

DW Freedom

*The Media Development
Think Tank*

**Collaborate, reconnect and
resist: How Latin American
innovators are reclaiming
journalism's purpose in the
AI era**

DW Freedom

The Media Development Think Tank

Project Background

This report is part of “The Next Chapter: Journalism in the Age of AI,” a global event series organized by DW Akademie and international partners between November 2025 and February 2026. The initiative brought together media professionals, policymakers, technologists, and civil society representatives across five regional conferences to examine journalism’s future in the age of artificial intelligence—through debate, coalition-building, and collaborative strategy development.

This document summarizes the Latin American regional conference, held in Mexico City on 26–28 November 2025. It reflects the shared analysis of independent media representatives, journalist associations, legislators, and researchers who took part in the workshop “Redefining the Rules of the Game: Independent Journalism and the AI Revolution.”

The report incorporates quotations from participant interviews and session transcripts, all reviewed in consultation with contributors. It offers a collective snapshot of current thinking, resistance strategies, and collaborative possibilities emerging within Latin American journalism at a critical juncture for the industry.

Author:

Tatiana Dias, as journalistic rapporteur, authored this report based on participant discussions, interviews, and session transcripts.

Workshop Moderation DW Akademie:

Cletus Gregor Barié, Bettina Knuth, and Julia Manske

Editing DW Akademie:

Alexander Matschke and Bettina Knuth

Native proofreading DW:

Loveday Wright

Summary

Artificial intelligence, particularly generative AI, is causing a seismic shift in the media ecosystem, radically altering how information is produced, distributed, and monetized. While offering potential benefits such as process automation and increased efficiency, AI already poses unprecedented challenges for journalism.

In the Latin American context — marked by the rapid adoption of new technologies alongside deep social and informational inequality — the massive popularization of generative AI contributes to increasing dependence of media outlets on the big tech companies that control these systems, deepening asymmetries and the concentration of power among major digital platforms.

Journalistic content is scraped and offered by large platforms and AI systems without financial compensation for the journalists who produce it. Simultaneously, major platforms adopt opaque algorithmic mediation strategies and AI summaries that reduce audience reach, creating a profoundly unbalanced relationship of structural and financial dependence.

For independent journalism, with less negotiating power against big tech, this crisis is especially acute. Declining audiences and revenue, loss of public trust, and erosion of public debate are some of the visible consequences already experienced in newsrooms from Mexico City to Porto Alegre to Oruro.

However, the crisis scenario has also led independent outlets to seek alternative financing and distribution methods, redefining their purpose, rethinking their business models, and creating new forms of audience connection — and these opportunities offer relevant lessons for strengthening and rebuilding journalism in Latin America and beyond.

This report, developed from a workshop among Latin American journalists, editors, researchers, and regulators, presents some of these strategies, discussed collectively during the two-day gathering in November 2025 in Mexico City, Mexico.

Guiding questions:

1. How can independent journalism survive in the era of artificial intelligence?
2. What can we learn from pioneers?
3. What public policies are necessary, and which already exist, and how can lessons be shared between Latin American countries?
4. How to create and strengthen alliances to safeguard journalism and the integrity of information?
5. What specific and urgent actions must be taken to determine and maximize the available margins for change in the face of existing power asymmetry?

Crisis and opportunities

AI use in Latin America

The development of AI is an ongoing geopolitical dispute with two main poles¹. On one side, the United States: Major Silicon Valley companies began the race driven by massive private investments concentrated in few players like OpenAI, Google, and Meta. Today, the US is responsible for most of the world's largest AI models. On the other side is China, which leads AI-related development and research, concentrating the largest number of academic papers and patents in the field, and is already approaching the US in the race for global leadership in this industry's development.

And then there is the rest of the world. There is profound global inequality between countries that use AI and countries that develop AI. According to the AI Index, between 2010 and 2023, Latin America accounted for only 0.04% of AI patents registered worldwide².

"We don't have educational systems that address AI in a responsible and ethical way. We also don't have the infrastructure to sustain what these models entail, so we depend heavily on large companies that aren't necessarily training the AIs with perspectives from Latin America, that aren't thinking about how these technologies will impact our communities. So, we're more consumers than producers, and not even critical consumers — just consumers who are using these technologies without critical perspectives."

