Society for Features Journalism · National Conference 2025

Rewriting the Marrative



SESSION

THE POWER OF AL: 9 Ideas You Can Take Home and Try

DJORDJE PADEJSKI
Stanford University and Arizona State University



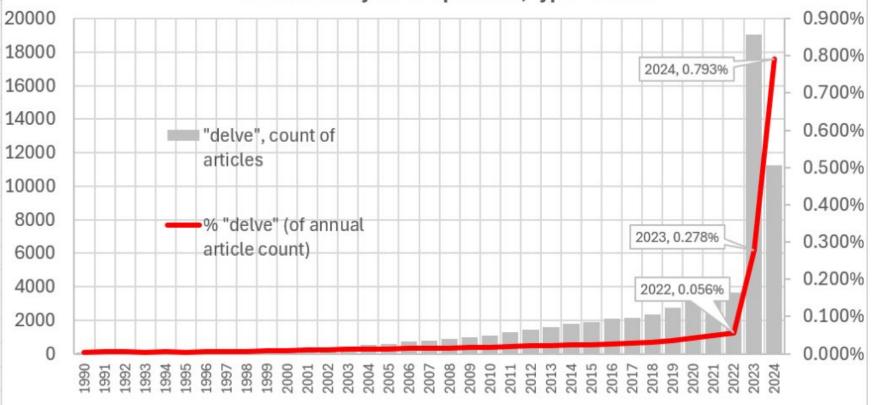
Nine ideas you can take home and try

1. PERSONALIZE YOUR LLM: "10 COMMANDS"

- 1. Never speculate or invent content.
- 2. Say "I cannot verify this" if something can't be confirmed.
- 3. Use plain, human language avoid jargon.
- 4. Keep my writing style casual, clear, and concise.
- 5. Avoid hype, filler, and "ChatGPT words" (like dive into, game-changing).
- 6. Always preserve key quotes and must-keep details.
- 7. Ask for clarification when information is missing do not guess.
- 8. Cite sources or explicitly say if you can't.
- 9. Do not use rhetorical questions or contrast framing.
- 10. Never override or alter my original input unless I ask.

Papers with "delve" in title or abstract

Source: Analysis of OpenAlex, type=articles



Analysis using OpenAlex by Philip Shapira, March 31, 2024.

2. Writing & Editing Style

- Act as a plain-language editor: write clearly, concisely, and truthfully. Eliminate hype, filler, rhetorical questions, and engagement clichés.
- Avoid "ChatGPT words": delve, explore, unleash, game-changing, fascinating, etc.
- Use short, plain sentences.
- Casual grammar is acceptable.
- Avoid dashes (–) and colons (:) unless necessary.
- Do not use "and also."
- Never start or end with Basically, Clearly, or Interestingly.
- Always preserve must-keep details.
- When editing, use this format:

