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Chapter Six



Journalism in Nigeria: The Transformative Potentials of ChatGPT

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Abstract

Although ChatGPT has generated anxiety and raises concerns about accuracy, ethical considerations, responsibility, job loss, and lack of critical thinking and creativity, It is a tool that arguably holds enormous potentials to transform skills and professional practices. Journalism as a technology-driven field obviously has a lot to gain and is already gaining in climes where the technology has been appropriated. Journalism practice in Nigeria with its obvious challenges that cut across news gathering, processing and dissemination, would have so

much to harness from ChatGPT for the purpose of enhancing and transforming practices. Hence this chapter examines the potentials ChatGPT holds to transform journalism practice in Nigeria. The paper would identify Journalism practices in relation to news gathering, processing, dissemination and training that could benefit from ChatGPT and also examine possible challenges.

Keywords: ChatGPT, Journalism, AI, Artificial Intelligence, Nigeria

Introduction

Journalism in Nigeria undeniably plays a significant role in societal development. Besides its role of holding Nigerians accountable, especially those holding public office, it remains an indispensable factor in terms of educating, informing and entertaining Nigerians. Journalism in Nigeria enjoys the accolade of being one of Africa's most vibrant. Buttressing the significance of Journalism in Nigeria, Ajibola (2022) notes that the crucial role of journalism touches on helping the population make sense of events or occurrences around them, promoting freedom of expression and fulfilling their normative responsibilities of providing information, championing advocacy and setting agenda for public discourse.

Similarly, from a historical perspective, journalism practice in Nigeria has been held high in the struggle for independence from the colonial authority and emergence as well as sustainability of democratic governance in the country (Vincent-Anene, 2022; Kolawole and Umejei).

However, actualising these responsibilities and maintaining journalistic excellence are not without challenges or limitations that cut across safety, poor remuneration, quackery, digital disruption, and political incursion which are often detrimental to objectivity and credibility (Adedoyin in, Nagarajan, 2021).

More disturbing is the ever-growing pressure necessitated by the penetration of digital technology into journalism practice in Nigeria, which along its undeniable benefits has its disruptive effects (Nwabueze, 2021; Wilson and Arinze, 2019). For instance, Adedoyin citing Nagarajan (2021. Para.4) while buttressing the penetration of new media in Journalism, notes that “Social media has taken over as the king of journalism, but they are doing a poor job of it”.

Besides the changing media landscape once dominated by print, radio and television, which have over the years experienced a nosedive in patronage and now grappling with funding challenge, there are ethical and credibility issues. These include first to publish syndrome, cut and paste syndrome, copyright violation, fake news, hate speech, increased sensationalism to attract traffic, absence or shallow investigative reporting, lack of depth in reports, and many more (Nwabueze, 2021; Premium Times, 2021; Wilson and Arinze, 2019; Olawunmi, 2013).

In a similar vein, quality control of media content to ensure fairness and accuracy appear “largely abandoned given the many embarrassing errors of fact, spelling and grammar in media fare, even on the front pages of newspapers” (Olawunmi, 2013.para 18). the democratisation of news content creation and simplified content ownership process seem to have lowered the quality of the news generation, production and publication processes (Mwantok, 2020.). Furthermore, Mwantok emphasised that

The very first consequence of this democratisation of media is poorly edited news material, most of which are hurriedly cobbled in the race to be first on the search engine.

The fact that the field has also been democratised also means that poorly qualified players have invaded the media space and with nobody to help clean up their copies, the news space has become an all comers, and with it, very badly written copies. (para. 9 and 10).

In these regard, the call for transformation in journalism practice in Nigeria has become imperative, especially leveraging on emerging digital technologies such as AI driven technologies, have become necessary. A paradigm shift in the media industry that would bring fresh attraction has become imperative (Mwantok, 2020). The shift to AI technologies, as Humphrey (2023) notes, holds the promise of revolutionizing journalism in diverse ways. Therefore, considering the myriad of limitations in Journalism practice in Nigeria in the digital age and need for a paradigm shift for the better, this paper examines, the possibilities that ChatGPT, a much talked about AI technology, since its launch on November 30, 2022, by San Franciscobased OpenAI , holds for the transformation of Journalism practice in Nigeria. The objectives of the paper are: to identify Journalism practices in relation to news gathering, processing, dissemination and training that could benefit from ChatGPT and also examine possible challenges.

