



AI in the media

Kenya and South Africa

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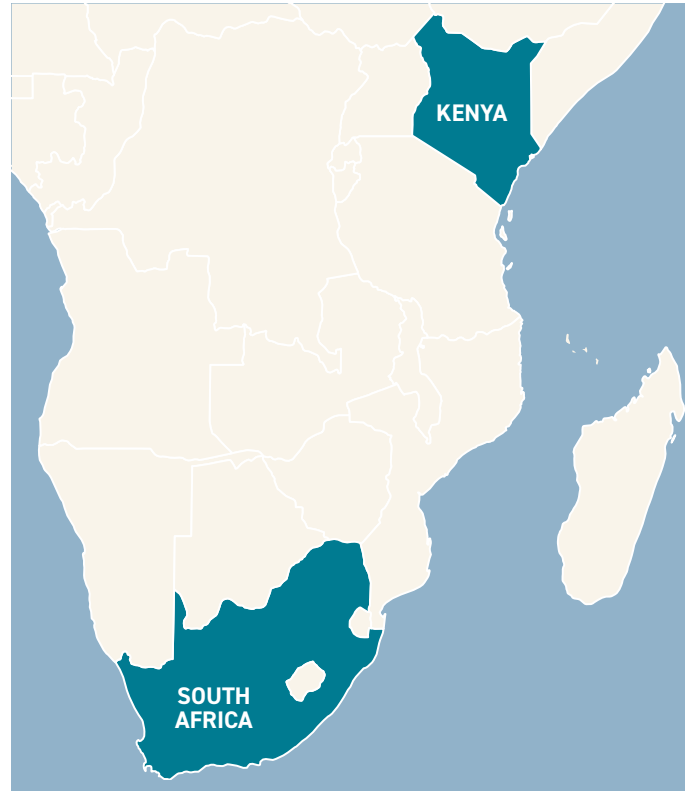
Introduction

This study seeks to investigate how artificial intelligence (AI) is represented in South African and Kenyan media. The objective is to identify how AI is framed both in terms of opportunities and threats, and to shed light on how AI stories are classified. It explores for example whether they are represented as business, security, governance or crime stories and consequently siloed; or whether instead a whole-of-society lens is applied when reporting on AI.

Moreover, it seeks to understand whether AI is considered by editorial gatekeepers to be a specialised, technical topic, or a broader societal one. Cyberspace, for example, is considered a domain similar to air, land, sea and space. Such domains accommodate both benign and malign activity. Framing AI this way, rather than as a siloed technical subject, may help to seed a more holistic or mainstream reporting approach.

The study seeks to explore what shapes AI coverage in Kenyan and South African media; particularly whether editorial decision-making is influenced by western 'hype' about AI or whether a local, contextualised lens is applied. It also asks whether AI reporting is constrained because many journalists and senior editorial staff do not understand AI; or because they are 'technophobic', as some describe it.

The focus for the research is on published authored articles and commentary over five years. Kenya and South Africa have been selected for their relatively high internet penetration rates, energetic media landscapes, and high levels of public online participation. Both governments have also shown an eagerness to develop AI policies and attract global AI investment.



While there has been limited analysis of AI-focused reportage in African settings, a 2025 study of 724 AI-focused articles across 26 African countries found that less than a third were authored by African journalists, with much of the coverage supplied by international agencies.¹ The dominant narratives emphasised technical promise and economic growth, with an overemphasis on 'tools' and 'solutions' at the expense of coverage of the broader effects of AI on employment, inequality and cultural values. Africa's specific needs and opportunities were marginalised.

This research seeks to add to the corpus of knowledge about AI reportage in Africa through an exploratory analysis of the main themes in reporting, and a targeted interview strategy.

¹ Nkoala, S. et al. 2025. AI Hype Through an African Lens: A Critical Analysis of Language as Symbolic Action in Online News Publications. *Digital Journalism*. Available at: <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/21670811.2025.2528052>.

Methodology

The study takes an exploratory approach to identify the various themes emerging from reporting on AI in two African countries, and journalists' views on the processes, routines and challenges that shape reporting on AI. Two methods were combined to form a thematic analysis of articles and interviews (focus group, and individual semi-structured interviews). The articles as well as the interviewees were selected using purposive sampling: articles were identified that mentioned keywords such as 'AI', 'artificial intelligence', or 'AI journalism'.

A total of 57 articles appearing in South African and Kenyan media were analysed, of which 11 were opinion pieces and 46 news reports, spanning five years from 2021 to February 2026. Based on this sampling, the authors were contacted and invited for interviews. Two rounds of interviews were conducted: a focus group, followed by a round of individual semi-structured interviews.

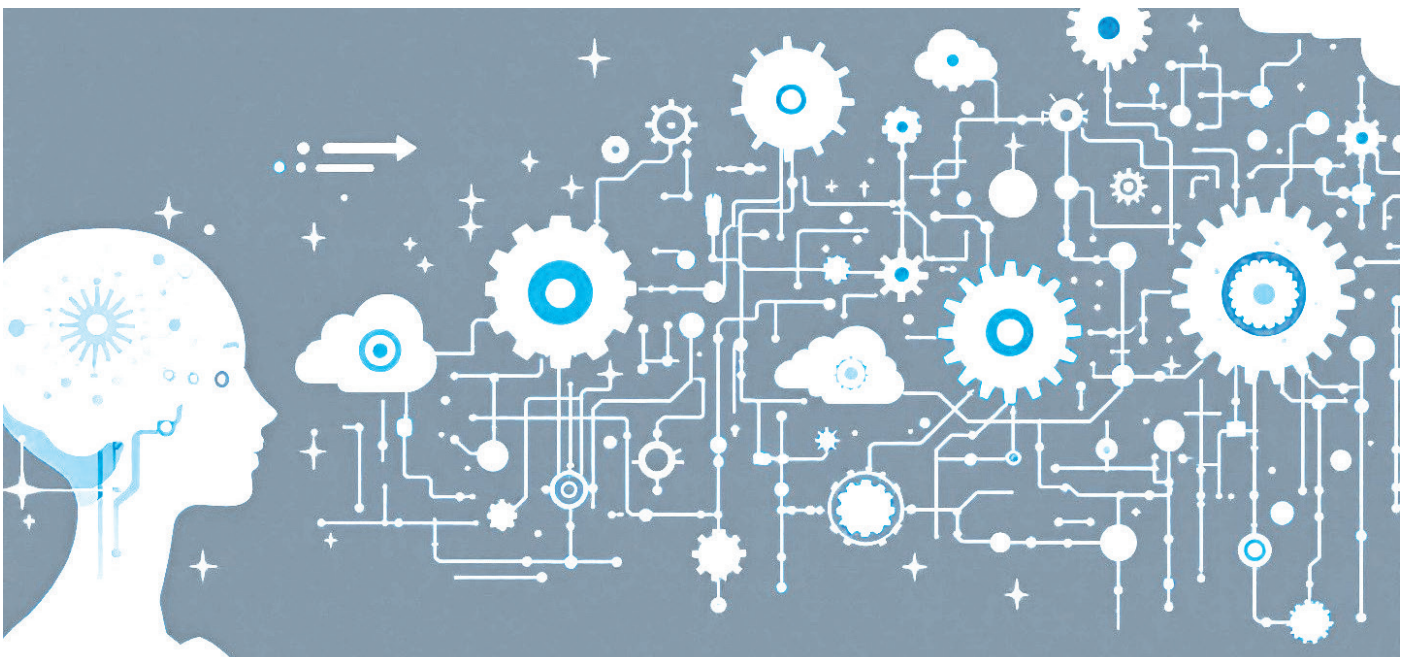
The articles were analysed to identify key themes in the reporting, and the articles were categorised accordingly. A second round of analysis was then conducted to explore

the content of the articles in more depth within the identified frames.

The interviews were transcribed and analysed to find the themes emerging from journalists' discussions of the challenges, opportunities and constraints they face when reporting on AI. These interviews seek to shed light on the editorial decision-making process that informs how and where AI-related articles are placed.

The research considered the following key issues

- Who is writing about AI in Africa?
- What are the predominant themes and narratives?
- What structural or institutional barriers prevent deeper coverage?
- Are there specialist publications/platforms that are covering AI in Africa?
- What skills, resources, and literacy are needed to develop more diverse AI coverage?



Background: AI presence in South Africa and Kenya

In July 2024 the African Union (AU) published its Continental Artificial Intelligence Strategy.² The strategy emphasises the 'sociological' development potential of AI and seeks to harmonise the continent's approach to the technology. It advances an 'Africa-centric, development-oriented and inclusive approach around five focus areas notably: harnessing AI's benefits, building AI capabilities, minimising risks, stimulating investment and fostering cooperation'. While seeking to 'harness the potential' of AI for development, it also seeks to address the ethical, security and legal challenges the technology presents.

'Action areas' the document identifies range from promoting AI in the public sector to introducing governance measures, making available high-quality and diverse data sets for AI, and encouraging the development of data centres. The document is essentially a statement of commitment and political intent, and strikes an aspirational tone.

In reality many countries across the region, including Kenya and South Africa, struggle with more fundamental technological challenges including digital inclusion, the high costs of data,³ digital access issues and digital dependence.

There are clear leapfrogging opportunities that AI and associated technologies offer for less developed countries,⁴ with big tech companies and global institutions driving the conversation, and arguably these could set the agenda for discussion in terms of opportunity and potential. But these could also overshadow some of the unintended consequences or risks for African countries.

South Africa

The South African National AI Policy Framework, released by the Department of Communications and Digital Technologies in August 2024, advocates for ethical, human-centred development of AI. Crucially the document seeks to support the development of 'robust' digital infrastructure required by AI technologies. AI requires massive amounts of storage capacity and data centres, and a skilled workforce capable of developing indigenous versions of AI that are relevant and encompass the values of South African society.

The document is very much a blueprint for future legislation, and is complemented by practical applications in the public sector, including AI-assisted digital government platforms to help with service delivery and image recognition technologies to aid in detecting fraud.⁵ However, as this report was being prepared the South African government announced it was suspending two officials after it was discovered they had used AI to draft a version of South Africa's AI policy that was due to be sent for public consultation. The document was swiftly withdrawn but it demonstrates the perils of unchecked AI as the document purportedly cited references to academic journal articles that did not exist.⁶

Developing digital public infrastructure is also one of the government's landmark policies, focusing on smart cities where AI-enabled technologies can help connect streetlights and cameras, and deliver water guided by data-driven

2 African Union. 2024. AU Continental Artificial Intelligence Strategy. Available at: https://au.int/sites/default/files/documents/44004-doc-EN-_Continental_AI_Strategy_July_2024.pdf.

3 Gillwald, A. 2020. Measuring Digital Inclusion, Research ICT Africa/University of Cape Town. Available at: <https://researchictafrica.net/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/measuring-digital-inclusion.pdf>.

