

IBERIFIER — Iberian Digital Media Observatory

Innovation Trends in Iberian Digital Media: Communication Scenarios for 2030

Report

Deliverable — D3.5



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1. Introduction

Alicia de Lara, UMH

This report builds on the foresight exercise published in 2023 by the same research team (García-Avilés et al., 2023), which examined the key trends and innovations expected to transform the media ecosystem in Spain and Portugal with a 2030 horizon. That initial study identified 16 major areas of transformation, ranging from artificial intelligence (AI), big data, and disinformation to business models, new narratives, audiences, and sustainability.

Three years later, we once again turn our attention to 2030, but from a different starting point, as the media ecosystem is no longer the same. Some of the transformations that were only beginning to emerge at that time have accelerated significantly, while others have taken on a new dimension. At the same time, new issues have arisen that require specific attention.

These changes affect the media ecosystem as a whole and cut across technological, economic, professional, regulatory, and social dimensions. They influence content production and distribution, the sustainability of media organizations, the authenticity of information, and the conditions under which journalism is practiced. Against this backdrop of accelerating change and growing uncertainty, the aim of this report is to identify emerging transformations and explore possible futures for the evolution of the Iberian media ecosystem.

To achieve this, the study adopts a mixed-methods foresight approach that combines expert consultation with the probabilistic assessment of scenarios by media professionals and executives from the communication sectors of Spain and Portugal. The research design integrates qualitative and quantitative methods and incorporates key principles of the Delphi methodology, particularly the systematic use of expert knowledge to generate, validate, and refine hypotheses about possible future developments. Combining expert knowledge with scenario building provides a particularly appropriate strategy for exploring complex and emerging transformations in contexts characterized by high levels of uncertainty (Nowack et al., 2011), and has been specifically applied to foresight research on journalism and news ecosystems (Kaivo-oja, 2013; Nel, 2024).

This approach goes beyond merely identifying trends. It also seeks to examine which scenarios generate the greatest consensus, where disagreements emerge between experts and practitioners, and in which areas uncertainty is most pronounced. In this context, uncertainty is not regarded as a limitation to be eliminated, but rather as a fundamental dimension of foresight analysis. The absence of consensus or the concentration of responses around intermediate probabilities may reveal the extent to which certain transformations remain open-ended and continue to depend on technological, business, political, or professional decisions.

This is, moreover, one of the central contributions of the new report: transformations can no longer be analysed in isolation. AI is closely connected to the evolution of disinformation, but also to changes in professional routines, business models, and

content distribution. The economic sustainability of media organizations is increasingly linked to traffic loss, platform dependency, brand value, and the ability to build direct relationships with audiences. Trust depends more than ever on transparency, authenticity, and the possibility of verifying the origin and authorship of content. At the same time, the emergence of new narratives and formats is reshaping patterns of media consumption, demanding new professional skills and prompting new strategies for engaging with audiences. Meanwhile, regulation and public policy are becoming increasingly important in response to transformations that exceed the capacity of individual media organizations and professionals to address on their own.

Rather than the 16 areas examined in the first report, the present study reorganizes the analysis around 10 broad strategic categories. These are not conceived as isolated compartments, but as deeply interconnected dimensions whose interrelationships constitute one of the most significant findings of the foresight exercise itself.

1. AI, Big Data, and High Technology
2. Media Industry, Business, Branding and Commercialization
3. Disinformation and Media Literacy
4. Relationship with the Public: Interactivity and Participation
5. Content and Editorial Approaches
6. Narratives, Formats, and Hybridization
7. Journalistic Culture and Professional Well-being
8. Professional Development and Continuing Education
9. Ethics and Transparency
10. Legislation and Public Policy

Some of these categories maintain a clear continuity with the previous exercise; others bring together areas that were previously addressed in a more fragmented manner; and certain issues have now acquired greater autonomy and relevance as a result of the transformations experienced by the media ecosystem in recent years.

Like its predecessor, this study has been developed within the framework of the IBERIFIER Plus project, coordinated by Ramón Salaverría at the University of Navarra. It has been produced by an international and inter-university research team from the Miguel Hernández University of Elche (UMH), ISCTE – University Institute of Lisbon, and the Communication Observatory (OberCom). The work is structured around the study's ten strategic categories, each coordinated by a thematic lead responsible for overseeing the different stages of the research process. The project was carried out within a common methodological framework to ensure consistency and to promote a cross-cutting, integrated interpretation of the identified trends.

Coordinated by: Alicia De Lara González
Miguel Hernández University of Elche (UMH)

1.1. Rationale and Development

In today's media ecosystem, a three-year period represents a sufficiently long interval to observe significant transformations. Technological acceleration, changing patterns of media consumption, the growing intermediation of digital platforms, and the emergence of generative AI have profoundly reshaped the media industry (Newman, 2024). The pace of these transformations, however, is uneven. While some areas experience rapid and readily observable change, others evolve more gradually and require longer time horizons before meaningful comparisons can be drawn.

The objective of this report is to provide the media industry with informed insights into the directions that different areas of communication may take in the coming years. The scenarios presented here are not based on mere speculation but on the expert perspectives of those responsible for decision-making across the sector. Over time, developments will reveal which forecasts proved accurate and will allow an assessment of the study's ability to identify emerging trends, while predictions that do not materialize will provide an opportunity to examine the factors, decisions, or events that altered the trajectory originally anticipated.

The report offers different reading pathways. It may be read sequentially, following the detailed analysis of trends and scenarios, or consulted selectively through the chapters that are of greatest interest to individual readers. It has been designed so that both approaches provide a coherent and self-contained understanding of the content. For readers seeking a more concise overview, the executive summary, the key findings, the chapter devoted to trend hybridization, and the concluding section offer a synthesis of the study's principal insights and results.

This report is intended as a guide to understanding a communication ecosystem undergoing profound transformation. It seeks to provide researchers, media professionals, institutions, and media organizations with tools to interpret uncertainty, anticipate change, and make better-informed decisions in the face of alternative future scenarios.

Once the 2030 horizon has been reached, the report may also acquire new value as a benchmark for comparison and as a record of the expectations and uncertainties through which the future of communication is envisioned today.

1.2. References

García-Avilés, J. A., Arias-Robles, F., De Lara-González, A., Paisana, M., Carvajal-Prieto, M., Foá, C., García-Ortega, A., Margato, A., Crespo, M., Quiles-Morán, B., & Valero-Pastor, J. M. (2023). Analysis of Trends and Innovations in the Media Ecosystem in Spain and Portugal (2025–2030). IBERIFIER. <https://doi.org/10.15581/026.006>

Kaivo-oja, J. (2013). Futures of journalism profession: Scenario analysis of trends and drivers in Finnish journalism. *Journal of Futures Studies*, 18(2), 59–82.



Nel, F. (2024). Future of public interest news: A scenario planning approach. University of Central Lancashire.

Newman, N. (2024). Journalism, media, and technology trends and predictions 2024. Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism, University of Oxford.

Nowack, M., Endrikat, J., & Guenther, E. (2011). Review of Delphi-based scenario studies: Quality and design considerations. *Technological Forecasting and Social Change*, 78(9), 1603–1615.

2. Executive Summary

- AI is no longer merely an operational tool; it is reshaping the entire value chain, including content production, distribution, audience relationships, and business models. This transformation is unfolding amid considerable uncertainty regarding its pace, scale, and impact, requiring caution when interpreting emerging trends.
- The sustainability of media organisations will depend on transforming relationships with audiences without compromising quality journalism. This requires overcoming the tension between short-term pressures and the need for a long-term strategy based on diversification, brand strengthening, and the development of first-party data.
- Disinformation will become increasingly shaped by AI and digital platforms. Media literacy, regulation, and fact-checking remain essential, yet significant uncertainty surrounds their future effectiveness. The key challenge lies in society's capacity to adapt to an increasingly complex and automated information ecosystem.
- AI-driven algorithms are becoming the new gatekeepers of the information ecosystem, reshaping content production, personalisation, audience measurement, and the relationship between journalism and increasingly fragmented audiences, all within a context of growing polarisation.
- The authority of content increasingly depends on its relevance, appeal, and emotional impact. The rise of conversational and entertainment-oriented content raises important questions about the quality, reliability, and rigour of information. Audio, in particular, is undergoing profound transformation, extending well beyond traditional radio.
- Narrative change is no longer driven by disruptive new formats but by the adaptation of existing ones through personalisation, short-form audiovisual content, and hybridisation. Innovation should therefore be understood as a strategic process rather than a response to technological fads.
- The media industry is caught between the pursuit of employee well-being and mental health, and the pressures of productivity and efficiency. Long-form content formats represent an opportunity for the survival of quality journalism, in contrast to the growing emphasis on rapid content production.
- The integration of AI into professional environments increases the risk of job displacement, deteriorating working conditions, declining content quality, and an urgent need for specialised training. Despite ongoing regulatory efforts, regulation alone is unlikely to prevent these negative consequences.
- Ethics has become an indispensable practical requirement, particularly in response to the advance of AI and the resulting need to protect truth. Restoring credibility and social relevance will depend on the development of stronger ethical frameworks and more robust systems of self-regulation.
- Regulatory momentum is accompanied by considerable institutional uncertainty. Effective implementation mechanisms are essential if regulation is to have a meaningful impact. European agreements continue to face significant challenges in

national implementation and in addressing the influence of the countries where major digital platforms are based.

2.1. Visual Summary of the Results

The evaluation of the central chapters of this report, included in Section 4, “Analysis by Thematic Areas,” has made it possible to identify the future communication scenarios that are most likely to materialize in the near future. By bringing together the perspectives of experts from the different thematic areas analysed and media executives working within the Iberian communication ecosystem, it has been possible to produce *Figure 1*, which presents the ten trends rated, on average, as the most likely to occur.

The prominence of AI in the scenarios considered most likely is unmistakable: seven of the ten selected scenarios focus primarily on AI or its implications. Overall, the most recurrent theme concerns the professional changes facing media organizations and journalists as AI becomes increasingly embedded in the communication sector. These changes encompass journalistic ethics, newsroom organization, language use, and employment precarity. More specifically, the scenario receiving the highest average probability score highlights the resilience of the human factor in the face of advancing artificial intelligence. Technological innovation in audience measurement also emerges as a prominent theme.

The lower half of the ranking is dominated by issues that are not directly centred on AI but instead focus on the relationship between media organizations and their audiences. These include direct audience engagement as a key factor for media sustainability and the growing hyper-personalization of content and formats. In addition, respondents envision a reconfigured platform ecosystem, in which today’s dominant platforms disappear or are transformed within an uncertain and rapidly evolving landscape shaped by market forces, technological change, and regulatory developments.

Taken together, the scenarios point to three overarching dynamics: technological transformation driven primarily by AI, the reorganization of work within media organizations, and the need to rebuild stronger relationships with audiences and respond more effectively to their expectations. The predominance of risks and challenges gives these trends a distinctly (techno-)pessimistic tone. Concerns include the erosion of the human dimension of journalism, the loss of distinctive journalistic identity and writing styles, and the persistence of employment precarity, potentially exacerbated by the widespread adoption of artificial intelligence.

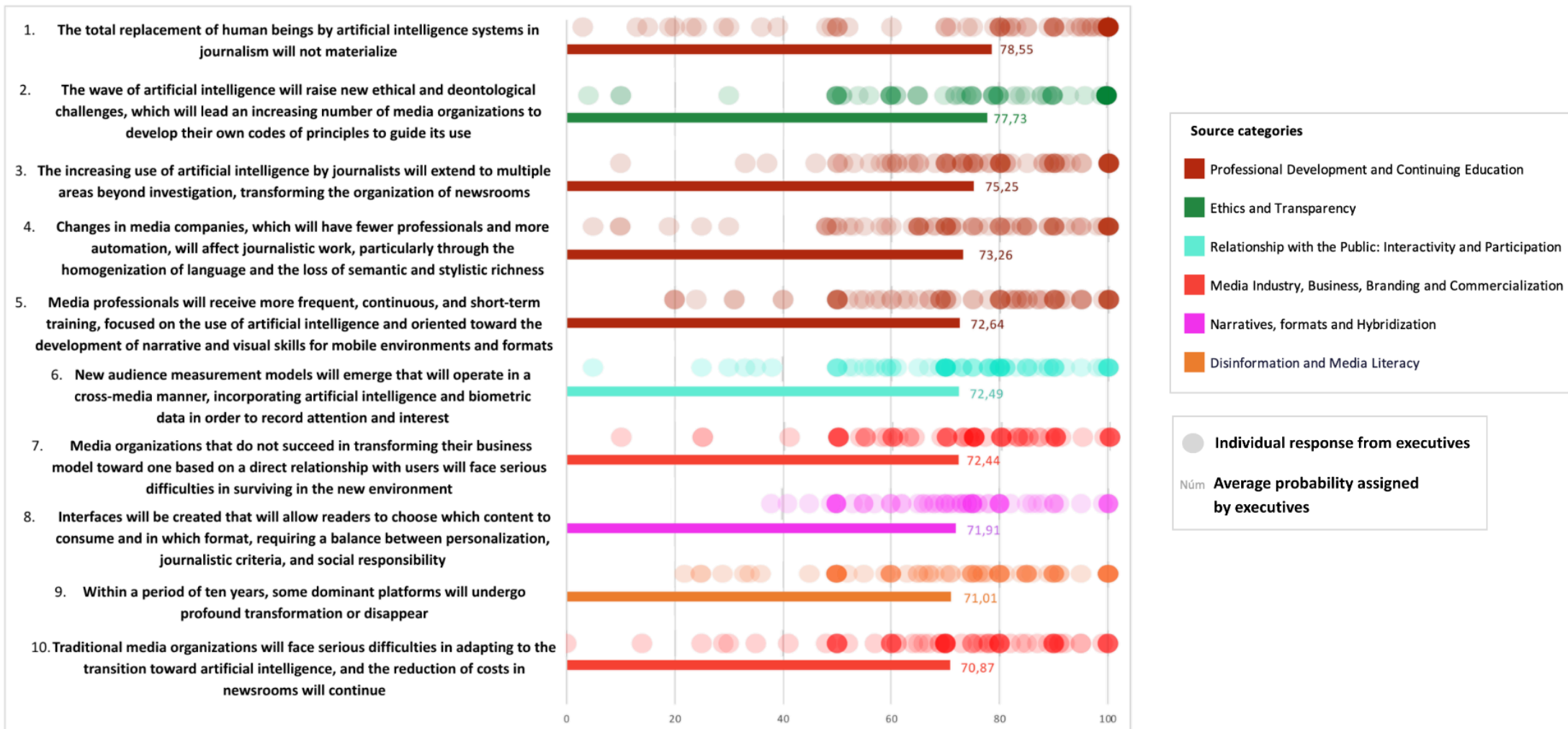
More neutral or technically oriented scenarios can also be identified, including the transformation of newsrooms, the expansion of lifelong professional learning, innovation in audience measurement and user interfaces, and the reconfiguration of the current platform ecosystem. Entirely optimistic scenarios or those pointing to substantial improvements are comparatively rare. The emergence of new ethical frameworks is presented as a response to the challenges posed by AI; stronger relationships with audiences are considered achievable, although often framed as the only viable alternative to media disappearance; and new interfaces are expected to

empower users while simultaneously raising new societal challenges regarding the distribution of and access to information. Nevertheless, the resilience of the human factor stands out as the most strongly supported idea and remains one of the report's recurring themes.

The following figure presents the ten expert-proposed scenarios that received the highest average scores in the evaluation conducted by the surveyed media executives. Each colour represents the original strategic category from which the scenario was drawn. These categories are examined in greater detail in Section '4. Analysis by Thematic Areas'.

Figure 1.
Source: own elaboration.

The 10 Most Likely Scenarios According to Executives



3. Methodology

Alicia de Lara and Armando Manzano

This report follows a predictive approach to communication trends in the Iberian system. It was developed using a mixed-methods and foresight-oriented methodology aimed at identifying emerging transformations in the media ecosystem and estimating the probability of different development scenarios in Spain and Portugal with a 2030 horizon.

The methodological design combined tools drawn from scenario forecasting and expert consultation, integrating qualitative and quantitative techniques for the construction and evaluation of trends in the field of communication. Although the study did not strictly adopt a classical Delphi methodology, it incorporated several of its core principles, particularly the systematic use of expert knowledge for the generation, validation, and refinement of prospective hypotheses.

The research was structured into five main phases.

3.1. Strategic Benchmarking and Definition of Analytical Categories

The first phase consisted of conducting a strategic benchmarking exercise based on specialized reports, scientific literature, and studies related to the current state of communication and the major transformations affecting the media ecosystem in both Iberian and international contexts.

The literature review made it possible to identify emerging trends, structural continuities, and transformation factors affecting the communication sector, journalism, and media industries. Based on this review, ten strategic analytical categories were established, which subsequently structured the foresight exercise.

The ten categories defined were: AI, Big Data, and High Technology; Industry, Business, Branding, and Commercialisation; Disinformation and Media Literacy; Audience Relationships: Interactivity and Participation; Content and Approaches; Narratives, Formats, and Hybridisation; Journalistic Culture and Workplace Well-being; Professional Development and Lifelong Learning; Ethics and Transparency; Legislation and Public Policy.

These categories were conceived as interconnected domains rather than isolated compartments, since many transformations within the media ecosystem simultaneously cut across technological, economic, regulatory, professional, cultural, and narrative dimensions. This cross-cutting perspective was reflected both in the drafting of the chapters devoted to each specific trend and in the dedicated chapter addressing the hybridization among the areas under study.

The selection of trends was guided by two strategic axes. On the one hand, AI and emerging technologies occupied a central position due to their growing impact on the production, distribution, automation, and consumption of content within the contemporary media ecosystem. On the other hand, disinformation and media literacy were prioritized because they constitute the core focus of the IBERIFIER PLUS research project, within whose framework this report was developed.

3.2. Expert Consultation and Construction of Foresight Scenarios

The second phase focused on conducting semi-structured interviews with experts in order to build prospective scenarios regarding the evolution of the Iberian media ecosystem between 2025 and 2030.

A total of 63 interviews were conducted with specialists linked to the different analytical categories. Participants were selected according to criteria of thematic expertise, professional trajectory, research experience, and diversity of profiles.

The interviews followed a common questionnaire structured around two major methodological blocks. The first stage of the interview was exploratory, conversational, and open-ended, and aimed at understanding each expert's frame of reference, intuitions, concerns, and perceptions regarding the recent evolution of their area of specialization. The second stage was specifically designed for the structured construction of future projections. Participants were asked to formulate at least three prospective scenarios organized according to different levels of certainty:

1. Scenarios considered highly likely to materialize.
2. Possible scenarios subject to uncertainty.
3. Remote or still weakly visible scenarios, although not impossible.

This system made it possible to incorporate different degrees of probability and uncertainty, avoiding an analysis limited solely to dominant trends or general consensus. The inclusion of a question on future scenarios and their gradual probability estimation encouraged experts to reflect on the evolution of the field as a whole rather than focusing exclusively on specific issues. It also prompted them to consider less conventional topics that nevertheless remain within the scope of their expertise. Despite their extensive knowledge, specialists are inevitably subject to the influence of thematic agendas imposed by academia, industry, and the broader ecosystem.

Interviewees were invited to formulate concrete, specific, and operational scenarios, incorporating temporal references, data, relevant actors, companies, technologies, or sectoral dynamics whenever possible. The interviews also enabled the identification of cross-cutting connections between categories and the detection of emerging phenomena not initially identified through the documentary benchmarking process.

This overlap of themes is highly relevant from a scientific perspective and constitutes, in itself, a key conclusion for understanding the short- and medium-term future of the media ecosystem. Consequently, a meta-analysis of the results from each dimension was conducted (Chapter 5) to draw cross-cutting conclusions related to issues that concern or interest experts, regardless of the thematic category in which they were interviewed.

For the design and development of the scenario forecasting process, the project benefited from the expert guidance of [Kiko Llaneras, editor-in-chief of Visual Narratives and Data and PhD in Automation and Industrial Informatics from El País, whose expertise lies in predictive analytics and data journalism.](#)

3.3. Systematization and Selection of Scenarios

Once the interviews had been completed, a process of systematization and classification of the identified scenarios was undertaken. Each thematic coordinator organized the scenarios corresponding to their category in a shared analytical matrix. For each scenario, the following elements were recorded: responsible coordinator, interviewee, thematic category, level of certainty, concise scenario description, and associated thematic tags.

Subsequently, each coordinator selected a maximum of five priority scenarios to be included in the subsequent predictive survey. In categories coordinated jointly, this selection was carried out by consensus among researchers

The selection process followed the following methodological criteria:

1. Thematic accumulation: priority given to recurring scenarios or those supported by multiple experts.
2. Diversity of certainty: balanced representation of scenarios considered almost certain, probable, and remote.
3. Thematic focus: priority given to specific scenarios directly linked to each category.
4. Operability: preference for concrete, measurable, and temporally defined scenarios.
5. Expertise and heterogeneity: inclusion of particularly relevant scenarios according to the benchmarking process and the analytical judgment of the coordinators.

The objective of this phase was to construct a balanced and methodologically consistent set of prospective scenarios suitable for subsequent probabilistic assessment.

3.4. Consultation with Executives and Professionals in the Iberian Media System

The fourth phase consisted of a structured consultation with executives, senior managers, and professionals from the media ecosystems of Spain and Portugal, aimed at estimating the probability assigned to each of the selected scenarios.

The sample was designed according to criteria of professional relevance, decision-making capacity, and institutional diversity. Priority was given to profiles with editorial responsibility or journalistic decision-making authority; editors-in-chief, managing editors, and section heads; professionals from media organizations, news agencies, and communication agencies. Contact information was obtained through the research team's professional networks, industry directories, communication guides, and specialized sectoral reports. Despite efforts to balance the participation of men and women, the final sample displayed an uneven gender distribution, a circumstance that may be related to the lower representation of women in leadership positions within the sector.

3.4.1. Questionnaire Design and Validation

The questionnaire introduction first included an information and consent screen, in accordance with the project's ethical guidelines. This was followed by a section for the collection of personal and demographic data, aimed at preventing duplicate responses and the inclusion of individuals outside the target sample, as well as enabling subsequent analyses that could account for relevant factors and disaggregate the data, thereby generating distinct demographic profiles based on gender, country, or age. The information requested was:

- Name
- Email address
- Gender
- Year of birth
- Country (Spain or Portugal)
- Media outlet or organization of employment
- Position/job title

Informe predictivo sobre tendencias en comunicación 2026-2030

Encuesta a directivos/as de medios de comunicación



The use of Google Forms was initially considered; however, due to technical limitations identified during preliminary testing, a dedicated web-based solution was ultimately chosen. The questionnaire employed slider bars enabling respondents to assign probabilities ranging from 0% to 100%.

Before its launching, the questionnaire underwent a pretest involving 15 participants in order to identify possible technical issues, comprehension problems, or navigation difficulties. Minor adjustments were subsequently made to its technical configuration, usability, and content. The questionnaire was translated into Portuguese so that distribution could be tailored to each country. All responses were anonymized for subsequent statistical and interpretive analysis.

The procedure involved an initial mass distribution to approximately 1,000 contacts, followed by reminder messages intended to increase the response rate. This process took place throughout the month of March, 2026. Despite these efforts, the response rate did not exceed 8%.

The final sample obtained during March consisted of 79 responses with the following characteristics:

Table 1. Executives' responses.

Country	Responses	Percentage
Spain	58	73.4 %
Portugal	21	26.6 %
Total	79	100 %
Gender	Responses	Percentage
Men	55	69.6 %
Women	24	30.4 %
Total	79	100 %

Source: own elaboration.

3.5. Integrated Analysis, Data Visualization, and Final Report Writing

The final phase consisted of the integrated analysis of the results obtained from both the expert interviews and the predictive survey conducted among professionals and executives in the Iberian media system.

The report combined qualitative analysis with the quantitative interpretation of probabilities, paying particular attention to: the scenarios considered most likely; the differences between expert and professional perspectives; variations according to sociodemographic characteristics; the areas of greatest uncertainty; and emerging trends.

In addition to the individual analysis of each category, the report includes a specific chapter related to synergies and cross-cutting relationships among trends identified across the different areas of analysis. Particular attention is given to the interactions

between AI and disinformation, as well as the ways in which both dimensions affect narratives, audience participation, the economic sustainability of media organizations, journalistic ethics, and regulatory policies.

The visual representation of the results also constitutes one of the project's main added values. The report incorporates visualizations designed to facilitate the comparative interpretation of scenarios, levels of uncertainty, and degrees of consensus among experts and professionals. The conclusions synthesize the main findings and connect the perspectives of experts and practitioners, offering a comprehensive interpretation of the possible future transformations of the Iberian communication system.

The objective is not only to enhance the accessibility and readability of the report but also to transform the data obtained into useful analytical tools for researchers, industry professionals, institutional decision-makers, and media organization

4. Analysis by Thematic Areas

4.1. AI, Big Data and High Technology

Uncertainties in the Media Value Chain

By Félix Arias-Robles, UMH & Paulo Couraceiro, OberCom

4.1.1. Introduction

Generative AI has been transforming the media industry from its foundational structures to its surface for more than three years now. These changes build upon those introduced, albeit more subtly, by big data over the past decade. To this must be added emerging technologies, primarily in the form of consumer devices, which are still seeking maturity.

In this increasingly complex environment, media companies are attempting to identify opportunities and redefine their core essence. In the face of new digital intermediaries, advancements in synthetic content, and shifting audience behaviors, platform dependency has intensified (Simon, 2024; Thäsler-Kordonouri & Koliska, 2025). This context is redefining the media value chain, spanning journalistic practice, content distribution, and revenue generation, while simultaneously reconfiguring the very essence of information and truth.

Given the novelty and pace of these transformations, establishing precise timelines proves particularly challenging. Broadly speaking, none of the potential future developments is perceived as clearly improbable. This suggests a context of notable uncertainty where the direction of change is widely recognized and considered inevitable (Arias-Robles, 2026; Calvo et al., 2025), yet its pace and specific outcomes remain open.

4.1.2. Qualitative Analysis of Expert Interviews

- **Alvaro Liuzzi:** digital media consultant, journalist and lecturer at Universidad Nacional de La Plata (UNLP). Interviewed by Félix Arias-Robles.
- **Antonio Ortiz Medina:** analyst and editorial consultant. Interviewed by Félix Arias-Robles.
- **Beatriz Lizárraga:** projects and innovation manager at ABC. Interviewed by José M. Valero-Pastor.
- **Diogo Queiroz Andrade:** CEO of Rprt. Interviewed by Paulo Couraceiro.
- **Joana Gonçalves de Sá:** researcher at LIP and at NOVA-LINCS and coordinator of the SPAC research group. Interviewed by Miguel Paisana.
- **João Canavilhas:** professor at Universidade da Beira Interior (UBI) and principal investigator of OBIAJOR. Interviewed by Paulo Couraceiro.
- **Olalla Novoa:** head of AI at PRISA Media. Interviewed by Félix Arias-Robles.

- **Nic Newman:** senior research associate at Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism (RISJ). Interviewed by Paulo Couraceiro.
- **Paulo Nuno Vicente:** professor at NOVA FCSH and coordinator of ICNOVA. Interviewed by Paulo Couraceiro.

Based on interviews with nine experts across journalism, research and media innovation, a consensus emerges that the media landscape is currently undergoing a profound technological transformation, driven by the rapid evolution of AI and decentralized technologies. While the experts' perspectives reveal shared concerns, they also present divergent strategies and unique visions for the future of media.

A significant shift identified by multiple experts is the transition from AI as a mere operational tool to a foundational technology that alters social environments and professional workflows. Paulo Nuno Vicente (NOVA FCSH) notes that the industry has moved from an era of “invisible AI”, characterized by recommendation algorithms, to the dominance of Generative AI capable of producing text and multimedia on scale. This has transformed newsrooms from the inside out, fostering what Antonio Ortiz (analyst) describes as a “shadow use” of AI, where journalists utilize large language models (LLMs) to increase their productivity at various tasks, not always aligning with the official regulations of their institutions.

The most pressing challenge highlighted across the interviews is the anticipated collapse of traditional search traffic. Antonio Ortiz Medina (Ceptual Media) firmly argues that organic search traffic is essentially “dead”, as platforms like Google integrate AI overviews that answer queries directly. Álvaro Liuzzi (UNLP) corroborates this, explaining the industry is shifting from Search Engine Optimization (SEO) to Generative Engine Optimization (GEO). Diogo Queiroz Andrade (Rprt) adds that this change represents the failure of the digital advertising “click economy”. According to these experts the media is being forced to return to its core mission: serving the individual and the audience, rather than chasing mass clicks.

Nic Newman (RISJ) predicts that AI conversational interfaces will become a primary access point for news, and several experts reinforce that news organisations must transform their websites and apps into what Queiroz Andrade calls “dynamic question-and-answer engines”. About the practical implementation Olalla Novoa (PRISA Media) observes that conversational news is currently “not a boom” because “people still struggle to formulate the first question”, indicating audiences still largely expect the media to proactively tell them what the important news of the day is.

However, this shift exacerbates a deeper structural vulnerability: the loss of infrastructural control. Nuno Vicente emphasizes that legacy media no longer own the means of distribution or the technological infrastructure, leaving them at the mercy of a few global tech giants. This dependency brings profound societal risks. Joana Gonçalves de Sá (LIP and NOVA-LINCS) warns of the “illusion of neutrality” in LLMs, explaining that attempts to manually “de-bias” AI models often lead to “political washing” where complex realities are flattened into artificial centrism. Consequently, several experts warn that the

proliferation of synthetic content may degrade the internet into an echo chamber of low-quality and AI-generated slop, with the risk of aggravating disinformation and news deserts by occupying any information void. As a response, most experts stress the urgent need for the introduction of watermarks or seals of authenticity on content and Beatriz Lizárraga (ABC.es) proposes a decentralized system based on blockchain as a technological solution to provide verifiable timestamps and trace the exact origin of a piece of content.

Despite the alarming threats, there is strong agreement among the experts regarding the enduring value of journalism produced by humans. João Canavilhas (UBI) anticipates that the overwhelming avalanche of AI-generated disinformation will inevitably force audiences to seek refuge in legacy news brands they can trust. Liuzzi and Ortiz concur, suggesting that as it becomes increasingly easy and fast to automate the generation of commodity content, the premium on products for which the human element is the key differentiator will increase, with greater emphasis on first-person experiences and distinctive authorial voices.

While the diagnosis of the industry's challenges is largely shared, experts disagree on the appropriate strategic responses, particularly concerning business models and technology adoption. A major point of contention is the value of licensing agreements between media companies and AI laboratories. On the one hand, a more optimistic view frames these deals as a necessary response to declining traditional revenues. Ortiz argues that media organizations must urgently pursue licensing as a new income stream, even predicting that it could account for up to 20% of total revenue within five years.

Similarly, Newman believes that news agencies and established news brands may benefit from a position of strength, as AI companies depend on accurate and up-to-date information that trusted media outlets are uniquely able to provide. Newman warns of a “nightmare scenario” for democracy where AI platforms refuse to pay for news, leading to the collapse of professional journalism. On the other hand, more critical perspectives question both the fairness and the long-term implications of these agreements. Luizzi contends that current deals deliver minimal financial returns while giving AI companies access to decades of verified and systematized archives, a “gold dust” in his view. Novoa echoes this concern, emphasizing that the industry still lacks a clear understanding of the true value of its content and that negotiations are inherently unbalanced in favour of the big tech companies.