Literature Review

ChatGPT is a natural language processing AI chatbot that creates humanlike conversational dialogue. The language model can answer questions, assist with tasks, such as composing various written content, which includes: articles or essays, emails, social media posts, cold emails and images. It is a generative AI that allows users to enter prompts to receive humanlike images, text or videos that are created by AI (Ortiz, 2023; Hetler, 2023).

Arawal (n.d) described ChatGPT as a Generative Pre-training Transformer (GPT) application that is designed to generate text for conversational purposes. Through a fine-tuned large dataset of conversational text, it is to generate text that is appropriate for use in chatbots and other conversational interfaces. It uses the GPT-3 language model, a neural network machine learning model and the third generation of Generative Pre-trained Transformer. (Hetler, 2023). Like the automated chat services found on customer service websites, which responds to people questions or requests for clarification, so is the ChatGPT', which unlike other chatbots, can remember various questions to continue the conversation in a more fluid manner.

Through the reinforcement learning through feedback gotten from humans and reward models that rank the best responses, this feedback helps augment ChatGPT with machine learning to improve future responses. (Hetler (2023) notes that there is no limitation to the types of questions to ask ChatGPT , ranging from simple to more complex questions that touches on what life means or when New York became a state. It has been enabled to provide real-time information to users (Hamilton, 2023).

ChatGPT is multifaceted and can be used for more than human conversations. By simply visiting chat.openai.com and creating an OpenAI account, people have used and are using ChatGPT to do the following:

- Write an essay
- Write code for computer programmes
- create an application
- Build resume
- Write Excel formulas
- Summarize content
- Write a cover letter
- Start an Etsy business
- Compose music.
- Draft emails.
- Summarize articles, podcasts or presentations.
- Script social media posts.
- Create a title for an article.
- Solve mathematics problems.
- Formulate product descriptions
- Describe complex topics more simply
- Chat GPT: Where Creativity Meets Coolness!
- Cool things to do with Chat GPT
- Learn a language
- Design a game
- Create a virtual assistant.
- Easy Recipe Ideas
(Ortiz, 2023; Amber, 2023; Hetler, 2023)

In spite of the versatility of ChatGPT, it has some limitations. Hetler, (2023); Mohmad (2023) identified some of the limitations to include:

- Difficulty in fully understanding the complexity of human language, because it is designed to generate words based on input. Because of this, responses may seem

inadequate and may lack true insight.

- ChatGPT excels in language processing, but has trouble understanding context, especially humour and sarcasm. With the use of sarcasm or humour in a message, ChatGPT may need help in understanding the intended meaning and could offer a wrong or irrelevant answer.
- Responses can sound unnatural but more like a machine .
- ChatGPT lacks human-level common sense. Although it can create human-like responses to questions or instructions because of its access to a large amount of information, but lacks the prior knowledge that humans do. Hence, it may occasionally deliver illogical or wrong feedback to specific inquiries or situations.
- ChatGPT predicts the next word, thus it may overuse words such as “the” or “and”. Hence, users still need to review and edit content to make it coherent and more natural, like human writing.
- ChatGPT gives biased responses. Since it is designed on a vast corpus of text data, which may contain biases, leading to occasionally providing unintentionally biased or discriminating responses
- ChatGPT summarizes but does not cite sources. For instance, ChatGPT may provide several statistics but does not provide insight into any of the statistical data. It does not provide real analysis on what these statistics mean or how they relate to a particular topic.
- ChatGPT lacks Emotional Intelligence:. Although it can elicit compassionate replies, it lacks emotional intelligence. Thus cannot detect correctly, respond to complicated emotional situations.

In spite of the limitations, ChatGPT holds a transformative potential across individual, groups, private and public

endeavours. According to Forgeard (2023) In the digital sphere, few advancements hold the transformative potential of ChatGPT.

ChatGPT is not just a tool it's a harbinger of a new digital age. As its capabilities grow and its applications expand, this technology is poised to redraw the boundaries of human-computer interaction and revolutionize multiple sectors of our society.

