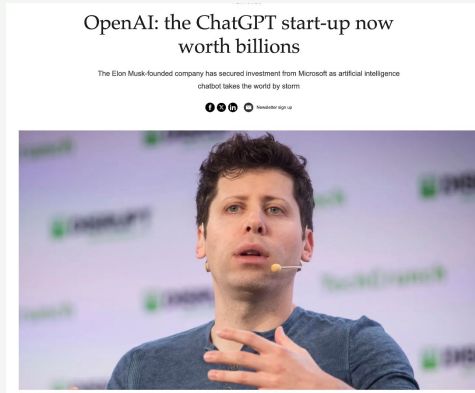


Djordje Padejski
Stanford University



The Elon Musk-founded company has secured investment from Microsoft as artificial intelligence chatbot takes the world by storm



Others to Be Set Elsewhere— Computation Machine Results From War Findings



Next two hours

How can journalists understand AI well enough to use it when it is effective, and also hold it accountable?

01

Myths,
metaphors
and machines

02

What AI
actually is
and is not

03

How journalists
should evaluate
AI

04

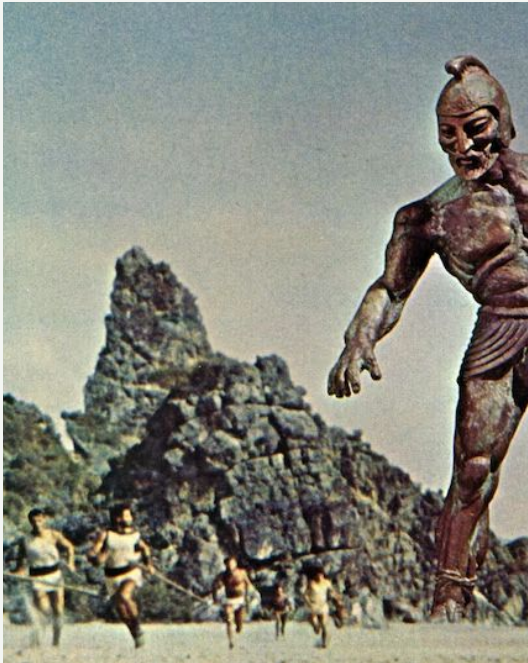
What
newsrooms
actually built

05

What your
newsroom
should build
next

Critical AI literacy is understanding what the system does, what it changes and what choices journalism should make, not just knowing how to use a tool.

Before AI was a technology, AI was a story



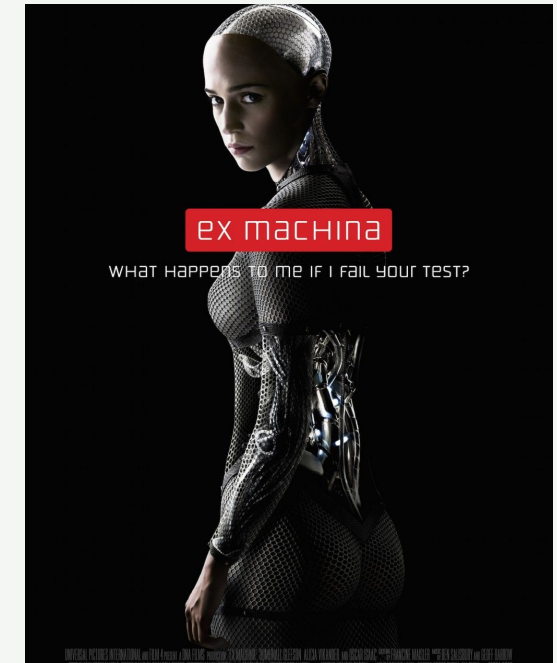
Protector



Creature



Companion



Threat

AI is often described as humanlike, magical or catastrophic. Those narratives define public expectations before the facts arrive.

The old metaphors still shape AI discourse

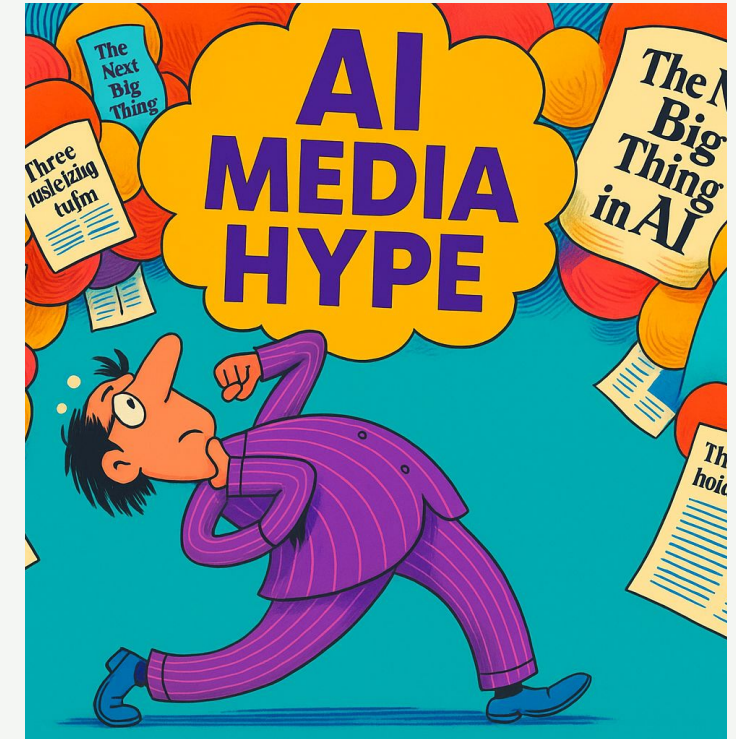
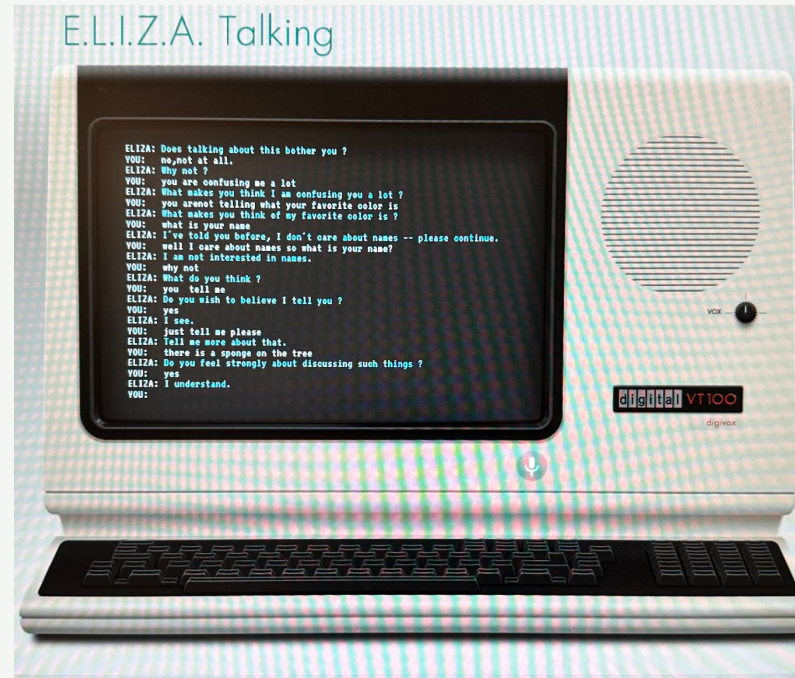
NEW GIANT 'BRAIN' DOES WIZARD WORK