4 World Bank. 2026. World Development Report 2026: Decoding AI for Development. Available at: <https://www.worldbank.org/en/publication/wdr2026#:~:text=There%20is%20optimism%20about%20AI,distribution%20processes%2C%20and%20facilitating%20decision%20making>.

5 Policy Innovation Lab. Update to our catalogue of AI public sector use cases. Stellenbosch University. Available at: <https://policyinnovationlab.sun.ac.za/update-to-our-catalogue-of-ai-public-sector-use-cases/#:~:text=South%20Africa%20demonstrates%20progress%20with,governance%20and%20AI%20enabled%20urban%20management>.

6 Nkademeng, I. 2026. Two officials suspended over AI-generated draft AI policy. *TimesLIVE*, 1 May. Available at: <https://www.timeslive.co.za/news/south-africa/2026-05-01-two-officials-suspended-over-ai-generated-draft-ai-policy/>.

decision-making. While aspirational, these policies are at times criticised for being vendor-driven and ushering in a culture of surveillance.⁷

While the South African government trumpets big plans to harness the development potential of AI, the country is notable for the absence of a comprehensive AI strategy, unlike other countries including Egypt, Mauritius, Rwanda, Benin, Senegal and Kenya.⁸ However, during its term assuming the G20 presidency, government did seek to present the African case for a more equitable, just and inclusive AI as part of the discussions in the digital economy working group.⁹

Kenya

In 2025 Kenya published its National AI Strategy 2025–2030, which sought to position the East African nation as a hub for AI innovation and business while promoting social inclusion and digital growth. In particular it highlights the application of AI technology in agriculture, education, finance and security, and suggests a 'light touch' regulatory framework to encourage investment and innovation.

It is essentially a roadmap for responsible AI development, and aims to present Kenya as an attractive location for major technology firms to base their regional operations.

Kenya has been something of a trailblazer in this area. The launch of the mobile money platform M-Pesa in 2007 marked it as an early adopter and innovator of digital technologies

7 Department of Cooperative Governance, South Africa. 2021. A South African Smart Cities Framework. Available at: https://www.cogta.gov.za/cgta_2016/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/Annexure-A-DCoG_Smart-Cities-Framework.pdf.

8 Ebrahim, N. 2025. SONA 2025, AI and South Africa's leadership: Why the national AI strategy can't wait. *ITWeb*. Available at: <https://www.itweb.co.za/article/sona-2025-ai-and-south-africas-leadership-why-the-national-ai-strategy-cant-wait/JN1gP70AL80qJL6m>.

9 G20 South Africa. 2026. Digital Economy. Available at: <https://www.g20.org.za/track/digital-economy-2/>.

10 Ndung'u, N. 2021. A Digital Financial Services Revolution in Kenya: The M-Pesa Case Study. African Economic Research Consortium. Available at: <https://aercafrica.org/old-website/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/AERC-MPesa-Case-Study.pdf>.

11 Mkalama, B. and Ragnet, M. 2025. How Digital Colonialism Threatens Kenya's Silicon Savannah. *TechPolicyPress*, 4 August. Available at: <https://www.techpolicy.press/how-digital-colonialism-threatens-kenyas-silicon-savannah/>.

12 Jili, B. 2020. The Spread of Surveillance Technology in Africa Stirs Security Concerns. Africa Center for Strategic Studies. Available at: <https://africacenter.org/spotlight/surveillance-technology-in-africa-security-concerns/>.



Kenya's capital Nairobi is hailed as the most surveilled city in Africa

and a tech-friendly place to do business. It also dramatically increased the country's digital inclusion, becoming a blueprint for other countries seeking to narrow the gap between the technology haves and have nots.¹⁰

However, some policy analysts highlight a creeping 'digital dependence' in Kenya, such that the East African nation with ambitions of becoming a 'Silicon Savannah' is trading valuable local data to big tech firms to refine their algorithms and data sets, consequently losing control over how that data is used, and signing away valuable intellectual property rights.¹¹ This is termed by many observers as 'digital extraction' and a new form of resource colonisation.

Much of the data generated locally is stored in data centres located in the Global North, leading to a critical infrastructure paradox and an erosion of data sovereignty. Increasingly civil society is asking questions of the big tech firms about algorithmic bias and imported norms, particularly surveillance norms. Kenya's capital Nairobi is hailed as the most surveilled city in Africa, raising issues of privacy and human rights.¹²

Civil society concerns

Although much optimism exists about AI's potential to unlock digital opportunities for African societies, concerns have also been noted. In some ways, the debate between AI optimists and AI pessimists mirrors those relating to the introduction of other digital technologies on the continent, from the internet to mobile phones.

Cyber-optimists tend to emphasise the potential for these technologies to help Africans 'leapfrog' stages in social and

economic development,¹³ while cyber-pessimists tend to focus on the negative consequences these technologies may hold for African societies. This is also the case when it comes to perspectives on the role that AI may play in Africa's development.

There is concern that introducing a new digital technology like AI in already unequal African societies will further exacerbate internal social inequalities, widening the gap between Africa and the rest of the world when it comes to using AI's opportunities for development.

Several factors obstructing Africa's ability to compete globally in AI development have been identified.¹⁴ For one, it has not nearly enough infrastructure to host the data centres AI models need. It also lacks the required resources for research and innovation in AI.

A second reason is data governance.¹⁵ African policymakers need to do more to ensure that data is made accessible to African users under common standards and governance, to facilitate collaboration between users, reuse of data and benefits for all. When international standards for quality, openness and ethos are applied in these contexts, it should consider African priorities and needs.

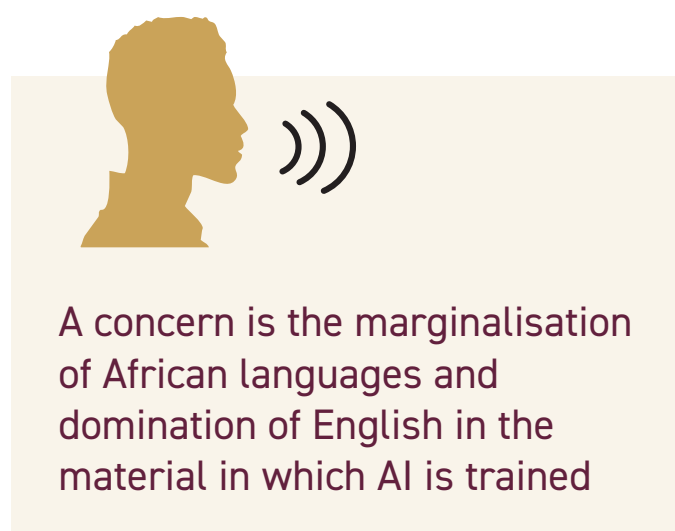
Another recurring concern is the marginalisation of African languages and domination of English in the material in which

AI is trained. This means existing biases and inequalities are entrenched in AI services and excludes African-language users from fully benefitting from AI.¹⁶ Related to the issue of language is that of literacy. Skills to use AI, and knowledge of its potential and pitfalls, are still low among African users.¹⁷ Research shows that South African users have little understanding of what AI entails, are anxious that AI may cause job losses, distrust big tech companies, and want human oversight of AI use by government.¹⁸

There is a need for skills training in AI and data science from school to university level, as well as lifelong learning programmes to help citizens understand how to use AI and avoid its risks. Such training would also facilitate public debate while ensuring support for marginalised communities to avoid the risk of AI widening existing inequalities.¹⁹

Better regulation and governance are needed to ward off the dangers of AI for African societies. Because of Africa's structural conditions, such as fragile or weak information ecosystems, social inequality, unemployment, low literacy levels and poor infrastructure, the continent is particularly vulnerable to disinformation, labour market disruptions, crime and negative environmental impacts from AI.²⁰

Social problems such as gender-based violence (GBV) can be perpetuated through technologies such as AI, for instance through attacks on women or the sharing of non-consensual sexualised images.²¹ But AI can also be used to fast-track the implementation of policies aimed at ending GBV on the continent,²² and as such can be used to help counter the problems created and facilitated by the technology itself.



13 Steyn, L. 2026. MTN sets sights on data centres in Africa's coming AI infrastructure race. *News24*, 17 March. Available at: <https://www.news24.com/business/companies/mtn-sets-sights-on-data-centres-in-africas-coming-ai-infrastructure-race-20260316-1057>.

14 Adams, R. 2025. AI in Africa: 5 issues that must be tackled for digital equality. *The Conversation*, 25 September. Available at: <https://theconversation.com/ai-in-africa-5-issues-that-must-be-tackled-for-digital-equality-265611>.

15 Ibid.

16 Ibid.

17 Ibid.

18 Junck, L. et al. 2025. Beyond the Hype: South African Attitudes to AI and the Future. Global Center on AI Governance. Available at: <https://www.globalcenter.ai/research/beyond-the-hype-south-african-attitudes-to-ai-and-the-future>.

19 Ibid.

20 Adams, R. 2025. AI in Africa: 5 issues that must be tackled for digital equality. *The Conversation*, 25 September. Available at: <https://theconversation.com/ai-in-africa-5-issues-that-must-be-tackled-for-digital-equality-265611>.

21 Heard, J. 2026. Digital harms demand Global South-led alternatives. Centre for Information Integrity in Africa. Available at: <https://cinia.africa/digital-harms-demand-global-south-led-alternatives/>.

22 Makone, I. et al. 2026. Policy Playbook to fast-track the implementation of GBV policies using Artificial Intelligence in South Africa. Policy Innovation Lab. Available at: https://policyinnovationlab.sun.ac.za/wp-content/uploads/2026/01/FemAI_Policy-Playbook.pdf.

Contextual differences between Kenya, South Africa and Europe

In 2024 the European Union (EU) introduced the Artificial Intelligence Act – a global first.²³ This landmark piece of legislation places the onus on developers to mitigate the harmful consequences of AI, and ranks different uses of AI technology based on risk.

Certain uses are prohibited, including using AI for social sorting – i.e. classifying individuals based on behaviour or personal traits and potentially disadvantaging them; some forms of predictive analytics (e.g. assessing the probability of a person committing a crime); and real-time biometric surveillance, with some exceptions. It makes certain technical requirements and governance measures mandatory.

While there has been much discussion about African countries developing an AI regulatory framework similar to that introduced in the EU, there are several constraining factors. These include fragmented legal systems, resource constraints and policy competition for other priority areas such as health and education, and in many parts of the continent, a less advanced tech ecosystem.

What arguably contributes to the absence of a comprehensive regulatory framework akin to that seen in Europe is that in many parts of Kenya and South Africa, citizens are excluded from the digital information environment. This so-called digital deprivation impacts how innovations such as AI are covered by each country's



African countries may struggle to implement a continent-wide AI act similar to that developed by the EU

journalists – a point to be explored in further detail later in this report – and to what extent it is considered relevant to citizens' basic needs. Organisations such as Research ICT Africa argue that one can't fully conceive a robust regulatory environment until this digital inequality gap is addressed.

