



Conceptualising and pursuing responsible AI in journalism

In recent years, Artificial Intelligence (AI) has transformed many fields in society and challenged existing practices. This is also the case in the field of journalism, where new applications of AI are increasingly used as part of journalistic practices. As a result of this development, it has become important to create the conditions to develop responsible AI for journalism, but this requires the conceptualization of what responsibility is and concrete good practices of how to pursue it. This work is being undertaken by both policymakers and media organizations who are developing both regulation and local guidelines to foster responsible development and use of AI for media. However, this is still a field in development with many questions to be explored and addressed.

To begin exploring such questions and providing examples of good practices, the AI, Media and Democracy Lab put together a panel that would discuss this topic at the Joint Computation + Journalism European Data & Computational Journalism Conference 2023 on June 24 at the ETH Zürich in Zürich, Switzerland. The panel aimed to discuss ways of conceptualizing responsible AI in journalism and the conditions needed to pursue this in practice. The panel consisted of:

- **Natali Helberger**, distinguished professor in Information Law at the Institute for Information Law (IvIR) at the University of Amsterdam.
- **Colin Porlezza**, Senior Assistant Professor in Digital Journalism at USI Università della Svizzera italiana
- **Uli Köppen**, head of the AI + Automation Lab at Bayerischer Rundfunk (BR).
- **Rhianne Jones**, Research Lead at the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), represented by **Bronwyn Jones** who is a Social Science researcher at the University of Edinburgh and works as a journalist for the BBC.

Based on the panel discussion, three good practices were highlighted:

Effective implementation through multiparty collaboration:

The **responsible use of AI** in journalism **requires collaborative efforts** among developers, journalists, practitioners, and researchers. This multiparty collaboration enables the implementation of responsible AI cost-effectively. It **involves a shared approach across various disciplines**, involving different actors at multiple levels, extending beyond governance issues and encompassing a wide range of considerations.

Cultivating regular assessments:

Responsible AI implementation **requires practical decision-making** on a daily basis. Adopting a multiparty evaluation approach with a shared understanding of responsible AI practices and **fostering a culture of outcome evaluation** can significantly contribute to the responsible use of AI. Regular assessments of AI applications and their impact on society **can help ensure that decisions related to AI align with ethical principles** and promote responsible outcomes.

Utilizing regulations for critical assessment:

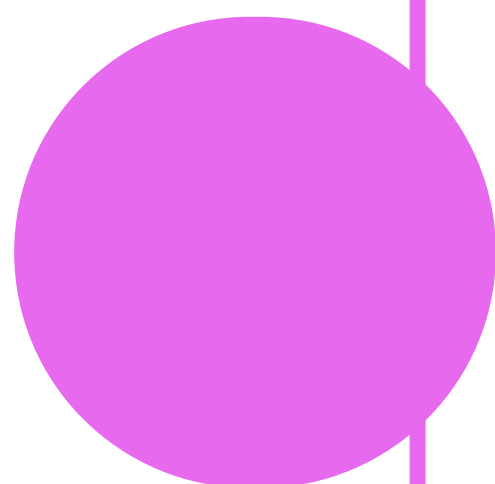
With **upcoming regulations** for AI technologies, it is crucial for news organizations to view them as an **opportunity to critically assess** their own utilization of **artificial intelligence**. These regulations should serve as a foundation for news organizations to develop general guidelines for responsible AI use within their profession. By actively engaging in self-reflection and aligning their practices with ethical and regulatory standards, news organizations can contribute to the responsible and accountable use of AI in journalism.

More information

Joint Computation + Journalism European Data & Computational Journalism Conference 2023 took place from June 22-24 in Zürich, Switzerland and included presentations from both practitioners and researchers. Many of the talks and panels are available online here: <https://www.datajconf.com/schedule>

The panel on 'Conceptualizing and Pursuing Responsible AI in Journalism' took place on Saturday, June 24 and was centred around three questions: (1) how is AI conceptualised as responsible within organisational guidelines, national policies and guidelines and/or regulation? (2) how can news organizations translate guidelines and conceptualizations of responsible AI into concrete practices on the floor and what challenges can be experienced in this process? And (3) how can concrete design methodologies and tools, policies and regulations further support grounding the responsible principles into practices.

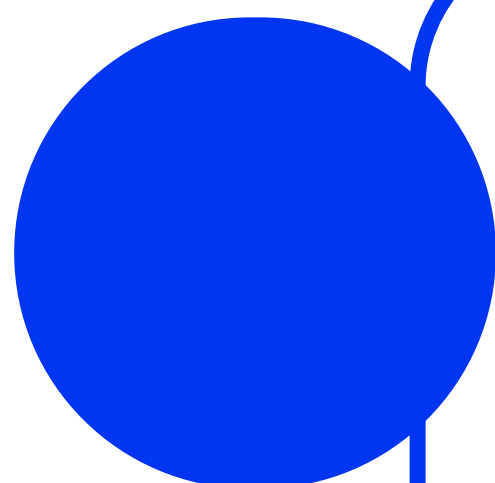
During the panel, each speaker presented their initial position on responsible AI. In the following, each of the panellist's positions is briefly outlined:



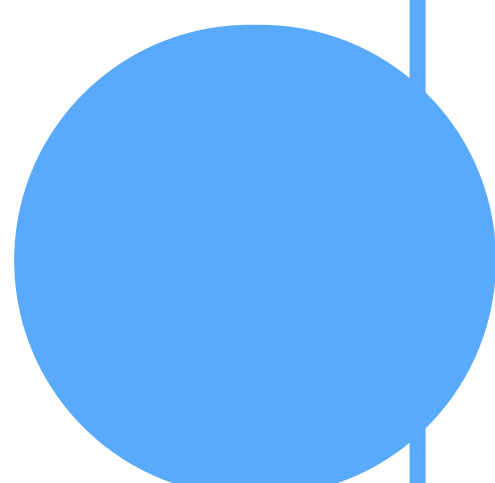
Natali Helberger emphasized the often overlooked aspects of ethical guidelines and generative AI, such as technical robustness, safety, and ensuring resilience against unlawful uses. She also stressed the importance of maintaining the integrity of training data, highlighting the need for being aware of data biases and unlawful content. Furthermore, Natali underscored the significance of considering the social and environmental value of AI, including ecological and the implications for democracy and society.



Colin Porlezza delved into the understanding of responsibility, emphasizing the role of machines and the human element within cultural contexts. He proposed a framework for responsible AI in journalism that encompasses transparency, participatory processes, interdisciplinary collaboration, and multi-stakeholder involvement.



Uli Köppen acknowledged the complex nature of responsible AI, admitting that the current development and conceptualization of it is far from perfect and requires ongoing improvement. She described the process undertaken in 2020, where an interdisciplinary group comprised of technical and legal experts, as well as those from the news department, came together to develop guidelines for responsible AI at BR that are currently being updated.



Rhianne Jones, represented by **Bronwyn Jones**, explained the BBC's approach to responsible AI through written guidelines that integrate existing policies and support values to enhance trust. However, challenges arise in bridging the gap between guidelines and practical implementation. To address this, it is crucial to foster a culture, conditions, and capabilities that enable teams to act according to principles on a daily basis, taking into account diverse perspectives across disciplines. Anticipation capacity, participatory processes, and outcome evaluations were identified as key elements for moving forward responsibly.

Panel organising team:

Anna Schjøtt Hansen (U of Amsterdam) and Valeria Resendez (U of Amsterdam)