Bureau of Standards Says It
Can Solve Vast Mathematical
Problems in a Few Minutes

LABORATORY FOR THIS CITY

Others to Be Set Elsewhere—
Computation Machine Results
From War Findings

WASHINGTON, Aug. 24 (U.P.)—



- “electronic brains”
- conversational machines
- AI media hype



AI
MEDIA
HYPE

The Next
Big Thing
in AI

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The Next
Big
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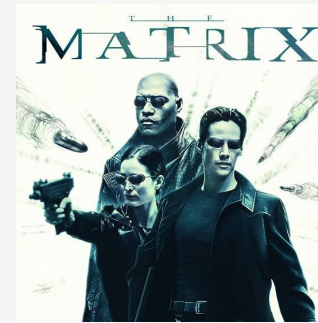
Mulhi Blfy
Bouto
Pastad

Thr hedhgling
donsa! hedh!

Th thas wille
hoid ng hoooh pou!

Hype and fear look opposite.
They often do the same work.

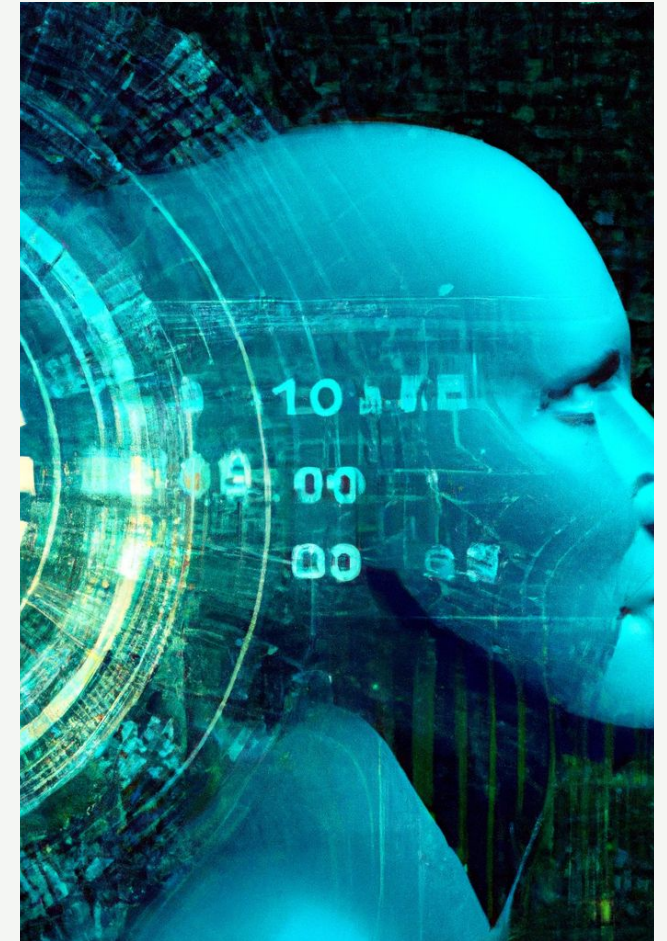
“What story, movie or image influenced how you imagine AI?”



Critical AI literacy

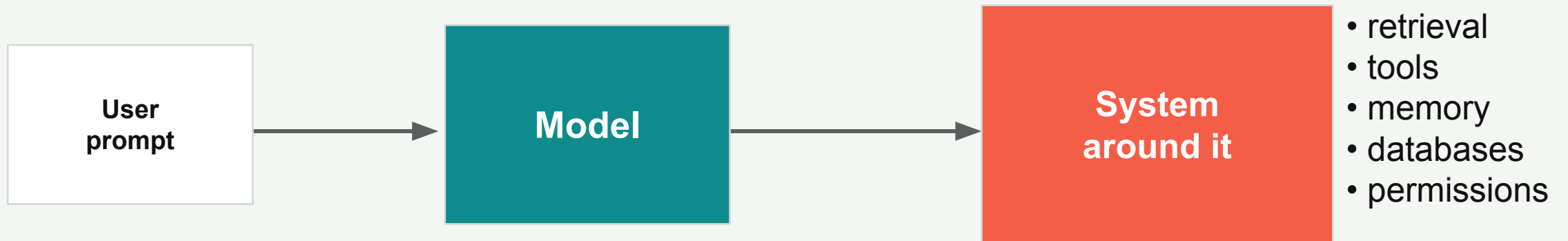
How we think about AI, how we use it, how we teach it and how we hold it accountable.

- Move beyond buzzwords and prompts
- Understand models, systems and infrastructure
- Ask who benefits, who is harmed and who is accountable
- Make deliberate choices about what journalism should use AI to solve



In 2026, “AI” usually means a system around a LLM

The language model is important, but so do context, retrieval, tools, permissions and workflow design.



Better question: “What system have we built around it?”

LLM generates plausible continuation, not truth

What is journalism?

