

AI IN PHOTOJOURNALISM ETHICS AND MANAGEMENT

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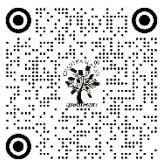
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ABSTRACT

The present paper is a critical discussion of the issue of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in relation to Photojournalism Ethics and Management, it is a discussion how visual journalism is being transformed as a result of automation, data analytics and algorithmic decision making. It examines the role of AI in changing the image-making, image-checking, and image-editing process and posing a threat to undermine traditional conceptions of authenticity, responsibility, and truth. The study considers the paradigm change of the photojournalism into the digital context and application of the AI-assisted technology, indicating the ethical concerns that emerge as a result of the synthetic imagery, data attitude, and algorithmic distortion. The paper uncovers the efficiency gains and moral hazards of the AI-powered processes, emphasizing the details of the analysis of the AI technologies, i.e. convolutional neural networks, deepfake detection, automated captioning, and blockchain-based provenance. As an evaluative examination of the ethical strategies in the world, including the one that the Society of Professional Journalists (SPJ), the National Press Photographers Association (NPPA) and UNESCO follow, it is apparent that there is an immediate need to modify professional codes to the world of the algorithms. The case studies of the Reuters, Associated Press (AP) and BBC are feasible illustrations of the accountable implementation of AI depending on human authority, editorial duty, and openness of automated processes. The Ethical Governance Model of AI in Photojournalism described in the paper ought to be anchored on three pillars, namely transparency, accountability, and oversight. The model outlines the provenance tracking systems, the algorithmic audit, and the interdisciplinary ethics boards and AI literacy program of the media organizations. The generative diffusion models, multimodal AI, and Explainable AI are the discussed future trends that are likely to cause more changes to the ethical and education context of journalism.

Keywords: Artificial Intelligence, Photojournalism Ethics, Deepfake Detection, Editorial Oversight, Generative Diffusion Models, Explainable AI, Ethical Governance



1. INTRODUCTION

One of the most radical changes in the media ethics and management of the modern world is the introduction of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in photojournalism. Having been decided in the bases of human intuition and narrative

sensitivity, as well as on the moral worth of visual reality, photojournalism became a part of a hybrid environment in which algorithms can and could capture, enhance and even create images. AI systems, such as computer vision models and automated tagging tools, and deep learning-based image generators are changing the visual story creation, verification, and spread [Uthman, S. \(2024\)](#). It is a recent technological change that is drifting against the long-tested journalism values of authenticity, accountability and editorial control that provokes a radical review of the professional ethics in the digital newsroom. The application of AI-assisted tools to the news photography processes has become a workflow in the past couple of years. Automated caption generation systems, real-time object recognition systems and deepfake detection systems are currently being implemented in the quest to optimize efficiency and precision in the area of visual reporting. Simultaneously, diffusion networks, GANs (Generative Adversarial Networks) and other generative models have eliminated the line between realistic documentation and artificial generation [Munoriyarwa et al \(2023\)](#). Even though they have positive consequences, such as the acceleration of the production and management of data, they raise the questions of manipulations, loss of confidence, and bias in algorithms. The editorial decision-making process, which used to be biased by human considerations, is increasingly getting manipulated by algorithms that will select or reject pictures in accordance with predictive measures of engagement [Sultan et al \(2024\)](#).