Beneath this imbalance of power lies the “buy versus build” dilemma, as Novoa puts it. She emphasises the value of building proprietary AI systems to maintain control over content and infrastructure, while ultimately endorsing a hybrid approach that combines internal development with external tools for non-core functions. Luizzi argues that even smaller newsrooms can innovate effectively by purchasing subscriptions to AI tools and applying them strategically and creatively, rather than investing in costly in-house development.

The experts also offer highly unique perspectives that expand the horizon of media innovation. Lizárraga actively envisions using tokenization to build and decentralize media communities, moving beyond the reliance on conventional social media platforms, and identifies an opportunity for media companies to offer anonymous subscription tiers via Web3 wallets. Nuno Vicente predicts a future inhabited by “synthetic media entities”, where entire broadcasts and sports commentary could be generated in real-time by digital agents, fundamentally altering the concept of a news anchor. Finally, Canavilhas extends AI’s reach into the “Internet of Things”, imagining a future where mundane objects, like clothing or cutlery, can also act as personal informational assistants.

Overall, the experts paint a picture of a media landscape at a critical crossroads. While advanced technologies present existential threats, they also offer unprecedented opportunities to deepen audience engagement, move beyond traditional revenue streams and regain infrastructural autonomy.

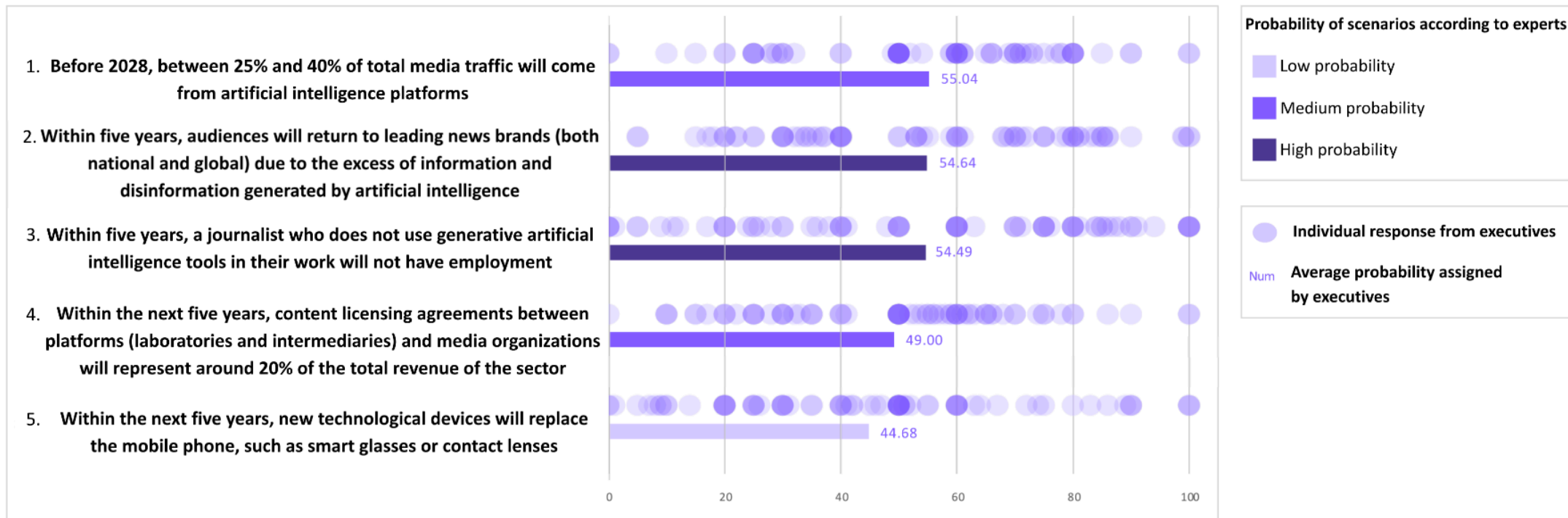
4.1.3. Probability Analysis of Scenarios

Figure 2.

Source: own elaboration.

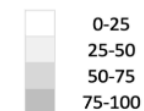
AI, big data and high technology

Estimated probability according to executives for scenarios proposed by experts



SCENARIO	GENDER		COUNTRY		AGE				TOTAL
	Men	Women	Spain	Portugal	30-40	41-50	51-60	61-70	
1	50.89	61.19	55.02	55.1	61.82	52.75	55.03	53.13	55.04
2	52.87	57.26	60.07	40.14	53.27	56.15	53.97	55.00	54.64
3	57.83	49.55	56.66	48.71	62.82	42.65	55.48	62.13	54.49
4	49.07	48.90	48.46	50.43	45.00	47.85	49.97	51.47	49.00
5	43.15	46.94	48.39	34.76	41.09	32.55	53.68	44.87	44.68

Average probability assigned by executives



The forecasts provided by executives regarding the scenarios hypothesized by the experts primarily highlight a climate of uncertainty concerning the trajectory of transformations that AI and other high technologies impose on journalistic practice. Despite the dispersion in respondents' individual answers, with scores ranging from 0 to 100 in all cases except for Scenario 2, the overall mean of the responses consistently gravitates toward central values, typically falling between 45% and 55%. This lack of clear consensus underscores the difficulty of predicting outcomes in this rapidly evolving environment, yet significant nuances emerge that warrant further exploration.

Scenario 1 ("Before 2028, between 25% and 40% of media traffic will originate from artificial intelligence platforms") garnered the highest average probability at a modest 55.04. This projection, characterized by the expert as a medium-probability event, suggests profound shifts in content distribution over the medium term. Should more than a quarter of users reach media outlets through these novel interfaces, Generative Engine Optimization (GEO) will assume critical importance, particularly as preliminary research suggests that click-through rates on links within AI-generated responses remain notably suppressed.

The demographic characteristics of the surveyed executives add greater granularity to the analysis. Based on mean data, women view this development as considerably more likely (61.19) than their male counterparts (50.89). Similarly, executives within the 30-40 age bracket find the Scenario much more plausible (61.82) than older cohorts do.

An equivalent degree of average consensus is also observed in Scenario 2, which reached a mean of 54.64 ("In five years, audiences will return to leading news brands faced with the excess of information and disinformation generated by AI"). This hypothesis, framed by the expert as a high-probability outcome, reflects an optimistic trajectory where users seek refuge in professional journalism to escape the saturation and diminished credibility of an AI-saturated information ecosystem. Notably, as shown by the distribution in the graphical data, responses frequently clustered around the 30 and 80 points, illustrating the polarized nature of these future expectations.

In this scenario concerning audience behaviour, the main differences according to the profile of the surveyed media executives are found in their country of employment. Among Spanish respondents, the estimated probability of materialization slightly exceeds 60, whereas among Portuguese respondents it barely reaches 40.

The final projection to exceed a 50 mean is Scenario 3 ("Within five years, a journalist who does not use generative AI tools for their work will be unemployed"), standing at 54.49. The categorical and generalized nature of this assertion — formulated with maximum certainty by the expert — likely influenced the results. The direct association with job loss and the lack of differentiation between specific professional roles may have discouraged respondents from selecting a more moderate midpoint, which can be seen in the highly dispersed responses, mostly far from central values.

Every respondent's sociodemographic variable provided noteworthy insights here. Men consider this Scenario more probable (57.83) than women (49.55). It is also viewed with higher verisimilitude in Spain (56.66%) compared to Portugal (48.71). Furthermore, executives aged 30-40 and 61-70 find it substantially more feasible (62.82 and 62.13 respectively) than those aged 41-50 (42.65).

In Scenario 4, ("In the next five years, content licensing agreements between platforms and media organizations will account for around 20% of industry revenue") the average response failed to reach the intermediate value, settling at 49. While many responses were situated around 60, very few exceeded 80, and a substantial portion fell between 10 and 40 of assigned average probability, reflecting a lack of certainty regarding the asymmetrical power dynamics between tech giants and news organizations.

The primary variations in this case were tied specifically to age. The oldest cohort (61-70 years) was the only group where the mean surpassed the halfway mark, at 51.47. In contrast, among younger executives aged 30-40, this figure dropped to a more modest 45.

The scenario deemed least likely by the participants is Scenario 5 ("In the next five years, new devices will emerge to replace the mobile phone, such as smart glasses or contact lenses"), which obtained a mean of 44.68. This result aligns with the expert's own cautious probability and highlights the inherent difficulty in forecasting the hardware that will host the next major technological pivot. Most responses occupied the central distribution, though a significant number of executives placed the likelihood between 20 and 40.

Age once again proved to be the most decisive variable in this instance. Surveyed executives in the 51-60 age group assigned an average probability of 53.68. Paradoxically, those in the immediately preceding decade (41-50 years) recorded the lowest figure across the entire study, at 32.55.

4.1.4. Conclusions

On one hand, the interviews depict a scenario of structural transformation in which AI ceases to be an operational tool and instead becomes a technology that reorders production, distribution, audience relationships, and media business models. The experts anticipate core tensions: the loss of search engine traffic, an increasing dependency on tech platforms and intermediaries, the expansion of synthetic content, the necessity for authenticity mechanisms, and the revaluation of human, authorial, and brand-based journalism.

On the other hand, the survey of executives introduces a relevant nuance: these hypotheses do not yet translate into firm consensus, but rather into moderate probabilities, hovering around 45% to 55%. This reflects a shared perception of change, but also high uncertainty regarding its speed, intensity, and specific effects.



This gap between the concrete predictions of experts and the caution of executives constitutes the most valuable finding of this section. Furthermore, it allows for a deeper exploration of important nuances. The scenarios rated highest by executives — such as increased traffic from AI platforms, a partial return to legacy news brands, or the necessity of incorporating generative tools into journalistic work — confirm that the industry recognizes the primary axes of transformation identified by experts. However, the lower confidence in licensing agreements becoming a significant revenue source, as well as in the replacement of mobile phones by new devices, demonstrates that executives distinguish between trends already visible in the value chain and developments that remain dependent on technological, regulatory, and commercial factors.

Consequently, this chapter does not establish a single prediction for the future of journalism and its relationship with AI technologies; rather, it identifies the framework of uncertainties that will shape its immediate evolution: the redistribution of power between media and platforms, the redefinition of the value of journalistic content, the adaptation of newsrooms to generative AI, and the pursuit of new forms of trust, differentiation, and sustainability.

In an environment where large platforms in particular compete to improve and differentiate themselves through constant changes, while regulatory bodies lag behind at a much slower pace and news organizations still lack a unified stance, attempting to predict the future becomes even more complex. Nonetheless, it is precisely for this reason that mapping potential scenarios and quantifying the perspectives of both experts and executives becomes an even more necessary exercise.

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4.2. Media Industry, Business, Branding and Commercialization

Towards a Direct Relationship with Audiences in order to Escape the Platforms in the Age of Artificial Intelligence

Miguel Carvajal, UMH

4.2.1. Introduction

The media industry is, more than ever, conditioned by the phenomenon of platformisation, which accentuates its structural dependence on the big technology companies (Nieborg et al., 2019). What is new about the cycle that began in 2023 with the emergence of generative AI is the breakdown of stability in the system for capturing traffic and audiences, a system that has sustained the advertising business model of media companies over the past few decades (Newman, 2026; Sjøvaag, 2024).

According to the experts and the reference literature, the field is shifting from a model in which the user came to the outlet to one in which the outlet must reach the user through AI agents and chats. Sector data reveal falls in organic and discovery traffic across social networks and platforms, and the classic advertising engine is further weakened. In this scenario, the recommendation is to pursue strategies based on a direct and trust-based relationship with the user, moving away from the mass-reach model, by nurturing the brand and the outlet's own community, which ultimately makes it possible to obtain first-party data (Bakke & Barland, 2022).

4.2.2. Qualitative Analysis of Expert Interviews

- **Juan Candela:** director of Digital Business at Las Provincias. Interviewed by Miguel Carvajal.
- **José Suárez de Lezo:** director of the Luca de Tena Foundation. Interviewed by Miguel Carvajal.
- **Clara Soteras:** SEO and digital business consultant for media outlets. Interviewed by Miguel Carvajal.
- **Esther Uhalte:** director of eCommerce & Sales at Google. Interviewed by Miguel Carvajal.
- **Bruno Padinha:** Chief Digital Officer at Impresa. Interviewed by António Vasconcelos.

The experts interviewed agree in pointing out that platformisation and dependence on external agents will be the greatest conditioning factor for the industry (Nielsen & Ganter, 2022). This is a phenomenon that has been unfolding since before the current decade owing to the growing capacity of platforms to determine the rules of access to audiences (Gillespie, 2010), but which is accentuated by the emergence of the major AI companies.

Clara Soteras (SEO consultant) believes that the industry faces the coming years in an even more subordinated position, if possible, to the platforms, which may give rise to a

chaotic scenario of great uncertainty. "Monetisation, especially in Spain, continues to depend on the great technology giant, which is Google," she states. Moreover, as José Suárez de Lezo (Luca de Tena Foundation) points out, "users used to come to the outlet and now the outlet is going to reach the user through agents [...] organic traffic ceases to be the engine."

As a result of this process, the breakdown of the outlet–search-engine reciprocity intensifies: AI Overviews policies and zero-click on platforms sink referral, search and discovery traffic (social, Search, Discover), bringing to an end an era of stability in traffic coming from those interfaces (Juan Candela, Las Provincias). At the corporate level, brands anticipate a scenario in which the traditional funnel breaks down and the points of contact between companies and customers become dispersed. This fragmentation, also from a commercial standpoint, balances out the strategic weight of the various channels: any media interaction may end in a purchase, which is why advertising investment is becoming more diversified across the digital terrain. The greatest challenge lies in access to reliable data: without mass registration, outlets do not have sufficient first-party data to compete with the platforms on segmentation.

AI emerges as a new intermediary in the relationship with the reader (agents, chats, voice), as a platform that users access. In addition, the experts also anticipate the proliferation of the use of agents that filter, select and offer the user a personalised information diet. Suárez de Lezo notes that "AI summaries and answers mediate the relationship with the reader; agents bring the outlet to the user and not the other way round."

This phenomenon, according to the experts, accelerates the evolution from SEO to GEO/AEO (optimisation for generative engines), which should prompt outlets to strengthen their products through the use of structured data, canonical sources, traceability systems and the generation of citable snippets (Newman, 2026). In this sense, the use of social networks will, according to the experts, be geared towards a different logic: no longer to chase clicks, but to create community, brand and authority (Gen Z). As Soteras explains it, "we have moved from a stage in which social networks were almost solely a distribution channel to another in which they are a central space for community and for building authority".

On the other hand, the model of diversifying media monetisation will also deepen. Alongside innovations in native advertising and in the subscription model, an increasing use of sponsorships or newsletter subscriptions is forecast, as well as the use of proprietary apps, the appearance of complementary products such as games/puzzles, or the distribution of audio formats. As do the executives surveyed in the trends report, the experts consulted argue that, in all likelihood, licensing/revenue share agreements will be reached with AI platforms as a revenue stream, with the risk that the platforms will seek out the leading outlet in each country, putting smaller ones at a disadvantage.

The media and content industry therefore faces enormous challenges in the coming years. Fundamentally, the change in the revenue model arising from the transition from

mass traffic to fewer but more valuable page views (Bakke & Barland, 2022). This evolution of reach strategies, that is, moving from low-cost inventory to trusted content, will make it possible to improve the journalistic product and to revalue the medium for premium advertising (Suárez de Lezo). Owing to the reduction in media consumption across the main channels, a stagnation of the classic paywall may occur, something that is already beginning to be sensed. This phenomenon will trigger a diversification of the model towards premium products and bundles that foster the acquisition of first-party data as a competitive advantage, something that could optimise willingness to pay, subscriber retention and product personalisation strategies.

The experts surveyed also agree in warning about short-termism among the management teams and owners of media outlets. This situation is reflected in the fact that, despite the warnings, boards operate with a short-sighted view and shareholders reward with bonuses strategies that, in the long run, entail a decapitalisation of the companies (Suárez de Lezo). The existence of CEOs disconnected from the new social and media reality complicates the capacity of traditional media organisations to react (Candela). As Suárez de Lezo says, the landscape raises the need to change the sector's KPIs (beyond unique users/page views, beyond being seen in the press clippings of major governmental round tables or of the Ibex).

Apart from the cultural challenge in management, the arrival of AI will transform workflows and practices in the newsroom (Arias-Robles, 2025). However, the lack of coordination in the sector's response, the fear of being left behind and the absence of clear values or missions will generate disorientation and inadequate responses that open the door to unethical, low-quality uses of AI. Those entities that fail to integrate AI strategically and in alignment with their purpose will find themselves at a competitive disadvantage. The ultimate folly would be to replace journalists with AI agents on the false promise of optimisation and agility, because the brand and the product run the risk of being emptied of references and talent.

Another challenge that remains present, according to the interviewees, is the loss of trust and news avoidance, fuelled both by political polarisation and by the anti-press rhetoric of populist political leaders. This situation demands a collective defence of journalism as a common/cultural good of public interest, through the promotion of protective legislative frameworks, of social and corporate initiatives that preserve media viability, and of a renewal of audience interest, a situation that seems difficult in the Spanish cultural context.

For that reason, the scenario will be even more negative for the industry and will cause an increase in the distance between the large outlets and local and niche initiatives, which are at greater risk (Wilczek et al., 2024; FT Strategies & Knight Foundation, 2023). In this respect, Suárez de Lezo notes, those entities without resources will even face new problems related to cybersecurity, because the development of new quantum-computing LLMs opens serious breaches in the management of information, proprietary data and digital security.

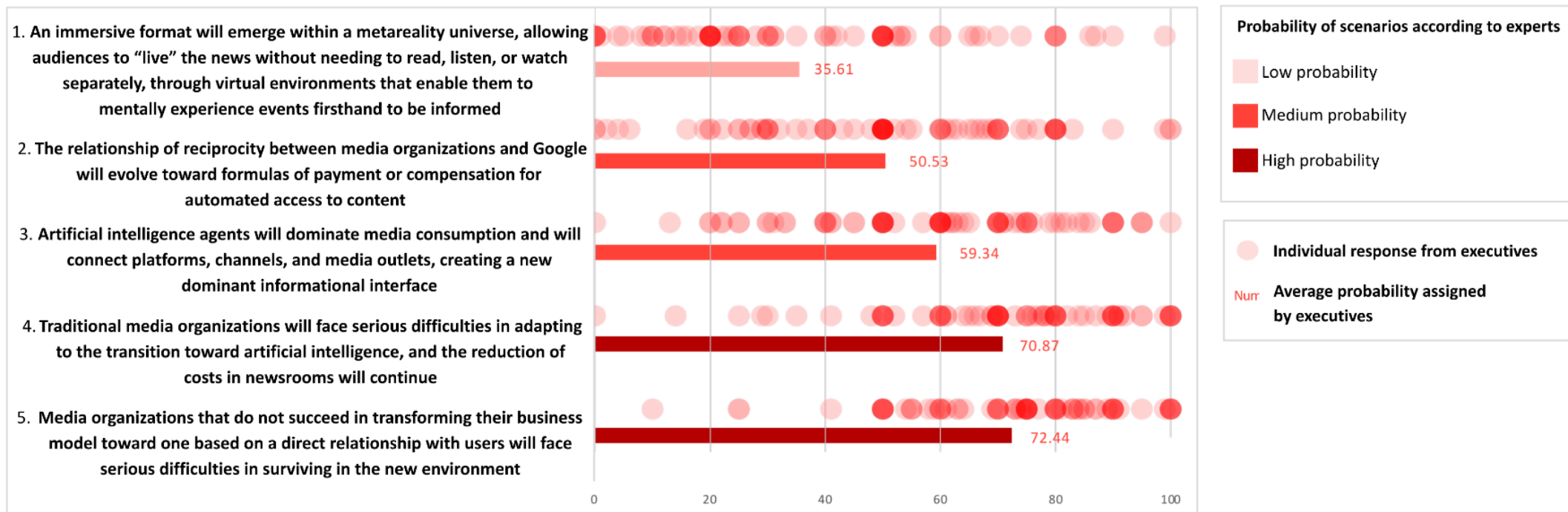
4.2.3. Probability Analysis of Scenarios

Figure 3.

Source: own elaboration.

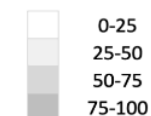
Media industry, business, branding and commercialization

Estimated probability according to executives for scenarios proposed by experts



SCENARIO	GENDER		COUNTRY		AGE				TOTAL
	Men	Women	Spain	Portugal	30-40	41-50	51-60	61-70	
1	35.74	35.42	33.41	41.48	27.18	24.45	42.23	43.00	35.61
2	48.78	53.13	53.00	43.95	47.45	44.70	56.84	47.53	50.53
3	59.04	59.77	59.05	60.10	63.27	54.25	61.90	57.93	59.34
4	67.67	75.61	69.70	74.00	73.36	73.80	66.29	74.60	70.87
5	70.65	75.10	72.18	73.14	73.82	75.15	67.81	77.40	72.44

Average probability assigned by executives



The scenarios attracting the greatest agreement are those of structural and competitive transformation between outlets and platforms. Scenario 5 ("Media organizations that do not succeed in transforming their business model toward one based on a direct relationship with users will face serious difficulties in surviving in the new environment") records the highest average probability (72.44): the experts consulted believe that, without a direct relationship with audiences, the chances of survival will be minimal for most journalistic entities. Likewise, there is also broad consensus around Scenario 4 ("Traditional media organizations will face serious difficulties in adapting to the transition toward artificial intelligence, and the reduction of costs in newsrooms will continue"): it is taken as almost inevitable that companies will transform their value chain in order to adapt to AI (70.87) (Wilczek et al., 2024).

In an intermediate position, the experts consider Scenario 3 ("Artificial intelligence agents will dominate media consumption and will connect platforms, channels, and media outlets, creating a new dominant informational interface") probable (59.34) (Newman, 2026). Similarly, Scenario 2 ("The relationship of reciprocity between media organizations and Google will evolve toward formulas of payment or compensation for automated access to content") is also seen as fairly probable (50.53), aspects that are deemed plausible.

The least probable Scenario is 1 ("An immersive format will emerge within a metareality environment that will allow audiences to "experience" information without the need to read, listen, or watch separately") (35.61): despite the hype, executives do not believe in a replacement of news consumption by virtual reality in the short or medium term. The very interviewee who proposed it saw it as a highly remote Scenario of low probability.

As regards the differences among respondents, the largest gap appears in 4, where women see it as more probable (75.61) than men (67.67); a similar pattern occurs in 5 (75.10 vs 70.65). In the rest, responses are close. By country, the experts surveyed from Spain and Portugal coincide fairly closely in their forecasts. The greatest differences lie in 2 —Spain sees it as more probable (53.00) than Portugal (43.95)— and in 1, where Portugal (41.48) exceeds Spain (33.43). Likewise, by age, in the scenarios that foresee a structural change in the industry 4 and 5, those aged 61–70 show the highest probabilities (74.60 and 77.40). In 1, the youngest groups (30–40: 27.18; 41–50: 24.45) are the most sceptical about the metaverse, while those aged 51–70 see it as somewhat more feasible. In 3, the 30–40 group stands out as the most convinced of the irruption of AI agents (63.27).

The respondents endorse the experts' most confident forecasts. For instance, they assign great average credibility to the necessary transformation of business models from traffic towards a direct relationship with the community. Both experts and executives share the diagnosis: greater dependence on platforms and the breakdown of traffic owing to the emergence of interfaces dominated by synthetic content produced by AI will pose an immense strategic challenge for the industry. Those entities that do not commit to maintaining a direct relationship with their publics in order to acquire proprietary data, that do not cultivate their brand value and do not opt to build community across diverse

channels, will find themselves subject to the swings of external agents. This situation reflects a clear convergence in Scenarios 4 and 5.

In the report, a more pragmatic view of the various scenarios is evident among the respondents: for example, they trust what has already proven profitable, such as subscriptions, *branded content* or events. Among respondents there is also great scepticism about the emergence of a product or format (of the metaverse or synthetic-media type) that brings about the disappearance of the traditional outlet. However, they do not ignore the existence of a systemic risk in the industry, one that may harm pluralism, increase the appearance of news deserts at the local level and cause the loss of talent in outlets (Juan Candela).

4.2.4. Conclusions

The study reveals an internal tension between the logics of short-termism at the senior-management level and the urgency of introducing a more strategic, transformative vision oriented towards the long term. The obstacle is not so much knowing what to do in the face of the challenges that lie ahead, such as the platformisation of AI, but rather renewing leadership and its key performance indicators. Although the sector knows which strategies should be prioritised (diversifying, building brand and product, owning data), managerial and the focus on financial short-termism holds back the transformation. The future of the business will depend on transforming the relationship with the user without sacrificing quality journalism, which, properly understood, continues to fulfil an essential social function for the common good. In this respect, it is also worth keeping an eye on the regulatory unknown in both national and European frameworks regarding AI, a variable that may accelerate or slow down the rebalancing.

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4.3. Disinformation and Media Literacy

The Race to Inform and the Race to Disinform

Miguel Paisana, OberCom

4.3.1. Introduction

Gauging the future of disinformation and of media literacy through the eyes of experts proves to be a complex balancing act of trying to ascertain the impact of a wide range of multidimensional factors. Previous research has shown the complexity of the phenomenon of disinformation in Spain and Portugal, with huge discrepancy between countries at the response level, mostly due to disparities at the social, political, territorial and economic level (Badillo-Matos et al., 2023).

The wide consensus among experts and industry stakeholders is that change is ongoing and inevitable but that the outcomes are unpredictable. On the one hand, disinformation is hard to mitigate as it is mostly determined by techno-political factors and, on the other, the benign intent in the promotion of media literacy as the cure may turn it into a palliative, with policy and educational frameworks reducing the nature of media literacy to a system of reactive practices rather than effective proactive measures to create a healthier relationship between citizens and information.

4.3.2. Qualitative Analysis of Expert Interviews

- **Luís Galvão:** journalist/fact-checking specialist of Agência Lusa. Interviewed by Aldina Margato.
- **Mercedes Muñoz-Rojas:** founding partner of Wanabí Formación and training manager of iCmedia. Interviewed by José M. Valero-Pastor.
- **Paula Gori:** programme coordinator and secretary-general/coordinator of EDMO. Interviewed by Miguel Paisana.
- **Rolf Nijmeijer:** researcher and scientific coordinator of EUI (European University Institute / EMIF). Interviewed by Miguel Paisana.
- **Vítor Tomé:** media literacy and training specialist of ISCTE / IBERIFIER. Interviewed by Miguel Paisana.
- **Vivian Rangel:** media literacy and education strategist of Maldita.es. Interviewed by Alba García-Ortega.

Experts reveal a high degree of convergence in diagnosing both disinformation and media literacy as structural, evolving, and deeply interconnected phenomena, while also highlighting important divergences in emphasis, particularly regarding policy priorities, educational approaches, and the future trajectory of the field. There is recognition across the board of the sensitive nature of disinformation, volatile and prone to change according to agenda and context, and of Media Literacy as the most adequate but slow to catch-up solution to mitigate it.

There is strong consensus that disinformation is no longer a marginal or episodic issue, but a permanent feature of the information ecosystem. Paula Gori (EDMO) and Rolf Nijmeijer (EUI/EMIF) frame disinformation as systemic, embedded in platform architectures, economic incentives, and political communication practices. As Paula Gori notes, disinformation predictably emerges in moments of crisis and uncertainty, which malign actors recognize as of vulnerability for the public sphere, while Rolf Nijmeijer goes further in arguing that it has altered the epistemic foundations of public discourse, introducing “the notion that truth is not real, it’s constructed.” (Rolf Nijmeijer). Framing the topic within the European context, Paula Gori further develops on the overlap between the issue of disinformation and the need to strike a balance between technological innovation, namely AI, and comprehensive regulation.

This understanding is reinforced by more practice-oriented perspectives. Luís Galvão (Agência LUSA) highlights the scale and speed of disinformation production exceeding verification capacities while Vivian Rangel (Maldita.es) points to the transformation of mediation itself, where users no longer seek information but passively receive it through algorithmic feeds. This suggests a shift from disinformation as a content problem to disinformation as an environmental condition, not a bug but a feature.

There is agreement in the role of AI as a driver and amplifier of disinformation. Experts identify AI, particularly in its generative form, as a transformative force. Paula Gori and Rolf Nijmeijer underline the asymmetry between malicious and defensive uses of AI, noting that while experts may use AI for detection and analysis, harmful applications are more directly accessible to the public. Luís Galvão pinpoints the proliferation of deepfakes in fraud and political manipulation, as well as the increasing difficulty of verification. Expert statements point towards the materialisation of the concerns mentioned by García-Avilés et al. (2024), of the institutionalisation of AI at the core of disinformation phenomenon.

Vivian Rangel and Mercedes Muñoz-Rojas (Wanabí Formación / iCmedia) place the focus on the societal and cognitive implications of AI use, particularly among younger users. They highlight the growing reliance on AI as a primary source of information, often without understanding its limitations, and warn of overconfidence in AI-generated outputs. Mercedes Muñoz-Rojas describes as a broader erosion of critical thinking capacities and increasing technological dependency compounding with ethical concerns requiring the balance technology and humanities: “We need to restore that balance between technological skills (...) and the humanities (...) after all, it is the humanities that enable you to think, reason, think critically, gain perspective, and perhaps question things a little; and, above all, to develop the values and ethics that allow you to make good use of any tool.” (Mercedes Muñoz-Rojas)

A particularly original concern is raised by Luis Galvão, who states that the interaction between AI systems and legacy media archives, suggesting that misinformation may become embedded in knowledge infrastructures themselves, creating long-term epistemic risks within knowledge systems themselves. Experts converge on the importance of media literacy as a key response to disinformation but diverge in its scope and priorities. On one level, there is broad agreement that media literacy must move

beyond reactive approaches. Rolf Nijmeijer and Paula Gori emphasise the shift from countering disinformation to building resilience, while Vivian Rangel highlights the need to move from fact-checking individual claims to understanding broader narratives. This aligns with a growing emphasis on preventive and systemic approaches, including pre-bunking and inoculation strategies (Cook et al., 2017).

Several experts warn that the current policy focus risks narrowing the field. Vítor Tomé offers the most explicit critique, arguing that media literacy is increasingly being reduced to a tool for combating disinformation, particularly within European frameworks. His concern is that this instrumentalisation neglects broader critical competencies. As he puts it, “the focus must be on information, not just on disinformation... Knowing how to interpret information is very important too.” (Vítor Tomé). This critique is echoed by Mercedes Muñoz-Rojas and Vivian Rangel, who emphasise the need to address basic cognitive, ethical, and emotional dimensions of media use, rather than focusing exclusively on misinformation.

A further area of strong convergence concerns the structural weaknesses of media literacy initiatives. Experts highlight fragmentation, lack of institutionalisation, and limited scalability as key challenges. Vivian Rangel explicitly notes the absence of “training that is consolidated, scalable, structured, and institutionalized”, while Luís Galvão and Mercedes Muñoz-Rojas point to the uneven distribution of initiatives and the exclusion of certain populations, particularly older users. Vítor Tomé complements this by emphasising the role of funding structures in shaping the field, often leading to misaligned priorities and superficial interventions. The issue of evaluation and impact measurement emerges as another critical concern. Vítor Tomé highlights the inadequacy of current metrics, which focus on outputs rather than long-term behavioural change.

Another common theme is the need for earlier and more systematic integration of media literacy into education systems. Mercedes Muñoz-Rojas and Vitor Tomé converge on the need to strongly advocate for interventions at the pre-school level and Vivian Rangel similarly calls for the establishment of media literacy as a dedicated subject. At the same time, there is recognition that current educational systems are ill-equipped to deliver this. Teachers lack training and time, curricula are overloaded, and most initiatives remain external and project-based, highlighting a gap between policy ambitions and implementation capacity.

