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Artificial Intelligence and Professional Boundaries in Journalism: Resistance, Adaptation, and Implications for Professional Education

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Abstract

This study analyses the impact of Artificial Intelligence (AI) on the construction of professional boundaries within Albanian media newsrooms. The analysis is grounded in the theoretical concept of boundary work (Carlson & Lewis, 2015), which conceptualises journalism as a field in continuous negotiation shaped by the interaction between professionals and external actors. The study combines quantitative and qualitative approaches. The quantitative data were obtained through a survey of 236 journalists, conducted as part of a study by the Department of Journalism and Communication at the University of Tirana in 2025, while the qualitative data were collected through 23 semi-structured interviews with journalists, editors, and editors-in-chief from both traditional and online media, as well as through a focus group of 14 participants from the same categories. The findings demonstrate that AI continues to be used at limited and mostly individual levels, while a tension exists between resistance and adaptation to its tools. Consequently, professional boundaries in Albanian journalism are being reshaped under the influence of AI, raising broader implications for professional education and the preparation of future journalists.

Keywords: Artificial Intelligence, professional boundaries, resistance and adaptation, AI ethics, journalism education

1. Introduction

The interaction between artificial intelligence and work practice across different domains of life has generated instability in the traditional definitions of professions. “Many studies focus on where employees find meaningfulness in their work, how different meanings are made with similar jobs, how work meanings have changed over time, and across cultures, and the personal and organizational implications of holding different beliefs about the meaning of work” (Olsen, 2023, p. 2). In this context, professional boundaries, once clear and stable, are now being renegotiated under the influence of new technological practices, creating a persistent tension between resistance and adaptation.

Journalism is among the professions most profoundly affected by this process. As Carlson and Lewis (2015) argue, its boundaries are in a constant state of renegotiation due to the ongoing interaction and friction between professionals and external actors. Within this process, technology companies, particularly those developing artificial intelligence, exert a substantial influence through their dominant role in shaping newsroom practices.

In an ever-intensifying wave of automation, many tasks once considered profoundly human, such as information verification, analysis, and narrative production, have increasingly been delegated to machines (Lewis, Guzman, Schmidt, & Lin, 2025). Consequently, the professional boundaries of journalism are losing their stability, creating the need for a renewed understanding of authorship and human agency.

Naturally, this is a process marked by ongoing tensions between professional autonomy and the pressures of adopting new technologies. Scholars such as Faulconbridge, Sarwar, and Spring (2025) as well as Sarrionandia et al. (2025) argue that technological competencies have become an integral component of professional legitimacy within journalism. This, in turn, gives rise to a persistent tension between increasing newsroom efficiency and the epistemological foundations of the journalistic profession. In such an environment, journalists face a profound ethical dilemma: where does the control over artificial intelligence end and where does professional responsibility, the core of journalistic ethics, begin?

The restructuring of professional boundaries has rendered traditional training and education for static roles inadequate. Both journalism schools and organizations need to reconsider the content of curricula and training for continuing education by incorporating new approaches that extend beyond these static roles, which do not meet the demands of the current era. The collaboration between humans and AI as well as the challenges that come with it should be assessed as an integral part of professional training at various stages of professional development, from university education through the involvement of media organizations themselves in this shift.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Professional boundary work and the transformation of journalism

Digital transformations have seen new forms of journalism emerge that challenge epistemological and professional paradigm (Cools, Gorp, & Opgenhaffen, 2022). In response to these dynamics, Carlson and Lewis (2015) rightly emphasise that whatever makes journalism distinctive must be continually constructed. For them, journalism has already changed and can no longer be regarded as a fixed entity. Rather, it represents an ever-evolving definition that is applied differently depending on the context (Carlson & Lewis, 2015, p. 2). Carlson and Lewis are widely recognised for their contribution to the redefinition of the theoretical concept of *boundary work* within journalism studies.

