



## Opportunities and Challenges of Adopting AI in Journalism in Nigeria

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**Abstract:** A growing number of industries are using artificial intelligence (AI), including journalism, where it has great promise to improve news gathering, content production, fact-checking, audience involvement, and operational effectiveness. In Nigeria, a dynamic media environment offers chances as well as difficulties for integrating AI. The advantages of AI for Nigerian journalism are examined in this research. These include automated data collecting and analysis, routine news story creation, disinformation detection, content distribution personalisation, and editing process efficiency. It also tackles the difficulties, however, such as moral dilemmas, technological constraints, effects on the labour, inadequate infrastructure, and legal problems. Application of Everett Rogers' Diffusion of Innovations Theory is made to comprehend the dynamics of AI uptake in Nigerian media. Among the suggestions are to improve infrastructure, increase AI literacy and capabilities, set ethical standards, and encourage cooperation between journalists and AI specialists. These tactics seek to optimise the chances given by AI while reducing its drawbacks, guaranteeing responsible and successful use. With more study and application, artificial intelligence (AI) in Nigerian journalism has a bright future that may drastically change the media environment.

**Keywords:** Artificial Intelligence (AI), Nigerian journalism, news collecting, content production, ethical standards, diffusion of innovations theory.

### 1. INTRODUCTION

In today's world, one of the technological transformations that seems to have come to stay is the use of artificial intelligence for everyday tasks and even in professional settings (Udoh, Nsude, & Oyeleke, 2022). However, the integration of artificial intelligence (AI) into various sectors is revolutionising industries worldwide, and journalism is no exception. AI encompasses a range of technologies that enable machines to mimic human intelligence, including learning, reasoning, and problem-solving (Haenlein & Kaplan, 2019). Globally, AI's adoption in journalism is transforming news gathering, reporting, and dissemination processes, promising efficiency and innovation (Marconi & Siegman, 2020). In Nigeria, a country with a vibrant media landscape, AI's potential in journalism remains largely untapped, presenting both significant opportunities and formidable challenges.

Journalism is both a practice and an institution. As an institution, Schudson (2008) defines journalism as the social institution that gathers, verifies, distributes, and analyses news that is important to a society" (p. 12). Schudson (2008) emphasises the social responsibility of journalism in informing the public about significant events. On the other hand, as a practice, Tuchman (1978) defines journalism as "the gathering, processing, and dissemination of information about current events through a mass medium" (p. 11). Tuchman focuses on the core functions of news collection, processing, and distribution through various media channels. Journalism adopts critical perspectives for the production of public knowledge about the general interest through a process of disciplined inquiry and dissemination (Ward, 2009). In their role as information communicators to the citizenry, journalists, through their work, serve as watchdogs to uphold democratic accountability and ensure that the public is aware of the actions (and, of course, inactions) of the people whom the majority (as the system allows) have elected (Wang and Lee, 2014). Nigeria has a democratic system, and in most democracies, journalism goes beyond news recording and reporting to include active investigative journalism and other press-centered efforts to uphold democracy's values. Therefore, as watchdogs in democratic systems, rural journalists are able

to uphold democratic values in rural areas, which are susceptible to violations of democratic values due to limited or restricted access to technology and information from mainstream media (Uchenna and Egere, 2021).

In undertaking their watchdog roles, journalists need to be aided by instruments and devices that allow them to discharge their functions effectively while communicating information to the public and also combating fake news (Opdahal et al., 2023). Artificial intelligence, therefore, comes into play by easing their workload and amplifying the proliferation of information. Advancements in generative AI, like OpenAI's ChatGPT and Microsoft's Gemini, allow machines to analyse vast datasets, discover trends, and even write basic news stories (Tatalovic, 2018). While this offers exciting possibilities to better the journalism profession (as an initiative and a practice), there are reservations that AI could replace human journalists entirely, jeopardising the role of journalism as a democratic watchdog (Miroshnichenko, 2018).

The integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) into various sectors is revolutionizing industries worldwide, and journalism is no exception. AI encompasses a range of technologies that enable machines to mimic human intelligence, including learning, reasoning, and problem-solving (Haenlein & Kaplan, 2019). Globally, AI's adoption in journalism is transforming news gathering, reporting, and dissemination processes, promising efficiency and innovation (Marconi & Siegman, 2020). Nigeria is a country with a very vibrant media landscape, whereas the prospects of AI's potential in journalism remains largely untapped, presenting both significant opportunities and formidable challenges. This paper therefore examines the fundamental opportunities and challenges of adopting AI for journalism in Nigeria.

## 2. THEORETICAL UNDERPINNINGS: THE DIFFUSION OF INNOVATIONS THEORY

The Diffusion of Innovations Theory by Everett Rogers (1995) provides a robust framework for understanding the adoption of AI in journalism within the Nigerian context (Rogers, Singhal, & Quinlan, 2014). This theory explains how new technologies spread across cultures by examining the innovation's characteristics, communication channels, time, and the social system involved. While journalism in its entirety is not "material culture," it does have its own intricate professional culture, which makes it stand out as a profession. All professions have their own cultures, which refer to the dynamics and realities of operations within such fields, and of course, the standards of practice and behaviour vary across professions.

Given the proliferation and adoption of AI-integrated technologies, the landscape of media communication has changed significantly (Kothari & Cruikshank, 2022). AI technologies offer a significant relative advantage over traditional journalism methods by enhancing news gathering, content creation, fact-checking, and operational efficiency (Diakopoulos, 2019). Their compatibility with Nigeria's existing digital infrastructure and journalistic practices, along with their user-friendly designs that reduce complexity, increase their likelihood of adoption (Marconi & Siegman, 2020). Trialability, or the ability to experiment with AI tools on a limited basis, and observability, where visible success stories influence broader adoption, also play crucial roles in this process (Haenlein & Kaplan, 2019).

Effective communication channels are critical for disseminating information about AI technologies. Professional journals, conferences, workshops, and training programmes provide in-depth analysis and practical insights, helping journalists understand and engage with AI applications. Additionally, social media platforms like Twitter and LinkedIn facilitate discussions and share success stories, thereby influencing adoption decisions (Schröder, 2020). The adoption process itself involves several stages: knowledge, persuasion, decision, implementation, and confirmation. Raising awareness through educational campaigns and training sessions fosters knowledge, whereas demonstrating tangible benefits and providing trial opportunities can influence positive decisions. Successful implementation requires support, resources, and possibly reconfiguration of existing processes to integrate AI tools effectively.

The Nigerian media landscape comprises various stakeholders, including journalists, media houses, regulatory bodies, and the audience, whose interactions shape the adoption of AI technologies. Influential figures and early adopters can act as champions for AI, advocating its benefits and addressing potential concerns such as job displacement or ethical implications (Autor, 2015; Floridi, 2018). Peer networks and social interactions among journalists facilitate the spread of information and best

practices. Understanding and addressing the cultural and social context within Nigeria is crucial for widespread adoption. Applying the Diffusion of Innovations Theory suggests that media organisations, policymakers, and other interested parties can come up with targeted plans to make the most of AI's potential while navigating its challenges. This could ultimately change the way journalism is done in Nigeria.

### 3. OPPORTUNITIES OF AI IN JOURNALISM IN NIGERIA

As Nigeria tackles difficulties such as disinformation, resource restrictions, and the necessity for timely news transmission, artificial intelligence appears as a viable tool for addressing these concerns. This section of the paper discusses some of the opportunities entrenched in the adoption of AI in journalism in Nigeria.

#### *Enhanced News Gathering and Reporting*

AI technologies can significantly enhance news gathering and reporting by automating data collection and analysis. Tools like natural language processing (NLP) can sift through vast amounts of information, identifying relevant news items quickly (Diakopoulos, 2019). For example, AI can monitor social media platforms for breaking news, providing journalists with real-time updates (Schröder, 2020). This capability can be particularly beneficial in Nigeria, where timely and accurate news dissemination is crucial due to the diverse and rapidly changing socio-political environment. The Nigerian media landscape is characterized by a high demand for rapid news dissemination due to the country's large and diverse population as well as the various goings-on in the country which requires reportage. The use of AI for real-time news updates can help journalists stay ahead of the curve, ensuring that they provide timely and relevant information to their audience. Additionally, AI can help journalists uncover trends and patterns that may not be immediately apparent, leading to more insightful and comprehensive reporting (Graefe, 2016).

