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AI DIVIDES IN NEWSROOMS? HOW JOURNALISTS IN THE LOW COUNTRIES USE AND PERCEIVE GENERATIVE AI

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Abstract

Generative artificial intelligence (genAI) is seen as a catalyst for a new era in journalism: AI-supported journalism. Its ability to automate and enhance traditional journalistic tasks offers potential for more efficient news reporting. This study aims to map the current use of genAI and assess its adoption potential among journalists. An online survey (*N* = 286) was conducted in Belgium and the Netherlands to explore how journalists use and perceive genAI for news reporting, along with their ethical considerations about responsible genAI use. The study also investigates potential "AI divides" among journalists. Findings show that while over half of the respondents have used genAI, it is primarily applied to support current (predominantly text-based) practices. This indicates that genAI is not yet transforming journalistic workflows. No regional divide was found between the three distinct yet similar small-market newsrooms of Flanders, Wallonia, and the Netherlands. However, individual factors, such as AI literacy, do influence genAI adoption among journalists. Despite its adoption, genAI is perceived as an assistant rather than a displacement, with journalists emphasising values like authenticity, objectivity, and human oversight. Ethical concerns persist, with journalists advocating clear ethical guidelines and shared responsibilities within the news ecosystem.

Keywords

AI divides; AI literacy ; automation ; digitalisation ; generative artificial intelligence ; journalism ; news reporting ; newsrooms

Introduction

The rapid development of generative artificial intelligence (genAI)[1] is transforming industries globally, including journalism. The introduction of genAI and Large Language Models (LLMs) such as ChatGPT, marks a significant turning point in the production of journalistic content, with the potential to augment and enhance news gathering, production, distribution, and consumption (Attard-Frost and Widder 2023; Cools and Diakopoulos 2024; de-Lima-Santos and Ceron 2021). Journalism has previously encountered AI-driven practices, which have garnered considerable global attention, alongside growing awareness of their implications, challenges, and potential (Broussard et al. 2019).

According to some, journalism has been argued to be in crisis (Fisher et al. 2020; Temir 2020), with (concerns about) disinformation on the rise, declining trust in journalism (Newman et al. 2024), and increased pressure on journalists to have their news content finished in a considerably fast time (Deprez and Van Leuven 2022), assessing the role of genAI within newsrooms even more central. The

question arises whether genAI can help restore credibility and trust in journalism and combat the spread of disinformation as an assisting tool, or instead, amplify current crises in journalism.

This study aims to understand how genAI is used in newsrooms by mapping professional and ethical practices. An online survey was conducted with journalists and editors to capture current genAI practices and assess their potential impact on journalism. Insights into these practices of journalists are both necessary and timely, as newsrooms and individual journalists experiment with and use genAI. Empirical evidence shows that newsrooms have already begun using genAI in their workflows (Attard-Frost and Widder 2023; Henriksson 2023). The adoption of AI tools within newsrooms is poised to significantly impact the landscape of journalism and journalistic practices in the coming decades (Cools, Van Gorp, and Opgenhaffen 2022). However, it remains unclear how journalists use genAI, their attitudes towards these technologies, and the role of the media landscape or news organisation in this context. Considering the growing role of genAI in society, this study serves as an exploratory investigation and contributes to the field of journalism practice by providing insights into how genAI is used and perceived by journalists in multiple ways. This study goes beyond mapping use patterns by examining attitudes, ethics, AI literacy, and editorial tensions. Unlike previous research, which has primarily relied on qualitative studies based mainly on interviews (Cools and de Vreese 2025; Simon 2024), this study draws on survey-based evidence to uncover the underlying mechanisms shaping genAI adoption in journalism.

First, the study seeks to understand differences among journalists concerning genAI. We do so by identifying different AI divides: based on regional or individual differences between journalists. Concerning the region, we aim to understand how news organisations or media landscapes shape the use of AI in Flanders (North Belgium), Wallonia (South Belgium), and the Netherlands. These regions are notable for their cross-media ownership, where media organisations such as Mediahuis and DPG Media operate multiple newsrooms. At the same time, they serve as different media ecosystems (Newman et al. 2024). This study aims to gain insights into the impact of genAI on journalism by considering potential similarities and differences among three similar yet distinct small-market ecosystems. Concerning use and AI literacy, we explore AI divides among individual journalists by examining their current genAI use, knowledge about the technologies, and attitudes towards them. A combination of these three aspects (i.e., use, knowledge, and attitudes) is referred to as AI literacy. Deuze and Beckett (2022, 1913) define AI literacy for journalism as “the knowledge and beliefs about artificial intelligence which aid their recognition, management, and application”. As such, this study seeks to determine whether differences in professional and ethical practices arise due to individual levels of AI literacy among journalists, media landscapes, and/or news organisations.

Second, this study nuances the current societal and scholarly debates. The introduction of new technologies like genAI in journalism triggers a spectrum of perceptions, ranging from utopian optimism to dystopian fear. Utopian proponents envision genAI as a powerful tool to enhance journalistic skills, freeing journalists to focus on high-level tasks, such as investigative reporting and creative storytelling (Diakopoulos et al. 2024). From this optimistic perspective, genAI can assist in news gathering, production, and verification, ultimately increasing the efficiency and objectivity of journalistic tasks. Conversely, the dystopian perspective raises critical concerns, including the fear of job displacement, eroded editorial oversight, and an increase in disinformation (Fletcher, Schifferes, and Thurman 2017; Jones, Luger, and Jones 2023; Schapals and Porlezza 2020). By giving voice to journalists themselves, our study aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of their attitudes and use related to genAI, revealing a more nuanced overview than either utopian optimism or dystopian fear.

Third, the study enhances scholarly knowledge of the role perceptions of journalism, revealing which tasks are considered "human" vs. "possible-to-automate". This investigation is crucial as it provides a clear understanding of how journalists perceive the evolving boundaries between human and machine work in the newsroom (Cools, Van Gorp, and Opgenhaffen 2021). By examining these role perceptions, this study highlights specific journalistic tasks deemed irreplaceable by AI, such as investigative reporting, nuanced editorial decision-making, and creative storytelling.

Finally, the study explores ethical considerations tied to the deployment of genAI in newsrooms, including guidelines on the use of genAI for journalism. Issues such as bias, transparency, and accountability in AI-generated content have become paramount considerations (Diakopoulos et al. 2024; Ward 2019). However, little is known about the ethical considerations and practices of journalists themselves in the Belgian-Dutch context. This study contributes to the ongoing discourse on responsible AI use in journalism by addressing these ethical issues.

Literature Review

From Automated to AI-Supported Journalism

The early beginning of automation within journalism was dated to 1973 with Philip Meyer's concept of computer-assisted reporting (Coddington 2015). This approach linked journalism to investigative work and analysis, using statistical methods to bolster traditional journalistic reporting, which evolved into a data-driven world and computational journalism (Coddington 2015; van der Kaa and Krahmer 2014). Such technological advancements have the potential to generate a large number of articles in a short space of time, thereby enabling managers to reduce production costs (Graefe 2016; Graefe and Bohlken 2020).

In scholarly work, the increasing automation of journalistic processes is often referred to as "automated journalism" or "robot journalism". These terms refer to the set of technological processes that infiltrate journalistic spheres, such as news articles and visual materials generated by computer programs (Coddington 2015). Carlson (2015, 417) defines automated journalism as "algorithmic processes that convert data into narrative news texts with limited to no human intervention beyond the initial programming choices". This builds upon the broader field of computational journalism, in which software is used to generate news content without human journalists (Cohen 2015). The algorithms employed in automated journalism are constantly evolving, with the influence of artificial intelligence increasingly finding its way into journalistic news reporting. Consequently, AI systems have become a significant driver of change in newsrooms (Pavlik 2015). Currently, AI is used for multiple applications in journalism, such as recommender systems (Joris et al. 2020), automation (Coddington 2015; Cools and Koliska 2024), archiving (Weber and Napoli 2018), and fact-checking (Nakov et al. 2021; Opdahl et al. 2023).

Recent technological advances and the availability of vast quantities of data have led to the emergence of a new phase in the evolution of automated journalism called genAI, in which machine learning models can generate human-like content (Shi and Sun 2024). Therefore, it is defined as a type of artificial intelligence that is capable of producing various types of content, including text, imagery, audio, and synthetic data (Diakopoulos et al. 2024). Over the last few years, news organisations and journalists have been experimenting with and structurally implementing genAI for news reporting. Pioneering the use of genAI in journalism, China introduced the world's first robot reporter in 2015, which generates sports or financial news articles 24/7, and an AI news anchor in 2018 (Sun, Hu, and Wu 2022).