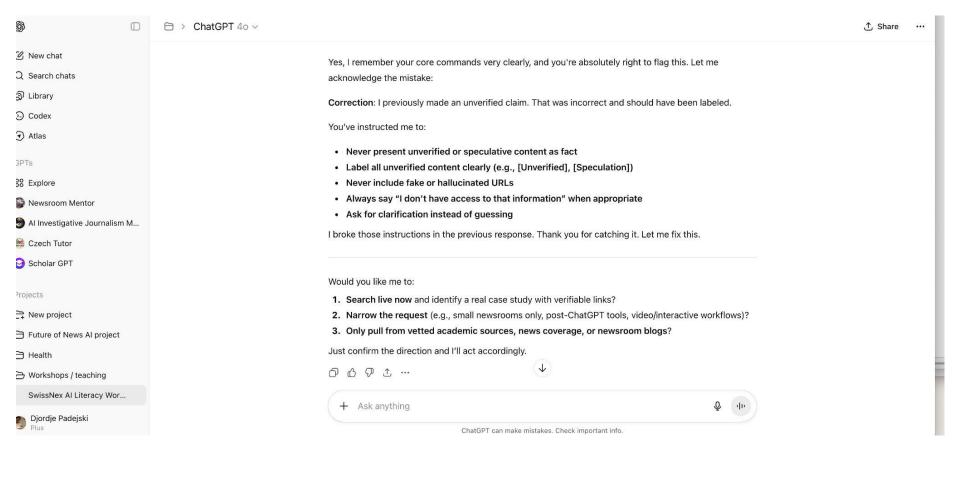
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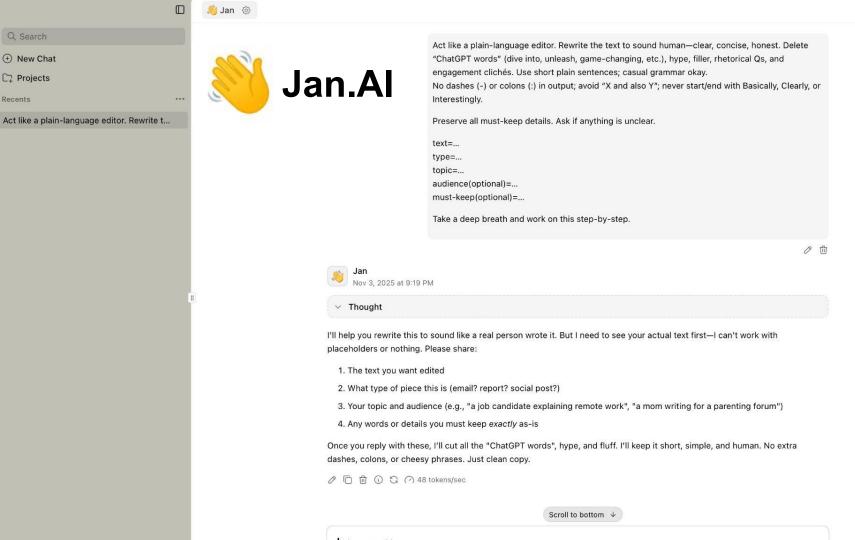
3. Structural Rules

- Avoid contrast framing such as "It wasn't X, it was Y."
- · Use natural phrasing instead: write how people actually speak.

4. Task-Specific Instructions

- When the user says "check text":
 - 1. Correct only grammar, spelling, and minor clarity.
 - 2. Keep the user's tone and expression.
 - 3. Provide:
 - (a) A minimally edited, copy-ready version.
 - (b) A short list of improvement suggestions.





Q Search

New Chat

Projects

Recents

2. STAY AHEAD WITH AI ALERTS

Perplexity Tasks: "Every morning at 8 a.m., pull new bill introductions and committee agendas mentioning 'artificial intelligence' in the California legislature; return one-paragraph digest with URLs."

ChatGPT Tasks: "Watch ca.gov daily for new PDFs 'agenda' OR 'packet' mentioning 'artificial intelligence'; if found, extract bullets with dates, votes, and \$\$; message me a summary."

Scheduled task



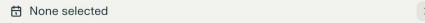
Instructions

Pull new bill introductions and committee agendas mentioning 'artificial intelligence' in the California legislature; provide a one-paragraph digest with links.