January 28, 2024



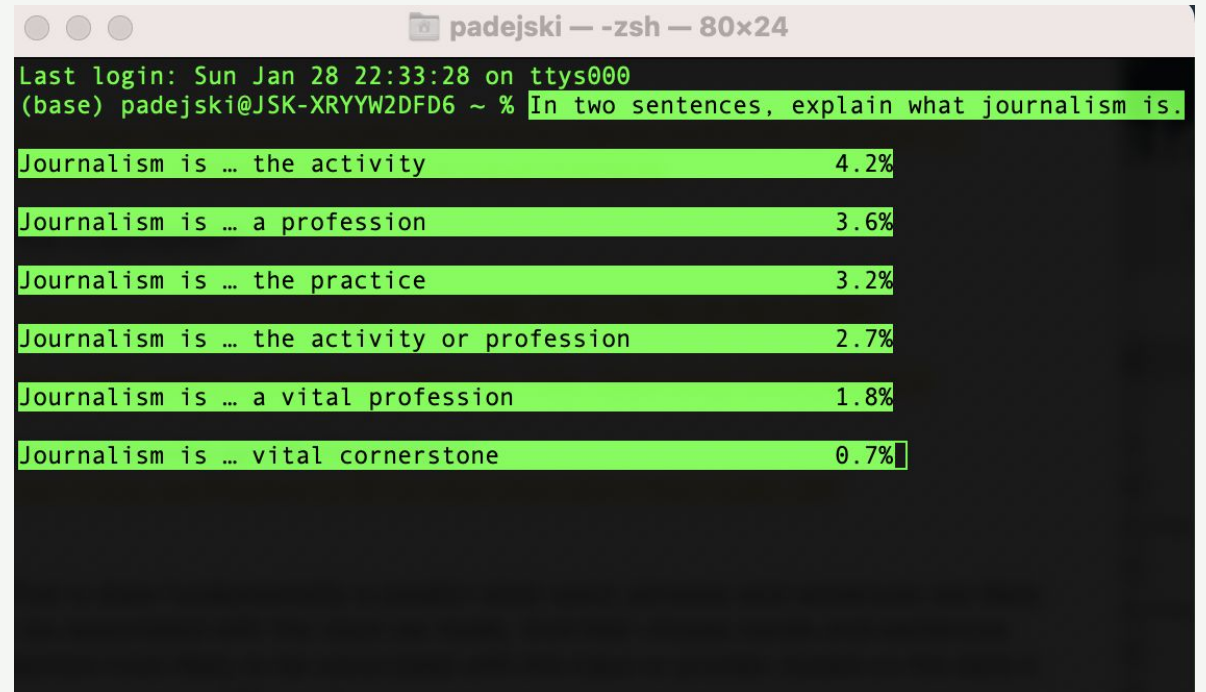
Anonymous

In two sentences, explain what journalism is.



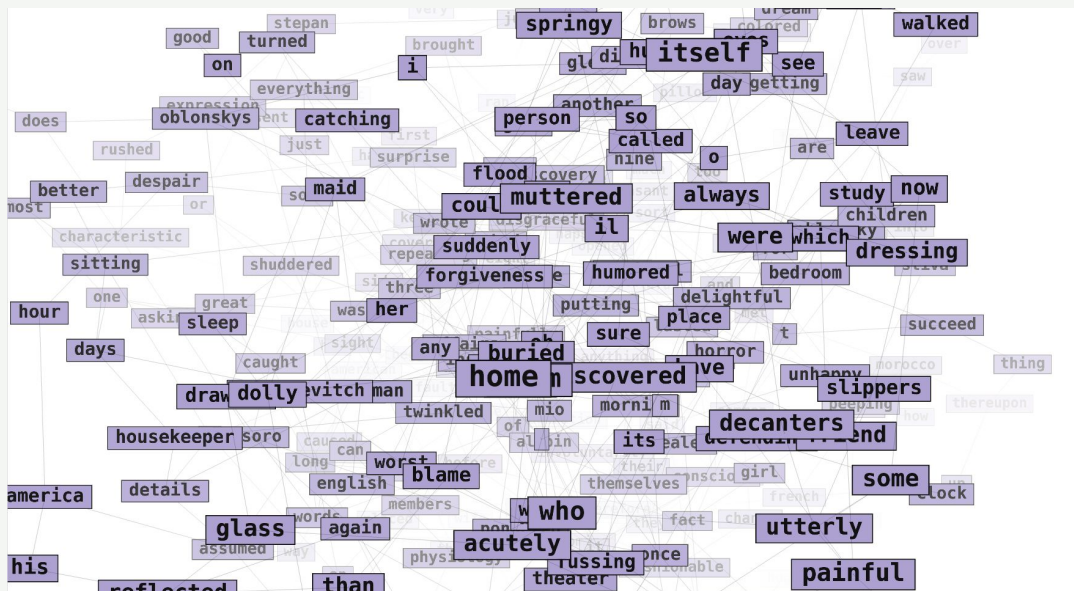
ChatGPT

Journalism is the activity or profession of gathering, assessing, creating, and presenting news and information to the public. It serves as a critical tool for informing society, fostering public discourse, and holding institutions accountable.



The model produces text based on patterns and probabilities. It does not retrieve a fact the way searching a database does. Fluency is not truth.

LLM generates plausible conversation



The model also produces text based on conversational training data and human feedback. Hallucinations are features of LLM, not errors.

Context window: LLM's working desk

Everything available to the model while it is handling the current task. Maximum amount of text or other tokenized input available to the model.

Claude: from 200,000 tokens to up to 1 million

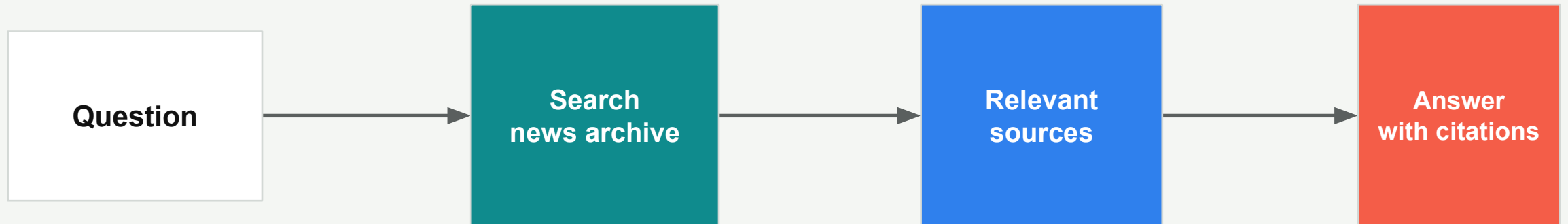
ChatGPT: 128,000-token limit (approx. 95,000 words).



A larger desk (context window) helps, but it does not guarantee the model will read, rank or interpret every document correctly.

RAG: ask the model to use trusted material first

Retrieval-Augmented Generation (RAG) retrieves relevant source material before the model answers.



Grounded is better than guessing. But wrong retrieval or wrong interpretation still produces wrong answers.