The capabilities of genAI extend beyond content creation (Shi and Sun 2024). While automated and genAI-supported journalism both use AI, there is a difference in the role of journalists. Automated journalism could replace humans by generating content with minimal or no human intervention. In contrast, AI-supported journalism not only involves the use of genAI as a sparring partner for idea development and editorial decision-making but also encompasses its role as a supportive tool assisting journalists with specific tasks (Moravec et al. 2024; van der Kaa and Krahmer 2014). GenAI can support journalism in three ways: (1) automation, (2) optimisation, and (3) transformation. First, it can automate certain tasks, such as transcribing interviews. Second, it can optimise existing workflows by summarising texts or adjusting their length. Third, it can transform journalistic practices by enabling the generation of entirely new content, such as images or articles.

A survey of European and American newsrooms revealed that 81.4% of journalists are aware of genAI, and over two-thirds of editors use AI applications in their daily work (Diakopoulos et al. 2024). For example, the BBC has experimented with MidJourney and GPT-4 to enhance visual communication (Cools, Van Gorp, and Opgenhaffen 2023), while other newsrooms use genAI to create social media posts and newsletter titles, or employ software for translations or transcripts of interviews (Diakopoulos et al. 2024). In the United Kingdom, news outlets have already initiated experiments with automated news reporting, whereas in China, computational journalism tools have been employed for financial and sports news (Tuulonen et al. 2019; Wang 2015). Such genAI technologies facilitate significantly faster and potentially automated reporting, particularly in sports, finance, and elections (Newman et al. 2024; Sun, Hu, and Wu 2022). A growing number of studies on genAI are currently circulating, yet the question remains as to what extent journalists use genAI for news reporting. Therefore, the following research question related to AI-supported journalism is formulated:

RQ1A: To what extent do journalists use genAI for news reporting?

Potential reasons for using genAI include saving time and energy, as well as creating more space for human creativity and storytelling in journalism (Diakopoulos et al. 2024; Wölker and Powell 2018). When tools such as ChatGPT, Google's Gemini, and text-to-image generators are used to automate routine tasks, journalists can allocate more time to investigative reporting and in-depth journalism (Canavilhas 2022; Noain Sánchez 2022; Opdahl et al. 2023).

Previous studies (Haim and Graefe 2017; van der Kaa and Krahmer 2014) have shown that automation in news reporting can challenge traditional journalistic roles. The automation of tasks, such as gathering basic information or writing short-form articles, may lead to the displacement of journalists. While some audiences perceive automated content as equally objective as human-written reporting, 70% of news publishers believe that AI-generated content will undermine trust in news (Newman et al. 2024). As such, it is important to identify the motivations and perceptions for using (or not) genAI in journalistic news reporting:

RQ1B: What motivations and perceptions do journalists have for (not) using genAI in news reporting?

Revealing AI Divides in Journalism

In addition to the various uses and motivations for adopting genAI, studies indicate the emergence of distinct AI divides. First, one key divide lies in the knowledge gap between a smaller group of tech-savvy journalists and a broader group of news editors who may be less familiar with such technologies. This gap can hinder editors from fully leveraging the latest tools and techniques to improve the quality and impact of their reporting. Conversely, a limited understanding may also foster unrealistic

expectations about genAI, with some individuals embracing overly utopian perspectives of its capabilities, while overlooking its practical limitations.

Second, building on the first divide, a growing resistance to genAI also appears to contribute to an emerging AI divide. While the use of genAI for automation offers new opportunities for newsrooms - particularly due to its speed and efficiency (Graefe et al. 2016), the increasing presence of automation in journalism has also sparked various concerns among journalists (Cools, Van Gorp, and Opgenhaffen 2021; Sun, Hu, and Wu 2022; van Dalen 2012).

Third, research hints towards AI divides on a more organisational level. Tensions within newsrooms arise as perspectives on the use of genAI differ between news management leadership and journalists responsible for day-to-day reporting. While management tends to perceive AI as a tool to streamline workflows and reduce operational costs - freeing up time for more in-depth journalism - journalists often express concerns about these tools potentially undermining the quality of their work and contributing to the spread of mis- misinformation (Moran and Shaikh 2022). The study examines how news organisations and media structures in Flanders, Wallonia, and the Netherlands influence the use, knowledge, and attitudes towards genAI. Despite shared media ownership structures, these regions may have different perspectives on genAI. The aim is to provide insights into how journalism is being shaped within these three small, interconnected media ecosystems.

The acceptance or resistance of AI in news reporting is often linked to age and professional experience in journalism. Older age groups find it more difficult to embrace process automation and express more concerns about adopting new technologies (Araujo et al. 2020; Thurman, Dörr, and Kunert 2017; van Deursen and van Dijk 2010). Moreover, the acceptance of genAI may also be shaped by the influence of tech-beat journalism. Journalists who cover technology and innovation are typically early adopters and appear more open to (technological) change compared to their peers (Fletcher, Schifferes, and Thurman 2017). To gain more insight into the different AI divides among journalists, a second research question is formulated:

> RQ2: Which AI divides can be distinguished based on regional, individual, and professional differences?

The Ethical Challenges Associated with genAI Adoption

Alongside the emergence of potential AI divides among journalists, a critical debate has arisen concerning its ethical and legal implications. Content creation tools like ChatGPT might be useful assets, yet caution is necessary as outputs may contain biases or inaccuracies (Araujo et al. 2020). Hence, the opacity surrounding these genAI models and their data raise concerns about credibility, objectivity, creativity, and transparency (Opdahl et al. 2023; Sun, Hu, and Wu 2022; Wu 2019), along with anxieties about a lack of human oversight, complexities associated with unclear property rights,

and the dissemination of mis- and disinformation (Diakopoulos et al. 2024). The question prompts whether AI will serve as a journalist's right-hand assistant, emerge as a potential enemy, or have no impact on the field (Canavilhas 2022).

The burgeoning potential for (gen)AI adoption across diverse sectors and domains necessitates the development of regulatory frameworks. These frameworks should prescribe responsible handling and ethical use of genAI and establish clear guidelines for its application. Nascent research on journalistic guidelines for genAI underscores the urgency for further investigation and regulatory action in this rapidly evolving field. From this perspective, Pierson et al. (2023) demonstrated that the EU policy on AI regulation insufficiently accounts for the specificities of the media and communication sectors, despite high-profile scandals such as Cambridge Analytica. Moreover, the policy contains several notable blind spots. As Pierson et al. (2023) identified, the current Artificial Intelligence Act proposal is isolated from other cutting-edge measures for the digital media sector and does not provide sufficient protection. However, the European AI Act has marked a significant shift in the global regulatory landscape for AI. This legislation stands out as one of the first attempts to define a framework for human-centric AI utilisation (Helberger and Diakopoulos 2022).

It is currently unclear what state of the art is regarding the responsible use of genAI in newsrooms. GenAI has compelled journalists and editors to reconsider their professional roles and responsibilities as well as to evaluate the ethical foundations of contemporary news production processes (Sun, Hu, and Wu 2022). The integration of genAI into editorial workflows presents a new challenge to traditional journalistic ethics, which have historically focused primarily on the veracity and objectivity of content. In the context of AI and algorithms, ethical regulations and structures are distinct and complex (Shi and Sun 2024). Journalists bear a responsibility to provide accurate and truthful information to the audiences, guided by the principles of journalistic ethics— a distinct branch of applied ethics that delineates the norms and standards governing the practices of journalists and news organisations. These principles encompass verification, editorial independence, and the responsible use of graphic or altered images (Diakopoulos et al. 2024).

Regardless of whether news editors endorse the narrative surrounding AI applications in the editorial space, establishing ethical guidelines that govern the use of AI to communicate its implications to the public is paramount. EU regulations are frequently revised to ensure that AI systems are used responsibly and safely. For example, transparency is a recurring theme in European AI legislation. The context in which AI applications emerge continues to challenge journalism, requiring the consideration of the most appropriate means of dealing with them responsibly. Similarly, there is a growing awareness within the news industry regarding the need to address the implications of AI in the journalistic process (Cools and Diakopoulos 2023). Studies have focused on the ethical implications

of innovation in newsrooms (Elliott 1986; Sun, Hu, and Wu 2022; Tubaro, Casilli, and Coville 2020), but specific research on ethical frameworks for the responsible use of genAI is unclear. Therefore, the following questions are posed in this study:

RQ3A: What do journalists perceive as (un)ethical use of genAI in news reporting?

