

The Stakes of Integrating Artificial Intelligence Technologies in Algerian Digital Journalism: A Qualitative Approach

Mebarki Ibtissam ¹, Boudjelal Maroua ²

(Abou El Qasim Saadallah University (Algeria), e-mail (maroua.boudjelal@univ-alger2.dz) ¹

(Abou El Qasim Saadallah University (Algeria), e-mail (ibtissam.mebarki@univ-alger2.dz) ²

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Abstract:

This article examines the professional and ethical stakes associated with the integration of artificial intelligence technologies in Algerian digital journalism. It is grounded in the assumption that artificial intelligence adoption extends beyond technical enhancement to reshape journalistic practices, professional roles, and institutional dynamics. The study adopts a qualitative research design based on semi-structured interviews conducted with a purposive sample of journalists working within Algerian digital media platforms. The collected data were analyzed using thematic analysis in order to identify dominant patterns and recurring analytical themes. The findings indicate that artificial intelligence is mainly perceived as a supportive tool that improves efficiency and accelerates news production processes. However, journalists express persistent concerns related to credibility, the absence of clear regulatory frameworks, and insufficient professional training. The study concludes that the effective and responsible integration of artificial intelligence in Algerian digital journalism remains dependent on strengthening

Corresponding author: Boudjelal Maroua.

Email: maroua.boudjelal@univ-alger2.dz

ethical guidelines, institutional governance mechanisms, and sustained professional capacity-building initiatives.

Keywords: Artificial Intelligence; Digital Journalism; Professional Stakes; Media Ethics; Algeria.

الملخص

يهدف هذا المقال إلى مقارنة رهانات توظيف تقنيات الذكاء الاصطناعي في الصحافة الرقمية الجزائرية، من خلال تحليل تجارب الصحفيين العاملين في المنصات الإعلامية الرقمية. وينطلق البحث من فرضية مفادها أن إدماج هذه التقنيات لا يقتصر على البعد التقني، بل يطرح رهانات مهنية وأخلاقية وتنظيمية تؤثر في طبيعة الممارسة الصحفية. واعتمدت الدراسة على المنهج النوعي، بالاستناد إلى مقابلات نصف موجهة مع عينة قصدية من الصحفيين، تم تحليلها وفق مقارنة موضوعاتية لاستخلاص الثيمات الدلالية الرئيسة. وقد أظهرت النتائج أن الذكاء الاصطناعي يُوظف أساسًا كأداة داعمة لتحسين الكفاءة وتسريع الأداء، مقابل بروز تحفظات مرتبطة بالمصداقية وغياب التأطير المؤسسي والتكوين المتخصص. ويخلص المقال إلى أن نجاح توظيف تقنيات الذكاء الاصطناعي في الصحافة الرقمية الجزائرية يظل مرهونًا بتعزيز الأطر الأخلاقية والتنظيمية، وتطوير التكوين المهني بما يضمن استخدامًا واعيًا ومسؤولًا لهذه التقنيات.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الذكاء الاصطناعي، الصحافة الرقمية، الرهانات المهنية، الأخلاقيات الإعلامية، الجزائر.

1. INTRODUCTION

Contemporary media systems are undergoing profound structural transformations driven by rapid technological advancement, particularly through the increasing integration of digital technologies and intelligent systems across various stages of journalistic production. Within this context, artificial intelligence has emerged as one of the most significant manifestations of digital transformation, given its advanced capabilities in data processing, content analysis, and the automation of editorial tasks within newsrooms.

This transformation has substantially reshaped journalists' professional practices, as intelligent technologies are no longer confined to technical support functions but have extended to influence modes of news production, editorial decision-making processes, and the evolving relationship between journalists and technology. At the same time, these developments raise critical epistemological and ethical questions concerning the limits of algorithmic intervention, journalistic responsibility, and the standards of credibility and transparency within digital media environments.

• Research Problem

Within this transformative context, the relationship between journalists and artificial intelligence applications in newsrooms

has become increasingly complex. The debate surrounding this relationship extends beyond technical considerations to encompass journalists' professional representations of these technologies, as well as their acceptance of—or reservations toward—their professional and ethical implications.

Accordingly, this study seeks to analyze journalists' and experts' representations of artificial intelligence technologies within digital newsrooms as a means of developing a deeper understanding of the ongoing transformations shaping the contemporary media field.

- **Research Question**

How do journalists and media experts represent the use of artificial intelligence technologies within digital newsrooms, and what do these representations reveal about contemporary journalistic practices?

