

AI IN MEDIA PROFESSIONS: TRENDS, CHALLENGES, AND PROFESSIONAL NORMS; A SYSTEMATIC LITERATURE REVIEW (2024–2025)

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Abstract

The advent of generative artificial intelligence marks a watershed moment in media history, fundamentally disrupting centuries-old journalistic practices and redefining the boundaries between human creativity and machine capability. As newsrooms worldwide adopt AI-powered tools for content generation, data analysis, and automated reporting, the media profession faces an unprecedented transformation that challenges core assumptions about authorship, editorial judgment, and professional expertise. This systematic literature review examines the integration of artificial intelligence in media professions during 2024–2025, a critical period characterized by rapid AI deployment and intensifying debate about journalism's future. Following PRISMA guidelines, we analyzed 26 peer-reviewed articles published in high-quality journals (85% Q1, 11% Q2), synthesizing evidence from empirical studies, systematic reviews, and theoretical analyses across diverse geographic contexts. Our analysis reveals three primary themes: ethical implications and governance frameworks, professional identity transformation, and AI adoption patterns. Key findings expose alarming gaps: only 14.1% of media professionals have received formal AI training despite widespread deployment alongside persistent concerns about algorithmic bias, transparency deficits, and the fundamental tension between automation efficiency and journalistic integrity. The evidence demonstrates that while AI promises unprecedented efficiency and analytical power, its integration proceeds without adequate ethical frameworks, professional preparation, or regulatory oversight. This review identifies the urgent necessity for comprehensive governance structures, enhanced professional education, and evidence-based policies that balance technological innovation with accountability. By synthesizing current knowledge and mapping critical gaps, this work provides actionable recommendations for practitioners navigating AI integration, educators developing curriculum, and policymakers crafting regulations to ensure AI strengthens rather than undermines journalism's democratic functions.

INTRODUCTION

The rapid advancement of artificial intelligence (AI) technologies has precipitated transformative changes across media professions, fundamentally altering news production, content generation, and professional practices. Generative AI tools, automated writing systems, and intelligent data analysis platforms are increasingly integrated into newsrooms and media organizations worldwide. While these technologies offer unprecedented opportunities for efficiency and innovation, they simultaneously raise critical questions about professional identity, ethical standards, and the future of journalism.

The integration of AI in media professions represents more than a technological upgrade; it constitutes a paradigm shift in how information is gathered, processed, and disseminated. Media professionals now face the dual challenge of leveraging AI's capabilities while maintaining journalistic integrity, ethical standards, and human oversight. This transformation has sparked intense debate about the role of human journalists, the authenticity of AI-generated content, and the potential displacement of traditional professional roles.

1.1 Research Context and Rationale

The 2024–2025 period marks a critical juncture in AI-media integration, characterized by widespread deployment of generative AI tools, emerging regulatory frameworks, and evolving professional guidelines. Recent developments include the proliferation of large language models in newsrooms, AI-powered content personalization systems, and automated fact-checking tools. Concurrently, concerns about algorithmic bias, data privacy, job displacement, and media manipulation have intensified, necessitating systematic examination of the literature.

Despite growing scholarly attention, the literature remains fragmented across multiple disciplines and perspectives. Existing studies address various aspects—technical capabilities, ethical implications, professional attitudes, organizational

adoption—but lack comprehensive synthesis. This systematic review addresses this gap by providing an integrated analysis of current knowledge, identifying key themes, and mapping the landscape of AI integration in media professions.

1.2 Research Objectives

This systematic literature review aims to:

- Systematically identify and synthesize peer-reviewed research on AI integration in media professions published during 2024–2025
- Examine trends, challenges, and emerging professional norms related to AI adoption in journalism and media organizations
- Identify gaps in current knowledge and propose directions for future research
- Provide evidence-based recommendations for practitioners, educators, and policymakers

1.3 Significance of the Study

This review contributes to the academic discourse on AI in media by providing a comprehensive, methodologically rigorous synthesis of recent literature. For practitioners, it offers insights into current adoption patterns, ethical challenges, and best practices. For policymakers and educators, it identifies regulatory gaps and training needs. The PRISMA-guided approach ensures transparency and reproducibility, establishing a reliable foundation for evidence-based decision-making.