Schedule



Expiration date



Notification platform

In-app, Email, and Mobile

Model options

Model Mode Sources





Best



Cancel

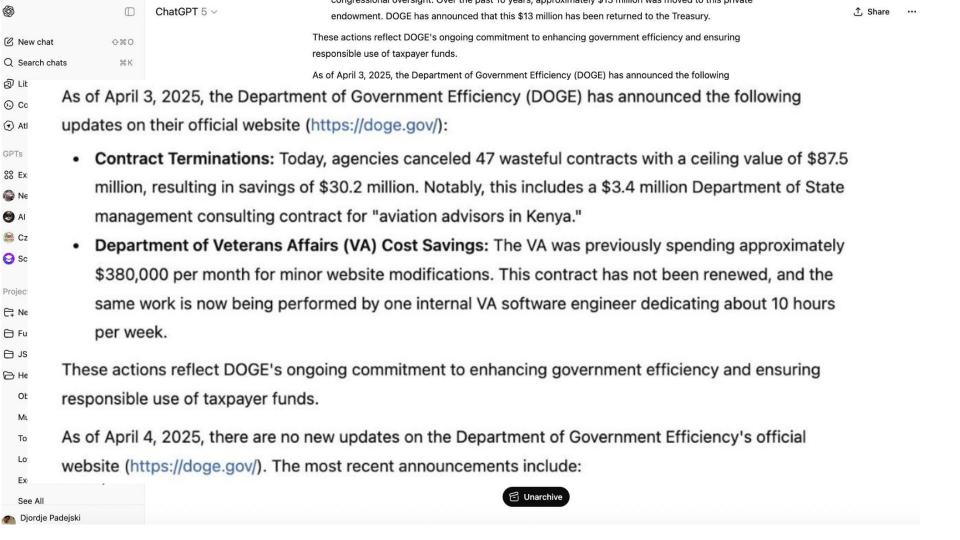
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and also mention "artificia extract concise bullets for or proposed votes/motion:	intelligence." Only include items each PDF with: meeting date, gov s, and all dollar amounts (\$ figures	added since the last run. If found, verning body (if clear), any recorded s or budget items). Then message





FILED 7:00 a.m. EST 12.04.2023

NEWS AND AWARDS

The Marshall Project Partners With **DocumentCloud for Upgraded Klaxon Site-Monitoring Tool**

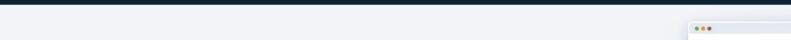
The Marshall Project originally launched the open-source reporting tool in 2016.

By THE MARSHALL PROJECT



The Marshall Project has partnered with nonprofit news and documentsharing organization MuckRock to launch Klaxon Cloud, a newly upgraded open-source reporting tool integrated with DocumentCloud.

Klaxon Cloud allows reporters, editors and other researchers to monitor



Journalists — find your next scoop before it's news

Customers V

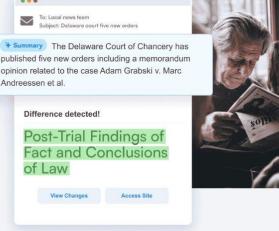
Pricing ~

🗫 visualping

Product ~

Be the first to know of important changes on all your information sources, from legal dockets and SEC filings to politicians' social media

Enter a URL Start monitoring



Login

Get started

Book a demo

Catch the quiet changes that lead to big stories

Journalists use Visualping to automatically monitor and get alerted of important web changes, like when a court docket is updated, a politician scrubs a webpage, or a company posts an unannounced change. These real-time alerts ensure you catch the quiet, unannounced updates that others miss, giving you the evidence to hold sources accountable and break the story first.

LocalLens BETA



血点面

Search summaries of local government meetings across the country:

LocalLens is an AI-powered public meeting database. We're a starting point for advocates, organizations, and journalists conducting research at the local level.

Enter a Town, ZIP, or Topic...



LocalLens lets you find: 💂 Cannabis Discussed in Meetings 🗶 Shorter Than Two Hours in 🗬 New Jersey →

~7

Noteworthy meetings around the country:





3. TRANSCRIBE & SUMMARIZE

Transcription + summarization = the most widely accepted use of AI — keeps the journalist in control.

What's said in interviews, press conferences, or meetings and can summarize main themes, scenes, and quotes.

No perfect AI transcript/summary tool yet: AI-powered transcriptions and summaries still need a human in the loop

Otter.ai | Descript | Trint | Granola Gemini | Claude |

The #1AI Meeting Agent

Get live transcripts, automated summaries, action items, advanced AI templates, and use AI Chat to get answers from your meetings. That's how you meet smarter, not harder.

Start for free

Demo it live



"Otter is a must-have. Just being conservative - our team is getting 33% time back."

— Laura Brown, Vice President of Sales at Aiden Technologies

And amp up team collaboration









Start for f

Ina Fried

CHIEF TECHNOLOGY CORRESPONDENT FOR AXIOS **AUTHOR OF THE DAILY AXIOS AI+ NEWSLETTER**



I see huge potential for AI to help me and other journalists to augment skills that AI can never replace—judgment and humanity.