Several experts highlight emerging risks related to the politicisation and instrumentalisation of both disinformation and media literacy. Rolf Nijmeijer warns of the securitisation of media literacy within broader geopolitical frameworks, while Vitor Tomé points to its association with specific ideological positions. This raises concerns about legitimacy and public trust, particularly if media literacy is perceived as a tool of political influence rather than an emancipatory practice “there’s a strong tendency to portray media literacy as a tool used by one political camp to attack another. And as a result, in some countries, media literacy is seen as a left-wing ideology” (Vítor Tomé).

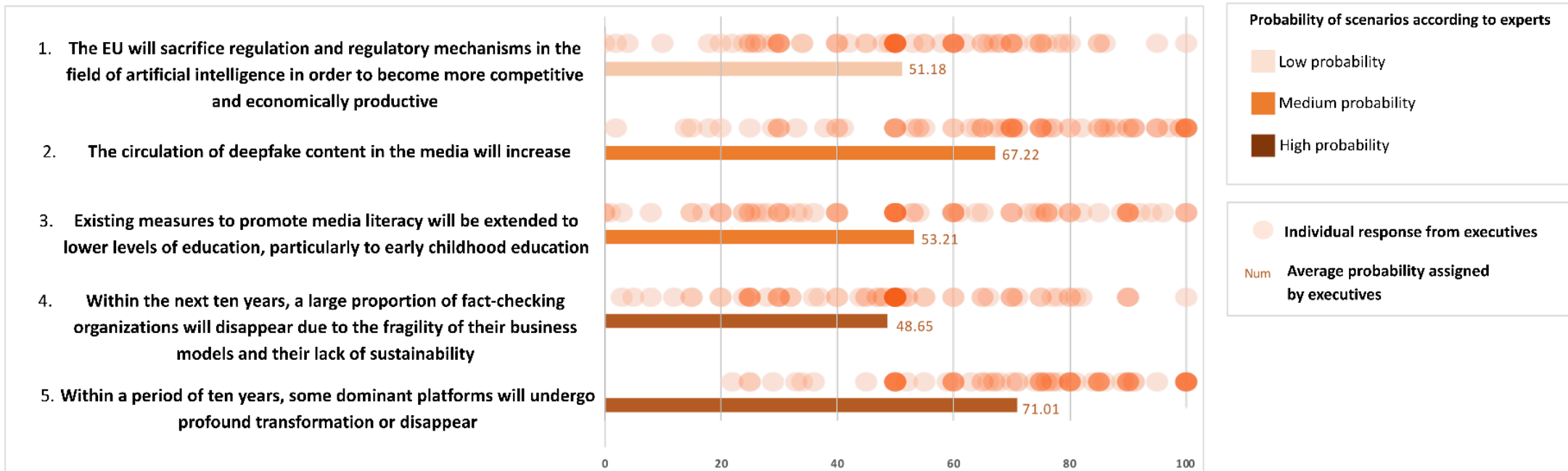
4.3.3. Probability Analysis of the Scenarios

Figure 4.

Source: own elaboration

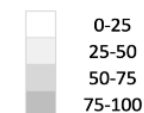
Disinformation and media literacy

Estimated probability according to executives for scenarios proposed by experts



SCENARIO	GENDER		COUNTRY		AGE				TOTAL
	Men	Women	Spain	Portugal	30-40	41-50	51-60	61-70	
1	50.59	52.06	51.77	49.62	52.36	47.15	49.29	59.60	51.18
2	67.50	66.81	67.57	66.29	71.64	70.25	62.97	68.73	67.22
3	56.20	48.77	49.63	62.76	55.55	38.75	54.71	67.67	53.21
4	52.80	42.48	51.57	40.86	49.18	48.35	46.42	53.27	48.65
5	73.76	66.94	71.79	68.95	73.09	71.35	66.45	78.47	71.01

Average probability assigned by executives



The survey results reveal a moderate-to-high level of alignment between industry perceptions and expert-derived scenarios, although with important variations in the degree of consensus and the distribution of responses across scenarios.

The scenarios that receive the highest levels of agreement are those related to structural and technological change in the information ecosystem. In particular, Scenario 5 (“dominant platforms will undergo fundamental transformation or disappear”) registers the highest average probability (71.01), alongside a relatively concentrated distribution of responses in the upper range of the scale. This suggests that industry actors widely anticipate significant disruption in the platform landscape, whether through regulatory pressure, technological shifts, or market evolution.

Similarly, Scenario 2 (“increase in the circulation of deepfake content”) also receives a high average score (67.22), indicating strong agreement that AI-generated content will become more prevalent. While the distribution of responses is somewhat more dispersed than in Scenario 5, the clustering remains clearly above the midpoint, reinforcing the perception that deepfakes are not a marginal risk but a central and escalating challenge for media systems. Together, these two scenarios reflect a shared expectation that the future of disinformation will be driven by technological determinism, particularly through AI and platform evolution, a perspective that aligns closely with the concerns raised by experts regarding the growing sophistication of manipulation techniques and the instability of platform ecosystems.

Scenarios 1 and 3 occupy an intermediate position, both in terms of average probability and dispersion of responses. Scenario 3 (“expansion of media literacy to lower educational levels”) receives an average of 53.21, suggesting moderate optimism about the growing institutionalisation of media literacy. However, the relatively wide distribution of responses indicates uncertainty about implementation, likely reflecting structural constraints such as limited resources, curricular rigidity, and uneven policy commitment across contexts.

Scenario 1 (“EU scaling back AI regulation for competitiveness”) presents a similar average (51.18), but with a more ambiguous interpretation. Responses are widely dispersed across the scale, indicating significant divergence in expectations. This suggests that industry actors recognise the plausibility of regulatory trade-offs between innovation and control, but do not converge on a clear trajectory. The Scenario is most likely perceived as being context-dependent, subject to geopolitical and economic developments rather than a linear policy trend.

Scenario 4 (“disappearance of most fact-checking brands”) records the lowest average probability (48.65), with responses distributed across the full range of the scale. This indicates substantial disagreement among respondents, reflecting uncertainty about the sustainability of fact-checking as a sector. While some respondents appear to share expert concerns regarding fragile business models, others likely anticipate adaptation or integration into broader media ecosystems, rather than outright disappearance. The dispersion of responses suggests that the future of fact-checking is perceived as open-ended, with multiple possible trajectories depending on funding models,

institutional support, and technology.

Disaggregated results reveal notable variations across demographic groups, although these differences do not fundamentally alter the overall ranking of scenarios. Gender differences are relatively modest but consistent. Men tend to assign slightly higher probabilities to scenarios involving technological disruption and platform transformation (e.g., Scenario 5), while women show more variation, particularly in scenarios related to media literacy and fact-checking. Country-level differences between Spain and Portugal are also limited but meaningful. Portuguese respondents assign a higher probability to the expansion of media literacy (Scenario 3), suggesting greater confidence in educational or policy developments in this area. Spanish respondents, by contrast, show slightly higher expectations regarding platform transformation and regulatory dynamics, indicating a stronger focus on systemic change at the technological and governance levels.

Age differences are more pronounced. Younger respondents (30–40) tend to assign higher probabilities to scenarios involving technological disruption, particularly platform transformation and deepfakes. Older respondents (61–70), while still recognising these trends, show relatively higher scores for scenarios related to media literacy expansion, suggesting a greater emphasis on institutional and educational responses. This generational divide may reflect divergent professional trajectories and degrees of exposure to digital transformation.

4.3.4. Conclusions

The combined analysis of expert interviews and industry responses points to a field at a critical juncture, characterised by both strong consensus and underlying tensions. Experts and practitioners alike converge on the idea that disinformation is increasingly shaped by structural technological transformations, particularly the rise of AI and the evolving role of digital platforms. These factors are widely perceived as the primary drivers of change, reinforcing the sense that the information ecosystem is undergoing a rapid and potentially disruptive transition.

At the same time, there is considerably more uncertainty regarding institutional and societal responses. While media literacy, regulation, and fact-checking are consistently identified as key pillars in addressing disinformation, their future development appears less predictable. Both experts and industry actors highlight challenges related to implementation, sustainability, and scope, including the risk of reducing media literacy to a purely defensive tool against disinformation, not proactive but reactive.

Importantly, the highest levels of agreement emerge around scenarios that describe ongoing transformations, whereas those dependent on policy decisions or organisational adaptation generate more divergent expectations. This suggests that change is perceived as inevitable, but its governance remains uncertain. The analysis indicates that the future of disinformation will depend less on whether transformation occurs, and more on how effectively societies adapt to its accelerating pace.

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4.4. Relationship with the Public: Interactivity and Participation

New Mediators: Algorithms and Content Producers

Aldina Margato, Iscte – IUL e Miguel Midões, IPV

4.4.1. Introduction

The postulate that audiences should be heard and taken into consideration has long been regarded as an ethical obligation of journalism (Fidalgo, 2007). The reconfiguration of the communicational context, driven by the widespread adoption of the internet and its interactive potential, appeared to create favourable conditions for strengthening this constructive relationship. This analysis adopts the concept of publics rather than the term audience, as the former is considered more appropriate to the networked ecosystem in which active individuals are constantly evolving, drawing on Bruns' (2013) conceptual proposal of "produsage" and Cardoso's (2023) notion of transformed publics. The term audience is therefore reserved for a more limited meaning, referring to a set of passive subjects whose behaviour may be measured quantitatively.

The researchers involved in this analysis argue that the technical conditions for interactivity are not contributing to a closer relationship between journalism and public and maintain that this distancing is likely to persist. This assessment is associated with indicators relating to declining interest in journalism, loss of credibility, and growing distrust. The experts converge in the view that the interactive potential of this field has largely failed to achieve its intended impact, while negative forms of participation continue to increase. At the same time, they highlight the emergence of other significant mediators within the information ecosystem, notably algorithms — increasingly incorporating AI — and content creators, with particular emphasis on the role of influencers. The researchers anticipate the growing presence of AI in both the production and consumption of information, as well as the increasing relevance of influencer-creators, who may partially replace the role traditionally performed by journalism.

4.4.2. Qualitative Analysis of Expert Interviews

- **Maria José Brites:** professor at Universidade Lusófona and associate researcher at the Centro de Investigação em Comunicação Aplicada, Cultura e Novas Tecnologias (CICANT). Interviewed by Aldina Margato.
- **Jaume Suau Martinez:** professor at Blanquerna – Universitat Ramon Llull, and researcher at the DIGILAB: Media, Strategy and Regulation research group. Interviewed by Aldina Margato.
- **Inês Amaral:** professor at Universidade de Coimbra and researcher at the Centro de Estudos Sociais (CES). Interviewed by Aldina Margato.
- **José Antonio Cortés Quesada:** professor at Universitat Internacional of La Rioja (UNIR) Interviewed by Alicia de Lara Gonzalez.

- **António Salvador:** director of Intercampus. Interviewed by Miguel Paisana.
- **Raúl Terol:** professor at the Universidad Politécnica de Valencia. Interviewed by Miguel Midões.

The researchers reveal a high degree of convergence in the negative diagnosis they draw regarding the relationship between journalism and public, pointing towards the weakening of that relationship, although they acknowledge that certain niche projects may constitute exceptions, as argued by Maria José Brites (Universidade Lusófona) and Jaume Suau Martinez (Universitat Ramon Llull). The overall pattern of responses therefore signals a risk of further distancing between journalism and the public. Nevertheless, as Maria José Brites explains, one should avoid being “media-centric”, since the problems do not depend exclusively on the media, but rather stem from society itself and from the broader conjuncture. The experts anticipate increasing polarisation among publics, which, according to Jaume Suau Martinez, will result in an even more divided society.

From the perspective of Inês Amaral (Universidade de Coimbra), even technically mediated interactivity, based on simple reaction mechanisms, has failed to materialise effectively. Following Nico Carpentier (2017), a distinction may be drawn between access, interactivity, and participation: the first concept refers to the possibility of contact, as a form of precondition in which the public is not involved in decision-making; the second concerns the possibility of communication through different mechanisms; while the third relates to co-production itself. News media remain attached to more traditional forms of journalism, making limited use of interactive mechanisms with audiences. In her view, even hypertext continues to be employed in a rudimentary manner by journalistic organisations.

The space of participation has also become occupied by forms of negative participation (Lutz & Hoffman, 2017), thereby challenging the previously positive and automatic assumptions associated with participation, as explained by Jaume Suau Martinez: “It was believed that social media would strengthen this relationship, but what emerged instead was negative participation.” Maria José Brites further argues that the initial enthusiasm surrounding participation has faded. In this context, Suau Martinez highlights the future role of regulation of digital platforms, which remains uncertain and uneven across countries, thereby affecting the tone of public discourse.

On the other hand, according to Inês Amaral, the field of participation within the ecosystem will incorporate new actors competing with journalists for public attention. “Influencers and independent creators may partially replace traditional media.”

It is suggested that the major transformation currently underway, and which is expected to become more visible in the medium term, is the growing prominence of algorithmic mediation. Algorithms will increasingly determine what is prioritised, thereby shaping the relationship between media organisations and publics. According to Inês Amaral, their role will intensify in two domains: on the one hand, in production processes, particularly

in tasks of research and filtering; and, on the other hand, in reception processes, through the personalisation of content, becoming central to communicational mediation. The significant influence of algorithms does not, however, imply that AI will replace journalists. Jaume Suau Martinez notes that contemporary studies indicate that publics continue to prefer content produced by humans. Inês Amaral follows a similar line of reasoning, expressing considerable scepticism regarding the full-scale use of AI: “AI may be useful for mechanical tasks, transcription, data analysis, and creative brainstorming, but it does not understand irony, context, or emotion.”

From the perspective of José António Cortés Quesada (Universitat Internacional de La Rioja), audience consumption will remain hyper-fragmented, spread across multiple devices and involving different forms and formats of consumption. According to the specialist, this shift will require the adaptation of narrative strategies and the development of new methods for capturing audience attention. In this regard, António Salvador (Intercampus) also argues that these changes necessitate the implementation of new measurement systems integrated within cross-media models, which Cortés Quesada describes as a “hybrid audience measurement model”. This new model may “be based on biometric and real behavioural signals, categories of gaze, reactions, attention, driven by AI and smart devices”.

António Salvador further considers it likely that AI will become integrated into market research and audience measurement, driven by the context of on-demand consumption referred to by Raúl Terol (Universidad Politécnica de Valencia). In the specific context of audio, the Spanish specialist argues that the relationship with publics is likely to be renewed, alongside the definitive consolidation of multiplatform listening: the “anywhere, anytime” model will cease to be a promise and instead become a structural reality of reception.

Although digital media present new forms of consumption and new relationships with publics, António Salvador remains convinced that a rebalancing of power will occur between traditional media organisations and major global digital platforms, leading to what he describes as a “pacification of the digital ecosystem”.

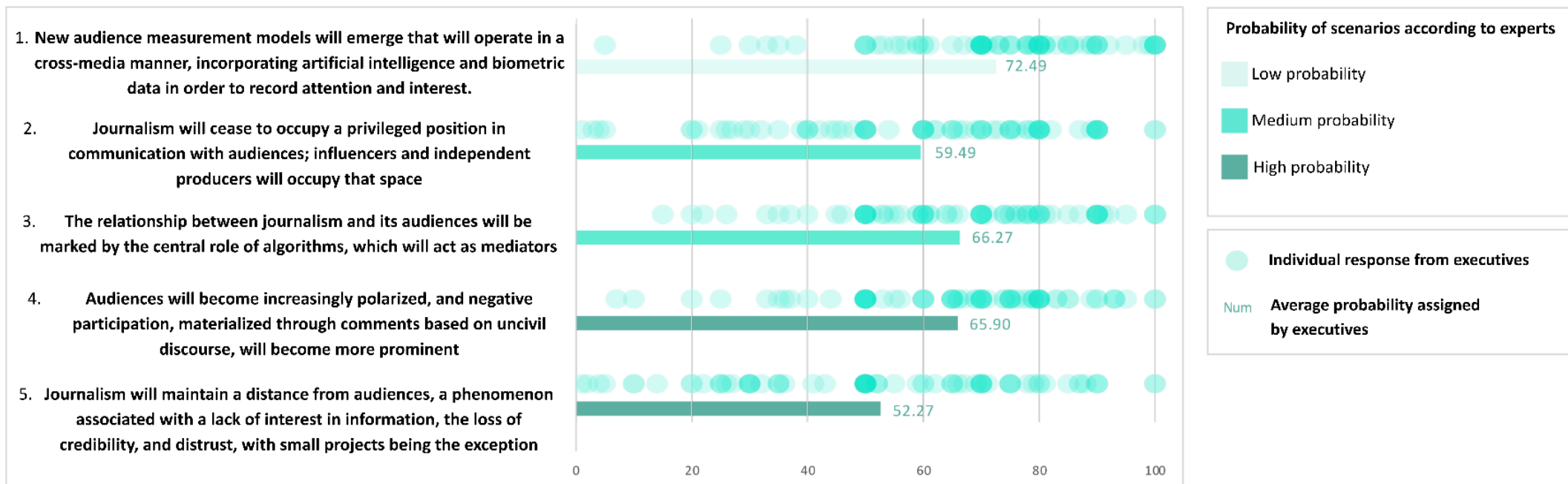
4.4.3. Probability Analysis of the Scenarios

Figure 5.

Source: own elaboration.

Relationship with the public: interactivity and participation

Estimated probability according to executives for scenarios proposed by experts



SCENARIO	GENDER		COUNTRY		AGE				TOTAL
	Men	Women	Spain	Portugal	30-40	41-50	51-60	61-70	
1	72.46	72.55	73.27	70.43	68.82	74.60	71.19	75.07	72.49
2	62.07	55.68	60.89	55.76	64.27	64.30	53.65	61.67	59.49
3	66.93	65.29	65.39	68.62	65.91	67.55	63.90	69.73	66.27
4	65.61	66.32	67.34	62.05	62.82	70.50	65.94	61.93	65.90
5	54.57	49.61	54.55	47.29	41.27	60.50	52.90	49.60	52.57

Average probability assigned by executives	
0-25	
25-50	
50-75	
75-100	

Scenario 1 (“New audience measurement models will emerge that will operate in a cross-media manner, incorporating artificial intelligence and biometric data in order to record attention and interest”) is regarded by media directors and executives as the most likely development in the relationship with audiences, interactivity and participation. Executives assign it an average probability of 72.40. Scenario 3 (“The relationship between journalism and its audiences will be marked by the central role of algorithms, which will act as mediators”) presents as well a high probability, with an average rating of 66.27.

With a similarly high probability (65.9), Scenario 4 stands out (“Audiences will become increasingly polarized, and negative participation, materialized through comments based on uncivil discourse, will become more prominent”). A slightly lower, though still substantial, probability (59.40) is assigned to Scenario 2 (“Journalism will cease to occupy a privileged position in communication with audiences; influencers and independent producers will occupy that space”).

For the directors, scenario 5 (“Journalism will maintain a distance from audiences, a phenomenon associated with a lack of interest in information, the loss of credibility, and distrust, with small projects being the exception”), describing a widening gap between journalism and its audiences, ranks last, although it still receives a probability of materialising of 52.57.

Analysis of the directors' responses shows that, in Spain, only two scenarios are viewed more positively than Scenario 1: Scenario 2 and Scenario 4 . Scenario 5 is considered among the plausible outcomes. In Portugal, only Scenario 3 is evaluated more positively than in Spain.

Comparing the probabilities assigned by media directors with those expressed by the experts reveals significant differences. While the experts consider Scenario 1, relating to the incorporation of AI techniques, to be unlikely, the directors identify it as the most probable Scenario. The opposite pattern is observed for Scenario 5, which presents a negative outlook concerning audiences' declining interest in news. This Scenario is regarded as highly probable by the experts but receives the lowest probability rating from the directors.

No significant gender-related differences (men/women) were identified in the directors' responses. Nevertheless, the highest number of positive assessments was recorded among male participants. Among female respondents, Scenario 1 displays greater variability, with responses concentrated within the 41–50 and 61–70 intervals.

4.4.4. Conclusions

The analysis identifies a set of trends shaping the relationship between journalism and its audiences within a context marked by the digital reconfiguration of the media ecosystem. However, some of the projected developments are evaluated differently by the researchers and the media directors consulted for this study. Researchers emphasise

increasing audience polarisation and negative participation, together with the growing distance between journalism and its audiences. By contrast, media directors express strong consensus regarding the importance of new cross-media audience measurement models incorporating AI, as well as the growing significance of mediation structures, particularly algorithms.

The findings indicate that researchers and media directors prioritise different aspects of what is likely to shape the future relationship between journalism and its audiences, reflecting distinct perspectives and concerns. The experts place greater emphasis on qualitative dimensions of this relationship, particularly increasing polarisation and the widening gap between journalism and the public. By contrast, executives focus on quantitative dimensions, notably audience measurement and the centrality of algorithms. It should be noted, however, that algorithmic mediation ranks third for both groups, making it the area of greatest convergence between them.

With regard to the growing distance between journalism and its audiences, the high probability assigned to this development by the researchers is given considerably less importance by the media directors and executives interviewed for this study.

It may therefore be concluded that, alongside audience polarisation and the growing distance between journalism and the public, algorithms are emerging as new intermediaries in both production processes (such as information retrieval and filtering) and consumption processes (through personalisation). This transformation is taking place within a media environment characterised by intense competition from influencers and independent content creators, who are already partially replacing the role traditionally performed by news media in their relationship with audiences.

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4.5. Content and Editorial Approaches

The Battle for Attention: Between Human–Machine Co-creation, Conversation and Entertainment

Alicia de Lara, UMH & Miguel Midões, IPV

4.5.1. Introduction

The ways in which content is produced, distributed, and consumed within the digital ecosystem are being transformed by the growth of streaming platforms and the simultaneous use of multiple services by households. This reflects an increasingly fragmented and competitive market (Cañedo et al., 2022). At the same time, the proliferation of new formats, such as video podcasts, connected television, and hybrid content combining information, entertainment, and branding, points to a growing diversification in the ways content is produced and circulated (IAB Spain, 2026).

This process also coincides with the gradual incorporation of AI-based technologies, used both to create automated content and to personalize recommendations. Taken together, these dynamics are unfolding in a context shaped by intensifying competition for attention, the consolidation of new actors in the production and circulation of content, and the progressive weakening of the authority traditionally exercised by media literacy.

4.5.2. Qualitative Analysis of Expert Interviews

- **Adrián Giménez:** Communications & Marketing Coordinator at Warner Bros. ITVP Spain. Interviewed by Alicia de Lara.
- **Ana Isabel Reis:** professor at University of Porto and Listener Ombudsperson at RTP. Interviewed by Miguel Midões.
- **Luís Bonixe:** professor and researcher at Polytechnic of Portalegre. Interviewed by Miguel Midões.
- **Luis Quevedo:** science communicator and audiovisual producer. Interviewed by Alicia de Lara.
- **Nelson Pimenta:** director of Digital Transformation and Artificial Intelligence at Grupo Renascença. Interviewed by Miguel Crespo.
- **Nuno Domingues:** editor at the news radio station TSF Rádio Notícias. Interviewed by Miguel Midões
- **Ricardo Jorge Tomé:** general director of Media Capital Digital. Interviewed by Miguel Crespo.
- **Sonia Blanco:** professor of Audiovisual Production at University of Málaga. Interviewed by Alicia de Lara.

Recent changes in the media ecosystem have transformed the types of content being produced, the topics that gain centrality, and the approaches through which they are addressed. There is a perceived rise of hybrid entertainment closely linked to the

persuasive capacity and personality of the communicator.

Indeed, the growing hybridization between information and entertainment is visible across different fields. As Sonia Blanco (University of Málaga) explains, much current content operates along this boundary, especially when seeking to attract younger audiences or adapt to more dynamic formats. This hybrid approach can be observed both in television programs and in digital content. The aim is to maintain audience interest without abandoning the informative component. However, this trend also poses challenges, particularly in relation to content that requires greater depth. The literature on the attention economy argues that content generating rapid responses, immediate emotion, or easy consumption tends to gain an advantage over denser and more demanding pieces (García Ramírez, 2021).

Hybridization is also reflected in how topics are combined and integrated across channels and platforms. Science, for example, increasingly appears in informative or narrative formats that blend data, entertainment, and debate. In this context, Luis Quevedo (science communicator) points out that science communication has undergone a significant transformation: it has shifted from being dominated by institutions and experts to depending increasingly on persuasive capacity. The consequence is a move toward more narrative, more personalized, and, in most cases, more emotional approaches. Meanwhile, aspects such as rigor and the quality of sources are relegated to the background.

As communications consultant Adrián Giménez (Warner Bros.) explains, in the promotion and circulation of cultural or audiovisual products, rather than relying on a single message aimed at a general audience, current strategies tend to multiply approaches and adapt content to different thematic contexts. Within this trend, the personality of the communicator is becoming increasingly relevant. Much contemporary content is structured around recognizable figures (presenters, science communicators, or digital creators) whose voice and style become the main identity element of the content.

For his part, Nelson Pimenta (Grupo Renascença) believes that the communication logic is no longer distribution-centred and has become user-centred. As a consequence, the systems that govern visibility on social media and streaming platforms operate beyond the direct control of producers, distributors, and audiences. “Netflix has up to 20 different covers for the same title depending on the user’s profile,” added Adrian Giménez. This phenomenon demonstrates the extent to which the presentation and positioning of content depend on automated and insufficiently transparent decisions.

This logic also affects cultural consumption. Recommendation systems increasingly shape which content citizens discover, watch, or share, thereby reducing, to some extent, their capacity for autonomous choice. Consequently, algorithms represent a risk not only for promotional strategies, but also for diversity, accessibility, and independence in content consumption (Adrián Giménez).

This situation is further aggravated by the fact that the distribution of information is no longer controlled primarily by traditional news media, increasing the circulation of

disinformation and fake news, as Ricardo Jorge Tomé (Media Capital Digital) points out. The challenge is intensified by the growing normalisation of AI-generated content. Beyond raising concerns about credibility and trust, artificial intelligence is also transforming the processes of content creation and distribution. While AI offers new opportunities for producing and personalising content at scale, it simultaneously lowers barriers to the generation and dissemination of misleading or low-quality information. As a result, media organisations face the dual challenge of integrating AI into their production workflows while maintaining editorial standards and ensuring that trustworthy content remains visible within increasingly algorithm-driven information ecosystems.

On the other hand, the interviews conducted also highlight the growing importance of audio and sound communication. Researcher Luís Bonixe (Instituto Politécnico de Portalegre) emphasizes that the development of podcasting has opened a particularly relevant space for long-form content. Whereas in traditional radio many topics had to be condensed into short reports or brief news segments, the serialized format allows investigations to be developed over several episodes and devotes more time to explaining and contextualizing the issues addressed. This new space for audio production expands the narrative and thematic possibilities.

At the same time, changes in the way audio is consumed have also influenced the type of content being produced. Ana Isabel Reis (University of Porto) emphasizes that the shift from linear listening to fragmented listening has encouraged the circulation of individual pieces, specialized content, and products adapted to different moments of consumption. In the same line of thought, Nuno Domingues (TSF Rádio Notícias) believes that digital offers “much more interesting flexibility” for handling information, especially breaking news. From Nelson Pimenta’s point of view, audio has ceased to be the exclusive domain of radio and, with digital, has taken on “a life of its own”, gaining a new prominence which, in his view, is linked to “the excess of visual stimuli that create fatigue and make audio more appealing.”

Although podcasts are widely regarded by the experts as a medium distinct from radio, their development remains closely linked to traditional broadcasting practices. Many podcast formats derive from conventional radio genres and structures, which are often reproduced in the digital environment despite the opportunities offered by digital transformation. What appears to distinguish podcasting most clearly is not the emergence of entirely new narrative forms, but rather the greater thematic and editorial freedom it provides. In this sense, podcasts have become an important extension of radio content, enabling broadcasters to expand their reach, attract new audiences and generate additional traffic, making them strategically relevant for the sector (Nuno Domingues). However, audience participation remains relatively limited, suggesting that the innovative potential of the medium lies primarily in content production and distribution rather than in new forms of interaction.

Likewise, the evolution of podcasting is shaped by broader changes in media consumption. According to Ricardo Jorge Tomé, news consumption is becoming increasingly audiovisual, while audio-only formats continue to face challenges in gaining traction. He argues that what many users currently identify as podcast consumption often

refers to video-based talk shows accessed through social networks, websites or streaming platforms, rather than downloadable audio content listened to on the move. This shift highlights some of the key challenges facing content creation today: adapting formats to audience preferences, competing within highly visual digital ecosystems, and developing narratives capable of capturing attention across multiple platforms while preserving the distinctive value of audio.

Overall, the results reflect the consolidation of a trend that has been visible for years: the progressive weakening of legacy media and major traditional news outlets in the face of advancing digital environments, leading to the same dilemma: how to connect with audiences in a context of radically changing consumption habits. “Our audience, which was never very young, is now very aged,” says Nuno Domingues. In the case of journalism, moreover, the problems are structural and predate the technological boom, since the main bottleneck lies less in the capacity to innovate in content than in the shortage of human resources and the lack of economic sustainability.

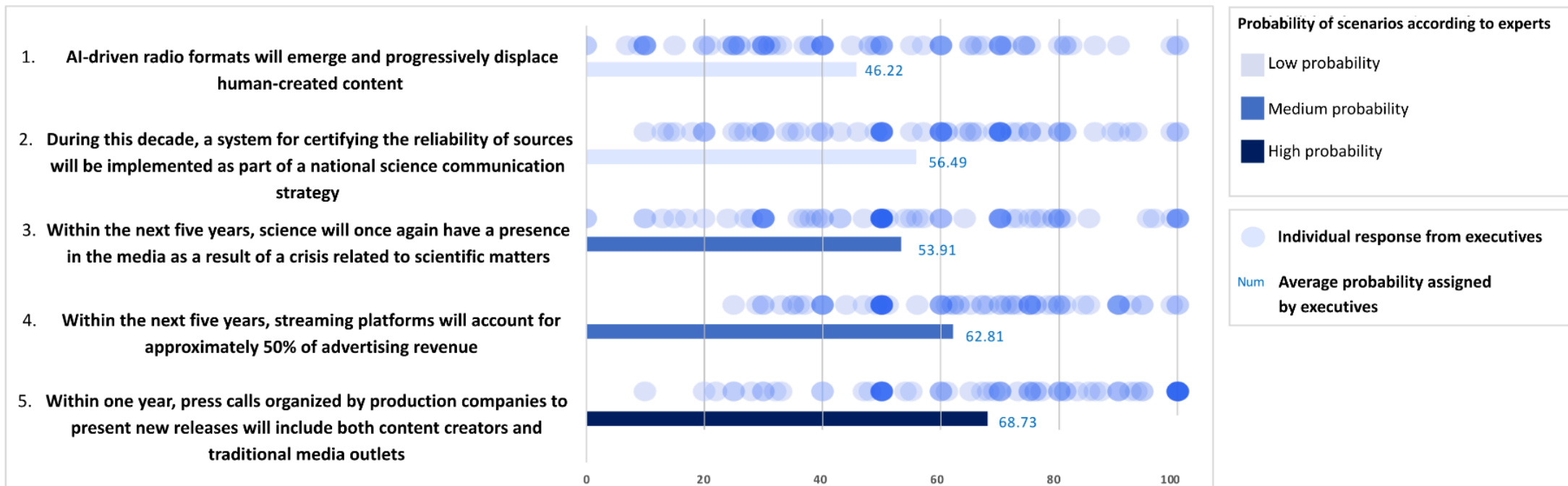
4.5.3. Probability Analysis of the Scenarios

Figure 6.

