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The Future of Journalism in Nigeria: Opportunities and Challenges of AI-Powered Reporting in Enhancing Efficiency and Accuracy.

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Abstract

The media environment in Nigeria is undergoing substantial transition due to developing technology and altering news consumer patterns. The application of artificial intelligence (AI) in the development and transmission of news is spearheading this transition. The study addresses the future of journalism in Nigeria from the standpoint of AI-driven reporting. It stresses the potential, problems, and emerging approaches of narrative that accompany this new technology. Using current trends and case studies, this study investigates how far along the AI adoption curve Nigerian newsrooms are. It zeroes in on how AI has improved journalistic operations, namely in areas like as data analysis, content customisation, efficiency, and accuracy. Issues such as algorithmic bias, disinformation, and the possible loss of journalistic independence are discussed in the article, along with other ethical, technological, and sociopolitical concerns related to the use of AI in journalism. It stresses the need of lawmakers, media professionals, and journalists having AI literacy and calls for specific training and rules to control the misuse of AI in the media. The essay highlights the importance of openness, responsibility, and diversity in the use of artificial intelligence within Nigerian media. This study adds to the growing body of knowledge on digital journalism in Africa and offers strategic advice to media companies in Nigeria on how to use AI to strengthen the credibility of their reporting, win over their audiences, and succeed in today's information-driven world.

Keywords: Artificial Intelligence, Journalism, News Reporting, Opportunities, Challenges.

Introduction

A class of computer systems that can learn, solve problems, and understand language is called artificial intelligence (AI). Usually requiring little to no human intervention, these systems are capable of data analysis, learning from experience, and decision making. The media, along with healthcare, education, and the financial industry, are among the many current users of artificial intelligence. The use of AI in journalism has expanded beyond any expectations. Already, it is altering the processes of news gathering, production, and distribution. AI is still changing how it is used in Nigerian journalism. The digital community in the country is expanding quickly, but there are big problems with the infrastructure, internet access, and the fact that journalists don't have enough technological skills (Oladapo, 2022). Channels Television, Arise Television, and The Guardian Nigeria are some well-known Nigerian media outlets that have started employing AI techniques to manage digital content and keep track of their audiences (Fadeyi, 2023). People are also worried about ethics and accountability when AI is used in media. People are worried that algorithms may be biased, that AI systems may not be clear, and that computers may take the place of human journalists. This shows that Nigerian media needs clear rules and standards to help people utilise AI responsibly (Adegoke, 2020). This article talks about how AI is changing the future of journalism in Nigeria. It looks at both the good and bad things that AI can do, and it offers suggestions on how to make sure that these technologies are utilised in a fair and effective way.

Review of related Literature

The Diffusion of Innovation Theory

Everett Rogers came up with the Diffusion of Innovation Theory, which helps us understand how new ideas, technology, or products spread among people over time. It has been applied in numerous fields, including as health, education, tech adoption, and marketing. In the case of journalism in Nigeria, especially with the emergence of artificial intelligence (AI), this theory helps us understand how AI technologies are being adopted and used in newsrooms.

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Okon (2020) argues that the idea separates individuals into five groups based on how rapidly they accept new innovations: innovators, early adopters, early majority, late majority, and laggards. These groups show how quickly and how well different people or groups adapt to change. The theory is built on four basic ideas: the social system, time, communication channels, and innovation. Anything that seems fresh to someone is an innovation, like AI tools in journalism. People hear about new ideas through communication channels, which might be discussions, the internet, or the news. Time is how long it takes people to get used to the new thought, and the social system is the group or society where the new idea is spreading.

There are a number of things that can make people accept an invention. These include whether people think it's better than the old way (relative advantage), whether it fits well with what they already know or believe (compatibility), how easy it is to understand and use (complexity), whether people can try it out before fully committing (trialability), and whether others can clearly see the benefits (observability) (Okon, 2020). These things can help you figure out how journalists and media companies in Nigeria feel about AI-powered reporting tools. Some people may be eager to embrace AI because it can help them do their jobs better and faster. Others may be reluctant to accept it because of problems like bad infrastructure, not enough training, or ethical issues. In general, this idea helps us understand how AI is starting to be used in Nigerian media.

Understanding Journalism

Journalism can be best described as the practice of producing and distributing reports on current events, grounded in factual information and supported by verifiable evidence. It encompasses both professional journalists and citizen reporters who collect and share news based on truth and accuracy (Ekwo, 2021). The scope of journalism includes various platforms such as print, radio, television, the internet, and historically, newsreels. The role and function of journalism differs across countries. In some contexts, such as certain authoritarian regimes, the media is subject to direct government control and censorship, limiting journalistic independence (McNair, 2017). In contrast, in democratic societies, the media often operates as a commercial enterprise, driven by profit but with a degree of editorial autonomy. These differences are also influenced by national laws related to press freedom, freedom of expression, and defamation (Oso, 2012). The rise of the internet and widespread use of smartphones have transformed the global media environment, particularly since the early 2000s. Traditional print journalism has seen a decline as audiences increasingly access news via digital platforms like smartphones, e-readers, and social media (Salawu & Adegbola, 2020; Pavlik, 2013). This digital shift has not only changed how news is consumed but also how it is produced, shared, and monetized in countries like Nigeria and beyond.