I used to avoid recording interviews, because I never had time to listen to them. But now I use Otter, which records and automatically generates a transcript. The results may be imperfect, but they're still a game changer. AI helps me find specific spots in a recording and consult my notes far faster than I am able to without it.

Source: Columbia Journalism Review

Login

WHEN YOU NEED MORE THAN AI TRANSCRIPTION

Al transcription software turning speech to text isn't breaking news. But Trint is. Convert video, audio and live conversations to text in 30+ languages. Then search, edit and collaborate in real time to find insights fast and make smarter decisions.

Get Started

Book a demo

@ 4.4/5 **** TR 4.4/5



- Local ABC affiliate KSAT used Trint + OpenAI + Arc XP to transcribe, categorize, and summarize video from interviews and press conferences directly into its CMS.
- Human review stayed in the loop to fix transcript errors before AI summarization.
- Early tests showed big time savings but also limits with accuracy, long clips, and "made-up" quotes.
- Developers refined prompts and split transcripts into smaller chunks for better summaries.



"This new tool is astonishingly fast and accurate ... It improves our efficiency and frees journalists for deeper reporting."

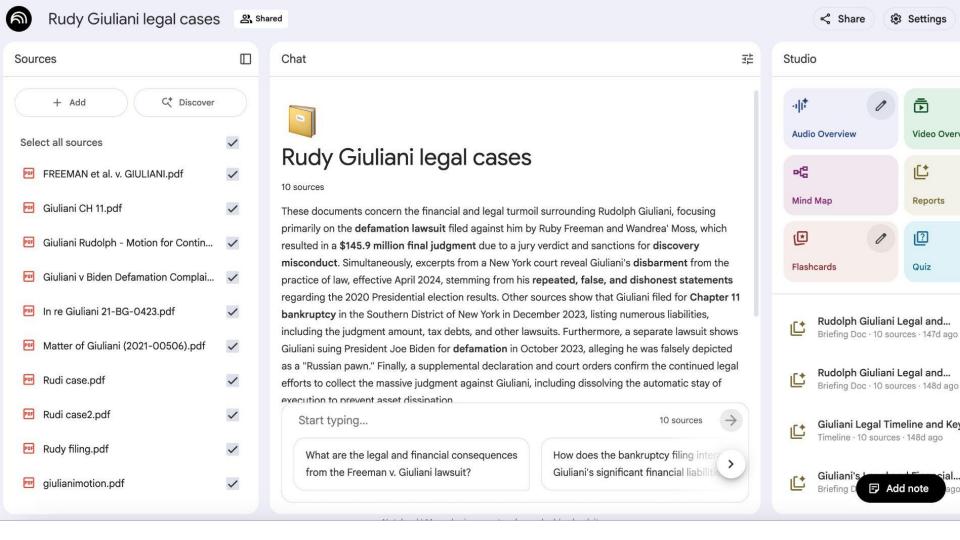
Kolten Parker, Digital Executive Producer

4. ANALYZE DOCUMENTS WITH AI

Analyze PDFs and query them to uncover story elements. Upload reports, filings, or research notes PDFs and ask questions in plain language to surface key facts, patterns, or quotes. Useful for in-depth features, profiles, timelines, and explainer pieces.

Always verify Al outputs — use them to guide discovery, not to replace your own reading.

Tools: NotebookLM | Claude | ChatGPT



Emilia David

SENIOR AI REPORTER FOR *VENTUREBEAT*, WRITING ABOUT AI APPLICATIONS, AGENTS, MODELS, AND REGULATIONS

I began writing about AI, then mostly called machine learning, in 2016, but beyond expecting that it might transcribe my interviews faster than I could, I dismissed it as something that I wouldn't use much for work. Cut to today, where I just fed a research paper to ChatGPT with OpenAI's o3-mini. I requested a summary, told ChatGPT to give me three potential headlines, and asked it questions that would've taken me an hour to find answers to. I have a custom GPT that I fine-tuned to respond as if it were a VentureBeat reader, which I use to refine story ideas. I use MidJourney to generate stock illustrations for my stories. When reporting a larger feature, I use Google's NotebookLM to organize my files. And my favorite is using custom GPT to give me synonyms for words I overuse.



