The State of AI in the Newsroom

Framing the Impact of AI Beyond Workflow Automation in 2025

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Introduction

As AI permeates every industry, publishers and broadcasters are already well-aquainted with the technology. AI is no longer experimental but has become a useful tool for everyday tasks that can drastically improve how media organizations function and deliver experiences to their audiences. While many businesses have incorporated AI into their daily operations, publishers have a unique opportunity to bolster their success by leaning on AI throughout their newsrooms.

However, misinformation still surrounds AI and its usage. Additionally, consumers don't always trust the technology, nor do those working closely with AI, due to conversations around it coming for their jobs. Publishers and broadcasters are strategically navigating these challenges while implementing the technology in their newsrooms.

For this State of the Industry Report, Digiday and Arc XP surveyed 108 publishers and broadcasters to understand how they're incorporating AI into their newsrooms (aside from the usual workplace efficiency tactics), how far they've come with their AI initiatives, what this free time has enabled them to do, and how they're overcoming implementation challenges.

This State of the Industry Report, sponsored by ArcXP, explores how publishers are incorporating AI into their newsrooms (beyond the typical workplace efficiency avenues), how far they've come with those implementations, the challenges they've encountered, and how they're overcoming them.

Budget and Allocation

Three-quarters of our respondents attributed the bulk of their AI spending to editorial or content creation departments, followed by advertising and marketing departments (10%).

No one selected "we aren't using AI", signaling that publishers and broadcasters understand the value of this technology and are actively putting it into practice.

Q. To what department do you attribute the majority of your AI spending?

- Editorial/content creation
- Advertising and marketing (including audience development and subscriptions)
- Data and research
- Technology/IT
- Operations
- Cross-departmental allocation
- We aren't using AI
- Other

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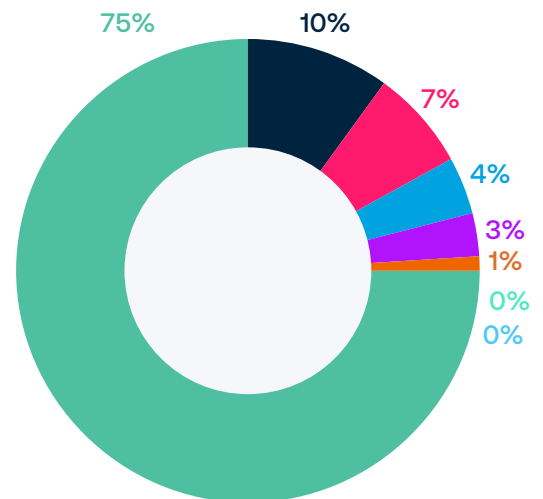
" We know all our customers have a different approach, so they may generally say they're using AI, but I don't think it means we're going to have ChatGPT write every article," said Joey Marburger, VP of Content Intelligence at Arc XP. "I think it's more aligned with the approach that Arc XP has taken around workflow. Not using it to write a whole story or purely generate content, but for additive things—like copy edits or figuring out some headlines, summaries, tags, translations, and things that are more operational."

The top three teams handling the budgets, allocation, and execution of AI initiatives align somewhat with respondent AI spending—editorial or content creation (93%), followed by a dedicated AI-focused team that collaborates with multiple departments (90%), and subscriptions and customer experience (89%).

Q. What team or teams handle AI initiatives in terms of budget, allocation, and execution?
Select all that apply.

Team	Percentage
Editorial/content creation	93%
Dedicated AI-focused team/unit that collaborates with multiple departments	90%
Subscription and customer experience (including audience development)	89%
Data and research	67%
Technology/IT	34%
The executive team manages and coordinates across departments	23%
Operations	13%
Advertising and marketing	9%
Ad performance	0%
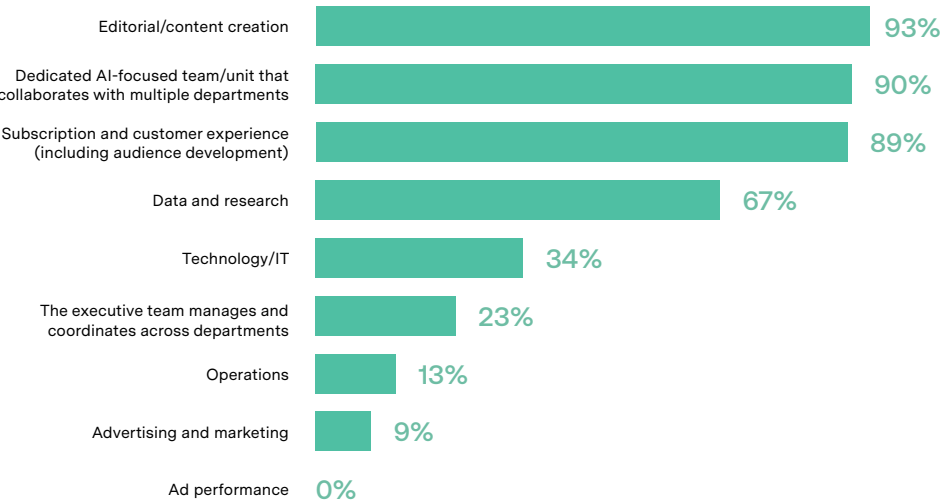
The bottom three teams—an executive team managing across departments (23%), operations (13%), and advertising and marketing (9%)—likely signal that publishers are working toward putting control in the hands of the departments that are using the technology, rather than introducing a middleman that could hinder productivity or innovation.

> You can't do things in a vacuum and just give it to a data science team," Marburger suggested. "Generative AI is a little less data science in application, and it really comes down to what you want to do with it—it's a tool like anything else. If you use it for predictions and more siloed product development, it could fall flat because it's so new and changing so rapidly. If you're not using it regularly or for real applications, not just experiments, then you won't know what you want."

While AI involves a large amount of data, Marburger underscored the importance of involving the teams that plan to utilize the data, tool, etc., rather than keeping things fragmented.

> If we build something we think is amazing and all the newsrooms reject it, then it's a complete failure, like any tool or product," said Marburger. "When I was on *The Washington Post* side running product, that was how we developed things so quickly. When it was a nugget of an idea, you would go straight to an individual reporter, or team, or editor in the newsroom, and spitball the idea, then start working on it. Not, 'Hey, we built this whole thing and didn't include you,' and it could just not work. I think AI is in that rapid cycle right now."

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None of our respondents indicated their budgets for AI are decreasing—nearly all (97%) said they're increasing.