2. Methodology

This systematic literature review follows the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) guidelines to ensure methodological rigor, transparency, and reproducibility. The PRISMA framework provides a structured approach for identifying, screening, and synthesizing relevant literature while minimizing bias and enhancing reliability.

2.1 Search Strategy

A comprehensive literature search was conducted using multiple academic databases and search platforms:

- Web of Science
- Scopus

Search terms included combinations of the following keywords:

- "artificial intelligence" OR "AI" OR "generative AI" OR "machine learning"
- "journalism" OR "media" OR "news" OR "newsroom" OR "media professionals"
- "ethics" OR "professional norms" OR "adoption" OR "integration" OR "automation"

2.2 Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

Inclusion criteria:

- Peer-reviewed journal articles published between January 2024 and December 2025
- Studies focusing on AI integration in journalism, news media, or media professions
- Articles examining professional practices, ethics, adoption, or organizational aspects
- English-language publications

Exclusion criteria:

- Conference proceedings, book chapters, and non-peer-reviewed sources
- Studies focusing purely on technical AI development without media context
- Articles not available in English
- Duplicate publications

2.3 Study Selection Process

Following PRISMA guidelines, the selection process consisted of four phases:

Identification: Initial database searches yielded 184 potentially relevant articles. Additional records identified through citation tracking and manual searches added 23 articles, resulting in 207 total records.

Screening: After removing 47 duplicates, 160 articles underwent title and abstract screening. Articles clearly outside the scope were excluded, leaving 68 articles for full-text assessment.

Eligibility: Full-text articles were assessed against inclusion/exclusion criteria. 42 articles were excluded due to: irrelevant focus (n=18), non-peer-reviewed status (n=12), publication date outside range (n=8), or insufficient quality (n=4).

Inclusion: 26 articles met all criteria and were included in the final analysis.

2.4 Data Extraction and Synthesis

A standardized data extraction form captured: author information, publication year, journal details, study type, research methodology, key findings, and theoretical frameworks. Data were extracted independently and cross-verified to ensure accuracy. Thematic analysis identified recurring patterns, challenges, and recommendations across studies. Quality assessment utilized journal impact metrics (SJR quartile rankings) and methodological rigor criteria.

2.5 Quality Assessment

Study quality was evaluated based on journal reputation (SJR quartiles), methodological transparency, sample size adequacy, and theoretical grounding. The final corpus demonstrates high quality: 85% published in Q1 journals, 11% in Q2, and 4% in Q3. This distribution ensures the review synthesizes findings from reputable, peer-reviewed sources.

3. Results

3.1 Study Characteristics

The systematic search identified 26 studies meeting inclusion criteria. Table 1 presents the descriptive characteristics of the included studies.

Table 1: Characteristics of Included Studies (N=26)

Characteristic	Category	N (%)
Publication Year	2024	11 (42.3%)
	2025	15 (57.7%)
SJR Quartile	Q1	22 (84.6%)
	Q2	3 (11.5%)

Study Type	Q3	1 (3.9%)
	Empirical	13 (50.0%)
	Systematic Review	3 (11.5%)
	Theoretical/Conceptual	7 (26.9%)
	Mixed Methods	3 (11.5%)
Geographic Focus	European Union	9 (34.6%)
	Asia	4 (15.4%)
	Global/Multi-region	10 (38.5%)
	Other	3 (11.5%)

PRISMA 2020 Flow Diagram for Systematic Review

IDENTIFICATION

Records identified through database searching:

- Web of Science: 43 records
- Scopus: 126 records
- Google Scholar: 15 records

Total: 184 records

Additional records identified through other sources:

- Citation tracking: 18 records
- Manual searches: 5 records

Total: 23 records

↓

SCREENING

Total records after duplicates removed: 160
(47 duplicates removed)