Figure 1

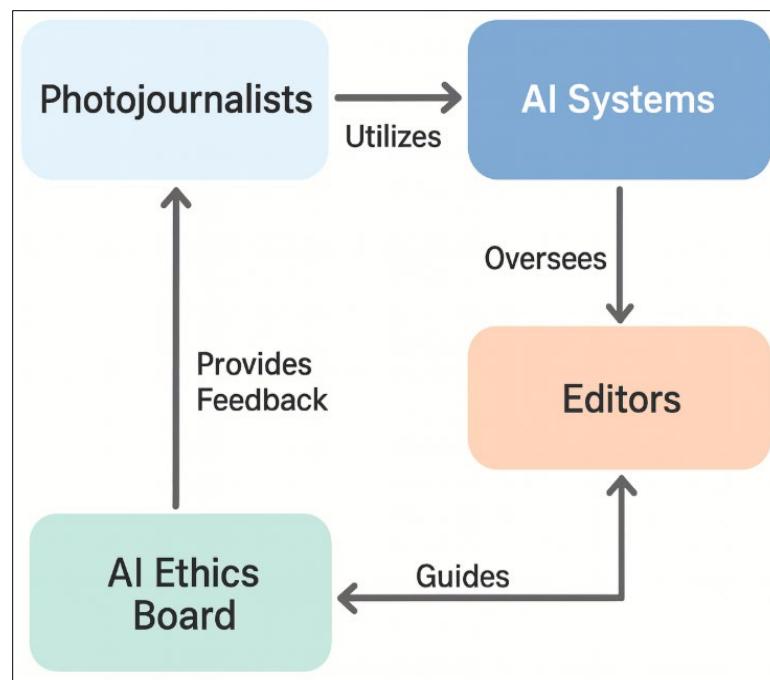


Figure 1 Governance Model for AI-Integrated Newsrooms

The ethics question has therefore become the centre of focus when it comes to discussing the implications of AI on photojournalism. The issues of consent, representation and truthfulness are now left to human photographers and are left over to machine actors and automated systems. AI application has resulted in intensification of the debate on visual misinformation in the world by the misuse of the technology particularly in the creation of misleading or deepfake images. It thus turns into a two-pronged challenge of journalists, media houses and regulators to keep enjoying the fruits of AI and simultaneously ensure that the ethical origins of visual storytelling are not compromised [Makwambeni et al \(2023\)](#). Introduction of AI introduces novel organizational paradigms in terms of management. Newsrooms are restructuring their activities and establishing ethical standards of using AI and training reporters to be more suspicious of algorithm-assisted work to balance automation and editorial control. These technologies are ever evolving hence there is need to have appropriate systems of governance which can integrate all three elements of transparency of technology, ethical auditing and interdisciplinary cooperation in such a way that AI can enhance the integrity of journalism rather than undermine it [Braun and Clarke \(2006\)](#). In the current photojournalism, this paper addresses the compatibility of AI, ethical issues, and management. It highlights the potential and the ethical dilemmas that emerge in a digital media ecosystem and gives a clue as to how AI can be employed in a responsible manner without removing the truth-telling nature of journalism in an increasingly automated world.

2. EVOLUTION OF PHOTOJOURNALISM IN THE AGE OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

The history of photojournalism is the mirror of the endless communication between the truth and people and technology and the truth. As the era of the analog photography, when images served as unquestionable truths concerning reality, until the current era of algorithmic interpretation, the profession has been adapting to technological shifts in the most successful manner feasible [Sukhodolov et al. \(2019\)](#). The first major change came in the late twentieth century with the introduction of digital photography because it has enabled capturing, editing, and sharing images instantly. It is this digital revolution that democratized the visual medium since it allowed not only photographers but citizens to add their input to the world news. However, it had also some emerging ethical problems such as photo manipulation, digital forgery and loss of contextual authenticity [Mikkonen and Kääriäinen \(2020\)](#), [Papadopoulou and Maniou \(2024\)](#). This is the twenty-first century and it brought the era of automation and data-driven journalism because artificial intelligence began making a decisive influence on production and editorial decision-making. Such tools as the object recognition, face recognition and automated caption generation with the help of AI have simplified the tasks of newsrooms greatly and made them much more effective since the process of sorting and searching through the large data base of images can be done within several seconds. Additionally, machine learning algorithms are currently employed to assist in event detection, emotion recognition and they can even be used to make predictive decisions of images that are likely to appeal to some audiences. These developments have redefined efficiency and speed in news presentation and this makes AI a companion of modern day journalism that cannot be overlooked [Verma \(2024\)](#).