Q. Compared to 2024, how is your budget for AI implementation in the newsroom changing for 2025

- ● It's increasing somewhat
- ● It's increasing significantly
- ● It's staying the same
- ● It's decreasing somewhat
- ● It's decreasing significantly
- ● I'm unsure/don't know

67% 30% 3% 0% 0% 0%
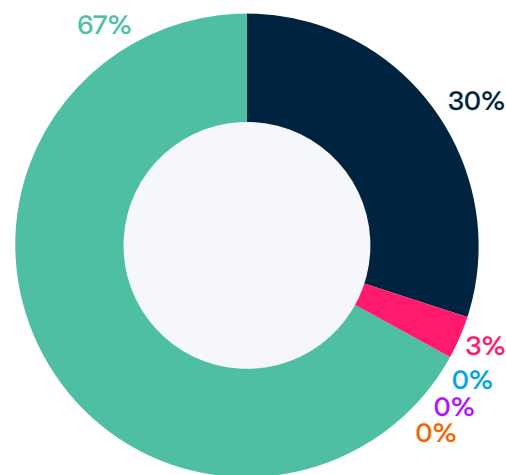
> "Not many media organizations were prepared for this big influx of AI," said Marburger "It's almost like when the internet happened—who had web developers already on staff? They didn't exist, but luckily, AI specialists do. But it's more about where that money is going and what it means. Now they can jump a few steps ahead and use their people to focus on making their business successful without investing as much in translation or distribution.
>
> "Investment, especially for news organizations, has to be cautious: Should I hire a data scientist or another reporter?" he continued. "Well, the reporter would probably further my bottom line more immediately, but data science is maybe more multi-year, so that's tough. I'm surprised there hasn't been as much investment, but it's trending up, so within the next couple of years, the level of investment in AI or AI-adjacent things will probably be close to a significant chunk of the pure newsroom investment."

While there have been many viral hype moments in AI, many media executives are now investing in the technology, knowing they may not see returns for a few years. To optimize savings in the meantime, they can use AI to open up new markets, access new audiences, and explore translation.

> "Translation is more than just, this English word to this German word, for example, it's the context and management of it, and the resonance of your content in that geographic area," Marburger elaborated.
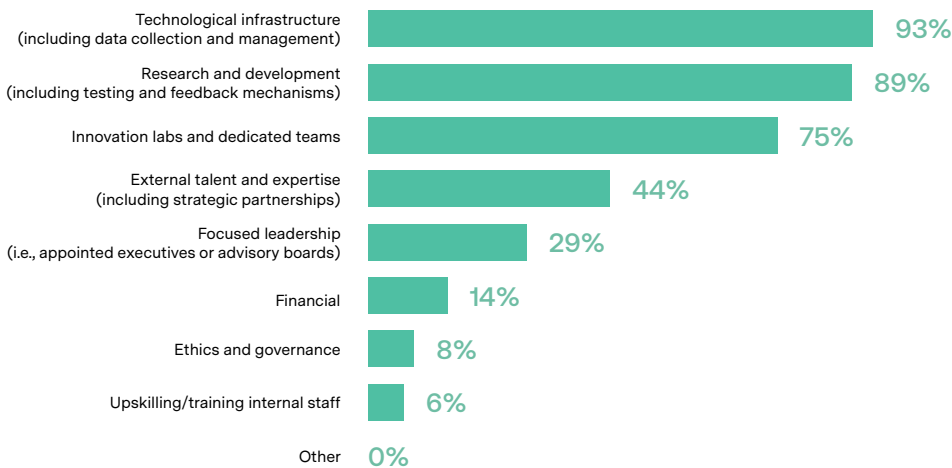
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Infrastructure and Tools

The resource focus has been on infrastructure (93%), research and development (89%), and innovation labs and dedicated teams (75%).

Q. What resources have you dedicated to AI efforts so far?
Select all that apply.

Technological infrastructure (including data collection and management)	93%
Research and development (including testing and feedback mechanisms)	89%
Innovation labs and dedicated teams	75%
External talent and expertise (including strategic partnerships)	44%
Focused leadership (i.e., appointed executives or advisory boards)	29%
Financial	14%
Ethics and governance	8%
Upskilling/training internal staff	6%
Other	0%

Meanwhile, staff training (6%) and ethics and governance (8%) aren't focus areas, likely due to widespread challenges regarding establishing AI standards and guidelines. With AI's tendency toward bias, and other ethical concerns, it's likely publishers are pouring efforts into research and development, for example, to train or build large language models (LLMs) that have reduced bias, increased standards, and more.

When it comes to developing AI infrastructure, nearly all publishers (or 96%) are using a hybrid approach.

Q. How would you describe your approach to the development of your team's AI infrastructure, tools and/or software?

96%

3%

1%

- Hybrid approach (building in-house and buying from vendors)
- Building in-house
- Buying from third-party vendors
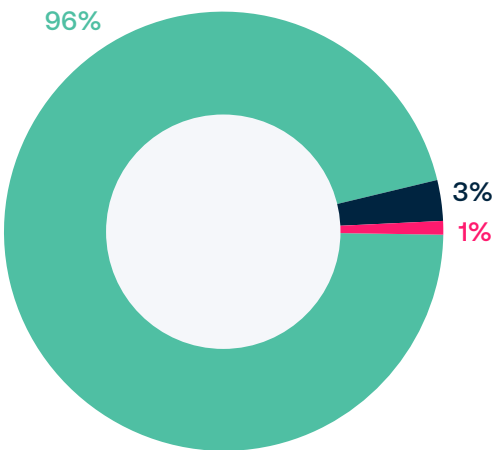
For news organizations, you pretty much have to do a hybrid model, unless you can get your hands on some GPUs, which is hard and very expensive," Marburger clarified. "I don't know if it's the right time to do that because that's just the models, but at the pace of how models are going, by the time you spend $100,000 or more, it'll probably be irrelevant. You also have to have good customer traction. For example, a newsroom can create an account on OpenAI and use that in a way that scales with their usage. It's definitely a hybrid time, although I anticipate that within the next three to five years, that barrier to entry to do more cost-intensive investments will go down."

The AI tools publishers rely on vary, but, unsurprisingly, workflow automation tops the list at 93%, followed by video and image optimization (87%), and automated content creation (82%).

Q. What tools/software does your team utilize for your AI initiatives?
Select all that apply.

Tool	Percentage
Workflow automation	93%
Video and image optimization	87%
Automated content creation	82%
Real-time data and alerts	79%
SEO and content optimization	69%
Personalization and audience insights	68%
Content recommendation and distribution	66%
Content moderation	21%
Transcription and translation	11%
Audience engagement tools	11%
Ethics and sentiment analysis	5%
Fact-checking and verification	4%
Other	0%

Ethics and sentiment analysis and fact-checking and verification are the least-used AI tools at 5% and 4%, respectively. Workflow automation and automated content creation are common uses for AI among respondents throughout this survey. Interestingly, although only 4% of respondents said they use fact-checking and verification tools, 84% indicated they use AI for automated fact-checking as a consumer-facing initiative. This may signal an in-house initiative rather than specific tools or software.

When you start getting into more advanced techniques, like fact-checking, depending on the timing, some of the tools aren't there yet without some pretty advanced knowledge. But that's changing," Marburger said. "We know some of the most-advanced models will make things up sometimes, so you almost have to fact-check the fact-checking, which becomes extremely inefficient. But, people should be exploring it, and that's probably the disconnect, because they're looking into it, but it's not good yet—it's not up to our standards or they realize how much work it is and want to wait until they can scale it and make it fully trustworthy."