The authors developed a typology, emphasising that disputes surrounding journalism are often disputes about boundaries. According to them, contemporary questions regarding who qualifies as a journalist and what constitutes acceptable or unacceptable behaviour can be better understood through the lens of professional boundary construction (Carlson & Lewis, 2015, p. 2). Carlson and Lewis analysed this concept across three dimensions – expansion, exclusion (of others), and the protection of autonomy – which, in their view, organise the existing scholarship on the construction and management of professional boundaries.

This concept has been further developed from different perspectives by media scholars. While some approach it through its dynamic nature, emphasising how professionals respond on a case-by-case basis to construct and negotiate professional boundaries (Faulconbridge et al., 2025), others have deepened the analysis from an economic perspective, thereby leaving a significant gap in addressing issues related to media ethics (Porlezza & Ferri, 2022, p. 71).

This situation has prompted media organisations and journalists to broaden their understanding of journalistic work, incorporating tasks that extend beyond the traditional boundaries of journalism (Mesquita & Mathias-Felipe, 2023, p. 921). This trend is also reflected in practice, where a considerable number of journalists report the use of AI-based tools in their daily work, albeit in diverse forms and to varying degrees (Radcliffe, 2025, p. 7).

In this regard, Arjen van Dalen argues that journalists perceive AI as a major threat to their profession (Van Dalen, 2024, p. 1) precisely because of its compelling influence within newsrooms and the media industry at large. This influence has opened the door to experimentation in journalism in ways that are both shocking and exciting (Lewis, Guzman, Schmidt, & Lin, 2025, p. 13).

A segment of the literature reinforces this view, considering AI as both disruptive threat and catalyst for innovation (Dodds et al., 2025, p. 3). The rise of AI technologies has complicated the journalistic landscape by enabling machines to generate news content (Çipuri et al., 2025, p. 3). Studies have shown that an overwhelming majority

of journalists believe that AI will significantly increase the risk of misinformation (Peña-Alonso et al., 2025; Dodds et al., 2025). Likewise, Albanian journalists perceive the phenomenon of disinformation as a threat to the functioning of democracy and as a risk to the future of the media and journalism as a profession (Çela, 2023). Furthermore, while automated journalism may enhance efficiency, it risks distancing journalists from the core meaning and purpose of their work (Olsen, 2023).

The current challenge lies in achieving a balance between the traditional professional standards of journalism and technological advancement. In other words, it requires reconciling external market pressures with journalists' personal preferences and values (Saliu et al., 2024). The ability to adapt is limited by the fact that only a small proportion of professionals have received formal education and professional training in AI, mostly through self-directed learning (Sarrionandia et al., 2025, p.1). The clash between optimistic and skeptical perspectives towards AI is likely to have a transformative effect on what constitutes journalism itself.

2.2 Newsroom governance, transparency, and professional authority in the age of AI

Due to the rapid pace of artificial intelligence development and the ethical concerns surrounding its use, scholars have claimed that "media organisations should establish their own ethical guidelines and self-regulatory ethic codes 'before external control and guidance does so'" (Parratt-Fernández et al., 2024, p.2). They further argue that "the increasing amount of automated content in journalism can lead to contradictions with existing self-regulatory guidelines" (Parratt-Fernández et al., 2024, p.3), thereby highlighting the need for new norms and values concerning the use of algorithms.

In this regard, transparency toward audiences remains one of the core concerns. Audiences must be aware of whether they are interacting with a human being or an artificial intelligence system. Consequently, Parratt-Fernández et al. emphasise that AI-generated content should be accompanied by an explicit disclosure. This requirement is also stipulated in Article 113 of the European Artificial Intelligence Act, which states that "it is also appropriate to envisage a similar disclosure obligation in relation to AI-generated or manipulated text to the extent it is published for the purpose of informing the public on matters of public interest unless the AI-generated content has undergone a process of human review or editorial control and a natural or legal person holds editorial responsibility for the publication of the content."

