

## The Interdependence of Artificial Intelligence and Global Media Ethics

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### Abstract

The contemporary era is characterized by the rapid development of artificial intelligence and its subsequent impact on various aspects of everyday life. Through the application of artificial intelligence across diverse fields and the examination of its implications from multiple standpoints, researchers have identified numerous ethical dilemmas and concerns related to its utilization. Concurrent with the emergence of artificial intelligence in the early years of the twenty-first century, a novel concept of media ethics has emerged: global media ethics. A central element of this emerging field is the regulation of online communication, encompassing social networks and various media platforms. Based on two seminal ethical theories – deontology and cosmopolitanism, global media ethics elucidates issues in the new environment of media, which traditional media ethics did not examine. In this paper, the analysis starts from the hypothesis that adherence to deontology and cosmopolitanism would bring benefits to society in the context of using artificial intelligence. In this study, we methodically examine advantages and disadvantages of global media ethics, the benefits of artificial intelligence, and its drawbacks in the domain of journalism and social platforms utilized for journalistic activities, including the emergence of citizen journalism. The conclusion drawn from this analysis is that global media ethics aspires to enhance the media environment, and that artificial intelligence, when used responsibly, has the potential to contribute to this enhancement. Furthermore, it has been demonstrated that significant responsibility lies with social media users, who have emerged as pivotal actors in media communication due to their role as media content producers.

*Keywords:* artificial intelligence, media ethics, global media ethics, deontology, cosmopolitanism

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## **The Interdependence of Artificial Intelligence and Global Media Ethics**

### **Introduction**

The development of artificial intelligence in the twenty-first century has greatly influenced and changed human activities in numerous areas of modern life. As different forms of artificial intelligence directly or indirectly have a significant impact on changes in human behavior (Silverman et al., 2016; Benvenutti et al., 2023), they also influence the elements that guide human behavior such as personal ethics and morality. Various areas of artificial intelligence fall under the suspicion of ethical correctness, where the questions of bias, loss of privacy and responsibility, as well as the reduced need to employ people and others are most often raised (Watters, 2023).

Artificial intelligence could be roughly described as “a set of ideas, technologies, and techniques that relate to the capacity of a computing system” (Brennen et al., 2018:1-2). The work process of artificial intelligence is related to the simulation of human intelligence and the processes that take place within it using a machine or software (Laskowski, Tucci, 2023). Considering the fact that our interest is limited to the relationship between artificial intelligence and media, we will list a few examples from that area: various software programs related to marketing, advertising and selection of advertisements; playback of music tracks on different platforms; regulation of censorship and control of publications in the form of truthfulness and various forms of discrimination (Jain, 2025). The development and application of artificial intelligence in the media have resulted in an increase in the number of contents that are entirely created by artificial intelligence or that software based on this technology has assisted in their production (Singh, 2023).

Having undergone major changes over the past decades, media ethics, with its innovations, increasingly strives to become the ethics of digital media. Taking into account that modern media are largely made up of various forms of digital technologies, including artificial intelligence (Dewdney, Ride, 2013), media ethics partly becomes a correlate between already existing information and computer ethics. Additionally, a significant share of influence has been achieved recently by machine and robotic ethics (Ess, 2013).

In this paper, we will attempt to point out ethical problems related to the use of artificial intelligence. We will also analyze contemporary perception of the concept of global media ethics and its interrelationship with artificial intelligence. The general hypothesis of this paper is that digital technologies, led by artificial intelligence as the most significant innovation, largely determine new forms of ethical behavior and decision-making in contemporary media. On the other hand, codes of ethics for media and media organizations should contribute to the theoretical and regulatory foundation of the use of artificial intelligence. To confirm or deny this hypothesis we will rely on literature and references relevant for the topic of this paper

## **Towards Global Media Ethics**

“Global media ethics does not exist, yet, at least not in a complementary form” is the opinion of a researcher in this field from the beginning of this century (Christians et al., 2010: 35). Today, fifteen years later, we can say that global media ethics, in its current form, represents a significant upgrade to existing media ethics.