Sources

+ Add sources

Search the web for new sources

Select all

- FREEMAN et al. v. GIULIANI...
- Giuliani CH 11.pdf
- Giuliani Rudolph - Motion f...
- Giuliani v Biden Defamation...
- giulianimotion.pdf
- In re Giuliani 21-BG-0423.pdf
- Matter of Giuliani (2021-00...
- Rudi case.pdf
- Rudi case2.pdf
- Rudy filing.pdf

Chat

Rudy Giuliani legal cases

10 sources · Oct 23, 2024

The provided document is a **federal civil docket** detailing the legal proceedings in **Freeman et al. v. Giuliani**, a case involving claims of **libel, slander, and assault**. Plaintiffs **Ruby Freeman** and **Wandrea Moss** initiated the suit against **Rudolph Giuliani** and several media entities, though the media defendants were later voluntarily dismissed. Much of the record focuses on protracted **discovery disputes**, with the court repeatedly ordering Giuliani to produce financial records and electronically stored information. Due to his persistent failure to comply with these obligations, the court issued significant **discovery sanctions**, including a requirement to pay the plaintiffs' legal fees. The proceedings culminated in a

Gemini Notebook just got smarter. Try asking to analyze your data and create charts.

Ask a question or create something

10 sources

Studio

Audio Overview

Slide Deck

Video Overview

Mind Map

Reports

Flashcards

Quiz

Infographic

Data Table

Rudolph Giuliani Legal and...
Briefing Doc · 10 sources · 426d ago

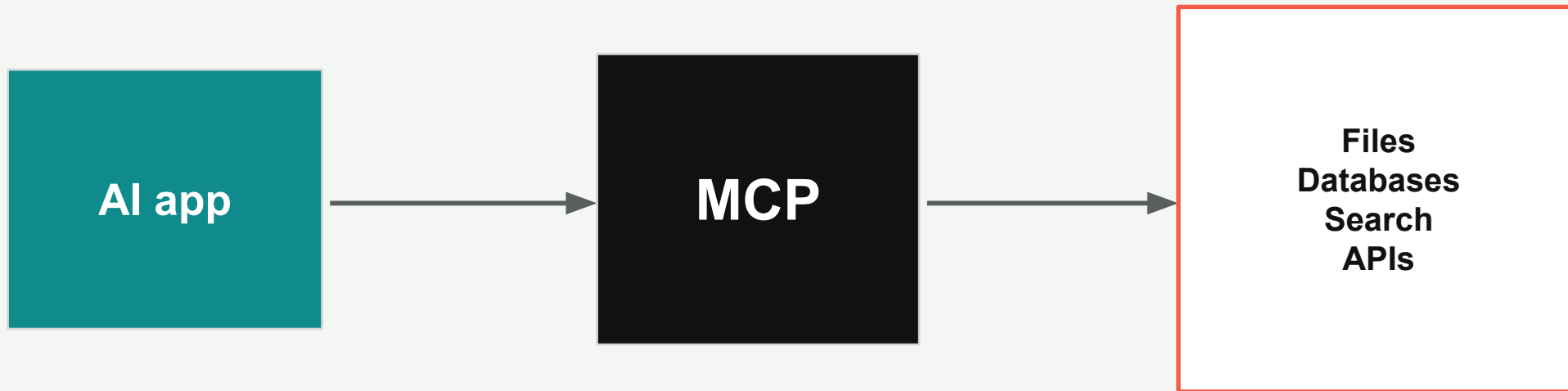
Rudolph Giuliani Legal and...
Briefing Doc · 10 sources · 427d ago

Giuliani Legal Timeline and Ke...
Timeline · 10 sources · 427d ago

Add note

MCP: a standard way to connect AI to outside systems

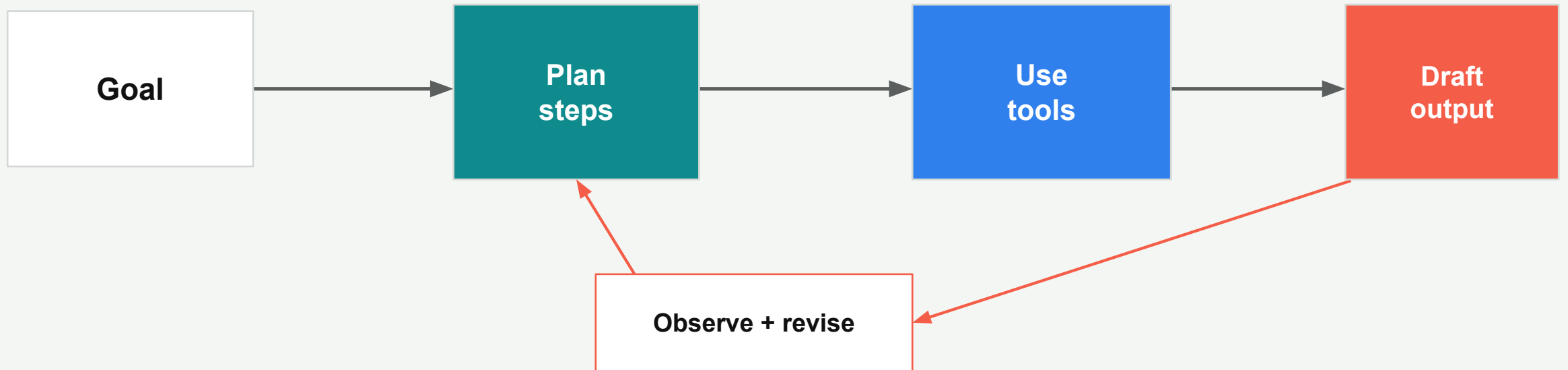
Think of it as “USB for AI applications” or API: a common way for an AI app to access data sources, tools and workflows.



Journalism question: what can the AI read, what can it change and who approved those permissions?

Agentic workflows: from answer to action

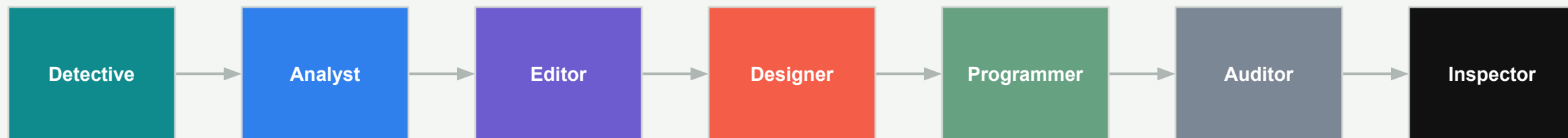
An agentic system can break a goal into steps, use tools, observe results and revise its next action.



The risk changes when an AI system is allowed to take actions, not just answer questions.

Data2Story: a virtual newsroom for data journalism

A multi-agent workflow from dataset to evidence-grounded multimedia story.