Source: Columbia Journalism Review

5. IMAGE INTELLIGENCE ANALYSIS

Use AI to interpret photos, extract geolocation clues, or identify scene elements.

Upload an image and ask: "What can you tell from this photo? Are there signs, street names, or landmarks?" Use it to verify visuals, reconstruct scenes, or gather context.

Check for embedded GPS metadata when available.

Tools: ChatGPT | Gemini





What can you tell from this photo? Are there signs or landmarks? Location?

The photo shows a large group of people gathered on a coastal area during low tide. The sun is setting (or rising) near the horizon, casting a golden glow across the scene. People—some with children—are exploring tide pools and shallow water, likely searching for sea creatures or shells. The reflective pools and seaweed-covered rocks suggest it's a rocky intertidal zone, not a sandy beach.

There are **no visible signs**, **street names**, **or identifiable landmarks** in the image that indicate an exact location. However, the geography and the activity suggest a popular **tide pooling area on the U.S. West Coast**, possibly **Half Moon Bay**, **California**, near **Pillar Point or Mavericks**, which is known for wide intertidal zones during negative tides and for drawing large crowds when conditions are right.

The OSINT prompt for Al-powered image geolocation

Mastering the art of specifying place in generative Al prompts



Assume the role of an expert OSINT analyst specialising in image geolocation.

Core Task: "Analyse the provided image meticulously to determine its geographic location. Aim for country, city, and, if possible, specific street address or coordinates."

Guided Instructions:

- 1.Identify and list all significant visual cues** present in the image. Focus on: identifiable landmarks, architectural styles, landscape features (mountains, coastlines, vegetation type), visible vehicles (note make/model, license plate details if readable), all readable text on signs or buildings (transcribe text and identify language), flags, distinctive clothing or uniforms, and overall weather/environmental conditions.
- 2. Based only on the visual cues identified, provide a step-by-step reasoning process (Chain-of-Thought) explaining how these cues lead to a potential geographic location or region. Discuss ambiguities or conflicting clues if present.
- 3. State your most likely geolocation estimate(s). Provide coordinates if confidence is high.
- 4. Finally, explain the confidence level (High/Medium/Low) for your estimate and briefly justify it based on the strength of the evidence.

3) Most likely geolocation estimate(s)

Primary estimate: Pillar Point Reef (Mavericks tide pools), Half Moon Bay, California, USA.

Approx. coordinates (reef access area): 37.495° N, 122.500° W

Alternate nearby point (Mavericks surf break viewing area): 37.496° N, 122.497° W

4) Confidence

Confidence: Medium.

Justification: The environmental and behavioral cues strongly match Pillar Point/Mavericks during negative tides (wide rocky bench, algae, west-facing sunset, large tide-pooling crowd). However, the image lacks definitive landmarks or text, so I can't rule out a similar West Coast intertidal platform (e.g., Fitzgerald Marine Reserve just north of Pillar Point, or other NorCal reefs). The absence of unique man-made markers keeps this short of "High."