The discussion on transparency had even greater importance in the time before the AI Act when "media professionals were unsure whether they should inform their readers about the use of AI in news production" and scholars anticipated "this will soon become (in certain circumstances) subject to a legal requirement" (Piasecki, et al. 2024, 2). What was once a voluntary ethical standard is now on the verge of becoming a legal obligation and a public norm. In 2024, the European Artificial Intelligence Act (AI Act) introduced two specific requirements for the media sector: first, to disclose whether content has been generated or manipulated by AI and

second, to do so particularly when there is a direct risk of disinformation (EU July 12, 2024, Art.50).

Suggested obligations from the European Parliament include a requirement that providers of foundation models perform risk assessments and stipulate requirements regarding data management, ecological sustainability, transparency, and assurance that auto-generated content is lawful and respects third parties' rights (Helberger 2024, 6).

However, Morosoli et al. emphasise that "the AI Act does too little to hold news content providers accountable and empower news consumers to make truly informed decisions" (2025, 4). According to these authors, citizens increasingly express a desire to understand when and where AI has been used in the production of news.

Drawing on interviews with a wide range of experienced journalists, Amigo and Porlezza (2025) conclude that journalists perceive ethical judgement, verification, and human presence as the foundation of professional authority that cannot be replaced by AI. As they observe, journalists' ability to contextualize editorial content - selecting and verifying information based on journalistic criteria and producing emotional storytelling - is regarded as a key role for journalists in legitimizing their work. "This ability serves therefore as an 'insurance policy' for the human contribution to safeguard journalism's authority in society" (Amigo and Porlezza 2025, 2275).

Cools and De Vreese (2025) expand this discussion by focusing on two internal dynamics, namely (1) professional norms expressed through journalistic autonomy and (2) the ethical considerations of news workers in implementing AI tools. As they explain, "these interconnected norms are selected because they are paramount in navigating the challenges associated with AI adoption and in ensuring that journalists retain control over their reporting process and uphold the principles of accuracy, fairness, and transparency" (Cools and Vreese 2025, 4).

In the same vein, Oh and Jung (2025) invite media organisations to identify frameworks and standards that reconcile the adoption of AI technologies with the values that journalism should uphold. They emphasise that "this issue of journalistic values and the accountability of journalists continues to evolve and intensify with the prevalence of generative AI, stressing the importance of continuous monitoring and evaluation to ensure the ethical and responsible deployment of such tools" (Oh and Jung 2025, 10).

According to Diakopoulos (2025), the media are not passive actors in this process. On the contrary, he proposes that "the media can also play a fifth role that is aligned with the normative work required to enable a prospective accountability regime" (Diakopoulos 2025, 11). As he explains, "journalistic practices such as investigative reporting, amplification of responsibility assignments, solutions journalism, and editorials can help establish or spread norms that, in turn, support prospective

accountability. Moreover, the media can play a role in supporting future-oriented cognition about prospective impacts, creating opportunities to draw in the public and contribute to more interactive norm-development processes” (Diakopoulos 2025, 2).

3. Methodology

3.1 Research design, data collection and analytical approach

This study employs both quantitative and qualitative methods. Mixed-method research provides a way to capitalise on the strengths of both approaches while offsetting their respective weaknesses. This has been the historical rationale for mixed-methods research for several decades (Creswell & Clark, 2018, p. 60).

The quantitative data were collected through a survey of 236 journalists conducted by the Department of Journalism and Communication at the University of Tirana in June 2025. The qualitative data were obtained through semi-structured interviews with 23 journalists (reporters, editors, and editors-in-chief) from 13 different media outlets, both traditional and online, conducted in January 2025. In addition, a focus group with 14 journalists and editors-in-chief was organised in June 2025.

During the processing of responses collected from the focus group and the interviews, participants were categorised and coded to ensure anonymity while distinguishing their professional roles. Editors working in television channels were coded as “TV Editor”, followed by a sequential number (e.g. TV Editor 1), whereas editors from online news outlets were coded as “NP Editor” (News Portal Editor). Likewise, journalists were labelled as “TV Journalist” and “NP Journalist”, each followed by their respective number (e.g. NP Journalist 1).