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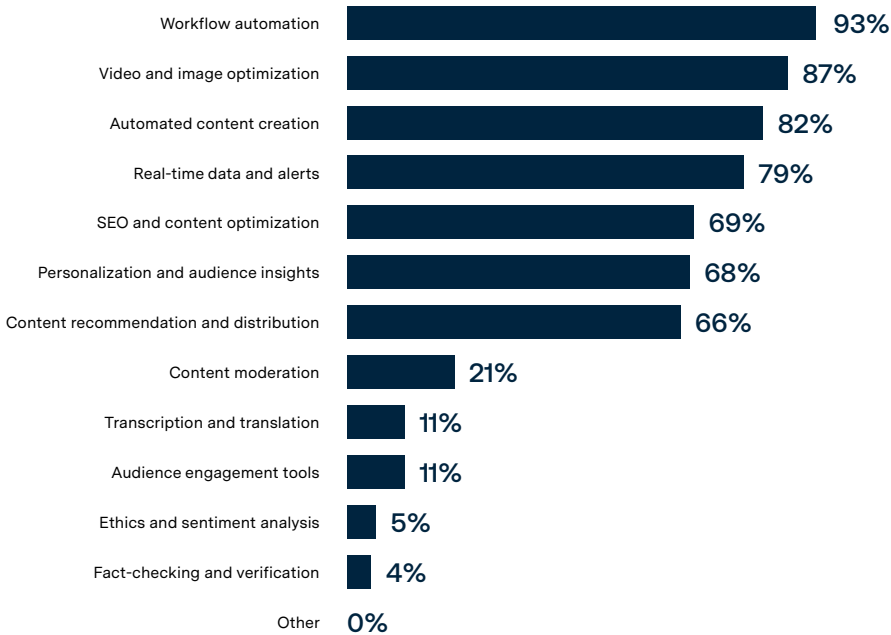and Results

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Key Takeaways

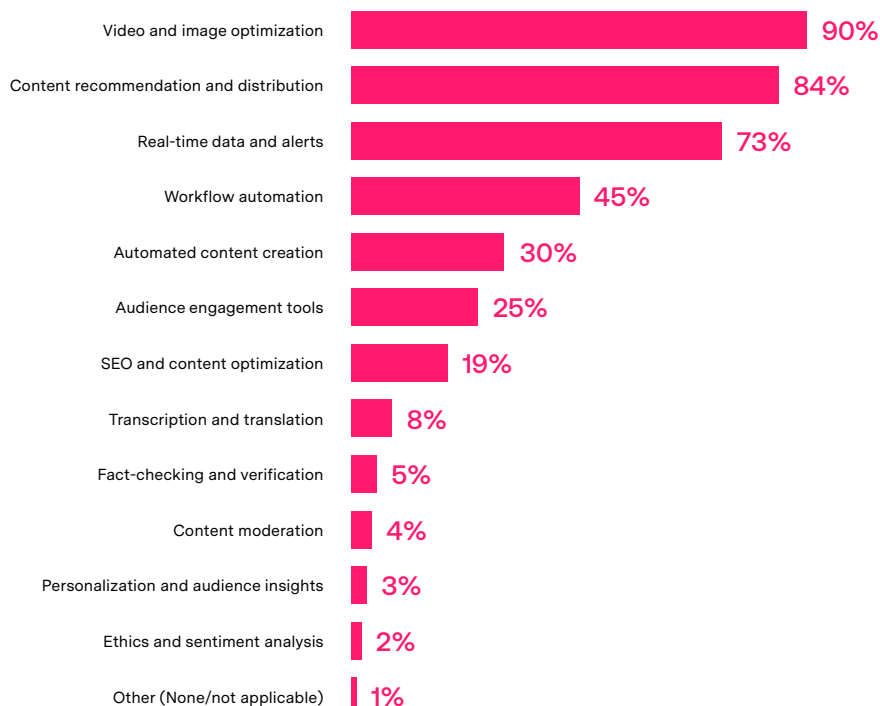About Arc XP

A study by Indiana University demonstrated some of the challenges arising from current automated fact-checking tools. The study found many cases of the technology increasing belief in false headlines and decreasing belief in true headlines mislabeled as false—another reason our respondents may be testing this technology but are not satisfied with its performance.

As for the tools that aren't working well for publishers, video and image optimization (90%), content recommendation and distribution (84%), and real-time data and alerts (73%) claim the top spots.

While 93% are using AI workflow automation tools, 45% aren't satisfied with those tools. Nearly everyone using video and image optimization and real-time data and alert tools isn't happy with the results.

Q. What AI tools are you using that aren't delivering satisfactory results?
Select all that apply.

Tool	Percentage
Video and image optimization	90%
Content recommendation and distribution	84%
Real-time data and alerts	73%
Workflow automation	45%
Automated content creation	30%
Audience engagement tools	25%
SEO and content optimization	19%
Transcription and translation	8%
Fact-checking and verification	5%
Content moderation	4%
Personalization and audience insights	3%
Ethics and sentiment analysis	2%
Other (None/not applicable)	1%

" We haven't done much with photo or video yet because it's a standards thing, although models keep getting better and better," Marburger said.

Referring to AI image generators like Midjourney, DALL-E, and more, he added, "There's the running joke of seven fingers and asking for something and getting text that's all jumbled. There are hundreds of models out there with different levels of quality, and then there's the ethical and copyright sides. If you're missing visual assets, then is using AI better than not having anything? Or, there's dynamic clipping, so creating a 30-second version of this 5-minute video because it has original content to work from. When you're pulling it out of thin air, it's tough to keep it consistent, and that's something Arc XP provides—consistency in your prompting at scale, so it's not everyone typing different things into ChatGPT and getting wildly different responses."
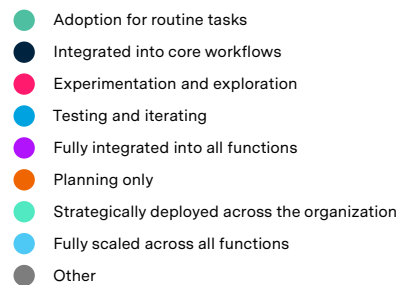
AI Implementation for Publishers

More than half of respondents are in the "Adoption for routine tasks" stage (65%), with nearly one-quarter integrating AI into their core workflows (24%). No one surveyed said they were in the "Planning only", "Strategically deploying across the organization", or "Fully scaled across the organization" stages.

Q. What stage of adoption are your teams in, regarding AI?

- ● Adoption for routine tasks
- ● Integrated into core workflows
- ● Experimentation and exploration
- ● Testing and iterating
- ● Fully integrated into all functions
- ● Planning only
- ● Strategically deployed across the organization
- ● Fully scaled across all functions
- ● Other

64%
24%
6%
5%
1%
0%
0%
0%
0%

Marburger cited an early maturity curve, with generative AI only moving from prototype to commercially usable models in late 2022, as the reason why fewer publishers had fully integrated AI in their newsrooms.