AI-powered tools like Reuters' *News Tracer* can analyse social media posts to determine the credibility and newsworthiness of information in real-time (Liu et al., 2017). It can identify breaking news on social media, classify the information, and even craft basic stories. This goes beyond just finding news; Tracer can package it for dissemination, potentially giving journalists a significant head start. Such tools can be invaluable in Nigeria, where social media often serves as a primary source of news for many people. Therefore, by filtering out false or irrelevant information, AI can help ensure that journalists focus on genuine stories, thereby enhancing the overall quality of news reporting.

#### *Improved Content Creation*

AI-powered systems can also aid in content creation. Automated journalism, where AI generates news articles based on data inputs, is already being used by several news organizations globally (Carlson, 2015). These systems can produce routine news stories, such as financial reports or sports summaries, freeing journalists to focus on more complex and investigative tasks. In Nigeria, AI-driven content creation could help media houses produce more content efficiently, addressing the challenge of resource constraints faced by many news organizations (Nyirenda-Jere & Biru, 2015).

For instance, The Associated Press uses AI to generate earnings reports, a task that would otherwise require considerable time and effort from journalists (Graefe, 2016). By automating such routine tasks, AI allows journalists to allocate more time to in-depth reporting and investigative journalism, which are crucial for holding power to account and informing the public on critical issues.

In Nigeria, where newsrooms often face financial constraints, the efficiency gains from AI can be particularly beneficial. AI can help smaller news organizations produce high-quality content at a lower cost, enabling them to compete with larger media houses. Additionally, AI-generated content can be customized to suit the preferences of different audience segments, thereby enhancing reader engagement and satisfaction (Thurman, 2011).

#### *Fact-Checking and Verification*

AI can play a crucial role in fact-checking and verifying news stories. With the proliferation of fake news, especially on social media, AI tools can help detect and counter misinformation (Graves, 2018). Machine learning algorithms can analyse patterns and discrepancies in information, flagging potentially

false stories for further investigation. This is particularly important in Nigeria, where fake news has been linked to exacerbating ethnic tensions and misinformation during elections (Adegoke, 2017).

The spread of misinformation poses a significant threat to social cohesion and political stability in Nigeria. AI-powered fact-checking tools can help mitigate this threat by identifying and flagging false information before it gains traction. For example, AI can be used to cross-reference news stories with reliable sources, identify manipulated images or videos, and detect inconsistencies in reported facts (Schiffers et al., 2014).

Organizations like Full Fact in the UK are already using AI to enhance their fact-checking processes, and similar approaches could be adopted in Nigeria. By leveraging AI for fact-checking, Nigerian news organizations can improve the accuracy and credibility of their reporting, thereby building trust with their audience.

### ***Audience Engagement***

AI can enhance audience engagement through personalized content delivery and interactive tools. AI-driven algorithms can analyse user preferences and behaviours to recommend personalized news stories, increasing user engagement and satisfaction (Thurman, 2011). Chatbots, powered by AI, can also provide instant responses to audience queries, improving the user experience (Linden, 2017). For Nigerian media organizations, such innovations could attract and retain readers, especially younger audiences who are increasingly turning to digital platforms for news.

Personalization is becoming increasingly important in the digital age, where users are often overwhelmed by the sheer volume of available content. By tailoring news content to individual preferences, AI can help media organizations deliver a more relevant and engaging experience to their audience. This can lead to increased readership, higher retention rates, and greater loyalty among users (Malthouse et al., 2019).

Additionally, AI-powered chatbots can enhance the user experience by providing instant assistance and answering common queries. For example, the BBC has developed a chatbot that provides users with personalized news updates and recommendations based on their preferences (Linden, 2017). Such tools can help Nigerian news organizations improve their customer service and engagement, thereby strengthening their relationship with their audience.