This study is based on an analytical approach that draws on literature from the sociology of professions, journalism studies and the relationship between AI and professional work. The literature highlights the importance of continuous education and training for journalists. Thus, the empirical data in this study serve a theoretical analysis that sheds light on the changing dynamics of journalism as a profession. The goal is to create an analytical framework that elucidates how professionals respond to AI by navigating the tension between resistance and adaptation.

RQ1: How do Albanian journalists perceive the impact of AI on the professional boundaries of journalism?

RQ2: What are the main tensions between resistance and adaptation to the integration of AI within newsrooms?

Hypothesis: *As the use of artificial intelligence in Albanian newsrooms reconstructs the professional boundaries of journalism, it simultaneously generates tensions between journalists’ resistance to maintaining traditional professional norms and their*

adaptation to new technological practices, thereby creating new demands for forms of professional education and continuous professional development.

3.2 Limitations of the study

Although this study relies on a careful combination of qualitative and quantitative research elements, its findings are subject to several limitations that should be acknowledged. Firstly, the sample of respondents in both the quantitative and qualitative phases is limited in size and therefore does not represent the entire Albanian media industry. The participants primarily represent media outlets based in the capital city, thus overlooking potential regional perspectives. Secondly, journalists' experiences appear diverse and often influenced by subjective perceptions regarding the application of artificial intelligence due to both the early stage of AI use in Albanian journalism and the nature of qualitative data from the focus group and semi-structured interviews. Finally, the period during which this study was conducted coincides with the initial phase of AI adoption in Albanian journalism, implying that the findings may evolve alongside future technological developments.

4. Results and Analysis

4.1 Current use of AI

Regarding the role of AI in the quality and verification of information, Albanian journalists are divided in their opinions. They perceive the human factor as irreplaceable because journalists provide a narrative context to information that AI cannot replicate (Çipuri, Erlis, & Hasan, 2025, p. 592).

As shown in *Table 1*, the use of AI and data-driven tools in Albanian newsrooms during the stages of information gathering and processing remains relatively low.

Table 1 Use of numerical databases with the assistance of search engines or AI

No.	Response	Frequency	Percentage
		[n]	%
1	Such databases do not exist	74	31.4
2	I do not have the technological tools to do so	8	3.4
3	I do not have time to do so	11	4.7
4	I do not do it because I am not an expert in statistics	28	11.9
5	It is not required in my work	23	9.7
6	I do not do it because the audience would get bored	11	4.7
7	I do it almost always	21	8.9

No.	Response	Frequency	Percentage
		[n]	%
8	I do it rarely	35	14.8
9	Other	18	7.6
10	No answer	7	3.0
—	Total	236	100.0

Source: Survey data, Department of Journalism and Communication, University of Tirana (2025).

The main barrier to AI use is a structural problem and the lack of adequate infrastructure. More than 31% of respondents indicated that such databases do not exist. The lack of statistical expertise was identified as the second most important reason, cited by around 12% of respondents.

As noted by *NP Editor 1* during the focus group discussion, contemporary newsrooms - particularly in online media - are using AI only for relatively simple tasks. Similarly, another editor-in-chief, *NP Editor 4*, stated that journalists in his newsroom use AI mainly for secondary news, particularly in sports coverage, and always subject the output to additional verification.

Meanwhile, *TV Journalist 4*, who works at a national television outlet, emphasized that although she has personally resisted using AI so far, she believes its adoption will soon become unavoidable.

The quantitative and qualitative data collected during the focus group discussion with journalists correspond closely to the reasons mentioned in the interviews. Among the most frequently cited factors was the lack of technological tools, which often leads to the use of free, low-quality applications that do not guarantee reliability.