Affordable access to digital services is key, and the 'relative ability of different population segments to access and use digital technologies ... determines the distribution of the benefits'.²⁴ It essentially shapes whether digitisation in such settings serves to 'exacerbate existing socioeconomic inequalities' or seeks to reduce these.

Furthermore, the relationship between digital providers and digital consumers is skewed broadly in favour of the main global powers. Notwithstanding the growing number of indigenous information and communications technology (ICT) firms in Kenya and South Africa, most of the popular AI programs are developed, shaped and sold by vendors based in the United States (US) and China.²⁵ This affects both content, i.e. how responsive AI programs are to local contexts, and concerns about inbuilt biases.

It also affects the ability of Global South nations such as Kenya and South Africa to negotiate terms with the big AI providers. This includes fair remuneration for data scraped from sources in those countries, and lobbying power such that providers are mandated to provide the same kinds of safeguards to protect against AI misuse for harmful purposes as they would in the Global North.²⁶

23 European Union. 2024. EU Artificial Intelligence Act. Available at: <https://artificialintelligenceact.eu/high-level-summary/#>.

24 Partridge, A. 2023. Digital inequalities in the post-pandemic recovery: The case of South Africa. Research ICT Africa. Available at: <https://researchictafrica.net/research/digital-inequalities-in-the-post-pandemic-recovery-the-case-of-south-africa/>.

25 The Global AI Index. 2026. Tortoise Media. Available at: <https://www.tortoisemedia.com/data/global-ai>.

26 Berger, G. 2026. Shaping media & digital ecosystems. *CommsPolicy.Africa*. Available at: <https://commspolicy.africa/>.

Analysing the coverage of AI in Kenya and South Africa

Siloed view of AI

Researchers identified that AI reportage was often confined to silos rather than reflecting its impact on society as a whole. This largely indicates market forces with a business-driven agenda seeming to privilege more broad reportage about tech in general and AI in particular. In South Africa much AI content resides in specialist tech publications with a global focus. For example the South African-based platform *TechCentral*²⁷ positions itself as a 'technology news leader in South Africa', with a focus largely on tech and business, and offers a comprehensive view on developments in AI largely from an IT business point of view.

It also offers syndicated global news stories about tech, such as 'How AI is transforming the machinery of war',²⁸ a Global North-focused piece with ethical and governance issues largely ventilated through op-eds in more mainstream publications such as *Mail & Guardian*, *Daily Maverick*, *Business Day*, *IOL* and *News24*.

'AI is usually written about in the mainstream media when there is a crisis or a scandal or a major disaster involving AI, as opposed to treating it as a tool and a topic on which readers should be kept informed and kept up to date'

South African
tech and ICT
journalist
Arthur
Goldstuck

ITWeb Africa offers a similar industry-focused approach with customised content for markets including Kenya and South Africa. *Gadget* is a South African digital magazine that describes itself as the voice of 'personal technology'. It focuses largely on stories of technology infrastructure and how AI 'solutions' are changing workflows and business.

In Kenya an energetic blogging ecosystem helps to disseminate information about AI, with examples including *TechMoran* and *Techweez*. Mainstream media like that in South Africa will focus on news developments related to tech, including recent legal challenges to the question of jurisdiction and big tech companies operating in Kenya, as reported in *Daily Nation* in August 2025.²⁹

However, in contrast to this largely reactive content, there are notable exceptions, with online publications like *Africa Uncensored* and *The Elephant* conducting their own investigations and touching on issues including AI workplace exploitation and surveillance. The challenge is that to make AI more of a focus in 'mainstream media', journalists need to be aware of such platforms as primary sources of information. Also, which journalists cover such stories may be determined by those individuals having a prior interest in tech.

Prominent South African tech and ICT journalist Arthur Goldstuck told this study's researchers that AI was usually written about in the mainstream media when there was 'a crisis or a scandal or a major disaster involving AI, as opposed to treating it as a tool and a topic on which readers should be kept informed and kept up to date'. This is a critical point and speaks to the need for media across Africa to take a more holistic approach to the topic.

The following table identifies three main siloes in which AI stories tend to be confined – business, security, and technically focused technology. This confines AI into the realm of specialism, with many South African and Kenyan newsrooms simply unable to accommodate dedicated reporters to write about such stories.

²⁷ *TechCentral*. Available at: techcentral.co.za.

²⁸ *TechCentral*. 2026. How AI is transforming the machinery of war. *The Conversation*, 23 March. Available at: <https://techcentral.co.za/how-ai-is-transforming-the-machinery-of-war/279312/>.

²⁹ Kimuyu, H. 2025. Kenyan Draft law sparks outrage for shielding tech companies from lawsuits. *Daily Nation*, 14 August. Available at: <https://nation.africa/kenya/business/kenyan-draft-law-sparks-outrage-for-shielding-tech-companies-from-lawsuits--5154948>.

AI siloes in South African and Kenyan media

Business	Security	Technology
AI as an efficiency tool, development multiplier, scaling tool, business opportunity	AI surveillance, analytics, verification, crime prevention	AI technical specs, as a creative tool, a destructive tool (disinformation and deepfakes), and a tool of competition in a global AI arms race

Key themes in the literature in South Africa and Kenya

Researchers for this study assessed the content and key themes of AI-focused material published between 2021 and 2026 in the two countries. The aim was to acquire a broad understanding of how AI is framed, packaged and presented by the media, which in turn informed the interviews undertaken. These sought to surface the decisions that influenced story selection and placement.

AI for development, inclusion and social change

Optimistic narratives in African media coverage of AI frequently emphasise the technology's potential to support development, education, healthcare, and social inclusion. Rather than framing AI primarily as a disruptive or threatening technology, these accounts present it as a tool

capable of addressing structural challenges such as educational inequality, skills shortages, limited access to services, and financial exclusion.

Media reports often highlight locally developed innovations, research initiatives, and digital tools designed for African languages and contexts, suggesting that AI solutions tailored to the continent's social realities can contribute to economic growth while empowering individuals and communities.

In their article 'Redefining AI for Africa: The Role of Artificial Intelligence in Kenya's Grassroots Movement' in *TechPolicy.Press*, Diana Kemunto Nyakundi and Liz Orembo highlight how digital tools and AI-enabled analysis can support civic mobilisation and collective action.³⁰ The piece argues that technological innovation in Africa does not need to replicate the corporate-driven model dominant in the Global North, but can emerge from grassroots networks and activist communities.

Using examples from civic mobilisation in Kenya, the article illustrates how digital platforms can assist activists in coordinating action and amplifying citizen voices, while emphasising the importance of developing AI systems grounded in African linguistic and cultural contexts.

Another area where AI is seen to have positive potential is as a catalyst for economic development and entrepreneurship across Africa. In *The Star*, Gideon Chitanga situates Africa within the global race to develop artificial intelligence, but emphasises that the technology also presents opportunities for skills development and job creation.³¹

Governments, private companies, and educational institutions are portrayed as key actors in building innovation ecosystems capable of supporting AI-driven industries and expanding employment opportunities in emerging technology sectors. He emphasises the need to pursue partnerships with countries like China to use such socioeconomic development opportunities.

Natasha Odendaal similarly highlights in *Mining Weekly*³² how AI can contribute to inclusive development across sectors such as healthcare, agriculture, education, and financial services. The article stresses that the benefits of AI will depend on investments in digital infrastructure and human capital, with partnerships between universities, industry, and governments presented as essential for building the technical expertise required to harness AI effectively.

30 Nyakundi, D. and Orembo, L. 2024. Redefining AI for Africa: The Role of Artificial Intelligence in Kenya's Grassroots Movement. *TechPolicy.Press*, 30 July. Available at: <https://www.techpolicy.press/redefining-ai-for-africa-the-role-of-artificial-intelligence-in-kenyas-grassroots-movement/>.

31 Chitanga, G. 2025. Empowering Africa: How China's tech cooperation fuels progress. *The Star*, 21 December. Available at: <https://iol.co.za/the-star/opinion/2025-12-21-empowering-africa-how-chinas-tech-cooperation-fuels-progress/>.

32 Odendaal, N. 2023. Search trends show interest in [artificial intelligence] in SA is at all-time high. *Mining Weekly*, 6 October. Available at: www.pressreader.com/article/281642489809937.

More explicitly positive narratives appear in reporting on technological innovation in education. A *TimesLIVE* article by Gugulethu Mashinini³³ describes the launch of MzansiLM – a new AI model that 'brings 11 South African languages online'.

Similarly, an *IOL* report by Gerry Cupido³⁴ highlights the growing role of universities in building Africa's AI ecosystem. The article notes that the University of Pretoria has been recognised as South Africa's leading institution for AI research, demonstrating the increasing contribution of African universities to global AI scholarship and innovation. This theme of the role that AI could play in addressing South Africa's persistent skills gap between education and employment, and to align education with workplace demands, also emerges from other articles.

AI's potential to expand financial inclusion is highlighted in an opinion piece by Ntokozo Mahlangu and Liata Monatisa in *Business Day* arguing that AI-driven financial systems could reach people traditionally excluded from formal banking services by using alternative data sources to assess creditworthiness.³⁵

The potential to use AI for local contexts is highlighted in an article in *ITWeb*. It talks about the emergence of locally developed AI systems designed specifically for South African contexts, emphasising culturally sensitive AI tools that recognise the country's linguistic and social diversity.

An article by Zano Kunene published by *SABC News* similarly highlights the use of AI in healthcare, focusing on the development of a chatbot that provides young people with confidential advice on sexual health and HIV prevention.³⁶ By making information accessible through familiar platforms such as WhatsApp, the system aims to reduce stigma and improve access to health services for young people.

Sesona Mdlokovana's *IOL* piece highlights efforts to make AI discourse more inclusive through language accessibility.³⁷ The report describes the creation of an AI glossary in isiZulu, isiXhosa, and Afrikaans, developed in collaboration with linguists and technology experts to help non-English speakers better understand AI terminology and participate in digital innovation.

The growing public interest in AI is noted in a report by Anita Nkonki in *The Star*³⁸ that highlights the strides made by AI in South Africa. It cites growing public interest in artificial intelligence and the expansion of AI-related skills development initiatives in the country. The article notes that Google Search trends show a record increase in interest in AI during 2024, with 88% of South Africans expressing interest in learning more about the technology and 60% expressing enthusiasm about its potential.

Many respondents also believed AI could improve society overall. Programmes like Google's Hustle Academy, which offers free AI training modules for African entrepreneurs and small business owners, are presented as examples of how digital skills initiatives can help individuals and businesses adopt AI technologies and strengthen economic participation.

Taken together, these articles illustrate how African media narratives frequently frame AI as a tool for development, empowerment, and social transformation. Stories about grassroots activism, educational innovation, research leadership, healthcare support, financial inclusion, linguistic accessibility, and digital skills training emphasise the potential for artificial intelligence to address longstanding structural challenges while expanding participation in the digital economy. At the same time, these narratives highlight that the benefits of AI depend on inclusive design, skills development, and the ability to adapt technologies to the linguistic, economic, and social diversity of African societies.

