here are that society cannot afford to lose the newspaper to extinction though the new means have arrived. There must be a way out, newspaper proprietors, reporters and editors, must find this way. They must strategise new models for doing business and surviving (Seragih & Harahap, 2020).

The print media that want to survive are trying to improve their contents without thinking about a business development strategy. What this means is that print is both journalism and a business venture, and one cannot stand without the other. Technological impact seems to be effective at both ends, but it seems it is affecting print media economics more than its journalism (Francis, 2022). It is important to note the consequence of technology generally on the print media business. This is why Picard (2010) notes that technology has always shaped the process of news gathering and dissemination. With the way AI is making inroad into the mainstream journalism practice, news-making, news circulation, and news consumption, as well as editorial routines have been significantly disrupted (Broussard, 2014). Hasanagar (2017) notes that artificial intelligence is the order of the day among other technologies in the media and it is believed to take over people's job. Journalism is embracing a shift on at least four dimensions (Pavlik, 2016). The first is journalistic procedure, the second is the contents, that is, how stories are told. The third includes organizational structures, regulations, and the laws that regulate journalism, while the fourth deals with who the journalist is, what makes one a journalist, which includes increased public participation in journalism through Citizen Journalists and the rise of AI functioning as digital journalist or in collaboration with human journalists (Ogbodo, 2023). The future of journalism is continually threatened by citizens Journalism and the emergence of AI. AI algorithm provide visionary journalists and media leaders with an opportunity to rethink the nature and practice of journalism by augmenting the work of human journalists with those emerging technologies. Not only will the newsroom be more efficient, but the quality and out of the human journalists are expected to improve also.

It is obvious that AI has been adopted and used across major newsrooms around the world. The idea is to improve the skills and intelligence of human reporters and not merely to replace them. When journalists who witnessed an event write about it in a journalistically induced way, generative AI will merely compliment them. Even when people read an AI generated news content, professionalism, and realistic good news content will keep the human journalists in the newrooms further. There is no need to shy away from the realities of AI in our news rooms, because AI has come to stay. Ogbodo (2023) notes that it is critical to invest in its adoption, implementation, training, and retraining of editors, reporters and news room staff. This is because as Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools are becoming more common in newsrooms, journalists must learn how to use them for effective storytelling (Nnamdi and Nwayanwu, 2021). It against this backdrop that this paper is designed to examine the implications of AI on the future of journalism in Nigeria.

The Problem

The emergence of artificial intelligence has posed both a threat and opportunities to different industries and their operations, and journalism is not an exception. AI has infiltrated all sectors of the economy from industry, medicine, to engineering, and communication. AI has enhanced production, processing and distribution of news. The future of journalism seems to be a shattered dream for the professionals. There is a growing fear that human journalists may leave their job, or that newspapers may go extinct. However, for newspapers to continue to exist, they must integrate AI into its production. Journalists should be trained and retrained on the use of artificial intelligence. This way, AI will be an advantage to improve newspaper production, other than a replacement.

METHODOLOGY

This paper adopts the qualitative Analytical research approach, leveraging on the review of a body of literature, and scholarly opinions from the Internet, books, journals, library, and

the media, to discuss the implications of emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence on the future of journalism.

Theoretical Framework

This article is built on the propositions of Technological Determinism Theory. McLuhan became popular for seeing technological determinism from a reductionist perspective. According to him, technology and media shape the world, its people and culture. Therefore, by the proliferation of media technology, the world is reduced to a small village, which he called 'global village'. What this means is that, media technology would remove or blur distance barrier in global communications, business, social relations, and cultural/political acculturation. In his view, technology drives social changes and underscores the kind of culture that exists in society, after a great cultural rebirth. He believed that 'the medium is the message,' that is, communication messages are uniquely shaped by a given medium (communication technology) that conveys them. He proposed that new communication technologies determine culture and redefine cultural patterns and that it is the form of the media rather than their content that matters. This theory shows that the future of journalism is dependent on the kind of technology in place.