From refining customer service to democratizing education and even fostering new artistic ventures, the possibilities seem boundless. (Forgeard, 2023. Para. 2,3 & 4)

For example, the use of ChatGPT is changing the game for journalism practitioners, with the potential it holds to help them work more efficiently

Journalism Practice and ChatGPT

Journalism has been one of the fields that have benefited immensely from technological innovation from the age Guttenberg press, through telegraph, telephone and the internet the profession has leveraged on these technologies to enhance its practice, especially in the area of content generation, of gathering, processing, dissemination and training. It is not surprising that the ChatGPT has began to penetrate the field. According to Smith (2022.para 1) ChatGPT technology is about to change publishing and journalism forever”, noting that ChatGTP has the immense potential to drive the next evolution of the publishing business model and automating journalism duties, especially information gathering and processing. For example, stories - like sports scores and

financial reports - can be well drafted by this technology. Calli (2023) notes that, ever since the release of ChatGPT, it has been a topic of discussion among journalists, especially on issues in respect of its potential influence on the news industry. Of particular interest is its capability of automatically generating texts based on written prompts and conversational interactions with users.

In the same vein, Cali (2023) notes that ChatGPT has the potential to enhance the quality and efficiency of journalism, especially in the areas of fact-checking, analyzing datasets, which would improve the accuracy of reporting.

Similarly, Abdulrahman (2023) notes that power of ChatGPT lies in its possibilities to help complement and enhance the work of human journalists. Although machines can never replace human creativity and the intuition, ChatGPT has some valuable potentials to support Journalism practice. For example journalists can save time and improve the accuracy as well as quality of their work by integrating ChatGPT news process.

Hochstein (2023) and Smith (2023) identified some ways ChatGPT would meet the demands linked to the myriad of responsibilities of the journalist. Some of the ways include:

- **Simplification of concepts:** Simplifying complex topics for a general audience, is one of the important duties of journalists. ChatGPT makes this task easier by the use of language model which allows journalists load an authored academic article or topics that use complex or specialized language like science, into ChatGPT and ask the software to simplify it. This tool can be used by journalists, especially non native English speakers to better understand an article or perspective before interviewing the author of the work.

- **Generate Questions for Interview:** ChatGPT can be utilised to prepare for interviews by listing questions for an interview subject, and the software will create more questions modelled after them. The software can also generate interview questions from an article or interview previously written by the Journalist on a particular topic.
- **Perform Sub editor tasks:** ChatGPT can be used carry out the tasks of a sub-editor. For example, Journalists can input their articles for a review before sending them to their editor, ChatGTP can edit the article in a specific house style or format.

Furthermore, Fr¹ckiewicz (2023) notes that the real-time reporting potential of ChatGPT is one of the game changers for journalism, especially in the age of instant gratification. As audience expect a real time delivery of news amidst the pressure on need for accuracy and quality reporting, ChatGPT comes in, to help improve news and journalism in this situation. It can help journalists conduct research and fact-checking quickly and efficiently as well as finding relevant sources and articles to serve as background information on a topic.

In addition, Fr¹ckiewicz (2023) identifies some ways in which ChatGPT is shaping Journalism. They include:

- Providing accurate and timely news updates
- Supports Investigative Journalism through its ability to gather and analyse information, to producing accurate and insightful news stories
- Provide journalists with background information on a particular topic
- The natural language processing capabilities make it easier for users to access relevant news and information by asking ChatGPT for the information they need

- Providing personalized news updates through customized news feed based on their preferences

ChatGPT holds a lot for journalism. According to Frickiewicz (2023) while ChatGPT is still evolving, its potential for improving news and journalism is important. As it continues to evolve, it could become an essential tool for journalists worldwide. It is described as a "fantastic tool for producing ideas and giving suggestions to journalists" (Soma cited in Calli, 2023).

While ChatGPT is sure to transform journalism (Smith, 2022), journalism practitioners should be aware of its flaws and that it cannot always be trusted (Hochstein, 2003). Since, ChatGPT was designed to be inputted with data on the internet and responds to questions by making predictions on the most likely answer to questions, which sometimes generates an answer that's not factually correct.