33 Mashinini, G. 2026. New AI model brings 11 South African languages online. *TimesLIVE*, 6 May. Available at: <https://www.timeslive.co.za/news/sci-tech/2026-05-06-new-ai-model-brings-11-south-african-languages-online/>.

34 Cupido, G. 2025. University of Pretoria recognised as leading institution for AI research in South Africa. *IOL*, 16 August. Available at: <https://iol.co.za/news/south-africa/2025-08-16-university-of-pretoria-recognised-as-leading-institution-for-ai-research-in-south-africa/>.

35 Mahlangu, N. and Monatisa, L. 2025. How AI can reach the unbanked with empathy and fairness. *Business Day*, 24 November. Available at: www.businessday.co.za/opinion/2025-11-24-ntokozo-mahlangu-and-liata-monatisa-how-ai-can-reach-the-unbanked-with-empathy-and-fairness/.

36 Kunene, Z. 2025. Meet AI chatbot that talks to SA's youth about sex, HIV, self-harm. *SABC News*, 2 October. Available at: www.sabcnews.com/sabcnews/1071107-2/.

37 Mdlokovana, S. 2025. Bridging the language divide: Google's AI glossary in Zulu, Xhosa and Afrikaans. *IOL*, 22 October. Available at: <https://iol.co.za/news/brics/2025-10-22-bridging-the-language-divide-googles-ai-glossary-in-zulu-xhosa-and-afrikaans/>.

38 Nkonki, A. 2024. AI is making significant strides in SA, according to research. *The Star*, 26 August. Available at: <https://thestar.co.za/news/2024-08-26-ai-is-making-significant-strides-in-sa-according-to-research/>.



AI as a tool for disinformation and information manipulation

Alongside optimistic narratives about innovation and development, African media coverage of artificial intelligence increasingly highlights concerns about the technology's role in disinformation, political manipulation, fraud, and state surveillance. In this framing, AI is often portrayed as a double-edged tool: capable of improving governance and administrative efficiency, but also vulnerable to misuse by political actors, cybercriminals, and governments seeking greater control over digital spaces.

Reports on manipulated political images, algorithmically amplified propaganda, and AI-enabled monitoring illustrate how emerging technologies are reshaping information ecosystems and the balance of power between citizens, media, and the state.

Journalist Larry Madowo's reporting on Uganda's political environment provides a clear example of how generative AI can distort political realities.³⁹ During online discussions about opposition leader Bobi Wine, manipulated images circulated on social media claiming he had been abducted.

Madowo warned audiences that the viral images were digitally altered versions of an older photograph and cautioned that in the 'AI era' people should assume images may be manipulated until verified. Such incidents illustrate how generative AI tools can be weaponised to spread misinformation during sensitive political moments such as elections, complicating efforts by journalists and citizens to verify information.

Concerns about the amplification of political manipulation are echoed by commentators such as Odanga Madung, who argues that AI technologies can supercharge disinformation ecosystems. Algorithmic recommender systems on social media platforms prioritise engagement and therefore tend to

AI is often portrayed as a double-edged tool: capable of improving governance and efficiency, but vulnerable to misuse

amplify sensational or polarising content. AI-driven micro-targeting can also enable political actors to tailor propaganda messages to specific demographic groups, making misinformation campaigns more effective and difficult to detect.

The intersection of AI with surveillance and state power is particularly evident in Kenya. Madung's article 'Kenya's government has a blueprint for digital tyranny. It is working – for now'⁴⁰ argues that the same digital technologies activists use to organise protests can also be deployed by governments to monitor and suppress dissent.

During the 2024 anti-tax protests, activists used online tools, including messaging platforms and AI-assisted systems, to coordinate demonstrations. However, the state reportedly responded with measures such as internet disruptions, digital monitoring, and the use of surveillance infrastructure to track online activity. The article therefore frames digital technologies as simultaneously enabling civic mobilisation and expanding the state's capacity for surveillance and information control.

In South Africa, media narratives also illustrate how AI technologies are becoming embedded in systems of governance and law enforcement. Simon Majadibodu reports in *IOL* that Gauteng Premier Panyaza Lesufi introduced an AI-driven Land Invasion Monitoring and Inspection Tool (LIMIT) designed to detect and respond to illegal land occupations across the province.⁴¹

The system uses real-time monitoring to identify early signs of land invasions and send targeted warnings, enabling authorities to intervene before structures are established. The government argues that the tool will help address rising rates of illegal occupation in areas such as Johannesburg and Tshwane while providing digital evidence that can support legal proceedings and evictions.

39 Lodite, C. 2026. Larry Madowo warns netizens against AI-generated images after Bobi Wine abduction reports. *K24*, 17 January. Available at: <https://k24.digital/news/larry-madowo-warns-netizens-against-ai-generated-images-after-bobi-wine-abduction-reports>.

40 Madung, O. 2024. Kenya's government has a blueprint for digital tyranny. It is working – for now. *The Continent*, 17 August. Available at: <https://continent.substack.com/p/kenyas-government-has-a-blueprint>.

41 Majadibodu, S. 2024. Gauteng Premier Panyaza Lesufi introduces new AI-powered tool to tackle illegal land invasions. *IOL*, 1 November. Available at: <https://iol.co.za/news/politics/2024-11-01-gauteng-premier-panyaza-lesufi-introduces-new-ai-powered-tool-to-tackle-illegal-land-invasions/>.

While the initiative is framed by authorities as a technological solution to urban governance challenges – particularly the housing backlog and rapid urbanisation – it also highlights how AI systems can expand the monitoring capabilities of the state. Systems designed for urban management and law enforcement may raise broader questions about data governance, oversight, and the potential for surveillance technologies to be normalised within public administration.

Finally, reporting on AI-enabled fraud and cybercrime further illustrates how the technology can be used to manipulate public trust beyond formal politics. A report by Tashlan Naidoo in *SABC News* citing the South African Banking Risk Information Centre (SABRIC) warns that criminals are increasingly using tools such as deepfake videos, voice cloning, and AI-generated phishing messages to impersonate financial institutions and trick victims into transferring money or revealing sensitive information.⁴² These developments show how AI is transforming the nature of digital deception, making scams more convincing and harder for ordinary users to detect.

These themes illustrate how African media coverage increasingly frames AI as a politically and socially consequential technology that reshapes electoral politics, governance, and public trust in information systems. While AI may provide governments and institutions with tools for improved administration and security, it also creates new opportunities for propaganda, algorithmically amplified disinformation, fraud, and digital surveillance. As a result, discussions of AI in African media frequently emphasise the need for stronger regulatory frameworks, improved digital literacy, and transparent governance mechanisms to mitigate the risks associated with AI-driven manipulation and monitoring.

Data colonialism and infrastructure gaps

Debates about data colonialism reflect the power dynamics behind tech and AI in particular, and touch on issues of data extraction from less developed nations by tech companies located predominantly in China and the Global North. They reflect issues of exploitation and privacy, and many draw on parallels with historic narratives of colonial extraction.

David Lemayian and Shikoh Gitau, in their blog 'Made in Africa: An African Perspective to the Design, Deployment and Governance of AI',⁴³ argue that Africa must shape its own AI ecosystem by grounding development, deployment, and governance of artificial intelligence in local realities. They nail this down with practical examples of what data sovereignty might look like in Africa. They argue for more African datasets, to ensure more context-specific results from AI prompts, and explain how the continent is disadvantaged by infrastructural constraints. Data requires vast amounts of processing power and storage capacity, as well as a robust regulatory framework to mitigate against data being extracted and commodified without compensation.

The authors argue that: 'Data for and about us is hosted and processed outside our jurisdictions, where we have little control over them and even less control over the cost.' They cite compelling data showing that 'the continent houses only 95 data centres out of over 5 000 globally – just 1.8% despite having 17% of the world's population'.

They argue that with underinvestment, Africa risks being a continuous consumer of AI rather than an innovator. This piece is characterised as a call to action to policymakers, politicians and tech investors on the continent.

This is a theme echoed by a *Mail & Guardian* op-ed, where Geci Karuri-Sebina et al. caution against Africa becoming the world's 'digital quarry'.⁴⁴ The piece argues that the continent risks being positioned as a consumer and a supplier of raw data while global powers and major corporations consolidate control over the algorithms and infrastructure that shape the future. A key question this op-ed seeks to pose is: Whose interests does technology ultimately serve? The language is direct and clear and seeks to raise awareness among a lay audience about the potential perils associated with AI technology.

The themes of data colonialism and infrastructure gaps arguably resonate with an African audience as they speak

⁴² Naidoo, T. 2025. Sabric warns of rise in AI-driven fraud scams. *SABC News*, 26 March. Available at: www.sabcnews.com/sabcnews/sabric-warns-of-rise-in-ai-driven-fraud-scams/.

⁴³ Lemayian, D. and Gitau, S. 2025. Made in Africa: An African Perspective to the Design, Deployment and Governance of AI. Qubit Hub. Available at: <https://qubit.africa/publications/made-in-africa-an-african-perspective>.

⁴⁴ Karuri-Sebina, G. et al. 2025. Africa must end the AI extraction economy now. *Mail & Guardian*, 20 November. Available at: <https://mg.co.za/thought-leader/opinion/2025-11-20-africa-must-end-the-ai-extraction-economy-now/>.

to historical experience. They also align with broader themes of African agency and self-determination and may tap into pre-existing suspicions of big corporations' motives in Africa.

AI governance, ethics and policy

This is a theme that seeks to shed light on the rules, ethics and practice of AI and how it shapes society. While such stories can often feel quite abstract, focusing on the ecosystem in which AI operates, South African journalist Phillip de Wet, writing for *ITWeb*, which largely serves South Africa's business and technology sector, puts some flesh on the bones with his practical real-world examples.

In his op-ed '2026: the year AI regulation bites', he predicts that regulators are going to have to deal with 'real-world products'.⁴⁵ He uses the examples of 'consumers denied access to credit, by companies having their intellectual property ripped off, and by those who suffer the consequences of foolish one-to-one swaps of humans for AI systems'.

These examples make what might otherwise be dismissed as a dry issue relatable, and help to demystify the issue of AI regulation. While the piece originated in a specialist publication, it was republished in the *Daily Maverick* online newspaper, which seeks to speak to a broader lay audience.

Business Day further sought to explore what regulatory guardrails might be needed for South Africa to realise its goal of being an 'AI mecca'.⁴⁶ While the substance of the content is located behind a paywall, author Khulekani Magubane reports on South Africa's ongoing policy efforts to position the country as a leading regional hub for AI development and innovation. The article highlights high-level discussions among policymakers, industry leaders and academic stakeholders focused on crafting a comprehensive national AI strategy that can unlock economic growth, attract investment, and build local technical capacity.