Redefining the Concept of Journalism

Journalism has provoked many questions bordering on its position in the sphere of human affairs. These questions are entertained on the basis of seeking answers to whether journalism is an art or social science, business or industry, institution, field of study, profession, craft or a vocation. Writers consider these questions to be obscure even though they suggest what journalists do and how they should be trained. In these days of digitisation, many people simply declare themselves journalists and begin to publish anything on the Internet. Such people have acquired no professional training to do the job. They proudly call themselves "Citizen Journalists", "Bloggers", "Social Networkers" and many other names that defend their jobs. Journalism is everywhere and some scholars believe journalism can be challenged on all of these categories (Uwakwe, 2017). As journalism has come to be thought of as a profession, an industry, a phenomenon, etc., definitions have emerged that reflect various concerns and goals. To some journalism scholars, journalism is the activity of gathering, assessing, creating, and presenting news and information to a widely dispersed, heterogeneous and anonymous audience. To others, journalism is a form of writing that tells people about events that really happened which they might not have known about. According to Encyclopaedia Britannica (2007) journalism is a collection, preparation, and distribution of news and other related commentary and feature materials through such media as pamphlets, newsletters, newspapers, magazines, radio, motion pictures, television, books, blogs, web casts, podcasts, and emails. Journalism is a job of gathering, processing, analysing, synthesising and disseminating news to a wide range of audience. Journalists tell the stories of the environments where they live to the people that live in it. They do this by using a variety of tools available to them, and these tools are the media – radio, television, newspapers, magazines, and now the Internet.

American Express Institute (2023) defines journalism as the activity of gathering, assessing, and presenting news and other information to a widely dispersed audience. It is also the product of these activities. The definition of journalism as offered by Most Censored Countries Committee to Protect Journalists (2019), sees journalism as the production and distribution of reports on the interaction of events, facts, ideas, and people that make the "news of the day" and that inform society to at least, some degree of accuracy. One thing is sacrosanct

here, and that is the fact that through journalism, people get accurate information. The level of accuracy is measured by the degree of correctness of facts, figures, quantity, and the quality of the news or the items in the news. In the words of Seema (2016), journalism is a discipline of collecting, analysing, verifying, and presenting news regarding current events, trends, issues and people. News as a product of journalism, exists in its raw state. The journalist always harvests news stories from events and subjects them to analysis, and verification to ascertain the veracity or otherwise of the stories presented to the audience. Today, the dynamics of journalism has changed largely due to the emergence of the new media. Technology has defined a new model for the operation of journalism. The kind of journalism now practiced on the Internet, differs significantly from what it used to be before the advent of the Internet. Technology has turned information consumers to producers. This means that the audience is no longer passive consumers of media contents, but active users and content creators. The traditional function of a journalist has changed from merely writing of news for the radio, television, newspapers, and magazines to relating with global audience through digital technology. This has, however made the verification process that makes the story accurate and accountable a lot easier. Journalists do not need to visit a scene of an accident or attend an event to make stories from it. This is because the new journalism has brought with it news tools. Journalists and even non-journalists who are driven by a single passion to communicate across boundaries, have also used the Internet to expand the frontiers of journalism in contemporary times. Internet now qualifies everyone who does the job of the professional reporter to be called a journalist. Notably, the emergence of technology has redefined journalism, and has caused more people to have a stake in the profession. Non-professionals are now enjoying the job. Actors in several other fields now operate as journalists, insofar as they communicate in the media.

The Concept of Artificial Intelligence

Artificial intelligence was coined at a conference at New Hemspshire in 1956 by John McCarthy. The term was used to describe a new technology that has the capacity to act in human capacity. The technology had since gained ascendancy in almost all sectors of the economy – from fianance, manufacturing, engineering, medicine, to pharmaceuticals, and Communication. Although the infiltration of AI into the communication industry is a recent phenomenon. Artificial intelligence uses machines to breakdown data to seek patterns and report same through several media types (Mande, Taofeek and Oko, 2023). According to Merril Lynch, the Managing Director, Bank of America, artificial intelligence is the future technology that will drive the growth of industries. But Ogbodo (2023) is of the opinion that AI is no long a futuristic technology, but has already manifested in all areas of human life. According to Oghwei and Ukadike (2023), McCarthy sees the phenomenon as a science and engineering of creating intelligent machines. Singh, Vedrtnam and Sagar (2023), defines artificial intelligence as the capacity to simultaneously keep two thought in mind while maintaining functionality. For artificial intelligence to be effective, they must be able to draw conclusion from the past, make decisions based on reasoning, and act quickly. It must be able to handle complexity and ambiguity, while making judgment based on priorities. Artificial intelligence is the ability of machines to do activities that, if performed by people, would need intelligence. The term artificial intelligence (AI) is the imitation of the real word processed computers. Both robots and drones are fashioned after artificial intelligence. This allows machines to do things and behave like humans or even play the role of humans. Both robots and drones are artificial machines with in-built intelligence that allows them to replace human efforts in real times.