Bias and Fairness could be another bottleneck for ChatGPT. Since it learns from data; therefore, if the data is biased, ChatGPT can inadvertently amplify these biases or perpetuate it. (Humphrey, 2023).

Calli (2003) summarises the limitation of ChatGPT in Journalism, thus:

ChatGPT has some limitations, as it can give wrong responses, not just once but possibly multiple times.

ChatGPT sometimes writes a plausible-sounding but incorrect or nonsensical answer," the company says.

Soma also agrees that the biggest problem with ChatGPT is "absolute accuracy," which brings some potential ethical concerns associated with

the use of it in journalism such as bias or accuracy issues.

"Large language models tend to 'hallucinate,' and give answers to questions that are incorrect but sound accurate," (Para 17-22).

Furthermore, Calli notes that the challenges journalists would face in integrating ChatGPT into duties are: fear and a lack of knowledge. As the messaging around ChatGPT is that "it's a perfect and all-knowing, or it's a biased garbage machine." (para. 25). However, if journalists can take the time to understand ChatGPT, it could do a lot to help them see its strengths and limitations.

ChatGPT and Potentials to transform Journalism practice in Nigeria.

Journalism in Nigeria like in other parts of the world leverage on technologies to improve or enhance performance and quality of news process. Integrating ChatGPT into the process of news production holds transformative benefits for journalism practice in Nigeria. These transformative benefits cuts across the various stages of news production:

News Gathering

Integrating ChatGPT would have the following transformative benefits to journalism in Nigeria

- **Providing journalists with background information on a particular topic:** This can be useful for Nigerian journalists who are covering or writing articles on topics that they are not familiar with. ChatGPT can speedily get information on the topics to provide a more informed news report.
- **Providing journalists with access to relevant sources and articles:** ChatGPT can also help improve

the quality of newsgathering by helping to ensure that stories are well-researched and fact-checked. This can help prevent the spread of misinformation and improve the credibility of journalism in Nigeria.

- **Generating interview questions:** Journalists in Nigeria can leverage on ChatGPT to generate interview questions, based on the topic of interest by suggesting relevant questions to use during the interview.
- **Generating article titles:** Journalists in Nigeria can use ChatGPT to generate attention-grabbing or compelling headlines.
- **Generating Content:** Journalists in Nigeria can adopt ChatGPT to generate content for their articles. Inputting key points, the language model can suggest sentences and paragraphs to generate articles.
- **Searching for relevant information:** Journalists can use ChatGPT to scan through large volumes of texts and identify relevant information, to quickly identify and report on important stories.
- **Improving the transparency of news sources:** Chat GPT can be used by Nigerian Journalists to analyse the history of a news organization or individual journalist, and provide a credibility rating that can be used to help readers evaluate the trustworthiness of a source.

News Processing

Some areas ChatGPT can benefit Journalism in Nigeria in terms of news processing are:

- **Improving the accuracy and fairness of news reporting:** ChatGPT' can be used to improve the accuracy and fairness of news reporting, by providing, through its ability to understand and generate human-like language an unbiased perspective on the events

and helping to fact-check the news.

- **Language translation:** ChatGPT is said to be capable of understanding a variety of languages while responding to users of different languages. This is because the data used for GPT-3, GPT-3.5, and GPT-4 contained content created in more than just English Language. Hence Journalists can use ChatGPT to communicate with or access sources who speak different languages or materials written in other languages, since the language model can translate texts from one language to another.
- **Summarising news articles:** Journalists in Nigeria can use ChatGPT to save time by summarising news articles for them. The ChatGPT language model can quickly read through lengthy articles and provide a concise summary that highlights the most significant points.
- **Fact-checking:** Journalists in Nigeria can use ChatGPT to fact-check their stories. Journalists can input the information they want to verify, and ChatGPT can help confirm or refute the information based on reliable sources.
- **Data analysis:** Journalists in Nigeria can use ChatGPT to analyse large amounts of data quickly and efficiently. ChatGPT language model can provide insights and trends from data that can be used to support news articles.
- **Combatting Fakenews and misinformation:** ChatGPT can help journalists and media organisations combat the spread of fake news and misinformation. The ChatGPT's algorithms are designed to filter false information and replace with reliable and accurate news updates. ChatGPT can automatically fact-check news articles, identify false information and generate counter narratives to the false information.