Figure 2

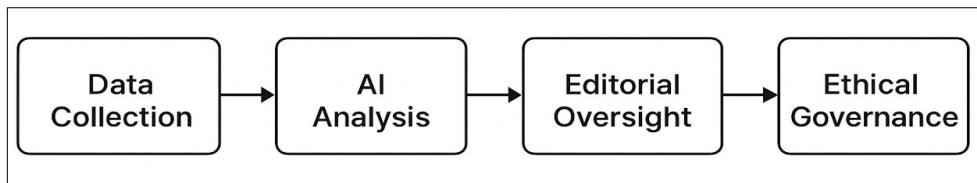


Figure 2 Collaborative Role Transformation in AI-Assisted Newsrooms

Nevertheless, there are also ethical and managerial issues that are far reaching with this development. Even the AI systems which can be utilized to enhance productivity can lead to the propagation of bias accidentally due to the faultiness of the training data or algorithm black-box. One more thing that complicates the idea of photographic truth is the emergence of generative AI and diffusion models, in particular, GANs [Tolnaiová \(2023\)](#). Photos created based on these models may also be highly realistic and, therefore, may disorient the lines between writing and fiction. In turn, the classical role of photojournalism as the witness has experienced an epistemological crisis, and it needs an improved ethical control and disclosure in technologies. The media entities, in their turn, are developing AI governance frameworks that combine human editorial control with automated procedures. Blockchain-based provenance tracking, watermarking, and authenticity certificates can be considered as the possible solutions that preserve visual news integrity. What is then the history of photojournalism is not merely the history of technological convergence, but also the history of moral re-setting. As the new era of AI has the capability to radically change the methods of storytelling, recording, and reading, the challenge lies in how to ensure that the innovation values the principles of truth, responsibility, and human perspective that the essence of journalism and do not wipe them out [Szabo \(2023\)](#).

3. AI TECHNOLOGIES IN PHOTOJOURNALISM

Artificial Intelligence has been a revolution in the field of photojournalism that transformed the process of taking, analyzing, editing, and distributing images. Currently, the modern newsrooms are highly relying on AI-driven applications that operate superficially across the entire range of the visual journalism pipeline, including camera sensors with intelligence features, real-time content filtering algorithms that sort through the huge amounts of digital data. The technologies not only are efficient and accurate, but also invalidate any ethical and aesthetic value of truth about visual narration [Utemissov et al. \(2021\)](#). One of the most significant applications of AI in photojournalism is computer vision since it enables machines to analyze and categorize visual information in a manner that is similar to how the eye of the human brain thinks of them. Deep convolutional neural networks (CNNs) can detect objects, detect faces, recognize

emotions, and even give contextual associations in images using large data sets that are trained. Such features allow photo editors to sift through thousands of pictures and label and access content with an unbelievable level of accuracy [Manisha and Acharya \(2023\)](#). Also, automated caption generation tools (operating on model of image-text alignment e.g. CLIP or BLIP) have been demonstrated to generate captions that are descriptive and provide context-relevant information with little human interaction in metadata generation and greater accessibility.

Table 1**Table 1 Key AI Technologies and Their Journalistic Functions**

AI Technology	Core Functionality	Application in Photojournalism	Ethical Considerations	Examples / Tools
Convolutional Neural Networks (CNNs) Munoriyarwa and Chiumbu (2024) .	Deep learning models for feature extraction and visual pattern recognition	Automated image classification, object detection, and emotion recognition in large photo archives	Risk of dataset bias leading to cultural or racial misrepresentation	Google Cloud Vision, OpenCV, PyTorch ImageNet models
Automated Captioning Models (CLIP, BLIP, or VisualBERT) Sandoval-Martín et al. (2018) .	Vision-language alignment for generating textual descriptions of images	Producing real-time captions, improving accessibility, and reducing manual metadata creation	Contextual inaccuracy or overgeneralization due to limited training corpora	OpenAI CLIP, Salesforce BLIP-2, Microsoft Azure Vision Captioning
Deepfake Detection Systems	Identifying synthetic or manipulated visual content using anomaly detection	Safeguarding image authenticity and public trust in visual reporting	Possible false positives and challenges in detecting high-quality synthetic media	Deepware Scanner, Sensity AI, Deepfake Detection Challenge models
Blockchain-Based Provenance Tools	Decentralized tracking and verification of image origin and modification history	Ensuring transparency and traceability of photos from capture to publication	Privacy concerns and energy cost of blockchain operations	Adobe Content Authenticity Initiative, TruePic, Nikon Verified Chain
AI-Based Image Enhancement Algorithms	Super-resolution, denoising, and restoration using GANs and diffusion models	Reviving low-quality or archival images for investigative storytelling	Ethical concerns over image alteration and authenticity preservation	Topaz AI, ESRGAN, NVIDIA Denoiser
Reinforcement Learning-Based Curation Engines	Adaptive ranking of visuals based on audience behavior and engagement patterns	Automatic selection of impactful photographs for publication	Bias toward sensational or emotionally manipulative content	Adobe Sensei, Reuters News Tracer, AP AI Curator

A mixture of these technologies is what makes up the heart of the AI-assisted photojournalism, as the automation and the ethical question are equalized. They strengthen the rapid visual storytelling and stress the need to have an open, human led control, as far as editorial decision making is concerned. Furthermore, AI-enhanced image-enhancing software, combined with image restoration, has turned into an invaluable resource in investigative journalism as the images in dim light or destroyed can be read. The good quality of the denoising, super-resolution and colorization algorithms enable to restore old photos or videos, and go even further into the past of the narrative. Meanwhile, AI-curation engines built upon reinforcement show the best photo sequence that will engage the audience in terms of the visual diversity, relevance, and emotional resonance.