Digital data systems enable intelligent processes to be replicated in machine to an even greater degree. The term 'artificial intelligence' is used as generic terms for these systems (COMECE, 2019). This article focuses on artificial intelligence, as its activities offer potentials to diversify the operations of journalism.

Classes of Artificial Intelligence

According to Hintze (2016) in Mande, Taofeek and Oko (2023) note that artificial intelligence are changing trends of journalism and other professions in the world, as it hasreached and exceeded their performance and imagination and the major tools of artificial intelligence are basically machine learning and deep learning. However, othercategories of artificial intelligence are as follows:

1. Reactive Machines: these kinds of artificial intelligence that naturally react to the environment, and do not have the ability to form its own memories to make decisions. Hence, its uses relies on computer to process information.
2. Limited Memory Machines: this machine has the ability to predict the future, but lacks the ability to add to it experiences. Cars with sensory automation use this technology.
3. Theory of Mind Machines: these machines are highly automated and can relate with the future through depiction of human emotions, thoughts, memories and mental framework. Machines within this categories are designed to behave like humans and carry out advance tasks.
4. Awareness Machines: here, machines such as automated robots are designed in a way that they become aware of the environment. Kray (2018) is of the opinion that awareness machines are basically deigned to extend the theory of the mind machines in terms of being conscious, aware of the environment, and thus predict the feelings of others.

Artificial Intelligence and Journalism

The emergence of artificial intelligence in the 21st Century has been recognized as setting the pace of growth and development in the on a high pedestal. Many industries are cutting cost by replacing AI automated robots in factories to replace humans. While this is considered consequential, its help in doing work easily and faster is something that cannot be ignored. Scholars such as Vaglis and Brtsas (2017) note that the present adoption of technology lies on artificial intelligence, used in all aspects of journalism to bring about radical change in the journalism world (Galily, 2018). The place of artificial intelligence in journalism is challenging for both the journalists and their profession. This explains why Omebring (2016) says that artificial intelligence is the order of the day, changing the facet of journalism, including the journalists' skills. Mande, Taofeek and Oko (2023) aver that artificial intelligence significantly assists in journalism reporting, content creation, distribution and audience interaction and engagement, thus it assists in crowdsourcing, brainstorming, and fact-checking to speed up data information gathering while also structuring the said data. It is obvious that artificial intelligence is gaining momentum in journalism, so much that journalists are gradually loosing fate in the future of their job. There is a growing fear that journalism may not necessarily need to be done by humans as AI algorithms are reporting with more precision and objectivity. In supporting this view, Jung, et.al. (2017), said that public and journalists trusted news written by algorithms and software than the ones written by journalists.

The Impacts of Artificial Intelligence on Journalism

Tom (2018) highlighted the impacts of AI on journalism to include the following:

1. Artificial intelligence technology is an automated technology for news room as it contributes significantly in newsroom with a lot of intelligence display.
2. Artificial intelligence is an augmented reality image as it ensures viewers qualities and imagery experience being a technology journalist.
3. Artificial intelligence creates a momentum of investigative reporting as the technology acts as an investigative journalist researching about full details of an events for reporting purposes.
4. Artificial intelligence technology acts as a verifier and fact-checker tools in terms of its full and insightful reports.
5. Artificial intelligence creates personalized user experience because of its ability to engage and give full report of an event through full reportage.
6. Artificial intelligence analyse reports in a transparent way as this build trust and confidence of the audience towards the news reports.
7. Artificial intelligence redefines copyright rules in the newsroom as it learns from human created articles and videos with specific right owners to create its own outputs.
8. Artificial intelligence refocuses journalists' perspective in the newsroom in terms of changing roles of journalists to be retrained with the way artificial intelligence is used to link media, thus making journalists become experts in operating artificial intelligence tools and other technologies in technological environment.
9. Artificial intelligence enhances newsroom management function. It also adds human touch to photo application.

CONCLUSION

From available literature, it is obvious that artificial intelligence has huge impact on journalism practice. It has affected the way journalists work, and even the way news are consumed. Stories churned out by AI algorithms seem to be more accurate than stories written by human journalists. This is the reason why the audience are relying more on AI contents. In terms of consumption, AI seems to make contents readily available to readers. This way, readers may not necessarily need to visit the newsstands for copies of the newspaper. This condition, has left media futurologists with the impetus to feel that the hope for newspaper survival is dwindling. However, the position of this paper is that the knowledge of AI and its application vary from country to country, and because Africa is a fledging ground for technology, and traditional media may still thrive. Albeit, the consequence of AI on newspaper survival are highlighted.

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