Policymakers, technologists and citizens are urged to balance innovation with ethical responsibility to promote societal wellbeing. 'AI mimics human reasoning but does not think. It processes data but does not possess consciousness'

Dinko Herman
Boikanyo

Proposed measures include strengthening digital infrastructure, incentivising research and development, enhancing AI skills training, and developing governance frameworks that balance innovation with ethical, privacy and equity considerations.

Probing more deeply into the ethical considerations of AI in society, Dinko Herman Boikanyo emphasises in the *Mail & Guardian*⁴⁷ the need for society to consider the implications of AI on human dignity, agency, and community values. He takes a 'sober reflection' on what long-term societal impacts may lurk, and cautions against the uncritical use of synthetic intelligence, which he argues could undermine empathy and moral judgement in favour of efficiency.

Boikanyo advocates for inclusive public dialogue and democratic oversight in AI development to maintain human values. He urges policymakers, technologists, and citizens to balance innovation with ethical responsibility to promote societal wellbeing. By locating the debate within society and using pithy accessible sound bites, AI 'mimics human reasoning but does not think. It processes data but does not possess consciousness'. He invites the reader to consider both the benefits and the unintended consequences of AI technology on human agency.

It is worth noting that most of the articles on AI governance, ethics and policy identified by researchers for this study featured in South African publications. While Kenyans actively engage on issues of what an AI future may look like, this may be a reflection of story selection and editorial preference.

⁴⁵ De Wet, P. 2026. 2026: the year AI regulation bites. *ITWeb*. Available at: www.itweb.co.za/article/oped-2026-the-year-ai-regulation-bites/Gb3Bw7WaDa8q2k6V.

⁴⁶ Magubane, K. 2025. Policy in the works to make SA an AI mecca. *Business Day*, 16 November. Available at: www.businessday.co.za/business-times/2025-11-15-policy-in-the-works-to-make-sa-an-ai-mecca/.

⁴⁷ Boikanyo, D. 2025. Protect our humanity in the age of AI and synthetic intelligence. *Mail & Guardian*, 26 August. Available at: <https://mg.co.za/thought-leader/2025-08-26-protect-our-humanity-in-the-age-of-ai-and-synthetic-iintelligence/>.

AI and workforce issues, labour exploitation

Workforce issues and AI have tended to revolve around job displacement narratives (including in the field of journalism) as AI tools undertake tasks that humans did previously, and skills, readiness and training. The research found a disproportionate number of texts focusing on the media sector and job displacement, which is dealt with in a separate section of this report, but which may reflect the media's unique access position to articulating such concerns that affect its industry. Numerous interviewees referred to editors as 'technophobic', with older journalists seemingly resistant to embracing new technologies.

Tech companies have been rushing to place content in legacy media to demonstrate a willingness among publics to embrace the technology and arguably to play down the displacement fear. *The Star* carried a piece by Nkonki that reflected a 'Google global study'.⁴⁸ This is an example of a vendor-driven narrative that seeks to paint a picture of AI as a societal good that is being widely embraced by the general public.

However, the article does not provide analysis or context about South Africa's digital divide, and gives the impression of being an 'advertorial' with little engagement between the reporter and the subject matter. The article posits that South Africans are increasingly seeking to enhance their AI skills and qualifications, as Google Search trends show a significant increase in searches for AI in 2024, marking a record high in global searches for AI.

The findings follow months after 88% of South Africans were reported to have expressed interest in learning more about AI in Google's global study *Our Life with AI*. According to the survey, 60% of South Africans were enthusiastic about artificial intelligence, and 76% agreed that it would probably improve society as a whole.

48 Nkonki, A. 2024. AI is making significant strides in SA, according to research. *The Star*, 26 August. Available at: <https://thestar.co.za/news/2024-08-26-ai-is-making-significant-strides-in-sa-according-to-research/>.

49 Mugendi, E. Eric Mugendi on Navigating the Storm: Mainstream Media in this Brave New World. YouTube. Available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q___duAYnAU.

50 Arends, M. and Cleary, K. 2025. Fuelling the AGI Hype: The Recruitment Playbook To Land Big Tech Contracts. Pulitzer Center. Available at: <https://pulitzercenter.org/stories/fuelling-agi-hype-recruitment-playbook-land-big-tech-contracts>.

51 Booth, R. and Kimeu, C. 2024. PTSD, depression and anxiety: why former Facebook moderators in Kenya are taking legal action. *The Guardian*, 18 December. Available at: www.theguardian.com/world/2024/dec/18/why-former-facebook-moderators-in-kenya-are-taking-legal-action.

A new type of 'digital sweatshop' is exploiting workers in the drive to refine AI



Eric Mugendi of *Africa Uncensored* has examined workforce issues extensively. A presentation of his investigations in a YouTube clip builds on the narrative of the exploitative nature of the AI workforce in Kenya for the benefit of tech consumers who largely reside in the Global North.⁴⁹ In the piece 'Fuelling the AGI Hype: The Recruitment Playbook To Land Big Tech Contracts'⁵⁰ Marché Arends and Kathryn Cleary shed light on the power dynamics of workforce exploitation and the dash to secure lucrative AI contracts. It follows similar reportage by *Africa Uncensored* into how Meta/Facebook moderators in Kenya have taken legal action against the tech giant and its local partners, for failing in their duty of care to protect them against mental distress.

The article advances that they were paid to police the internet by sifting through potentially harmful content.⁵¹ Mugendi's investigation builds on that workforce exploitation narrative and describes a new type of 'digital sweatshop' being used to refine AI and the drive towards artificial general intelligence (AGI). He also focuses on the phenomenon of 'labour hedging', whereby companies hire a large pool of individuals 'in order to show scalability' to potential investors. They recruit numerous people, explains Mugendi, but don't actually get them to do many tasks (they are paid on a task-by-task basis).

Researchers for this paper also interviewed Mugendi about his articles, which are syndicated across Kenyan media and through not-for-profit media outfits such as *TechPolicy.Press*, which examines the intersection of technology and society.

At the time of the interview, Mugendi was working on a similar workforce exploitation story, about AI smart glasses, whereby Kenyan contractors are having to document everything seen through the glasses, even if it is obscene or what Mugendi describes as 'unsavoury' content. The articles have resonance as they speak to real-world issues that are arguably broadly accessible and relatable with or without an AI or technology wrapper.

AI impact on journalism and the media

African media debates increasingly highlight how artificial intelligence is reshaping journalism, both by offering new tools for reporting and by creating new risks for press freedom, information integrity, and newsroom sustainability. Generative AI can produce deepfakes and large volumes of synthetic content, while algorithmic systems on digital platforms amplify misleading narratives. These developments complicate journalists' ability to verify information and maintain credibility in rapidly evolving digital information ecosystems.

An *SABC News* article, 'AI poses as an unprecedented threat to press freedom',⁵² emphasises that AI-generated misinformation and manipulated media can pollute the information environment and weaken public trust in professional journalism. Media scholars note that the spread of synthetic content makes it harder for audiences to distinguish between verified reporting and fabricated material, placing additional pressure on journalists to fact-check and contextualise online information.

At the same time, journalists are exploring how AI can support newsroom practices. A resource article from the Press Council of South Africa, 'Building a foundation with AI to jumpstart your journalism',⁵³ highlights how AI tools can assist with analysing large datasets, summarising research, and organising investigative materials. However, the article emphasises that AI should remain a support tool rather than a substitute for editorial judgement, and that transparency about AI use is essential to maintain audience trust.

One interviewee for this study highlighted how data-driven journalism had become a 'big thing'. They believe there are opportunities to educate journalists and senior editors about 'how they can use AI to scrape data and then find a pattern', helping to support a more robust journalism and supporting a key objective of holding actors accountable.

Discussions about AI and journalism increasingly focus on the broader information ecosystem in which the media operates. A *TechPolicy.Press* article titled 'Need for Data Access to Tackle AI-powered Disinformation in the Global South'⁵⁴ argues that researchers, journalists, and civil society organisations require greater access to social media platform data to properly analyse the spread of AI-driven misinformation.

The authors note that two developments are accelerating the disinformation problem: first, the use of platform algorithms that recommend and amplify misleading content at scale, and second, generative AI systems that can produce large volumes of realistic false media such as deepfakes.

The article therefore calls for improved transparency and data-sharing frameworks that would allow researchers and journalists to better understand how disinformation spreads online and how algorithmic systems shape public debate. Without such access, it becomes difficult to study the dynamics of digital propaganda or develop effective responses to AI-driven misinformation in the Global South.

Overall, these discussions illustrate how AI is widely seen within African media as a double-edged development. While the technology can enhance investigative capacity and newsroom efficiency, it also introduces new risks related to misinformation, intellectual property extraction, and declining trust in news. As a result, journalists, researchers, and media organisations increasingly call for stronger ethical frameworks, transparency in AI use, and greater access to platform data to ensure that AI strengthens rather than undermines the integrity of journalism.



**Transparency
around
journalists'
AI use is
essential
to maintain
audience
trust**

52 Sibanyoni, B. 2025. 'AI poses as an unprecedented threat to Press Freedom'. *SABC News*, 3 May. Available at: <https://www.sabcnews.com/sabcnews/ai-poses-as-an-unprecedented-threat-to-press-freedom/>.

53 Bansal, M. 2025. Building a foundation with AI to jumpstart your journalism. Press Council of South Africa. Available at: <https://presscouncil.org.za/2025/04/16/building-a-foundation-with-ai-to-jumpstart-your-journalism/>.

54 Orembo, L. et al. 2023. Need for Data Access to Tackle AI-powered Disinformation in the Global South. *TechPolicy.Press*, 20 December. Available at: <https://www.techpolicy.press/need-for-data-access-to-tackle-ai-powered-disinformation-in-the-global-south/>.

Authoritarian tech and crime

Authoritarian tech is broadly described by AI programs such as Copilot as 'the use of modern technologies, especially digital tools like AI, surveillance systems, and internet controls, by governments to monitor, manipulate, and suppress populations'. Its founding principle is that technology is not neutral, and can be weaponised by those who control it.

Narratives about authoritarian tech include such issues as mass surveillance and disinformation. While disinformation is considered as a separate section in this report, the intersection of crime and mass surveillance has found traction in both Kenya and South Africa.

The prism through which such stories are told is often that of crime and crime prevention. South Africa has one of the world's highest violent crime rates, according to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime,⁵⁵ and this has been a justification for mass surveillance through the installation of CCTV cameras on streets, in shopping centres and in other public spaces.

South African journalist Heidi Swart has investigated this in a series of reports for *Daily Maverick*, shedding light on the tension between privacy and security in a country

where crime is of serious concern. Her investigation alleges that one of the key surveillance camera providers, Vumacam, installs Chinese Hikvision CCTV monitors with little oversight, despite evidence of data exfiltration in other settings.⁵⁶

A much-publicised case revolves around data exfiltration from the Chinese-built AU building in Addis Ababa between 2012 and 2017.⁵⁷ Swart's reportage spotlights the extent to which CCTV camera surveillance is being rolled out across South Africa with little oversight and industry guardrails. It mirrors similar pieces written in Kenya.