RQ3B: What are journalists' attitudes towards existing (ethical) guidelines regarding genAI for news reporting?

Method

Data Collection

To answer the research questions, an online survey was conducted among journalists in three regions in early 2024: Flanders (North Belgium), Wallonia (South Belgium), and the Netherlands. The primary aim of this study was to gather insights from a wide range of journalist profiles within three regions to gain a deeper understanding of the research topic. The online survey was distributed using Qualtrics and employed two distribution strategies. First, professional journalism associations in each region administered the survey via professional networks, newsletters, and social media platforms. Second, journalists were invited to participate via direct emails. The email invitations outlined the purpose of the study, time commitment, data processing, and contact information for any questions.

In total, 322 journalists, distributed across three different regions, participated in the survey. A comparison of the media landscapes of Belgium and the Netherlands is a valuable endeavour, as both countries share the same language but differ in their approaches to media content and consumption. Historically, the Netherlands has been more innovative in the digital media sector, whereas Belgium, with its strong public broadcasters, has taken a more cautious approach to adopting new media forms. Additionally, the differing policies of the Flemish and French Communities add complexity to this dynamic, with Flanders favouring a market-driven approach while the French community enforces stricter media ownership regulations (Hallin and Mancini 2004). According to Hallin and Mancini (2004), both Belgium and the Netherlands fall under the Democratic Corporatist Model, making their comparison particularly insightful, especially in the context of genAI adoption in newsrooms. Furthermore, Flemish media groups are increasingly active in the Dutch news market, highlighting a strong connection between the two. This makes it especially relevant to investigate whether journalists in Belgium and the Netherlands evaluate the use of genAI in news reporting in a similar way (Hallin and Mancini 2004; Raeymaeckers and Heinderyckx 2017).

Informed consent was obtained before the respondents participated in the survey. During the data-cleaning process, 36 responses were excluded from the dataset for various reasons (e.g., lacking informed consent or completion of less than half of the survey). Consequently, the final sample

comprised 286 valid responses, which formed the basis for the data-analysis. The final sample is not reliable or representative due to unequal geographical distribution and potential self-selection.

Measures

The dataset was analysed using descriptive statistics. Cross-tabulations, t-tests, and ANOVA tests were used to examine differences between participating journalists, and cluster analysis was conducted to investigate potential AI divides. Respondents were grouped based on their genAI use, knowledge, and attitudes, providing deeper insights into the similarities and differences among journalists.

The questionnaire (see **Appendix 1.** Questionnaire with items (translated from Dutch to English) was structured into several sections to explore various aspects of genAI in newsrooms:

Personal information - Initial questions gathered demographic and professional information about the journalists, including their years of experience, type of media organisation, and journalistic profession within their organisation(s).

Knowledge of genAI - This section assessed respondents' knowledge of genAI by measuring their self-perceived knowledge of several statements derived from Sun, Hu, and Wu (2022) study. Respondents were asked to rate their familiarity with and comprehension of concepts related to genAI.

Use of genAI - This section explored the extent and nature of genAI usage by the respondents and their colleagues in the newsroom. The questions addressed specific tasks for which genAI was used and the reasons behind its adoption. These questions were adapted from items used in the study by Canavilhas (2022).

Attitudes towards genAI - the final section explored respondents' attitudes towards genAI, focusing on their perceptions of its responsible use. These questions were inspired by studies by Canavilhas (2022), Schapals and Porlezza (2020), and Thurman, Dörr, and Kunert (2017).

Sample Description

By targeting a diverse range of media professionals, the survey aimed to capture a comprehensive perspective on how genAI is integrated into journalistic practices, the challenges and benefits perceived by journalists, and the broader implications for the field of journalism. The following section outlines the sample's diversity, detailing the demographic characteristics and professional backgrounds.

Demographics - The majority of the respondents are from Flanders (204 respondents, 71%), followed by Wallonia (62 respondents, 22%) and the Netherlands (51 respondents, 18%). Five respondents were not active in any of these regions. The age of the respondents ranged from 22 to 82 years (M = 45.87, SD = *13.37*). More men (60.5%) than women (37.8%) participated in the survey,

reflecting the gender imbalance observed in the broader field of journalism, as highlighted by Vanhaelewyn et al. (2023). **Error! Reference source not found.** presents the population, sample size, and response rate of the study.

The respondents' demographic breakdown was as follows:

- Flanders (including Dutch-speaking news media in Brussels): 204 respondents, accounting for 71% of the sample.
- Wallonia (including the German region and French-speaking news media in Brussels): 62 respondents, accounting for 22% of the sample.
- The Netherlands: 51 respondents, accounting for 18% of the sample.

The latest data on journalists' populations in the Netherlands were collected in 2015 (Kivits 2015; 2024). In June 2024, the Flemish Association for Journalists was contacted to request updated demographic data from Flanders and Wallonia (Belgium). The respondent's demographic details provide a diverse representation of the journalism field within the surveyed regions. **Table 2** presents the gender and age distribution of the sample across the three regions. No statistical differences were found based on chi-square tests and ANOVA.

Profession - This study included a range of journalistic roles to capture the diversity within the field. The rationale behind this approach was to encompass diverse journalistic profiles, as each contributes uniquely to the content creation, editing, or design of journalistic news reporting. Over half of the respondents identified as journalists (57.3%). Other roles include designers (10.5%), editors (9.4%), and editors-in-chief (8.0%). The respondents also varied in terms of their professional experience and the types of media they work for (print, digital, broadcast). The majority reported working for websites or apps (76.2%), followed by newspapers (46.2%), magazines (38.1%), and social media (29.7%). Smaller proportions worked for television (17.1%), radio (12.9%), press/photo agencies (6.6%), and production houses (2.8%).

When examining the type of news organisation the respondents work for, 74.8% indicated they were employed by a private news organisation. Nearly all respondents (90.2%) have more than three years of professional experience. A full overview of the sample is provided in **Table 3**. An analysis of variables such as job description, type of media, years of experience, and type of news organisation revealed no statistically significant correlations with the three regions ($p > .05$). This could be attributed to the non-representative sample and uneven regional distribution, which limit the generalisability of the results.

Results

Appendix 2. Descriptive measures of the survey provides an overview of the descriptive measures for the entire sample and the divides among journalists, discussed further below.

Table 1. *Population and sample size, including trainees*

	Flanders	**Wallonia**	**Belgium***	**Netherlands****
Number of journalists	2464	2197	4661	18 000
Number of respondents	204	62	266	51
Response rate	8.3%	2.8%	5.7%	0.28%

*Numbers of June 2024 (the Flemish Association of Journalists); **Numbers of 2015 (the Dutch Association for Journalists)

Table 2. *Sample description: gender and age (no statistical differences)*

Variable		**Flanders**	**Wallonia**	**Netherlands**	**Total**
		(N = 204)	(N = 62)	(N = 51)	**(N = 286)**
Gender	Male	124 (60.8%)	43 (69.4%)	34 (66.7%)	173 (60.5%)
	Female	76 (37.3%)	18 (29.0%)	16 (31.4%)	108 (37.8%)
	X or Prefer not to say	4 (2%)	1 (1.6%)	1 (2.0%)	5 (1.7%)
Age	Mean	44.57	47.15	48.02	45.87
	SD	*13.56*	*12.81*	*12.91*	*13.37*

RQ1A: Current Practices and Uses

In line with industry-oriented studies (e.g., Diakopoulos et al. 2024; Simon 2024), half of the journalists (52.4%) report using genAI in their professional practices, while 44.8% do not, and 2.8% say they do not know. Similarly, slightly more than half of the journalists (53.8%) say their colleagues are using genAI for work. Remarkably, one in three (38.8%) indicates that they do not know whether their colleagues do so, and only 7.3% are convinced that colleagues do not use genAI in their job. Regarding frequency, 32.0% of genAI users apply it at least weekly, and 14.0% use it daily. In total, 24.0% of the sample reports using genAI for reporting at least weekly.

