

# Adoption of AI by Changemakers Globally



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Words like ChatGPT, automation, and algorithms seem to be crawling into even more aspects of our lives today. AI is the new buzz word; however Artificial Intelligence has its origins since 1956 from an interdisciplinary research proposal “to understand human thought, particularly logic as a mechanical process of symbol manipulation” (McCarthy, Shannon, Rochester). This idea attempting to reverse engineer the human brain has taken many divergences, also finding definitions of AI that are more human centred. Prof. Julia Stoyanovich within her course “We are All AI” developed in NYU, presents this term as “(AI) refers to computer systems that use algorithms to learn from data in order to make decisions on our behalf or help us make decisions”.

Fast-forward to 2023, **OpenAI** introduced the tool ChatGPT. This generative AI is a technology that functions through natural language prompts creating text, images, and other formats by harvesting data it's been trained on. Since its launch, this AI chatbot system has been used by millions of users. We can say, it is accessible and user-friendly, and responds to tasks for a wide range of roles, for which it has gained its popularity. ChatGPT and other text and image generating AI tools are transforming the landscape for impact organisations and media makers active in the digital sphere. There are many aspects in which these tools are making the use of digital media more dynamic, and in which we might encounter innovative ways to enhance the impact of our interventions and ways of working.

At **RNW Media** we focus on young people centred solutions that bring about social impact. As an international media accelerator, we engage with changemakers worldwide, adapting our approach to digital technologies while prioritizing user-centered solutions.

To gain deeper understanding of the adoption and impact of AI technology among digital media professionals, we reached out to our vibrant community, **Vine**. This dynamic network serves as a hub for innovation, fostering ideas, connections, and inspiration. Comprising 25 organizations, over 80 digital media experts, and more than 6,000 alumni of RNTC (RNW Media’s Training Centre), Vine provides a fertile ground for exploring the transformative role of AI in the media landscape.

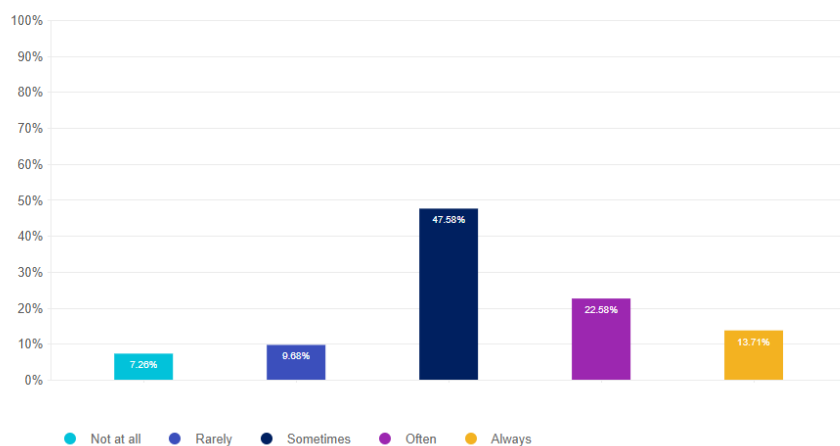
# Introduction

This brief serves as a concise overview of how changemakers have adopted AI in their work, especially in contexts where English is not the primary language, and further understands the advantages and challenges faced. We present a survey conducted in January 2024 and the answers of 124 individuals from the Vine, active in the development and digital media sectors. Additionally, we also present responses from interviews with 8 network member organisations from Lebanon, Kenya, Mali, Yemen, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), and Uganda.

RNW Media’s insights based on the answers from changemakers will be detailed in the next pages. Firstly, presenting an overall usage of AI and main purposes for using it. Secondly, we will outline some concrete examples of different approaches using AI for content creation. Finally, we will present current challenges and opportunities.

How often do you use AI at work?

Answered: 124 Skipped: 0



The majority of respondents ranged from using AI for work sometimes (specific tasks) to using it often or always. Only a few respondents mentioned not using AI at all for their work. The most common tools mentioned were ChatGPT (86 times), Bard (14 times), Transcription services (7 times) and Quillbot (4 times).

# Key Take Aways

Based on participants responses and our analysis we encounter that digital media professionals are starting to use AI technologies more and more for different aspects of their work, specially finding great benefits when it comes to productivity and enhancing their skills for creativity and strategic approaches.

## AI: Catalyst for Creativity and Quality Delivery

AI is cited by respondents as a catalyst for creativity, with tools providing new insights, suggestions, and generating creative content. This not only speeds up their processes but also introduces novel ideas and approaches that might not have been considered otherwise.

Likewise, AI's ability to analyze large datasets and provide accurate predictions or corrections (e.g., in writing or data analysis) is highlighted as a key factor in enhancing the quality of work. Tools like grammar checkers, data analysis software, and design aids contribute to reducing errors and improving output quality.