AI and the environment

A newly emerging topic of interest to journalists is the environmental impact of massive AI expansion. It feeds into the debate about infrastructure, regulation and the opportunity cost of Africa being a key player in the AI global economy and the impact that may have on limited resources.

African companies are joining the global rush to develop AI infrastructure.⁵⁸ This will require investment in, for example, data centres, which are known to have a significant impact on the environment as they require land to be made available to house them, electricity to run them, and water to cool them down.⁵⁹ A piece in *Daily Maverick* by Tony Carnie⁶⁰ looks at the growing demand for technology and data centres globally, and the impact on electricity. It contrasts this with existing energy shortages in South Africa and questions future resource constraints.

One of the reasons for the rapid surge in demand for energy and water is the rise of AI, and while he notes that the largest data centres are in the US, China and Europe, he says India's data centre capacity has doubled in just four years. As a similar emerging economy, he questions whether South Africa will be able to accommodate these infrastructural demands and maintain data sovereignty as it seeks to position itself as a key player in the global AI economy.

This thematic area opens up the potential for further journalistic enquiry to question the underlying power dynamics determining the allocation of scarce resources. It finds a parallel in many other industries including the food and mining sectors, where stories have emerged of water being diverted away from impoverished villages to power industry.^{61, 62}

55 United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. Violent Crime & Sexual Violence. United Nations. Available at: <https://data.unodc.org/datareport/violent-offences>.

56 Swart, H. 2021. Here's how Johannesburg security cameras track you. *Daily Maverick*, 8 September. Available at: <https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2021-09-08-heres-how-johannesburg-security-cameras-track-you/>.

57 Council on Foreign Relations. African Union Bugged by China: Cyber Espionage as Evidence of Strategic Shifts. Available at: <https://www.cfr.org/articles/african-union-bugged-china-cyber-espionage-evidence-strategic-shifts>.

58 Steyn, L. 2026. MTN sets sights on data centres in Africa's coming AI infrastructure race. *News24*, 17 March. Available at: <https://www.news24.com/business/companies/mtn-sets-sights-on-data-centres-in-africas-coming-ai-infrastructure-race-20260316-1057>.

59 Ibid.

60 Carnie, T. 2026. Growth spurt of data centres could threaten SA's electricity and water supply. *Daily Maverick*, 8 February. Available at: <https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2026-02-08-growth-spurt-of-data-centres-could-threaten-sas-electricity-and-water-supply/>.

61 Shimo, A. 2018. While Nestlé extracts millions of litres from their land, residents have no drinking water. *The Guardian*, 4 October. Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/global/2018/oct/04/ontario-six-nations-nestle-running-water>.

62 Centre for International Environmental Law. 2017. Coal mining threatens people's access to water in Mpumalanga, South Africa. Available at: <https://www.ciel.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/Coal-mining-threatens-peoples-access-to-water-in-Mpumalanga-South-Africa.pdf>.

AI stakeholders

There are multiple interests that are served by the way AI is reported in the media across Africa. Some stakeholders have commercial motives, while others seek to instrumentalise AI and digital technologies more generally – e.g. for political gain during elections or by using it as a pretext to shut down the internet altogether.

Civil society has an interest in highlighting AI's potential hazards, while tech innovators and universities may use AI in the media space to seek funding for future projects. As consumers of the tech, the public and citizens surely have the right to demand quality information on AI to assist with decision-making, or professional or personal development. Access to information is considered a human right and part of the UN's Sustainable Development Goals, with 'credible information' considered 'foundational for building trust and resilience' in an interconnected world.⁶³

Key AI stakeholders in Kenya and South Africa

- Big tech
- Universities
- National government
- Regional and continental organisations (e.g. AU, Southern African Development Community and East African Community)
- Public relations companies
- Civil society organisations
- The media
- Public and citizens

Framing and challenges to reporting AI in African media

How AI stories are framed and pitched to editors provides insight into the dynamics of how journalists interact with AI on a personal level, and how as information gatekeepers they have the power to shape the AI news agenda. AI may be presented as a threat or an opportunity depending on whose interests are served by the technology, and this in turn is translated into which stories get covered.

Furthermore, given the apparent knowledge gap about AI among senior editorial staff, how it works and what it means for society, tech companies are arguably in a position to fill that void, supplying copy that positions AI in a favourable light. Indeed, as vendors seeking to drive a narrative, they may place copy with a view to offering a technological solution to what is ultimately a societal problem.

An example is Nkonki's previously mentioned article in *The Star*⁶⁴ that cites a Google study revealing that AI interest is increasing among the public, with 76% of South Africans believing AI would 'improve society as a whole'. There is no mention in the article of any AI scepticism or context, or indeed the widely reported concerns globally that AI might replace Google searches altogether.⁶⁵

This lack of interrogation may represent a blind spot among journalists tasked with reporting AI or tech stories more generally, who may feel that the subject is too technical. A Kenyan journalist interviewed for this study explained that most AI journalism tended to appear in specialist IT and tech publications and was often internationally focused, and that there was little primary reporting on local AI issues.



Journalists have the power to shape the AI news agenda

63 Jelassi, T. 2025. Access to Information: A Cornerstone of Sustainable Development, Human Rights and Environmental Resilience. *UN Chronicle*, 25 September. Available at: [https://www.un.org/en/un-chronicle/access-information-cornerstone-sustainable-development-human-rights-and-environmental#:~:text=Access%20to%20information%20\(ATI\)%20is%20a%20cornerstone,%20Peace%20*%20Justice%20*%20Strong%20institutions](https://www.un.org/en/un-chronicle/access-information-cornerstone-sustainable-development-human-rights-and-environmental#:~:text=Access%20to%20information%20(ATI)%20is%20a%20cornerstone,%20Peace%20*%20Justice%20*%20Strong%20institutions).

64 Nkonki, A. 2024. AI is making significant strides in SA, according to research. *The Star*, 26 August. Available at: <https://thestar.co.za/news/2024-08-26-ai-is-making-significant-strides-in-sa-according-to-research/>.

65 Bearne, S. 2025. AI challenges the dominance of Google search. *BBC*, 16 December. Available at: www.bbc.com/news/articles/c1dx9qy1een0.

Inwardly focused journalism: the media workforce

Many of those interviewed for this study – especially South African journalists – highlighted the perceived threat posed by AI displacement to the journalism workforce. Consequently, some appear reluctant to cover the broader topic of AI or look beyond its impact on their jobs, and AI is broadly framed as a threat. One journalist said this had an impact on how they pitched stories to editors. She said it was hard to pitch to editors at the national broadcaster, the SABC, unless the proposed stories directly addressed workforce concerns or regulatory gaps.

Yet one interviewee argued that: 'Our role as the media is not to obstruct certain information just because it's viewed as a threat to us, but to actually tell whatever story the public needs to know. And also it comes from a place of integrity. It's like ... we decide not to talk about an AI story because we're scared about how people might feel.'

Her colleague pointed out that AI presented opportunities for new types of stories, and that AI's effects on other economic sectors, including healthcare and hospitality, should not be overlooked by media's inward-looking approach.



'Our role as the media is not to obstruct certain information just because it's viewed as a threat to us'

⁶⁶ Mdllovana, S. 2025. Bridging the language divide: Google's AI glossary in Zulu, Xhosa and Afrikaans. *IOL*, 22 October. Available at: <https://iol.co.za/news/brics/2025-10-22-bridging-the-language-divide-googles-ai-glossary-in-zulu-xhosa-and-afrikaans/>.

⁶⁷ Nyakundi, D. and Orembo, L. 2024. Redefining AI for Africa: The Role of Artificial Intelligence in Kenya's Grassroots Movement. *TechPolicy.Press*, 30 July. Available at: <https://www.techpolicy.press/redefining-ai-for-africa-the-role-of-artificial-intelligence-in-kenyas-grassroots-movement/>.

Security vs business

AI stories in South Africa and Kenya have tended to be viewed either through a business or security lens. Key stakeholders include big tech companies, universities, government, public relations companies, civil society organisations and the public, who are each able to drive a range of narratives relating to AI. Within the context of Africa, and as alluded to in the policy section above, the AU has framed AI as a tool for development as part of its Continental AI Strategy. This arguably sets the tone for much of the coverage.

AI for development and social development featured prominently in the articles sampled for this study. For example, in October 2025 *IOL* published an item on how Google South Africa, in collaboration with the Pan South African Language Board, launched an initiative to provide a glossary of 100 AI terms translated and standardised into several vernacular languages.⁶⁶

This was an interesting insight but did not dwell on the issue of AI bias in many large language models that underpin AI, and the challenges African countries face to find AI models that accurately translate African languages, unlike their Global North counterparts. While informative, the piece lacked broader context about some of AI's biggest challenges.

Likewise in Kenya Diana Kemunto Nyakundi and Liz Orembo wrote about how AI was helping grassroots social movements challenge contentious pieces of legislation by arming them with context-specific chatbots to answer questions about controversial laws, such as Kenya's proposed Finance Bill, which have been the focus of recent Gen Z protests.⁶⁷ This was a positive and inspiring story showcasing African innovation, anchored in a very human activity – the right to protest.

Both of these stories have at their core a narrative about AI for development and how humans interact with AI and the greater impact on society. Capturing the human dimension makes stories more relatable, according to journalists interviewed for this study, and perhaps explains why the abovementioned stories may have been easier to pitch than more policy-heavy and seemingly abstract content.

Stories that position AI as a crimefighting aid, or a tool of greater surveillance, have also found traction, in South Africa

in particular. This is possibly because of high levels of crime making narratives about apparent solutions, such as CCTV cameras and predictive analytics for policing, arguably easier to pitch given the public fear of crime.

Often the underlying research that populates such stories is carried out by civil society organisations. For example, Swart's series on CCTV camera surveillance was supported by the Media Policy and Democracy Project at the University of Johannesburg and University of South Africa (Unisa).⁶⁸ This may be a model to consider in future.

Moreover, narratives about privacy and surveillance culture are increasingly finding their way into mainstream media, through the placement of op-eds by civil society organisations such as Research ICT Africa.⁶⁹ These narratives act as agenda-setting agents and help shape the journalism agenda by seeding stories that warn that 'AI can assist law enforcement, but it must operate transparently and within clear lines of accountability'. Such op-eds may help to educate and 'sensitise' journalists about some of the unintended consequences of AI and in turn stimulate an interest in searching for similar stories.



Influence of global narratives on agenda setting

Often South African and Kenyan media headlines are dominated by international frames such as the business of AI and tech, who is investing, what are AI's new capabilities, as well as the geopolitical arms race in tech as China and the US compete to dominate, with programs such as OpenAI's ChatGPT going head to head with the Chinese-owned DeepSeek.⁷⁰

Furthermore, stories about international AI regulation may seem remote and irrelevant, with one journalist telling researchers that digital access disparities in many parts of Africa make AI less relatable to many audiences and consequently hard to pitch its societal implications.

