

NEWPATH SYMPOSIUM EVALUATION: ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE, COMMUNICATION, AND SOCIETY

'NEWPATH SEMPOZYUMU' DEĞERLENDİRMESİ: YAPAY ZEKÂ, İLETİŞİM VE TOPLUM

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Bu çalışma araştırma ve yayın etiğine uygun olarak gerçekleştirilmiştir.

Artificial intelligence is the new 'big thing' in the digital age. It is slowly changing the basic ways we interact with one another, construct culture, and communicate with society. While smart technologies may help people make better decisions, they also make it harder to hold people accountable. Personalisation offers a sense of control, but it might also limit the public sphere. Data-driven models make it easier for everyone to create knowledge, but they also run the risk of concentrating data ownership in the hands of a few entities.

A practical perspective clarifies what is at stake in all of this. As Deleuze (1992) asserts, "enclosures are moulds, distinct castings, but controls are a modulation, like a self-deforming cast that will continuously change from one moment to the other" (Deleuze, 1992: 4). In communication studies, this implies that design and institutional decisions consistently recalibrate visibility, initiative, tempo, and accountability. From this angle, the NEWPATH symposium addressed AI not merely as a parade of tools but as an array of variables that produce public value, distribute risk, and allocate responsibility.

While the outcome suggests an easy evaluation for AI in communication – quicker and more subdued – it remains unclear who initiated the interaction and who withdrew from it. NEWPATH approached this unique development as a key element, encouraging researchers to investigate not just the efficacy of AI but also its beneficiaries, associated costs, and the requisite institutional frameworks.

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The primary focus of the symposium was “Artificial Intelligence: Technological, Social, and Cultural Ties”, jointly organised by Üsküdar University and the University of Trás-os-Montes and Alto Douro (UTAD) on March 6-7, 2025. Over the course of two days, 33 papers were presented across 6 sessions, with 52 scholars from 27 universities and nine different countries engaging in the discussions. The programme addressed several diverse topics, including algorithmic mediation, the construction of social realities, digital labour, creativity, and ethics; representation and identity; accessibility and assistive technologies; data literacy and personalisation practices; as well as the future of data in culture and the marketplace.

Building on this idea, the opening session – moderated by Assoc. Prof. Bahar Muratoğlu Pehlivan – framed AI as a long-term change in the way people connect, not just a set of temporary utilities. Üsküdar University’s Rector, Prof. Nazife Güngör, emphasised the need to re-evaluate communication concepts in light of AI-mediated interactions, highlighting the shift from computer-based systems to AI-based systems, and stressed that the discipline must adapt its theoretical terminology accordingly. Pro-Rector for Culture and Documentation Services, Prof. Daniela Fonseca from UTAD, addressed the evolving dynamics of digital communication, wherein video formats, webinars, and continuous visual stimulation normalise hyperpersonalised messaging, posing a critical inquiry for the ensuing two days: “How do we ascertain the authenticity and value of personalised experiences?”

Prof. Susana Fontes termed AI as a transformative force that presents true potential, while also creating ethical, social, and technological dilemmas that demand thorough discussion, critique, and knowledge exchange. Prof. Süleyman İrvan emphasised the public interest dimension of these discussions, contending that the goal extends beyond just cataloguing risks or advantages. At the same time, he emphasised that it is essential to understand how we can implement AI tools for the common benefit of journalism, media, and communication professions. Assoc. Prof. Orquídea Ribeiro grounded the symposium within UTAD’s extensive research framework, underscoring the interdisciplinary collaboration among media, society, literacy, arts, and digital technologies, while highlighting the institutional consistency needed for the ongoing studies.

On the first day of the symposium, during the first keynote session moderated by Assoc. Prof. Fábio Ribeiro of UTAD and Helena Sousa, President of the Portuguese Regulatory Authority for the Media, addressed AI in journalism predominantly as a question of governance and public trust. Sousa stressed that the utilisation of AI in newsrooms should be transparent to audiences through open disclosure and auditable procedures. In this framework, the author highlighted two accepted benchmarks in the domain: “The 2023 Paris Charter on AI in Journalism by Reporters Without Borders” and “The Council of Europe’s 2023 Guidelines on the Responsible Implementation of AI Sys-

tems in Journalism". Both studies reflect transparency, editorial autonomy, and accountability in practical standards for everyday implementation. Sousa further cautioned that no governance can prosper if its fundamental data are of inferior quality. Provenance, standards, and methodological rigour, therefore, become integral to accountability, not an afterthought.