Following the considerations of one of the founders of the concept of global media ethics, Stephen Ward, we see its purpose of existence. Ward believes that global media ethics seeks to articulate and critically examine the responsibilities of media that are now considered global in content, reach, and influence (Ward, 2013: 1), overcoming local and national frameworks, with the aspiration of encompassing the world on a global scale. In the sequel to his book “Global Media Ethics: Problems and Perspectives”, Ward states that there are two basic causes of the media revolution in the context of global media ethics. First, he cites the emergence of the so-called “mixed news media”, which, in addition to basic informative characteristics, have the ability to interact with the audience and are available online. The second cause is the accelerated globalization of media content and the media in general. According to Ward, these two characteristics of modern media define the goal of global media ethics. They create an agenda and motivate researchers to delve into this topic in more detail. The reasons for which it is necessary to research different aspects of global media ethics are divided into two groups, practical and ethical. Practical reasons relate to the inability of traditional media ethics to resolve the problems faced by contemporary journalism, which already has the epithet of global. Ethical reasons concern new responsibilities of global media, which have a worldwide scope and influence (Ward, 2013: 1-2; Ward, 2020).

The theoretical foundation of global media ethics, viewed from a purely ethical perspective, is based on the concept of “ethics of universal being”. Clifford Christians is an advocate of the view that global media ethics is a concept without physical and geographical limitations, based on universal ethics of human dignity, truth, and peace (Christians, 2010). Therefore, there are two basic models of ethical theories that correspond to the concept of global media ethics. The first concept is related to the so-called “Kantian ethics”, i.e., the deontological approach. The idea is that an individual’s behavior should be viewed through the prism of the behavior of everyone else, as well as the concept of universal moral law (Mateus, 2019). The second concept is an example of cosmopolitanism, in which all people are represented as citizens of the world regardless of the nation and culture from which they originate (Ward, 2021).

Ward’s main hypothesis is that moral globalism, like the theory of cosmopolitanism, must be preferential, but not exclusive, to other views. He further explains it in the spirit of accepting parochial values that should be incorporated into the ethical system (Ward, 2015: 23). Parochial is what is national, regional, local, etc. The opposite of parochial is global. This is not a question of completely erasing differences, on the contrary, differences can be preserved. Parochial values would be nurtured wherever they do not conflict with global values, but where they do, global values would prevail.

Cosmopolitanism originates from two Greek words *kosmos* - world or order and *polis* - city, state. Cosmopolitan (κοσμοπολίτης), literally translated, means a *citizen of the world*. Related to this meaning is the idea of cosmopolitanism among the Stoics. The modern interpretation of this term is that it is about the ideology that all human beings belong to the same political community based on moral equality (Stojadinović, 2016: 80). Cosmopolitanism is based on caring for others. In the media sphere, mainstream media would represent the main forums for discussion, promotion of universal values, and gathering of all media (Stojanović Prelević, 2019).

Deontology, on the other hand, is based on duty. Practice shows that the consequences of certain actions are equated with duties, which originated from the absolutist nature of this theory and the impossibility of applying the categorical imperative in certain situations. The main question in his ethics is: “What should I do?” We can find the answer in Kant’s notion of the categorical imperative as a principle of mind that binds us. This would mean that when choosing an action, one should discard all maxims that cannot be universalized. Kant would reject false promises as a maxim, not because of the consequences that may be bad, but because we cannot make false promises as a general principle (O’Neil, 1997).

In the combination of deontological and cosmopolitan ethics, Ward finds a solution to the problem of traditional media ethics. In this way, individual duties and universal values are highlighted.

In the context of the discussion on global media ethics, Ward proposes the creation of radical ethics, i.e., the codification of all new forms of communication – online journalism, data journalism, brand journalism, citizen journalism, etc. According to him, future ethics should look like this: ethics of the new media ecology; ethics of using new media, ethics of interpretation and expression of opinion; ethics of activism and ethics of a global democratic society (Ward, 2014: 51). All of this points to new forms of communication that have been present for a long time, for instance, journalists are using social media posts, fact-based journalism is replacing interpretive journalism, activism is developing in contrast to investigative journalism, while the ethics of a global democratic society directly refers to free and responsible news publishing (Stojanović Prelević, 2019).