The race to secure resources that underpin AI development is also an important thematic area that may be fertile ground for future journalistic enquiry. Access to rare earth minerals and competition between global powers to secure these speaks to resource security, sovereignty and development and governance themes. While the South African government approved a critical minerals and metals strategy in May 2025 that sought to put value addition and localisation at its core,⁷¹ the process of implementing the strategy, reporting on areas of resistance, and monitoring its effectiveness will doubtless yield future stories.

These in turn will provide opportunities to link AI technology to foundational topics such as conflict minerals, industrialisation and international trade, and locate Africa as a key player in the AI technology supply chain.

⁶⁸ Swart, H. 2021. Vumacam's 'hundreds of thousands of cameras' will be watching you. *Daily Maverick*, 25 September. Available at: <https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2021-09-25-vumacams-hundreds-of-thousands-of-cameras-will-be-watching-you/>.

⁶⁹ Ijason, K. 2026. From digital ID to AI in policing: Turning SoNA commitments into public-interest governance. Research ICT Africa. Available at: <https://researchictafrica.net/2026/02/13/from-digital-id-to-ai-in-policing-turning-sona-commitments-into-public-interest-governance/>.

⁷⁰ Jianinggong. 2025. Different Attitudes Towards DeepSeek and ChatGPT in Media Coverage. *Medium*, 20 March. Available at: <https://medium.com/@jianinggong928/different-attitudes-towards-deepseek-and-chatgpt-in-media-coverage-2ab7ae8c8853>.

⁷¹ Department of Mineral and Petroleum Resources, South Africa. 2025. Critical Minerals and Metals Strategy. Available at: https://www.gov.za/sites/default/files/gcis_document/202505/critical-minerals-and-metals-strategy-south-africa-2025.pdf.

Regulation and keeping it human

The way AI is regulated in South Africa and Kenya is of critical importance, but understandably may appear abstract when competing with other pressing stories on the daily news agenda. Yet one journalist pointed out in an interview for this research that linking regulation to a human story can have a big impact and can determine whether a story reaches the public or not.

She gave the example of the absence of clear regulation of AI in the education sector leading to unchecked use by both students and teachers. The South African online news platform *News24* ran a story in February 2026 stating that Unisa had seen 'an increase in AI misuse among students'.⁷² The story had considerable traction.

Likewise drawing parallels with regulatory challenges in other parts of the world, for example introducing legislation limiting the age at which young people can access social media, may provide entry points for a richer range of stories in Africa.

Story competition and financial constraints

What determines whether an AI story makes it into news media is very much governed by what else is happening on that day. Given that other pressing priorities such as health, education, unemployment and crime compete for space online and on air, one can perhaps understand why AI stories struggle.

Yet as discussed above, framing and presenting a human dimension is key. It is perhaps not surprising that stories about AI-generated mis-/disinformation deepfakes and scams make it into the headlines, as more and more citizens consume information via social media and curate



Specialist publications look for ways AI is used to solve challenges and meet the needs of the African continent. So those stories may not be told in the mainstream media, but they are being told

their own feeds. But the more 'remote' the story feels, say many journalists interviewed for this study, the harder it is to 'pitch'.

Furthermore, media houses in South Africa and Kenya face significant financial constraints, making it hard to devote reporter time to investigate an AI story, and making the offer of a story from AI vendors arguably more appealing. Senior editors need to be aware of balancing the hype with the human realities of AI faced by their audiences in South Africa and Kenya, and select stories accordingly.

There may well be more scope for syndicating or republishing material from what might be broadly termed the tech press into more mainstream media provided it is not driven by commercial interests. Goldstuck told researchers for this study that more specialist publications such as *Gadget* magazine, which he edits, are 'always looking for ways AI is being used to solve challenges and meet needs across the African continent. So those stories might not be well told in the mainstream media, but they are being told'.

This creates the possibility of AI cheerleaders in journalism who seed stories in the technical press and amplify them through op-eds and republishing in mainstream media.

Furthermore, Goldstuck rejects the concept of a Global North-dominated AI agenda, pointing to competition between China and the US such that 'they are all but oblivious of what is happening in the Global South'. He argues the case for more African-led tech innovation in the AI space.

⁷² Govender, P. 2026. Degrees of dishonesty: Unisa sees increase in AI misuse in exams among students. *News24*, 17 February. Available at: <https://www.news24.com/newsletter/gmsa/degrees-of-dishonesty-unisa-sees-increase-in-ai-misuse-in-exams-among-students-20260217-0229>.

Conclusions and recommendations

This study shows that AI remains largely an underexplored, and often misunderstood, topic for journalism in South Africa and Kenya. Stories can be framed in overly positive terms, such as the potential AI holds for development and social change, or negative terms, by highlighting the extractive nature of big tech firms or the potential of AI to foster disinformation. Either way, these reports frequently lack a more nuanced understanding of the impacts of AI in African contexts.

Fear of the impact of AI on the media workforce may also explain why reporters say they often face resistance by editors when seeking to get AI and tech stories commissioned.

AI articles tend to be siloed and reactive, framed as business, security or technology stories. Seldom is AI presented in terms of its multidimensional, layered impact on society. Furthermore, the geopolitical aspect of AI rarely gets interrogated in mainstream media.

Journalists interviewed for the study admitted that many of their stories were reactive, and identified areas where synergies could be harnessed from other parts of the world. On issues of AI and social media regulation, for example, where precedents have been set by countries such as Australia, South African and Kenyan media could use such precedents to develop locally focused stories.

AI reporting often adopts a framing promoted by technology vendors who derive interest from presenting a one-dimensional, optimistic view of AI. The unintended consequences often go unreported unless supported by an investigation, such as the CCTV camera surveillance reportage by Swart referenced above.

Furthermore, the topic is often presented through a Global North lens, with little contextualisation or interrogation of these issues from an African point of view amid resource and access constraints. This occurs against a background of under-developed policy frameworks for AI on the continent generally, and in newsrooms in particular. Consequently the playing field can be tilted in favour of AI and tech vendors who fill the vacuum with hyperbole and hype about what the technology is capable of delivering.

At the same time, more nuanced and specialised reporting on AI is constrained by the familiar obstacles of journalism, such as lack of resources, over-stretched newsrooms and story competition.

To enhance coverage of AI in Africa, a multifaceted strategy is needed. While training and AI literacy programmes can deepen the knowledge needed by African journalists to investigate the topic more comprehensively, increased investment in newsrooms can provide the structural support to provide more context-specific coverage of AI on the continent. Crucially, training and education of African journalists should be done from within the African context, as solutions cannot be imposed from newsroom contexts in the Global North.

Practical assistance may include:

- Fellowships and funding opportunities for journalists dedicated to the coverage of AI, and for investigative journalism projects on AI. This would also contribute to more in-depth journalism on the topic.
- Cross-border journalism initiatives should be supported to enable closer monitoring of AI reporting in Africa. It also provides an opportunity for joint investigations to be undertaken and potentially offers a global platform to showcase the best in African AI journalism.
- Development of an AI reporting toolkit for journalists in Africa. This could act as an AI literacy resource as well as a tool to guide journalists towards the key thematic areas to consider when preparing a story on AI. The toolkit could include a practical newsroom AI reporting manual with glossaries, key thematic areas and angles to consider.
- In newsroom training on reporting, AI could be integrated into broader training being undertaken on the operational use of AI in newsrooms. The training must be locally relevant and practically focused.
- Showcasing the best AI stories from the region, similar to the World Press Photo Contest for photojournalism, could help give the subject public prominence.

Annex

Key themes in AI reporting (thematic table of stories)

THEMATIC AREA	AUTHOR/TITLE	URL
Impact on journalism and media	Sthembiso Lebuso (SA) – <i>Sanef calls for urgent regulation to protect struggling news media from AI threats</i>	https://www.news24.com/citypress/news/sanef-calls-for-urgent-regulation-to-protect-struggling-news-media-from-ai-threats-20240620
	Buhle Sibanyoni (SA) – <i>'AI poses as an unprecedented threat to Press Freedom'</i>	https://www.sabcnews.com/sabcnews/ai-poses-as-an-unprecedented-threat-to-press-freedom/
	Eric Mugendi (Kenya) – <i>Eric Mugendi on Navigating the Storm: Mainstream Media in this Brave New World</i>	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q__duAYnAU
	Damian Radcliffe (SA) – <i>How AI is changing journalism in the Global South</i>	https://presscouncil.org.za/2025/03/03/21244/
	Press Council of South Africa – <i>Guidance note on Artificial Intelligence</i>	https://presscouncil.org.za/2023/11/28/press-council-of-sa-pcsa-guidance-notes/
	Muskan Bansal (SA) – <i>Building a foundation with AI to jumpstart your journalism</i>	https://presscouncil.org.za/2025/04/16/building-a-foundation-with-ai-to-jumpstart-your-journalism/
	South African National Editors' Forum – <i>The Media Discuss the Opportunities and Risks for Journalism in the Era of AI-driven Newsrooms</i>	https://sanef.org.za/the-media-discuss-the-opportunities-and-risks-for-journalism-in-the-era-of-ai-driven-newsrooms/

THEMATIC AREA	AUTHOR/TITLE	URL
Impact on journalism and media	<i>African journalists meet in Nairobi to discuss impact of Artificial intelligence</i> (Kenya)	https://www.independent.co.ug/african-journalists-meet-in-nairobi-to-discuss-impact-of-artificial-intelligence/
	Chris Roper (SA) – <i>AI ‘expert’ exposed: Fake Kremlin-linked analyst planted stories in African media</i>	https://www.news24.com/southafrica/news/ai-expert-exposed-fake-kremlin-linked-analyst-planted-stories-in-african-media-20260318-0560
	Seliphar Machoni (Kenya) – <i>Kenya Journalists Debate AI’s Impact on Press Freedom and Ethical Reporting</i>	https://storyspotlight.co.ke/kenya-journalists-debate-ais-impact-on-press-freedom-and-ethical-reporting
	Arthur Goldstuck (SA) – <i>7,000 Africans show why AI needs humans</i>	https://www.businessday.co.za/business-times/2026-02-08-7000-africans-show-why-ai-needs-humans/
Labour and exploitation in the AI economy	Dr Zamandlovu Sizile Makola (SA) – <i>South Africa is not ready for the coming white-collar AI bloodbath</i>	https://iol.co.za/business-report/opinion/2025-07-29-south-africa-is-not-ready-for-the-coming-white-collar-ai-bloodbath/
	Thenzie Stewart (SA) – <i>AI is shifting and even ending the beginning of SA careers</i>	https://www.businessday.co.za/bd/opinion/2025-08-04-thenzie-stewart-ai-is-shifting-and-even-ending-the-beginning-of-sa-careers/
	Daniel Orelowitz (SA) – <i>The future of work – skills, not fear – South Africa’s path to an AI-ready workforce</i>	https://mg.co.za/thought-leader/opinion/2026-01-08-the-future-of-work-skills-not-fear-south-africas-path-to-an-ai-ready-workforce/
AI for development, inclusion and social change	Dr Gideon Chitanga (SA) – <i>Empowering Africa: How China’s tech cooperation fuels progress</i>	https://iol.co.za/the-star/opinion/2025-12-21-empowering-africa-how-chinas-tech-cooperation-fuels-progress/
	Natasha Odendaal (SA) – <i>Search trends show interest in [artificial intelligence] in SA is at all-time high</i>	https://pressreader.com/article/281642489809937
	Lydia Labanya (Kenya) – <i>Nairobi to host AI documentary screening as ethics debate intensifies</i>	https://www.newvision.co.ug/category/science/nairobi-to-host-ai-documentary-screening-as-e-NV_219808_032026

