Expert Report Syndicate 6: GenAI video tools in news video production and journalism education

Expert: Debora Wenger, University of Mississippi
Chair: Heidi Makady, Texas State University
Rapporteur: Kristina Vera-Philips, Arizona State University

The integration of generative artificial intelligence (GenAI) into news video production represents a significant technological shift, combining disruptive and sustaining innovation patterns. Recent advancements such as OpenAI's Sora, Adobe's Firefly Video and Google Veo2 have the potential to automate and augment many journalistic video production tasks, ranging from routine editing to the creation of fully synthetic visual narrative. This evolution brings transformative potential but also substantial ethical, pedagogical, and professional challenges for the journalism industry and education sector.

In contemporary local TV newsrooms, GenAI tools are already automating "zombie processes" — labor-intensive tasks such as tagging, indexing, and retrieving video content. AI is being used to recommend video clips, automate translations, and enhance metadata generation, ostensibly allowing human journalists to focus on higher-order storytelling activities. News organizations also anticipate the future capability of AI to generate hyper-personalized news content tailored to individual viewer preferences.

Despite these promising applications, adoption remains cautious. As of late 2024, most AI applications in local newsrooms were restricted to transcription and headline-writing support, with few stations reporting active use of AI in video editing itself (Papper & Henderson, 2025). Moreover, while efficiency gains are evident, concerns over content authenticity, deepfakes, and erosion of editorial judgment persist, reinforcing calls for transparency, particularly through labeling AI-generated material.

The dual trajectory of GenAI in video journalism can be seen through the lens of disruptive and sustaining innovation theory (Christensen, Raynor, & McDonald, 2013). While many AI implementations today enhance newsroom efficiency (sustaining

innovation), developments in fully synthetic video creation represent a more disruptive shift, potentially redefining newsroom roles and ethical norms.

The response from journalism educators to GenAI video tools is characterized by a significant readiness gap. A 2024 cross-sectional survey of journalism educators revealed that while 93% had used AI text-generation tools like ChatGPT, only 10% reported being "very" or "extremely" familiar with GenAI video capabilities. Furthermore, a mere 6% of educators had integrated GenAI video tools into their coursework by the end of 2024.

When asked about ethical boundaries, more than 80% of educators indicated comfort with using AI-generated animations or background graphics. However, substantial discomfort was expressed regarding AI tools altering journalistic footage, extending video clips, or creating synthetic news scenes. Only 18% endorsed the use of AI to remove distracting elements from footage, and just 12% supported extending incomplete video clips.

A majority of educators (53%) reported feeling either "extremely" or "somewhat" unprepared to teach AI video tools. Their primary means of self-education included reading articles (84%), attending workshops (55%), and utilizing university resources (51%), revealing a largely ad hoc approach to professional development.

This lag in instructional adaptation poses risks to the professional readiness of future journalists. With AI increasingly embedded in newsroom operations, graduates who lack hands-on familiarity with GenAI video tools may find themselves at a disadvantage. Moreover, without structured ethical education frameworks, students may be ill-equipped to navigate the complex dilemmas GenAI introduces into visual journalism.

GenAI video tools are poised to reshape the production and consumption of video journalism. In the U.S., the latest RTDNA/Syracuse survey found that almost a third of news directors (32.6%) report that they're doing something with AI. That's up from 26.6% the year prior (Papper & Henderson, 2025). As with earlier technological innovations, adoption tends to begin gradually but accelerates significantly over time. While current newsroom applications primarily focus on automating repetitive tasks, the horizon points toward

deeper disruptions as synthetic video generation becomes more sophisticated and accessible.

For journalism education, this means curricula must adapt to include GenAI video production tools, while ensuring that instruction remains firmly rooted in rigorous ethical discourse. Universities should also invest in faculty development and foster partnerships with industry leaders to ensure that instruction remains current.

However, the use of GenAI for journalistic purposes also raises critically important questions for practitioners and journalism educators: What constitutes journalism's human, ethical, and unpredictable elements, which GenAI cannot replicate? Are there skills and practices that will become increasingly irrelevant for journalists and therefore journalism students to master? What are the implications for journalism educators as they prepare students for newsrooms in which AI will most certainly be a factor?

Our syndicate discussion and future research should focus on addressing these questions and identifying best practices for integrating GenAI tools into hands-on instruction and establishing clear ethical guidelines regarding the appropriate use of GenAI in video storytelling. The transformational potential of GenAI offers journalism educators a rare opportunity to redefine the craft's technical and ethical foundations for a new era.

The **central question** the members of this syndicate will discuss and answer is: **"How can journalism educators ethically and effectively integrate AI-powered video editing and production tools into their curriculum to prepare students for the evolving video journalism industry?"**

References

Christensen, C. M., Raynor, M. E., & McDonald, R. (2013). *Disruptive innovation*. Harvard Business Review Press.

Papper, R., & Henderson, K. (2024). Local TV explores OTT, NextGen, AI. RTDNA.

Papper, R., & Henderson, K. (2025). Local TV News, OTT, NextGen TV and AI. RTDNA.

Wenger, D. (2025). "AI Automates Zombie Processes in TV News". NewsLab.org.

Wenger, D. (2025). "AI is Changing Broadcast News Production". NewsLab.org.

Wenger, D., Hossain, M. S., & Senseman, J. R. (2024). Integrating AI in Broadcast Journalism Education: Current Trends and Challenges. *Journalism & Mass Communication Educator*

Wenger, D., & Imre, I. (n.d). Integrating AI in Video Journalism Education: Current Trends and Challenges.