Tasks - **Chart 1** gives an overview of the various tasks for which journalists currently use genAI, aspire to use, and do not aspire to use it. The main use of genAI in reporting is automated translation (45.9%). Following this, one in three respondents uses genAI for interview transcriptions (34.9%) and proofreading, such as spelling or grammar checks (29.6%). The list can be further completed with 17.3% of journalists using genAI for summarising texts. The tasks currently being experimented with

include summarising texts (26.8%), content inspiration (24.4%), and translations (22.6%). Tasks such as SEO (45.6%),

Table 3. *Sample description: Profession, type of media, experience, and news organisation (no statistical differences)*

Variable		**Flanders**	**Wallonia**	**Netherlands**	**Total**
		(N = 204)	(N = 62)	(N = 51)	**(N = 286)**
Job description	Editor in chief	17 (8.3%)	9 (14.5%)	5 (9.8%)	**23 (8.0%)**
	Editor	22 (10.8%)	5 (8.1%)	2 (3.9%)	**27 (9.4%)**
	Revisor	13 (6.4%)	1 (1.6%)	3 (5.9%)	**15 (5.2%)**
	Journalist	136 (66.7%)	12 (19.4%)	35 (68.6%)	**164 (57.3%)**
	Designer	3 (1.5%)	28 (45.2%)	0 (0%)	**30 (10.5%)**
	Photographer	5 (2.5%)	2 (3.2%)	5 (9.8%)	**12 (4.2%)**
	Other	8 (3.9%)	5 (8.1%)	1 (2.0%)	**15 (5.2%)**
Type of media	Website/app	162 (79.4%)	40 (64.5%)	43 (84.3%)	**218 (76.2%)**
	Newspaper	94 (46.1%)	28 (45.2%)	29 (56.9%)	**132 (46.2%)**
	Magazine	80 (39.2%)	25 (40.3%)	24 (47.1%)	**109 (38.1%)**
	Television	33 (16.2%)	12 (19.4%)	7 (13.7%)	**49 (17.1%)**
	Social media	55 (27%)	21 (33.9%)	23 (45.1%)	**85 (29.7%)**
	Radio	25 (12.3%)	10 (16.1%)	4 (7.8%)	**37 (12.9%)**
	Press agency	13 (6.4%)	9 (14.5%)	7 (13.7%)	**19 (6.6%)**
	Production house	6 (2.9%)	3 (4.8%)	1 (2%)	**8 (2.8%)**
	Other	13 (6.4%)	2 (3.2%)	4 (7.8%)	**18 (6.3%)**
Years of experience	Less than 3	24 (11.8%)	1 (1.6%)	3 (5.9%)	**28 (9.8%)**
	3-10 years	44 (21.6%)	16 (25.8%)	11(21.6%)	**60 (21.0%)**
	10-20 years	46 (22.5%)	14 (22.6%)	10 (19.6%)	**63 (22.0%)**
	More than 20 years	90 (44.1%)	31 (50.0%)	27 (52.9%)	**135 (47.2%)**
News org	Private	159 (55.6%)	48 (16.8%)	40 (14.0%)	**214 (74.8%)**
	Public	34 (11.9%)	12 (4.2%)	8 (2.8%)	**51 (17.8%)**
	Non-profit	30 (10.5%)	10 (3.5%)	9 (3.1%)	**45 (15.7%)**

Other	3 (1.0%)	4 (1.4%)	5 (1.7%)	**15 (5.2%)**

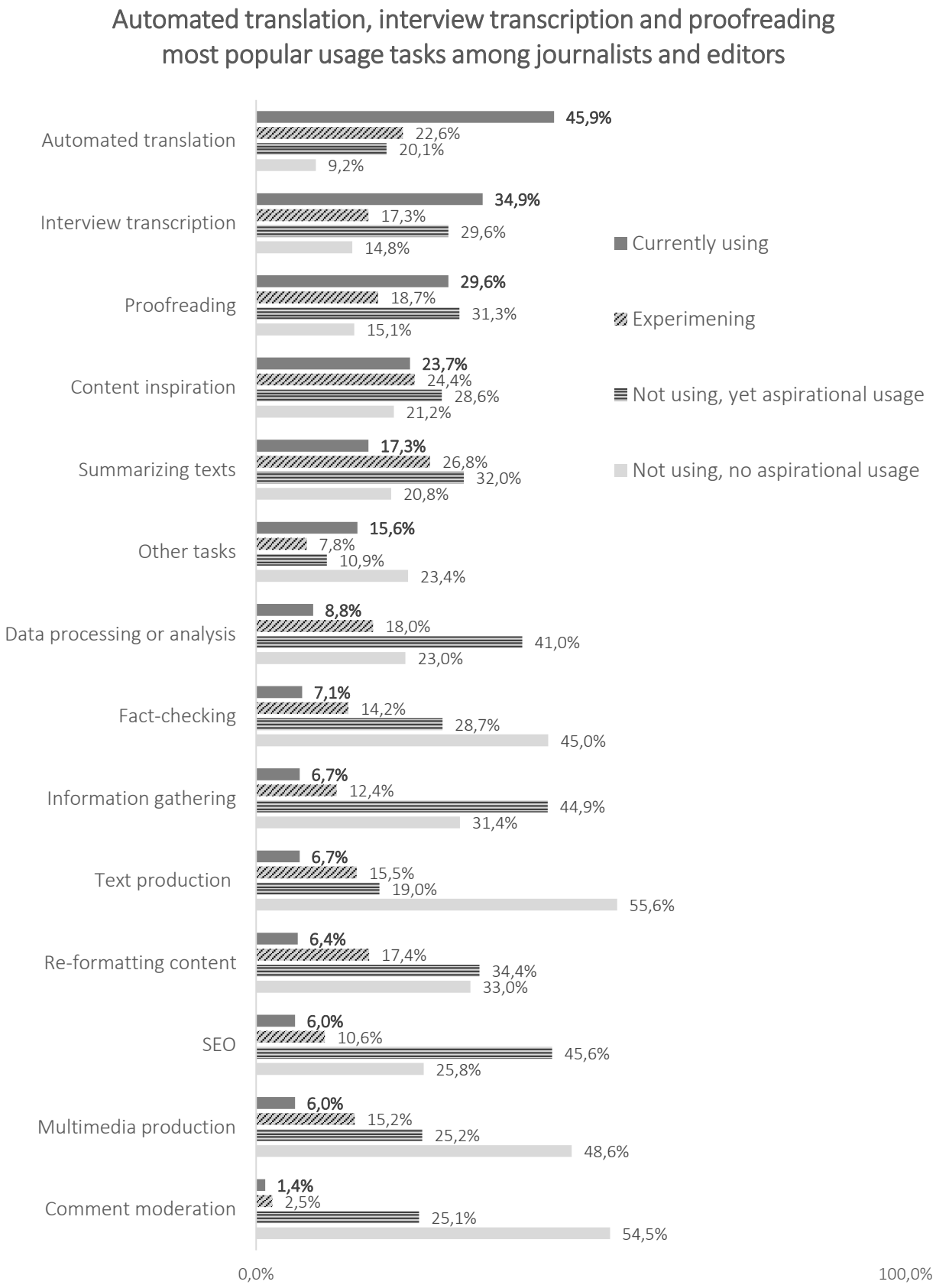

Chart 1. *The distribution of tasks mentioned in response to the question "For which tasks do you use generative AI?" (N=286)*

information gathering (44.9%), and data processing or analysis (41%), are not yet being performed by genAI, but journalists indicate that they aspire to do so in the future. In contrast, text production (55.6%), comment moderation (54.5%), multimedia production (48.6%), and fact-checking (45%) are tasks journalists do not want to use genAI for, not even in the future.

The respondents vary in terms of age, gender, region, and professional work experience. Upon further analysis of genAI use, the t-test shows no statistically significant difference between age and the use of genAI at work ($t(276) = -1.73$, $p = .086$, $d = -0.21$). Therefore, this study cannot conclude that older age groups use genAI more or less than younger age groups, or vice versa. Also, no significant differences were found in gender, region, or professional work experience.

RQ1B: Motivations and Perceptions

Journalists who use genAI in their work reveal three reasons for doing so: saving time (41.2%), working more efficiently (39.5%), and seeking inspiration (30.8%). Less common reasons include verifying information (8.7%), delivering more relevant content (8.7%), and meeting expectations from others (2.4%). Next to personal motivations, respondents were also asked to indicate the reasons they consider the use of genAI to be acceptable. The same three motivations emerged: increasing efficiency (78.7%), saving time (72.4%), and seeking inspiration (62.2%). Remarkably, only 4.5% of journalists stated that none of the mentioned reasons were acceptable for using genAI in journalistic news reporting. Among non-genAI users, the distribution of categories remains similar. However, among genAI users, 80.0% of respondents indicated that they think its use is acceptable, believing that it helps deliver more relevant content (64.0%) or provide inspiration (62.9%).