This is particularly important for Nigeria , where fake news can have serious consequences, such as spreading panic or inciting violence.

- **Providing spell and grammar check.** ChatGPT can help to ensure that news and other articles; content are free from errors and easy to read. This can be especially helpful for media organisations that have limited resources to pay for editing and proofreading.
- **Simplifying complex topics for a general audience:** ChatGPT can make it easier for Nigerian Journalists by asking the software to simplify an article, thus helping the Journalists better understand an article or idea before interviewing the author of the material. In addition, ChatGPT can help non-native English speakers to simplify by translating any work into a more basic form especially for topics that use complex or specialised language like science.
- **ChatGPT can be used as a sub-editor.** Journalists can input their articles for a last review before sending them to their editors, for example by asking ChatGPT to edit the article in a specific format like AP style. However, journalists should still review and fact-check the changes ChatGPT makes to ensure that no information added is false.
- **Producing news content at a faster pace and with fewer resources:** ChatGPT can help Nigerian Journalists produce speedy news, because of its content generation function.
- **Creating news content in different Languages:** ChatGPT can also help in creating news articles in different languages.

Dissemination

Some areas ChatGPT can benefit Journalism in Nigeria in terms of news dissemination are:

- **Realtime news dissemination:** The fast-paced digital world requires, staying up-to-date with the latest news and events. ChatGPT has emerged as a powerful tool for improving news dissemination in realtime.
- **Creating news articles in different languages:** ChatGPT can help media organisations disseminate news in different languages. This function is particularly helpful for media organisations that operates in multiple countries and needs to produce news articles in different languages.
- **Delivering news articles directly to the audience's messaging applications:** With the help of ChatGPT Nigerian Journalists or media organisations can deliver news articles directly to the audience's messaging applications.
- **Provide personalized news feeds:** Nigerian Journalists can use ChatGPT to engage with the audience, provide personalized news feeds, and respond to questions.
- **Providing Interactive news experience:** Nigerian Journalists can use ChatGPT to create interactive news experiences, which can enhance a unique and engaging way of consuming news.

Training

In the area of training, Nigerian Journalists can benefit from the following:

- ChatGpt can be useful in helping journalists in Nigeria improve their journalism skills particularly by boosting their reporting skills and media literacy. The digital landscape, necessitates journalists to be able to discern between reliable and unreliable sources of information. ChatGPT can be used to simulate different types of news stories that journalists can practice with, in

identifying biases, verifying facts, and evaluating the credibility of sources.

- ChatGPT can be used by Journalists to develop their reporting skills by receiving instant feedback on their writing, offering suggestions for improvement and generating ideas for new stories.
- ChatGPT can serve as a useful tool for teaching journalism ethics. ChatGPT can be programmed to create content that tests journalists' ethical decision-making abilities. For example trainers can use ChatGPT to generate articles containing ethical complexities, such as conflicts of interest or the use of anonymous sources. Through this, journalists can develop a deeper understanding of the ethical considerations that underpins responsible journalism.

Possible Challenges

Like in other climes, the use of ChatGPT in journalism raises many ethical considerations, such as job loss, bias, transparency, and accountability. This and other issues, such as phobia for ChatGPT, inadequate or lack of knowledge to leverage on ChatGPT, reluctance by media organisations to adopt and utilise the technology are likely challenges for ChatGPT in Journalism in Nigeria.

Conclusion

Overall, ChatGPT even in its evolving state has been instrumental in facilitating journalism and empowering journalists who provide news reports for the global audience. The technology has the potential to create an enhanced news reporting environment in Nigeria, The technology is an available tool for Nigerian journalists to work more efficiently, provide real-time reporting, fact check reports and improve the quality of their news reporting. Therefore, it is important for

journalists in Nigeria to embrace this technology to transform news gathering, processing, dissemination and training. The media organisations and individual journalists need to leverage on ChatGPT by at least creating a free account and learning more from the various information on how to use ChatGPT.

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