Journalism in Nigeria

This topic is being discussed under the following subtopics;

Understanding the Foundations of Nigerian Journalism

The beginning of journalism in Nigeria are closely linked to the activities of Christian missionaries in the 19th century. In 1846, the Presbyterian mission established the first printing press in Calabar with the aim of promoting literacy and religious education. This laid the groundwork for print media in Nigeria. A milestone came in 1859 when Reverend Henry Townsend founded *Iwe Iroyin*, the first newspaper in Nigeria, published in the Yoruba language. It was designed to encourage reading among the Yoruba-speaking population and advance Christianity (Oso, 2012).

The Colonial Press and Rise of Indigenous Voices

During the colonial era, newspapers were primarily used by British authorities as tools to shape public opinion and legitimize colonial rule. However, this period also saw the emergence of indigenous journalism. Early newspapers like *The Anglo-African*, *The Lagos Times* and *Gold Coast Colony Advertiser* marked a shift as educated Nigerians began to use the press as a platform for cultural expression and political commentary (Uche, 1989).

Journalism and the Nationalist Struggle

By the 1930s and 1940s, Nigerian journalism became a key instrument in the nationalist movement. Prominent figures such as Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe used the media to demand self-rule and mobilize the masses. His newspaper, *West African Pilot*, was particularly influential in articulating nationalist ideologies and unifying public sentiment against colonial oppression (Omu, 1978). This period solidified the press as a voice for political advocacy and public enlightenment.

Post-Independence Expansion and Challenges

After Nigeria became independent in 1960, journalism there grew a lot. The media landscape grew to include more newspapers, radio stations, and TV networks. This was a sign of the country's cultural and political variety (Oso, 2012). But this time too had its problems. During military rule, journalistic freedom was limited, and

economic constraints led to unethical practices like "brown envelope journalism," in which reporters are paid to write biased reports (Oboh, 2017).

The Digital Age and the Future of Nigerian Journalism

Digital platforms and citizen journalism have started a new era of journalism in Nigeria in the 21st century. Smartphones and the internet are now so common that they have changed how news is made and read. Online news sites and social media are becoming the most popular, allowing for real-time reporting but also raising issues about false information and regulation (Salawu & Adegbola, 2020). Nigerian journalism has changed society in many ways, from its beginnings as a missionary effort to the digital age. It keeps changing, though, because of both its past and the things that may happen in the future.

Overview of Artificial Intelligence

AI, or artificial intelligence, is a part of computer science that focusses on making machines and systems that can do things that normally need human intellect. Russell and Norvig (2020) say that these activities include learning from experience, solving problems, comprehending language, seeing patterns, and making judgements. The basic goal of AI is to make machines that can think and act like people. Algorithms are step-by-step instructions that let machines learn and think like people. Developers utilise them to make this happen. Some of these systems are simple tools that obey basic principles, while others are more complicated and can learn and get better on their own over time (Nilsson, 2010). Computer science is commonly thought of as the main discipline of AI, although it also depends on arithmetic, psychology, cognitive science, biology, and philosophy. Researchers can learn more about how intelligence works and how to make computers that are smart by combining these fields (Poole & Mackworth, 2017). Psychology has helped AI systems learn like people do, while biology has led to the building of artificial neural networks that operate like the brain does when it analyses information. John McCarthy first coined the phrase "artificial intelligence" at a conference in 1956. This event is now seen as a pivotal landmark in the history of AI (McCarthy et al., 2006). The two main principles behind AI are the idea of "intelligence" and the idea of using "artificial" technologies to exhibit it. AI is all about producing systems that are clever, either by having them think as people do or by getting them to solve problems in the best manner possible, even if they don't think like we do.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) Powered Reporting: An Overview

AI-powered reporting is changing the way journalism works. It involves using technologies like machine learning, natural language processing and data analytic to help journalists gather, create, and share news faster and more efficiently (Marconi, 2020). With AI, newsrooms can automate repetitive tasks, uncover deeper insights, and tailor content to individual audiences.

One of the most common uses of AI in journalism is to handle routine reporting like writing, weather forecasts, or sports summaries. But AI does more than just automate writing. It also helps with investigative journalism by analyzing massive amounts of data to spot patterns and irregularities that would take humans much longer to find. AI is also useful in multimedia reporting, for example, by transcribing interviews, tagging photos or videos, and even suggesting headlines or summaries (Diakopoulos, 2019). AI can also personalize how news is delivered. By studying users' reading habits, AI recommends articles based on individual interests. While this can improve user experience, it also raises concerns about people being stuck in "echo chambers," where they only see content that reinforces their views (Diakopoulos, 2019).

AI in journalism is not perfect. It brings up real challenges like;

1. the possibility of journalists losing their jobs to automation,
2. the lack of transparency in how algorithms make decisions, and
3. the danger of spreading misinformation.