The data presented in *Table 1* show that less than 9% of journalists reported using AI almost always, while about 15% indicated that they use it rarely. Regarding the purposes for which AI is used, journalists most often mentioned translation, headline generation, quick news writing rather than in-depth analysis, image verification, audience trend reading, descriptive reconstructions of past events, video production, short film scripting, and general curiosity.

The gap between those who use AI and those who remain reluctant indicates that its adoption remains fragmented and limited to individual use. Although there appears to be considerable potential for wider adoption, such cases are still the exception rather than the norm.

4.2 Perception of risk from the use of AI

Despite a diverse distribution of responses, a considerable number of journalists expressed concerns about job replacement by AI and skepticism regarding the reliability of ChatGPT.

Table 2 Perceived risk to the journalism profession from AI and ChatGPT

No.	Response	Frequency [n]	Percentage %
1	Over the years, journalism and information will no longer be the work of humans but of robots	45	19.1%
2	It poses a risk because it will reduce the number of journalists	77	32.6%
3	It does not pose a risk. Why should it?	42	17.8%
4	I am hesitant	53	22.5%
5	I do not know	16	6.8%
6	No answer	3	1.3%
—	Total	236	100.0

Source: Survey data, Department of Journalism and Communication, University of Tirana (2025).

While approximately 33% of respondents believe that the journalism profession is at risk due to AI's potential to reduce the number of journalists, more than 19% of respondents envisage a future in which journalism and information will be the work of robots rather than humans. Taken together, this brings the proportion of those who express hesitation or fear to around 52%. Only about 18% of respondents believe that there is no significant risk in this regard.

Commenting on this issue, *NP Editor 3* stated: "I believe that in less than a decade we will have AI platforms capable of doing everything. On the other hand, these same platforms will take this content and use it to reproduce new material, much like the image of a snake biting its own tail."

Journalists working in online media also face a persistent dilemma between speed and accuracy (Çela & Çipuri, 2024, p. 18). "Soon, the work itself will be dictated by AI. Journalists will no longer be able to distinguish whether the news is true or generated by AI," said *TV Journalist 4*, a journalist at a national television outlet.

TV Editor 3, a news director at a 24-hour news channel who advocates the use of AI in the newsroom, argued that "in an environment where work happens at the speed of light, AI makes the difference, especially in the critical stages of research and

verification.” According to her, tools such as Google News AI, for instance, provide in-depth, real-time news trend analyses, and this technology is indispensable in filtering noise and ensuring clear, reliable information.

NP Editor 2, a researcher and editor-in-chief of an online magazine, argued that the application of AI in journalism occurs in two forms: assistive and generative. “We have long used the assistive form,” he said, “whereas the generative form still has much room for development.” He views this evolution through a multimedia lens. “There is a concept in multimedia journalism, multisource multimedia reporting. The idea is that soon, I see AI being used in newsrooms as a tool for generating real-time subtitles and voices in multiple (perhaps even all) languages of the world. In other words, a single news report could be broadcast globally, with synchronised voice and image,” added *NP Editor 2*.

However, the views of many journalists who believe that AI will transform journalistic practices do not correspond to their level of trust in ChatGPT as a working tool. When asked directly about their trust in using ChatGPT in journalistic work, respondents expressed a markedly lower level of confidence.

Table 3 Trust in the use of ChatGPT in journalistic work

No.	Response	Frequency [n]	Percentage %
1	No, because its use is not allowed by the company	15	6.4%
2	No, even if it were allowed, I would consider it plagiarism	109	46.2%
3	I have tried it and was disappointed with the quality of the output	64	27.1%
4	Yes, and I am very satisfied	12	5.1%
5	I consider this information a professional secret	33	14.0%
6	No answer	3	1.3%
—	Total	236	100.0

Source: Survey data. Department of Journalism and Communication, University of Tirana (2025).

Only 5% of the surveyed journalists stated that they are satisfied with their use of and trust in ChatGPT, compared to more than 46% who consider its use to constitute a form of plagiarism.

