


Chapter 10

Artificial Intelligence, Digital Media, and the Future of Journalism

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ABSTRACT

AI-powered digital media tools have emerged as indicators of a new era, particularly in the field of journalism. As the ways in which information is produced, disseminated and verified continue to evolve, the function, responsibility and ethical boundaries of journalism in democratic societies have become subjects of renewed debate. This study aims to examine the societal impacts of the accelerated digitalization process in the post-COVID-19 era, with a specific focus on how AI and emerging media technologies are shaping the future of journalism. The rise of algorithmically generated news, personalized information flows, and automated editorial decisions has accelerated the transformation of traditional journalism into a hybrid model. Drawing on theoretical insights from Zuboff, Castells, and McLuhan, this study examines how AI challenges the public responsibility of journalism, particularly in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic. It argues that the future of journalism depends on a delicate balance between technological innovation and ethical accountability.

INTRODUCTION

Since the early 21st century, rapid developments in communication technologies have brought a new dimension to both social life and public services. As a result of these technological advancements, social habits, ways of accessing information,

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and news channels have changed significantly. Throughout history, the interaction between technology and social events has played an important role in triggering social change. Although social transformations cannot be reduced to a single factor, the influence of technological innovations has been both evident and transformative. During the COVID-19 pandemic, lockdown measures forced individuals and institutions to turn to internet-based digital services to maintain communication, social interaction, and professional responsibilities. As a result, practices such as online meetings, remote working models, and digital education systems became part of the so-called new normal. Office work shifted to home environments, and hybrid or remote working models gained traction, laying the foundation for long-term changes in work culture.

Digital transformation has led to comprehensive changes in many areas, from daily routines to professional skills. Before the pandemic, the use of digital tools was mostly limited to certain age and socioeconomic groups. However, during the pandemic, the range of users and fields of use expanded significantly. Extended periods of isolation increased the time spent on digital devices, and many activities including access to education, healthcare, social interaction, and public services moved to digital platforms. The global process of digitalization has also caused structural transformations in the fields of media and journalism. Traditional media institutions have been forced to adapt to new technologies. Especially in the first quarter of the 21st century, digital transformation has created significant changes in every stage of news production, distribution, consumption, and analysis. Artificial intelligence (AI), algorithms, and big data technologies have become key components of news production, rather than being just tools.

AI systems are actively used in news writing, headline generation, content personalization, audience segmentation, and even fake news detection. (Marconi, 2020). Marconi argues that the rise of algorithmically generated content, data-driven news production, and automation is reshaping the field of journalism. According to him, the source of news is no longer limited to the reporter alone but also includes lines of code and datasets. These technologies enable media organizations to accelerate content production while also developing more targeted publishing strategies based on reader behavior. However, with the integration of AI-supported algorithms, the traditional journalism model based on the “human touch” in news production has undergone a significant transformation. Journalism has evolved from merely transmitting information to becoming a content architecture grounded in data analytics and algorithmic processes. In this context, the digital media environment redefines classical journalism norms through parameters such as speed, accessibility, personalization, and data orientation. Fundamental principles of journalism, such as objectivity, editorial independence, and public interest, have been reopened for discussion in light of the dynamics of digitalization. With the increasing use of AI-

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