4. ETHICAL CHALLENGES AND DILEMMAS

The paradigm shift in the production and distribution of the visual stories has been brought about by the introduction of the Artificial Intelligence in the sphere of photojournalism. However, the ethical problems that this new technological creation breeds is a new landscape where the sanctity of journalism is questioned. Among the most significant ones, the problem of authenticity, manipulation, consent, privacy, and algorithmic bias that directly influence the degree of trust in visual media in the population should be listed.

- 1) Authenticity. The artificial intelligence created or edited photos removes the distinction between the actual and the digital composition. Generative Adversarial Network (GANs) or diffusion models can create hyper-realistic images which are literally indistinguishable to actual photographs.
- 2) The creatively potent ability of such sort is a danger to the credibility of visual journalism in the possibility to propagate misinformation and deepfakes. This is because it has to do with sources, not taking a picture, which has become as significant to journalists as the last element. The technology will offer potential guardians, including blockchain-based authentication and embedded metadata verification, however, they will also present an issue of technology dependency and unequal access to large media houses and freelance journalists.
- 3) Manipulation and consent. It could be the automated retouching, editing assistance, and AI-based image editing feature that can manipulate the narratives or can contribute to certain emotional responses in the most delicate manner. These changes can even be accidental, yet they may be considered to have an undesirable impact on the ethical concept of objectivity. Moreover, the AI content analysis can be linked with the information that was not given by people who were not asked to do so directly in particular, in the event of crowd-sourced or surveillance-related reports. This severely endangers good privacy, because the exposure, profiling, or misrepresentation of subjects can be carried out against his or her will or even without his or her knowledge.
- 4) Algorithms bias is a problem that exacerbates these issues. The studies on machine learning algorithms trained on unbalanced data sets are likely to reproduce biases on societal, racial, and cultural data. When it comes to a photojournalism, biased AI may pay more or less attention to a particular demographic or geographical region, and the influence will be hidden, yet resulting in a person reinterpreting phenomena and communities in a particular way. Such biases affect the purpose of journalism in terms of offering fair and all-inclusive reporting.
- 5) Accountability. The question on accountability is complicated when an AI system makes an ethical error (selecting the incorrect picture or generating obscene content). Will it be the journalist, the editor or the designer of the algorithm to answer it? In such a gray area, there must be a system of ethical management, i.e., the emphasis on transparency in the use of AI, humanizing it, and continuous audit of automated decision-making.

The matters of ethical AI-driven photojournalism, though, do not simply rely on technology but they reshape the meaning of telling the truth with pictures. It is not only necessary to be technologically savvy in this new world but also morally awake so that AI could become the instrument of truth rather than falsification.

5. FRAMEWORKS FOR ETHICAL AI IN PHOTOJOURNALISM

The spread of Artificial Intelligence in photojournalism needs to be supported by a strong moral principle that would potentially support the core values of the profession, i.e., truth, integrity, and accountability. Because the digital and algorithmic technologies take up increasingly more roles in the image making and editorial decision-making processes, the classic codes of journalism, as elaborated upon in the Society of Professional Journalists (SPJ), as well as the National Press Photographers Association (NPPA), and the set of ethical principles established by UNESCO, must be altered critically to the terms of AI involvement. These paradigms have taken the moral code of conduct in the new machine-human partnership in the newsroom ecosystem. The SPJ Code of Ethics that relies on the idea of seeking the truth and telling it, limiting harm, acting alone, being responsible and transparent provides a template of ethics in AI integration. The principles of the AI era become the following requirements: image generating or curation algorithms are supposed to be open, their information must be ethically acquired, and the output is to be validated. Journalists are advised to expose the scenario in case of using AI tools to create or edit the content to protect the audience by ensuring that they are aware of using the machine. It is the emphasis on accountability in SPJ which makes the perspective on accountability in AI be transformed into an explainability of the algorithms, in such a way that every AI-based editorial choice, such as automated photo selection or captioning, must be confirmed as explainable by a human decision-maker.