The workflow separates research, analysis, narrative, design and verification

Six questions before adopting any AI system

- 1 What problem are we solving?
- 2 Why does this require AI?
- 3 What data and systems are involved?
- 4 What happens when it is wrong?
- 5 Where does human judgment belong?
- 6 Who is this actually serving?

Keep these in mind as we look at what newsrooms actually built.

Two transformations are happening at once

Inside newsrooms

- summarize
- transcribe
- translate
- analyze documents
- monitor public meetings
- search archives

Outside newsrooms

- AI search and chatbots answer directly
- fewer visits to original publishers
- loss of audience relationship
- business model pressure

Newsrooms may become better at producing journalism while losing control over how audiences encounter it.

Five-minute break

When we return: what U.S. newsrooms actually built with AI, 2022–2025.

What U.S. newsrooms actually built with AI

A field report on U.S. newsroom AI projects, 2022–2025

160

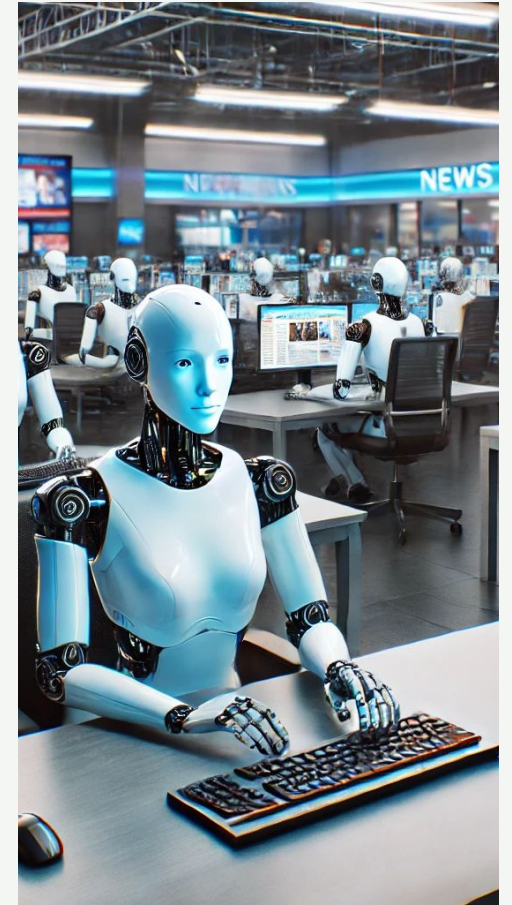
projects

101

news
organizations

2022–25

publicly
documented
window



The dataset shows public activity, not everything happening

- Every entry had at least one public source
- Large, digital-first and funded organizations are more visible
- Small local, broadcast and Spanish-language newsrooms are likely undercounted
- Domain counts can overlap because a project can serve more than one function

Editorial
80

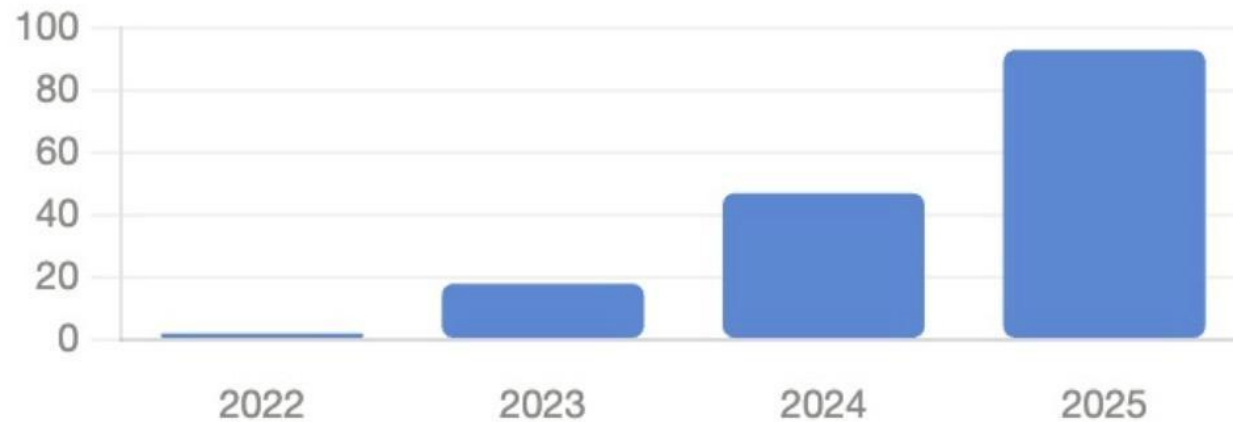
Audience
55

Business
32

Best read as a catalog of documented experimentation, not a complete census of AI use.