Records screened (title/abstract): 160

Records excluded: 92

- Irrelevant topic: 68
- Wrong publication type: 15
- Non-English: 9

↓

ELIGIBILITY

Full-text articles assessed for eligibility: 68

Full-text articles excluded: 42

- Irrelevant focus: 18
- Non-peer-reviewed: 12
- Outside date range: 8
- Insufficient quality: 4

↓

INCLUDED

Studies included in qualitative synthesis: 26

2024: 11 studies | 2025: 15 studies

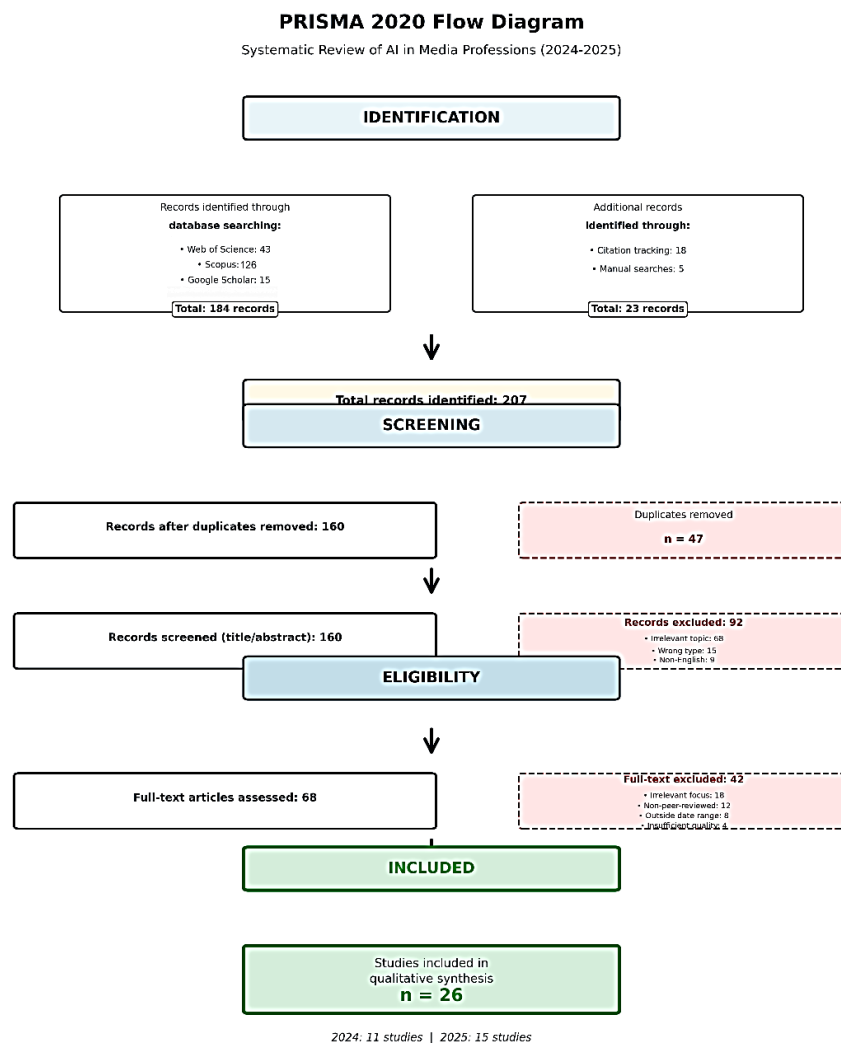


Figure 1: PRISMA 2020 flow diagram for systematic review of AI in media professions

Figure 1: PRISMA flow diagram showing the systematic review selection process

The corpus demonstrates temporal concentration in 2025 (57.7%), reflecting the accelerating pace of AI integration research. The predominance of Q1 journals (84.6%) ensures high-quality evidence. Empirical studies constitute half of the corpus, complemented by systematic reviews, theoretical analyses, and mixed-methods investigations. Geographic diversity is evident, with substantial representation from European (34.6%) and global perspectives (38.5%).