"I wasn't surprised to see such a steep drop-off between using AI for routine tasks (the 65%) and fully integrated (1%)," Marburger said. "Most newsrooms spent 2023–2024 experimenting with safe, low-stakes use-cases like transcription, translation, tagging, and A/B testing headlines. Moving from pilot automations to cross-function orchestration—where AI touches every stage from newsgathering to commercial ops—requires multi-year platform work, new governance structures, and staff retraining. Even now, 87% of newsroom leaders say generative AI is already transforming their organizations, yet few claim it's embedded end-to-end.

"Integration demands hard, often invisible prerequisites," he continued. "Outliers such as Reuters, where bespoke tools like Fact Genie and AVISTA are now live in production, had already invested heavily in data pipelines, unified content APIs and a 'human-in-the-loop' culture before generative AI arrived. Most publishers don't yet have that foundation."
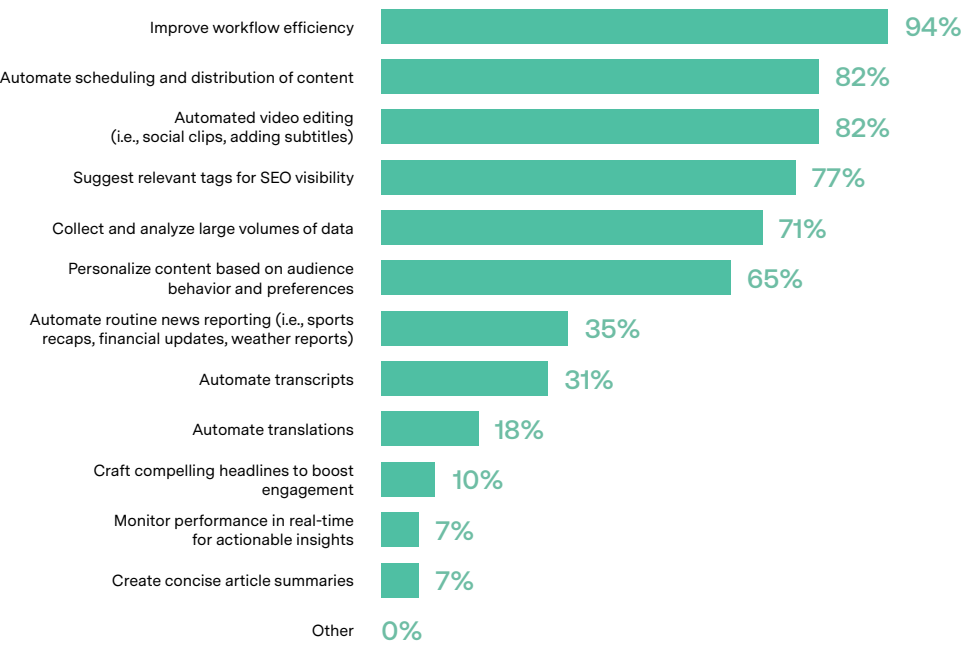
As for the ways publishers and broadcasters are using AI so far, improving workflow efficiency tops the list (94%), followed by automating scheduling and distribution of content (82%), and automating video editing (82%).

Workflow efficiency has been the most widely promoted application of AI, so it's no surprise that this is popular with our respondents. Tedious yet time-consuming tasks, like scheduling and distributing content, benefit significantly from AI assistance. The increasing need for video content can be met with AI's efficiency.

The least-selected uses for AI were crafting compelling headlines to boost engagement (10%), monitoring performance in real-time for actionable insights (7%), and creating concise article summaries (7%).

Q. How are you currently using AI?
Select all that apply.

Use	%
Improve workflow efficiency	94%
Automate scheduling and distribution of content	82%
Automated video editing (i.e., social clips, adding subtitles)	82%
Suggest relevant tags for SEO visibility	77%
Collect and analyze large volumes of data	71%
Personalize content based on audience behavior and preferences	65%
Automate routine news reporting (i.e., sports recaps, financial updates, weather reports)	35%
Automate transcripts	31%
Automate translations	18%
Craft compelling headlines to boost engagement	10%
Monitor performance in real-time for actionable insights	7%
Create concise article summaries	7%
Other	0%

While it's interesting that not many publishers are using AI for more of these small, time-consuming tasks (or for real-time performance, which could benefit future stories and engagement), it could be that they've found alternative ways to improve these tasks, or they haven't found AI tools that have worked well in these areas.

> "Our most-used AI feature is recommending headlines and summaries, so that is a bit confusing," said Marburger. "I think to implement those use cases, you have to be consistent and maintain style and tone—all things Arc XP's AI features do with complete prompt customization. I think that's why the features are so heavily used versus pasting a story into ChatGPT and hoping for consistent responses."

Publishers could find great success if they're able to find AI tools that work well for them. If the first ones they try aren't delivering satisfactory results, there are so many to choose from, it's worth trialing alternatives to improve engagement and ultimately reduce tedious tasks.

AI's Impact on the Newsroom

Publisher respondents are using AI for a variety of consumer-facing initiatives, with only 3% saying they haven't yet done so. Automated creation of accessible content (88%), personalized content delivery (85%), and automated fact-checking (84%) are the most used, aligning with changes in consumer expectations.

Q. Are you using AI for any consumer-facing initiatives
Select all that apply.
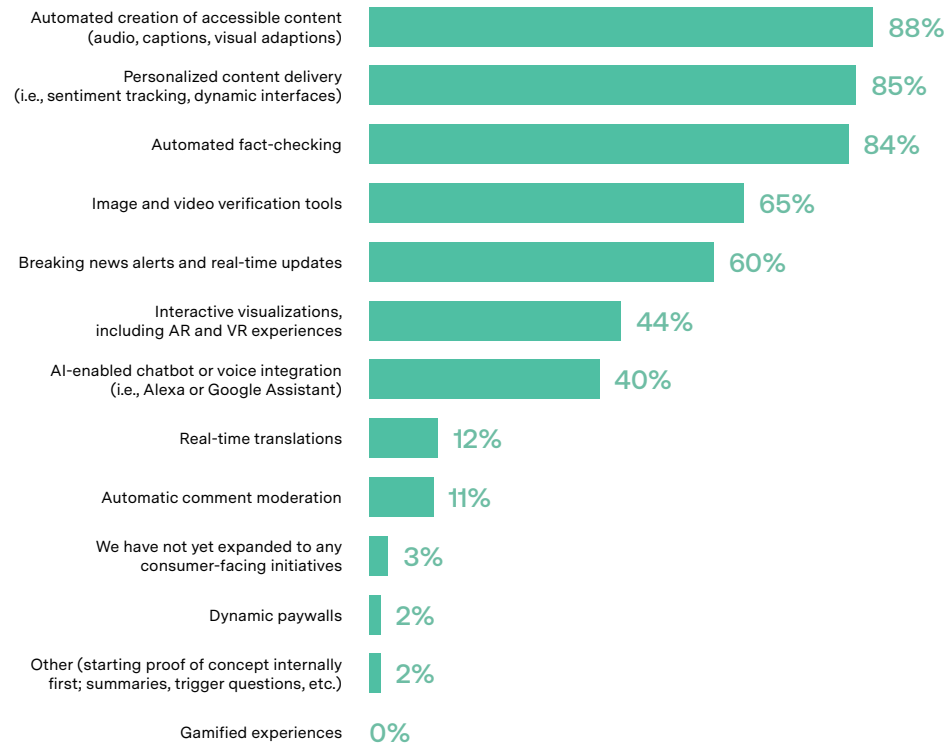
Initiative	Percentage
Automated creation of accessible content (audio, captions, visual adaptions)	88%
Personalized content delivery (i.e., sentiment tracking, dynamic interfaces)	85%
Automated fact-checking	84%
Image and video verification tools	65%
Breaking news alerts and real-time updates	60%
Interactive visualizations, including AR and VR experiences	44%
AI-enabled chatbot or voice integration (i.e., Alexa or Google Assistant)	40%
Real-time translations	12%
Automatic comment moderation	11%
We have not yet expanded to any consumer-facing initiatives	3%
Dynamic paywalls	2%
Other (starting proof of concept internally first; summaries, trigger questions, etc.)	2%
Gamified experiences	0%