### **Ethical Reasons for Researching Global Media Ethics**

Global media ethics should be researched through a synergy of both practical and ethical reasons. The development of technology and digitization caused the emergence of new forms of journalism and new relationships between the audience and the media. The number of content producers has also multiplied due to the emergence of social networks. Artificial intelligence has found its usage in journalism. Among the new forms of journalism, we highlight data journalism, citizen journalism, and brand journalism. The media has long had its own online editions, so the need to redefine ethics is urgent. Here we highlight an important relationship of global media ethics, which covers the areas of new forms of journalism, behavior on social networks, and political activism,

to traditional media ethics, namely that global ethics is based on traditional ethics (Stojanović Prelević, 2022). The values that were valid in traditional media ethics remain global, although there may be changes in interpretation and representation. Moreover, we can notice that the new innovative forms have a completely different appearance and a different relationship to values in the sense of giving importance or priority. Thus, in brand journalism, the value of independence is not significant, while telling the truth is. Therefore, many will say that brand journalism is not journalism at all, but content marketing or public relations (Koch et al., 2021). We can say that citizen journalism respects the value of independence, but it can happen that the truth is not respected. On the other hand, it happens that mainstream media do not respect any of these principles in some situations due to the presence of censorship and self-censorship, which leads to a crisis in the journalistic profession, a decline in trust in the media, etc. As citizen users of social media become *prosumers*,<sup>5</sup> ethics is also desirable in their actions in the media sphere. Social networks can help organize and act on behalf of certain groups. An example of this are the student protests in Serbia at the end of November 2024. Social media not only helped connect students from different cities, but also had a greater impact thanks to the mass of social networks and posts on social networks that were objective and timely, unlike the reporting of most media in Serbia, including the national service. In modern society, we increasingly talk about responsibility, and in reality, everyone who posts or comments is responsible for the message they send. Codification of values according to Word could regulate this behavior. Considering the fact that codes in the field of journalism have existed for a long time and yet we encounter great disregard for the codes, we are pessimistic that the existence of codes can help in ethical behavior. Ethical education must be a priority, namely learning global media ethics, as this would first encourage social media users to respect ethical values proposed in ethical codes when producing media content or publications.

### **Ethics of Artificial Intelligence and Media Ethics**

Artificial intelligence and media ethics, or the media, have common problems and challenges that they face. The basic problem is the problem of definition; neither artificial intelligence nor media ethics have a standard and generally accepted definition, which results in difficulty in resolving the ethical problems they face. The lack of a definition significantly slows down and complicates the understanding of concepts as well as determining the limits of their actions. The widespread adoption of machine learning in the 2010s, fueled by advances in big data and computing power, brought new ethical challenges. As Stryker explains, these new challenges are: bias, transparency and the use of personal data. Additionally, AI ethics emerged as a distinct discipline during this period as tech companies and AI research institutions sought to proactively manage their AI efforts responsibly (Stryker, 2024).

The main ethical problems of artificial intelligence can be divided into several groups, i.e., categories: 1. Human rights ethics – unequal access to artificial

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<sup>5</sup> Prosumers are producers and users of media content.

intelligence; 2. Moral philosophy – artificial intelligence should be endowed with a moral component, and simply make judgments and conclusions (Bryson, 2018); 3. Information ethics – requirements and conditions for the dissemination, management and use of information; 4. Ethics of prejudice – artificial intelligence to a certain extent produces biased results; 5. Ethics of responsibility – the question arises of who is responsible for its mistakes; 6. Ethical ecology – the use of artificial intelligence requires consumption of a large amount of energy (Li et al., 2019: 102-103).

The causes of ethical problems related to artificial intelligence can be divided into four groups. The first group consists of technical limitations. Artificial intelligence bases its work on learning algorithms, while it still lags behind the domain of human and moral values. The second group includes deficiencies in ethical principles. The development of technology has led to an increasingly frequent perception of man through the prism of materialism, where the boundaries between humans and machines are increasingly blurred. The third group of reasons is related to the incorrect creation of artificial intelligence policy. The policy of the work of artificial intelligence directs its focus mainly on the technical and economic aspects, while the sociological and philosophical, i.e., ethical aspects remain marginalized. The fourth group consists of the reasons for insufficiently perfected mechanisms of supervision and work control (Li et al., 2019: 103).