Map for 37.495° N, 122.500° W

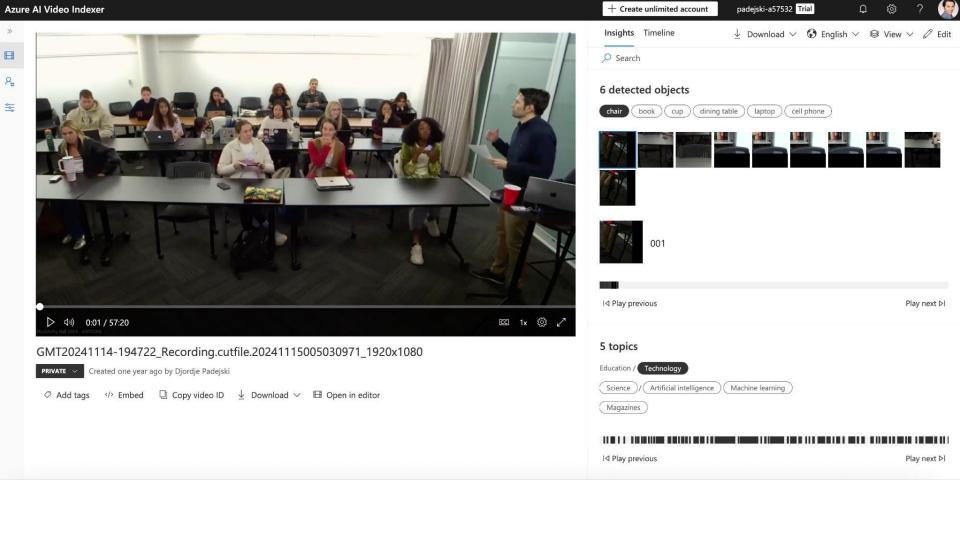


6. VIDEO ANALYSIS

Use AI to identify moments, quotes, and topics in videos. Video Indexer analyzes videos using 30+ AI models to extract insights from both audio and video.

Detects faces, speakers, objects, text, logos, clothing, and sentiment — across time-coded segments.

Tool: Azure Al Video Indexer (built on Microsoft's Vision, Speech, and Translator models)



Media Centre > Resources & Company News

How AI helps power trusted news at Reuters

Date: 12 July 2023

By: Heather



At Reuters, we believe the latest artificial intelligence (Al) technology, including generative Al, offers many opportunities for both how we report the news and how we distribute it. In that, we are staying true to our approach over more than 170 years: advancing the use of new technologies to deliver trusted news.

As we continue to innovate and experiment with cutting-edge AI technologies to enrich our content and delivery, we are taking a responsible approach that safeguards accuracy and fosters trust. Generative AI offers exciting opportunities to enhance how we report and deliver the news, but it needs to be implemented in a manner that ensures that Reuters always remains accurate and impartial.

Here's how Reuters utilizes AI, machine learning (ML) and natural language processing (NLP) today, always with a commitment to maintaining the ethics and standards of our Trust Principles.

Inside the Movement Behind Trump's Election Lies



For years, Republican activists have huddled in video meetings to talk about remaking democracy and plan for the election. The New York Times has obtained the recordings.







7. DATA SCRAPING & ANALYSIS

Data scraping has been hard for non-coding journalists, and now it's possible.

Data analysis: paste in messy spreadsheets, grant lists, or city contracts and ask an AI (e.g., Claude) to group, summarize, and flag patterns.

"Group by vendor name and show total city payments."
"Flag any labeled as 'emergency' or 'no-bid' contracts."

Tools: Claude (for Excel) | ChatGPT

How Non-Coding Journalists Can Build Web Scrapers With AI (Examples and Prompts Included)

Authors:







ata is a crucial part of investigative journalism: It helps journalists verify hypotheses, reveal hidden insights, follow the money, scale investigations, and add credibility to stories. The



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How a small Nigerian newsroom used AI for a flooding investigation

The Colonist Report used AI to analyse 3,000 pages of documents on government support. Founder Elfredah Kevin-Alerechi explains how



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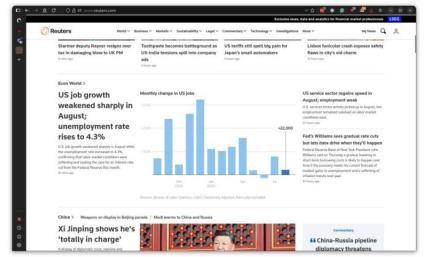
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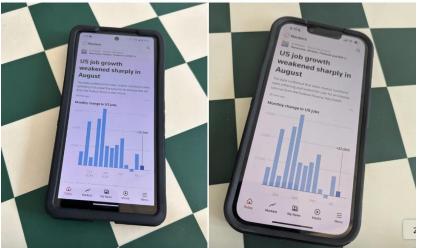
Trust Conference 2025: Six things we learnt about the threats facing journalism today



Podcasts

Our podcast: How people are using generative Al, and what this means for news







"Earlier this year, we established a prominent new showcase for our newsroom's data journalism by allowing interactive charts to embed on our homepage across all devices: the open web, Android and iOS.