Cristian León, Executive director Fundación InternetBolivia (Bolivia)

Although it makes up 8.1% of the world's population³ and 6.3% of global GDP⁴, Latin America today accounts for only 1.12% of global AI investment, according to the latest Latin American Artificial Intelligence Index (ILIA)⁵, published in 2025. There are also deep regional inequalities. While countries like Chile, Brazil, and Uruguay already have technological infrastructure, specialized human capital, and national policies, countries like Paraguay, Cuba, and El Salvador have little infrastructure for local development.

On the other hand, the Latin American population is deeply enthusiastic about these new technologies. Countries like Brazil and Mexico exceed the global average in the use of generative

¹ https://hai.stanford.edu/assets/files/hai_ai_index_report_2025.pdf

² https://hai.stanford.edu/assets/files/hai_ai_index_report_2025.pdf

³ <https://www.statista.com/topics/3287/latin-america/#:~:text=Latin%20America%20comprises%20around%20,countries%20are%20Spanish%20and%20Portuguese.>

⁴ https://www.unido.org/sites/default/files/unido-publications/2023-12/documents_Yearbook_2023_UNIDO_IndustrialStatistics_Yearbook_2023_LAC.pdf

⁵ <https://www.cepal.org/pt-br/node/70285>

AI⁶, mainly ChatGPT from OpenAI and similar tools like Gemini from Google. While the average usage among the global population was 66%, in Brazil this number reached 76% and in Mexico 70%, according to Omdia's Digital Consumer Insights 2024.

In Brazil, AI chatbots have even emerged as one of the main means used to consume news, according to the Reuters Digital News Report 2025⁷. Today, the number of Brazilians who claim to use AI to consume news is equal to the percentage who get information through print media: About 10% of the population.

"Hegemonic AI, controlled by five companies and particularly by the US, is a political, imperial, and colonial project deliberately designed to deepen dependence, automate inequality, violence, and epistemicide."

Paola Ricaurte, principal researcher at the Department of Media and Digital Culture at Monterrey Institute of Technology, and associate researcher at the Berkman Klein Center for Internet & Society at Harvard University (Mexico).

Thus, we have a scenario where the development, operation, and technologies of major AI companies are predominantly from the Global North and, in their conception, are not shaped to meet the needs and particularities of Latin America. Latin Americans are avid consumer, but the region has little participation in technology development. An extractivist logic is underway that compromises the survival of the journalistic field – and consequently, democracy – in Latin American countries.

Three converging crises

1. Economic sustainability crisis

Journalism's growing dependence on big tech has caused profound changes in its business models, which shaped their strategies to respond to the algorithmic impositions of major platforms. Thus, adapting news production to the platforms' logic – with Search Engine Optimization (SEO) techniques to boost audiences and focusing on production volume to guarantee advertising revenue, for example, had become survival strategies for digital journalism in the past years. But once again, the scenario has changed.

⁶ <https://omdia.tech.informa.com/om123539/2024-digital-consumer-insights-digital-consumer-services>

⁷ <https://reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk/digital-news-report/2025>

"What's needed for the survival of public interest media is a lot of things, but we can synthesize it into finding sustainable business models — which is a very complex process and also varies from country to country — as well as rebuilding a connection with audiences, so they understand the difference between quality journalism and content that was perhaps made hastily."

Pablo Fernandez, Grants and Partnerships Manager, Latin America & the Caribbean, IFPIM (Argentina)

The advancement of generative AI is once again transforming the media ecosystem — and the strategies adopted in the past to ensure sustainable journalism not only no longer work but impose new challenges.

To function, large language models (LLMs) need to be fed with enormous volumes of data. This includes information from audiovisual works, pieces of visual arts, academic articles, books, websites, social networks, and journalistic content, among various other sources, collected massively through web scraping without proper economic compensation to the original content producers. Journalistic content feeds AI chatbots and synthetic news summaries, in a unilateral extraction of economic value and commercial exploitation of journalistic reporting work. Big tech needed journalism to create reliable machines.