While using AI for dynamic paywalls is very low on this list, that's been very successful for many publishers, including the *Post*.

> The *Post* has had some great successes with their smart metering, dynamic paywall, which has allowed them to more rapidly create that propensity and use cases or deliver different messages, almost more personalized generation to target that messaging," explained Marburger. "That's a great use case of accelerating a business or subscription strategy they already had. I think it's a little lower on the list because, do you have a business or subscription strategy that's well-defined already? An LLM can't write your business strategy and put it into the right template, it can only tell you possible paths to take, but maybe not any paths that apply to you."

The vast amount of data that publishers and broadcasters gain when using AI is an easy way to lean into gamified experiences.

> Generative AI is really good at complex patterns, so if you have all this data that's clean but you aren't sure what to do with it, you could ask an LLM to define a markup chain or pattern around it to give you the power of a PhD-level scientist that you can then do other things with," Marburger suggested. "But, you have to know what you're looking for and have all that data. I think people are starting to realize they can drop a huge CSV file into an AI tool and immediately start extracting value. We're going to see a pivot. Within a year, I think people will be saying, 'I'm using AI more for business intelligence'."

So, if a publisher has a large amount of readership data and wants to create a mini game to drive more engagement, they can use an LLM to help build such an experience.

Publishers are using AI to deepen engagement with their audiences via tools that monitor and moderate comments (88%) and predict emerging topics (85%).

Q. How are you using AI to help deepen audience engagement?
Select all that apply.

Category	%
Tools that monitor and moderate comments in real-time for positive, engaging discussions	88%
Prediction of emerging topics for the delivery of timely, relevant stories	85%
Interactive chatbots and voice assistants	68%
Personalized recommendation systems (audience sentiment, tailored content)	68%
Gamifying elements to engage readers in new, interactive ways	67%
Short, engaging videos pulled from long-form and optimized for mobile	66%
AI-built interactive visualizations for captivated audiences (AR, VR)	41%
Real-time engagement via AI-powered push notifications	26%
Identifying keywords and topics that drive traffic to optimize content for search engines continuously	15%
Converting articles to accessible formats (audio, translations, etc.)	14%
Hyper-personalized paywalls for optimal engagement and UX	2%
Other	0%

Identifying keywords and topics that drive traffic, converting articles to accessible formats, and hyper-personalized paywalls for optimal engagement and UX (15%, 14%, and 2%, respectively) are the least-used tasks. Notably, while only 14% said they're using AI to convert articles to accessible formats to aid in audience engagement, 88% are using the technology for the automated creation of accessible content as a consumer-facing initiative. The difference between these could come down to conversion versus creation, or viewing accessibility as a necessity rather than an engagement tool.

As AI automates tasks that require a lot of time, publishers are dedicating more efforts to strengthening editorial oversight (86%), spending more time connecting with local communities and audiences (85%), and focusing on innovation and experimentation (76%).

However, not as much time is being dedicated to the following: training and upskilling (19%), amplifying underrepresented voices (18%), building revenue and growth strategies (12%), and developing niche coverage areas (5%).

Q. What is your team doing with the extra time freed by incorporating AI?
Select all that apply.

Strengthening editorial oversight (i.e., fact-checking and accuracy)	86%
More time connecting with local communities and audiences	85%
Innovation and experimentation (i.e., testing new approaches, products, formats)	76%
More in-depth investigative reporting	68%
Focusing on ethical journalism (i.e., combatting misinformation and bias)	68%
Increased cross-departmental collaboration	24%
Focusing on original storytelling from unique angles	21%
Increased focus on training and upskilling (i.e., developing multimedia skills)	19%
Amplifying underrepresented voices	18%
Building revenue and growth strategies (i.e., new business opportunities)	12%
Developing niche coverage areas	5%
Other	0%

" If you have more time for innovation or expanding different coverage areas, then that will probably indirectly impact that revenue side," said Marburger. "It's not that more content necessarily equals revenue, but the inverse of that—less content, less revenue—is probably 100% true. I think what AI will change for reporters is that they'll spend more time reporting, and that can't be replaced by an LLM. Everyone is warming up to it, where they'll have more time to do something that could be filled with work, or it could be spent taking a break, sleeping, or thinking for a minute, because out of that will probably come the innovation and exploration to do other things, and AI tools can help accelerate that."

"I also love the narrative emerging around local news and community, because that's obviously been gutted the most over the years," he continued. "I think AI will help a lot there. One person with sophisticated knowledge can do what a thriving local newspaper team did in a 20,000-person community in the '50s."
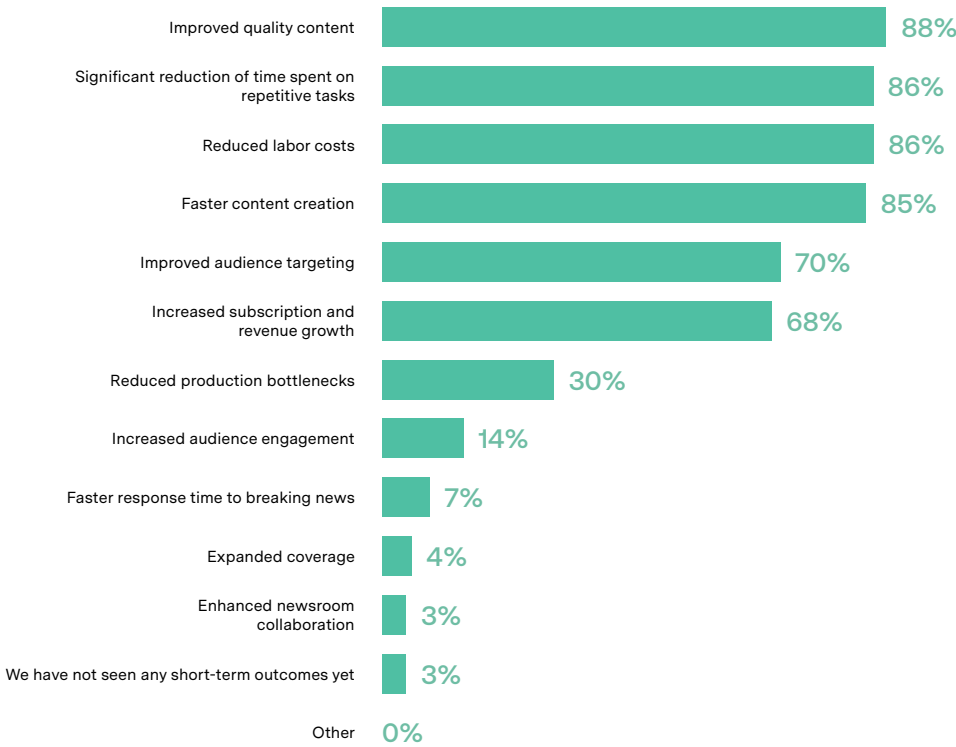
Outcomes and Results