Figure 3

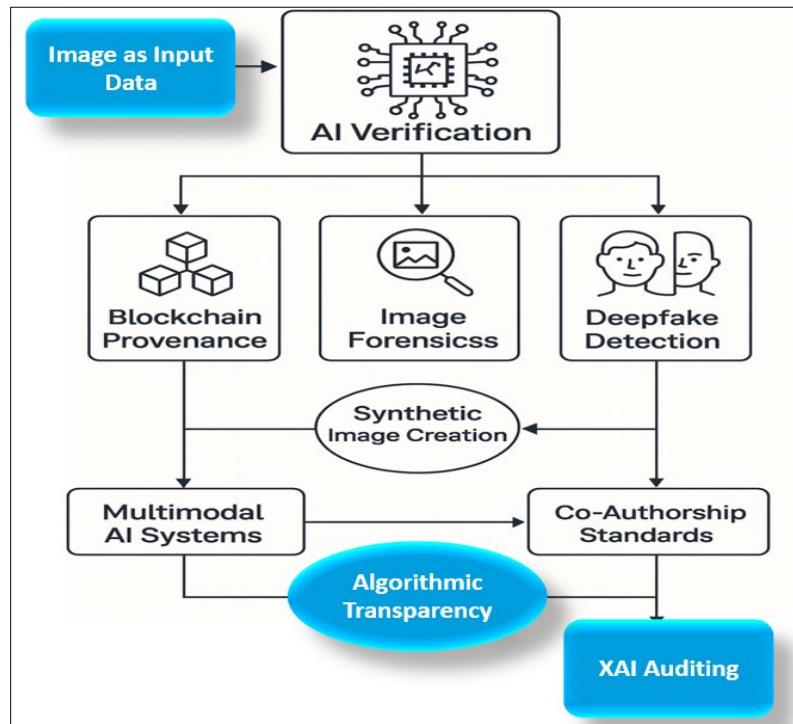


Figure 3 Future Trajectories of AI in Photojournalism Ethics and Governance

Similarly, NPPA Code of Ethics that is solely about maintaining the integrity of the visual work is being redefined to cope with the opportunities of AI as a manipulative and enhancing organism. The NPPA principles emphasize that the photojournalists should not manipulate the pictures to mislead the readers and invert the subjects. This fact is transferred to AI: the use of generative models should not be to form events or falsify representations of facts. The second idea that the NPPA promotes is the importance of context i.e. any AI-generated or restored image must not lose an original informational value without losing any historical or emotional specificity. This modification is a recognition that even the slightest modification of an algorithm such as automated background correction or filters will alter the perception of a story without being explicitly stated. At the level of the international arena, the rules of artificial intelligence put forward by UNESCO in their article, Ethical Principles for Artificial Intelligence (2021), could be seen as an approximate structure of the technology management through which the relationships between technological innovation and human rights can be reconciled. The model focuses on human oversight, equality, confidentiality and authority of data all of which are central to AI-driven journalism. It is also reflected in the focus of ethical auditing and cultural inclusiveness provided by UNESCO indicating the problem of Western-centric bias in AI systems, which must be represented in other data and must have just equal access to technology on the regional level. All these shifting moral codes promote a very important shift that is AI must not replace the purpose of journalistic responsibility, but instead should strengthen it. Transparency, responsibility and respect of human dignity are the primary pillars of responsible visual journalism that is integrated into the AI-based processes through the incorporation of SPJ, NPPA, and UNESCO values. The relevant norms of disclosure, constant review of the algorithms, and human control would ensure that photojournalism at the AI does not turn into a victim of the mission that the profession has been striving to over the years that is, a true witness of the world.

6. AI-BASED IMAGE VERIFICATION AND FACT-CHECKING SYSTEMS

As the visual misinformation becomes more sophisticated, the Artificial Intelligence has found a new indispensable ally in the quest to verify images and keep the image journalism profession intact. The AI-based systems have increasingly become a necessity in the present age of fact-checking to identify the manipulation and tracking of image source and a degree of transparency in the visual content lifecycle. They are the use of computer vision, cryptography and forensic analysis to combat the fake pictures which threatens the confidence and the journalistic accountability of

individuals. Provenance tracking is one of the technologies in this field that was adopted using blockchain. The assertion of provable integrity is achieved through blockchain by capturing unalterable records of the creation, modification, or publication of an image in some kind of decentralized registration. Each picture is allocated a cryptographic hash that acts as a digital fingerprint to allow the journalists and editors to determine the entire history of that picture, its capturing device to the point of publication. Other programs such as Content Authenticity Initiative (CAI) launched by Adobe and TruePic Vision integrate metadata authentication and tamperful signatures and helps the media houses to ensure images are not manipulated since their original capture.