"Verified and systematized information, archives of more than 30, 40, 50, 100 years — for these data-extractive companies, this is the fossil fuel they need to feed the large models."

Alvaro Liuzzi, journalist, communications professor and digital media consultant (Argentina)

"We could fall into a kind of return to the past, because let's remember that there were many media gatekeepers in our countries, large media conglomerates that filtered what did and didn't reach the population. The internet and social media decentralized that, and we're at risk of the major platforms now becoming gatekeepers again with that penetrating power via social networks."

Alonso Tamez, Technical Secretary of the Senate AI Commission (Mexico)

Google's AI Overview, launched in May 2024⁸, has already caused profound effects. Research shows that the tool, which allows users to obtain synthesized information directly in Google search without accessing publisher sites, has already caused a 10% to 20% traffic drop in many Brazilian digital outlets.

There's also estimates that "zero-click" the strategy of displaying content summaries directly in search without needing to take users to the original site — could divert up to 79% of potential traffic from source sites⁹. Another study showed that only 1% of users click on original sources in Google's AI¹⁰.

There are also studies demonstrating significant drops in digital advertising revenues¹¹.

"So, people arrive at that summary, see the result, and no longer click on the site. There's real desperation among outlets in the Brazilian market regarding the impact this could cause."

Maia Fortes, Executive Director of Ajor (Brasil)

2. Relevance crisis

Beyond losing revenue sources and audiences, outlets' dependence on platforms has caused another effect: Disconnection from audiences. If news is produced for algorithm optimization — whether through SEO techniques or AI optimization — the audience isn't people, but robots. Submission to optimization causes journalism to lose its original mission or purpose, which is to connect with real people.

In the platformized logic, where large companies decide visibility according to their commercial interests through opaque decisions, journalism competes with everything: From cat cartoons to political influencers, everything is content competing for user attention. To perform in social media logic, journalism often needs to adopt simplified and superficial language.

"What worries us a lot about artificial intelligence is adding one more intermediary to connect us with people, because ultimately our work is conversation. For that, you need the journalist to meet with another person who is on the other side, watching, listening to or reading what we're talking about. If the other side is not a human being or if we start creating information simply and

⁸ <https://blog.google/products/search/generative-ai-google-search-may-2024/>

⁹ <https://www.foxglove.org.uk/2025/07/04/legal-challenge-google-theft-of-news/>

¹⁰ <https://es.wired.com/articulos/la-ia-de-google-deja-sin-clics-a-los-medios-solo-el-1-accede-a-fuentes-originales>

¹¹ <https://www.adexchanger.com/publishers/advertising-isnt-a-major-growth-driver-for-top-news-publishers/>

we automate moderation, well, there's no longer a conversation. If you take it to the extreme, we could reach a public space where the conversation is between artificial intelligences."

Sara Castillejo, digital intelligence manager, Mutante (Colombia)

And AI's advancement aggravates the scenario. Today, at least half of new articles published on the internet were written by AI¹²; students can no longer identify AI-written journalistic articles¹³; and cases of journalistic errors caused by misuse of AI also undermine people's trust in journalism¹⁴.

Google's AI Overview also has demonstrated curation failures by reproducing advertorials as if they were news¹⁵, accelerating the erosion of professional journalism's institutional legitimacy.

In a scenario of profusion of AI-produced synthetic content and bot-driven coordinated disinformation campaigns, the boundary between real and false blurs — and public debate deteriorates.

3. Democratic crisis

The democratic crisis is a multifaceted problem. One of its manifestations, the deterioration of public discourse, is directly linked to power asymmetry and big tech's operational logic, in a scenario of inauthentic and easily manipulable conversations.

Now, AI is accelerating this process. The common space of knowledge and social cohesion¹⁶, crucial elements for democracy, are being dissolved. When citizens are led into very separate silos through hyper-personalization, common spaces — essential for living in society — cease to exist.

"How will we be able to build or preserve democracy if we can't genuinely meet to make some basic agreements?"