The initial outcomes publishers have seen within 6 months of implementing AI throughout their newsrooms are fairly significant, reporting improved quality content (88%), significant reduction of time spent on repetitive tasks (86%), reduced labor costs (86%), and faster content creation (85%).

The less prevalent outcomes are faster response time to breaking news (7%), expanded coverage (4%), and enhanced newsroom collaboration (3%). Only 3% of publishers say they haven't yet seen any outcomes.

Q. What short-term (within 6 months of implementation) outcomes have you seen from implementing AI?
Select all that apply.

Outcome	%
Improved quality content	88%
Significant reduction of time spent on repetitive tasks	86%
Reduced labor costs	86%
Faster content creation	85%
Improved audience targeting	70%
Increased subscription and revenue growth	68%
Reduced production bottlenecks	30%
Increased audience engagement	14%
Faster response time to breaking news	7%
Expanded coverage	4%
Enhanced newsroom collaboration	3%
We have not seen any short-term outcomes yet	3%
Other	0%

"This is totally in alignment with what we're seeing," Marburger said. "Our core focus with Arc XP Intelligence is to provide value through automating repetitive tasks and decreasing the time to publication. We know journalists are constantly being asked to do more production-like work with their stories, so that's where we want AI to help the most."

Ninety-six percent of respondents have used AI in their newsrooms for longer than 6 months. Most of these publishers are seeing increased operational efficiency (89%), empowerment of journalists (85%), and greater sustainability (84%).

Only 3% haven't seen any long-term outcomes yet.

**Q. What long-term (beyond 6 months of implementation)
outcomes have you seen from implementing AI?**
Select all that apply.

Outcome	%
Increased operational efficiency	89%
Empowerment of journalists (i.e., creativity focus, new skill development)	85%
Greater sustainability (i.e., resource optimization, smarter energy use)	84%
Improved subscription retention and ad revenue optimization	78%
Improved editorial decision-making	69%
Scalable content production with support for emerging formats	68%
Diversification of revenue streams	66%
Enhanced journalistic integrity (i.e., automated fact-checking, standardized ethics)	9%
Broader audience reach via global expansion and niche markets	7%
Tailored user experiences (i.e., hyper-personalized content delivery)	4%
Resilience in competitive markets	4%
We have not used AI in this capacity for longer than 6 months	4%
Strengthened audience engagement	3%
We have not seen any long-term outcomes yet	3%
Other	0%

As more tedious, time-consuming tasks are automated via AI, journalists can feel more empowered to cover stories they feel passionate about or simply pour more passion into their writing and coverage. The increase in efficiency can also lead to improved sustainability.

However, not many publishers are seeing tailored user experiences (4%), resilience in competitive markets (4%), and strengthened audience engagement (3%).

It could be that these types of results warrant longer implementation, need more experimentation, or the current tools and methods publishers are using aren't providing the necessary results.

"It's still early days for generative AI in the news," said Marburger. "With any huge technology platform shift, you will always see those who lean in quickly, follow fast, and lag behind. The news industry tends to be more cautious, which I think is a good thing. However, AI use is rapidly accelerating, which could be detrimental if organizations don't at least experiment and have a strategy for adoption, even if they haven't implemented it yet."

"AI is only one piece of the overall experience, so even though it can unlock new capabilities and deliver them quickly, there's still a lot of non-AI development and product strategy going into it," he continued. "For publishers to heavily invest, I think they need to see steady results before they jump into far more advanced use cases. Seeing the items at the bottom of the list doesn't surprise me at all, but I do see that shifting quickly over the coming years."
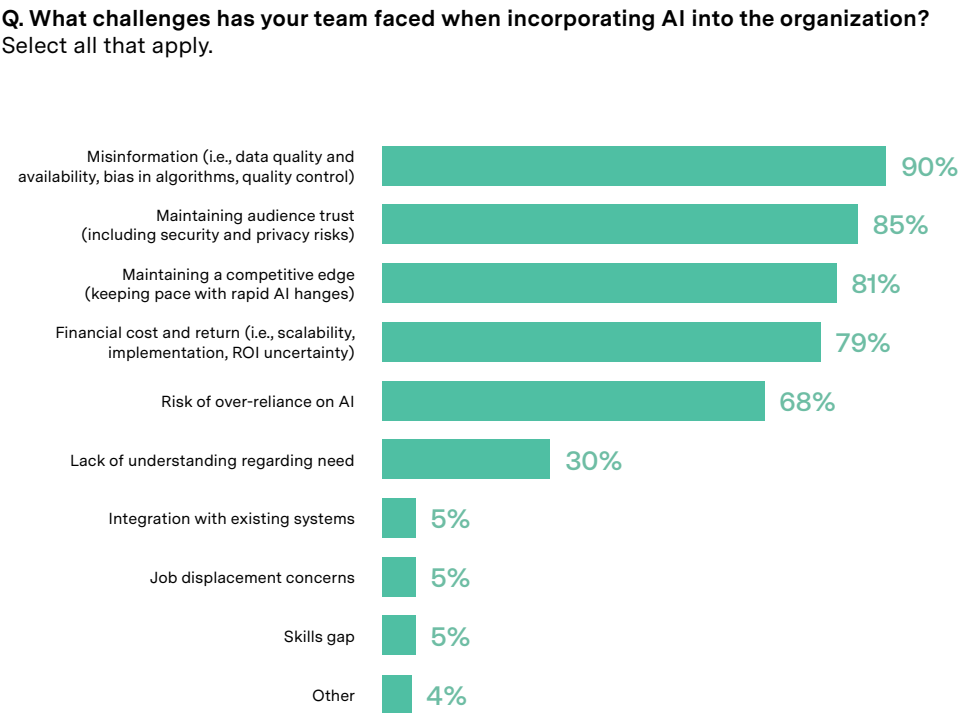
Challenges and Pain Points

As AI becomes more prevalent and spoken about, this leads to fewer people being concerned about the technology coming for their jobs (as far as journalists are concerned), more frequent usage (and therefore less of a skills gap), and a deeper understanding of AI's ability to integrate with numerous systems.