### **AI Impact: Time Saving and Strategic Agility**

Respondents reported that AI tools significantly reduce the time needed to complete various tasks by automating routine and repetitive activities. Especially, relevant to media makers with tight deadlines since this allows them to focus on more complex and strategic work.

When it comes to strategic agility, it is evident that the speed at which AI tools can process information and provide insights enhances decision-making processes. This agility allows individuals and organizations to respond more rapidly to environmental changes and opportunities.

### **AI Supporting Language Tasks and Multilingual Capabilities**

Not surprising, however important to note is how AI tools are harnessed by changemakers in diverse language environments. Respondents highlighted the positive impact on efficiency, indicating AI tools assist with language-related tasks, including vocabulary enhancement, writing improvement, and language confidence.

At an organizational level, for example, partner organization Raseef22 has integrated ChatGPT into their Content Management System (CMS) to facilitate article translation across multiple languages, particularly English and Farsi. According to Raseef22, "this tool is positioned to significantly broaden our linguistic capabilities, enabling us to explore new language territories, particularly in situations where dedicated translators might be unavailable."

## **Current Usage**

Partner organisations shared concrete examples of how they have been using AI tools and its advantages.

### **AI for Media Content**

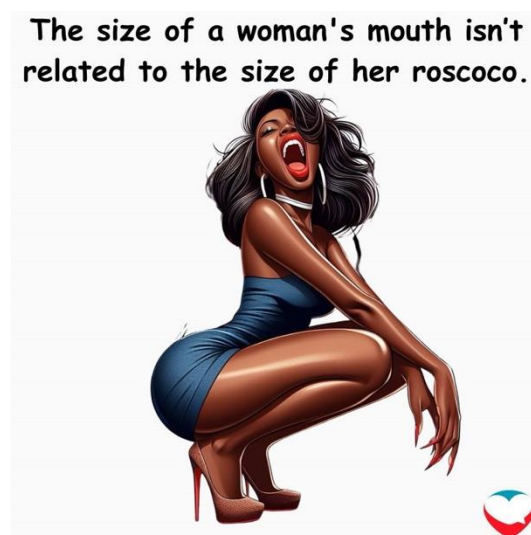
Raseef22, which is an independent media covering Arab affairs, has initiated multiple projects for optimizing content processes, which has resulted in extending their audience's reach.

As a media organisation, search engine optimization (SEO) is a priority for growing organically their online presence. Their first and intuitive implementation was to use ChatGPT to automate the generation of SEO-friendly titles and summaries. This helped to streamline their editorial workflow, allowing editors to concentrate on crucial content refinement, while reinforcing good SEO practices. For Raseef22 one of the main learnings has been "the significance of refining prompts and keeping them up to date. Ensuring that prompts evolve with the dynamic nature of our content and audience preferences is crucial for the optimal performance of AI models. It highlights the necessity of constant adaptation to enhance the precision and relevance of generated content, particularly in SEO-focused tasks".

Currently, they are embarking on an innovative integration of AI into their website by incorporating ChatGPT and Murf (an AI voice generator program). This initiative seeks to transform articles into concise summaries narrated by an AI voice. Beyond catering to the preferences of the younger audience with shorter attention spans, it enhances accessibility for visually impaired individuals. This approach also presents exciting possibilities, such as providing pre-made scripts and voices for Instagram Reels and podcasts, resulting in considerable time and resource savings. Their team is diligently working on the technical aspects of this AI integration to ensure a seamless and user-friendly experience.

### **AI for Contextualizing Images**

Love Matters Africa is an organisation based in Kenya providing information on sex and sexual health for young people online. For them, Ai has been very beneficial to contextualize their images. Or partner shared “one of the key learnings is that AI offers the flexibility and options to contextualize images such that they act as relatable representations of the audience we serve in terms of elements such as style skin colour, and settings. The second advantage is that this technology allows us to align images with emerging/trending issues. The third advantage is that we can capture emotions to the images that align with the mood of the post.” Additionally, their audience has reacted positively and with curiosity to the AI generated images, further inquiring moderators on information regarding tools used to create these images.



### **AI for Reaching Youth about Sensitive Topics**

The organisation Reach a Hand Uganda (RAHU), who is a youth-centered non-profit organization with focused on youth empowerment programs, embraces change and diversity, particularly in their approach to serving young people.

Recognizing the evolving landscape of technology, they have integrated AI into the programming to provide better sexual reproductive health (SRH) information and services. This includes using

an AI chatbot accessible via WhatsApp (+256764364876), ensuring young people can access accurate SRHR information confidentially, despite societal norms. This allows them to interact with young people in a timely manner and empower them with knowledge and resources necessary, enabling them to make informed decisions about their sexual health.

RAHU has shared as main learnings:

- AI tools must be designed with user accessibility in mind, ensuring that young people, including those in rural or marginalized communities, can easily access and benefit from these resources.
- Privacy and confidentiality are very important therefore AI platforms should prioritize privacy safeguards to protect sensitive (health) information and maintain trust among users.
- Cultural sensitivity is crucial which means that AI solutions must be culturally sensitive and tailored to the specific needs and norms of the target population to effectively engage and educate young people about sexual health.
- Ongoing evaluation and improvement are essential.