- **Sub-Questions**

- 1.How do journalists conceptualize artificial intelligence technologies within digital newsrooms?
- 2.What are the primary professional uses of artificial intelligence applications from journalists' perspectives?
- 3.What ethical concerns and professional challenges are associated with the use of artificial intelligence in journalism?
- 4.How does the integration of artificial intelligence influence journalists' perceptions of their professional roles and responsibilities?

- **Research Objectives**

This study aims to:

- 1.Examine journalists' and experts' representations of artificial intelligence technologies in digital newsrooms.
- 2.Identify the practical professional uses of artificial intelligence applications in everyday journalistic work.
- 3.Explore the ethical concerns and professional challenges associated with the integration of artificial intelligence in journalism.
- 4.Analyze the impact of artificial intelligence technologies on the redefinition of journalists' professional roles and responsibilities.

2. Theoretical Framework

2.1. Artificial Intelligence in the Context of Digital Transformation of Journalistic Practice

Artificial intelligence represents one of the most prominent manifestations of digital transformation within contemporary journalism. Its role is no longer limited to the automation of technical operations; rather, it has become an active force reshaping the very structure of journalistic practice. Recent scholarship conceptualizes artificial intelligence as a set of algorithmic systems capable of simulating certain human cognitive functions, such as data analysis, classification, prediction, and decision-making, thereby opening new possibilities for journalism in terms of speed, accuracy, and content personalization (Carlson, 2015, pp. 418–421; Pavlik, 2019, pp. 108–110).

Within this framework, the concept of automated journalism has emerged to describe the use of algorithmic systems in the production of news content, whether partially or fully, based on structured data and predefined templates. Reports issued by the Reuters Institute indicate that newsrooms increasingly rely on artificial intelligence applications across multiple stages of news production, ranging from data collection and verification to text generation and automated dissemination in specific contexts (Reuters Institute, 2023, pp. 18–20).

However, this transformation raises significant epistemological and ethical concerns, particularly with regard to the limits of algorithmic intervention in editorial processes and its implications for core journalistic values such as objectivity, accuracy, and social responsibility. Diakopoulos warns against uncritical dependence on algorithmic systems, emphasizing that opaque computational processes may undermine transparency and professional accountability if left unchecked (Diakopoulos, 2019, pp. 56–58).

2.2. Technological Determinism and the Reconfiguration of Journalistic Work

This study draws on technological determinism as a theoretical lens for interpreting the transformations affecting journalistic labor. According to this perspective, technological development constitutes a decisive factor in shaping social, cultural, and professional change. McLuhan argues that technologies are not neutral tools but rather impose their own logic on patterns of thought and behavior within society, including the media sphere (McLuhan, 1964, p. 23).

From this standpoint, artificial intelligence can be understood as a driving force behind the reorganization of newsroom structures and professional roles. Journalists increasingly shift from being direct producers of content to supervisors of algorithmic processes and interpreters of data outputs generated by intelligent systems. This transformation raises fundamental questions concerning professional identity and journalistic authority in digital environments (Deuze, 2017, pp. 24–26).

2.3. Diffusion of Innovation Theory and Journalists' Representations

The study further relies on Diffusion of Innovations Theory to explain how journalists and media organizations adopt artificial intelligence technologies based on subjective perceptions of usefulness, ease of use, and perceived risks (Rogers, 2003, pp. 15–18).

According to this theory, the adoption of artificial intelligence in newsrooms is neither automatic nor uniform but is influenced by a combination of psychological, organizational, and professional factors, including:

- Levels of trust in technological systems,
- Access to training and professional development,
- The prevailing organizational culture within media institutions.

Within this context, journalists' representations play a central role in shaping the trajectory of artificial intelligence integration. These representations reflect varying degrees of acceptance, reservation, or resistance and illuminate the evolving relationship

between human actors and algorithmic systems in everyday professional practice (Lewis et al., 2019, pp. 414–416).

Recent studies confirm that journalists' representations of artificial intelligence are characterized by a dual stance combining pragmatic acceptance with ethical caution. Artificial intelligence is largely perceived as a conditional support tool rather than a full substitute for human labor, accompanied by persistent concerns regarding professional boundaries and accountability (Zamith & Braun, 2024, pp. 238–241).

2.4. Media Ecology Theory and Artificial Intelligence as a Cognitive Environment

The theoretical discussion is further enriched through Media Ecology Theory, developed by McLuhan and Neil Postman, which conceptualizes media as cognitive environments that shape human perception, communication patterns, and social interaction.

From this perspective, artificial intelligence is not merely a technical instrument but constitutes a new cognitive environment that reshapes the structure of media discourse, influences meaning-making processes, and affects agenda-setting practices within digital journalism (Postman, 2000, pp. 10–12).