However, our publisher respondents still cited misinformation (90%), maintaining audience trust (85%), and maintaining a competitive edge (81%) as top challenges they face when incorporating AI into their newsrooms.

Q. What challenges has your team faced when incorporating AI into the organization?
Select all that apply.

Challenge	%
Misinformation (i.e., data quality and availability, bias in algorithms, quality control)	90%
Maintaining audience trust (including security and privacy risks)	85%
Maintaining a competitive edge (keeping pace with rapid AI hanges)	81%
Financial cost and return (i.e., scalability, implementation, ROI uncertainty)	79%
Risk of over-reliance on AI	68%
Lack of understanding regarding need	30%
Integration with existing systems	5%
Job displacement concerns	5%
Skills gap	5%
Other	4%

Integration with existing systems (5%), job displacement concerns (5%), and skills gap (5%) are the least-common challenges, likely due to increased familiarity with the technology.

Even with the increasing prevalence of AI, Marburger wasn't surprised to see misinformation, maintaining audience trust, and maintaining a competitive edge as the main challenges our survey respondents are concerned with.

" There's a lot of fear and excitement around AI, but publishers have to find the right strategy that works for them," explained Marburger. "If you force AI into a newsroom, there will undoubtedly be rejection and distrust. However, establishing clear guardrails and a best practices framework that allows newsrooms to build trust with AI tools will help them warm up to it. Journalists hate making mistakes, and AI can make mistakes. AI is like a junior reporter, so if you teach it new skills and give it experience, it will grow—just like a human reporter."

The top three challenges holding teams back from further AI adoption echo the top challenges they're facing when incorporating the technology in general—maintaining a competitive edge (90%), misinformation (89%), and risk of over-reliance on AI (85%). Notably, maintaining audience trust, which was one of the top three challenges faced when incorporating AI into the organization, is fourth-highest here (83%).

Q. Are any of these challenges holding your teams back from further AI adoption?
Select all that apply.

Challenge	Percentage
Maintaining a competitive edge (keeping pace with rapid AI changes)	90%
Misinformation (i.e., data quality and availability, bias in algorithms, quality control)	89%
Risk of over-reliance on AI	85%
Maintaining audience trust (including security and privacy risks)	83%
Financial cost and return (i.e., scalability, implementation, ROI uncertainty)	78%
Lack of understanding regarding need	61%
Job displacement concerns	5%
Integration with existing systems	4%
Skills gap	3%
Other	0%

The challenges at the bottom are nearly identical to those at the bottom of the previous list: job displacement concerns (5%), integration with existing systems (4%), and skills gap (3%). More people indicated that maintaining a competitive edge and the risk of over-reliance (90% and 85%, respectively) were holding them back from further AI adoption than those who selected those options as challenges they faced (81% and 68%, respectively).

" I think what we're seeing is a shift in the kind of concerns publishers are wrestling with," Marburger highlighted. "In the early days of adopting AI, the challenges are more tactical—how do we plug this into our workflows, who needs to be trained, that sort of thing. But once those hurdles feel manageable, people zoom out and start thinking about the bigger picture. There's this worry that if everyone uses the same AI tools, especially the off-the-shelf models, we'll all start sounding the same. That's a real concern because voice, tone, and editorial judgement are all things that differentiate a publisher. So, the fear isn't just 'Can we use AI?', it's, 'If we do, are we giving away what makes us unique?'."

Regarding over-reliance on AI, Marburger emphasized the importance of trust and control, recognizing that the challenge here is with policy, not the technology.
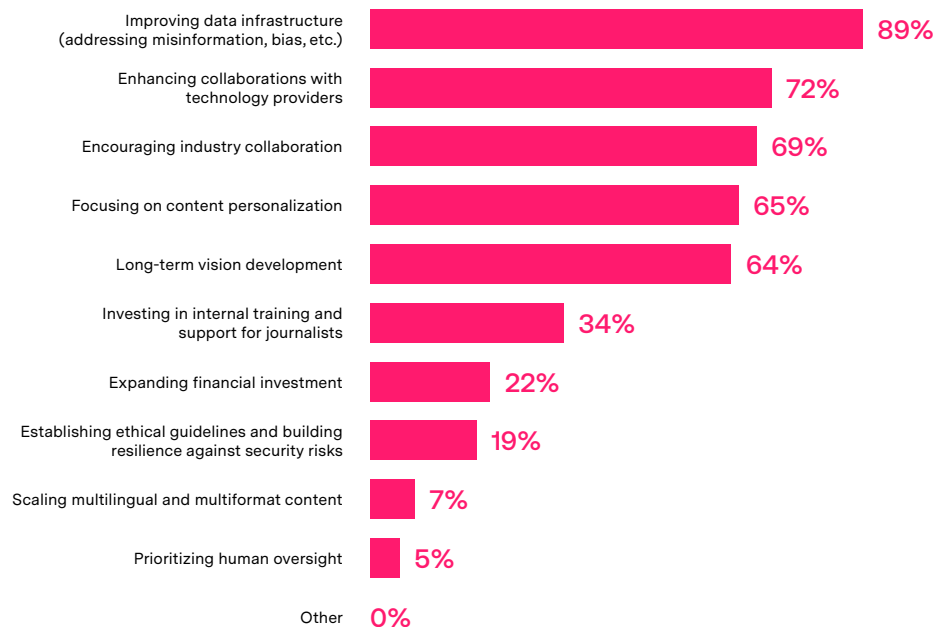
" Publishers are cautious, rightfully so, about handing over too much to automation," he said. "There's always a risk that we lean too hard on AI for speed or scale and lose sight of editorial rigor or nuance. It's not a tech problem; it's a governance problem. To overcome this, you have to build differentiation into your AI use. Find the best models that work for your use cases, then leverage fine-tuning and vector databases to augment the models with your content. Also, human judgment has to stay in the loop. AI can assist, but editorial oversight is what makes content meaningful and trustworthy—you need that balance."

Publishers plan to overcome the challenges outlined here by improving data infrastructure (89%) and enhancing collaborations with tech providers (72%).

Q. What plans do you have for working to overcome these challenges this year?
Select all that apply.

Plan	Percentage
Improving data infrastructure (addressing misinformation, bias, etc.)	89%
Enhancing collaborations with technology providers	72%
Encouraging industry collaboration	69%
Focusing on content personalization	65%
Long-term vision development	64%
Investing in internal training and support for journalists	34%
Expanding financial investment	22%
Establishing ethical guidelines and building resilience against security risks	19%
Scaling multilingual and multiformat content	7%
Prioritizing human oversight	5%
Other	0%

While publishers are concerned about the risk of over-reliance on AI (85% said it was holding them back from further AI implementation and 68% said it's been a challenge when incorporating AI in general), prioritizing human oversight (5%) is last on the list here. Whatever they're doing to combat that, human oversight is not at the top of the list.