Responses from the survey also showed the significant role of AI in various industries, particularly in journalism, art, education, and marketing; as for research, and professional skill development.

**AI in Art and Education:** *"I am now relying on AI for the artwork I do using several tools, even I started teaching my student AI art and how to write the right prompts to get the photo you want. So, I am depending on it know I just can't ignore it's there."*

**AI in Journalism:** *"I was experiencing a problem for a perfect start on a recent fire incident that left a mother and child killed. In the process, I prepared a draft and then took help to rewrite the story, which later published in the newspaper."*

**AI in Radio Broadcasting:** *"As a radio host, I use AI to enhance content creation for my show as well as engaging my audience. AI-driven recommendation engines assist me in playlist curation based on listener preferences and ensuring a personalized experience."*

**AI in Research:** *"For topics I am not too familiar with, I use ChatGPT to research on and it brings out a whole lot of data for me to read. Recently, as I worked on a concept note for a project, I got lost for ideas, but researching through ChatGPT, I got so many ideas to consider, and I was able to put up a strong concept note."*

## Challenges & Considerations

While AI technologies offer significant boosts to efficiency and agility, respondents also acknowledge certain challenges, particularly the need to learn how to effectively utilize these tools. They emphasize the importance of understanding both the capabilities and limitations of AI as a necessary skill to fully maximize its benefits. It's essential to consider the global disparities in AI development and adoption, as the social and economic advantages of AI tend

to be concentrated primarily in the Global North.<sup>1</sup> For instance, our partner from the DRC highlighted that ChatGPT was launched much later in 2023, which impacted their ability to adopt AI for digital media activities effectively.

As tasks are increasingly delegated to AI systems, there is a growing concern that this trend could lead to a loss of certain skills or the replacement of human jobs. However, it is also crucial to acknowledge that experimenting through trial and error is essential at this stage to understand the full extent of how AI can meet specific needs. For example, a partner shared that eventually, the content generated with AI lacked the uniqueness and creativity required to align with their organization's branding. This highlights the iterative process necessary to refine AI applications and integrate them effectively into existing workflows while preserving fundamental human skills and creativity.

Respondents were no exception to express concerns about the ethical implications of using AI, including data privacy, and morally problematic algorithms. Case studies can be found in which the lack of incorporating an ethical lens in the processes of designing and deploying AIs are amplifying unfair information at a rapid scale, which as media makers there is a need to be aware of.

Students of the International Media Studies Master's degree, a joint program offered by Deutsche Welle, Hochschule Bonn Rhein Sieg and University of Bonn, shared their research where they analyzed the prevalence of sexualization in AI-generated depictions of women. After producing 1113 images as a sample following some prompts via four AI tools—Stable Diffusion, DALL-E, NightCafe, and Midjourney, their findings highlighted existing issues of sexualization, particularly in free image generators. “This study underscores the importance of a transversal gender perspective in AI ethics, and advocates for ongoing vigilance and a commitment to developing inclusive technology”.

## Opportunities

### **Implementation of AI considering feedback loops.**

As mentioned before, while implementing AI for tasks like creating concept notes, writing scripts, and generating new ideas offers significant advantages. To fully understand AI's potential, capturing experts' feedback is critical at this stage. On one hand, this can contribute to maintaining certain authenticity, and secondly to incorporate learnings to fine-tune the prompts used for AI tools. Additionally, establishing a feedback loop with the audience is essential, especially for media makers fostering digital communities. Understanding and informing the audience about AI topics fosters meaningful engagement. For example, RAHU finds that while human stories with real photos resonate best with their audience, AI is a good alternative for showcasing products.

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<sup>1</sup> Charlie Beckett and Mira Yaseen (2019) *Generating Change A global survey of what news organisations are doing with AI*. London School Of Economics: [Generating+Change+ +The+Journalism+AI+report+ +English.pdf \(squarespace.com\)](https://www.lse.ac.uk/Research/Research%20Centres/Global%20Journalism/Research%20Reports/Generating+Change+-+The+Journalism+AI+report+-+English.pdf)

**Streamlining AI initiatives at different levels of your organisation.**

While some tasks naturally lend themselves to AI adoption, streamlining workflows benefits everyone in the organization. Although this might seem obvious, creating a regular flow of sharing ideas and experiences on AI adoption within different departments can spark curiosity and make it easier for others with less knowledge to start experimenting with AI.

**AI ethical considerations to innovate with purpose.**

Embracing AI innovation requires careful consideration of cross-cutting topics such as gender, bias, and privacy. Familiarizing yourself with the ethical aspects of AI early on, is key for shaping a diverse and inclusive future. While holding big tech organizations accountable is crucial, we can also begin integrating certain [ethical principles](#) into our daily practices to ensure responsible AI use.