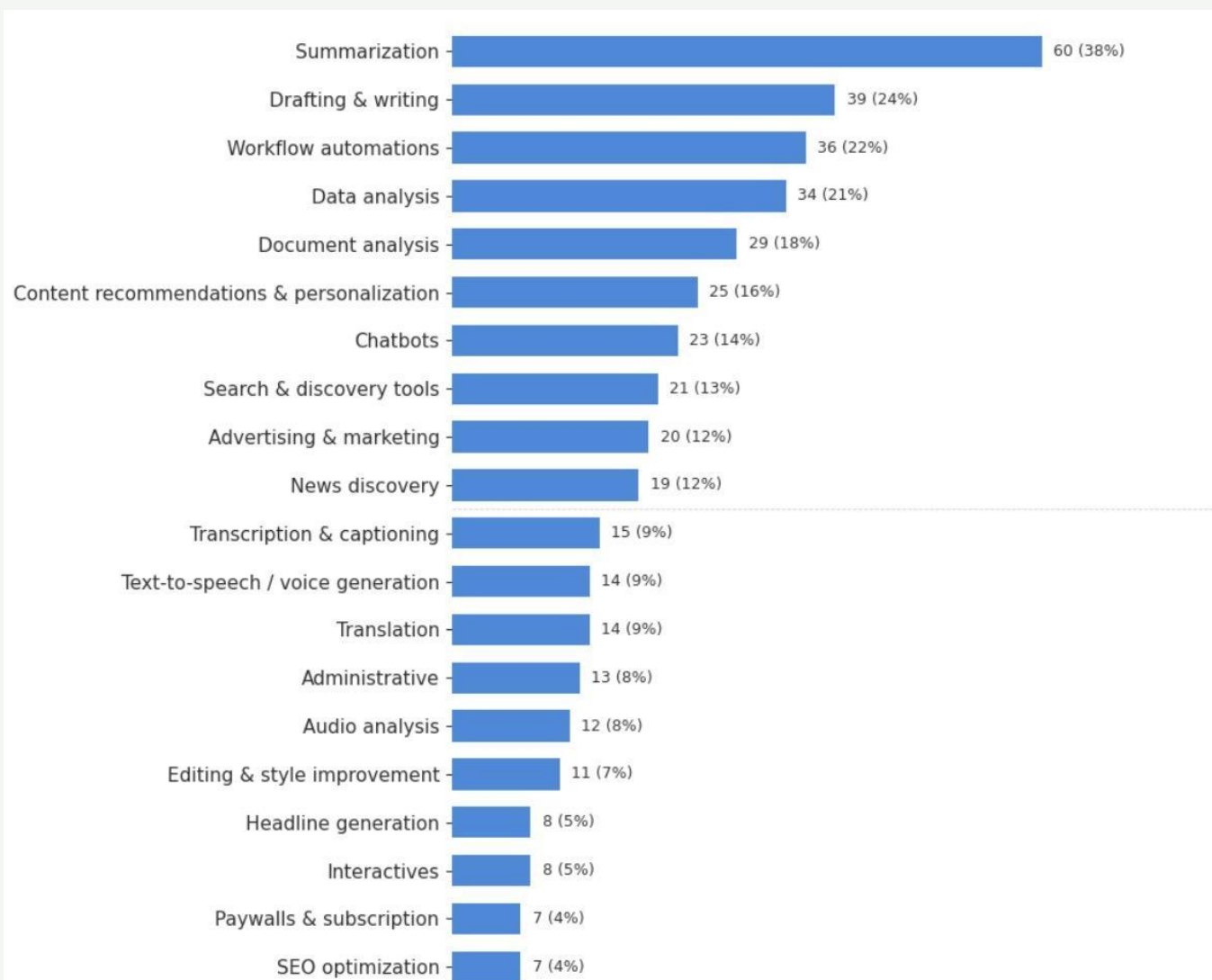
Experimentation accelerated quickly

Launch year



Three years after ChatGPT, AI moved from a few early adopters into ordinary newsroom operations.

What they built: most projects optimize existing work



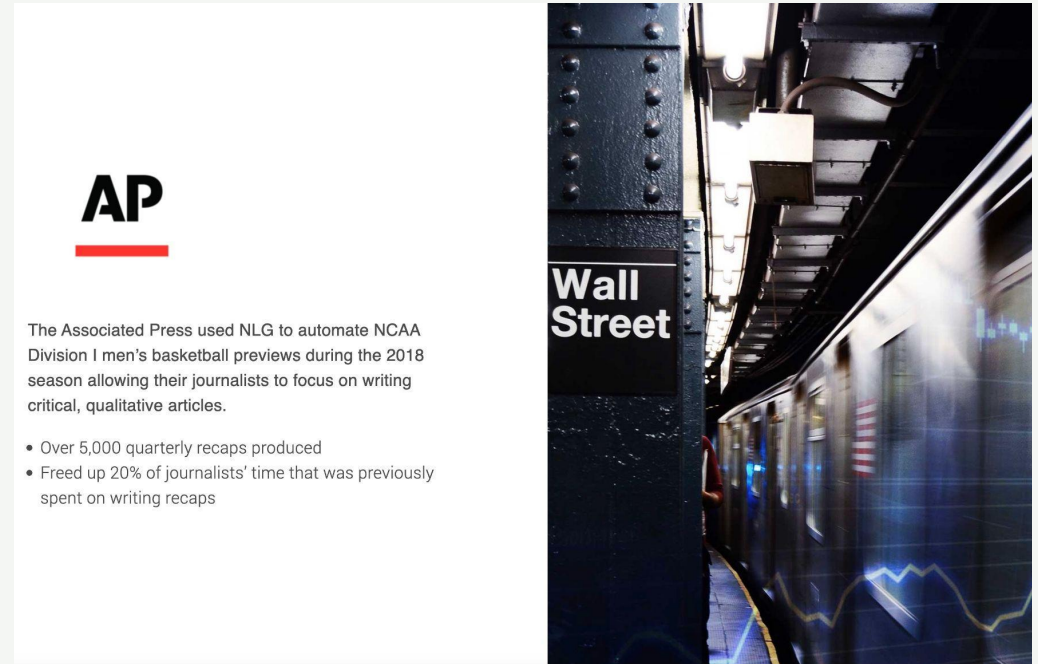
The dominant pattern is not reinvention. It is acceleration.

Summarization, drafting and workflow automation show newsrooms using AI to do familiar work faster.

Efficiency: AI automates routine production work

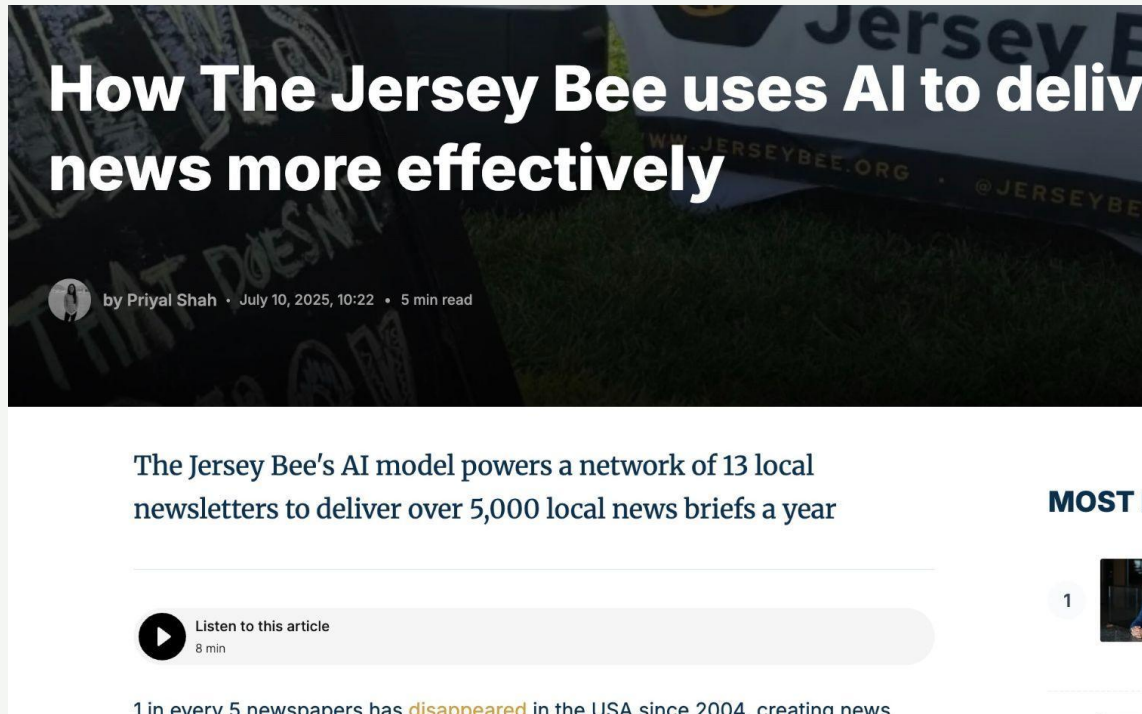
- summaries, transcription and translation
- headlines, SEO and social posts
- newsletter and alert workflows
- copyediting and formatting support

Useful, but not automatically transformative.