Source: own elaboration.

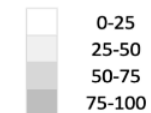
Content and editorial approaches

Estimated probability according to executives for scenarios proposed by expertss



SCENARIO	GENDER		COUNTRY		AGE				TOTAL
	Men	Women	Spain	Portugal	30-40	41-50	51-60	61-70	
1	43.30	50.55	41.41	59.05	41.00	44.85	48.23	47.73	46.22
2	56.85	55.97	56.84	55.57	55.82	50.60	58.00	61.73	56.49
3	47.41	63.55	56.09	48.10	62.45	51.50	57.42	43.60	53.91
4	61.83	64.26	62.23	64.33	61.00	66.70	64.45	55.53	62.81
5	68.85	68.55	70.07	65.14	73.64	79.15	63.39	62.27	68.73

Average probability assigned by executives



The two scenarios that directors perceive as most feasible within the field of content are related to changes in business models and communication strategies. Scenario 5 (“Within one year, press calls organized by production companies to present new releases will include both content creators and traditional media outlets”) is the case that receives the highest level of confidence, with an average probability of 68.73. It is followed by Scenario 4 (“Within the next five years, streaming platforms will account for approximately 50% of advertising revenue”), with an average estimated probability of 62.81. Overall, these forecasts point to a content ecosystem increasingly shaped by commercial profitability, in which direct brand strategies and the expansion of advertising gain prominence over traditional models.

Regarding Scenario 2 (“During this decade, a system for certifying the reliability of sources will be implemented as part of a national science communication strategy”) occupies an intermediate position. Many executives consider it possible that institutional mechanisms will be developed to strengthen informational trust, although they do not view this outcome as fully assured. A similar pattern appears in Scenario 3 (“Within the next five years, science will once again have a presence in the media as a result of a crisis related to scientific matters”), perceived as moderately likely (53.91). Recent experience suggests that health, climate, or technological events may return science to the center of media attention, but this is not considered certain.

The least likely of the five cases, with an average probability of 46.12, is Scenario 1 (“AI-driven radio formats will emerge and progressively displace human-created content”). Despite the advance of this technology in content production, executives do not anticipate a full replacement of human creativity and intervention in the short or medium term. Recent studies reach a similar conclusion: AI is advancing, but primarily as a complementary tool (Demir Alada & Yilmaz, 2024).

The comparison between the assessments of executives and experts shows that the former give greater credibility to business changes already visible in the market (such as Scenario 4) than to scenarios that appear more speculative at first glance, such as Scenario 1, about AI-generated radio content progressively displacing human creation. Everything suggests that those leading communication currently see an evolution of the economic model affecting content as more likely than a total revolution driven by production itself.

When examining the disaggregated data, it is noteworthy that, by country, Portugal shows a more plausible view than Spain in Scenario 1, about AI-generated radio content progressively displacing human-created content: Portugal reaches 59.05, compared with 41.41 in Spain. The other scenario in which the greatest cross-national difference appears is Scenario 3 about science-related content, where Spain appears more convinced (56.09) than Portugal (48.1). By gender, one of the widest gaps also appears in Scenario 3: women rate it at 63.55, compared with an average rating of 47.41 among men. In Scenario 1 women assign 50.55, compared with 43.3 among men, showing a greater predisposition to believe in the rise of AI-automated radio. In the remaining cases, gender-based responses show broad similarities.

With regard to generational differences, Scenario 1, which receives low overall acceptance, reveals an interesting pattern: older groups are those who see the emergence of AI-based radio stations as most likely, especially the 51–60 age group (which assigns an average probability of 48.23), while the youngest respondents aged 30–40 are somewhat more

skeptical (41.00). Although the probability expressed for this Scenario is low across all age groups.

Likewise, in Scenario 2, the estimated probability also increases with age, reaching its highest level among those aged 61–70 (61.73). The 30–40 age group is the most convinced (62.45) that Scenario 3 will occur. Moreover, in Scenario 4, middle-aged groups give the highest ratings, especially those aged 41–50 (66.70).

Finally, Scenario 5 shows the strongest generational difference: respondents aged 41–50 consider it highly likely (79.15), as do those aged 30–40 (73.64), while older cohorts lower their expectations, although they still remain relatively high (60).

4.5.3. Conclusions

Experts highlight a shift toward hybrid formats that combine information, entertainment, and narrative, where personalization, emotional appeal, and the communicator's voice become key elements for capturing attention. Authority no longer resides in the medium, but depends instead on the ability to produce relevant and engaging content. Executives largely share this diagnosis, although they interpret it from a more pragmatic perspective, focusing on formats and strategies that are already proving effective. Both perspectives point to a transition from standardized, one-directional content toward more flexible, audience-oriented approaches, even if they differ in the intensity of this change.

This transformation is particularly evident in the audio ecosystem. Experts describe a shift from linear and scheduled listening to more fragmented and personalized forms of consumption, in which individual pieces, niche content, and formats adapted to specific moments of everyday life gain prominence. Digital technologies have expanded the possibilities for producing, distributing, and accessing audio content, allowing greater flexibility in the treatment of information and facilitating more immediate responses to audiences' needs. As a result, audio is increasingly understood as a medium that extends beyond traditional radio, acquiring an autonomous role within digital environments. Some experts even suggest that the growing saturation of visual stimuli may be contributing to a renewed appeal of audio formats, which offer a less demanding and more versatile mode of consumption.

At the same time, this evolution introduces certain tensions. The growing emphasis on conversational and entertainment-oriented content expands the possibilities for connection and diversification of formats, but it may also favor immediacy and emotional impact over depth and rigor. In fields such as journalism or science communication, this raises questions about the quality and reliability of information. Moreover, these changes do not resolve the sector's structural problems, particularly the lack of resources and economic sustainability needed to produce high-quality content. The future of content will therefore depend on the ability to balance narrative innovation with depth, credibility, the capacity to connect, and public value.

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4.6. Narratives, Formats and Hybridization

From Technological Race to the Search for Connection

Alba García-Ortega, UMH

4.6.1. Introduction

Traditionally, the search for new narratives and formats has been closely linked to technological development. Just a few years ago, the focus was placed on the potential of technologies such as virtual reality, augmented reality, or the metaverse to offer new, more engaging and participatory forms of consumption (García-Avilés et al., 2023). These trends pointed toward a communicative scenario centered on the expansion of immersive environments and new forms of interaction based on emerging devices (Watson, 2017). However, at present, experts point in a different direction. Without abandoning the technological dimension, attention is now focused on the search for new formats and narratives that make it possible to adapt the message to different audiences. The key no longer lies in technological spectacle, but in the capacity to adapt to the user. In this context, narrative innovation ceases to be an end in itself and becomes a tool at the service of relevance, differentiation, and the construction of closer relationships with audiences.

4.6.2. Qualitative Analysis of Expert Interviews

- **Ana Sofía Paiva:** sound innovation expert at ICNOVA. Interviewed by Miguel Midões.
- **Iker Barinaga:** product director of Vocento. Interviewed by Alba García-Ortega.
- **Joana Beleza:** deputy director of Audio and Multimedia of Grupo Impresa. Interviewed by Miguel Crespo.
- **Sara I. Belled:** visual journalist at Colpisa. Interviewed by Alba García-Ortega
- **Sara Pérez-Seijo:** researcher at Novos Medios Group (USC). Interviewed by Alba García-Ortega.

Experts broadly agree on the growing hybridization of professional profiles and production logics. In contrast to earlier stages marked by hyper-specialization, there is now a clear commitment to multidisciplinary teams in which narrative, technical, and editorial competences converge. As Sara I. Belled (Colpisa) points out, the most significant change is “the commitment to hybrid profiles [...] capable of bringing together the different languages through which we communicate with readers.” This transformation directly affects the way formats are conceived, as journalists incorporate multimedia and multiplatform logic from the outset.

This hybridization is not only organizational but also narrative. Experts highlight a growing tendency to enrich content with more experiential and emotional dimensions, aimed at strengthening connections with audiences. Although immersive narratives have not become widely established as standard formats, they have left a significant imprint on the industry. As Sara Pérez-Seijo (USC) explains, these transformations introduced a new logic in news consumption, in which value no longer lies solely in the transmission of information, but in the ability to generate experiences that actively engage users. This approach, which some authors have conceptualized as storyliving, has not necessarily led to a broader adoption of immersive formats. However, it has influenced how media outlets conceive their content today, incorporating narrative elements aimed at fostering greater audience engagement and emotional connection.

In this context, artificial intelligence emerges as a key driver. Rather than being seen as a substitute technology, it is understood as a tool that expands expressive possibilities, enabling experimentation with different languages and formats. However, its integration also raises challenges at the narrative level. Pérez-Seijo points to the sector's tendency to "experiment first and reflect later", which can result in ineffective narrative uses or formal solutions that do not always respond to clear journalistic criteria. In the same vein, Joana Beleza (Grupo Impresa) stresses that AI must be "controlled by the journalist, not the other way around", emphasizing that even in an increasingly automated context, meaning, focus, and narrative coherence should continue to rely on professional judgment.

Another key dimension is the transformation of consumption patterns and the growing disconnect with audiences, particularly younger ones. Experts point to a decline in the centrality of traditional media as primary sources of information. Iker Barinaga (Vocento) suggests that younger generations increasingly place their trust in individuals rather than in established media outlets, questioning the symbolic authority of the media as an institution. This shift is further reinforced by changes in how information is accessed, which is now increasingly mediated by algorithms and AI-based interfaces (Barinaga).

In this context, formats are redefined in response to new consumption habits. Video —particularly in short, vertical formats— has emerged as one of the dominant languages, driven by social media platforms. However, experts warn against uncritically adopting these logics. Barinaga argues that "we cannot aim to produce a TikTok", but should instead adapt these languages to a journalistic context. Similarly, Belled stresses that "we cannot seek to become a social network", underscoring the importance of preserving identity, credibility, and human connection as key differentiating elements.

In contrast to video, audio emerges as a "silent space of innovation" (Ana Sofía Paiva, ICNOVA). Rather than undergoing an explosive expansion of new formats, audio journalism has been consolidating, particularly in the field of podcasting, which is no longer viewed as an amateur format but as a strategic tool. In this context, Paiva highlights the emergence of new lines of development aimed at expanding the narrative potential of audio. Some initiatives explore the use of sound to represent information in alternative ways —for example, through data sonification— while others focus on

adapting content to different listening contexts, fostering more personalized and accessible forms of consumption.

This development, however, takes place within a context shaped by significant structural constraints that limit the actual scope of narrative innovation. In practice, many initiatives must contend with economic and organizational restrictions that hinder their implementation. This is particularly evident in the case of immersive narratives. According to Belled, such projects require “large teams and extended timelines”, which places them outside the rhythms of daily production and confines them to specific, standalone initiatives. These limitations are compounded by the pressure for immediacy that characterizes the current media ecosystem. As Beleza notes, news production operates within a constant “whirlwind”, driven by continuous updates, leaving little room for the development of more elaborate formats or for sustained experimentation over time.

In this context, narrative innovation cannot be understood in isolation, but rather in constant tension with its environment. For this reason, a common thread across all the interviews is the need to strike a balance between narrative innovation and editorial value. Experts agree that the adoption of new formats should not be seen as an end in itself. As Barinaga puts it: “If you have a groundbreaking format but a mediocre approach, the result is mediocre”. This perspective reflects a broader shift: from technology-driven innovation to an approach focused on usefulness, relevance, and audience connection.

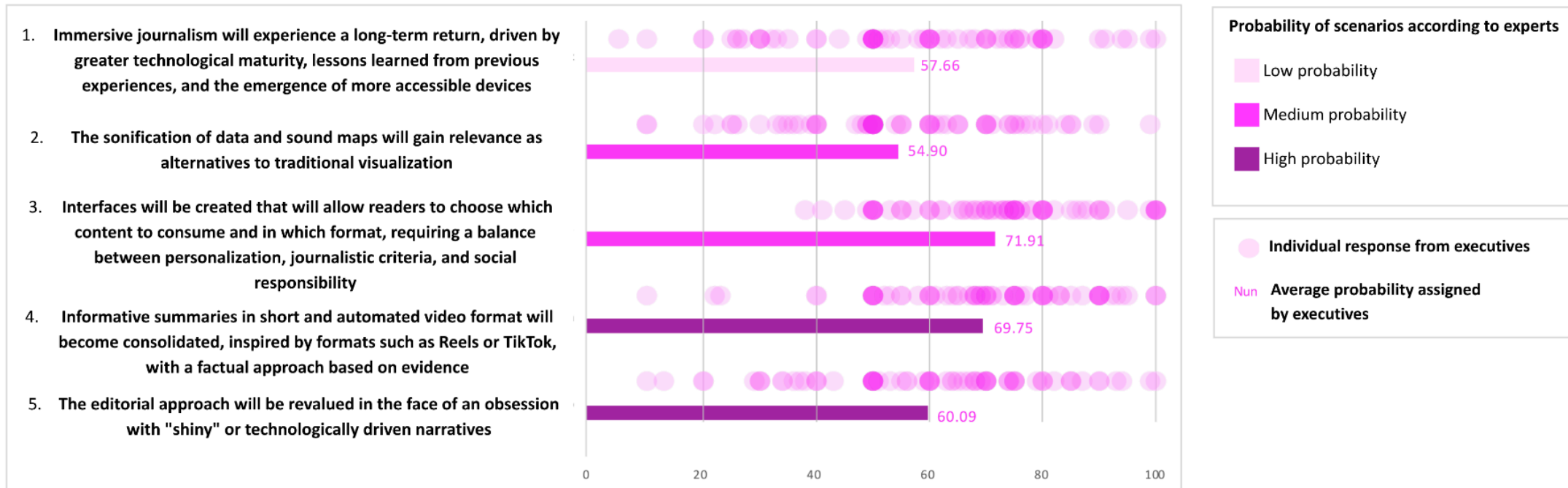
4.6.3. Probability Analysis of the Scenarios

Figure 7.

Source: own elaboration.

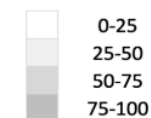
Narratives, formats and hybridization

Estimated probability according to executives for scenarios proposed by experts



SCENARIO	GENDER		COUNTRY		AGE				TOTAL
	Men	Women	Spain	Portugal	30-40	41-50	51-60	61-70	
1	57.61	57.74	57.09	59.19	53.09	51.00	63.06	58.73	57.66
2	54.52	55.45	53.13	59.62	45.73	57.25	56.23	55.73	54.90
3	71.02	73.23	70.88	74.67	67.82	76.60	72.06	68.33	71.91
4	70.17	69.13	69.70	69.90	72.64	70.20	68.58	69.47	69.75
5	57.85	63.42	59.38	62.00	58.73	62.15	57.52	63.67	60.09

Average probability assigned by executives



The scenario that achieves the highest level of consensus among executives is Scenario 3 (“Interfaces will be created that will allow readers to choose which content to consume and in which format, requiring a balance between personalization, journalistic criteria, and social responsibility”), with an average probability of 71.91. This result points to a clear expectation regarding the personalization of news consumption. The high score suggests that executives do not view this Scenario as a distant possibility, but rather as a direct extension of trends already underway, particularly in terms of user-content interaction.

A closely ranked scenario is Scenario 4 (“Informative summaries in short and automated video format will become consolidated, inspired by formats such as Reels or TikTok, with a factual approach based on evidence”), with an average of 69.75. This scenario reflects the consolidation of short audiovisual formats inspired by the languages of digital platforms. Its strong evaluation reinforces the idea that changes in narrative forms are closely shaped by consumption habits, particularly the preference for fast, concise, and easily consumable content.

A second group of scenarios displays intermediate values, reflecting more nuanced expectations. Scenario 5 (“The editorial approach will be revalued in the face of an obsession with “shiny” or technologically driven narratives”) reaches an average of 60.09, while Scenario 1 (“Immersive journalism will experience a long-term return, driven by greater technological maturity, lessons learned from previous experiences, and the emergence of more accessible devices”) stands at 57.66. Both share a common feature: they point to changes that are not solely driven by current consumption dynamics, but also by potential adjustments in narrative models or by the evolution of the technological ecosystem.

In particular, Scenario 5 suggests a reaction to the overexposure of innovative formats, pointing to a certain maturation of the sector in which editorial value may regain prominence over format. Scenario 1, meanwhile, reflects greater uncertainty regarding the future of immersive narratives. Although their return is not ruled out, it is projected over a longer time horizon, conditioned by factors such as technological accessibility and the sustainability of these formats.

The scenario with the lowest level of agreement is Scenario 2 (“The sonification of data and sound maps will gain relevance as alternatives to traditional visualization”), with an average of 54.90. Despite growing interest in audio as a field of experimentation, this result suggests that its consolidation as an alternative narrative format is still perceived as limited or incipient. The dispersion of responses also indicates a lack of consensus regarding its potential impact, placing it in a more speculative position within the set.

A comparative reading of the results reveals a clear pattern: scenarios involving adaptations of already established formats —such as personalization or short video— receive higher levels of confidence than those implying more structural transformations or less widespread innovations —such as immersive narratives or experimental audio—. This suggests that executives tend to prioritize incremental developments over disruptive change, placing greater value on trends that already have a visible foothold in the market.

However, this approach does not always align with the experts' perspective. In the case of Scenario 5, classified as highly probable, executives place it in an intermediate position (60.09), whereas Scenario 3, with a moderate probability, achieves the highest score (71.01). This reveals a certain divergence between strategic logic and professional perspective.

Disaggregated analysis reveals some differences across groups. In terms of gender, differences are moderate, although women tend to assign slightly higher scores to scenarios related to personalization (73.23 compared to 71.02 assigned by men) and editorial revaluation (63.42 compared to 57.85), which may indicate greater sensitivity to content-related aspects and audience relationships. Regarding differences by country, Portugal shows slightly higher scores than Spain in most scenarios, particularly in Scenario 3 (74.67 assigned by Portugal compared to 70.88 by Spain), which may reflect greater confidence in the evolution of personalized consumption models.

Age-related variations are more pronounced. Respondents aged 41 to 50 show the highest levels of agreement in scenarios related to personalization and audiovisual consumption, while younger groups (30–40) tend to be more cautious regarding more experimental forms of innovation, such as audio and immersive narratives. Older groups (61–70), meanwhile, assign relatively higher scores to scenarios involving a revaluation of editorial approaches, suggesting a stronger inclination toward changes that reinforce the traditional principles of journalism.

4.6.4. Conclusions

The results point to a narrative ecosystem in which the most likely changes are not associated with the emergence of new disruptive formats, but rather with the adaptation and reconfiguration of existing ones. Personalization, the rise of short audiovisual formats, and narrative hybridization emerge as the main drivers of transformation, while more experimental innovations are relegated to more uncertain horizons. This interpretation aligns with the views expressed by experts, who emphasize the need to subordinate technological innovation to editorial value.

The main challenge lies not in adopting new tools or languages, but in articulating a coherent narrative model that balances experimentation, sustainability, and relevance. The hybridization of professional profiles, the consolidation of multimedia logics, and the emerging role of AI shape a narrative landscape in which innovation must be understood as a strategic process rather than a response to technological trends. In this sense, the ability of media organizations to maintain their credibility and strengthen their connection with audiences will depend on their capacity to integrate these changes without diluting their identity, placing journalistic judgment and content quality at the core of their narratives.

4.6.5. References

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4.7. Journalistic Culture and Professional Well-being

The Stresses Caused by Technological Change and Job Insecurity are Taking a Toll on Journalists' Mental Health

Jose Alberto García Avilés, UMH

4.7.1. Introduction

The economic sustainability of media companies competes directly with the well-being of their professionals. In the wake of the 2020 pandemic, the sector has experienced a technological and productive acceleration that has redefined not only news production but the very essence of the journalistic profession. A paradox stands out in this paradigm shift: while digital tools enable unprecedented global dissemination, professionals face a crisis of workplace well-being characterized by hyperconnectivity and burnout.

Mental health has ceased to be a taboo subject and has become a strategic focus of debate in newsrooms. Through the testimonies of experts, the tensions between the immediacy demanded by the market and the need for healthy work environments are examined. The general framework of the analysis regarding the transition toward 2030 raises the question of whether journalism will succeed in integrating AI and a culture of care as allies, or whether it will succumb to structural precariousness that threatens its quality and social relevance.

4.7.2. Qualitative analysis of expert interviews

- **Graciella Almendral:** president of the Asociación Nacional de Informadores de Salud (ANIS). Interviewed by Jose A. García-Avilés.
- **Paula Sofia Luz:** president of the Conselho Geral do sindicato dos jornalistas. Interviewed by Ana Pinto Martinho.
- **María Miret:** freelance journalist and coordinator of the Almas Rotas project. Interviewed by Jose A. García-Avilés.
- **Isabel Nery:** journalist and professor of Universidade Autónoma de Lisboa. Interviewed by Ana Pinto Martinho.
- **Erika Reija:** chief reporter of ABC. Interviewed by Jose A. García-Avilés.

Journalism has always been a demanding profession. The journalistic community interprets current changes and future challenges through the lens of professional culture (Kunelius and Ruusunoksa, 2008). This professional culture is evolving alongside technological transformation in newsrooms, coupled with uncertainty about how it will develop, with implications that are difficult to predict (Kung, 2024).

Journalists are expected to be constantly alert to all important news and events, whether during working hours or in their free time. In general, the profession offers limited financial

remuneration and almost always jeopardises peace of mind. Long hours, hostile environments, job insecurity and constant pressure are hallmarks of working life. However, media executives continue to adopt a reactive approach to the mental health of their staff (Miller, 2025).

The Reuters Institute's 2025 Digital News Report revealed that psychological distress and anxiety are causes for concern in newsrooms worldwide (Newman et al., 2025). The importance of a healthy working environment and an economically sustainable workplace are among the greatest challenges.

The experts interviewed believe that the blurring of personal and professional life through tools such as WhatsApp is creating a culture of constant availability that is impacting the health of journalism professionals. In 2030, therefore, AI will be a determining factor: either it is used to reduce workloads or it will become a source of stress at work, and of inequality for those who do not master its use.

María Miret (Almas Rotas) highlights that the most disruptive change has been the “coming out of the mental health closet”. She argues that the pandemic marked a turning point, allowing professionals to speak openly about how the practice of journalism affects their psychological well-being. According to Miret, this increased visibility is very powerful at an individual level. Institutions such as the Reuters Institute highlight mental health as a global trend. Miret is critical of the corporate environment because “in the media, it seems they don't want to acknowledge that something important is happening”.

Graziella Almendral (ANIS) corroborates this view and stresses that journalists are increasingly tied to the newsroom, relying on social media and press releases, which reduces their own investigative work and the cross-checking of sources. The lack of resources leads to a decline in the quality of audiovisual and written content: “It is accepted that anything goes just to get a statement on television... a person who is poorly lit, hard to hear and looks terrible,” says Almendral. This expert cites the TakTak survey (2024), backed by the European Union, which indicates that 60% of European freelance journalists have experienced burnout. The challenge is not only the pressure to report, but the ‘anxiety of not being able to make a living from the profession’. Almendral warns of an exodus of talent towards corporate communications because, in the media, professionals feel less respected and underpaid.

Érika Montañés (ABC) emphasises the “tyranny of the audience” as the driving force behind the transformation of work and notes that the shift towards a single newsroom and the demand to produce content “yesterday” have eliminated time for reflection. Montañés highlights that precariousness is not just about pay, but also about time: today's journalist is a “multitasker” and must manage social media, SEO and production, which creates an emotional disconnect from the profession. “WhatsApp has become a parallel newsroom that never closes,” says Montañés, adding that it is necessary to restore prestige and well-being through training. He argues that companies must understand that employee wellbeing is “profitable” and that AI can be a tool that frees

journalists from mechanical tasks, allowing them to return to “critical thinking and getting out into the field”.

Paula Sofia Luz (Journalists’ Union) highlights the digital and gender divides as critical factors affecting well-being. The expert argues that digitalisation has imposed work rhythms incompatible with work-life balance, disproportionately affecting female journalists. She points out that the culture of immediacy penalises specialisation because “data or investigative journalists need time that the click-based model does not always allow for”. According to Luz, a major challenge is the ethical use of AI and the protection of labour rights in an increasingly automated environment; therefore, mental health should be incorporated into collective agreements, rather than being an “individual responsibility” of the worker, as it depends on the creation of structures that protect journalists from the precariousness of the “personal brand” and forced self-employment.

Isabel Nery (Universidade Autónoma de Lisboa) highlights job insecurity and the deterioration of working conditions in newsrooms, with very negative consequences for mental health and burnout. In her view, there is a shortage of jobs in the sector, which affects management positions and younger journalists in particular, alongside the demanding technological transformation of the media. “Technology is fantastic, but we are putting it on a pedestal,” says Nery.

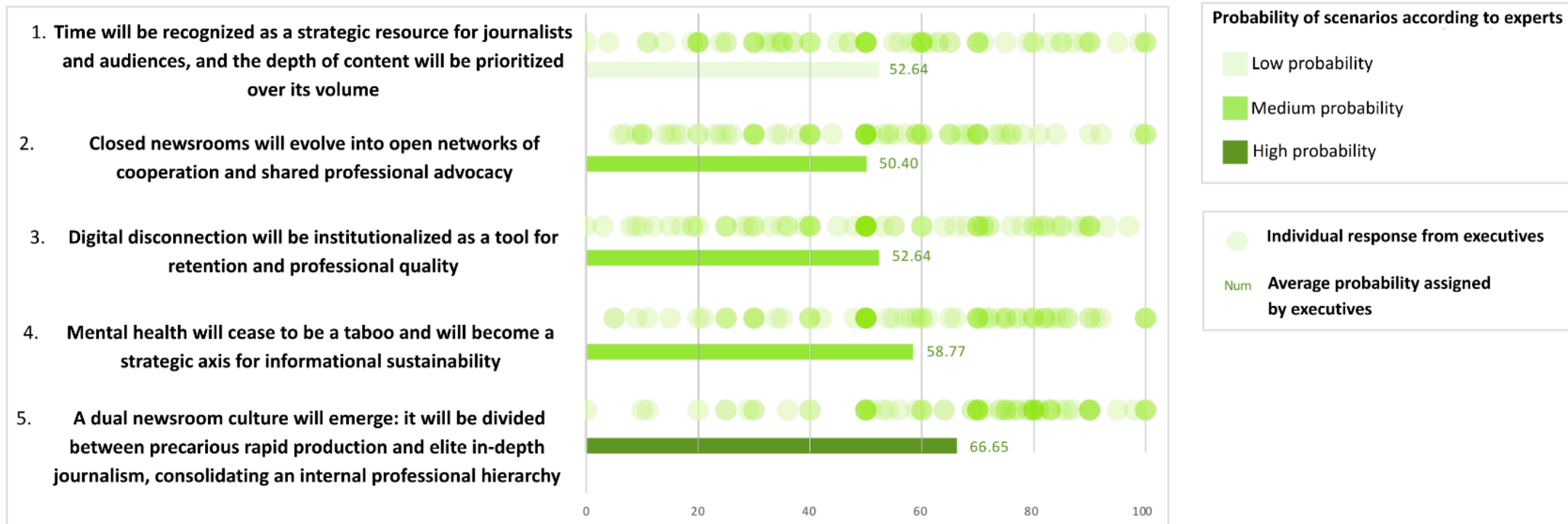
4.7.3. Probability Analysis of the Scenarios

Figure 8.

Source: own elaboration.

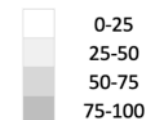
Journalistic Culture and Professional Well-being

Estimated probability according to executives for scenarios proposed by experts



SCENARIO	GENDER		COUNTRY		AGE				TOTAL
	Men	Women	Spain	Portugal	30-40	41-50	51-60	61-70	
1	53.85	50.84	53.36	50.71	41.73	54.15	56.42	50.80	52.64
2	53.50	45.81	51.11	48.52	53.09	39.60	55.74	51.80	50.40
3	52.74	52.48	54.73	47.05	46.27	46.95	58.03	53.73	52.64
4	60.24	56.58	60.80	53.33	55.73	57.90	62.39	54.67	58.77
5	66.43	66.97	65.52	69.67	65.91	67.40	62.58	74.60	66.65

Average probability assigned by executives



The scenario that garners the broadest consensus among the professionals surveyed and the highest average probability (66.65) is the fifth (“A dual newsroom culture will emerge: it will be divided between precarious rapid production and elite in-depth journalism, consolidating an internal professional hierarchy”). According to managers, there is a strong perception that newsrooms will be divided between those opting for rapid, precarious production and those opting for in-depth, elite journalism. This view is somewhat alarming, as it reinforces an internal professional hierarchy where quality is reserved for a few prestigious outlets, whilst the bulk of news coverage is subject to industrial rhythms. In this Scenario, convergence between the two countries is higher, although Portugal shows a higher assigned probability (69.67) than Spain (65.52). By age, the 61–70 age group views this as most inevitable (74.60), suggesting that more senior professionals perceive the deterioration of working conditions as an inevitable process.

A significant finding is the importance attached to mental health (Scenario 4: “Mental health will cease to be a taboo and will become a strategic axis for informational sustainability.”), with an average probability of 58.77. The perception that mental health will cease to be a taboo is particularly pronounced in both Spain (60.80) and Portugal (53.33). There is also agreement on the likelihood in Scenario 3 (“Digital disconnection will be institutionalized as a tool for retention and professional quality”), with an average of 52.64. However, data broken down by age reveals a generational divide: whilst managers aged 51 to 60 assign a probability of 58.03, younger managers (aged 30–40) are more sceptical, with a probability of 46.27. This could indicate that the middle generations are more aware of the need for boundaries to retain talent, whilst younger managers consider disconnection to be still a utopian ideal.

Scenario 1 (“Time will be recognized as a strategic resource for journalists and audiences, and the depth of content will be prioritized over its volume”) is assigned a probability of 52.64. This is a medium probability Scenario reflecting a desire to return to the founding values of journalism. However, men assign it a higher probability (53.85) than women (50.84). This slight difference could suggest that media executives perceive greater structural obstacles to promoting “slow journalism” dynamics in environments that continue to prioritise immediacy.

The scenario that executives consider least likely, although still above the 50 threshold, is Scenario 2 (“Closed newsrooms will evolve into open networks of cooperation and shared professional advocacy”), which scores an average of 50.40. Here we see the greatest discrepancy by gender and age. Whilst men assign a probability of 53.50, women’s figures drop significantly to 45.81. Similarly, executives aged 41 to 50 are the most pessimistic regarding professional cooperation (39.60), compared to the optimism of older age groups (55.74). This resistance suggests that, despite the rhetoric of innovation, the model of the insular and competitive newsroom remains deeply entrenched in Iberian journalistic culture.

Consequently, journalistic culture in Spain and Portugal appears to be heading towards professional polarisation. The high level of agreement with Scenario 5 reveals that precariousness is not seen as a temporary situation, but as a structural component of the sector’s hierarchy. Comparatively, Spain shows a greater inclination to believe in the implementation of changes related to wellbeing management (mental health and work-life balance), whilst Portugal projects a more categorical view of the divide within newsrooms. In generational terms, older managers tend to be more optimistic about the possibility of implementing structural and cooperative reforms, whilst the middle cohorts (aged 41–50)



express the most sceptical views, possibly because they are currently the ones managing the tensions between economic profitability and journalistic quality.