When it comes to media ethics, we have already mentioned that it deals with the evaluation of media activity, that is, the ethical and moral correctness and incorrectness of media reporting. The way the media reports and broadcasts certain content, as well as the selection of that content, often encourages the emergence of ethical dilemmas. One of the everyday cases of inappropriate media reporting is bias. On the other hand, one of the basic media postulates is neutrality and objectivity in the selection and transmission of information (Puglisi et al., 2015). Moreover, the basic principles such as truthfulness, independence and impartiality, which have the status of inviolability in the ethical behavior of the media (Celiberti et al. 2015), are frequently violated and neglected to a great extent.

Looking at the ethical challenges and problems faced by artificial intelligence and the media, we see that to some extent these problems coincide, that is, they are similar in certain characteristics. However, this does not necessarily lead to the conclusion that these are the only ethical problems; instead, they are an intersection, or rather, their common problems. The way in which seemingly the same problems and dilemmas will be resolved will not be identical, given that they constitute different areas. Although we talk about the media as being ethical or unethical, it should be kept in mind that the media is made up of media workers who determine such status. We also believe that artificial intelligence is not responsible in itself, but that part of the responsibility also falls on the engineers, programmers, and designers who designed and configured it, as well as on technology companies and users themselves.

Nevertheless, the term “responsible AI” is used in practice. Responsible artificial intelligence (AI) is described as a set of principles that help guide the design, development, deployment and use of AI—building trust in AI solutions



that have the potential to empower organizations and their stakeholders (Stryker, 2024). AI must be trustworthy. In addition, it must be transparent, which is very important for stakeholders. Veeneendaal indicates the following risks of using AI: errors or incorrect data, bias and discrimination, lack of interpretability, performance instability, inability to scale, costly penalties and fines (Veenendaal, n.d.). Principles for responsible use of AI are: fairness and inclusiveness, privacy and security, transparency, accountability, reliability and safety. In order to implement such principles in practice, it is necessary to have a strategic plan for implementing responsible AI.

### **Artificial intelligence and Journalism – the Examples of ChatGPT and Deepfake**

The emergence of ChatGPT has greatly facilitated the work of many professions. ChatGPT can be most simply described as an artificial intelligence bot that can answer questions, write essays and program computers. This is one of the largest AI models for language processing, with as many as 175 billion parameters (Danas, 2023; Ortiz, 2024). The main feature is that it has the ability to generate text as a human would in a text box, therefore it is suitable for chatbots, conversational systems, and virtual assistants. These are the actions it can do: write code, write an article, translate text, debug a program, and write a story/poem (Danas, 2023; Ortiz, 2024). However, this bot still does not know everything, mistakes and untruths can be sneaked in. One of the professions where it is used is journalism. But not all journalists have a positive attitude toward the usage of ChatGPT. Selma Fukelj for Media Center says *“Most of the journalists we talked to about GenAI state either that they have not used its tools so far or after testing they decided not to use them because they doubt the veracity of the information it provides. Ethics is one of the reasons why journalists refuse to use these tools in their work”* (Fukelj, 2023).

The World Association of Newspapers and News Publishers (WAN-IFRA) surveyed journalists, editors and media professionals last year in April and May to see how much they use GenAI tools. A total of 101 participants from all over the world took part, half of whom stated that they already use these tools in their work. A fifth of all participants have guidelines on how to use them. The biggest reason for using them is that they can summarize information and simplify research and investigation (Fukelj, 2023).

Pamela Howard, at a webinar held in February 2023 on global crisis reporting, spoke about the advantages and disadvantages of ChatGPT in journalism. This tool is also useful for journalists whose native language is not English. Simplifying the text and translating particularly specialized pieces of text helps journalists to better understand the topic. It can also be helpful for interview writing, especially when it comes to preparation. The journalist asks a question and the software then creates new questions based on the given ones. Another useful feature is the sub-editor. Journalists can submit their articles for final review and then send them to the editor after editing. However, fact-checking is essential (Cemaj Hochstein, 2023).

Regarding the use of deepfakes in journalism, Deanna Ritchie says: “As it stands, the impact of deepfakes can already be felt in industries like entertainment, politics, and social media. Sectors like journalism – considered a cornerstone of various societies – are also not exempt. For some, this could be a worrying trend”.