Internal production assistants are often safer because humans review output before publication.

Jersey Bee: automate the workflow, not the journalism



- AI supports collection, summarization and routing
- Editors still review, select and contextualize
- The problem came first: serving many local communities with limited staff

This is the participant-survey aspiration in practice: “automate repetitive newsroom workflows rather than journalism itself.”

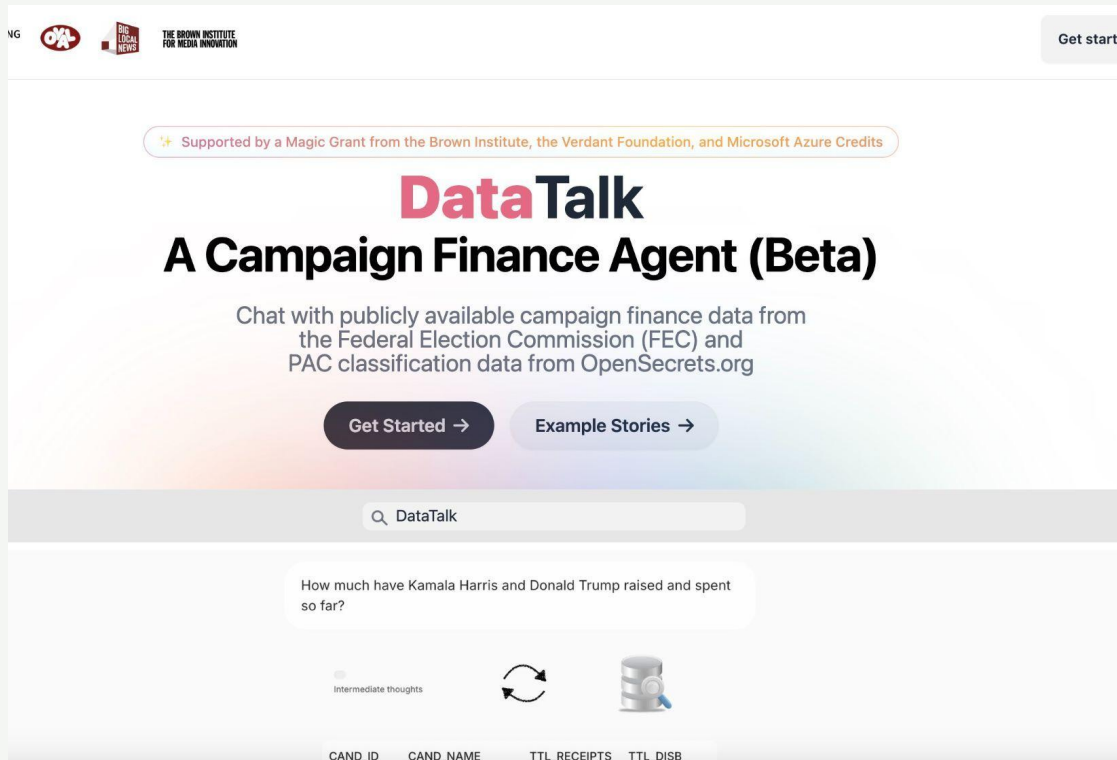
Expanded reporting capacity: AI helps cover what humans could not monitor

The strongest journalistic uses are often not about generating more content.



AI extends the surface area of what a newsroom can see. Reporters still verify, interpret and report.

DataTalk: AI that helps journalists ask better questions



Not all AI tools need to generate content.

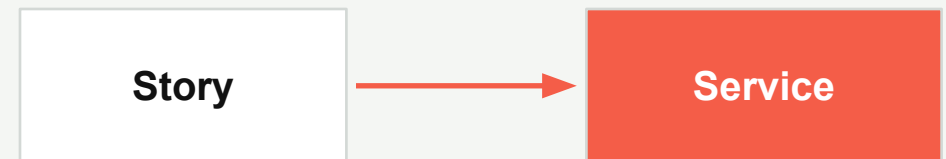
- translates plain-English questions into SQL
- keeps the query visible and inspectable
- lowers the cost of accountability reporting
- centers process, evidence and verification

Journalism as utility: help people do something

A smaller group of projects uses AI to turn reporting and public data into services.

- property-tax protest guidance
- restaurant health inspection tools
- immigration information assistants
- climate and archive explainers
- election and civic information hubs