" Collaboration is key, but even large tech providers are in a similar situation where generative AI has been a great level-setting force among technology companies," Marburger suggested. "Over-reliance on tech providers could be detrimental, similar to becoming over-reliant on social referral or search referral traffic. We all know how difficult that has been in the industry. It's the classic build-versus-buy dilemma, and I think that right now is a time where publishers should do a mix—build what is critical to their business and buy what they don't have the expertise or capital to do themselves. If you kick the can down the road, you'll come to find there's a very expensive toll to pay, and the can is way too expensive now."
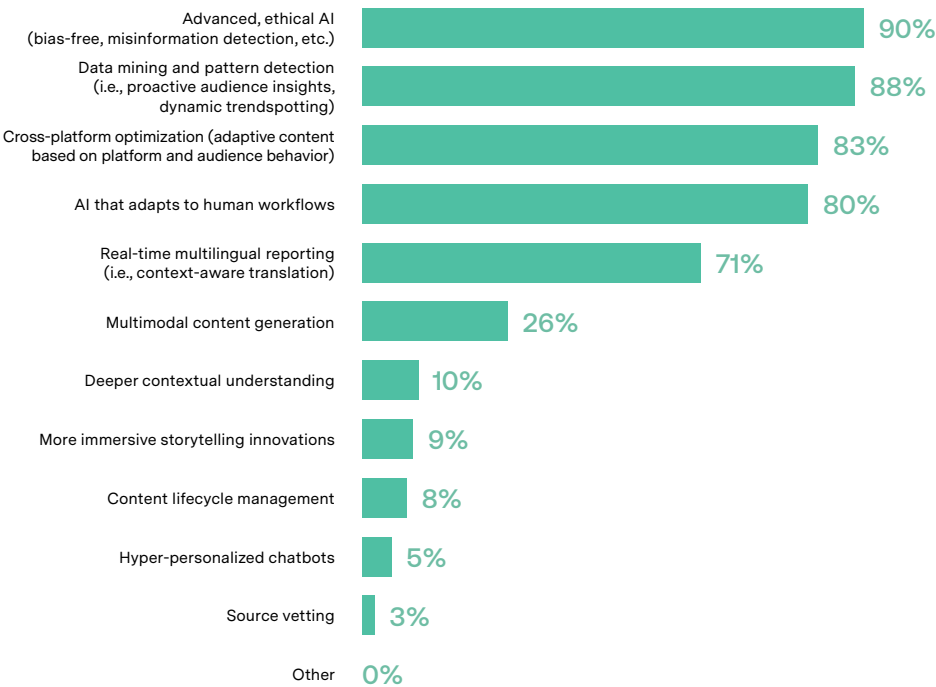
Future Applications

Looking ahead, the areas publishers most want to see AI expand into include advanced, ethical AI (90%), data mining and pattern detection (88%), and cross-platform optimization (83%).

Content lifecycle management (8%), hyper-personalized chatbots (5%), and source vetting (3%) are the least-common areas where our respondents want to see innovation.

Q. Where would you like to see AI expand and innovate in the future that you feel you currently can't find?
Select all that apply.

Advanced, ethical AI (bias-free, misinformation detection, etc.)	90%
Data mining and pattern detection (i.e., proactive audience insights, dynamic trendspotting)	88%
Cross-platform optimization (adaptive content based on platform and audience behavior)	83%
AI that adapts to human workflows	80%
Real-time multilingual reporting (i.e., context-aware translation)	71%
Multimodal content generation	26%
Deeper contextual understanding	10%
More immersive storytelling innovations	9%
Content lifecycle management	8%
Hyper-personalized chatbots	5%
Source vetting	3%
Other	0%

It's unsurprising to see ethical AI at the top of this list, as maintaining audience trust and misinformation are high on the list of respondent challenges in AI adoption and what's holding them back from further adoption. Ethical AI adoption is a surefire way to combat misinformation and gain and maintain audience trust.

As for the areas at the bottom, chatbots have already come a long way, so it doesn't look like there's much interest in further advancement anytime soon. While source vetting hasn't been a priority among our respondents, 84% are using AI for fact-checking as a part of their consumer-facing initiatives. There may be a sense of distrust with AI's ability to vet sources, but an acknowledgment that readers and consumers appreciate publications that actively, visibly fact-check.

" We have to remember that these LLMs are being trained for everybody, not just publishers or the news industry as a whole," advised Marburger. "However, they are meant for the information world, and model providers should work with publishers to understand their use cases because this is an industry where accuracy, ethics, and information distribution are key. Model providers are looking for the same thing. I think the publishing industry has a huge role to play in shaping the future of AI, especially if we want that future to be ethical, transparent, and aligned with public interest."

"Publishers bring something to the table that a lot of other industries don't: a deep understanding of truth, context, and responsibility," he continued. "One of the biggest contributions we can make is pushing AI to be more accountable. We've spent decades building systems to vet information, check sources, and uphold editorial standards. If we can help encode some of that thinking into AI models, or at least demand that those principles guide the design, we can steer AI toward being more trustworthy and less extractive."

As publishers look ahead, Marburger recommended they prioritize more seamless AI integration into CMS tools that feel collaborative and natural. While there's been a lot of focus on ChatGPT, it's worthwhile to explore beyond chat-like experiences to see how publisher content can be used to offer new storytelling experiences to their readers.

" The value publishers provide is immense, but it can be overshadowed by less editorial-guided people and platforms," Marburger cautioned. "AI can help accelerate content production to get more real, factual information in front of people. We can't just keep up, we have to lead and be at the forefront."

Key Takeaways

01

Publishers are rapidly embracing AI, but not to replace journalists—to empower them.

Ninety-seven percent of publishers plan to increase AI investment in 2025, with three-quarters focusing budgets on editorial tasks. AI is now routine for workflow automation, content tagging, and translation, but deeper newsroom integration remains limited—just 1% say it's fully scaled across operations.

02

While tools like headline generators and video editors are widely used, satisfaction varies.

Many publishers say current solutions fall short, particularly in video optimization and real-time data. Still, early results are promising: 88% report higher content quality and 86% have cut time spent on repetitive tasks.

03

Misinformation, audience trust, and the pace of innovation remain top concerns.

Publishers want AI that's ethical, adaptable, and contextually aware, not just efficient. Human oversight, however, is rarely a top priority despite fears of over-reliance on automation.

04

The future lies in a hybrid approach that blends in-house tools with vendor solutions.

For AI to truly reshape journalism, it must be shaped by journalists. As the tech evolves, the challenge is clear: use AI to enhance editorial values, not erode them.

About Arc XP

Arc XP is the content platform and operating system built to power aggressive growth for ambitious media companies. Born from *The Washington Post's* longstanding commitment to reinvention, Arc XP delivers the AI-powered tools that modern media businesses need to accelerate workflows, personalize experiences, monetize smarter, and innovate without limits. Arc XP is trusted by the world's leading media brands, powering more than 2,500 sites and delivering billions of pageviews each month.

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