Consequently, the integration of artificial intelligence into newsrooms represents an epistemological transformation in journalistic knowledge production. Journalism increasingly shifts from practices grounded in individual human expertise toward data-driven models based on large-scale computation and algorithmic modeling.

3. Theoretical Synthesis

In light of the preceding discussion, the use of artificial intelligence technologies in digital newsrooms cannot be reduced to a transient technical development. Rather, it constitutes a structural transformation in the logic of journalistic work, redefining professional roles and raising new epistemological and ethical challenges concerning the relationship between humans and technology in media knowledge production. Accordingly, analyzing journalists' representations of this transformation provides a crucial analytical entry point for understanding the present and future trajectories of journalism within intelligent digital environments.

4. Methodology

4.1. Research Design and Approach

This study adopts a qualitative research approach based on a case study design, as it is particularly suited to exploring complex social and professional phenomena within their real-life contexts. Qualitative inquiry enables the researcher to investigate meanings, interpretations, and representations constructed by social actors, rather than relying solely on the measurement of variables or statistical generalization (Yin, 2018, pp. 15–18).

The case study approach is especially appropriate for examining transformations in journalistic practice, as it allows for an in-depth analysis of the organizational and cultural contexts in which artificial intelligence technologies are integrated into newsroom workflows. It further facilitates an understanding of

how journalists perceive and negotiate the role of these technologies in their daily professional routines (Stake, 1995, pp. 2–5).

4.2. Data Collection Tool: Semi-Structured Interviews

Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, which constitute a central method in qualitative research due to their flexibility and capacity to capture participants' subjective experiences and perspectives. This interview format allows researchers to maintain a guiding framework while providing participants with the opportunity to elaborate on issues they perceive as salient (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009, pp. 3–7).

The use of semi-structured interviews enabled the researchers to obtain rich and nuanced insights into journalists' experiences with artificial intelligence technologies in digital newsrooms. It further facilitated the exploration of both positive evaluations and critical concerns related to professional practice, ethical implications, and institutional constraints (Bryman, 2016, pp. 466–468).

4.3. Research Population and Sampling Strategy

The research population consists of journalists and media experts working in Algerian digital media organizations. Given the exploratory nature of the study and the difficulty of accessing the entire population, a purposive sampling strategy was employed. Participants were selected based on their direct professional experience with the use of artificial intelligence applications in journalistic work.

Purposive sampling is particularly suitable for qualitative

studies, as the primary objective is not statistical representativeness but rather analytical depth and conceptual insight derived from information-rich cases (Patton, 2015, pp. 264–267). This approach allows for a focused examination of professional representations within contexts that are especially relevant to the research problem (Creswell, 2013, pp. 155–158).

4.4. Data Analysis Procedure

The interview data were analyzed using thematic analysis, a widely employed qualitative method that involves identifying, analyzing, and interpreting recurring patterns of meaning within textual data. Thematic analysis offers a systematic yet flexible framework for organizing qualitative material into coherent analytical themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006, pp. 77–80).

The analytical process followed several stages:

1. Repeated reading of interview transcripts to achieve familiarization with the data;
2. Identification of initial meaning units and open coding;
3. Grouping codes into broader thematic categories;
4. Interpreting the emergent themes in light of the study's theoretical framework (Guest et al., 2012, pp. 50–54).

This analytical strategy enabled the researchers to capture both convergent and divergent representations of artificial intelligence among journalists and to link empirical findings with existing theoretical perspectives.

4.5. Ethical Considerations

Several ethical principles were strictly observed throughout the research process. These included ensuring the confidentiality and anonymity of participants, obtaining informed consent prior to participation, and using the collected data exclusively for scientific research purposes.

Adherence to ethical standards is a fundamental requirement in qualitative research, particularly when studies involve professional experiences within sensitive institutional settings such as media organizations. Respecting these principles enhances the credibility and integrity of the research process (Orb et al., 2001, pp. 93–95).

5. Findings and Analysis

The analysis of the interview data revealed that journalists' representations of artificial intelligence technologies in Algerian digital newsrooms are multidimensional and, at times, ambivalent. While participants acknowledged the functional advantages of artificial intelligence in enhancing journalistic efficiency, they simultaneously expressed reservations concerning its ethical implications and its impact on professional identity. The findings are presented below through a set of dominant analytical themes.