4.7.4. Conclusions

An analysis of the future prospects for the journalism industry in Spain and Portugal, based on the assessments of senior managers regarding the five scenarios proposed by the experts, reveals that the industry is torn between the pursuit of human values and the risk of a structural breakdown. The tensions between workplace wellbeing and productive efficiency, and between mental health care and the stressful conditions of journalistic work, will shape the evolution of this trend in the coming years.

Both the experts and the executives agree that the survival of quality journalism will depend on its ability to differentiate itself from ‘fast production’, although they admit that this will likely generate a two-tier system within the industry. Their vision of the future is twofold: there is a risk of a total breakdown of the profession, and also an opportunity to return to “good journalism” through formats such as podcasts or documentaries, sought after by an audience that seeks the truth amidst the noise.

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4.8. Professional Development and Continuing Education

AI is Set to Transform the Media and Training is Essential to Mitigate any Negative Impacts

Miguel Crespo, Cenjor e Iscte

4.8.1. Introduction

The growing use of artificial intelligence in newsrooms and across the media in general raises a number of questions regarding the impact of these technologies on the media and journalism, ranging from production processes to labour relations, including the restructuring of newsrooms, the relationship with audiences, and the business models that can ensure the survival of journalism in the age of AI.

On the optimistic side, AI can be seen as a tool for producing better journalism and thus giving a boost to the profession and the media. On the opposite, it will bring more disinformation, less trust and smaller audiences. Between the positive views and the negative ones, the training of media professionals (not just journalists) and the adaptation of journalism to new consumption models seem to be a key solution for successfully overcoming the risks posed by the ongoing AI revolution.

4.8.2. Qualitative Analysis of Expert Interviews

- **Luís Filipe Simões:** president of the Portuguese Journalists' Union. Interviewed by Miguel Crespo.
- **Lola López:** expert in employment, talent and university entrepreneurship at the Miguel Hernández University of Elche (UMH). Interviewed by Alicia de Lara.
- **Cláudia Maia:** president of the Portuguese Press Association. Interviewed by Miguel Crespo.
- **João Pedro Fonseca:** director of Escola Lusa. Interviewed by Miguel Crespo.
- **Marisa Picó:** journalist and trainer in oral communication. Interviewed by Alicia de Lara.

Experts are almost unanimous on the fundamental issue of professional development and continuing professional training as it applies to the field of communication and journalism. It is clear that the media and journalism are set to change, and professionals will have to adapt, requiring ongoing, practical and regular training to support this transformation.

The most significant changes will be far-reaching, affecting the media, its professionals and the way they engage with their audiences. According to Luís Filipe Simões (Journalists' Union), "the way we work in journalism has changed radically since the start of the century. But now, with the rapid rise of artificial intelligence tools, people have been forced to work without having the necessary training to use them." There will be "an

expansion in the use of AI tools in journalists' day-to-day work, going far beyond something as simple as handling an interview or figures, and into more complex tasks", he adds.

Repetitive and automated tasks that do not require critical analysis – such as presenting a television news programme by reading from a teleprompter – can be effectively replaced by AI. João Pedro Fonseca (Escola Lusa) believes that “television presenters will no longer be presenting those run-of-the-mill news programmes, which will be produced using artificial intelligence. The journalist provides the image and the voice – his face will appear – but he isn't actually presenting. And so he can devote himself to conducting major interviews and other in-depth pieces.”

Even taking only current technology into account, it is possible to imagine that the media and journalists themselves may have AI agents that interact with their audiences at any time, even when no human is available. “It's possible to have a conversation using my voice, my memory, my face,” says Lola López (Miguel Hernández University of Elche).

There is also a very high probability that the growing use of AI in the media will extend to areas that go far beyond mere journalistic work (gathering, processing, editing and publishing). “Not only journalists, but also the executive bodies themselves – company CEOs – will realise that this transition is necessary and that stories and news must be told in a different way. Not just in written text, but in various formats,” explains Cláudia Maia (Portuguese Press Association).

It is predicted that AI will transform the way media companies and newsrooms are organised into something completely different – and as yet difficult to predict. Similarly, there is a high probability that these changes will mean companies will have fewer staff and be more automated, which will affect the distinctive features and characteristics of each medium, in particular by promoting homogeneity of language (written, visual or audio) and leading to a loss of semantic and stylistic richness, as Marisa Picó (Oral Communication Trainer) stated.

A complex issue concerns publishing platforms and interaction with audiences. “If we continue to focus on platforms that people do not use, we will become irrelevant. Journalism will cease to make sense,” predicts João Pedro Fonseca. But, on the other hand, focusing solely on a particular medium can be counterproductive. One example is the heavy emphasis on producing content for social media. “We have far more journalists multitasking, churning out news by the second for social media, than actually producing the kind of journalism that is more in-depth, more complex and, ultimately, more necessary,” warns Luís Filipe Simões.

To develop a form of journalism suited to this age of AI, and to mitigate the problems identified, there is a need for professionals to receive more frequent, ongoing and short-term training, focused on the use of artificial intelligence, so that they can develop narrative skills, particularly for mobile formats and platforms other than traditional ones. As João Pedro Fonseca explains, “young people are the media consumers of the future. And they've already moved beyond traditional channels; they don't even visit websites.

Reading on paper? Forget it! They look for information from influencers, Instagrammers...”

Information consumption habits have changed completely, and these habits have changed the information itself, Cláudia Maia reiterates. One reason for this may be that put forward by Marisa Picó (journalist and trainer): “Our ability to understand, read and interpret, and retain concepts has declined. Critical thinking has diminished. We cannot run the risk, in terms of education and communication, of letting AI think for us.” But Lola López believes that this risk is real, and that the very logic of teaching and training will be affected. “I am certain that teachers and trainers, as well as pupils and trainees, will all use all kinds of AI tools to explain content, set exercises, and so on. The teacher or trainer as a content creator will cease to make sense in a few years’ time.”

One fact that all the experts highlight is the radical changes in how young people consume information. “Most 18-year-olds don’t watch TV news or read newspapers, not even online,” summarises Lola López. “We have to win these young people back; they need to engage with journalists’ work, because otherwise we’ll end up with a lost generation of people who can’t tell the difference between fact and fiction. It won’t be all of them, but many of these young people who don’t go directly to the sources of knowledge are consuming rubbish, rubbish and more rubbish, and this is very worrying. And I see it as journalism’s duty to win over these audiences. And if they’re on these different platforms, that’s where we’ll have to go,” adds João Pedro Fonseca.

Editorial organisations need new skills. Cláudia Maia warns that “we must be able to use technology and all these changes to our advantage,” an idea reinforced by Luís Filipe Simões and by Lola López, who adds that she believes “the most important thing for new professionals is critical thinking” because, as Marisa Picó says, “these days we have less critical thinking and have reduced our ability to reason.” But one must not “go to the extreme of journalists attending a training course every week. Anything in excess ends up being harmful because it can eventually lead to a certain aversion”, warns Luís Filipe Simões.

Investment in training depends heavily on companies, and when they fail to invest in training, this is a problem on which all interviewees agree. There are those that are “equipping their teams – not just journalistic ones, but all of them – for these new technologies and trends. But there are also many companies which, due to their much smaller structure and limited resources, have not yet reached that stage,” points out Cláudia Maia.

What the interviewees see as a long-term solution is that European regulation and agreements – whether in force, under negotiation or yet to come – with big tech could improve the conditions for practising journalism and better empower audiences. For example, the recent situation where many regions in Portugal were at risk of losing press distribution made it clear that regulation is essential. “There must be a concerted effort by everyone to ensure that journalism is not just relevant, but indispensable,” says Luís Filipe Simões.

It is not foreseeable that humans will be completely replaced in the production of journalistic content, with those interviewed considering this possibility remote, even though there may be a “temptation to strip newsrooms bare”, according to Luís Filipe Simões. João Pedro Fonseca does not believe in replacement, but rather in the need to harness the potential created by AI to develop new forms of journalism. “Journalists will have to learn how to appear on camera and produce short videos in alternative formats. This isn’t very popular yet, but I can’t see any other way of reaching younger audiences.”

In short, the media are grappling with a process of acceptance and rejection of change, which is taking place at various levels. João Pedro Fonseca considers the most significant aspect to be that there are “people who do not want to accept the revolution, but what history tells us is that you cannot stop a revolution – it is impossible. The revolution begins and you never know what will emerge in its wake”. For Cláudia Maia, it’s a mixed picture: “There are journalists who think they should carry on doing things as they always have. And other journalists who are adapting and are also using artificial intelligence to their own advantage.”

In the field of training, we may be asking people to achieve more with less effort, on the one hand, whilst trainers will have to adapt their content to formats that are more visual, easier to understand, use simpler concepts and deliver faster results, as Marisa Picó explains.

In more concrete terms, shortcomings in the training of media professionals are highlighted in several areas: a significant lack of ability to analyse data and respond based on that data (Cláudia Maia); narrative skills, particularly for mobile formats and platforms other than traditional ones (João Pedro Fonseca); critical thinking (Marisa Picó and Lola López); and the ability to produce more in-depth content (Luís Filipe Simões).

The need for investment is the greatest challenge, but “it is not financial; it is investment in people, in human resources. And are we talking about journalists, company management, or both? Both,” confirms Cláudia Maia.

Overall, as João Pedro Fonseca puts it, when dealing with AI, “we are fighting for what we believe is right, but only in the future will we know what it is we are part of.”

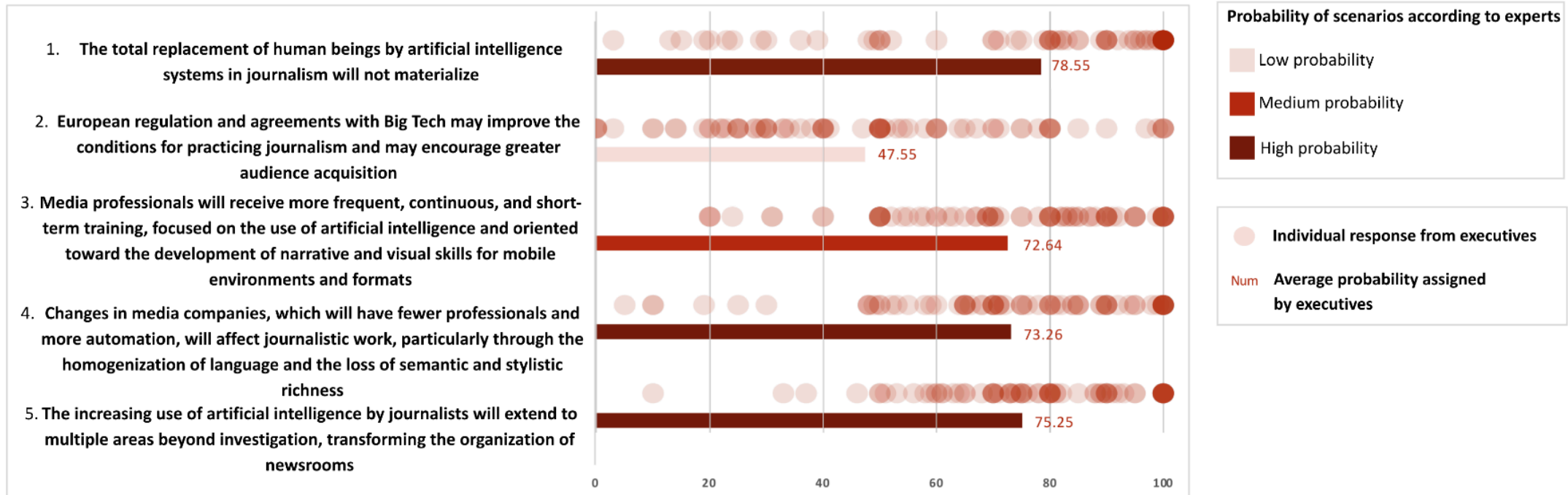
4.8.3. Probability Analysis of Scenarios

Figure 9.

Source: own elaboration.

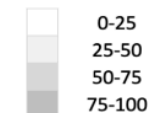
Professional development and continuous training

Estimated probability according to executives for scenarios proposed by experts



SCENARIO	GENDER		COUNTRY		AGE				TOTAL
	Men	Women	Spain	Portugal	30-40	41-50	51-60	61-70	
1	76.59	81.45	76.07	85.14	83.45	77.10	78.90	76.13	78.55
2	47.15	48.13	43.54	58.24	46.36	40.90	51.65	48.80	47.55
3	72.8	72.39	73.82	69.48	72.91	62.30	79.16	72.73	72.64
4	72.89	73.81	71.18	78.81	69.91	80.05	70.90	71.53	73.26
5	77.52	76.84	76.23	79.95	74.45	77.70	77.68	77.80	77.25

Average probability assigned by executives



The two scenarios with the highest probability of occurring are both related to the introduction of AI into professional practice, but one anticipates positive impacts whilst the other anticipates negative ones.

Scenario 5 (“The increasing use of artificial intelligence by journalists will extend to multiple areas beyond investigation, transforming the organization of newsrooms”) has the highest average probability (75.25) and a relative concentration of responses in the upper section of the scale, with almost none below 50 and a large concentration above 70. This suggests that stakeholders in the media sector, as the experts, are alert to the potential revolution currently underway, and that they are assessing the future potential of using these technologies to reorganise their activities, production structures and even the companies themselves.

Similarly, Scenario 4 (“Changes in media companies, which will have fewer professionals and more automation, will affect journalistic work, particularly through the homogenization of language and the loss of semantic and stylistic richness”) is considered of high probability by experts and assigned an average score of 73.26 by professionals and shows a relative concentration of responses in the upper range of the scale, with almost none below 50 and a large concentration from 60 upwards. This result highlights the concerns of industry professionals regarding two realities. On the one hand, potential losses of linguistic and stylistic richness, which could lead to a dilution of editorial differences and media positioning, as well as the way audiences perceive and consume them. On the other hand, there is a reduction in the number of professionals – journalists and others – due to ‘negative automation’, that is, redundancies resulting from being replaced by automated tasks, rather than the automation of tasks to enable professionals to produce better journalism. Once again, stakeholders and experts agree.

Between the optimism of Scenario 5 and the pessimism of Scenario 4 – both of which are considered to have a high probability – lies Scenario 3, considered to have a medium probability by experts and assigned an average score of 72.64 by media executives, which appears capable of helping to bring about Scenario 5 (reorganisation of newsrooms) whilst avoiding Scenario 4 (negative automation and homogenisation). Meanwhile, Scenario 3 (“Media professionals will receive more frequent, continuous, and short-term training, focused on the use of artificial intelligence and oriented toward the development of narrative and visual skills for mobile environments and formats”) shows a relative dispersion of responses in the upper half of the scale, but with some peaks around 50, 70 and 80. This reveals that, although the result indicates an average probability, there is a significant group that has doubts (those responding around 50), another that believes with reservations (between 70 and 80), and a third that responds at the top end. These results may suggest that training is not seen as the solution (or, at least, the only solution) by the majority of professionals, or that they are not convinced that investing in new narrative skills – which are more visual and geared towards mobile platforms – is the way forward.

In Scenario 1 (“The total replacement of human beings by artificial intelligence systems in journalism will not materialize”), there is a high level of agreement (78.55), with a large cluster of responses above 80; yet, at the same time, there is a wide spread of responses with agreement levels below 50, revealing a strong sense of techno scepticism and general pessimism regarding the future of the media. Even so, the result indicates that, for the most part, professionals do not feel they are likely to be replaced by AI.



With a remote probability according to experts, Scenario 2 (“European regulation and agreements with Big Tech may improve the conditions for practicing journalism and may encourage greater audience acquisition”) has an average score of 47.55 from media executives. In this case, not only is the spread high, but it also ranges from one end of the scale to the other, with very little concentration in the 20–40 range. This indicates that professionals, as the experts, have little confidence in regulation and/or in big tech to help resolve the media sector’s problems and improve its relationship with audiences, both in terms of reach and, potentially, trust.

When the respondents’ views on each scenario are analysed by gender, country or age it is visible that, on average, there are no major differences, but in some cases certain variations can be noted. Not so much in terms of gender, where there is a high degree of consistency (except for Scenario 1, which women consider 5 average points more likely than men do), nor even in terms of age (although younger and older respondents are less certain in their predictions), but rather in the differences between Portugal and Spain.

In terms of age, younger respondents (30–40) consider Scenario 1 (not total replacement by AI) to be around 5 points higher on average than the others. In Scenario 2 (regulation and big tech), which shows a wide range of responses, there is no identifiable pattern, as is the case with Scenario 3 (training). In Scenario 4 (automation), interestingly, the 40–50 age group stands out with a higher probability – around 10 points – than the others. As for Scenario 5 (greater use of AI), once again there are no significant differences between age groups – only the youngest participants rate the probability at 3 average points below the others.

It is amongst respondents from Spain and Portugal that the greatest difference is noted. The Portuguese are more optimistic and, for example, consider the probability of people being completely replaced by AI very remote (Scenario 1) to be much lower than the Spanish (85.14 probability of occurrence versus 76.07). Similarly, regarding the likelihood given to the belief that European regulation and big tech will resolve most of the problems (Scenario 2), the Portuguese are considerably more optimistic (they assign 58.24 average points versus 43.54).

In terms of training (Scenario 3) and the adoption of AI (Scenario 5), the differences between the average probability given by both countries is less than 5 points, but the Spanish give 7 points less to the belief that there will be negative impacts on the media (Scenario 4).

4.8.4. Conclusions

A comparison of the survey results with the experts’ responses shows, to a large extent, a general alignment, despite some variations in terms of assessing the likelihood of the scenarios materialising.

The growing use of artificial intelligence in newsrooms will influence journalistic work, but will also transform the entire internal organisation and the very nature of the media’s work. News organisations will inevitably have fewer staff and become much more automated, and this will affect journalistic output, with foreseeable negative effects including potential homogenisation and some loss of the individual and distinctive style of each media outlet. However, it is not foreseeable that people will be completely replaced by AI, or that we will

have robots in our homes, but we may have AI agents that interact with other people whilst we are away.

Given the impact of AI on the reshaping of the media sector, it is difficult to envisage that the conditions for practising journalism and attracting audiences will improve. These effects are likely to be felt across the board, even if European regulations are adopted to protect journalism from the potential harmful effects of AI, and even if agreements are in place with platforms to safeguard journalism.

The current situation and trends make it clear that there is a pressing need for professionals to receive more frequent, ongoing and short-term training, centred on the use of artificial intelligence in general, and focused on developing narrative and visual skills for mobile platforms and formats in particular.

Interestingly, there are some differences in the views held by experts in Spain and Portugal. The Portuguese are more optimistic and, for example, consider the likelihood of people being completely replaced by AI to be much lower than the Spanish do. Similarly, regarding the likelihood that European regulation will resolve most of the problems, the Portuguese are considerably more sceptical, doubting that this is a viable solution.

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4.9. Ethics and Transparency

Ethics as Cultural Resistance in the Face of Artificial Intelligence, Disinformation and Loss of Trust.

Ana Pinto-Martinho, Cenjor / Iscte

4.9.1. Introduction

Contemporary journalism is undergoing a profound transformation driven by the convergence of technological innovation, economic changes and social reconfigurations within the media ecosystem. The expansion of digital platforms, the fragmentation of audiences, the growing circulation of information in unmediated environments and, more recently, the incorporation of AI into content production and dissemination processes have significantly altered the conditions under which journalism is practised. These changes affect not only the organisational structure of the media, but also the ethical principles, verification mechanisms and credibility models that underpin its democratic function.

In this context, the media face a dual pressure: on the one hand, the need for technological and economic adaptation in a highly competitive environment and, on the other, the preservation of fundamental values such as transparency, editorial responsibility and public trust. The emergence of synthetic content, the acceleration of information flows and the growing influence of digital platforms and independent creators challenge the traditional role of journalism as a privileged mediator of the public sphere, raising questions about authenticity, regulation and professional integrity.

It is within this framework that the present analysis is situated, focusing on emerging trends in journalistic ethics within a context of technological transformation. Drawing on the perspectives of experts and a probabilistic analysis of future scenarios, the study seeks to understand how these changes are redefining the media and what challenges and opportunities journalism faces in preserving its social and democratic relevance.

4.9.2. Qualitative Analysis of Expert Interviews

- **Carlos Camponez:** professor at the Universidade de Coimbra and researcher at CECS – Universidade do Minho. Interviewed by Miguel Midões.
- **Carmen López Rico:** lecturer in Journalism Ethics at Universidad Miguel Hernández de Elche. Interviewed by Alicia de Lara.
- **Eduardo Infante:** philosopher, professor of ethics and contributor to Retina, interviewed by Alicia de Lara.
- **Joaquim Fidalgo:** professor at the Universidade do Minho and researcher in the field of media ethics. Interviewed by Ana Pinto-Martinho.
- **Telmo Gonçalves:** member of the Regulatory Council of the ERC – Entidade

Reguladora dos Meios de Comunicação Social. Interviewed by Ana Pinto-Martinho.

An analysis of the perspectives of experts in the field reveals a scenario in which ethics and transparency have ceased to be mere deontological adornments to become, in the words of Eduardo Infante (Retina), the “last cultural resistance” and a condition for the survival of democracy itself. He addresses this concept by projecting a more distant future scenario, in which the vast majority of information in circulation (around 90%) will be synthetic, generated by AI rather than by human beings. According to Infante, in this context, truth will become a “minority experience” and the ethical dilemma will shift from defining what is true to “what remains of truth when everything seems plausible”.

The experts discuss one of the most structural changes of the last decade: the loss of journalism’s exclusivity over the public sphere of information and how this is influencing ethical issues and transparency. Joaquim Fidalgo (Universidade do Minho) states that one of the most significant changes is the fact that journalism has “lost its monopoly on current affairs”, with the internet and social media enabling “unmediated communication” that has brought in new players and “shuffled the cards in the equation”. This observation is corroborated by the Reuters Institute Digital News Report 2024 (Newman et al., 2024), which documents a systematic migration of audiences towards digital platforms, influencers and independent content creators as their primary news source, particularly among younger generations, a trend that has intensified compared to previous editions of the same report.

Telmo Gonçalves (Entidade Reguladora dos Meios de Comunicação Social) describes this dynamic as an “erosion of the primacy” of traditional media, or legacy media, which have lost their dominance both as a source of information and as a source of entertainment. This interpretation is supported by Ferrucci and Kuhn (2022), who argue that, in the context of technological disruption and growing job insecurity, the power of a single organisation over news production practices has never been as decisive, nor as contested, as it is today. In turn, Carlos Camponez (UC/CECS) characterises this acceleration as “successive waves” of change: “by the time we have just recovered from one process, we are already having to face another”, highlighting the inability of journalistic organisations to adapt in a sustainable manner.

The emergence of artificial intelligence is identified as the most recent qualitative leap in this process. For Eduardo Infante, this change causes a “shift in the moral subject”: whereas ethics previously focused on the “what” and the “why”, the central question is now the “who”, since machines are making decisions that were previously exclusively human, creating a “hybrid subject” where responsibility is diluted. Porlezza and Schapals (2024) theorise precisely this tension, showing that news organisations have addressed ethical concerns related to AI slowly and gradually, highlighting the “tension between the industry and the profession of journalism” in assessing the promises and risks of this technology.

The experts interviewed also place the issue of credibility at the heart of the contemporary debate on journalistic ethics. Carlos Camponez warns that, in the face of economic pressures, the media tend to prioritise profit over credibility, which is fatal: “when journalism and media information become irrelevant, the situation becomes complicated.” The *Digital News Report 2025* confirms this assessment, showing that trust in journalism continues to erode across multiple markets, with news avoidance and concerns about disinformation reaching new highs.

Ownership transparency is another fundamental pillar. Telmo Gonçalves points out that Portugal has a “very comprehensive transparency law”, with mechanisms such as the “media transparency portal” that allow the owners of the main media outlets to be identified. Nevertheless, challenges persist when opaque financial funds attempt to enter the media market. Peterson and Dunaway (2023) document that the acquisition of newspapers by financial owners and investment funds has resulted in a reduction in newsrooms of, on average, nine journalists and editors, affecting primarily political and general interest coverage.

Carmen López Rico (Universidad Miguel Hernández de Elche) emphasises the need for ‘genuine self-regulation’, criticising the fact that many media outlets claim to be self-regulated yet remain subject to economic interests and the clickbait logic. Thus, the likelihood that the media will develop their own codes of principles and guidelines is high and widely agreed upon among experts.

On a professional level, the precarious working conditions of journalists constitute a direct ethical obstacle to the quality of information. Carlos Camponez notes that precariousness has ceased to be the exception and has become the norm, with the *freelance* model replacing traditional newsrooms, undermining the preservation of the values that constitute the “heart of journalism”. A recent study, Rivas-de-Roca, et al. (2024), identifies the “precariousness trap” as one of the main forms of media capture, demonstrating that journalists’ job insecurity is one of the most prevalent causal mechanisms in the shift of journalistic practices towards undemocratic practices.

The challenge posed by synthetic content and deepfakes exacerbates this scenario. Carmen López Rico asks how “journalists will be able to verify whether there is a video of a politician saying something absurd?”, calling for legal mechanisms to label AI-generated content. Von Sikorski and Hameleers (2025) warn that generative AI technologies intensify existing trends of public distrust in information, increasing users’ uncertainty in distinguishing between true and false content, and facilitating the use of disinformation as a tool for political delegitimisation.

In the long term, Eduardo Infante warns of the risk of growing “cognitive poverty”: AI offers a tempting shortcut where judgement is delegated to the machine, and the real danger is not that AI thinks for us, but that “we stop thinking”. This concern is shared by Dinçer (2024), who observes that, although technology is becoming increasingly sophisticated, the ability to tell meaningful and in-depth stories remains the key distinguishing feature of quality journalism.

Despite the complex landscape, experts see an opportunity: if journalism can reaffirm its role in fact-checking and the rigorous handling of information, it may regain its social and democratic relevance. The major ethical question of the future will not be merely about what to do with technology, but about “what humans must continue to do”, as Eduardo Infante puts it – which functions we cannot delegate to machines. Journalism of the future will have to be, above all, an exercise in transparency and “cultural resistance”.

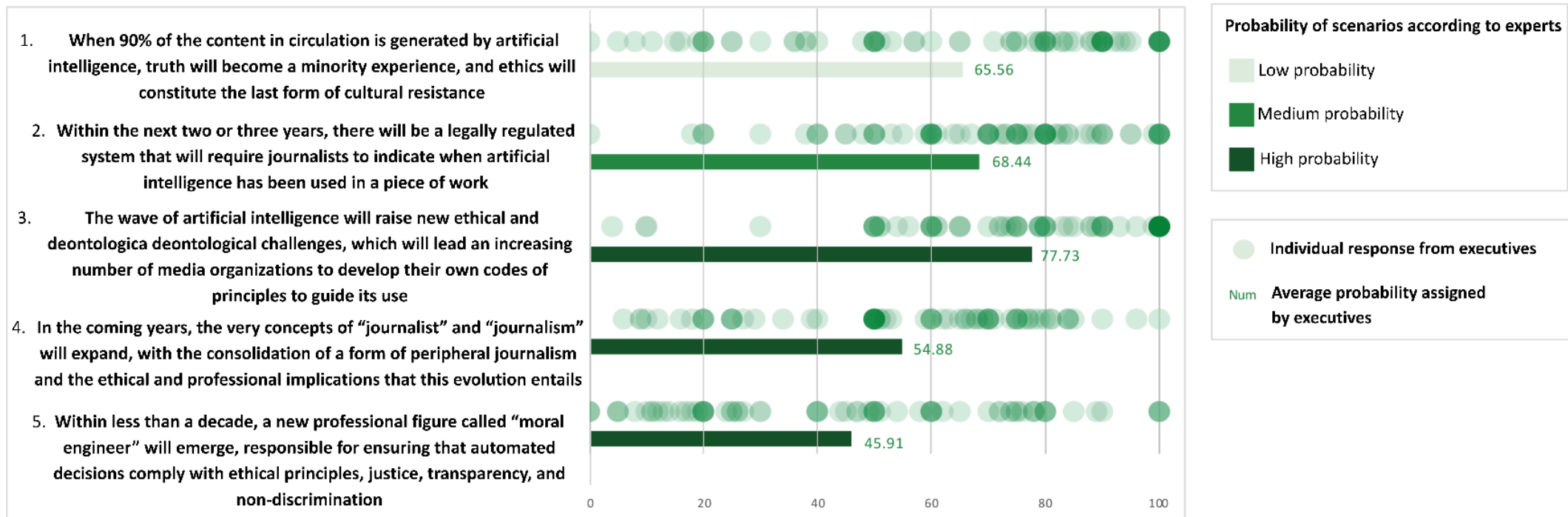
4.9.3. Probability Analysis of the Scenarios

Figure 10.

Source: own elaboration.

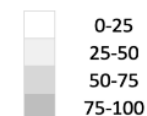
Ethics and transparency

Estimated probability according to executives for scenarios proposed by experts



SCENARIO	GENDER		COUNTRY		AGE				TOTAL
	Men	Women	Spain	Portugal	30-40	41-50	51-60	61-70	
1	67.22	63.10	64.93	67.24	62.09	61.35	67.48	69.73	65.56
2	65.00	73.55	66.93	72.48	66.82	65.95	72.03	65.53	68.44
3	75.70	80.74	72.93	90.52	73.18	75.25	81.00	77.60	77.73
4	54.15	55.97	57.50	47.90	58.00	51.75	55.48	55.53	54.88
5	43.61	49.32	44.07	50.81	42.00	45.15	45.19	51.27	45.91

Average probability assigned by executives



Technological evolution, driven by AI, is redefining the boundaries of moral integrity in journalism, presenting challenges that vary significantly according to the geography, gender and age of professionals in the sector. Based on the study involving media executives in Portugal and Spain, it is possible to draw up a detailed analysis of the probability of five key scenarios for the future of journalistic ethics coming to pass.

The scenario that garners the greatest consensus and has the highest probability of materialising is Scenario 3 (“The wave of artificial intelligence will raise new ethical and deontological challenges, which will lead an increasing number of media organizations to develop their own codes of principles to guide its use”), concerning the Creation of New Codes of Ethics (77.73 average probability). However, there is a marked disparity between countries: in Portugal, confidence in this Scenario materialising stands at 90.52, whilst for Spain executives probability of occurrence stands at 72.93. With regard to gender, women are more convinced of this need (80.74) than men (75.70).

Continuing with Scenario 3, with regard to age, although this belief is widely shared across all age groups, the highest perceived probability is recorded among professionals aged 51–60 (81.00), followed by those aged 61–70 (77.60).

Scenario 2 (“Within the next two or three years, there will be a legally regulated system that will require journalists to indicate when artificial intelligence has been used in a piece of work”) has an average probability of 68.44. Portugal (72.48) remains more optimistic about this regulation than Spain (66.93). This Scenario is marked by the greatest gender difference in the entire study: women assign it an average probability of 75.55 points, compared with 65 points among men. Analysing age groups, professionals aged between 51 and 60 are the most likely (72.03) to foresee this legislative change, whilst younger professionals (aged 30–40) put the probability at 66.82.

At the heart of ethical concerns lies Scenario 1 (“When 90% of the content in circulation is generated by artificial intelligence, truth will become a minority experience, and ethics will constitute the last form of cultural resistance”) with a 65.56 probability. The perception of this risk is slightly higher in Portugal (67.24) than in Spain (64.93). As well as in other scenarios men are more pessimistic (67.22) than women (63.10). There is a direct correlation with age here: pessimism increases as professionals get older, rising from an average probability of 61.35 (41–50 years) to a peak of 69.73 (61–70 years).