3.2 Thematic Analysis

Systematic content analysis identified three overarching themes that organize current research on AI in media professions: (1) Ethical Implications and Governance, (2) Professional Identity and Role Transformation, and (3) Adoption Patterns and Organizational Dynamics. These themes are interconnected yet analytically distinct, providing a comprehensive framework for understanding the literature.

Table 2: Thematic Analysis of Included Studies (N=26)

Theme	N (%)	Sub-themes	Key Issues Addressed
Theme 1: Ethical Implications and Governance	19 (73%)	- Algorithmic Bias and Fairness - Data Privacy and Consent - Authenticity and Manipulation - Governance Frameworks	- Biased datasets perpetuating prejudices "Black box" AI opacity conflicts - Privacy concerns in personalization - Misinformation and deepfakes - Gaps in regulatory frameworks - Lack of organizational policies
Theme 2: Professional Identity and Role Transformation	15 (58%)	- Displacement Anxiety - Evolving Skill Requirements - Redefining Journalistic Value - Human-AI Collaboration Models	- Job displacement concerns - Only 14.1% received AI training - New competencies required - Emphasis on uniquely human capacities - Human-AI Co-Creation Continuum - Redefining professional expertise
Theme 3: Adoption Patterns and Organizational Dynamics	8 (31%)	- Organizational Size and Resources - Professional Role Variations - Trust and Perceived Usefulness - Regulatory and Social Influences	- Resource disparities between organizations - Technical staff lead, editorial staff lag - Trust as critical mediating factor - Technology acceptance frameworks (UTAUT, TAM) - External pressures accelerate adoption

Note: Studies may address multiple themes. Percentages calculated based on N=26 total studies.

3.2.1 Theme 1: Ethical Implications and Governance

Ethics emerged as the dominant concern across 19 studies (73%). Researchers consistently identify tensions between AI capabilities and journalistic values. Key ethical challenges include:

Algorithmic Bias and Fairness: Multiple studies document how AI systems trained on biased datasets perpetuate and amplify existing prejudices. The lack of transparency in algorithmic decision-making often termed 'black box' AI prevents journalists

from understanding how content recommendations, news prioritization, or automated writing decisions are made. This opacity conflicts with journalism's core commitment to transparency and accountability.

Data Privacy and Consent: AI-powered personalization and audience analytics raise significant privacy concerns. Studies highlight tensions between leveraging user data for targeted content delivery and respecting individual privacy rights. The collection, storage, and algorithmic

processing of personal data often occur without explicit informed consent, creating ethical and legal vulnerabilities.

Authenticity and Manipulation:

Generative AI's capability to produce convincing text, images, and videos amplifies concerns about misinformation and media manipulation. Several studies examine how AI-generated content can be weaponized for disinformation campaigns, deepfakes, and erosion of public trust in media institutions. The blurring boundary between human-authored and AI-generated content challenges traditional verification practices.

Governance Frameworks: Research reveals significant gaps in regulatory frameworks and organizational policies. While some jurisdictions (notably the European Union) are developing AI regulations, implementation remains nascent. Most media organizations lack comprehensive ethical guidelines for AI use, creating inconsistency and uncertainty among professionals.

3.2.2 Theme 2: Professional Identity and Role Transformation

Fifteen studies (58%) examine how AI integration reshapes professional identities, roles, and competencies. This theme encompasses both threats and opportunities:

Displacement Anxiety: Automation of routine tasks data analysis, basic reporting, content aggregation generates legitimate concerns about job displacement. Studies document professional anxiety about AI replacing human journalists, particularly for entry-level and routine reporting positions. However, research also suggests AI augments rather than replaces human capabilities when deployed thoughtfully.

Evolving Skill Requirements: AI integration necessitates new competencies: understanding algorithmic systems, data literacy, AI tool proficiency, and ethical AI deployment. Traditional journalism skills critical thinking, investigative reporting, contextual analysis remain essential but must be complemented by technical capabilities. Studies reveal significant

training gaps, with only 14.1% of media professionals having received formal AI education.