Figure 4

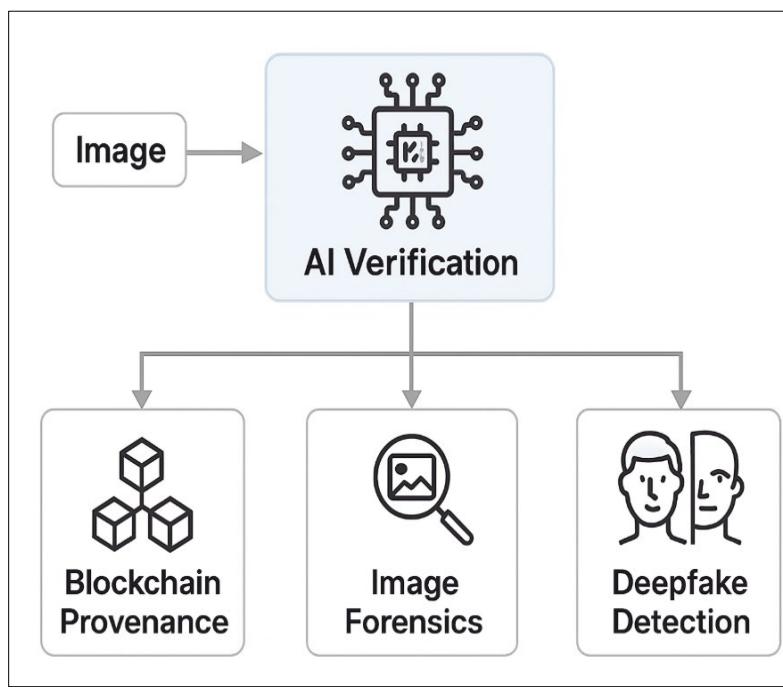


Figure 4 Verification Ecosystem in Photojournalism

Besides the provenance systems, image forensics based on AI is of great significance in image identification of manipulations. Such algorithms analyze lighting, pixel distribution, the direction of shadows and inconsistency of compression artifacts to identify digital editing. Even in the case when it is impossible to use the old method of inspection, modern forensic algorithms can detect the cloning, splicing, or retouching processes. Journalists can ensure that the technical integrity of the image is not impaired and disseminated with the help of such software as FotoForensics, Forensically and AI-based models that are trained on large sets of tampering.

7. MANAGEMENT OF AI WORKFLOWS IN NEWSROOMS

Introduction of Artificial Intelligence in photojournalism has transformed the functioning of the newsroom, and it needs new models of management to integrate robotization and human control. The effective AI workflow management process is no longer concerned with the technology introduction, but with the process of organizing the work and the creation of the policy as well as with the ethical regulation that will contribute to the integrity and transparency of the practice of journalism. It is also hard to make human judgment the central point of editorial decision-making and maximize efficiency because the development of the application of AI in newsrooms has created new forms of organizational structures that involve human editors, technologists, and AI systems, all of whom exist in an ecosystem by their side. The editorial teams are currently working with the data scientists and AI engineers to train and deploy and monitor machine learning models to call upon in image curation, captioning, and verification. Special AI ethics boards and technology governance committees that oversee the behavior of the algorithms, bias reduction and the practice of journalism exist in news companies that excel in their best practices such as Reuters, Associated Press and The New York Times. It is the interdisciplinary that will enable the editorial accountability not to be driven away by automation but

will be enhanced by more specific management jobs. The editorial control is the ethical support of AI-assisted journalism. Even though the speed of AI systems when tagging, filtering and recommending images is high, human professionals who are trained to make decisions on the basis of social, cultural and ethical undertonings that AI systems lack should still make the final editorial choices. The management policies are getting more oriented towards the idea of the human-in-the-loop (HITL) systems in which all the decisions that are made by the automated systems like photo selection, metadata generation etc are revised or confirmed by an editor. These hybrid workflows tend not to rely too much on predictive analytics that can prioritize certain visual narratives over the rest because of the trends of algorithmic preferences. The existence of human and AI in the management of photojournalism extends beyond the editorial approval to jointly develop knowledge systems. The journalists are now trained on how to be informed about the AI models limits, understand the confidence measures, and provide feedback on how to further improve further algorithm learning. Reporters and AI systems can communicate in real-time by using cooperative dashboards, which results in transparency in the process of data-driven decision making. These symbiosis of human intuition and machine computation enhance productivity, and it will not lose the contextual richness of the storytelling process.