Scenario 4 (“In the coming years, the very concepts of “journalist” and “journalism” will expand, with the consolidation of a form of peripheral journalism and the ethical and professional implications that this evolution entails”) presents an average probability of 54.88. Unlike in the previous scenarios, editors in Spain consider this development more likely (57.50) than their counterparts in Portugal (which they assign an average probability of 47.90 points). Women tend to predict more frequently this conceptual expansion (55.97) than men do (54.15). By age group, it is the youngest (30–40 years old) who attribute the highest probability to this change (58.00), indicating a more flexible view of the profession among the younger generations.

Finally, there is Scenario 5 (“Within less than a decade, a new professional figure called “moral engineer” will emerge, responsible for ensuring that automated decisions comply with ethical principles, justice, transparency, and non-discrimination”), with a 45.91 average probability. Portugal views the creation of this role more favourably (50.81) than Spain (44.07). Once again, women express a higher expectation (49.32) than men (43.61). This prediction is also stronger among the older age group, with professionals aged 61–70 assigning it a probability of 51.27.

The results show that executives generally agree with experts that AI will have a major impact on journalism, especially regarding ethics and transparency. The highest probability was assigned to the idea that AI will create new ethical challenges, leading media organizations to develop their own codes of conduct (77.73). Executives also consider AI transparency regulations highly likely (68.44), indicating strong support for accountability measures.

However, executives are more cautious about the most transformative scenarios proposed by experts. They assign lower probabilities to the emergence of a new role such as a “moral engineer” (45.91) and to major changes in the definition of journalism itself (54.88). Overall, both groups expect significant changes driven by AI, but executives tend to focus on practical and regulatory adaptations rather than on broader cultural transformations.

Overall, the analysis shows that the future of journalism is viewed with a mixture of normative rigour and existential caution. Whilst Portugal stands out for its strong belief in the need for new codes and regulation (Scenarios 3 and 2), Spain focuses more on the transformation of professional identity (Scenario 4). The gender variable reveals that women are more receptive to formal mechanisms of ethical control, whilst age accentuates concern for the survival of factual truth in the face of mass automation.

4.9.4. Conclusions

In conclusion, the convergence between expert assessments and survey findings portrays a journalism sector facing significant challenges, where ethics is no longer a theoretical concern but a practical requirement for maintaining credibility and relevance. The decline of traditional media’s authority and its former control over information is accompanied by a strong expectation that the sector’s response will be centred on ethical and regulatory frameworks, particularly through the development of updated professional standards.

Three main conclusions emerge from the comparison. First, the need for stronger self-regulation and greater transparency is reinforced by widespread support for mechanisms that clearly identify AI-generated content. This reflects a growing recognition that ethical safeguards are essential to counter commercial pressures, misinformation, and the erosion of public trust.

Second, concerns about the future of truth and factual accuracy are shared across both

expert and professional perspectives. The proliferation of synthetic and AI-generated content is perceived as a direct challenge to reliable information, increasing the importance of ethical principles as a safeguard against the dilution of truth in digital environments.

Third, the findings point to an ongoing redefinition of journalistic identity. While concerns remain about the effects of precarious working conditions on professional standards, there is also openness to broader and more flexible understandings of journalism. At the same time, more transformative professional roles linked to the governance and ethical oversight of emerging technologies are still viewed as possibilities for the future rather than immediate realities.

Ultimately, the two parts of the text converge on the idea that the future of journalism will not be determined solely by technological sophistication, but by the human capacity to resist “cognitive poverty”. Ethics, understood as “cultural resistance”, emerges as the distinguishing factor that will enable journalism to regain its social relevance, ensuring that the rigorous handling of information remains a function that we cannot, and must not, delegate to machines.

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4.10. Legislation and Public Policy

Between Regulatory Ambition and Enforcement Capacity

José M. Valero-Pastor, UMH

4.10.1. Introduction

The relationship between media systems and public policy has never been straightforward, but the past decade has made it openly contentious. The rise of large digital platforms, the collapse of traditional advertising models, the proliferation of AI-generated content, and the growing instrumentalization of disinformation as a political weapon have collectively destabilized a regulatory framework designed for a different media landscape (Santos et al., 2025).

Across Europe, legislators have responded with an expanding body of law, from the Digital Services Act (DSA) to the European Media Freedom Act, that attempts to impose transparency, accountability and platform responsibility on a sector whose most powerful actors operate beyond the reach of any single jurisdiction. These developments make the media industry dependent on regulatory decisions being made at the European level and exposed to the gap between legislative ambition and effective enforcement (Koltay, 2024)

4.10.2. Qualitative Analysis of Expert Interviews

- **Borja Adsuara:** digital Law specialist. Interviewed by José M. Valero-Pastor.
- **Nacho Guadix:** head of Children's Digital Rights at UNICEF Spain. Interviewed by José M. Valero-Pastor.
- **Elena Herrero:** co-founder and director of Ethosfera. Interviewed by Armando Manzano.
- **Pedro Jerónimo:** researcher in Communication at Universidade da Beira Interior. Interviewed by Miguel Paisana.
- **Sérgio Gomes da Silva:** director of #PortugalMediaLab. Interviewed by Miguel Paisana.
- **Felisbela Lopes:** full Professor of Journalism at Universidade do Minho. Interviewed by Paulo Couraceiro.

The experts consulted share a broad diagnosis: the last decade has brought growing regulatory ambition at the European level, deepening economic fragility in the media sector, and a structural gap between the pace of technological change and the capacity of democratic institutions to respond. Within this consensus, significant divergences emerge around the role of the state, the limits of regulation, and the degree of optimism with which each expert contemplates the near future.

The European Media Freedom Act (EMFA) stands out as the single most discussed landmark, with Elena Herrero (Ethosfera) and Sérgio Gomes da Silva (#PortugalMediaLab) both identifying it as the defining regulatory event of the past few years. Herrero, who had

not expected a law of this kind to pass, frames its core purpose as establishing transparency in ownership and financing to counteract the capture of media companies by large platforms. Gomes da Silva situates EMFA within a broader wave of EU legislation, alongside the DSA, the Digital Markets Act and the revised Audiovisual Media Services Directive, that has progressively extended regulatory reach into areas previously considered outside European competence. From a Spanish legal perspective, Borja Adsuaara (Digital Law expert) reads the same period differently: the DSA has granted platforms powers to remove content deemed inappropriate, not merely illegal, which he regards as a genuine threat to freedom of expression. "If the limit of freedom of expression is no longer the law but what a social network considers harmful, then where does my fundamental right stand?" (Borja Adsuaara).

This tension between the protective and the restrictive dimensions of the same regulatory framework runs through several of the interviews. Where Herrero and Gomes da Silva emphasize that regulation enables transparency, accountability and media independence, Adsuaara foregrounds what it risks: the effective privatization of editorial judgment and the normalization of content removal without judicial oversight.

Gomes da Silva also points to the 2015 abolition of Portugal's dedicated media policy body as an instructive counterexample, a moment when the state retreated from the sector on the grounds that press freedom required distance, only for the subsequent decade to demonstrate that the absence of public policy does not produce a neutral ecosystem but an accelerating market failure. The creation of #PortugalMediaLab in 2024 and the government's 30-measure action plan for the sector represent, in his view, a belated recognition that democratic functioning requires an active state role, provided it is designed to avoid any interference with editorial independence.

Pedro Jerónimo (Universidade da Beira Interior), who participated in the follow-up commission for regional media subsidies at the CCDR Centro, offers a ground-level view of that same policy shift. He states that the transfer of competences to regional bodies produced highly uneven results, with the smallest and most under-resourced newsrooms (precisely those most in need) frequently left without support, and media literacy funding lines remaining consistently the least drawn upon.

The implementation gap between what legislation requires and what actually happens is the most consistently raised concern across the interviews. Herrero reports that EMFA is already being breached by both media companies and the Spanish state, which has failed to equip the National Markets and Competition Commission (CNMC) with the supervisory resources the regulation demands. Adsuaara agrees that the underlying problem is not a lack of regulation but a failure to apply existing law. He argues that the legal tools for sanctioning poor journalistic practice, including disinformation and disqualification, already exist and are simply not used. Gomes da Silva frames the same structural problem at a higher level of abstraction: the question is whether the EU actually possesses the sovereign capacity to impose its regulatory choices on platforms whose home government openly opposes European digital rules.

AI emerges across all interviews as the technology most urgently requiring a legislative response, though experts differ on what that response should look like. Adsuara points to emerging certification mechanisms, what he calls "proof of humanity" seals (biometric tools that verify the human authorship of a piece of content), as a probable near-term development that regulation should anticipate and formalize.

Nacho Guadix (UNICEF España) approaches the legislative gap from a child rights angle. He argues that existing data protection rules nominally prohibit platforms from processing children's data below the age of consent, yet 80% of Spanish children in years five and six of primary school already have social media profiles. Nevertheless, he points to the bill on the protection of minors in digital environments, currently moving through the Spanish parliament, as evidence that civil society pressure can translate into legislative movement, even if enforcement remains the open question.

Felisbela Lopes (Universidade do Minho) adds that any legislative response to AI in the media will require coordination at the European level. The professor draws a distinction between what states can do unilaterally, which is limited to restricting access to platforms, and what requires common action, namely content moderation and the verification of information, warning that national prohibitions risk being counterproductive if adolescents simply emigrate to less regulated spaces. What the experts share, despite their different starting points, is a conviction that the legislative debate around AI and social media is still being conducted at the wrong level of abstraction, focused on what rules to write rather than on building the institutional architecture to make them effective.

In considering future scenarios, the interviews reveal a clear fault line between those who consider the regulatory direction broadly correct and those who doubt the system's capacity to enforce it. Herrero is the most optimistic, as she considers it near-certain that media companies will move towards greater transparency, and probable, yet uncertain, that this will gradually strengthen factual reporting over polarized opinion. Gomes da Silva notes that the sustainability of European media policy depends on a sovereign capacity that is being openly contested. As a remote possibility, Adsuara warns of the possibility of an undesirable scenario where the convergence of state pressure and platform power into systematic information control.

Lopes considers it near-certain that technology will remain the central axis of media policy, necessarily coordinated at the European level, while she regards sustained state support for media sustainability as probable but politically contingent, given the rightward shift of European governments. Her claims show a structural pessimism about whether any policy framework can reverse the erosion of journalism already underway, but she predicts that public media service will survive because the state cannot reduce its commitments entirely to zero, and commercial groups have no interest in serving territories where there is no profit.

Jerónimo, thinking from the regional scale, places his near-certain bet on the incorporation of AI tools into understaffed local newsrooms, and his remote hope on a regulatory environment that can distinguish between genuine journalism and the

pseudo-media outlets that are proliferating in the same digital space, undermining public understanding of what accountability reporting actually is.

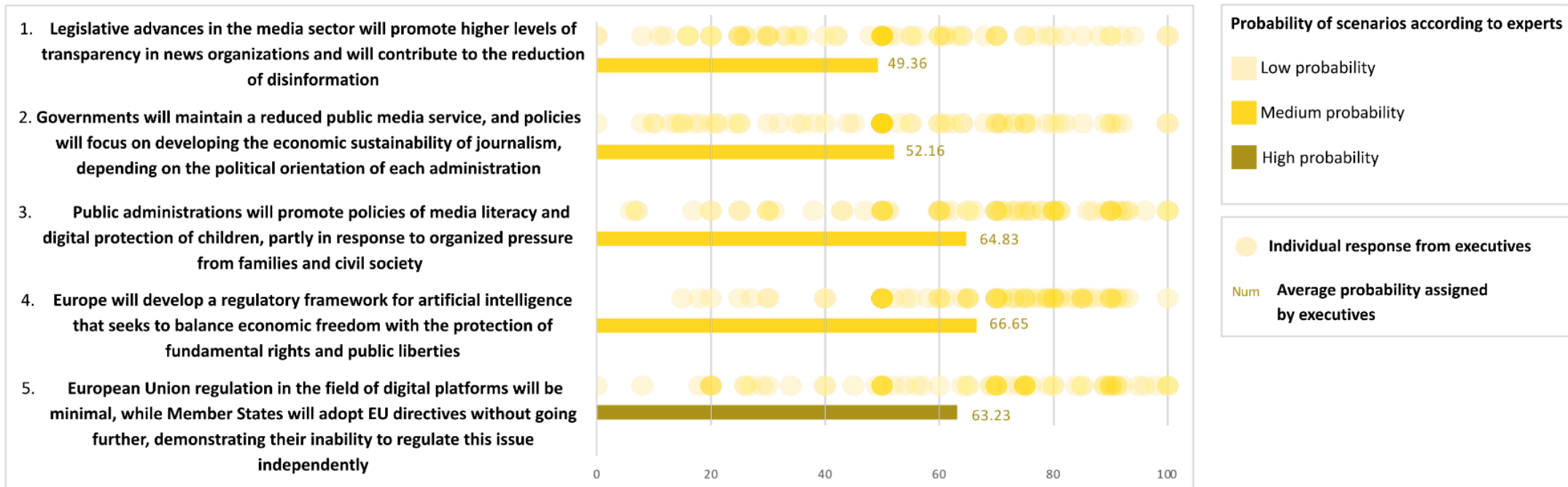
4.10.3. Probability Analysis of the Scenarios

Figure 11.

Source: own elaboration.

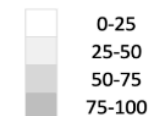
Legislation and public policy

Estimated probability according to executives for scenarios proposed by experts



SCENARIO	GENDER		COUNTRY		AGE				TOTAL
	Men	Women	Spain	Portugal	30-40	41-50	51-60	61-70	
1	46.87	53.06	47.04	55.57	48.64	41.95	55.16	47.80	49.36
2	46.52	60.52	49.66	58.81	57.36	55.05	48.19	52.67	52.16
3	63.76	66.42	65.75	62.38	60.64	59.80	66.97	70.20	64.83
4	64.96	69.16	65.25	70.38	66.27	63.20	68.71	67.27	66.65
5	60.91	66.68	66.27	55.14	68.91	61.95	61.13	65.13	63.23

Average probability assigned by executives



The survey results reveal a moderate-to-high level of alignment between industry perceptions and expert-derived scenarios, with executives broadly sharing the view that the regulatory landscape for media will be shaped more by technological pressures and institutional limitations than by deliberate policy ambition. The only points where a slight divergence between expert and executive assessments can be observed concern Scenario 1, which experts considered to have a medium probability—largely due to the confidence expressed by one of the experts—whereas executives assigned it a probability below the 50% threshold; and Scenario 4, which, although regarded by experts as less likely than Scenario 5, ranks above it in executives' responses.

The scenarios receiving the highest levels of agreement are those related to AI regulation and the structural constraints of platform governance. Scenario 4 ("Europe will develop a regulatory framework for artificial intelligence that seeks to balance economic freedom with the protection of fundamental rights and public liberties") registers the highest average probability (66.65), with responses concentrated in the upper range of the scale. This suggests that industry actors consider European AI regulation not merely possible but expected, even if its ultimate shape remains contested.

Scenario 3 ("public administrations will promote policies of media literacy and digital protection of children, partly in response to organized pressure from families and civil society") follows closely (64.83), with a similarly concentrated distribution. The high score reflects a widely shared perception that civil society mobilization around children's digital rights has already produced measurable legislative momentum, a dynamic consistent with developments such as the current bill on the protection of minors in digital environments moving through the Spanish parliament.

At an intermediate-high position (63.23), Scenario 5 ("European Union regulation in the field of digital platforms will be minimal, while Member States will adopt EU directives without going further, demonstrating their inability to regulate this issue independently") presents a notably dispersed distribution of individual responses. The relatively wide spread suggests that while executives broadly anticipate a minimalist implementation of EU platform rules at the national level, there is meaningful disagreement about the degree of that minimalism. This Scenario reveals a structural tension identified by several experts between the EU's regulatory ambitions and the sovereign capacity of member states and of the EU itself to enforce them against platforms whose home governments actively oppose such frameworks.

The lower end of the probability range is occupied by Scenarios 2 and 1. Scenario 2 (52.16 of average probability) sits just above the midpoint, while Scenario 1 is the only one to fall below it (49.36). Scenario 2 ("governments will maintain a reduced public media service, and policies will focus on developing the economic sustainability of journalism, depending on the political orientation of each administration") presents a wide dispersion of responses reflecting genuine uncertainty about the political trajectory of media support policies across the Iberian Peninsula. The Scenario 2 is perceived as plausible but contingent, as executives appear to recognize that the political orientation of each administration is itself a key variable in determining whether media sustainability policies are pursued or abandoned, a logic consistent with the concerns raised by

experts regarding the rightward shift of European governments and its implications for public media funding.

The lowest average (49.36) corresponds to Scenario 1 ("legislative advances in the media sector will promote higher levels of transparency in news organizations and will contribute to the reduction of disinformation"), with responses spread across the full scale. This result is consistent with the divergence of expert opinion on the matter: while some regard EMFA as a landmark step towards media transparency, others warn that its regulatory logic risks restricting freedom of expression or proving unenforceable in practice.

Disaggregated results reveal meaningful variations across demographic groups. Gender differences are modest overall but notable in Scenario 2, where women assign a substantially higher probability (60.52, compared with the average probability of 46.52 assigned by men), suggesting greater female confidence or concern about the political contingency of public media sustainability policies. In addition, gender differences reveal a consistent pattern: women assign higher probabilities than men across all five scenarios, suggesting a broader tendency among female executives to anticipate regulatory and policy change in the media sector.

Country-level differences are limited but significant in two scenarios. Portuguese respondents assign a higher probability to Scenario 2 (58.81 while 49.66 in Spain), perhaps reflecting greater familiarity with state intervention in the media sector following the creation of #PortugalMediaLab and the government's 30-measure action plan. Conversely, Spanish respondents score Scenario 5 higher (66.27 while 55.14 in Portugal), suggesting greater scepticism in Spain about the capacity of member states to go beyond minimum EU compliance in platform regulation.

Age differences are most pronounced in Scenario 3, where the 61–70 cohort assigns the highest probability (70.20), well above the 30–40 group (60.64). This pattern shows older respondents placing greater confidence in educational responses and state-led policy solutions. In Scenario 1, the 51–60 group stands out with the highest score (55.16), while the 41–50 cohort is the most skeptical (41.95), a divergence that resists easy interpretation but may point to differences in direct exposure to regulatory processes across career stages.

4.10.4. Conclusions

The picture provided by this chapter is one of regulatory momentum accompanied by deep institutional uncertainty. Experts and industry executives broadly agree on the direction of travel (greater transparency requirements, AI regulation, civil society pressure translating into child protection legislation) but diverge on whether the institutional architecture exists to make any of it effective. The implementation gap, identified across interviews as the defining problem of the current moment, is also implicitly present in the survey data: executives assign the lowest probability to the Scenario most directly tied to

legislative optimism, suggesting that the industry distinguishes clearly between the existence of regulation and its real-world impact.

The most significant convergence between expert assessment and executive perception concerns the structural limits of European sovereignty in the face of platform power. Both groups appear to accept, with varying degrees of agreement, that the regulatory frameworks being developed at the EU level will be implemented minimally at the national level and contested externally by the governments of the platforms' home countries. In the absence of stronger enforcement mechanisms, this dynamic risks turning the most ambitious legislative advances of the past decade into largely symbolic gestures.

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5. Hybridation

Two Cross-Cutting Phenomena: Artificial Intelligence and Disinformation

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Communication is today, more than ever, a multifaceted and interconnected whole. The boundaries and culturally accepted criteria that, only a few years ago, provided journalism with meaning, helped confer credibility upon it, and sustained its own cultural hegemony were already dissolved by the digital journalism revolution. Today, journalism is undergoing a paradigm shift driven by the new technological revolution, while at the same time facing a chronic crisis marked by the increasing degradation of information, the deterioration of business models, and the declining economic sustainability of journalism.

In line with these circumstances, two communicative realities emerge continuously throughout the present report. They transcend their own boundaries, cut across categories beyond their original scope, influence them and, in certain cases, even condition them. The pre-established frameworks brought about by these phenomena impose new dynamics that have inevitably blurred the boundaries of journalism and communication across all their dimensions, while simultaneously opening up new possibilities in some of them.

The researchers identified from the outset the overlap among the key topics addressed across the different aspects analysed throughout this report, highlighting the methodological need to devote a chapter to these interrelationships. Rather than representing a limitation of the research, this overlap corroborates the findings obtained by the IBERIFIER team on innovation in digital media in 2021. Although the delimitation of dimensions and categories facilitates the analysis, interpreting them in isolation may sometimes provide only a partial view. It is therefore essential to also examine their interrelationships in order to better understand the complexity of the ecosystem.

In the following sections, beyond the issues examined specifically in Chapters 4.1 and 4.3, consideration is also given to forecasts formulated by experts from other categories in which these phenomena emerged tangentially, as well as to the assessments provided by media executives and the ways in which these findings interact with the social landscape portrayed throughout the present report.

5.1. AI: From Uncertain Innovation to a Universal Framework

AI was already addressed specifically in the previous Trends Report (García-Avilés et al., 2023), although from a very different perspective. At that time, the observations focused primarily on technical issues and on consequences related to work organisation. Consideration was also given to the risks posed to content quality and to disinformation,

which at the time could still be regarded as collateral issues with uncertain implications. If one conclusion clearly emerged, it was the speed with which these effects were anticipated—a premise that has ultimately been confirmed in the present edition.

In any case, it is important to bear in mind that the way AI is perceived within journalism has changed since the publication of the 2023 report, which primarily highlighted the sector's internal perspective. By 2026, we are witnessing an acceleration in the integration of AI into the global economic fabric, and this technology has ceased to be a possibility to become an inevitability for the future of mediation, communication, and every sector of economic and social relevance.

The transformations anticipated at that time have since materialised and intensified, and the expansion of this technology has already produced highly visible effects across every stage of the social communication process. The emergence of artificial intelligence as a new integrating agent is democratising the production of massive quantities of information, both by media organisations and platforms and by users themselves, who, for the first time in history, can obtain immediate, direct responses to their information needs without the intervention of a clearly identifiable mediator. As discussed below, the scope of these consequences extends across all the other trends examined in this report. Overall, these experts warn that this type of mass information production trivialises, from the outset, the very motivation behind information production (the absence of deontological principles and predominantly commercial purposes), its distribution, and the broader social landscape surrounding the media understood in the broadest sense.

Of the sixteen AI-related scenarios identified across the chapters included in Section “4. Analysis by Thematic Areas,” ten were classified by the interviewed experts as highly probable, whereas only three were assigned a medium probability and another three a remote probability. From the experts' perspective, therefore, the overall perception is one of progress, with a clear tendency towards affirmation and certainty. Media executives likewise display a high degree of agreement, with an overall average score of 65.27. Only one scenario within this cross-cutting category received an average score below 50.

Of all the scenarios in which AI plays a prominent role, only three come specifically from Chapter 4.1, devoted to artificial intelligence: Scenarios 13, 14 and 15, presented below in Figure 11. The responses provided by communication professionals reveal considerable dispersion, resulting in central average values once the scores are aggregated. Indeed, taken together, these constitute the lowest values recorded across the entire report. This suggests indecision and a lack of consensus regarding the scenarios proposed by experts specialising specifically in AI. In most cases, this pattern differs markedly from that observed in the remaining scenarios, which receive substantially higher scores and a greater degree of consensus when AI emerges tangentially through the exploration of other thematic categories.

This analysis highlights a broad consensus in perceiving artificial intelligence as a recent phenomenon that nevertheless remains open to multiple potential developments and, in any case, promises to remain a long-term presence. In terms of content, most of the scenarios were formulated from a negative or pessimistic perspective, presenting futures

in which AI is expected to bring about a range of undesirable outcomes.

Turning to the themes addressed, experts from different categories repeatedly emphasise the urgent need for regulation in this field, whether at the national or international level or through the internal policies of media organisations. For media executives, Scenario 11, which envisages sacrificing AI regulation in favour of economic productivity, is the second least likely scenario to materialise. The average level of agreement with Scenario 2, which proposes precisely the opposite, exceeds that of Scenario 11 by 15 points. This confirms the Iberian media professionals' "regulatory faith", reflecting their optimism that legal measures—regarded as both essential and urgent—will continue to be developed and implemented.

Likewise, Scenario 5, which proposes the certification of AI use as a legal obligation, receives a similarly positive assessment and is regarded as feasible. Mechanisms of authenticity or labelling indicating the use of AI could indeed be introduced. However, in terms of their practical implementation, determining the qualitative extent of AI involvement may prove considerably more complex, creating the risk of equating—or failing to distinguish between—forms of AI use that may, in practice, differ substantially. This connects with the previously discussed notion of the "hybrid subject" characterised by "diffuse responsibility" arising from the use of AI. Although comparable to the traditional concept of shared editorial responsibility within media organisations, this phenomenon represents something unprecedented in journalism.

In the post-truth era, defending abstract values that are increasingly being redefined and questioned becomes more challenging in the face of the technocratic dominance of major technology companies. Given their economic and cultural influence over the social order, media organisations engage with these companies from a position of inequality. In this context, AI may represent the most aggressive introduction to date of these emerging philosophies into the daily work of communication professionals. The media ecosystem is facing a significant increase in disinformation as a result of the deployment of these technologies, to the point of jeopardising the collectively accepted boundaries of what is considered true and what is not.

The mere existence of alternative channels that place AI at the service of disinformation (*deepfakes* being the clearest example) is, in itself, a source of destabilisation. The very act of informing, as a fundamental social pillar, is placed at risk, with the possibility that truth may become a minority experience (Scenario 4). A certain dissonance can be observed between the most discouraging—even Orwellian—projections, which experts regard as distant and unlikely, and the views of media executives, who distribute their assessments much more evenly across the scale, resulting in a far from negligible average score of 65.56.

It is possible, however, to go a step further. As we move into this new cycle, artificial intelligence is no longer merely a set of tools available to anyone and capable of being used for either beneficial or harmful purposes. Rather, it has become a framework that is reshaping the very environment within which media organisations have been compelled to operate for years: the Internet. Not only the most widely used chatbots—which have

become the new mediator *par excellence* and are expected to capture a substantial share of web traffic in the near future—but also web browsers and social media platforms have redesigned their architectures so that AI has become an integral component of their core functionality and underlying algorithms.

In summary, the debate raised by the present report is no longer limited to how AI will be used—something that could potentially be regulated or delimited—but rather to how its very existence is redefining and conditioning the frameworks within which action, and even thought itself, take place. From the perspective of journalism, this issue is doubly complex. On the one hand, the chatbot model has profound implications for the assimilation of information and the shaping of its cognitive reflexivity. On the other hand, it has far-reaching consequences for journalism's business model, which is becoming increasingly “mediated” rather than “mediating.”

Scenarios 13 and 16, both regarded by the experts in their respective fields as highly probable, address precisely this technological dominance over digital environments and the audiences that consume them. Media executives, however, do not display the same degree of agreement. Although these projections of an information architecture dominated by intelligent platforms remain controversial, they are nevertheless regarded as likely. Their formulation strongly suggests that they will almost certainly be revisited and reassessed in a future edition of this report.

With regard to audiences, a segment of users accustomed to using Large Language Models (LLM) and receiving much of their information in a synthetic and passive manner may gradually lose sensitivity and critical judgement when processing information, ultimately influencing the way journalists produce content. As reflected in Scenario 1, and strongly endorsed by media executives, the adaptation of content to this emerging trend is not a new phenomenon. Media professionals have previously faced the need to make content more attractive, concise, or attention-grabbing within the highly competitive attention economy.

Paradoxically, this new cycle may instead require content to become less “attractive” in the previous sense, and more uniform and flattened in order to maximise readability and AI optimisation. There is a risk that the overall quality of information may deteriorate as content becomes increasingly subject to processes of standardisation—through GEO—to adapt it to LLMs and algorithms (Aggarwal et al., 2024).

It is therefore possible to observe how media organisations are increasingly confronted with the prospect that specifically journalistic genres, language itself, and their associated conventions may be placed at risk. Journalistic content is systematically reformulated by LLMs, resulting in information that ultimately reaches audiences after being filtered through artificial intelligence. Consequently, the original content becomes sanitised, stripped of writing style and personality (Calvo-Rubio & Rojas-Torrijos, 2024). At the same time, journalists' own use of artificial intelligence represents a temptation that may be reinforced by the growing demand for content generated by algorithms that are themselves driven by AI.

The production of AI slop content through the mechanisms described above may lead to a cycle in which sources generated or summarised by AI are reinterpreted to produce news stories that are subsequently reinterpreted by another AI system before reaching the end user. This creates an entire circuit in which artificial intelligence is capable not only of intervening but also of encountering itself and recursively recycling its own outputs (Shumailov et al., 2024). Such dynamics give rise to serious creative challenges, but also to the loss of nuance, the erosion of depth, the reinforcement of homogenised narratives, and the disappearance of alternative discourses. As Joana Gonçalves suggests, the result is a form of artificially generated “officialism” or “centrism.”

This is not, however, the only possible outcome envisaged. Contrary to what was initially expected, and as discussed in Chapter 4.1, journalistic content could ultimately benefit from AI in less obvious ways. Artificial intelligence may bring about the end of the “click economy” and a return to the primary mission of the media: serving both the individual and society. Following this line of reasoning, this new model could even lead to a relative improvement in content quality, given the increasingly sophisticated ability of AI systems to understand texts and their meanings.

From a professional and labour perspective, workflow optimisation is accelerating the execution of tasks. New opportunities for innovation are emerging, while increasingly hybrid and technically oriented professional profiles are beginning to take shape. Scenarios 3 and 8 are among the highest-rated in the entire report, referring to AI as a disruptive force in professional organisation and to the way it will compel changes in work processes—an immediate and tangible concern for media executives. They also regard the implementation of continuous training related to these technologies (Scenario 7) as highly probable. However, whether these competencies will become essential in the near future receives a more ambiguous response, as reflected in Scenario 15. At the same time, there is clear agreement regarding another issue: the technological revolution will not alleviate labour precariousness within the sector; rather, it is likely to exacerbate it (Scenarios 1 and 12). Journalists, as a professional and economic group, remain particularly vulnerable to changes whose scale extends far beyond their collective capacity to respond.

In audience measurement, it is already possible to envisage more advanced models incorporating AI to collect biometric data. Whereas the expert who proposed this possibility in Scenario 10 regarded it as a remote prospect, media executives collectively consider it one of the scenarios with the highest average probability of materialising (72.49). This suggests that perspectives which might previously have been associated primarily with science fiction—or, more specifically, with its dystopian subgenre—are increasingly entering the realm of what is considered plausible.