Beyond technological considerations, journalists' interaction with audiences represents an important element in shaping professional judgement and maintaining editorial boundaries.

On the other hand, it is worth noting the high level of prior consultation with the audiences regarding their interest in the information being prepared. About 60% of respondents confirmed engaging in such consultation, compared to less than 39% who reported not doing so (Table 4).

Table 4 Prior consultation with the audience regarding their interest in the prepared information

No.	Response	Frequency [n]	Percentage %
1	Yes	141	59.7%
2	No	91	38.6%
3	No answer	4	1.7%
—	Total	236	100.0

Source: Survey data, Department of Journalism and Communication, University of Tirana (2025).

While acknowledging the existence of ethical concerns arising from the use of AI in newsrooms, *NP Editor 2* argued that the lack of sensitivity inherent in this technology is the primary reason for not entrusting it with journalistic work. According to him, "No matter how advanced it becomes, it lacks autonomous will, and therefore cannot reason about decisions related to publication, inclusion, or perspective." In other words, he has little or no trust in AI because it is biased, directed, and easily influenced.

Meanwhile, other reasons mentioned by journalists, both during the focus group discussions and individual interviews, regarding their lack of trust in ChatGPT, include: the absence of control over information, the risk of content homogenisation, the tendency to use AI primarily for technical tasks rather than investigative or editorial purposes, the fear of weakening the journalist's creative role, and the danger of political or commercial instrumentalization.

4.3 Adaptation through training and experience

The data indicate that the adoption of AI technologies in Albanian newsrooms remains relatively low. However, there is a growing interest among journalists in receiving training in new forms of digital and data-driven journalism. About 56% of respondents reported having attended training courses to improve their skills in this area, compared to 41% who reported otherwise (Table 5).

Table 5 Journalists' participation in internships and training on new forms of digital journalism

No.	Response	Frequency [n]	Percentage %
1	I have attended	132	55.9%
2	I have not attended	97	41.1%
3	No answer	7	3.0%
—	Total	236	100.0

Source: Survey data, Department of Journalism and Communication, University of Tirana (2025).

The responses of journalists who participated in the focus group discussions and individual interviews highlight a tension between preserving professional boundaries and adapting to new practices. A journalist from a news television channel, *TV Journalist 2*, stated that the integration of artificial intelligence into newsroom processes poses several challenges for journalists, particularly those of an older generation, mainly related to their lack of technological literacy. "Some journalists feel insecure when using new technologies and AI algorithms, expressing the need for specialised training," he added. Similarly, a journalist from a national television station emphasised the undeniable need for training on the use of AI in newsroom processes, saying, "Unfortunately, our newsroom offers very few such opportunities, which has led some of us to enroll in online courses about AI."

Two online news editors-in-chief, *NP Editor 1* and *NP Editor 4*, stated that in their newsrooms they had only conducted internal training sessions focused on the use of basic platforms, but not on advanced AI-related training, which they considered a significant shortcoming. According to *TV Journalist 5*, a journalist from the public broadcaster, "In Albania, there is a lack of institutional structure for training in new technologies," and people mostly learn things on their own through individual effort. They emphasize that acquiring such knowledge has become an unavoidable prerequisite for practising the profession today.

The tension surrounding the preservation of professional boundaries was evident in several cases among the interviewed journalists. Another journalist from a national TV station, *TV Journalist 7*, stated that he is not against technology, but the real issue lies in the fact that its use without professional training risks undermining the basic standards of journalism.

Another online editor-in-chief, *NP Editor 6*, argued that many journalists use these tools merely to save time, without considering the ethical implications, which poses a risk to professional boundaries. "For me, AI itself is not the problem. The lack of clear

rules and structured training makes it difficult to maintain professionalism," emphasised a journalist from the public broadcaster.