As the second keynote in the same session, Prof. Halil Nalçaoğlu considered AI as a revolution of epistemic practice, contending that artificial intelligence is modifying the production of knowledge and the construction of meaning in communication disciplines. The argument is situated within a larger philosophical discussion about truth, particularly in an era when the validity of overarching narratives is being questioned. This discussion draws on Nietzsche's exploration of whether truth is a fixed endpoint or a tool that serves specific social purposes within a historical context. Prof. Nalçaoğlu continued by stating that AI's method of knowledge generation signifies a fundamental divergence from previous philosophical systems, hence establishing new challenges for media and communication studies that must consider model logics, data provenance, and evolving standards of validity.

On the second day of the symposium, during the second keynote session – moderated by Prof. Gül Esra Atalay – Prof. Raquel Recuero scrutinised artificial intelligence in the context of platform politics and attention economics. The presentation described social media companies as fundamental infrastructure that integrates various services, centralises communication, and shapes public discourse through data collection and ranking. The study highlighted this concentration of power during the pandemic, when daily communication moved online and reliance on platform infrastructures intensified. In Brazil, roughly 80% of the population increasingly relies on social media for news, heightening the potential of polarisation when recommender algorithms exclude content deemed undesirable for users.

After the first keynote session, the first symposium session, chaired by Dr. Sinan Aşçı of Dublin City University and titled "Algorithmic Mediation and the Construction of Social Realities", shifted the discussion axis from governance and epistemology to the quotidian aspects of algorithmic existence. During the session, Aline Veronize and Alexandra Figueira examined how platforms co-produce social representations. Valdonė Rudenkienė addressed the responsibilities of media organisations in safeguarding trust in an AI-dominated environment. Enes Akdağ and Necati Alp Çelebi analysed how parental control applications and AI plugins stand out as a new form of parental violation of a minor's sensitive data. Yağmur Tanrıverdi mapped public sentiment toward generative models in the film industry through *YouTube* comment cultures. Gamze Gül Örgaç explained how AI reorganises the influencer ecosystem across advertising, content, and engagement. These contributions rendered the politics of visibility tangible. Algorithms do more than recommend; they reallocate attention, redefine authority, and reconfigure the boundaries of

trust across institutional, familial, and creative spheres, which reflects the tensions raised in the opening session and keynotes.

The second session, titled “AI and the Evolution of Digital Labour, Creativity, and Ethics”, was chaired by Assoc. Prof. Orquídea Ribeiro (UTAD) and combined creative activity with production conditions within a unified analytical frame. Yaren Demirel and Neslihan Erdem explored the collaboration between humans and AI in influencer work, utilising psychophysiological measures. Sibel Gök and İsmail Erim Gülaçtı examined the ethical and aesthetic transformation of art with the aid of AI. Artür Vahe Karapekmez and İsmail Erim Gülaçtı investigated the relationship between AI-generated art and digital inequalities. Duygu Yaprakçı and İsmail Erim Gülaçtı analysed moving images supported by AI in advertising and audience reception. David M. Berry and Merve Güven Özkerim proposed an alternative framework for artistic creativity through the Plantoid case. The session indicated that AI does not merely add to creativity; it reorganises labour, evaluation and distribution, which moves ethical inquiry from retrospective compliance to the design of workflows.

The third session, titled “AI, Gender, and Digital Culture: Representation, Identity, and Communication”, was chaired by Assoc. Prof. Bilge Şenyüz from Marmara University redirected the discussion from newsroom governance and epistemological questions to the micropolitics of online identity. The session featured Dilek Evirgen’s analysis of *ChatGPT*’s interpretations of gender roles using photos labelled with professions, questioning whether automation subtly perpetuates traditional hierarchies. Enes Akdağ and Necati Alp Çelebi analysed digisexual experiences within an interdisciplinary framework. Özgün Arda Kuş and Asena Irmak Yavuz investigated the ambiguity around designations such as #ad, #sponsorship, and #collab, as well as the culture of apprehension that this uncertainty engenders for prosumers overall. Orquídea Moreira Ribeiro presented cultural heritage as a metaverse experience rather than solely digitalisation. Zindan Çakıcı and Neslihan Bulur studied *OpenAI*’s engagement on *TikTok* as an illustration of platform-native public communication. The session concluded that, in the context of AI, representation operates as a dynamic construct, shaped by prompts, platform designations, and policy defaults, thereby presenting the responsibility, clarity, and context essential for further studies.