Among all the scenarios examined, the one that media executives consider most likely to materialise is the proposition that the complete replacement of human beings by AI systems in journalism will never fully occur. As discussed in previous chapters, technological pessimism does not imply abandoning a humanistic core: the human element continues to be regarded as ultimately irreplaceable. Scenario 9, which proposes the opposite—the progressive replacement of the human by the synthetic—is the

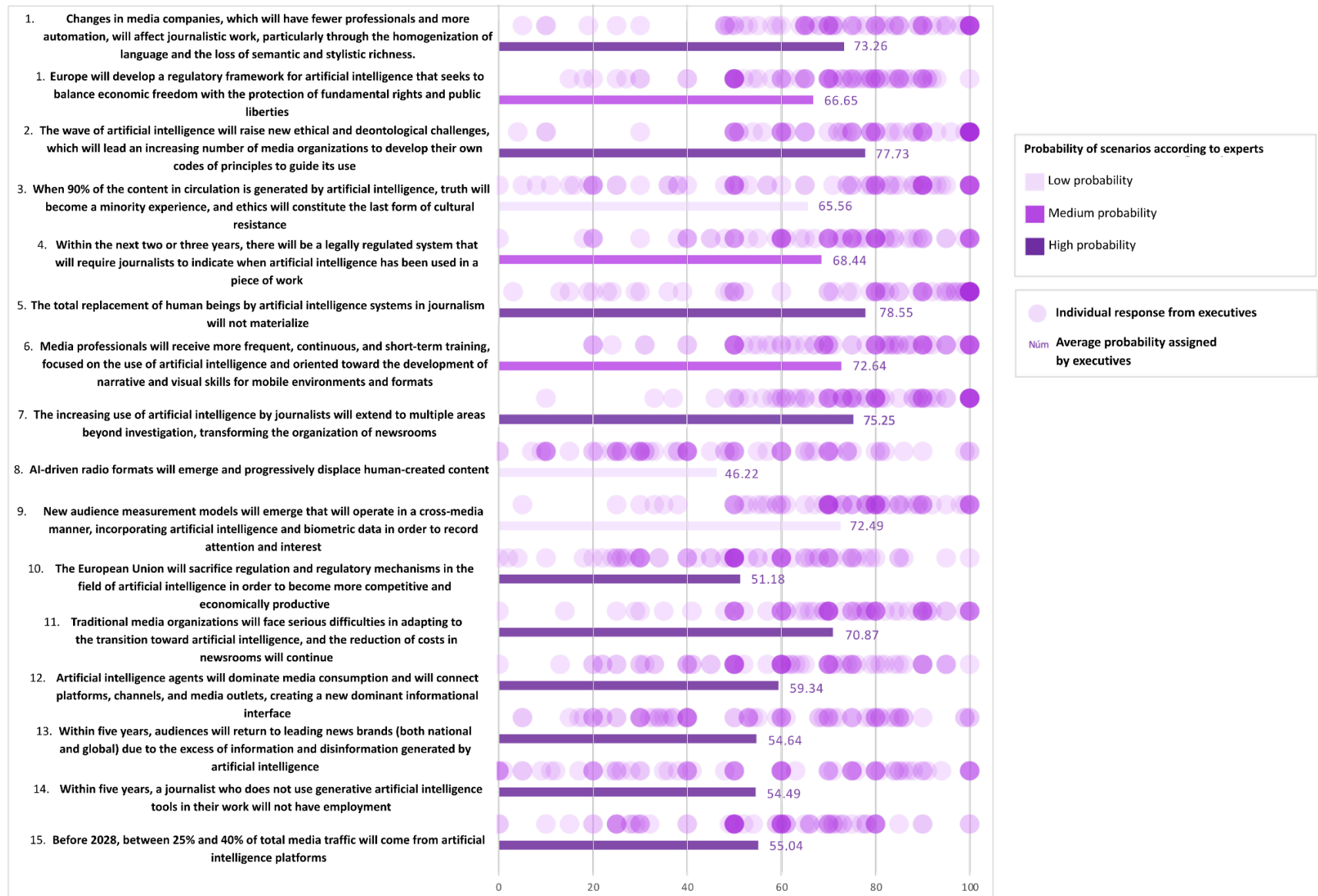
lowest-rated scenario among those assessed by both experts and media executives.

It is nevertheless noteworthy to compare this marked pattern of responses with Scenario 4, which envisages a world in which up to 90% of all content is generated artificially. In this case, media professionals appear considerably more willing to contemplate such a possibility. It should be noted, however, that responses to this particular scenario are widely distributed across the rating scale. Along similar lines, the prospect of traditional media regaining ground from AI (Scenario 14) ranks among the least highly valued scenarios. This reinforces an overall perception of resignation in the face of an overwhelming context: considerably more pessimistic or radical scenarios tend to be regarded as probable with greater confidence. A future characterised by 100% AI still lies beyond the boundaries of collective imagination, whereas one in which AI accounts for 90% of all content appears considerably more conceivable.

Figure 12.
Source: Own
elaboration

Artificial Intelligence

Estimated probability according to executives for scenarios proposed by experts



5.2. How Disinformation Gains Ground on a Rigged Playing Field

The passage of time has neither diminished the decisive importance of disinformation within the media landscape nor reduced the questions that communication professionals continue to raise about it. If anything, the problems grouped under the umbrella of disinformation have multiplied and assumed increasingly sophisticated and pernicious forms. At the same time, however, certain optimistic perspectives—suggesting the possibility of a “reversal” or decline of disinformation—can also be identified and deserve careful examination.

When all the scenarios specifically related to disinformation included in this report are considered together, a total of nine emerge across the different thematic categories: four belonging to Section 4.3, “Disinformation and Media Literacy,” and five arising tangentially in other sections. Of these, three were assessed by the consulted experts as highly probable, four as moderately probable, and two as remotely probable. Despite the overall tendency towards medium-to-high probability, this distribution reflects the ability to envisage multiple open futures, rather than converging upon a single trajectory of certainty or inevitability.

The responses provided by media executives are, however, particularly striking because of their considerable dispersion, resulting in an overall average score of 56.94. The limited degree of consensus suggests collective controversy and uncertainty regarding the future evolution of disinformation. Although intermediate values are also selected, they do not represent the dominant pattern. Media professionals, therefore, do not display moderate opinions on this issue, but rather markedly divergent ones.

Disinformation also features prominently in relation to legislation and public policy, with four associated scenarios (1, 2, 4 and 7). These concern greater corporate transparency, the expansion of media literacy in schools, the digital protection of minors, and the certification of the reliability of scientific sources.

With regard to combating disinformation among young people, it is worth noting that the preparation of the present report coincided with the emergence of a growing international trend: restricting access to social media for individuals under the age of sixteen, a measure that both Spain and Portugal are currently in the process of adopting. It is possible to establish a connection between the tangible progress of these policy initiatives and the strong overall support received by Scenario 2, which proposes advances in media literacy and the digital protection of minors. Scenario 7, focused on the preschool educational context, does not receive the same level of support. It is, on average, the second lowest-rated scenario among media executives.

Amid ongoing debates concerning government intervention in the fight against disinformation, initiatives of this kind face the considerable challenge of designing programmes capable of securing broad support from different social actors, who may perceive them as forms of ideological indoctrination. Furthermore, the very young age group targeted by this latter proposal is likely to generate additional controversy, alongside the pedagogical difficulties inherently associated with it.

With regard to the legal regulation of platform content and the algorithms that govern it—a topic already addressed in the previous edition—the reforms introduced through the Digital Services Act have generally been well received. Nevertheless, existing challenges remain and new ones continue to emerge. Legislative advances have also been made in support of freedom of information and media independence, most notably through the adoption of the European Media Freedom Act. Since 2025, Spain’s National Commission on Markets and Competition (CNMC) has required the commercial purposes of content published on digital platforms to be disclosed in a more explicit and visible manner, an issue that was already highlighted in the 2024 Trends Report.

Milestones such as these sustain the relative “regulatory faith” previously identified within the media ecosystem, although this confidence is not without limits. Media executives consider the development of specific public policies aimed at protecting children to be considerably more likely than improvements in transparency and fight against disinformation resulting directly from legislative action, an issue that elicits more varied assessments.

Despite these reform efforts, recent years have witnessed a marked escalation in the professional production of disinformation. The broader social context offers little cause for optimism: the growing questioning of social institutions resulting from successive economic crises and shifts in the international order has continuously contributed to the erosion of trust in mainstream media and science (van der Meer & Hameleers, 2025). Moreover, the architecture of the digital information environment itself has given rise to a chronic loss of attention, with serious consequences for reading comprehension (Shen, 2025).

Beyond the media and communication system itself, institutional politics has witnessed the normalisation of discourses originating from movements employing anti-establishment rhetoric, characterised by direct attacks on both public and private media, as well as on journalism as a profession, portraying them as enemies. Journalism, as a social institution, is increasingly questioned, if not outright rejected. Political fatigue has led to diminished concern for accuracy, increased news avoidance, and a consequent erosion of critical judgement. This far-reaching trend, although not new, has become increasingly entrenched. Rather than representing a passing discourse, it has developed into a relatively new alternative and anti-intellectual school of thought centred on the primacy of narratives and emotion over truth and factual evidence (van der Meer & Hameleers, 2025).

Within this context, the strategy adopted by disinformation channels does not always depend on persuading audiences of a particular claim through falsehoods. Simply generating distrust and clouding public narratives and opinion is sufficient to make verified information more vulnerable. The weakening of trust in truth itself (identified in Scenarios 3 and 5) goes hand in hand with phenomena such as the acceptance of falsehoods as truths, the consolidation of anti-democratic, apolitical, and anti-political values, and the spread of conspiratorial and denialist thinking. This stands in striking contrast to the explicitly political objectives of disinformation and the threat posed by the “well-trained propaganda armies” already identified in the previous report.

The democratisation of information production has continued to expand, while the distinctive characteristics of media practice have steadily receded. Indeed, this cross-cutting reality increasingly approaches a partial substitution of journalistic functions: cost reduction, the growing absence of field reporting, the reuse of material obtained from third parties or generated by AI, and the presentation of information to audiences through AI systems and algorithms all contribute to distancing the media from reality itself. This trend, embodied in Scenario 5, becomes particularly evident during times of crisis. At the same time, it transfers core communicative functions to actors operating outside journalism.

The role of major technological actors must also be considered. Once again, the emergence of artificial intelligence constitutes the most prominent trend identified throughout the analysis. Its influence permeates every section because of its capacity to reshape all previously established media realities, and it is explicitly addressed in Scenarios 3, 8 and 9. It is therefore unsurprising that these technologically pessimistic scenarios receive the highest average evaluations, while the prospect of legacy media regaining ground in relation to AI (Scenario 9) is regarded as considerably less likely. Media executives consider it more probable that truth itself will be pushed to the margins by the saturation of AI-generated content than that the gap between journalism's credibility and its audiences will continue to widen, a proposition that elicits much more varied responses.

With regard to social media, this arena has dissolved what remained of the “great public square” of the early Internet, where journalism was once able to amplify its messages, reach new audiences, and acquire discursive relevance. The rules of the game are now more tightly orchestrated than ever before. The use of algorithms and AI to maximise user consumption has given rise to a distorted form of polarisation-driven engagement, based on rage-baiting: presenting content designed to provoke rejection and further radicalisation among those who encounter it (Milli et al., 2025). The dangers are well known. For years, scholars have warned about the use of these platforms by political actors and governments to influence information flows by constructing agendas that serve particular interests.

With only a few exceptions, platforms remain reluctant to intervene in distinguishing information from disinformation. When they do engage in content moderation, they tend to prioritise the preventive removal of content, at times approaching the boundaries of censorship and, in other cases, demonstrating questionable effectiveness in reducing the reach of disinformation—an issue already criticised by the experts in previous chapters. From the perspective of platform politics and economics, it is also necessary to consider the geopolitical dimension, which is largely shaped by the fact that these platforms constitute instruments of political power in the hands of the major global powers, particularly the United States and China.

For this reason, the European legislative framework based on digital sovereignty, which directly addresses issues related to disinformation, is subject to considerable pressure and conditioned by the broader political environment. Likewise, platforms make operational decisions regarding regulation and content moderation on the basis of this

underlying power equation, rather than according to coherent internal principles.

At the same time, the tendency of artificial intelligence to generate excessively neutral or accommodating narratives has also become a matter of concern, as discussed in Section 5.1. Ironically, this form of “artificial centrism” stands in contrast to the “artificial extremism” fostered by major social media platforms. Whether these two models will ultimately converge or come into conflict remains to be seen.

Over recent years, certain formats and genres have gained considerable popularity and appear to move in the opposite direction to the trends discussed above. In response to the fatigue and saturation produced by doomscrolling, a segment of audiences has increasingly turned its attention to long-form formats. Video essays, live streams, documentaries, and particularly podcasts are experiencing a golden age (Sierra-Iso et al., 2025), as described in Chapters 4.5, 4.6 and 4.7. These formats offer content in which dialogue, exchanges of opinion, interviews with experts, ideological debate, and the investigation and analysis of specific topics predominate, serving purposes such as awareness-raising, education, intellectual curiosity, and entertainment.

These spaces provide significant opportunities for community building and for fostering engagement with in-depth information among audiences that are not necessarily niche audiences, at a time when fragmentation has made this increasingly difficult in many other areas. At the same time, however, another phenomenon has emerged—particularly within video podcasts and livestreams—namely the proliferation and cultural normalisation of openly discriminatory, ultra-conservative, or anti-democratic narratives, a trend that is attracting growing scholarly attention (Dowling, 2025).

Paradoxically, the growing acceptability of disinformation and the perception of its creators as prestigious anti-establishment figures (Sierra-Iso et al., 2025) have led media organisations themselves to feel “compelled” to address issues that previously lay outside their editorial agendas, with the well-known risk of ultimately amplifying or normalising these disinformation narratives. The concessions made to such discourses in pursuit of trends, audience attention, or increased clickbait are particularly concerning when they originate within journalism itself.

It is particularly revealing to compare the overall perceptions regarding traditional media reflected in Scenarios 5 and 9, which point in opposite directions: the former towards a deepening of distrust and the latter towards its recovery. Nevertheless, both the considerable dispersion of responses and the very similar average scores once again reflect a high degree of collective uncertainty and insecurity.

A final aspect to consider concerns the professionals who work directly to combat disinformation. With regard to the use of AI for this purpose, opportunities exist for its integration into newsrooms. Institutionally, however, media organisations have not yet succeeded in making artificial intelligence a decisive ally; rather, it has become an intermediary. By contrast, AI has assumed a more supportive role for digital platforms, thereby further reinforcing the subordination of journalistic information to these platforms and deepening the asymmetrical relationship between them. Expert assessments

continue to associate the advancement of AI with the retreat of truth itself (Scenario 3), while audiences have become increasingly familiar with the use of LLMs, and the initial sense of concern has gradually been replaced by growing confidence in their use (Sierra-Iso et al., 2025).

Disinformation has moved from existing on the margins and exploiting informational voids to competing, in many cases on an equal footing, with verified information enjoying the highest levels of legitimacy. Forms of distinction that may once have had some effect, such as verified account badges, have lost much of their value and have become little more than another marketable feature. Against this backdrop, the prospect of a source reliability certification emerges (Scenario 4), receiving an average score of 56.49 from media professionals. This figure coincides with the overall average, yet it is the only proposal that received no extremely low individual ratings. Interestingly, this was not the case when the expert originally proposed the scenario, considering it instead to be a remote possibility.

Fact-checking initiatives continue striving to secure visibility and expand their reach. For the experts, however, their long-term survival remains uncertain, with economic fragility identified as the principal factor that could ultimately lead to their disappearance, as reflected in Scenario 6. Media executives, by contrast, regard this as the least likely outcome among the scenarios considered.

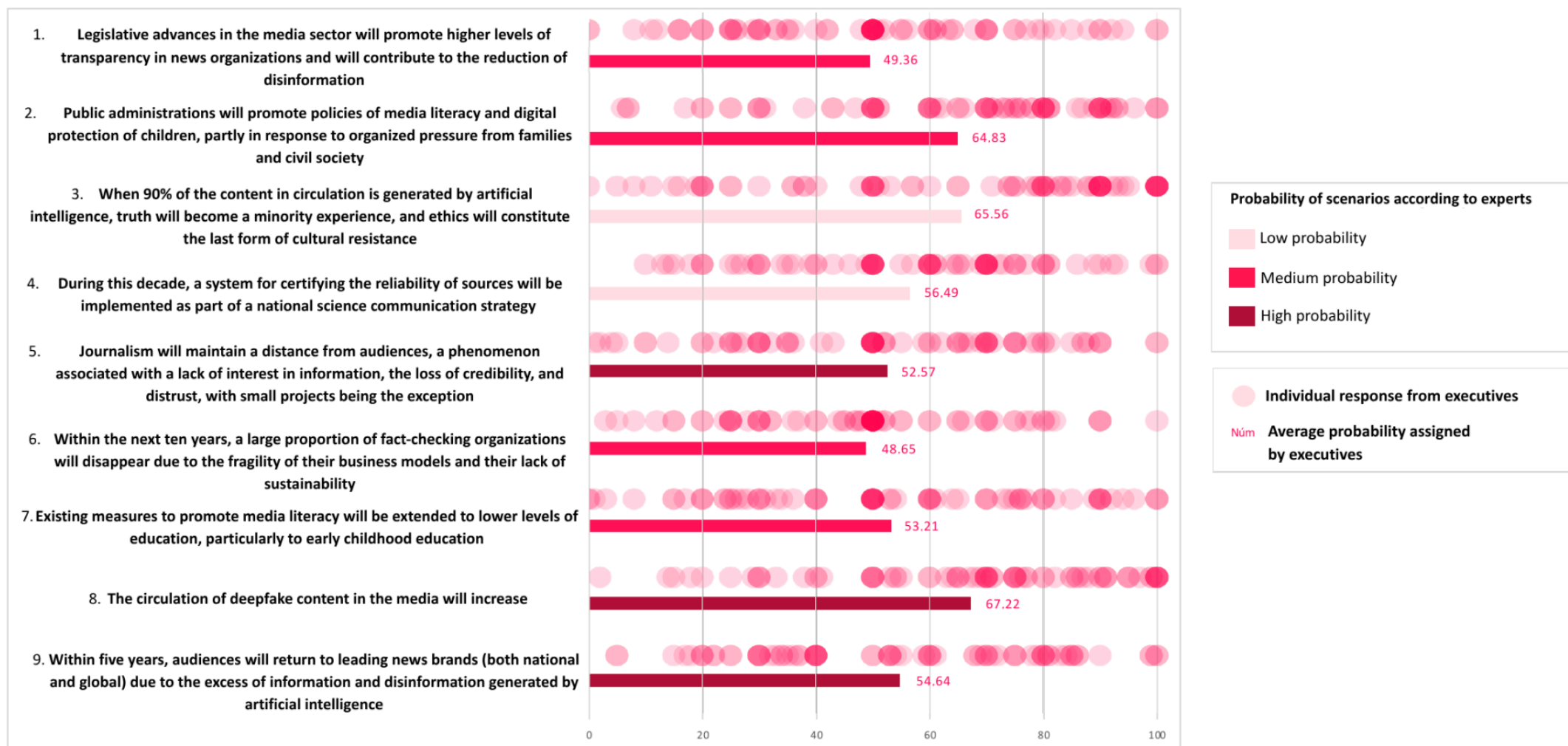
Despite their gradual expansion across different media and formats over the years, and despite efforts to encourage citizen participation, fact-checking has not evolved, for example, into a widely established permanent newsroom section. This suggests that it is still not fully recognised as a broadly established journalistic genre, but rather remains associated with specialised niche projects. This occurs at the same time as the production of disinformation vastly outpaces verification efforts, making the balance of power increasingly unequal, if only in quantitative terms. Opportunities for broader deployment appear to increase whenever a new social crisis gives rise to a corresponding wave of disinformation, only to diminish again before such initiatives can fully consolidate or accumulate substantial momentum.

As the experts point out in Section 4.3, fact-checking currently runs the risk of functioning primarily as a reactive practice, assuming a largely mechanical role of correction and scientific rebuttal based on the presentation of evidence, while discursively presupposing the existence of disinformation as the very condition for its own existence. The alternative would involve adopting proactive approaches that promote a form of journalism genuinely committed to social transformation: fostering critical thinking; producing truthful and honest information; encouraging users to internalise individual verification as both a personal practice and a social responsibility; safeguarding the health of public opinion; and so forth. Ultimately, the objective should be an interest in the anatomy of society rather than its autopsy.

Figure 13.
Source: own elaboration.

Disinformation

Estimated probability according to executives for scenarios proposed by experts



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6. Interpretative and Foresight Conclusions

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Building on the tensions identified throughout the study, and viewed through the dual lens of continuity and change, the report's final findings are organized around five major transformations that provide an overarching perspective on the possible evolution of the Iberian media ecosystem by 2030.

6.1. From Technological Innovation to the Reconfiguration of the Information Ecosystem

The previous report anticipated that AI would enhance journalism. Three years later, this technology has become a genuine tsunami sweeping across the entire communication ecosystem. The focus has shifted from the mere automation of individual tasks to the transformation of the entire media value chain. One of the issues that concerns both the expert panel and the surveyed media executives most is the growing intermediation of AI platforms in access to information, with the potential loss of traffic originating from search engines.

Closely related to this transformation, the report highlights the need for the continuous updating of professional skills in content discoverability and optimisation. Traditional Search Engine Optimization (SEO) is gradually giving way to Generative Engine Optimization (GEO), aimed at improving content visibility within generative artificial intelligence systems (Aggarwal et al., 2024). However, this remains a rapidly evolving field, characterized by the fast pace of AI model development and the limited transparency surrounding the criteria used to select and cite information sources. As a result, communication professionals are required to engage in a continuous process of adaptation and lifelong learning.

This challenge is compounded by the anticipated proliferation of synthetic content—including text, audio, and video—driven by brands' increasing need to position themselves within the responses generated by AI systems. This trend will make the verification of the provenance and authorship of content increasingly difficult. In this context, legislation and public policy assume an increasingly prominent role, emerging as a strategic area in their own right: the more structural the impact of AI and digital platforms becomes, the more central regulatory responses will be. Within the Iberian context, these developments are taking place under an increasingly demanding European regulatory framework that is reshaping the obligations of Spanish and Portuguese media organizations in areas such as artificial intelligence, transparency, editorial independence, and the protection of users' rights.

At the same time, the speed at which AI—particularly generative AI since its widespread emergence in 2023—continues to evolve makes it difficult for regulatory frameworks to keep pace. This requires the continuous adaptation not only of regulatory approaches but

also of professional practices, organizational strategies, and even citizens' competencies. The European Commission (2025) itself acknowledges this challenge by introducing the concept of AI literacy, recognising that individuals who use AI systems should possess a sufficient level of AI literacy.

This accelerating pace of technological change makes precise long-term forecasting increasingly difficult and leaves multiple future scenarios open. Nevertheless, the findings indicate that several areas that have traditionally received less attention—including legal frameworks, ethics, and lifelong professional learning—are assuming an increasingly prominent role in the years ahead.

6.2. From Combating Disinformation to Rebuilding Trust

Among the emerging threats identified, the increasing sophistication of AI-generated disinformation and the growing difficulty of distinguishing between human-created and synthetic content stand out. The continuous improvement of generative AI tools suggests that this distinction will become progressively more challenging, highlighting transparency and traceability as two of the sector's principal challenges.

Current developments point towards a model in which artificial intelligence does not replace journalistic responsibility but instead becomes integrated as another tool within the production process, always under human supervision. Indeed, this idea recurs throughout the report and represents one of its strongest areas of consensus: the transition towards human-in-the-loop models, in which AI operates with a degree of autonomy under human oversight, and human-in-command models, in which ultimate control and editorial responsibility always remain with people.

Alongside the well-documented biases already identified in AI systems (Ferrante, 2021), new and less visible forms of opacity are emerging that have important implications for journalistic practice. Among them is the tendency of some conversational AI systems to produce overly agreeable responses and reinforce users' assumptions. When used to support ideation, planning, or content creation, these systems may encourage conventional or unoriginal proposals, reducing the critical capacity traditionally provided by editorial discussion. Where a communications director or an experienced editor might recognize that a particular approach is predictable, insufficient, or lacking originality, an AI system may instead validate it, creating a misleading impression of quality or creativity. The risk lies not only in the accumulation of errors or biases, but also in the possible homogenization of reflection and decision-making processes within organizations.

The 2023 report concluded that responding to increasingly sophisticated forms of disinformation required stronger training for journalists and fact-checkers, together with enhanced media literacy. The present study goes one step further: media literacy cannot remain exclusively reactive and defensive; it must also help people critically understand how content is produced, distributed, and legitimized within an increasingly automated ecosystem. Another major concern is not only strengthening people's ability to

distinguish between information and different forms of disinformation, but also between facts and opinions, in a context that increasingly favours the hybridization of these forms of content, departing from the journalistic tradition of separating verifiable facts from value judgments, and in which opinion has gained ground over information.

6.3. Technological Transformation Requires Redefining the Journalistic Profession

The findings suggest that technological adaptation cannot be reduced to the adoption of new tools. Rather, it requires a fundamental reassessment of professional skills, roles, work organization, and the human costs associated with transformation. Continuous technological training has become an essential requirement given the rapid pace at which AI is evolving. At the same time, however, experts emphasize the importance of preserving the specifically journalistic and communication-related competencies that remain central to the profession.

This constant need to keep pace with new tools and technological developments adds to the existing workload associated with multitasking. The risk is that technological adaptation may simply translate into greater pressure to accomplish more work with fewer resources. The 2023 report anticipated that media teams would increasingly combine technological expertise, creativity, and human mediation, and that professionals would become progressively more multifunctional. The new report raises a critical question: to what extent does this multifunctionality genuinely improve journalism and communication, and at what point does it begin to undermine quality and working conditions?

The importance of a healthy working environment and an economically sustainable media sector emerges as one of the industry's key challenges. Closely related to this is another issue affecting the profession's long-term renewal: journalism's ability to attract and retain young talent at a time when other areas of communication—particularly digital marketing and corporate and institutional communication—offer greater employment opportunities and, in many cases, higher salaries, greater job security, and working hours that are more compatible with work-life balance.

This challenge is particularly significant in the Spanish and Portuguese media markets, where difficulties in providing stable career paths continue to limit the sector's ability to attract and retain talent. In this context, younger generations appear increasingly reluctant to accept prolonged entry into the profession under conditions characterized by instability, employment uncertainty, and relatively uncompetitive salaries (Palau-Sampio & Iranzo-Cabrera, 2026). The challenge, therefore, is not only to improve the well-being of those already working in newsrooms, but also to ensure that journalism remains a viable and attractive career option for those entering the labour market. Added to this is the risk that AI may reduce opportunities for entering the profession by automating tasks that have traditionally been performed by early-career professionals.

6.4. New Partners, New Ways of Storytelling, and New Criteria for Deciding What to Cover

The transformation of journalism and communication affects not only the way stories are told, but also the topics that are selected, the way they are prioritized, and the perspectives from which narratives are constructed.

The growing emphasis on conversational and entertainment-oriented content through formats such as vertical video, conversational podcasts, informal newsletters, and similar formats expands opportunities for audience engagement and format diversification. At the same time, however, it may also encourage emotional impact over depth and journalistic rigour in some cases. Moreover, these developments do not resolve the sector's structural challenges, particularly the shortage of resources and the lack of economic sustainability required to produce high-quality content.

There is clear continuity with the report published three years ago, which had already anticipated the consolidation of short-form vertical video, agile audiovisual content, and the growing demand for more natural language. However, the present report considerably expands that outlook by showing that innovation no longer lies solely in the adoption of new formats, but increasingly in the hybridization of genres, platforms, and communication languages. Within an ecosystem characterized by the abundance of synthetic content and the progressive loss of intermediation, journalistic brands become a key asset for building trust, strengthening audience loyalty, and diversifying revenue streams beyond traditional advertising. In this context, agreements between media organizations and AI companies represent a new business opportunity. Companies such as OpenAI, Google, and Anthropic require access to reliable, up-to-date, and high-quality content to improve the performance of their generative systems, while media organizations see these partnerships as a potential additional source of funding at a time of considerable economic pressure.

Nevertheless, these collaborations also raise important strategic questions. In the short term, they may contribute to improving the economic sustainability of media organizations. In the medium and long term, however, they involve two significant risks: the loss of traffic to media websites, and the possibility that journalistic work will become diluted within AI-generated responses that integrate content from multiple sources without users always clearly perceiving its origin.

6.5. The Crisis of Intermediation and the Search for a New Value Proposition for Journalism

The previous report had already anticipated increasing personalization of media offerings and the predictive use of data to better understand consumers. Today, however, the challenge is no longer simply to attract audiences, but also to maintain a direct relationship with them in an ecosystem where platforms, search engines, and AI systems are increasingly controlling information intermediation. In this environment, media

organizations lose not only traffic but also the ability to understand their audiences, as they no longer have direct access to user data.

Building communities around news brands is not a new strategy. Digital-native media organizations were among the first to recognize that their sustainability depended not only on attracting users but also on building lasting relationships with them. Projects such as *eldiario.es* and *Mensagem de Lisboa* have built much of their growth on models based on member communities, memberships, or subscriptions. Within these models, readers cease to be merely consumers of information and instead become active members of a community that shares common values and interests and, in many cases, contributes financially to the project's long-term viability (Nielsen & Ganter, 2022).

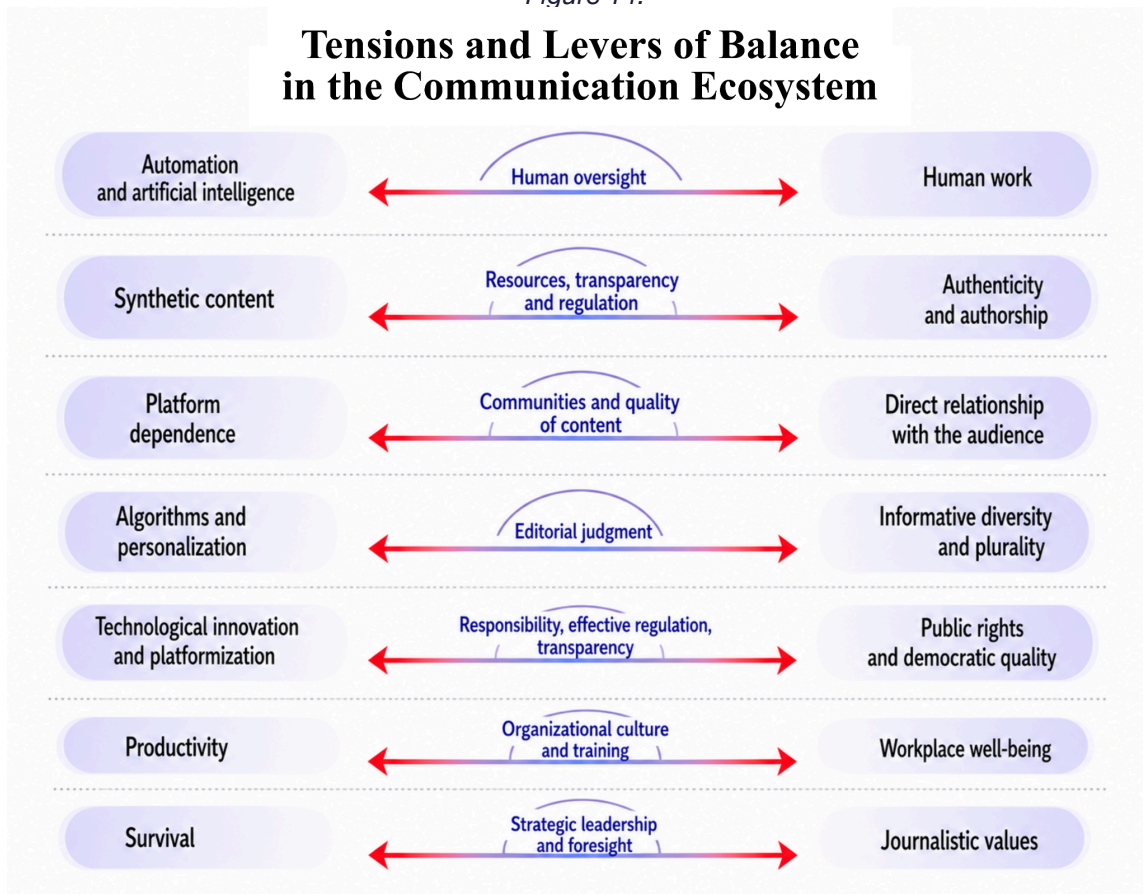
What only a few years ago represented a distinctive strategy for digital-native media has now become a necessity across the entire communication ecosystem. Legacy media organizations, new journalistic ventures, technology companies, content creators, public institutions, and private organizations now compete to establish lasting relationships with their audiences. This situation gives rise to a significant paradox. The strategic objective is to build increasingly direct relationships with audiences while reducing dependence on technological intermediaries. Yet the initial acquisition of these communities still takes place largely through platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, YouTube, Facebook, and LinkedIn, which continue to serve as the main gateways to news consumption for a substantial share of the population, particularly younger generations (Newman et al., 2025). Media organizations depend on these platforms to gain visibility, while simultaneously remaining vulnerable to algorithmic changes, shifts in content distribution policies, and corporate decisions beyond their control that may directly affect their traffic.