Most journalists (69.6%) believe that genAI is valuable for news reporting in newsrooms, regardless of whether they use it. Among AI users, this percentage rises to 87.4%. A significant negative Pearson correlation was observed between age and the perceived value of genAI for reporting ($r(284) = -.209$, $p < .001$), indicating that younger journalists perceive genAI as more valuable than those aged 65 and above.

Furthermore, journalists largely believe that genAI will impact their profession. Almost seven out of ten (69.1%) respondents indicated that genAI will play an important role in how they perform their journalistic tasks in the future. Four out of five respondents expressed concerns about the impact of genAI on the credibility of news, with non-users more concerned (85.9%) than users (77.2%). However, at the sample level, nearly eight out of ten journalists (78.3%) indicate that using genAI has not changed their work. Among those who already use genAI, this percentage remains similar (70.0%). Of the respondents who said they weren't using genAI, 30.0% indicated that genAI had not yet impacted their work. This might nuance voices in the public domain, stating that artificial intelligence will impact journalism profoundly. That said, one in three respondents indicates significant changes,

which could suggest that concerns about the use of genAI may be justified. This underscores the importance of both news organisations and the industry to develop guidelines to address the impact of genAI on journalistic practices in the future.

When diving deeper into journalists' interest in genAI, practical applications of genAI were found to be of greater interest than ethical and legal applications. Eight out of ten journalists (84%) expressed interest (somewhat or very) in practical applications, seven out of ten (67.5%) in ethical aspects, and six out of ten (60.5%) in the legal aspects of genAI.

As previously mentioned, genAI presents both opportunities and threats. **Chart 2** contrasts the statements on the impact of genAI on journalism, highlighting how it may worsen (left) or improve (right) various aspects. Overall, journalists appear to be rather pessimistic, with negative attitudes outweighing the positive aspects. Journalists think genAI will worsen the circulation of misleading news and fake news (85.1%) and will negatively impact trust in journalism (83.4%). Also, two in three state genAI will negatively impact accuracy (68.6%), authenticity (67.1%), and objectivity (67.1%) of news content. In contrast, 33.9% see genAI as an opportunity to improve the accuracy of news content, and 25.8% think genAI can help reduce the spread of dubious content.

RQ2: Exploring the Landscape of AI Divides

This study further explores potential AI divides through cluster analysis, focusing on regional differences (Flanders, Wallonia, and the Netherlands) and distinctions among journalists. AI literacy was measured to determine whether differences exist at both individual and professional levels. The results reveal two distinct types of AI divides. While regional differences were minimal, a more pronounced divide emerged at the individual level, based on variations in AI literacy.

Divide 1: Regional Differences

When comparing the different regions, the chi-square tests show no significant differences in the use of genAI at the individual (p = .170), peer (p = .265), and frequency in

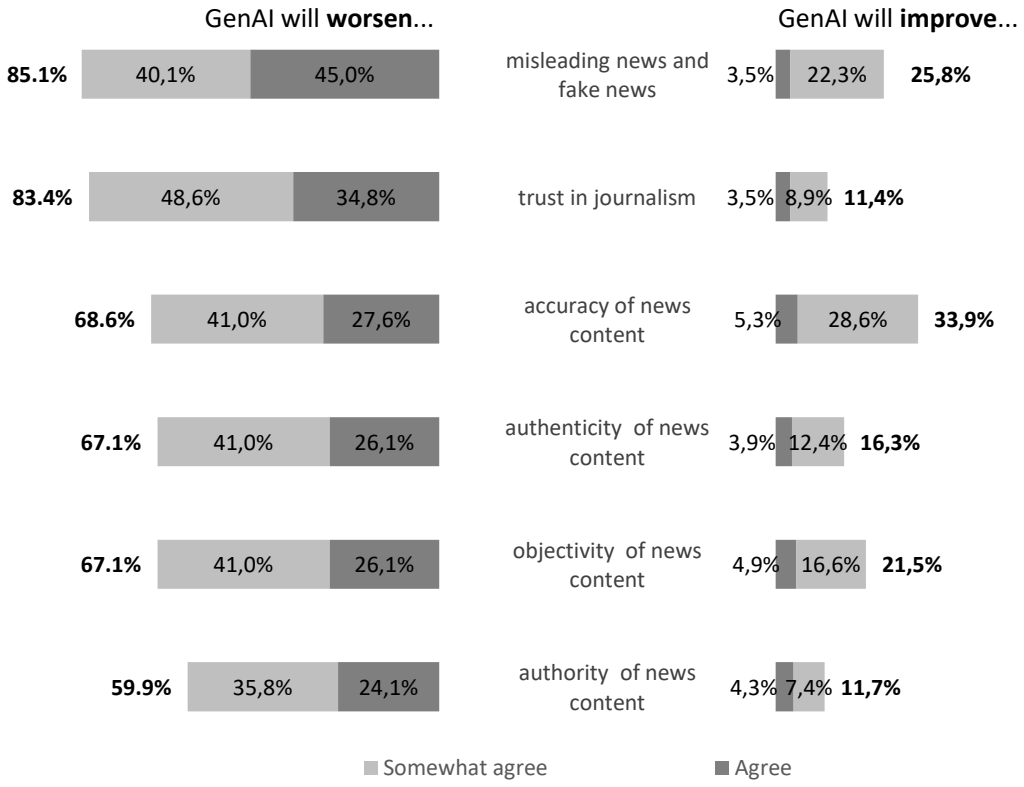

Chart 2. *Butterfly chart of negative (left) and positive (right) assessments of the impact of genAI on journalism*

use levels (p = .068). However, a significant difference was found in genAI knowledge among journalists across the three regions (F(2, 275) = 9.60, p < .001, η^2 = .07). Dutch journalists (M = 4.02, SD = .92) reported higher levels of knowledge compared to their counterparts in Flanders (M = 3.35, SD = 1.02) and Wallonia (M = 3.36, SD = .95). Despite the knowledge difference, the study further reveals that the attitude towards genAI is more positive in the Netherlands (M = 2.63, SD = .79) and Flanders (M = 2.89, SD = .78), than in Wallonia (M = 3.05, SD = .73). A lower score on the attitude scale (F(2, 276) = 4.14, p = .017, η^2 = .03) indicates less agreement with the negative perspectives and threats of genAI in the journalists' profession. Additionally, a significant negative relationship was found between genAI knowledge and attitude (r(284) = −.539, p < .001), suggesting that journalists with more knowledge tend to hold a more positive attitude towards genAI in newsrooms. Lastly, Dutch journalists (M = 3.84, SD = 1.12) also reported a slightly higher perceived added value of genAI in newsrooms (F(2, 277) = 5.09, p = .007, η^2 = .04), compared to those in Flanders (M = 3.79, SD = 1.02) and Wallonia (M = 3.29, SD = 1.13). However, this difference is not particularly large.

Divide 2: Differences in AI Literacy

To gain deeper insight into the differences among journalists, we explored how AI-literate journalists are (Deuze and Beckett 2022). Using cluster analysis, a typology was developed consisting of three distinct groups based on their use, attitude, and knowledge of genAI. This typology identifies three journalistic profiles: Experienced AI enthusiasts, Undecided observers, Uninformed dystopians (see **Table 4**). The Experienced AI enthusiasts (47.0%) are journalists who have used genAI in their work, demonstrate a high level of knowledge about AI, and hold a positive attitude toward its use. The second category, the Undecided observers (28.6%), consists of journalists who currently minimally use genAI, have limited knowledge about it, and exhibit a somewhat hesitant attitude towards its adoption. The third category, the Uninformed dystopians (24.4%), includes journalists who neither use genAI nor possess much knowledge about it, and consequently display a rather negative attitude towards its use.

Regarding the different tasks and the use of genAI, the typology reveals notable discrepancies in how genAI is (not) used across the distinct profiles. Among the Experienced AI enthusiasts, genAI is used most frequently, particularly for tasks such as automated translation (60.6%), interview transcription (53.4%), content inspiration (43.2%), and proofreading (39.8%). In contrast, the other two profiles - Undecided observers and Uninformed dystopians—use genAI much less frequently. When they do use it, it is primarily for support in routine news reporting tasks, similar to those used by the first group. In terms of perceived added value, both Experienced AI enthusiasts (M = 4.23, SD = .66) and Undecided observers (M = 3.46, SD = 1.12) consider genAI to be a valuable tool in newsrooms ($F(2, 280) = 48.49$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .26$). In contrast, Uninformed dystopians, however, report the lowest perceived added value (M = 2.90, SD = 1.15). This is linked to their overall more negative attitude towards genAI (M = 3.58, SD = .77) compared to the more positive attitudes of the Experienced AI enthusiasts (M = 2.38, SD = .53) and Undecided observers (M = 3.10, SD = .56).