Table 2

Table 2 Human–AI Collaboration Roles in Modern Newsrooms				
Role / Domain	Primary Responsibilities	AI Involvement	Human Oversight Functions	Ethical / Managerial Considerations
Editorial Team	Curating, verifying, and contextualizing visual content; ensuring narrative integrity	Uses AI for automated tagging, image selection, and caption suggestion	Validates AI recommendations; ensures cultural and contextual accuracy; final content approval	Maintains transparency in AI-assisted content; prevents algorithmic distortion of narrative
Photojournalists / Field Reporters	Capturing authentic imagery and field data; providing ground truth for AI models	Contribute metadata and training inputs for computer vision models	Report on AI misclassifications; provide qualitative corrections to datasets	Ensure ethical sourcing of data; protect subject consent and privacy
AI Engineers / Data Scientists	Designing, training, and optimizing AI systems for image analysis and verification	Develops deep learning and NLP tools for captioning, detection, and curation	Collaborates with editors for feedback-driven model refinement	Ensures fairness, bias mitigation, and explainability in deployed models
AI Ethics and Governance Committee	Monitoring AI deployment across newsroom operations	Evaluates ethical compliance of AI tools and datasets	Conducts audits, bias testing, and transparency reporting	Upholds organizational accountability; aligns AI use with journalistic codes (SPJ, NPPA, UNESCO)
Legal and Policy Advisors	Reviewing intellectual property, copyright, and liability implications	Uses AI-driven provenance tools for content tracking and compliance	Oversees adherence to data protection and media laws	Ensures responsible use of AI-generated imagery under national and international law
Audience Engagement / Analytics Team	Tracking reader engagement and optimizing visual presentation	Employs AI-based recommender systems and audience analytics	Interprets algorithmic trends to maintain balanced representation	Prevents sensationalism or bias amplification through engagement metrics

The **Table 2** below, illustrates the efforts of the AI-oriented newsroom management as the collaborative ecosystem with functions of the editorial, technical, ethical and legal functions that overlap each other. By ensuring that all the levels of the working organization are composed of automation and human control, the contemporary news industries can maintain journalistic accountability and innovativeness. There are also ethical governance mechanisms that are relevant in AI workflow management. The policies are to be concerned with accountability of algorithms, data privacy, and disclosure of the use of AI and demonstrate all the automated processes to the population. Conducting periodic AI ethics audits, issuing explainability reports, and designing internal review practices can be used to make sure that technology would not nullify the principles of fairness and truth. In addition, openness in communication with audiences over the application of AI in the content creation process promotes credibility and trust.

8. CONCLUSION

Photojournalism is an emergent area through which Artificial Intelligence has redefine, re-arrange and reconfigure the way images are taken, processed and distributed. It should be mentioned that, on the one hand, AI has enhanced performance and innovation by using CNNs, diffusion models, and multimodal systems; on the other hand, it has endangered such ethical standards of the profession as the truth, authorship, and responsibility. The key conclusion that is made is that the three pillar ethical governance model transparency, accountability, and oversight is important in the quest to reach responsible AI utilization. Transparency, which involves the disclosure of the role of AI, is one solution to these; accountability, which spreads responsibility among journalists, editors, and technologists, is another; the oversight, with its introduction of the human authority, is another one, and it has its means in ethics boards and audit cycles. The combination of these principles ensures that the people trust the journalism and that journalism is an automated set up. The case studies of Reuters, AP, and BBC indicate that ethical application of AI is not solely grounded on technological aspect but also on institutional ethics and control. A good example of how the human-AI collaboration can maintain authenticity and improve operational agility is the organizations. The convergence of the generative, multimodal, and explainable AI demands the fact that the photojournalism of the future would be anthropocentric in context with the emphasis on the ethical literacy and provenance verification alongside the ongoing transparency. The acceptable solution is to ensure that AI is the assistant of the truth, rather than that truth, by ensuring that the profession is even more committed to its long-standing mission: documenting, confirming and making the truth more human in the time of intelligent machines.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

None.

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