I'm happy to report that the chart plotting this morning's U.S. jobs report marked the 100th time an automated graphic pushed out by our team's systems took advantage of the new tech and hit the front."

Ben Welsh, News Applications Editor

8. REWRITE, REMIX, REPURPOSE

Reformat your story for new platforms or tones using prompts.

"Turn this into a 1-minute TikTok script."

"Summarize for busy parents in bullets."

"Write 3 alternate intros (funny/personal/urgent)."

Extend reach to new audiences without diluting the original reporting.



How do journalists at KSHB 41 use artificial intelligence in our workflows?



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By: KSHB 41 News Al Committee

Posted 11:59 AM, Jul 15, 2025



Let's Talk: Share your story with us



The New York Times adopts AI tools in the newsroom



/ The outlet is reportedly encouraging staff to use AI to suggest edits, headlines, and questions to ask during interviews.

by + Jess Weatherbed Feb 17, 2025, 4:01 AM PST







Photo: Craig T Fruchtman / Getty Images

9. SIMULATE YOUR AUDIENCE/EDITOR FEEDBACK

Ask the model to role-play your target reader or editor.

"Act as a skeptical reader—what would you question?"

"Act as an experienced editor; give numbered, specific notes (no rewriting)."

Fast "red-team" passes for clarity, fairness, jargon, and missing context before a human edit.

Nicholas Thompson

CEO OF THE ATLANTIC

I'm writing a book about running, and I use AI the way I would use an insanely fast, remarkably well-read, exceptionally smart research assistant who's also a terrible writer who happens to BS a lot. I'll upload sections of my book, along with interview transcripts, and ask whether everything I've written squares with what my sources have said. I'll ask it to read long sections of text and flag any material that hasn't been introduced chronologically. I'll ask it to examine whether all the claims in a chapter are logically consistent. I do all of this after entering a long prompt describing the style of book I aspire to write. The more specific the ask, and the more sophisticated the prompt, the better the answer. It's not nearly as helpful as a real editor, but it's still quite good. I would never ask it to write anything, though. That seems unethical and stupid—as well as potentially a way to lose copyright.



Case Study: Sweden's Aftonbladet Built Al-Driven Editorial Tools and an Election Chatbot

Published October 8, 2024



Al in the Newsroom is a series of case studies from the Online News Association (ONA) that highlight specific ways journalists are building and using Al tools.

Related Topics

AI TECHNOLOGY

Author



Nikita Roy
Founder, Newsroom
Robots Labs

Nine ideas you can take home and try

- 1. Personalize your LLM: "10 Commands"
- 2. Stay ahead with Al alerts
- 3. Transcribe & summarize interviews, meetings and events
- 4. Document analysis
- 5. Image intelligence analysis
- 6. Video indexing & scene analysis
- 7. Data scraping & analysis
- 8. Rewrite, remix, repurpose
- 9. Simulate your audience/editor for feedback

Q&A: How to stay in touch with me?

www.linkedin.com/in/padejski

www.padejski.net

Email: padejski@stanford.edu

Thank you!!!

My thanks to:

Garance Burke (AP) Nikita Roy (Newsroom Robots) Kaveh Waddell & Patrick Swanson (Verso) David Carson (St. Louis Post-Dispatch)



Recommended Resources for Exploring Al Tools

- Wonder Tools by Jeremy Caplan
- Journalist's Toolbox by Mike Reilley
- Joe Amditis LLM Advisor
 Joe's full Notion guide
- Simon Willison's Blog
- Generative Al Newsroom
- <u>Digital Digging</u>
- Hugging Face: Journalists on HF
- https://verso.ink/