Similarly, *TV Journalist 1*, a journalist working for a major media group in Tirana, stated that unless journalists are careful, AI may push them towards fast-production practices that contradict professional ethics. Therefore, she added, training is essential. These views indicate that adaptation through training is perceived not only as a practical necessity but also as a mechanism for protecting and reinforcing professional boundaries in journalism.

5 Discussion

In general, Albanian journalists and editors maintain the position that the human factor is irreplaceable in verifying the information collected by AI, especially regarding new information and journalistic standards (Çipuri et al., 2025, p. 593). The data from this study show that the use of AI in Albanian newsrooms remains limited. Overall, there is a predominant perception of AI as potentially dangerous, particularly concerning its ability to replace journalists and regarding trust in ChatGPT's work.

Studies show that the use of artificial intelligence in newsrooms across Balkan countries is still at an early stage and is characterized by a degree of skepticism regarding its influence on journalistic work and the organization of newsrooms (Gogo & Kaso, 2024, p. 20). A similar situation can be observed in Central Europe. A study conducted by the Thomson Foundation and the Media and Journalism Research Centre found that the adoption of AI in this region continues to progress slowly, with newsrooms approaching the use of artificial intelligence tools with caution and skepticism. The study, conducted among 314 media leaders across 56 countries, revealed that the level of adoption remains moderate at best (Marko & Dragomir, 2024, p. 3).

Nevertheless, as our data indicate, some journalists and newsroom managers acknowledge that AI tools are being used pragmatically, mainly for secondary news stories, headlines, translations, or quick analyses. This approach also reflects the findings of van Dalen (2024), who highlights the resistance that persists in newsrooms towards the use of AI. According to him, this resistance manifests either as an effort to preserve professional boundaries, such as the protection of autonomy or fear of replacement, or as a form of selective adoption limited to routine tasks. This pattern was also evident among Albanian journalists, who tend to use AI tools in a restricted manner and primarily for simple processes.

Meanwhile, under the combined pressure of rapidly evolving AI technologies and the ethical imperatives of journalism leading global media organisations have begun issuing detailed guidelines on the use of AI. The Associated Press (AP), for instance, has released a dedicated directive stating that AI tools must not be employed to generate publishable content or images for its news service, while encouraging journalists to familiarise themselves with the technology. One of the AP's executives

stated that the agency has been using AI for more than a decade, mainly for secondary news and financial reports. However, regarding its recent integration, she emphasized that the AP aims to enter this new phase with great caution, ensuring the protection of journalism and the preservation of public trust (Bauder, 2023).

The hesitation of media organisations is also linked to the level of public trust in AI-generated content. Recently, a study conducted in Germany exposed a large group of participants (n = 1,261) to a fictional news outlet featuring content manipulated and produced by AI tools. The findings revealed that participants had lower trust in media outlets producing AI-generated news and were also less inclined to accept advertisements displayed by these outlets (Nanz et al., 2025, p. 1). In other words, the study shows that, at least for the moment, the use of AI costs media organizations two essential assets: public trust and advertising engagement - both of which represent critical sources of financial sustainability.

Discussions on the use of artificial intelligence in journalism are not limited to technical and ethical challenges. Another crucial dimension affecting media credibility concerns the ways in which political actors increasingly instrumentalise AI to manipulate mass information, particularly in countries where democracy remains fragile. In such contexts, professional journalists face growing difficulties in preserving and strengthening their professional boundaries, as AI is weaponised to produce deceptive content. A study conducted in Turkey observed that “these events highlight the dual nature of AI: while it enables journalists to overcome resource limitations and state censorship, it simultaneously reinforces the tools of authoritarian control and manipulation” (Çoban, 2025, p. 126).

The technological infrastructure and the ability to modernise it in step with contemporary developments remain among the key concerns of Albanian journalists regarding the use of artificial intelligence. Interviewees acknowledge that, even when they wish to use AI, they often lack the necessary tools and resources. As Lewis et al. (2025) note, the trajectory of adaptation depends entirely on institutional opportunities and capacities.