5.1. Artificial Intelligence as a Tool for Enhancing Professional Efficiency

The majority of participants perceived artificial intelligence primarily as a supportive tool that contributes to improving the efficiency of journalistic work. Journalists emphasized that artificial intelligence applications facilitate faster access to

information, assist in data analysis, and streamline routine newsroom tasks. Several participants noted that such technologies enable them to accomplish tasks that previously required considerable time and effort, particularly during the stages of data gathering and verification.

One journalist stated:

“Some intelligent applications now save us hours of work, especially in data collection and source verification.”

This perception aligns with Carlson’s argument that automated journalism redistributes professional roles within newsrooms by shifting journalistic labor away from repetitive tasks toward more analytical and supervisory functions (Carlson, 2015, pp. 419–421).

5.2. Artificial Intelligence and the Redefinition of the Journalistic Role

Beyond efficiency gains, the findings indicate that artificial intelligence contributes to a reconfiguration of journalists’ professional self-perceptions. Participants reported that their roles increasingly involve overseeing algorithmic processes, evaluating the quality of automated outputs, and intervening to correct potential errors rather than producing content independently.

As one participant explained:

“I am no longer just a news writer; I have become more of a supervisor of an intelligent system.”

This shift reflects a broader transformation identified in the

literature, wherein journalists operating in digital environments transition from content producers to coordinators of complex technological processes (Deuze, 2017, pp. 24–26).

5.3. Ethical Concerns and Professional Reservations

Despite acknowledging the practical benefits of artificial intelligence, participants articulated significant ethical concerns related to its use in journalism. These concerns centered on issues of credibility, data manipulation, and the opacity of algorithmic decision-making processes. Journalists expressed apprehension about disseminating content generated or influenced by systems whose internal logic remains insufficiently transparent.

One journalist remarked:

“We fear becoming transmitters of content without fully knowing how it was produced.”

These concerns correspond with Diakopoulos’s critique of algorithmic opacity and its potential to undermine journalistic accountability and public trust if left unregulated (Diakopoulos, 2019, pp. 56–58).

5.4. Training and Professional Development as Preconditions for Positive Adoption

A recurring theme across interviews was the perceived lack of institutional training related to artificial intelligence technologies. Participants indicated that their current knowledge often stems from personal experimentation or self-directed learning rather than structured training programs provided by media organizations.

As one expert noted:

“We use powerful tools, but we do not always fully understand how they work.”

This finding resonates with Diffusion of Innovations Theory, which emphasizes that technology adoption is closely linked to users’ access to training, institutional support, and perceived competence (Rogers, 2003, pp. 15–18).

6. Analytical Synthesis of Findings

Overall, the findings suggest that journalists’ representations of artificial intelligence are characterized by a tension between appreciation for its technical potential and caution regarding its ethical and professional implications. This tension reflects a negotiated relationship between human actors and technological systems within digital newsrooms, wherein artificial intelligence is neither unconditionally embraced nor categorically rejected.

Rather than representing a purely technical stance, journalists’ representations reveal an ongoing professional and ethical negotiation shaped by institutional constraints, normative values, and evolving definitions of journalistic responsibility.

7. Discussion of Findings

The findings of this study indicate that journalists’ representations of artificial intelligence technologies in Algerian digital newsrooms are marked by a dual and negotiated stance. On the one hand, artificial intelligence is perceived as a valuable technological resource that enhances efficiency and accelerates journalistic workflows; on the other hand, it generates persistent ethical and professional concerns related to credibility, transparency, and role boundaries. This ambivalence reflects a broader pattern identified in contemporary journalism studies,

wherein technological innovation is accompanied by uncertainty regarding its normative implications.

These findings are consistent with the work of Lewis et al., who argue that journalists tend to conceptualize artificial intelligence as a supportive tool rather than a replacement for human labor. According to their analysis, human-machine interaction in journalism is primarily characterized by complementarity, with human judgment remaining central to editorial decision-making (Lewis et al., 2019, pp. 415–417). The present study confirms this dynamic within the Algerian digital journalism context, where journalists emphasize the necessity of human oversight despite the growing presence of automated systems.

Similarly, the results align with Pavlik's assertion that the integration of artificial intelligence contributes to a gradual transformation of journalistic roles, shifting professional emphasis toward analysis, interpretation, and contextualization rather than routine content production (Pavlik, 2019, pp. 112–115). Participants' accounts illustrate this shift, as journalists increasingly describe themselves as supervisors and evaluators of algorithmic outputs rather than sole content creators.