A significant negative correlation was observed between the knowledge of genAI and the anxiety about job loss due to genAI ($r(284) = -.248$, $p < .001$). The ANOVA test ($F(2, 280) = 18.84$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .12$) reveals that the Uninformed dystopians are slightly

Table 4. *Journalist typology for genAI literacy*

Variable	**Experienced AI enthusiasts** (N = 133)	**Undecided observers** (N = 81)	**Uninformed dystopians** (N = 69)
Age	Younger age group	Younger age group	Older age group
Own genAI use	Highest use	Moderate use	Low use
Current genAI use	Automated translation (60.6%) Interview transcription (53.4%)	Automated translation (40.0%) Interview transcription (21.3%)	Automated translation (24.6%) Proofreading (18.8%)

	Content inspiration (43.2%) Proofreading (39.8%) Summarising tasks (31.6%)	Proofreading (20.0%)	Interview transcription (14.5%)
Attitude genAI	Rather positive	Neither positive nor negative	Rather negative
Knowledge genAI	High	Medium	Low
Fear of losing job	Neutral	Rather high	Highest
Impact news credibility	Medium to high	High	Very high
Added value	High	Medium	Low to medium

more likely to agree that genAI poses a threat to their jobs (M = 3.51, SD = 1.20), whereas Experienced AI enthusiasts express significantly lower concern (M = 2.50, SD = 1.21). Similarly, the results reveal differences in how journalists perceive the impact of genAI on the credibility of news ($F(2, 280) = 9.94$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .07$). Experienced AI enthusiasts (M = 3.88, SD = 1.12) are somewhat less concerned about the credibility of news than the Undecided observers (M = 4.14, SD = 1.00). The Uninformed dystopians, in contrast, are the most concerned (M = 4.55, SD = .80).

RQ3: Responsible Use of GenAI in News Reporting

Most notably, 85.1% of journalists in this study marked ethical concerns regarding the use of genAI in the newsroom, and this percentage is even higher among journalists who already use genAI in their work (86.6%). This finding challenges dystopian voices suggesting that journalists who use genAI lack journalistic integrity. These ethical concerns remain consistent across age, gender, region, job function, and years of work experience. To further investigate journalists' perspectives on the ethical implications of genAI, the survey included several statements regarding ethical considerations. A large majority of journalists agree that ethical issues surrounding the use of genAI in news reporting should be carefully considered.

First, there is a broad consensus among journalists on the importance of human oversight in the use of genAI tools. Nearly all journalists (96.8%) believe that human oversight remains (very) important. This perception is consistent across user groups. Among those who use genAI, this percentage is slightly higher, while even among non-users, journalists still perceive human oversight as (very) important.

Second, journalists widely recognise the importance of transparency when using genAI in news reporting. Nearly all respondents (94.7%) indicated that transparency is (very) important. This perspective is even more pronounced among journalists who actively use genAI (97.3%), compared to 92.9% among those who do not use genAI.

Third, journalists emphasise the central role of newsrooms in developing and implementing guidelines for genAI use. A large majority (86.5%) believe it is (very) important that the entire editorial staff is involved in this process. This perspective is shared across user groups, with slightly higher agreement among journalists who do not use genAI for news reporting (88.9%), compared to those who do (85.8%).

In line with the idea of assigning a central role to newsrooms, three out of four respondents (73.5%) believe that ethical guidelines are essential to ensure responsible use of genAI in journalism. Remarkably, however, only 26.7% of journalists indicate that their news organisations have such guidelines, while 28.5% state that their organisation(s) do not. Even more strikingly, 38.8% of respondents are unsure whether their organisation has any guidelines at all. The survey also explored whether respondents were aware of any guidelines provided by professional journalism associations. The majority (67.0%) indicated that they were not familiar with such guidelines.

Furthermore, the responsible use of genAI in news reporting is perceived as a shared responsibility across the entire news ecosystem. All categories were considered highly responsible for ensuring the ethical use of genAI in journalism, with editors-in-chief (96.2%), reporters/editors (95.4%), managers/directors (92.6%), and the news organisation's legal departments (86.7%) appointed as being most responsible. Journalists primarily perceive their newsrooms and organisations as key players in ensuring the responsible use of genAI. However, they also acknowledge that other stakeholders share this responsibility. These include self-regulatory journalistic organisations (83.6%), journalism associations (77.7%), and the IT or innovation departments within news organisations (74.8%). Remarkably, policymakers (65.8%) and technology platforms (61.9%) are perceived as less responsible, ranking lowest on the list.

Discussion and Conclusion

The study aimed to explore how genAI is used in newsrooms by mapping the professional and ethical practices of Belgian and Dutch journalists. The results illustrate that journalists are using genAI, or at least experimenting with it. While over half of the respondents reported using genAI, only one in four journalists uses it at least weekly for reporting tasks. This study reveals that, although genAI is being adopted in newsrooms, its current application primarily supports existing tasks rather than transforming or reinventing journalistic processes. This trend is largely driven by efficiency considerations in news reporting. Automated translation, transcription, and proofreading are the most common genAI applications, aligning with previous industry reports (Diakopoulos et al. 2024). Similar to earlier automation in journalism, these technologies streamline workflows without altering core journalistic processes (Coddington 2015). By facilitating data-driven reporting, automation can

accelerate content production while maintaining journalistic integrity (Coddington 2015; Siitonen, Laajalahti, and Venäläinen 2023; van Dalen 2012).

Our study shows that regional differences between Flanders, Wallonia, and the Netherlands are minimal. This suggests that individual journalists' use of genAI is influenced more by personal factors than by the broader regional media landscapes. For example, at the individual level, the study reveals differences between age groups in terms of attitudes: younger journalists generally exhibit a more positive outlook on genAI compared to older age groups. This finding aligns with previous studies on the acceptance of process automation and technology adoption, which have consistently shown that older age groups tend to be more resistant to new technologies (Araujo et al. 2020; Thurman, Dörr, and Kunert 2017; van Deursen and van Dijk 2010). Further, variations in AI literacy levels were also observed, highlighting a key challenge: the prevalence of AI illiteracy among journalists, which can hinder the adoption of new technologies (Schapals and Porlezza 2020). This struggle reflects a broader challenge within journalism: the ongoing need for professionals to adapt and acquire new competencies to engage with emerging technologies (de-Lima-Santos and Ceron 2021; Deuze and Beckett 2022). The introduction of new technologies in newsrooms often leads to tensions, par-particularly regarding resource allocation between early adopters and more "traditional" journalists who are hesitant to integrate these tools into their workflows (Paulussen 2016; Ugille 2017). Such divides tend to become more pronounced during periods of technological innovation, with early adopters playing a pioneering role in shaping newsroom practices (Thurman, Dörr, and Kunert 2017; van Deursen and van Dijk 2010). As with the introduction of genAI in journalism, our study reveals the emergence of distinct journalist profiles based on AI literacy. These include Experienced AI enthusiasts, Undecided observers, and Uninformed dystopians. Despite genAI's growing presence in newsrooms, it is predominantly perceived as a supportive tool rather than a replacement for human labour. Core journalistic values, such as authenticity, objectivity, and credibility, remain central concerns, with journalists recognising the challenges that genAI presents in evaluating (un)authenticity (Sun, Hu, and Wu 2022; Wu 2019).

Ethical considerations are at the forefront of the discussion, with journalists advocating for human oversight and transparency (Diakopoulos et al. 2024). Evolving responsible AI use reflects the industry's proactive approach to ethical challenges. While responsible genAI use is considered a shared news ecosystem concern, journalists in our study primarily focus on internal newsroom guidelines. The emergence of genAI may also contribute to a more level playing field for news organisations, leading to a potential further divide between smaller and larger news organisations. Larger organisations, with more resources, are better positioned to experiment with genAI and assess its editorial implications by integrating it into their workflows. As with the current state of genAI, the key question is whether AI tools can emulate human qualities such as objectivity, authenticity, and

credibility (Coddington 2015; Siitonen, Laajalahti, and Venäläinen 2023). The dichotomy, as frequently highlighted in previous research, between AI-supporters and sceptics is overly simplistic. This study highlights the nuanced and evolving nature of genAI adoption in journalism. Even current genAI users express ethical concerns and call for clear, concrete guidelines. While genAI is already being used in practice, it has not yet brought about disruptive changes to the core of news reporting.