Sara Castillejo, digital intelligence manager, Mutante (Colombia)

¹² <https://theconversation.com/more-than-half-of-new-articles-on-the-internet-are-being-written-by-ai-is-human-writing-headed-for-extinction-26835>

¹³ <https://www.nature.com/articles/s41599-025-04872-2>

¹⁴ <https://reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk/rebuilding-trust-journalisms-role-ai-driven-world>

¹⁵ <https://www.aosfatos.org/noticias/como-esquema-anuncios-sites-falsos-suplementos-enganou-ate-seus-participantes/>

¹⁶ <https://www1.folha.uol.com.br/ilustrissima/2025/07/crise-do-jornalismo-deixou-terreno-fertil-para-erosao-da-democracia.shtml>

Generative AI has the capacity to produce synthetic content on an industrial scale, including deepfakes and "hallucinations", gross errors presented as correct information. Additionally, trained with historical data, algorithms can amplify inequalities under the appearance of neutrality.

"When we have a marginalized population that already uses artificial intelligence but doesn't know how it works and what's behind these mechanisms, we have a scenario of exclusion and reinforcement of social inequalities that already exist."

Elena Wesley, Journalist and communication coordinator at Data_labe (Brazil)

AI chatbots take personalization to the extreme: Instead of an opinion or question being submitted to public scrutiny, the user obtains a customized response that often reinforces beliefs and biases¹⁷.

The problem is aggravated by lack of knowledge about how socio-technical systems function. Thus, neither the public nor journalism yet comprehensively understand how automated decisions are made and what their consequences are — which is fundamental for critical and informed use of new technologies.

"The first problem is opacity [of the algorithms]. The second problem is that probably the rules based on which this algorithm is constructed are not rules that have the public interest as their horizon. Without transparency of the platforms it is very difficult to have significant and concrete data about what is happening and about what matters."

Nina Santos, deputy secretary of digital policy (Brazil)

Thus, big tech has become central actors in shaping public opinion, with profound reflections not only on journalism but also on democracies. The discussion is less about AI — the technology itself — and more about the unprecedented concentration of economic and political power of these companies, with enormous influence in Latin America.

Technical infrastructure is concentrated in the hands of few private actors, without public mediation and without a democratic project. This power is opaque, automated, and click-oriented. Algorithms act as institutions that shape choices, and AI accelerates this process.

¹⁷ <https://www.article19.org/resources/algorithmic-people-pleasers-are-ai-chatbots-telling-you-what-you-want-to-hear/>

The development of competitive generative AI requires massive data access and large computational capacity, resources that dominant companies accumulate, reinforcing their competitive advantages and creating substantial barriers to market entry for other actors. Thus, innovation is restricted to few actors and subject to a market logic imported from Silicon Valley.

"We're actually losing the community to generate spaces for public debate that truly reflect what society needs, and the issues that are priorities to build a broader context for democracy and for the defense of rights. We try to think about artificial intelligence not just as a tool, but as an assemblage of power and an assemblage of knowledge."

Paola Ricaurte, professor at Tecnológico de Monterrey and a faculty associate at the Berkman Klein Center for Internet & Society at Harvard University (México)

In this context, on the geopolitical map of AI, Latin America, like other Global South regions, is one of the backyards of this industry — a place with cheap labor¹⁸ and abundant natural resources for extractivist practices, with the construction, for example, of datacenters that consume enormous amounts of energy and water¹⁹.

At the same time, platforms exercise effective lobbying to block and interfere with regulations in the region. The project "The Invisible Hands of Big Tech" documented thousands of influence actions²⁰, including hundreds of big tech's official visits to the Brazilian Congress during discussions of important laws in Brazil.

"The Invisible Hands of Big Tech" also showed that platforms massively use journalism to gain credibility — but haven't compensated outlets for it. And when they did, it was in a way that undermined the collective strength of the journalistic field. One of big tech's strategies to deal with demands for content payment was to "rent the enemy:" With Google Showcase, the company offered payments to outlets while imposing "confidentiality agreements that didn't allow collaboration²¹."