Chaired by Prof. Rute Bastardo of UTAD, the fourth session was titled “AI and Society: Influence, Perception, and the Digital Future”. The session returned the discussion to institutions and public life. The session redirected the conversation towards institutions and their role in public life. In this context, Süleyman İrvan investigated the perspectives of journalism students on artificial intelligence. Ecem Ergül, Aysun Eyrek, and Esra Pelin Güregen Dereboyu examined conversational memory in interactions between humans and chatbots. Fábio Ribeiro, João Pedro Baptista, Concha Perez-Curiel, and Dan-

ielia Fonseca examined post-truth algorithms, deception, and the emergence of digital neopopulism. Özge Uğurlu re-evaluated the impact of influencers via de-influencing and its ramifications for consumer awareness. Fábio Ribeiro and João Pedro Baptista conducted a survey of AI-related news in Portuguese online media. Luís Pereira evaluated essential digital skills in higher education. Georgeta Drula delineated the evolving roles, connections, and workflows inside newsrooms. The session's theme was almost evident: AI today functions as an institutional practice inside education, media, and consumer culture, necessitating that literacy, capacity building, and accountable design be prioritised in any meaningful response.

The fifth session, "AI, Communication, and Accessibility" – chaired by Associate Professor Derya Gül Ünlü from İstanbul University – integrated design practice, teaching, and newsroom procedures into a unified framework. Bahşende Çoban Azizoğlu and Özgül Dağlı investigated the role of advertising in facilitating the connection between sustainability objectives and the implementation of AI. Semih Eken and Mustafa Ekim Atay conducted a comparative analysis of "Apple's VoiceOver" and "Android's TalkBack" to assess the impact of AI-enhanced screen readers on accessibility for individuals with visual impairments. Gözde Büklüm demonstrated the application of AI to deliver structured feedback in interpretation training, thereby reconceptualising assessment as an ongoing learning cycle. Maria Pia Ester Cristaldi tackled the linguistic disparity that arises when AI systems facilitate communication across communities with disparate language resources. Dilruba Çatalbaş and Ceren Saran examined the implementation of AI technologies in Turkish newsrooms, emphasising the experiences and attitudes that influence whether integration remains experimental or evolves into standard practice.

The sixth and final session, titled "AI and the Future of Data: Risks, Literacy, and Cultural Shifts", was chaired by Marisa Mourão (UTAD) and addressed topics including sustainability, literacy, cultural norms, personalisation, and market practices. Hafize Nurgül Durmuş Şenyapar analysed artificial intelligence in relation to sustainable development, stressing risks, problems, and policy solutions for societal benefit. Elif Posos Devrani and İrem Dölen presented an enhanced educational framework for media literacy in the era of AI. Sara Pascoal and Rosa Mesquita investigated how robots and LLMs (Large Language Models) prompt a reconfiguration of cultural and social norms. Paulo Couraceiro and Miguel Paisana examined algorithmic personalisation in the changing trajectories of news consumption in Portugal. The session reached a pragmatic conclusion. Data serves as an institutional capability rather than an unbiased asset. The sustainable utilisation of AI relies on the formulation of policies, the enhancement of literacy, cultural reflexivity, and the simultaneous development of market incentives.

The closing session marked the conclusion of the programme, which had spanned two days, featured three keynote speeches, and included six sessions

with thirty-three presented papers. Üsküdar University's Rector, Prof. Nazife Güngör, regarded the event as scientifically valuable and remarked that its debate on opportunities and risks will inform future research efforts. Prof. Marlene Loureiro from UTAD emphasised the significance of international and interdisciplinary collaboration, stating that the symposium offered new enquiries and opportunities. Assoc. Prof. Bahar Muratoğlu Pehlivan highlighted that the programme addressed the social, technological, and cultural aspects of AI and expressed a desire to maintain this partnership. Assoc. Prof. Fábio Ribeiro characterised the event as the start of a continuous interdisciplinary academic collaboration. Prof. Gül Esra Atalay expressed appreciation to the organising teams and acknowledged the international aspect, highlighting involvement from nine nations and twenty-seven universities.

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