### ***Operational Efficiency***

AI can streamline editorial processes, leading to cost reduction and increased efficiency. Automated systems can handle tasks such as transcription, translation, and even video editing (Zhong, 2020). This operational efficiency can be a significant advantage for Nigerian newsrooms, which often operate under tight budgets and limited resources (Salawu, 2021). AI's ability to handle routine tasks in journalism frees up human journalists to pursue high-impact investigative stories. This shift in focus has the potential to significantly improve the overall quality of news reporting.

For instance, transcription software like Trint uses AI to convert audio recordings into text, saving journalists hours of manual transcription work (Linden, 2017). Similarly, AI-powered translation tools can help news organizations reach a broader audience by making their content accessible in multiple languages. This is particularly relevant in Nigeria, where there are over 500 indigenous languages spoken (Salawu, 2021).

Furthermore, AI can assist in video production by automating tasks such as editing, captioning, and metadata generation. Tools like *Wibbitz* use AI to create short video summaries of news articles, making it easier for journalists to produce multimedia content (Zhong, 2020). By automating these labour-intensive tasks, AI can help Nigerian news organizations operate more efficiently and cost-effectively.

## **4. CHALLENGES OF ADOPTING AI IN JOURNALISM**

### **Ethical and Privacy Concerns**

The adoption of AI in journalism raises significant ethical and privacy concerns. The use of AI tools to collect and analyse data can lead to privacy violations if not properly managed (Zuboff, 2019). In Nigeria, where data protection laws are still evolving, there is a risk of misuse of personal data collected through AI systems (Oyewole, 2020). Moreover, the ethical implications of AI-generated content, which

may lack the nuance and context provided by human journalists, need careful consideration (Floridi, 2018).

The deployment of AI in journalism involves handling vast amounts of data, which often include personal information. Without robust data protection measures, there is a risk that this data could be misused or accessed by unauthorized parties. This could lead to privacy breaches and erosion of public trust in news organizations (Zuboff, 2019). In Nigeria, the Data Protection Regulation (NDPR) provides some level of protection, but more comprehensive and enforceable laws are needed to safeguard personal data effectively (Oyewole, 2020).

Ethical concerns also arise from the use of AI to generate news content. AI-generated articles may lack the depth, context, and critical perspective that human journalists provide, potentially leading to superficial or misleading reporting (Floridi, 2018). Additionally, there is a risk that AI-generated content could perpetuate existing biases present in the training data, further exacerbating issues of representation and fairness in the media (O'Neil, 2016).

### 5. TECHNICAL LIMITATIONS

AI systems are not infallible; they rely on algorithms that can be prone to errors and biases (O'Neil, 2016). Inaccurate or biased AI outputs can lead to the dissemination of false or misleading information. The high costs associated with implementing and maintaining AI technology also pose a significant barrier for many Nigerian news organizations, which may lack the financial resources to invest in advanced AI systems (Nyirenda-Jere & Biru, 2015).

AI algorithms are only as good as the data they are trained on. If the training data contains biases or inaccuracies, the AI system is likely to reproduce these issues in its outputs (O'Neil, 2016). This can lead to the spread of misinformation and reinforce existing stereotypes, which is particularly problematic in a diverse society like Nigeria. Moreover, AI systems can struggle with understanding nuanced and context-specific information, which can result in incorrect or misleading news stories (Diakopoulos, 2019).

The financial cost of AI technology is another significant challenge. Implementing AI systems requires substantial investment in software, hardware, and training for staff (Nyirenda-Jere & Biru, 2015). For many Nigerian news organizations, which often operate on limited budgets, these costs can be prohibitive. Additionally, maintaining and updating AI systems requires ongoing investment, further straining the financial resources of news organizations.

#### *Workforce Impact*

The integration of AI in journalism could lead to job displacement, with automated systems potentially replacing human journalists in certain tasks (Autor, 2015). This could result in resistance from the workforce, particularly from traditional journalists who may feel threatened by the new technology. There is also a need for reskilling and training programs to help journalists adapt to the changing landscape (Newman, 2018). In Nigeria, where unemployment is a major issue, the impact of AI on job security in the media sector could be a significant concern (NBS, 2021).