Redefining Journalistic Value: Research explores how AI shifts the value proposition of journalism. If machines can generate routine content efficiently, human journalists must focus on interpretive, investigative, and contextual work that requires creativity, ethical judgment, and deep domain expertise. This repositioning emphasizes journalism's unique human capacities—empathy, moral reasoning, source cultivation—that AI cannot replicate.

Human-AI Collaboration Models: Studies increasingly frame AI not as replacement but as collaborative partner. The 'Human-AI Co-Creation Continuum' concept emerges, describing various collaboration modes from AI-assisted reporting to human-supervised automated content. Successful integration requires clear delineation of human oversight, editorial control, and ethical boundaries.

3.2.3 Theme 3: Adoption Patterns and Organizational Dynamics

Eight studies (31%) investigate factors influencing AI adoption in media organizations and individual acceptance among professionals:

Organizational Size and Resources: Larger, internationally oriented media organizations demonstrate significantly higher AI adoption rates compared to local outlets. Resource constraints—financial, technical, human capital—create adoption disparities. Smaller organizations lack capacity for AI infrastructure investment, specialized personnel, and experimentation, widening the gap between media sectors.

Professional Role Variations: Technical and managerial staff lead AI adoption, while editorial and newsroom professionals lag. This disparity creates organizational tensions, with technology decisions made without adequate journalistic input. Studies emphasize the necessity of involving editorial staff in AI implementation to

ensure tools align with professional values and workflows.

Trust and Perceived Usefulness: Research applying technology acceptance frameworks

emerges as a critical mediating factor professionals must believe AI tools are reliable, transparent, and aligned with journalistic standards.

Regulatory and Social Influences: External factors regulatory requirements, industry standards, peer organization practices

4. Discussion

This systematic review reveals that AI integration in media professions is characterized by rapid technological advancement coupled with significant ethical, professional, and organizational challenges. Three principal findings emerge: First, ethical frameworks lag dangerously behind technological capabilities. While AI tools proliferate in newsrooms, comprehensive ethical guidelines, regulatory policies, and professional standards remain underdeveloped. Gutiérrez-Caneda et al. (2024) identified critical tensions between technology and journalism, documenting how data privacy concerns, algorithmic biases, and transparency deficits create ethical dilemmas that newsrooms are ill-equipped to resolve. Lefèvre et al. (2025) further revealed that European Union newsrooms, despite operating under emerging AI regulations, demonstrate "limited discourse on AI use" and "an absence of clear, actionable regulatory guidelines for addressing considerations in AI-driven news content." Similarly, Mahony and Chen (2024) warn that biased datasets and human-engineered uncertainty create constant dangers, emphasizing that "we need to understand both the data and the processes that go into AI-driven results." This gap between technological deployment and ethical governance creates uncertainty, inconsistent practices, and potential harm. The literature consistently calls for proactive ethical governance that anticipates rather than reacts to problems (Shin et al., 2025; Parratt-Fernández et al., 2025).

(UTAUT, TAM) reveals that professional adoption depends on perceived performance expectancy, effort expectancy, social influence, and facilitating conditions.

Trust in AI systems

significantly influence adoption decisions. Organizations operating in regulated environments or competitive markets demonstrate higher adoption rates, suggesting external pressures can accelerate integration even when internal resistance exists.