This is why human oversight is still crucial. Journalists need to make sure the content is accurate, ethical, and contextually appropriate (Fadeyi, 2023).

Nigeria's AI-powered reporting is still in its early stages. It holds great potential to speed up news production and improve coverage, especially in underserved areas. However, the country faces real barriers, such as inconsistent internet access, a shortage of digital skills, and a lack of clear policies to support innovation. Moving forward, investment in infrastructure, training, and supportive media policies will be key (Oladapo, 2022).

The Opportunities of AI-Powered Reporting in Nigeria

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is transforming journalism globally, and Nigeria is no exception. As a technology-driven innovation, AI enhances the efficiency, accuracy, and accessibility of news reporting, offering promising solutions to long-standing challenges such as misinformation, language diversity, and resource constraints (Oladapo, 2022). AI-powered tools facilitate real-time reporting, automate news writing, support multilingual

dissemination, and assist in detecting fake news all of which are particularly significant in Nigeria's fast-paced and multifaceted media landscape.

Automated News Writing and Reporting

AI tools such as ChatGPT, Jasper AI, and Bard can generate content including news summaries, articles, and reports with minimal human input. In the Nigerian context where media houses often contend with limited resources and high workloads. These tools help meet tight publication deadlines. AI can generate first drafts of news based on structured data such as financial results, sports statistics, or election outcomes, reducing the pressure on journalists (Aina, 2023).

Fake News Detection and Fact-Checking

The spread of misinformation, especially during politically sensitive periods like elections or national crises, undermines trust in the media. AI-powered fact-checking systems, which utilise Natural Language Processing and data verification techniques, are increasingly capable of flagging potentially false or misleading content before it spreads (Fadeyi, 2023). For example, AI tools can detect manipulated images, identify inconsistencies in narratives, and cross-reference claims with reliable data sources, thereby helping Nigerian journalists uphold truth and integrity in their reporting (Adeyemi, 2022). As misinformation continues to threaten social stability and democratic governance, AI offers a critical layer of defense.

Multilingual Reporting and Inclusivity

Nigeria's linguistic diversity with over 500 indigenous languages often limits access to national news for non-English-speaking populations. AI-powered translation tools such as Google Translate and Meta's NLLB (No Language Left Behind) are capable of translating content into local languages such as Hausa, Igbo, Yoruba, and Pidgin English. This enhances inclusive journalism, allowing media outlets to reach broader audiences and promote civic engagement across ethnic and linguistic lines (Adegbola & Alawode, 2021).

Content Creation and Social Media Engagement

AI facilitates content development and audience interaction with technologies that aid in graphic design, video editing, and blog generation. Applications like Canva AI, Runway ML, and CapCut enable journalists to create high-quality pictures and narratives, so augmenting their online presence and increasing digital media strategy. These technologies are particularly advantageous for freelance journalists and smaller newsrooms aiming to maintain competitiveness in the digital arena. The capacity of AI to assess public responses to news articles introduces a novel aspect to journalism. Sentiment analysis and predictive modelling can assist Nigerian journalists in evaluating public reactions to topics such as subsidy elimination, elections, or policy alterations (Chukwuemeka, 2021). This data-informed perspective facilitates more adaptive and audience-focused journalism.

Obstacles of AI-Driven Reporting in Nigeria

Although AI has significant prospects in the media sector, its adoption in Nigeria encounters several structural and contextual obstacles.

Limited Technological Infrastructure

Due to a lack of adequate infrastructure, the incorporation of AI into Nigerian journalism is facing substantial challenges. A lot of media companies have problems with slow internet, unpredictable power, and the high costs of buying AI-compatible gear (Adegoke, 2020). These limitations reduce the potential impact of AI and make it harder to integrate it into journalistic duties.

Missing Knowledge in Technical Areas

Journalists need data analytics, programming, and machine learning pros to help them use AI effectively. However, most Nigerian journalists have limited experience with these skills. The potential for insufficient or improper application of artificial intelligence technology exists in the lack of targeted training and capacity-building programs (Adelakun & Ogunyemi, 2021). The full potential of AI can only be realised if this skills gap is filled.

Recommendations

1 Organisations in the media should invest in the tech that will allow them to take advantage of AI-driven reporting.

2 Establishing Capacity and Providing Professional Training
In order to make good use of AI technology, media professionals and journalists need enrol in specific training programs.

3 Making Data More Accessible and Improved Improvements in data quality, accessibility, and retrieval ease are crucial for the successful use of AI applications in journalism.

4 Establishing Standards for Ethics and Legislation
To guarantee the ethical use of AI in journalism, it is vital to establish clear norms and standards.

Conclusion

AI-driven reporting is transforming the future of media in Nigeria. The technology possesses significant promise to enhance reporting efficiency, inclusivity, and accuracy; yet, its usability is hindered by infrastructural, educational, and data-related challenges. Nigeria must invest in digital infrastructure, journalist training, and enhancing data accessibility to maximise the benefits of AI in journalism. Artificial intelligence can assist Nigerian journalism in establishing its position within the global information ecosystem, provided that appropriate regulations and support systems are implemented.

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