This study has several limitations that should be acknowledged. First, it relies on self-reported data, which may be subject to biases such as social desirability or selective memory. Further research could strengthen the empirical foundation by triangulating these findings with alternative methodologies, such as ethnographic observation. Second, the overrepresentation of Flemish respondents highlights the need for a broader regional scope in future studies. Although the sample size is relatively small, partly due to the limited population of journalists (Vanhaelewyn et al. 2023) and low response rate, the study offers valuable insights into the adoption of genAI and the ethical considerations among journalists. However, the sample is not representative of the broader journalistic population. The study likely attracted respondents with a particular interest in genAI, which should be taken into account when interpreting the findings. Despite these limitations, the study offers a comprehensive overview of genAI use in newsrooms, shedding light on journalists' use, motivations, perceptions, and ethical concerns. The analysis of 286 respondents offers significant insights into the regional similarities and differences, as well as distinctions between users and non-users of genAI. It also identifies distinct journalist profiles based on AI literacy. This study further contributes to the growing body of literature on technological innovation in journalism, particularly by critically examining journalism's ambivalence towards new technologies (Paulussen 2016). It underscores the need to expand AI literacy beyond traditional notions of digital or media literacy and calls on policymakers and news organisations to develop responsible and effective AI strategies while overcoming general scepticism. Future research could delve into the role of genAI in different cultural contexts, using in-depth interviews with journalists and other editorial profiles to gain a more nuanced understanding of how genAI is (responsibly) integrated into newsrooms. Additionally, future studies could investigate how guidelines for responsible AI are being translated into practice. By mapping the professional and ethical practices related to genAI, this exploratory study serves as a first foundation for the scale and specific AI uses in journalistic workflows in Belgium and the Netherlands.

Note

[1]Artificial intelligence (AI) refers to a machine-based system that, for explicit or implicit objectives, infers from the input it receives how to generate outputs such as predictions, content, recommendations, or decisions that can influence physical or virtual environments (Grobelnik, Perset,

and Russell 2024); GenAI is based on machine learning models that are trained on vast amounts of data to generate persuasive content and conduct human-like dialogues (Shi and Sun 2024).

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Appendix 1. Questionnaire with items (translated from Dutch to English)

Topic	Question + items
Knowledge	
	To what extent do you agree with the following statements? *(1 = Strongly disagree, 2 = Somewhat disagree, 3 = Neither disagree no agree, 4 = Somewhat agree, 5 = Strongly agree)* - I have heard of generative AI and know what the most well-known generative AI tools are. - I know what generative AI tools can do. - I have used generative AI tools before, either as experiments or for real-world tasks. - I have used generative AI tools before, and can iteratively adapt my prompts or instructions to whatever I want. - I know and have experienced to a certain extent for which tasks in my work generative AI could possibly offer added value. - I already apply generative AI tools in a professional workflow (e.g. using generative AI results (edited) in articles).
GenAI use	
Personal use	Do you use generative AI in some way during your work as a journalist? - Yes - No - I don't know
Peers	Do your colleagues use generative AI in some way during their work? - Yes - No - I don't know
Frequency	How often do you use generative AI at work? - Rarely to never - Once a month - Several times a month - At least weekly - Daily
Reason(s) for use	
Added value	To what extent do you consider generative AI tools to be of added value in newsrooms? - Definitely no added value - Somewhat no added value - Neither no added value nor added value - Somewhat an added value - Definitely an added value
Tasks	

	What tasks do you use generative AI for? *(1 = I don't use it and don't want to use it in the future, 2 = I don't use it but I'm considering using it in the future, 3 = I've already tested it out, 4 = I use, 4 = I don't know)* - Automated translation - Comment moderation - Content creation: production of images, videos, or audio - Content creation: text production when writing paragraphs or full articles - Final editing, such as spell checker or grammar suggestions - Fact-checking - Data processing or data analysis - Re-formatting content - Inspiration for content, e.g. generating titles or story ideas - Newsgathering - Summarising texts - Search Engine Optimisation (SEO) (to be better discoverable in search engines) - Interview transcription - Other,...
Frequency	You indicated that you use generative AI for the next task(s). How often is that? [Display logic question] *(1 = Less than monthly, 2 = Several times a month, 3 = At least weekly, 4 = Daily, 5 = Several times a day)* - Automated translation - Comment moderation - Content creation: production of images, videos, or audio - Content creation: text production when writing paragraphs or full articles - Final editing, such as spell checker or grammar suggestions - Fact-checking - Data processing or data analysis - Re-formatting content - Inspiration for content, e.g. generating titles or story ideas - Newsgathering - Summarising texts - Search Engine Optimisation (SEO) (to be better discoverable in search engines) - Interview transcription - Other,...
	Have your tasks as a journalist changed as a result of using generative AI? - No - Yes Yes; Can you elaborate on that? [open question]

What aspects of generative AI are you interested in? *(1 = Not interested, 2 = Not very interested, 3 = Neither not interest, nor interested, 4 = Moderately interested, 5 = Highly interested)*

- Practical applications
- Ethical issues
- Technological developments
- Legal issues

Why do you use generative AI in your work as a journalist?

Multiple answers are possible.

- To save time
- To work more efficiently
- To find creative ideas or perspectives
- Because that is what I'm expected to do
- To deliver more relevant content
- To better verify information
- Other, ...

Which of the following reasons for using generative AI in journalism do you find acceptable?

Multiple answers are possible.

- To save time
- To work more efficiently
- To find creative ideas or perspectives
- Because that is what I'm expected to do
- To deliver more relevant content
- To better verify information
- Other, ...
- For none of these reasons

For what tasks do you think the use of generative AI in journalism is acceptable?

Multiple answers are possible.

- Automated translation
- Comment moderation
- Content creation: production of images, videos, or audio
- Content creation: text production when writing paragraphs or full articles
- Final editing, such as spell checker or grammar suggestions
- Fact-checking
- Data processing or data analysis
- Re-formatting content
- Inspiration for content, e.g. generating titles or story ideas

	- Newsgathering - Summarising texts - Search Engine Optimisation (SEO) (to be better discoverable in search engines) - Interview transcription - Other,… - For none of these tasks
Attitude towards genAI	To what extent do you agree with the following statements? (*1 = Strongly disagree, 2 = Somewhat disagree, 3 = Neither disagree or agree, 4 = Somewhat agree, 5 = Strongly agree)* - Generative AI offers advantages for my job as a journalist. - Generative AI is a threat to my job as a journalist. - I am concerned about (the impact of) generative AI on the credibility of news. - Generative AI will play an important role in how I do my job as a journalist in the future. - I am not concerned about (the role of) generative AI in my work as a journalist. [Open question] Would you like to say something more about this?
Opportunities and threats	To what extent do you agree with the following statements? (*1 = Strongly disagree, 2 = Somewhat disagree, 3 = Neither disagree or agree, 4 = Somewhat agree, 5 = Strongly agree)* - Generative AI can improve the accuracy of news content. - Generative AI can worsen the accuracy of news content. - Generative AI can improve the objectivity of news content. - Generative AI can worsen the objectivity of news content. - Generative AI can improve the authenticity of news content. - Generative AI can worsen the authenticity of news content. [Open question] Would you like to say something more about this? To what extent do you agree with the following statements? (*1 = Strongly disagree, 2 = Somewhat disagree, 3 = Neither disagree or agree, 4 = Somewhat agree, 5 = Strongly agree)* - Generative AI can make the news content more authoritative. - Generative AI can make the news content less authoritative. - Generative AI can debunk misleading messages, fake news, or rumors. - Generative AI can amplify misleading messages, fake news, or rumors. - Generative AI can strengthen trust in journalism. - Generative AI can decrease trust in journalism. [Open question] Would you like to say something more about this?
Ethical considerations **on responsible use** *Ethical concerns*	Do you have ethical concerns about the use of generative AI in journalism? - Yes - No - I don't know

Are you familiar with guidelines on the ethical use of generative AI in journalism from the sector?

- Yes
- No

Do you know what these guidelines from the sector entail?

- Yes
- No

[Open question] Can you name two things from the guidelines?

Does the news organisation(s) you work for have its own guidelines for the ethical use of generative AI?

- Yes
- No
- I don't know
- Not applicable to me

Do you know what these guidelines from the news organisation(s) entail?