Second, professional identity transformation is underway but poorly supported. Media professionals recognize that AI changes their roles fundamentally, yet only a small minority receive adequate training. Sarrionandia et al. (2025) documented that merely 14.1% of media professionals in the Basque Country have undergone AI training, with most relying on self-learning rather than structured organizational programs. This finding is particularly alarming given that larger, internationally focused companies show significantly higher training investment than local media outlets, creating dangerous competency disparities. Møller et al. (2024a) found that journalists are actively redefining their expertise by emphasizing "that human touch" and uniquely human capacities—contextual understanding, ethical judgment, and source cultivation—that AI cannot replicate. However, without systematic education and skill development, professionals cannot effectively navigate AI integration, leading to suboptimal deployment, ethical lapses, and professional anxiety (Londoño-Proaña & Buele, 2025). The situation is further complicated by role-based adoption disparities: Sarrionandia et al. (2025) revealed that technical and managerial staff lead AI adoption while newsroom staff lag notably behind, creating organizational tensions where technology decisions proceed without adequate journalistic input.

Third, organizational disparities risk creating a two-tier media system with profound democratic implications.

Sarrionandia et al. (2025) demonstrated that larger, internationally oriented media organizations are significantly more proactive in providing AI training and investment compared to local and traditional media organizations, which show "significant gaps." Triantafyllou et al. (2025) documented this divide in Greece, identifying "AI pioneers and stragglers" where resource-constrained outlets lack capacity for infrastructure investment, specialized personnel, and experimentation. Hassouni and Mellor (2025) observed similar patterns in the United Arab Emirates, where balancing efficiency gains with cultural integrity becomes more challenging for smaller organizations. This divide threatens media diversity and local journalism, potentially concentrating information power in corporate hands and undermining democratic discourse. Van Dalen (2024) argues that this creates "professional competition" where journalists at well-resourced organizations leverage AI tools while those at smaller outlets face displacement anxiety without corresponding capability enhancement. The implications extend beyond individual organizations: Sonni et al. (2024) warn in

their systematic review that these disparities in AI adoption fundamentally reshape "journalistic practices, news narratives, and ethical challenges" in ways that disadvantage already marginalized media sectors.

4.1 Theoretical Contributions

The review contributes to theoretical understanding by identifying the 'Human-AI Co-Creation Continuum' as an organizing framework. This concept moves beyond binary replacement narratives toward nuanced understanding of collaboration modes. Rather than asking whether AI replaces journalists, scholarship should examine how different collaboration configurations from AI-assisted research to human-supervised content generation affect quality, ethics, and professional identity.

Additionally, the synthesis reveals that existing technology acceptance models (UTAUT, TAM) provide useful but insufficient frameworks for understanding AI adoption in media. These models must be extended to incorporate journalism-specific factors: professional values, editorial independence, source protection, and public service commitments. Professional identity, not just individual acceptance, mediates AI integration in journalism.

4.2 Practical Recommendations

Based on the synthesis, we propose recommendations for key stakeholder groups. For media organizations, it is essential to develop comprehensive AI ethics policies that specify transparency requirements, human oversight mechanisms, and accountability structures. Organizations must invest systematically in staff training programs covering technical, ethical, and practical AI dimensions, while ensuring editorial staff are centrally involved in AI tool selection and implementation decisions. Clear labeling and disclosure practices for AI-generated or AI-assisted content should be established to maintain audience trust and transparency.

For educators and training providers, the integration of AI literacy into journalism curricula at all levels is paramount. This includes developing continuing professional education programs for current

practitioners that emphasize both technical capabilities and critical ethical reasoning about AI. Educational institutions should create practical, hands-on learning opportunities with current AI tools to bridge the gap between theoretical understanding and real-world application.

Policymakers and regulators must develop sector-specific AI regulations for media that balance innovation with accountability. This includes supporting resource-constrained media organizations through funding programs for AI capacity building, requiring transparency in algorithmic content recommendation and moderation systems, and establishing standards for AI-generated content disclosure and verification. Such regulatory frameworks should protect journalistic integrity while fostering technological advancement.

Professional associations play a crucial role by updating codes of ethics to explicitly address AI-related challenges and facilitating knowledge sharing about effective AI practices across organizations. They must advocate for professional interests in regulatory and policy discussions while developing certification or credentialing programs for AI competency. These initiatives will help standardize best practices and ensure professionals are adequately prepared to navigate the AI-integrated media landscape.