THEMATIC AREA	AUTHOR/TITLE	URL
AI for development, inclusion and social change	Mthobisi Nozulela (SA) – <i>South Africa must embrace AI or risk falling behind, warns Minister Blade Nzimande</i>	https://iol.co.za/technology/2025-03-19-south-africa-must-embrace-ai-or-risk-falling-behind-warns-minister-blade-nzimande/
	Gugulethu Mashinini (SA) – <i>New AI model brings 11 South African languages online</i>	https://www.timeslive.co.za/news/sci-tech/2026-05-06-new-ai-model-brings-11-south-african-languages-online/
	Mamsi Nkosi (SA) – <i>ASUS Launches AI-Powered ExpertBook Ultra in South Africa</i>	https://www.itnewsafrika.com/2026/03/asus-launches-ai-powered-expertbook-ultra-in-south-africa/
	Duncan Pike (SA) – <i>First AI-enabled autonomous crop inspection drone introduced in South Africa</i>	https://stuff.co.za/2024/10/14/ai-enabled-autonomous-crop-inspection-drone/
	Gerry Cupido (SA) – <i>University of Pretoria recognised as leading institution for AI research in South Africa</i>	https://iol.co.za/news/south-africa/2025-08-16-university-of-pretoria-recognised-as-leading-institution-for-ai-research-in-south-africa/
	Admire Moyo (SA) – <i>Joburg mayor eyes AI to boost service delivery</i>	https://www.itweb.co.za/article/joburg-mayor-eyes-ai-to-boost-service-delivery/VgZeyvJl6oaMdjX9
	Tsakani Nkombyane (SA) – <i>Educate before you automate: South Africa's defining AI choice</i>	https://www.msn.com/en-za/news/other/educate-before-you-automate-south-africa-s-defining-ai-choice/ar-AA1Yrdni
	Shaun Fuchs (SA) – <i>From classroom to career: AI has the potential to bridge South Africa's skills gap</i>	https://capetimes.co.za/business-report/economy/2025-01-26-from-classroom-to-career-ai-has-the-potential-to-bridge-south-africas-skills-gap/
	Zamokuhle Ndawonde (SA) – <i>Academics in SA see AI as an opportunity to enhance learning, PwC survey reveals</i>	https://www.news24.com/citypress/news/academics-in-sa-see-ai-as-an-opportunity-to-enhance-learning-pwc-survey-reveals-20231012
	Ntokozo Mahlangu and Liata Monatisa (SA) – <i>How AI can reach the unbanked with empathy and fairness</i>	https://www.businessday.co.za/opinion/2025-11-24-ntokozo-mahlangu-and-liata-monatisa-how-ai-can-reach-the-unbanked-with-empathy-and-fairness/

THEMATIC AREA	AUTHOR/TITLE	URL
AI for development, inclusion and social change	KAMuses/Elmarie Swart (SA) – <i>The future of AI is here, and it's South African</i>	https://www.itweb.co.za/article/the-future-of-ai-is-here-and-its-south-african/RgeVDqPRLQx7KJN3
	Ferial Haffajee (SA) – <i>Digital platforms have a profound and negative impact on media freedom and sustainability – Competition Commission</i>	https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2025-04-22-digital-platforms-have-a-profound-and-negative-impact-on-media-freedom-and-sustainability-competition-commission/
	Sesona Mdlokovana (SA) – <i>Bridging the language divide: Google's AI glossary in Zulu, Xhosa and Afrikaans</i>	https://iol.co.za/news/brics/2025-10-22-bridging-the-language-divide-googles-ai-glossary-in-zulu-xhosa-and-afrikaans/
	Aarti Bhana (SA) – <i>Tech experts call on South Africa to scale up its digital infrastructure</i>	https://mg.co.za/news/2025-07-08-tech-experts-call-on-south-africa-to-scale-up-its-digital-infrastructure/
	Duncan McLeod (SA) – <i>Up and running with AI</i>	https://www.financialmail.businessday.co.za/fm/fm-fox/2025-04-24-duncan-mcleod-up-and-running-with-ai/
Data colonialism and infrastructure gaps	David Lemayian and Dr Shikoh Gitau (Kenya) – <i>Made in Africa: An African Perspective to the Design, Deployment and Governance of AI</i>	https://qbit.africa/publications/made-in-africa-an-african-perspective
	Studypool (Kenya) – <i>African perspective to the design, deployment and governance of AI</i>	https://www.studypool.com/documents/38206691/african-perspective-to-the-design-deployment-and-governance-of-ai
	Mudiwa Gavaza (SA) – <i>Companies still not ready for AI despite investment boom</i>	https://www.businessday.co.za/companies/2026-01-08-companies-still-not-ready-for-ai-despite-surge-investment/
	James Maisiri (SA) – <i>AI is deciding your future, but South Africans are watching blindly</i>	https://mg.co.za/thought-leader/opinion/2026-01-15-ai-is-deciding-your-future-but-south-africans-are-watching-blindly/

THEMATIC AREA	AUTHOR/TITLE	URL
Data colonialism and infrastructure gaps	Geci Karuri-Sebina et al. (SA) – <i>Africa must end the AI extraction economy now</i>	https://mg.co.za/thought-leader/opinion/2025-11-20-africa-must-end-the-ai-extraction-economy-now/
	Bitange Ndemo and Marine Ragnet (Kenya) – <i>AI sovereignty in Kenya: Building a future rooted in local ownership and innovation</i>	https://www.brookings.edu/articles/ai-sovereignty-in-kenya-building-a-future-rooted-in-local-ownership-and-innovation/
	Tony Carnie (SA) – <i>Growth spurt of data centres could threaten SA's electricity and water supply</i>	https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2026-02-08-growth-spurt-of-data-centres-could-threaten-sas-electricity-and-water-supply/
	Leah Davina Junck and Rachel Adams (SA) – <i>One in three South Africans have never heard of AI – what this means for policy</i>	https://iol.co.za/sunday-tribune/news/2025-09-18-one-in-three-south-africans-have-never-heard-of-ai-what-this-means-for-policy/
AI governance, ethics and policy	Svetlana Khristoforova (SA) – <i>AI in BRICS: Opportunities or challenges</i>	https://pressreader.com/article/281749865707510
	Phillip de Wet (SA) – <i>2026: the year AI regulation bites</i>	https://bit.ly/40RkpMM
	Khulekani Magubane (SA) – <i>Policy in the works to make SA an AI mecca</i>	https://www.businessday.co.za/business-times/2025-11-15-policy-in-the-works-to-make-sa-an-ai-mecca/
	Nothando Magudulela (SA) – <i>'It's important to use Artificial Intelligence ethically to benefit us all'</i>	https://www.sabcnews.com/sabcnews/mapulane-emphasises-importance-of-using-ai-ethically-to-benefit-all-south-africans/
	Dinko Herman Boikanyo (SA) – <i>Protect our humanity in the age of AI and synthetic intelligence</i>	https://mg.co.za/thought-leader/opinion/2025-08-26-protect-our-humanity-in-the-age-of-ai-and-synthetic-iintelligence/
	Cecilia Maundu – <i>How Kenyans are using AI during protests</i>	https://advox.globalvoices.org/2025/07/12/how-kenyans-are-using-ai-during-protests/
	Nanjira Sambuli et al. (Kenya) – <i>What Do Emerging Economies Want From AI?</i>	https://iafrica.com/what-do-emerging-economies-want-from-ai/

THEMATIC AREA	AUTHOR/TITLE	URL
AI governance, ethics and policy	Steve Mbengo (Kenya) – <i>Kenya Tables AI Bill Proposing Regulator, Risk Rules And Penalties</i>	https://cioafrica.co/kenya-tables-ai-bill-proposing-regulator-risk-rules-and-penalties/#:~:text=Kenya%20has%20moved%20to%20formally,AI%20technologies%20in%20the%20country
	Odanga Madung (Kenya) – <i>Kenya's Government has a blueprint for digital tyranny. It is working - for now</i>	https://thisisafrica.me/politics-and-society/kenyas-government-has-a-blueprint-for-digital-tyranny-it-is-working-for-now/
AI as a tool of disinformation and political manipulation	Liz Orembo et al. (Kenya) – <i>Need for Data Access to Tackle AI-powered Disinformation in the Global South</i>	https://www.techpolicy.press/need-for-data-access-to-tackle-ai-powered-disinformation-in-the-global-south/
	Tashlan Naidoo (SA) – <i>Sabrics warns of rise in AI-driven fraud scams</i>	https://www.sabcnews.com/sabcnews/sabrics-warns-of-rise-in-ai-driven-fraud-scams/
	Cynthia Lodite (Kenya) – <i>Larry Madowo warns netizens against AI-generated images after Bobi Wine abduction reports</i>	https://k24.digital/news/larry-madowo-warns-netizens-against-ai-generated-images-after-bobi-wine-abduction-reports
	Simon Majadibodu (SA) – <i>Gauteng Premier Panyaza Lesufi introduces new AI-powered tool to tackle illegal land invasions</i>	https://iol.co.za/news/politics/2024-11-01-gauteng-premier-panyaza-lesufi-introduces-new-ai-powered-tool-to-tackle-illegal-land-invasions/
	Toby Shapshak (SA) – <i>AI won't save us from our bad habits</i>	www.businessday.co.za/opinion/2026-01-16-toby-shapshak-ai-wont-save-us-from-our-bad-habits/
	Diana Kemunto Nyakundi and Liz Orembo (Kenya) – <i>Redefining AI for Africa: The Role of Artificial Intelligence in Kenya's Grassroots Movement</i>	https://www.techpolicy.press/redefining-ai-for-africa-the-role-of-artificial-intelligence-in-kenyas-grassroots-movement/



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Centre for Information Integrity in Africa (CINIA)

The proliferation of 'fake news', misinformation, and harmful content on digital platforms poses significant risks to democracy, public health, and social cohesion. As such, CINIA emerges as a crucial initiative designed to combat these threats through innovative research, interdisciplinary collaboration, and public engagement. Located in the Department of Journalism at the University of Stellenbosch, the centre acts as a bridge between practitioners, academics and policymakers. It provides insights, analysis and practical training for those on the frontlines of journalism, as well as policymakers.