At the same time, the study highlights a critical dimension related to ethical concerns and algorithmic opacity. Journalists' apprehensions regarding the lack of transparency in artificial intelligence systems resonate with Diakopoulos's critique of algorithmic decision-making in journalism. He emphasizes that opaque computational processes may undermine accountability and public trust if journalists are unable to explain or audit algorithmic outcomes (Diakopoulos, 2019, pp. 56–58). The

recurrence of such concerns in this study suggests that ethical uncertainty remains a central obstacle to the full institutionalization of artificial intelligence in newsrooms.

Moreover, the findings converge with recent international research emphasizing the absence of clear regulatory and ethical frameworks governing artificial intelligence in journalism. Marconi and Siegman identify regulatory gaps and insufficient ethical guidance as major challenges facing news organizations adopting artificial intelligence technologies (Marconi & Siegman, 2024, pp. 49–52). This observation is particularly salient in the Algerian context, where journalists reported limited institutional policies addressing artificial intelligence use.

The results also echo conclusions drawn by the Reuters Institute, which notes that public trust in algorithmically generated news content remains lower than trust in news produced under direct human supervision, especially in politically sensitive or crisis-related reporting (Reuters Institute, 2023, pp. 18–20). This reinforces journalists' insistence on maintaining human editorial control as a safeguard for credibility and professional legitimacy. Furthermore, the study's findings are consistent with recent scholarship on generative artificial intelligence in news production. Graefe and Bohlken argue that while generative artificial intelligence has the potential to reshape news production processes, sustained human oversight remains indispensable for ensuring quality, accuracy, and ethical integrity (Graefe & Bohlken, 2025, pp. 6–9). Participants' narratives in this study support this position, emphasizing that technological

efficiency must not come at the expense of journalistic standards. Taken together, these comparisons demonstrate that the findings of this study are largely aligned with international literature while simultaneously contributing a context-specific perspective on Algerian digital journalism. In particular, the combination of limited professional training and the absence of institutional governance frameworks appears to intensify journalists' ethical concerns and shape their cautious engagement with artificial intelligence technologies. This contextual dimension underscores the importance of situating artificial intelligence adoption within broader organizational, cultural, and regulatory environments.

In the Algerian context, several studies have highlighted that digital transformation has significantly contributed to reshaping media practices and professional roles, while raising new organizational and ethical challenges related to technological change within news institutions. ((جزائري سمير، الجزائر، 2020، ص86)). Similar reflections on digital transformations in media practices have been addressed in previous studies published in the same journal. (Benachenhou , 2021, pp. 45–62.)

8. Conclusion and Recommendations

• Conclusion

This study has examined the stakes associated with the integration of artificial intelligence technologies in Algerian digital journalism through a qualitative analysis of journalists' professional representations and experiences. The findings demonstrate that artificial intelligence is no longer perceived merely as a technical instrument but as a transformative force reshaping journalistic practices, professional roles, and

newsroom dynamics.

The analysis reveals that journalists largely acknowledge the functional benefits of artificial intelligence, particularly in enhancing efficiency, accelerating news production, and supporting data-driven journalistic tasks.

However, this pragmatic acceptance is accompanied by persistent ethical and professional concerns related to credibility, transparency, algorithmic opacity, and the redefinition of journalistic responsibility. These concerns indicate that the relationship between journalists and artificial intelligence remains characterized by negotiation rather than unconditional adoption.

Furthermore, the study highlights that the integration of artificial intelligence within Algerian digital newsrooms occurs in a context marked by limited institutional regulation and insufficient professional training.

As a result, journalists often rely on individual initiative and informal learning, which reinforces uncertainty and constrains the development of coherent professional practices surrounding artificial intelligence use.

Overall, the findings suggest that artificial intelligence constitutes a structural transformation in contemporary journalism rather than a temporary technological trend. Understanding journalists' representations of this transformation provides critical insight into the evolving nature of journalistic work and the conditions necessary for responsible technological integration within digital media environments.

- **Recommendations**

Based on the study's findings, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. **Strengthening Professional Training:** Media organizations should integrate specialized training programs focused on artificial intelligence technologies within journalists' professional development pathways in order to enhance technical understanding and ethical awareness.
2. **Establishing Ethical and Regulatory Frameworks:** Clear institutional guidelines and ethical charters should be developed to regulate the use of artificial intelligence in news production, ensuring transparency, accountability, and respect for journalistic values.
3. **Promoting Algorithmic Transparency:** News organizations are encouraged to adopt practices that enhance the explainability and auditability of algorithmic systems used in journalism, thereby reinforcing credibility and public trust.
4. **Encouraging Future Research:** Further studies should adopt comparative approaches examining artificial intelligence integration across different national and organizational contexts, as well as mixed-method designs that combine qualitative insights with quantitative data.

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