4.3 Research Gaps and Future Directions

Despite growing scholarly attention, significant research gaps remain:

Longitudinal Studies: Most research is cross-sectional, capturing snapshots of rapidly evolving phenomena. Longitudinal designs tracking organizations and professionals over time would illuminate adaptation processes, learning curves, and long-term effects on journalism quality and professional satisfaction.

Audience Perspectives: Current research focuses heavily on professional and organizational perspectives, with limited examination of audience attitudes toward

AI-generated content, trust implications, and information consumption patterns. Understanding audience responses is critical for assessing AI's impact on media's democratic functions.

Comparative International Research:

While the corpus includes some international diversity, systematic comparative studies examining how different regulatory environments, media systems, and cultural contexts shape AI integration remain rare. Cross-national research would identify transferable practices and context-specific challenges.

Impact on Journalism Quality: Surprisingly few studies empirically assess whether AI integration improves or degrades journalism quality—accuracy, depth, diversity, public service value. Developing robust quality metrics and conducting comparative evaluations should be research priorities.

Implementation Science: Research documenting successful and unsuccessful AI implementation cases, identifying critical success factors, and developing evidence-based implementation frameworks would provide actionable guidance for organizations navigating integration.

4.4 Limitations

This review has limitations. First, focusing exclusively on 2024–2025 publications captures recent developments but may miss foundational earlier work. Second, limiting to English-language publications potentially excludes important non-English scholarship. Third, the rapidly evolving

nature of AI means some findings may become outdated quickly. Fourth, publication bias toward positive or novel findings may skew the evidence base. Despite these limitations, the PRISMA-guided approach and high-quality corpus ensure robust, reliable findings.

5. Conclusion

At this critical juncture in media history, when artificial intelligence simultaneously threatens and promises to transform journalism, this systematic review provides essential clarity: the question is no longer whether AI will reshape media professions, but whether this transformation will strengthen or diminish journalism's capacity to serve democratic societies. This systematic literature review synthesizes current knowledge on AI integration in media professions, revealing a field in rapid transition characterized by significant

opportunities and substantial challenges. The evidence demonstrates that AI technologies are reshaping fundamental aspects of journalism and media work from content creation to editorial decision-making, from professional identity to organizational structure.

Three critical insights emerge. First, ethical frameworks and governance structures must urgently catch up with technological capabilities. The current gap between AI deployment and ethical guidelines creates risks for professional credibility, public trust, and democratic discourse. Second,

professional education and training require immediate, substantial investment. Media professionals cannot navigate AI integration effectively without appropriate knowledge, skills, and critical frameworks. Third, organizational disparities threaten media diversity and democratic functions, requiring policy interventions to support resource-constrained outlets.

The literature increasingly rejects simplistic replacement narratives in favor of nuanced collaboration frameworks. Rather than viewing AI as threat or panacea, research emphasizes the importance of thoughtful integration that preserves journalism's core values while leveraging technological capabilities. The Human-AI Co-Creation Continuum provides a useful conceptual tool for understanding diverse collaboration modes and their implications.

Moving forward, stakeholders must act decisively on multiple fronts: media organizations developing ethical policies and investing in training, educators integrating AI literacy into curricula, policymakers creating appropriate regulatory frameworks, and professional associations updating standards and

facilitating knowledge sharing. These actions, grounded in evidence synthesized through systematic review, can help ensure AI integration strengthens rather than weakens journalism's capacity to serve democratic societies.

The transformation underway is profound, but its trajectory remains malleable. Evidence-based decisions, ethical deliberation, and commitment to journalistic values can shape AI integration toward outcomes that enhance information quality, professional satisfaction, and public service. This review provides the knowledge foundation for those decisions, while identifying areas where further research is urgently needed.

As the media landscape continues evolving at unprecedented speed, ongoing systematic synthesis of research evidence will be essential for informed decision-making. The PRISMA framework applied here provides a replicable methodology for future reviews that can track developments, assess interventions, and guide the field toward responsible, effective AI integration that serves both professional excellence and public good.

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