The strongest communities are those that successfully transfer these initial relationships to proprietary channels that are less dependent on third-party platforms. Newsletters, membership programmes, WhatsApp and Telegram channels, podcasts, and community events are among the mechanisms that help establish more stable and direct relationships with audiences. The mass-audience model traditionally associated with legacy media has not disappeared entirely—it remains essential for maintaining influence, advertising revenue, and credibility. However, on its own it is no longer sufficient. Media organizations also need loyal user communities capable of reducing their dependence on volatile, high-volume traffic and strengthening their long-term autonomy.

6.6. Strategic Recommendations for an Ecosystem Under Strain

The figure below summarizes the main tensions identified throughout the report and proposes a series of balancing levers designed to help address them. Derived from an overall interpretation of the findings, these recommendations highlight areas of action that are likely to become increasingly important in the coming years while remaining flexible and adaptable to the evolving dynamics of the media industry.

Figure 14.



Source: own elaboration.

The tensions and balancing levers presented in the figure synthesize the report's principal findings. Building on this framework, the following strategic insights summarize the most significant transformations likely to shape the Iberian media ecosystem by 2030.

1. Disinformation is no longer exclusively a matter of false content; it has also become a question of authenticity, provenance, and trust.
2. The future does not point towards the replacement of journalists by generative AI systems, but rather towards hybrid models in which human intervention remains essential to ensure editorial judgment, contextualization, and verification.
3. In an ecosystem characterized by a growing volume of synthetic content, trust will increasingly depend on the transparency and credibility of both media organizations and journalists.
4. The accelerating pace of technological innovation and the growing platformization of the media environment require governance models capable of balancing technological development with the protection of citizens' rights and democratic quality.

5. The future of journalistic content will depend on the ability to balance narrative innovation with depth, credibility, and meaningful audience engagement.
6. Building proprietary communities is no longer simply an audience loyalty strategy; it is becoming one of the main drivers of media sustainability, differentiation, and autonomy, reducing dependence on platform-driven traffic while strengthening direct relationships with audiences.
7. Communication and journalism professionals—particularly younger generations—identify well-being, professional development opportunities, and more participatory organizational cultures as key priorities for the future sustainability of the profession.
8. Generative AI has become the principal driver of transformation across the communication ecosystem, reshaping the production, distribution, access, and consumption of information.
9. The evolution of the communication ecosystem will continue to be shaped by a high degree of uncertainty. Rather than providing definitive answers, the trends identified in this report should be understood as frameworks for interpreting change and supporting more informed decision-making.
10. The future of journalism will depend largely on its ability to innovate and embrace technological change without abandoning the values that underpin its social mission.

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8. Annexes

Annex 1. Annex 1. Questionnaire for experts in Spanish

Questionario | Tendencias en el ecosistema mediático | IBERIFIER PLUS

Estamos realizando una investigación sobre las Tendencias en el Ecosistema de Medios y Comunicación 2025-2030. La investigación se enmarca dentro del proyecto IBERIFIER PLUS, un observatorio de medios digitales integrado por más de 90 investigadores sobre comunicación digital, desinformación, computación y análisis estratégico. IBERIFIER cuenta con la participación de 23 instituciones de España y Portugal y está avalado por la Comisión Europea. Todos los datos aquí recogidos sólo se utilizarán con fines académicos. Al aceptar la entrevista, autorizas a que usemos las respuestas sólo con esta finalidad.

La entrevista será grabada, pero su audio no será difundido. El contenido se utilizará para realizar el informe extrayendo citas concretas.

Duración aproximada: 30 min

FASE 1: EXPLORATORIA (conversacional y abierta)

Objetivo: Conocer el marco de referencia del experto, su experiencia, intuiciones y preocupaciones sobre el área.

Cuestiones amplias:

- 1) ¿Cuál consideras que ha sido el cambio más significativo en tu área en los últimos 5-10 años?
- 2) ¿Qué aspectos te parecen más relevantes hoy, aunque aún no estén consolidados?
- 3) ¿Qué desafíos se están gestando aunque aún no están en el radar general?

FASE 2: PREVISIÓN ESTRUCTURADA

Objetivo: Invitar al experto/a a traducir sus intuiciones en escenarios concretos y ordenados por probabilidad.

Te pedimos que nos des 3 previsiones para el futuro de tu campo, organizadas según su nivel de certeza:



1. Casi seguro

Algo que das por hecho que ocurrirá en los próximos años.

Ej en IA: "La automatización del contenido básico en medios será generalizada".

2. Probable pero con incertidumbre

Algo que te parece plausible, pero con muchas dependencias o incertidumbres.

Ej en IA: "Se generalizar El uso de asistentes personales basados en IA"

3. Remoto y con poca evidencia por el momento

Un escenario que parece lejano, pero que no descartas totalmente.

Ej: "Surgirán nuevos lenguajes de comunicación generados por IA entre máquinas y humanos".

A la hora de imaginar los escenarios futuros, si lo consideras oportuno, añade detalles concretos, como marcas, empresas, fechas o momentos. Si planteas predicciones específicas, serán especialmente valiosas.

- ¿Nos recomiendas que contactemos con otros expertos/as

Annex 2. Questionnaire for experts in Portuguese

Questionário | Tendências no ecossistema dos media | IBERIFIER PLUS

Estamos a realizar uma investigação sobre as Tendências no Ecossistema dos Media e da Comunicação 2025-2030. A investigação enquadra-se no projeto IBERIFIER PLUS, um observatório de media digitais composto por mais de 90 investigadores nas áreas da comunicação digital, da desinformação, da computação e da análise estratégica. O IBERIFIER conta com a participação de 23 instituições de Espanha e de Portugal e é apoiado pela Comissão Europeia. Todos os dados aqui recolhidos serão utilizados exclusivamente para fins académicos. Ao aceitar participar na entrevista, autoriza a utilização das suas respostas apenas para esta finalidade.

A entrevista será gravada, mas o respetivo áudio não será divulgado. O seu conteúdo será utilizado para a elaboração do relatório, mediante a extração de citações específicas.

Duração aproximada: 30 min

FASE 1: EXPLORATÓRIA (conversacional e aberta)

Objetivo: Conhecer o enquadramento de referência do especialista, a sua experiência, intuições e preocupações relativamente à área.

Questões gerais:

- 1) Qual considera ter sido a mudança mais significativa na sua área nos últimos 5-10 anos?**
- 2) Que aspetos lhe parecem hoje mais relevantes, embora ainda não estejam consolidados?**
- 3) Que desafios estão a emergir, embora ainda não façam parte do radar geral?**

FASE 2: PREVISÃO ESTRUTURADA

Objetivo: Convidar o(a) especialista a traduzir as suas intuições em cenários concretos, organizados de acordo com a sua probabilidade de ocorrência.

Pedimos-lhe que apresente 3 previsões para o futuro da sua área, organizadas em função do respetivo grau de certeza:

1. Quase certo

Algo que considera praticamente inevitável que venha a acontecer nos

próximos anos.

Ex. em IA: "A automatização dos conteúdos básicos nos media tornar-se-á generalizada".

2. Provável, mas com incerteza

Algo que considera plausível, mas dependente de muitos fatores ou incertezas.

Ex. em IA: "Generalizar-se-á a utilização de assistentes pessoais baseados em IA".

3. Remoto e com pouca evidência até ao momento

Um cenário que parece distante, mas que não exclui totalmente.

Ex.: "Surgirão novas linguagens de comunicação geradas por IA entre máquinas e seres humanos".

Ao imaginar os cenários futuros, se o considerar oportuno, acrescente detalhes concretos, como marcas, empresas, datas ou momentos específicos. Caso apresente previsões específicas, estas serão particularmente valiosas.

- Recomenda que contactemos outros especialistas?

Annex 3. Set of Scenarios by Category in Spanish, Portuguese and English

-CONTENIDOS Y ENFOQUES- -CONTEÚDOS E ABORDAGENS- -CONTENT AND EDITORIAL APPROACHES-		
Castellano	Português	English
En cuestión de un año, las convocatorias de prensa para presentar novedades organizadas por productoras incluirán tanto a los creadores de contenido como a los medios tradicionales.	Num prazo de um ano, as conferências de imprensa para apresentar novidades, organizadas por produtoras, incluirão tanto os criadores de conteúdos como os meios de comunicação tradicionais.	Within one year, press calls organized by production companies to present new releases will include both content creators and traditional media outlets.
En los próximos 5 años, las plataformas de <i>streaming</i> concentrarán el 50% de los ingresos publicitarios.	Nos próximos cinco anos, as plataformas de <i>streaming</i> irão concentrar 50% das receitas publicitárias.	Within the next five years, streaming platforms will account for approximately 50% of advertising revenue.
En los próximos 5 años, la ciencia volverá a tener presencia en los medios de la mano de alguna crisis relacionada con lo científico.	Nos próximos cinco anos, a ciência voltará a ter presença nos meios de comunicação impulsionada por alguma crise relacionada com o âmbito científico.	Within the next five years, science will once again have a presence in the media as a result of a crisis related to scientific matters.
En esta década se pondrá en marcha un sistema de certificación para la fiabilidad de las fuentes en el marco de una estrategia	Nesta década será implementado um sistema de certificação da fiabilidade das fontes no âmbito de uma estratégia	During this decade, a system for certifying the reliability of sources will be implemented as part of a national science

nacional de divulgación científica.	nacional de divulgação científica.	communication strategy.
Aparecerán radios impulsadas con contenido generado por IA que desplazarán progresivamente la creación humana.	Irão surgir rádios impulsionadas por conteúdos gerados por IA que irão progressivamente deslocar a criação humana.	AI-driven radio formats will emerge and progressively displace human-created content.
-CULTURA PERIODÍSTICA- -CULTURA JORNALÍSTICA- -JOURNALISTIC CULTURE-		
Castellano	Português	English
Surgirá una cultura dual de redacción: se dividirá entre producción rápida precarizada y periodismo profundo de élite, consolidando una jerarquía profesional interna.	Uma cultura dual de redação surgirá: dividir-se-á entre produção rápida precarizada e jornalismo profundo de elite, consolidando uma hierarquia profissional interna.	A dual newsroom culture will emerge: it will be divided between precarious rapid production and elite in-depth journalism, consolidating an internal professional hierarchy.
La salud mental dejará de ser tabú y se integrará como eje estratégico para la sostenibilidad informativa.	A saúde mental deixará de ser tabu e integrar-se-á como eixo estratégico para a sustentabilidade informativa.	Mental health will cease to be a taboo and will become a strategic axis for informational sustainability.
La desconexión digital se institucionalizará como herramienta de retención y calidad profesional.	A desconexão digital institucionalizar-se-á como ferramenta de retenção e qualidade	Digital disconnection will be institutionalized as a tool for retention and professional quality.

	profissional.	
Las redacciones cerradas evolucionarán hacia redes abiertas de cooperación y defensa profesional compartida.	As redações fechadas evoluirão para redes abertas de cooperação e defesa profissional partilhada.	Closed newsrooms will evolve into open networks of cooperation and shared professional advocacy.
El tiempo se reconocerá como recurso estratégico para periodistas y audiencias, y se priorizará la profundidad de los contenidos sobre el volumen de los mismos.	O tempo reconhecer-se-á como recurso estratégico para jornalistas e audiências, e priorizar-se-á a profundidade dos conteúdos em detrimento do volume dos mesmos.	Time will be recognized as a strategic resource for journalists and audiences, and the depth of content will be prioritized over its volume.

-DESARROLLO PROFESIONAL Y FORMACIÓN PERMANENTE-

-DESENVOLVIMENTO PROFISSIONAL E FORMAÇÃO CONTÍNUA-

-PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND CONTINUING EDUCATION-

Castellano	Português	English
El creciente uso de la inteligencia artificial por los periodistas se extenderá a diversos ámbitos más allá de la investigación, transformando la organización de las redacciones.	Uso crescente de inteligência artificial pelos jornalistas irá desenrolar-se-se em diferentes domínios, além da pesquisa, alterando a organização das redações.	The increasing use of artificial intelligence by journalists will extend to multiple areas beyond investigation, transforming the organization of newsrooms.
Los cambios en las empresas de medios, que tendrán menos profesionales y más automatización, afectarán al trabajo periodístico, en	Mudanças nas empresas de mídia, que terão menos profissionais e mais automação afetará trabalho jornalístico, nomeadamente na	Changes in media companies, which will have fewer professionals and more automation, will affect journalistic work, particularly through the homogenization

particular en la homogeneización del lenguaje y en la pérdida semántica y estilística.	homogeneização da linguagem, perda semântica e estilística.	of language and the loss of semantic and stylistic richness.
Los profesionales de los medios recibirán formaciones más frecuentes, continuas y de corta duración, centradas en el uso de la IA y orientadas al desarrollo de competencias narrativas y visuales para entornos y formatos móviles.	Os profissionais dos meios de comunicação receberão formações mais frequentes, contínuas e de curta duração, centradas na utilização da IA e orientadas para o desenvolvimento de competências narrativas e visuais para ambientes e formatos móveis.	Media professionals will receive more frequent, continuous, and short-term training, focused on the use of artificial intelligence and oriented toward the development of narrative and visual skills for mobile environments and formats.
La regulación europea y los acuerdos con las Big Tech podrán mejorar las condiciones para el ejercicio del periodismo y propiciar una mayor captación de audiencias.	Regulação europeia e acordos com Big Tech poderão melhorar as condições para a realização de jornalismo e originar maior captação de públicos.	European regulation and agreements with Big Tech may improve the conditions for practicing journalism and may encourage greater audience acquisition.
La sustitución total de las personas por dispositivos de IA en el periodismo no llegará a materializarse.	Substituição plena de pessoas por dispositivos de IA no jornalismo não se concretizará.	The total replacement of human beings by artificial intelligence systems in journalism will not materialize.
-DESINFORMACIÓN Y ALFABETIZACIÓN MEDIÁTICA- -DESINFORMAÇÃO E LITERACIA MEDIÁTICA- -DISINFORMATION AND MEDIA LITERACY-		
Castellano	Português	English

La UE sacrificará regulación y mecanismos regulatorios en materia de IA con el fin de volverse más competitiva y productiva en términos económicos.	A UE irá sacrificar regulação e mecanismos regulatórios para a IA de forma a tornar-se mais competitiva e produtiva em termos económicos.	The European Union will sacrifice regulation and regulatory mechanisms in the field of artificial intelligence in order to become more competitive and economically productive.
Aumentará la circulación de contenidos deepfake en los medios de comunicación.	A circulação de conteúdos deepfake aumentará nos meios de comunicação social e informativos.	The circulation of deepfake content in the media will increase.
Las medidas existentes de promoción de la alfabetización mediática se ampliarán a los niveles educativos inferiores, en particular a la educación preescolar.	As medidas existentes de promoção da literacia mediática serão expandidas para os níveis mais baixos de ensino, nomeadamente o pré-escolar.	Existing measures to promote media literacy will be extended to lower levels of education, particularly to early childhood education.
En los próximos diez años desaparecerán gran parte de las marcas de fact-checking debido a la debilidad de sus modelos de negocio y de su sostenibilidad.	Nos próximos dez anos desaparecerá grande parte das marcas de fact-checking devido à fragilidade dos seus modelos de negócio e da sua sustentabilidade.	Within the next ten years, a large proportion of fact-checking organizations will disappear due to the fragility of their business models and their lack of sustainability.
En un plazo de diez años, algunas plataformas dominantes se transformarán de manera fundamental o desaparecerán.	Num prazo de dez anos, algumas plataformas dominantes transformar-se-ão de forma fundamental ou desaparecerão.	Within a period of ten years, some dominant platforms will undergo profound transformation or disappear.

-ÉTICA Y TRANSPARENCIA- -ÉTICA E TRANSPARÊNCIA- -ETHICS AND TRANSPARENCY-		
Castellano	Português	English
En los próximos dos o tres años existirá un etiquetado o sistema regulado por ley que obligue a los periodistas a indicar cuándo se ha usado la IA en un trabajo.	Nos próximos dois ou três anos, existirá uma rotulagem ou um sistema regulado por lei que obrigará os jornalistas a indicar quando a inteligência artificial terá sido utilizada num trabalho.	Within the next two or three years, there will be a legally regulated system that will require journalists to indicate when artificial intelligence has been used in a piece of work.
En menos de una década va a surgir una nueva figura profesional llamada "ingeniero moral" encargada de garantizar que las decisiones automatizadas respeten principios éticos, de justicia, transparencia y no discriminación.	Em menos de uma década, surgirá uma nova figura profissional denominada "engenheiro moral", encarregada de garantir que as decisões automatizadas respeitarão princípios éticos, de justiça, transparência e não discriminação.	Within less than a decade, a new professional figure called "moral engineer" will emerge, responsible for ensuring that automated decisions comply with ethical principles, justice, transparency, and non-discrimination.
Cuando el 90% de los contenidos que circulen sean generados por la inteligencia artificial, la verdad se convertirá en una experiencia minoritaria y la ética constituirá la última resistencia cultural.	Quando 90% dos conteúdos que circularem forem gerados por inteligência artificial, a verdade converter-se-á numa experiência minoritária e a ética constituirá a última resistência cultural.	When 90% of the content in circulation is generated by artificial intelligence, truth will become a minority experience, and ethics will constitute the last form of cultural resistance.

En los próximos años, los propios conceptos de "periodista" y de "periodismo" se expandirán, con la consolidación de un periodismo periférico y las implicaciones éticas y deontológicas que esta evolución conlleve.	Nos próximos anos, os próprios conceitos de "jornalista" e de "jornalismo" expandir-se-ão, com a consolidação de um jornalismo periférico e as implicações éticas e deontológicas que essa evolução comportará.	In the coming years, the very concepts of "journalist" and "journalism" will expand, with the consolidation of a form of peripheral journalism and the ethical and professional implications that this evolution entails.
La ola de la inteligencia artificial planteará nuevos desafíos éticos y deontológicos, lo que llevará a un número creciente de medios de comunicación a desarrollar códigos de principios propios para orientar su uso.	A onda da inteligência artificial colocará novos desafios éticos e deontológicos, levando um número crescente de meios de comunicação a desenvolver códigos de princípios próprios para orientar a sua utilização.	The wave of artificial intelligence will raise new ethical and deontological challenges, which will lead an increasing number of media organizations to develop their own codes of principles to guide its use.
-IA, BIG DATA Y ALTA TECNOLOGÍA- -IA, BIG DATA E ALTA TECNOLOGIA- -AI, BIG DATA AND HIGH TECHNOLOGY-		
Castellano	Português	English
En los próximos cinco años, los acuerdos de licencia de contenido entre plataformas (laboratorios e intermediarios) y medios supondrán alrededor del 20% de los ingresos del sector.	Nos próximos cinco anos, os acordos de licenciamento de conteúdo entre plataformas (laboratórios e intermediários) e meios de comunicação representarão cerca de 20% das receitas totais do setor.	Within the next five years, content licensing agreements between platforms (laboratories and intermediaries) and media organizations will represent around 20% of the total revenue of the sector.

Antes de 2028, entre el 25% y el 40% del tráfico de los medios procederá de plataformas de inteligencia artificial.	Antes de 2028, entre 25% e 40% do tráfego total dos meios de comunicação procederá de plataformas de inteligência artificial.	Before 2028, between 25% and 40% of total media traffic will come from artificial intelligence platforms.
Dentro de cinco años, un periodista que no utilice herramientas de IA generativa para su trabajo no tendrá empleo	Dentro de cinco anos, um jornalista que não utilizar ferramentas de inteligência artificial generativa no seu trabalho não terá emprego.	Within five years, a journalist who does not use generative artificial intelligence tools in their work will not have employment.
En los próximos cinco años, surgirán nuevos dispositivos que sustituirán al teléfono móvil, como gafas o lentes de contacto.	Nos próximos cinco anos, novos dispositivos tecnológicos substituirão o telemóvel, como óculos ou lentes de contacto inteligentes.	Within the next five years, new technological devices will replace the mobile phone, such as smart glasses or contact lenses.
En cinco años, las audiencias regresarán a marcas informativas de referencia (nacionales y globales) ante el exceso de información y desinformación generada por IA.	Em cinco anos, as audiências regressarão a marcas informativas de referência (nacionais e globais) perante o excesso de informação e desinformação gerado por inteligência artificial.	Within five years, audiences will return to leading news brands (both national and global) due to the excess of information and disinformation generated by artificial intelligence.
-INDUSTRIA, NEGOCIO, MARCA Y COMERCIALIZACIÓN- -INDÚSTRIA, NEGÓCIO, MARCA E COMERCIALIZAÇÃO- -MEDIA INDUSTRY, BUSINESS, BRANDING AND COMMERCIALIZATION-		
Castellano	Português	English

Los medios que no logren transformar su modelo de negocio hacia uno con una relación directa con el usuario tendrán serias dificultades para sobrevivir en el nuevo entorno.	Os meios de comunicação que não conseguirem transformar o seu modelo de negócio para uma relação direta com o usuário terão sérias dificuldades para sobreviver no novo ambiente.	Media organizations that do not succeed in transforming their business model toward one based on a direct relationship with users will face serious difficulties in surviving in the new environment.
Los agentes de IA dominarán el consumo mediático y conectarán los soportes, canales y medios creando una nueva interfaz informativa dominante.	Os agentes de IA vão dominar o consumo mediático e vão conectar os suportes, canais e meios, criando uma nova interface informativa dominante.	Artificial intelligence agents will dominate media consumption and will connect platforms, channels, and media outlets, creating a new dominant informational interface.
La relación de reciprocidad entre los medios y Google evolucionará hacia fórmulas de pago o compensación por el acceso automatizado a contenidos.	A relação de reciprocidade entre os meios de comunicação e a Google vai mudar para modelos de pagamento ou compensação pelo acesso automatizado aos conteúdos.	The relationship of reciprocity between media organizations and Google will evolve toward formulas of payment or compensation for automated access to content.
Surgirá un formato inmersivo en un universo de metarrealidad que permitirá a la audiencia "vivir" la información sin necesidad de leer, oír o ver por separado, recreando universos virtuales que le permitan viajar mentalmente al acontecimiento para informarse	Surgirá um formato imersivo num universo de metarrealidade que permitirá à audiência "viver" a informação sem necessidade de ler, ouvir ou ver separadamente, recriando universos virtuais que lhe permitam viajar mentalmente até ao acontecimento para se informar.	An immersive format will emerge within a metareality environment that will allow audiences to "experience" information without the need to read, listen, or watch separately.

Los medios tradicionales tendrán serias dificultades para adaptarse a la transición hacia la IA y continuará la reducción de costes en las redacciones.	Os meios de comunicação tradicionais enfrentarão sérias dificuldades de adaptação à transição para a IA e prosseguirá a redução de custos e de equipas nas redações.	Traditional media organizations will face serious difficulties in adapting to the transition toward artificial intelligence, and the reduction of costs in newsrooms will continue.
-LEGISLACIÓN Y POLÍTICAS PÚBLICAS- -LEGISLAÇÃO E POLÍTICAS PÚBLICAS- -LEGISLATION AND PUBLIC POLICY-		
Castellano	Português	English
La regulación europea comunitaria en materia de plataformas digitales será de mínimos, mientras que los Estados adoptarán las directivas comunitarias sin ir más allá, mostrando su incapacidad para regular por separado esta cuestión.	A regulação europeia comunitária em matéria de plataformas digitais assumirá um programa de mínimos, enquanto os Estados adotarão as diretivas comunitárias sem ir além, demonstrando a sua incapacidade para regular separadamente esta questão.	European Union regulation in the field of digital platforms will be minimal, while Member States will adopt EU directives without going further, demonstrating their inability to regulate this issue independently.
Europa desarrollará un marco normativo para la inteligencia artificial que trate de equilibrar la libertad de actuación económica con la protección de los derechos fundamentales y las libertades públicas.	A Europa desenvolverá um quadro normativo para a inteligência artificial que procurará equilibrar a liberdade de atuação económica com a proteção dos direitos fundamentais e das liberdades públicas.	Europe will develop a regulatory framework for artificial intelligence that seeks to balance economic freedom with the protection of fundamental rights and public liberties.

Las administraciones impulsarán políticas de alfabetización mediática y de protección digital de la infancia, en parte como respuesta a la presión organizada de familias y sociedad civil.	As administrações promoverão políticas de literacia mediática e de proteção digital da infância, em parte como resposta à pressão organizada das famílias e da sociedade civil.	Public administrations will promote policies of media literacy and digital protection of children, partly in response to organized pressure from families and civil society.
Los avances legislativos en materia de medios promoverán mayores niveles de transparencia en las empresas informativas y contribuirán a la reducción de la desinformación.	Os avanços legislativos em matéria de meios de comunicação promoverão níveis mais elevados de transparência nas empresas informativas e contribuirão para a redução da desinformação.	Legislative advances in the media sector will promote higher levels of transparency in news organizations and will contribute to the reduction of disinformation.
Los gobiernos mantendrán un servicio público de medios más reducido y las políticas se centrarán en desarrollar la sostenibilidad económica del periodismo, en función del signo político de cada ejecutivo.	Os governos manterão um serviço público de meios de comunicação mais reduzido e as políticas centrar-se-ão no desenvolvimento da sustentabilidade económica do jornalismo, em função do signo político de cada executivo.	Governments will maintain a reduced public media service, and policies will focus on developing the economic sustainability of journalism, depending on the political orientation of each administration.
-NARRATIVAS, FORMATOS E HIBRIDACIÓN- -NARRATIVAS, FORMATOS E HIBRIDAÇÃO- -NARRATIVES, FORMATS AND HYBRIDIZATION-		
Castellano	Português	English
El enfoque editorial se verá revalorizado frente a la	O enfoque editorial será revalorizado face à	The editorial approach will be revalued in the face of an

obsesión por narrativas “shiny” o tecnológicamente llamativas.	obsessão por narrativas “shiny” ou tecnologicamente apelativas.	obsession with “shiny” or technologically driven narratives.
Los resúmenes informativos en formato vídeo corto y automatizado se consolidarán, inspirados en estructuras como Reels o TikToks, con un enfoque factual basado en evidencias.	Os resumos informativos em formato de vídeo curto e automatizado consolidar-se-ão, inspirados em estruturas como Reels ou TikToks, com um enfoque factual baseado em evidências.	Informative summaries in short and automated video format will become consolidated, inspired by formats such as Reels or TikTok, with a factual approach based on evidence.
Se crearán interfaces que permitirán a los lectores elegir qué contenidos consumir y en qué formato, obligando a equilibrar personalización, criterio periodístico y responsabilidad social.	Interfaces serão criadas e permitirão aos leitores escolher quais conteúdos consumir e em que formato, obrigando os meios de comunicação a equilibrar personalização, critério jornalístico e responsabilidade social.	Interfaces will be created that will allow readers to choose which content to consume and in which format, requiring a balance between personalization, journalistic criteria, and social responsibility.
La sonificación de datos y los mapas sonoros ganarán relevancia como alternativas a la visualización tradicional.	A sonificação de dados e os mapas sonoros ganharão relevância como alternativas à visualização tradicional.	The sonification of data and sound maps will gain relevance as alternatives to traditional visualization.
El periodismo inmersivo vivirá un regreso a largo plazo, impulsado por una mayor madurez tecnológica, experiencias previas aprendidas y nuevos dispositivos más accesibles.	O jornalismo imersivo viverá um regresso a longo prazo, impulsionado por uma maior maturidade tecnológica, experiências prévias aprendidas e novos dispositivos mais acessíveis.	Immersive journalism will experience a long-term return, driven by greater technological maturity, lessons learned from previous experiences, and the emergence of more accessible devices.

-RELACIÓN CON EL PÚBLICO: INTERACTIVIDAD Y PARTICIPACIÓN- -RELAÇÃO COM O PÚBLICO: INTERATIVIDADE E PARTICIPAÇÃO- -RELATIONSHIP WITH THE PUBLIC: INTERACTIVITY AND PARTICIPATION-		
Castellano	Português	English
El periodismo mantendrá un distanciamiento con las audiencias, un fenómeno que se asocia con el desinterés en la información, la pérdida de credibilidad y la desconfianza. Los proyectos pequeños serán la excepción.	Jornalismo vai manter-se afastado das audiências e este fenómeno terá efeito no desinteresse pela informação, na perda de credibilidade e desconfiança. Os projetos de nicho serão a exceção.	Journalism will maintain a distance from audiences, a phenomenon associated with a lack of interest in information, the loss of credibility, and distrust, with small projects being the exception.
Las audiencias estarán cada vez más polarizadas y la participación negativa, materializada a través de comentarios basados en un discurso incivilizado, cobrará relevancia.	As audiências estarão cada vez mais polarizadas e a participação negativa, concretizada através de comentários incivilizados, ganhará relevância.	Audiences will become increasingly polarized, and negative participation, materialized through comments based on uncivil discourse, will become more prominent.
La relación entre el periodismo y sus audiencias estará marcada por la centralidad de los algoritmos, que se configuran como mediadores.	A relação entre o jornalismo e as suas audiências será marcada pela centralidade dos algoritmos, que se configurarão como mediadores.	The relationship between journalism and its audiences will be marked by the central role of algorithms, which will act as mediators.
El periodismo dejará de ocupar una posición privilegiada en la comunicación con las audiencias; se incorporarán a este espacio los	Jornalismo deixa de ser ator privilegiado na comunicação com públicos, juntando-se influencers e produtores	Journalism will cease to occupy a privileged position in communication with audiences; influencers and independent producers will

influencers y los productores independientes.	independentes.	occupy that space.
Surgirán nuevos modelos de medición de audiencias que actuarán de forma crossmedia incluyendo IA y datos biométricos para registrar la atención y el interés.	Surgirão novos modelos de medição de audiências que atuarão de forma crossmedia, incluindo inteligência artificial e dados biométricos para registrar a atenção e o interesse.	New audience measurement models will emerge that will operate in a cross-media manner, incorporating artificial intelligence and biometric data in order to record attention and interest.

IBERIFIER – Iberian Digital Media Observatory

IBERIFIER is a digital media observatory in Spain and Portugal funded by the European Commission, linked to the European Digital Media Observatory (EDMO). It is made up of thirteen universities, five fact-checking organizations and news agencies, and five multidisciplinary research centers.

Its main mission is to analyze the Iberian digital media ecosystem and tackle the problem of misinformation. To do this, it focuses its research on five lines of work:

1. Research on the characteristics and trends of the Iberian digital media ecosystem.
2. Development of computational technologies for the early detection of misinformation.
3. Fact-checking of misinformation in the Iberian territory.
4. Strategic reports on threats of disinformation, both for public knowledge and for the authorities of Spain and Portugal.
5. Promotion of media literacy initiatives, aimed at journalists and informants, young people and society as a whole.

For more information, look at the project website and its social media accounts:

Website: iberifier.eu

X: [@iberifier](https://twitter.com/iberifier)

Instagram: [@iberifier](https://www.instagram.com/iberifier)

LinkedIn: [IBERIFIER](https://www.linkedin.com/company/iberifier)

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