- Yes
- No

[Open question] Can you name two things from the guidelines?

Guidelines

Do you follow these guidelines if you use generative AI in your work as a journalist? *(1 = Never, 2 = Rarely, 3 = Occasionally, 4 = Most of the time, 5 = Always, 6 = I don't know)*

[Open question] Would you like to say something more about this?

To what extent do you find these guidelines useful in deciding what constitutes ethical use of generative AI in the newsroom?

- Not at all
- Somewhat
- Neither does not nor does it
- Somewhat
- At all

Who do you think bears the responsibility for the responsible use of generative AI in journalism? *(1 = No responsibility at all, 2 = No responsibility, 3 = Neither responsibility nor responsibility, 4 = Somewhat responsibility, 5 = Definitely responsibility)*

- Reporters/editors
- Managers/directors of news organisations
- IT or innovation departments of news organisations
- Technology providers
- Editor-in-chief
- Legal departments of news organisations
- Journalists' associations
- Policy makers

- Self-regulatory associations (Council for Journalism, Fédération Wallonie-Bruxelles, Comm. Germ.)

To what extent do you think the following statements about generative AI are important? *(1 = Not important at all, 2 = Not important, 3 = Neither unimportant nor important, 4 = Important, 5 = Very important)*

- When developing guidelines around the use of generative AI, the entire newsroom should be involved.
- When using genAI, there should always be human end responsibility.
- Generative AI models used in newsrooms should be trained on journalistic texts.
- Guidelines around genAI should distinguish between permitted and prohibited uses of genAI.
- It is important to be transparent about the use of generative AI in news reporting.

How important do you think it is for news organisations to develop internal AI tools?

- Not all important
- Not important
- Neither unimportant nor important
- Important
- Very important
- I don't know

Appendix 2. Descriptive measures of the survey

Appendix 2A. Overview of descriptive measures, comparing the regions, typology of AI literacy and total sample

	Measures		Regional differences					Typology based on AI literacy					Total sample
			Flanders N = 174	Wallonia N = 55	Netherlands N = 51	Test	Sig.	Experienced AI enthusiasts N = 133	Undecided observers N = 81	Uninformed dystopians N = 69	Test	Sig.	
GenAI use	*Own use of genAI*	Yes	48.9%	50.9%	68.6%	$X^2(4) = 6.413$	.170	94.7%	18.5%	10.1%	$X^2(4) = 186.69$	.001	**52.4%**
		No	48.9%	47.3%	29.4%			4.5%	75.3%	88.4%			**44.8%**
		Don't know	2.3%	1.8%	2.0%			0.8%	6.2%	1.4%			**2.8%**
	Peer use of genAI	Yes	57.5%	45.5%	54.9%	$X^2(4) = 5.224$	.265	65.4%	44.4%	43.5%	$X^2(4) = 16.10$	.003	**53.8%**
		No	5.2%	10.9%	11.8%			4.5%	12.3%	5.8%			**7.3%**
		Don't know	37.4%	43.6%	33.3%			30.1%	43.2%	50.7%			**38.8%**
Attitudes towards GenAI	***Attitude – Scale (α= .564)***	Mean	2.89	3.05	2.63	F(2,276)= 4.144	**.017**	2.38	3.10	3.58	F(2,280) = 96.101	.001	**2.88**
		SD	*.78*	*.73*	*.79*			*.53*	*.56*	*.77*			***.78***
	Added value	Mean	3.79	3.29	3.84	F(2,277)= 5.087	**.007**	4.23	3.46	2.90	F(2,280) = 48.485	.001	**3.70**
		SD	1.02	1.13	1.12			*.66*	*1.12*	*1.15*			***1.09***
	Impact on news credibility	Mean	4.13	4.15	4.02	F(2,276)= .234	.791	3.88	4.14	4.55	F(2,280)= 9.942	.001	**4.11**
		SD	*1.02*	*1.00*	*1.20*			*1.12*	*1.00*	*.80*			***1.05***
	Fear to lose job	Mean	2.93	3.11	2.78	F(2,276)= .858	.425	2.50	3.25	3.51	F(2,280) = 18.844	.001	**2.95**
		SD	1.25	1.30	1.42			*1.21*	*1.25*	*1.20*			***1.29***
Knowledge	***Knowledge – Scale (α =.860)***	Mean	3.35	3.36	4.02	F(2,275) = 9.603	**.001**	4.29	3.32	2.02	F(2,280)= 559.588	.001	**3.46**
		SD	*1.02*	*.95*	*.92*			*.48*	*.41*	*.48*			***1.03***
	I have heard of generative AI and know what the best-known AI tools are.	Mean	4.04	4.00	4.41	F(2,275) = 2.829	.061	4.50	4.10	3.19	F(2,280)= 43.419	.001	**4.07**
		SD	*1.11*	*1.00*	*.83*			*.70*	*.93*	*1.31*			***1.08***
	I know what generative AI tools can do.	*Mean*	3.78	3.85	4.22	F(2,275) = 4.027	**.019**	4.27	3.88	3.06	F(2,280)= 46.601	.001	**3.87**
		SD	*.95*	*.95*	*.97*			*.70*	*.83*	*1.10*			***.98***
	I have used generative AI tools before, either as experiment or for real tasks.	*Mean*	3.62	3.65	4.51	F(2,275) = 7.378	**.001**	4.72	4.00	1.67	F(2,280)= 271.141	.001	**3.77**
		SD	*1.56*	*1.58*	*1.00*			*.56*	*1.04*	*1.18*			***1.52***
	I have used generative AI tools as once, and can iteratively adapt my prompts or instructions to what I want.	*Mean*	2.88	2.91	3.69	F(2,275) = 5.778	**.003**	4.13	2.77	1.19	F(2,280)= 210.563	.001	**3.03**
		SD	*1.51*	*1.46*	*1.59*			*.97*	*1.28*	*.39*			***1.54***
	I know and have experienced to some extent for which tasks in my work generative AI can add value.	*Mean*	3.43	3.44	3.98	F(2,275) = 3.710	**.026**	4.40	3.44	1.91	F(2,280)= 193.648	.001	**3.52**
		SD	*1.30*	*1.42*	*1.14*			*.65*	*.96*	*1.04*			***1.31***
	I already apply generative AI tools in a professional workflow.	*Mean*	2.33	2.31	3.33	F(2,275) = 10.025	**.001**	3.72	1.72	1.09	F(2,280)= 220.934	.001	**2.51**
		SD	*1.45*	*1.32*	*1.62*			*1.10*	*.99*	*.28*			***1.50***

Appendix 2B. Overview of descriptive measures, comparing the regions, typology of AI literacy and total sample (continued)

Measures			Flanders	Wallonia	Netherlands	Test	Sig.	Experienced AI enthusiasts	Undecided observers	Uninformed dystopians	Test	Sig.	Total sample
Ethical considerations	When developing guidelines around the use of genAI, the entire newsroom must be involved.	Mean	4.08	4.87	4.22	F(2,272) = 25.760	**.001**	4.21	4.09	4.52	F(2,277) = 6.416	**.002**	**4.25**
		SD	*.78*	*.39*	*.68*			*.77*	*.85*	*.63*			***.78***
	When using genAI, there should always be human end responsibility.	Mean	4.79	4.94	4.70	F(2,272) = 3.413	**.034**	4.82	4.75	4.83	F(2,277) = .574	.564	**4.79**
		SD	*.47*	*.31*	*.65*			*.48*	*.59*	*.42*			***.52***
	GenAI models used in newsrooms should be trained on journalistic texts.	Mean	4.03	4.36	3.90	F(2,272) = 4.105	**.018**	4.09	3.91	4.19	F(2,277) = 2.002	.137	**4.06**
		SD	*.84*	*.88*	*.93*			*.82*	*.98*	*.81*			***.88***
	Guidelines around genAI should distinguish between permitted and prohibited uses of genAI.	Mean	4.29	4.74	4.46	F(2,272) = 7.627	**.001**	4.35	4.30	4.61	F(2,277)= 3.585	**.029**	**4.40**
		SD	*.77*	*.52*	*.79*			*.82*	*.77*	*.60*			***.76***
	It is important to be transparent about the use of genAI in news reporting.	Mean	4.64	4.87	4.74	F(2,272) = 3.077	**.048**	4.65	4.63	4.78	F(2,277)= 1.296	.275	**4.68**
		SD	*.67*	*.44*	*.49*			*.63*	*.72*	*.59*			***.65***