Deepfakes use a form of artificial intelligence called deep learning to create images of fake events. This technology applies not only to videos, but also to photos and audio. Even an entire identity could be created using deepfake technology.

Here are the areas in which a deepfake can blur the line between reality and fiction:

1. Threat to the truth of information and news,
2. Require more work and research,
3. Enable the rise of alternative realities (Cemaj Hochstein, 2023).

Consequently, deepfake technology allows for the creation of more sophisticated images and videos and makes it easy to manipulate the audience. In journalism, timeliness is the most important element, along with accuracy, but due to the emergence of deepfake, the veracity of information must be verified for a longer time. Ritchie explains that the Wall Street Journal has an internal working group to detect deepfakes. There is also the danger of the Mandela effect, because people remember information they see first for a long time even if it is false. Therefore, caution is recommended.

## **Conclusion**

The basic problem of global media ethics is its lack of foundation. In this paper, we are specifically referring to its academic foundation, which will bring increased interest among researchers, which later leads to its definition and acceptance by other disciplines. The tendency towards changes due to the impact of technology on global media ethics allows for assistance from artificial intelligence, given that much of the media contains some form of artificial intelligence. Its improvement, both theoretical and practical, will contribute to the development of the media both locally and globally. As artificial intelligence takes on a global scale, addressing ethical issues surrounding the use of AI can help lay the foundation for global ethics in the media field. From the aspects of cosmopolitanism and deontology, one should be very careful with the use of AI, or even exclusive. Deepfake is particularly dangerous because it undermines reality, and we can conclude that it is not a good tool for journalism or has not yet proven to be good. There are justifications for using ChatGPT: easier search, data collection, etc. The initial hypothesis of this paper, which assumes that artificial intelligence as a leading digital innovation significantly influences ethical behavior and decision-making in modern media, has been confirmed.

The interdependence of global media ethics and artificial intelligence is also realized through the development of both fields. In recent years, the media has increasingly assumed the global status, thanks to artificial intelligence, which



requires additional research into media ethics; in this case, it becomes global. On the other hand, artificial intelligence, in addition to the practical development that occurs during its specific application in the media, is also experiencing a higher-quality theoretical definition. In the near future, media researchers will increasingly deal with artificial intelligence as an integral part of the structure of media systems, while resolving ethical problems will contribute to the institutionalization of global media ethics.

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## **Veštačka inteligencija i globalna medijska etika – međuzavisnost**

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### **Apstrakt**

Svedoci smo brzog razvoja veštačke inteligencije i njenog uticaja na svakodnevni život. Primenujući veštačku inteligenciju u različitim sferama i posmatrajući je iz različitih perspektiva, istraživači su se susreli sa brojnim etičkim dilemama i nedoumicama vezanim za njeno korišćenje. Paralelno sa veštačkom inteligencijom u prvim decenijama dvadeset prvog veka razvija se novi koncept medijske etike – „globalna medijska etika“. Ona bi trebalo da reguliše i komunikaciju u onlajn sferi, od društvenih mreža do različitih medijskih platformi. Utemeljena na dvema etičkim teorijama – deontološkoj i kosmopolitskoj, globalna medijska etika objašnjava probleme u novom medijskom okruženju, koje tradicionalna medijska etika nije ispitivala. U ovom radu polazimo od hipoteze da bi poštovanje deontologije i kosmopolitizma donelo benefite društvu kada je reč o korišćenju veštačke inteligencije. Ovde ispitujemo prednosti i nedostatke globalne medijske etike, zatim prednosti upotrebe veštačke inteligencije i njene loše strane, kada je reč o sferi novinarstva, i društvenih platformi korišćenih za novinarsko delovanje, ovde mislimo i na pojavu građanskog novinarstva. Zaključak je, da globalna medijska etika ima pretenzija da učini medijsko okruženje povoljnijim za društvo i da veštačka inteligencija korišćena odgovorno to isto okruženje može učiniti prijatnijim. Dalje, pokazalo se da je velika odgovornost na samim korisnicima društvenih medija i da su oni podjednako važni akteri u medijskoj komunikaciji, s obzirom da i oni postaju proizvođači medijskog sadržaja.

*Ključne reči:* veštačka inteligencija, medijska etika, globalna medijska etika, deontologija, kosmopolitizam

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