AI's ability to automate routine tasks such as data collection, transcription, and content generation means that fewer journalists may be needed to perform these tasks. This could lead to job losses and increased competition for remaining positions, particularly in a country like Nigeria where the job market is already challenging (NBS, 2021). The fear of job displacement may also lead to resistance from journalists, who may be reluctant to embrace AI technology (Newman, 2018).

To address these concerns, it is essential to invest in reskilling and training programs that help journalists develop the skills needed to work alongside AI. This includes training in data analysis, AI ethics, and the use of AI tools for investigative journalism (Newman, 2018). By equipping journalists with these skills, news organizations can ensure that they remain relevant and valuable in an AI-driven media landscape.

#### *Infrastructure and Accessibility*

The successful adoption of AI in journalism requires robust technological infrastructure and accessibility. Nigeria faces challenges in this regard, with issues such as unreliable internet connectivity

and limited access to advanced technology (Salawu, 2021). These infrastructure deficiencies can hinder the implementation of AI systems in newsrooms, limiting their potential benefits.

Reliable internet connectivity is a prerequisite for the effective use of AI tools, which often rely on cloud computing and real-time data analysis. However, many parts of Nigeria still suffer from poor internet access, particularly in rural areas (Salawu, 2021). This can make it difficult for news organizations to implement and use AI technologies effectively.

Additionally, access to advanced technology is often limited in Nigeria due to high costs and import restrictions. News organizations may struggle to acquire the necessary hardware and software to implement AI systems, further limiting their ability to benefit from AI (Nyirenda-Jere & Biru, 2015). Addressing these infrastructure and accessibility challenges is crucial for the successful adoption of AI in Nigerian journalism.

### **Regulatory and Policy Issues**

The regulatory environment in Nigeria poses challenges for the adoption of AI in journalism. There is a lack of clear regulations and guidelines for the use of AI in the media, creating uncertainty for news organizations (Oyewole, 2020). Additionally, enforcing AI-related policies can be difficult due to the rapid pace of technological advancements and the complexity of AI systems (Binns, 2018).

Clear and comprehensive regulations are essential to ensure the ethical and responsible use of AI in journalism. However, the current regulatory framework in Nigeria is insufficient, leading to uncertainty and potential misuse of AI technology (Oyewole, 2020). Developing robust policies that address issues such as data privacy, bias, and accountability is crucial to ensure that AI is used responsibly in the media sector.

Enforcing these regulations can also be challenging, given the rapid pace of technological advancements and the complexity of AI systems. Regulators need to stay abreast of the latest developments in AI and ensure that policies are adaptable to new technologies (Binns, 2018). This requires ongoing collaboration between regulators, industry stakeholders, and experts to develop and enforce effective AI policies.

## **6. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

AI presents Nigerian media with enormous potential for improvement in news collecting, content production, fact-checking, audience involvement, and operational effectiveness. Adopting AI does, however, also bring difficulties including ethical questions, technological constraints, effects on the workforce, inadequate infrastructure, and legal problems. Many suggestions are made in order to maximise the advantages of AI while minimising its drawbacks: First and foremost, funding training courses is essential to providing journalists with the knowledge and abilities they need to use AI technology (Newman, 2018). Second, enabling the use of AI in newsrooms requires enhancing the technical infrastructure (Salawu, 2021). Thirdly, privacy and prejudice issues must be addressed by laying down precise ethical standards for the use of AI in journalism (Floridi, 2018). Finally, encouraging cooperation between journalists and AI specialists will guarantee that AI technologies are integrated successfully (Marconi & Siegman, 2020).

With the ability to drastically change the media environment, artificial intelligence (AI) in Nigerian journalism appears promise. Navigating the changing obstacles and taking full use of the benefits offered by AI will need ongoing research and adaptation. Nigerian media companies may thus use AI to improve the calibre and effectiveness of their journalism by tackling the important areas of skill development, infrastructure improvement, ethical issues, and teamwork. This proactive strategy will help AI technologies be implemented responsibly and successfully, which will strengthen and modernise Nigeria's media landscape.

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