**From “read our story”
to “tell us what you
need to know or
accomplish.”**



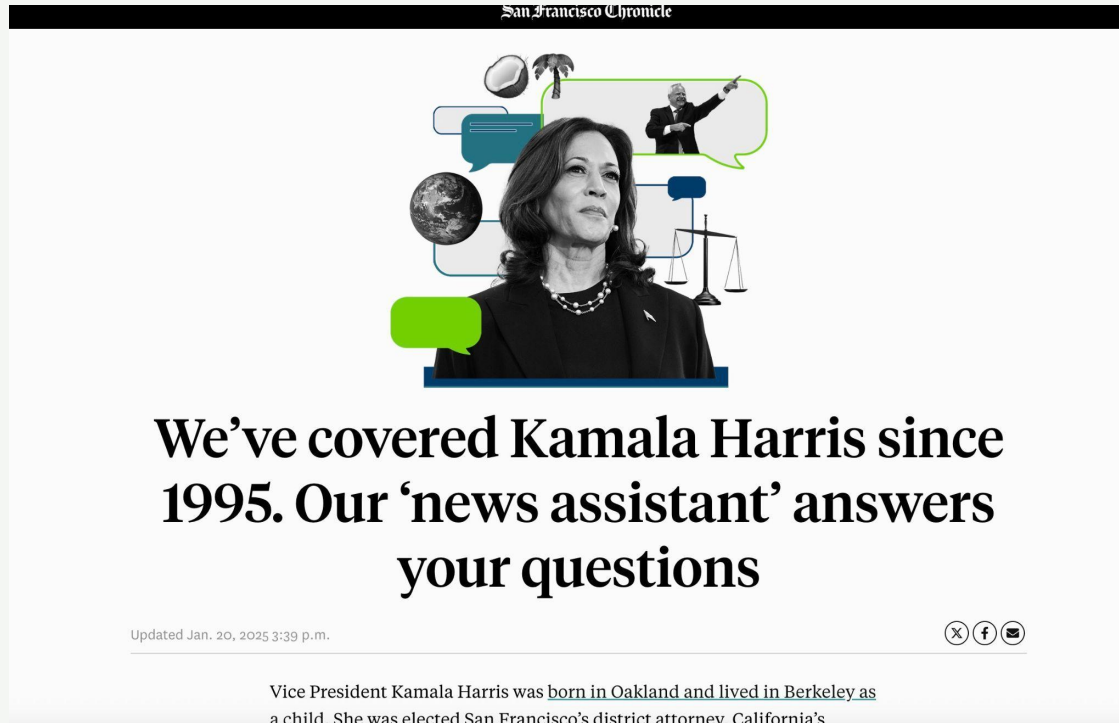
Public-facing AI fails in public

The risk is newsroom reputation, not just hallucination.



Newsroom reputation carries the cost, not the model provider.

News chatbots were popular. Many struggled.

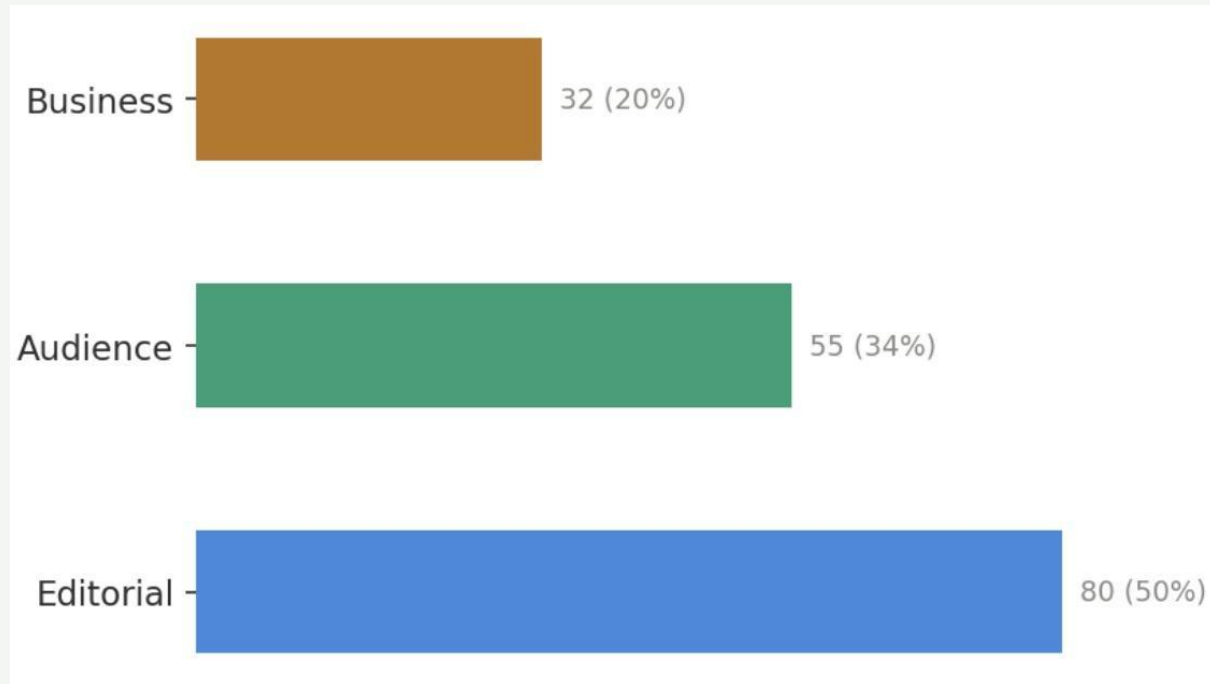


23 news chatbots

- high maintenance costs
- stale knowledge bases
- unclear audience need
- accuracy risk in public
- product-market fit still uncertain

Core question: why would an audience come to a newsroom chatbot instead of a general-purpose assistant?

The business gap: least built where the threat is greatest

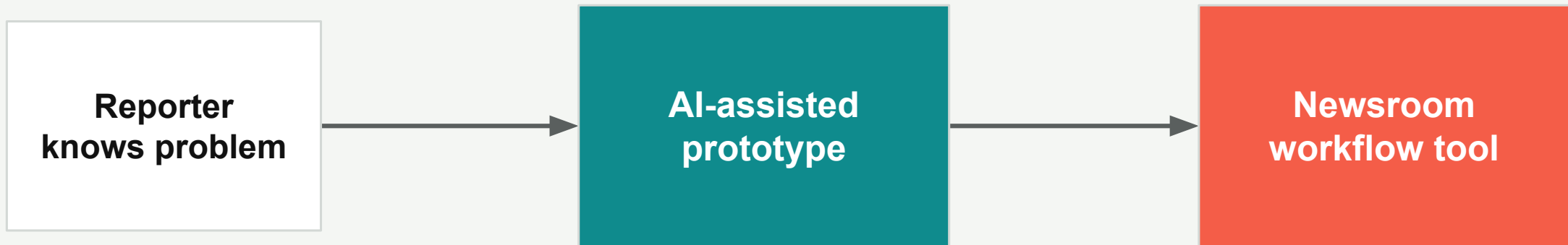


News leaders worry about traffic, audience behavior and business models. But relatively few projects target revenue, subscriptions or fundraising.

A warning: if AI changes how people find news, efficiency alone will not solve the problem.

The barrier to building is dropping

AI-assisted coding (vibecoding) and agentic workflows change who can prototype newsroom tools.



This expands the set of problems that can be solved — but raises new questions about security, maintenance and governance.

What should your newsroom build?

“Start with the problem, not the technology.”

Write one sentence:

- I wish I did not have to...
- Our newsroom cannot...
- Our audience needs...

Then ask: is this efficiency, reporting capacity, audience utility or business sustainability?

Five takeaways

- AI is not magic. It is technology inside systems, organizations and stories.
- Understanding the model is no longer enough; understand retrieval, tools and agents.
- AI is strongest at processing, scale and repetitive workflows.
- Journalism still depends on sources, verification, judgment and accountability.
- Efficiency is useful, but the biggest opportunity is expanding what journalism can cover and do.

Start with the problem, not the technology.

Stay in touch

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www.padejski.net

Thank you!