In the broader context of academic debates, it becomes evident that the preservation and development of professional boundaries in journalism are strongly influenced by the digital divide that exists between media organisations in developed countries with greater financial and technological capacities and those operating with more limited resources. For instance, one study (Triantafyllou et al., 2025) found that the capacity of Greek media organisations to invest in and adopt advanced technological systems remains limited. By contrast, in Western Europe, leading outlets such as BBC, Sky News, The Telegraph, the Daily Mail, and The Economist employ AI and related tools in a more functional and systematic manner, owing to sustained investment in this field. This concern was also raised by Albanian journalists during the interviews. Many of them stated that when they use AI tools, they generally rely on those that are publicly available and free to use.

On the other hand, interaction within newsroom structures, role-specific training, and the engagement of journalists in understanding audience behaviour and needs remain underdeveloped in Balkan countries (Gogo, 2024, p. 81). Sarrionandia et al. (2025) argues that in many major newsrooms, training levels remain low, which has led journalists to seek these opportunities individually. Indeed, in the Albanian context, a considerable share, approximately 56% of respondents, reported having attended such courses independently of the media organisations where they work.

The lack of journalist training is considered a significant problem in many countries. Studies show that in Greece, in the absence of training initiatives from media organisations and formalised newsroom policies, journalists have developed a reliance on unofficial guidelines. They often exploit the advantages of AI, yet in doing so they compromise their ethical and professional integrity (Palla & Kostarella, 2025, p. 13). In Turkey, 50% of journalists surveyed in a recent study stated that they are unable to use AI tools in journalism due to a lack of training and education (Demirdiř, 2025, p. 10). In Serbia, with the absence of clear newsroom policies and structured journalist training programmes overseen by media executives, Serbian scholars argue that the inclusion of these topics in journalism school curricula - particularly for final-year students - is an indispensable necessity (Nedeljković & Krstić, 2025, p. 117).

The data indicate that a persistent tension exists within Albanian newsrooms between resistance to and adoption of AI. This situation affects the construction and management of professional boundaries, which—when they do occur—are largely the result of individual journalists' efforts. The media outlets themselves have not developed clear editorial policies. Within most of them, there is a lack of adequate investment in technological infrastructure that could ease the tension between resistance and adoption. Moreover, there is no systematic assessment or provision of structured training for journalists. Technology in general and artificial intelligence in particular are undeniable realities of contemporary society. A proper understanding of these developments, coupled with strategic investment, would not only ease this “ping-pong” between journalists' responsibility to uphold professional values and the influence of external actors on editorial processes, but it would also contribute to building a newsroom culture that integrates technological innovation with the ethical standards of journalism.

In such circumstances, when the structural factors of the media do not support the necessary professional conditions – such as technological investments, clear editorial policies and training on the use of AI – the issue of education and professional development must be addressed at various stages of a professional's career. The findings indicate an urgent need for journalism schools to incorporate professional knowledge on the use of AI into their curricula, as they serve as spaces where new professional boundaries are established. Additionally, this knowledge should be presented in a manner that considers broader social implications, gradually influencing the content of media and information across different levels of education.

6 Conclusions

The discussion above demonstrates that the tension between resistance and adaptation to AI is not only technological, but also professional and educational in nature.

Based on the hypothesis and research questions of this study, it can be concluded that the efforts of Albanian newsrooms to construct and maintain professional boundaries are characterised by two main features: fear and the pragmatic use of artificial intelligence tools.

The data reveal a clear divide between journalists who use AI and those who remain skeptical of it. While the number of users is still limited, the majority express a lack of trust in these emerging technologies. This attitude reflects resistance to the influence of AI as an external actor in the processes that shape the professional identity of journalism in the eyes of the public.

This tension is, however, inevitable, as technology constitutes an irreversible reality—one to which media organisations must respond by developing functional strategies grounded in clear editorial guidelines, sustained investment in technological infrastructure, and the continuous professional development of journalists in line with the dynamics of ongoing technological transformation.

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