"That platforms also promote, and finance journalism is very evident in Latin America, much more strongly than in other regions. This is part of big tech's

¹⁸ <https://advox.globalvoices.org/2024/10/05/latin-america-uncovering-the-hidden-human-workforce-behind-ai/>

¹⁹ <https://www.intercept.com.br/tag/data-center/>

²⁰ <https://big-tech-data.elclip.org/methodology/?lang=en>

²¹ <https://apublica.org/2025/09/alugando-o-inimigo-como-o-google-pagou-milhoes-a-imprensa-para-evitar-a-regulacao/>

invisible hands that are operating."

Angela Cantador, journalist, El Clip (Costa Rica)

Additionally, by financing initiatives for journalistic outlets, without clear transparency criteria, big tech created financial dependence that contributed to deepening power asymmetries between platforms and the journalistic field in Latin America. All participants agreed there is an urgent need to act collectively.

"Artificial intelligence is a tool that can and must be used to improve what we do, but it shouldn't be defined as the future of journalism, because it simply won't be able to do what we do when we practice serious and investigative journalism."

Sérgio Spagnuolo, founder, Núcleo Jornalismo (Brazil)

Latin American lessons

Strategies from news outlets, associations, experts and regulators

No single actor can face these transnational challenges alone. The response requires a collective and collaborative approach, focused on building sovereignty and autonomy against concentrated powers.

New practices from Latin American new outlets

Rethinking journalism's purpose

Despite the challenges, the journalistic field has never been so diverse and vibrant. What's underway is the need to renegotiate: What makes journalism essential today? It's not just "quality information," but the creation of a minimal and common space for social cohesion, of the world we live in and the common things that build the idea of society.

For this, journalism needs to abandon the focus on content volume production and concentrate on generating real impact and concrete changes in society.

Who is doing it?

- **Mutante (Colombia):** An independent digital outlet that practices participatory journalism. Their journalism is the trigger for what its creators call "social conversation," based on three pillars: Speak, understand, and act. The outlet functions as an "exercise in resistance" and works on the need to "imagine a different ecosystem and collaborate so that ecosystem exists."
- **El Surtidor (Paraguay):** Its co-founder, Jazmin Acuña, created the Change Journalism project, which proposes a framework for impact-centered journalism. This change is based on "a much closer connection with audiences and in search of a strengthened purpose."

"This is an enormous chance to also think about how we can reinvent ourselves to develop much more genuine relationships with the audience to transcend this transactional model that the attention economy has left us with, distancing us greatly from people."

Jazmin Acuña, co-founder, El Surtidor (Paraguay)

"A first step is that media outlets in the independent ecosystem can revalidate our impact frameworks and center impact precisely on the change we want to trigger in society, not only on indicators or reach metrics."

Sara Castillejo Ditta, digital intelligence manager, Mutante (Colombia)

Reconnecting with audiences

It's urgent to resume the one-to-one relationship with readers, focused on transparency and ethical principles, instead of seeking millions of users. Journalism needs to reclaim its social role.

Who is doing it?

- **La Diaria (Uruguay):** The outlet has a model based on one-to-one relationships with readers based on transparency, review of ethical principles, seeking "the 100 who truly exist and believe in you," instead of millions of users. It was noted that about 25,000 subscribers cover 85% to 90% of the outlet's budget, a "fantastic" figure for financial sustainability.
- **Muy Waso (Bolivia):** Muy Waso, an independent feminist outlet, uses games and other creative methodologies to connect with audiences. A specific example of their methodology is the climate action tarot, which combines artistic methodologies, technology, environment, and participatory action.

"Artificial intelligence allows us to go back to asking ourselves things that were there before artificial intelligence. I believe it is returning to the base of journalism, of returning to going out into the street, thinking about doing what machines cannot do."

Alvaro Liuzzi, journalist, communications professor, and digital media consultant (Argentina)

"It is very important to return to explain the importance of journalism and the value of informative content, creating common ways of measuring value."

Cecilia Álvarez, director, La Diaria (Uruguay)

Opening technology's black boxes

Journalism plays a fundamental role in monitoring power. In an era of extreme power concentration among a few technology companies, journalistic coverage must explain and politicize technologies in a way that benefits a majority of people.

Who's doing it?

- **El Clip (Latam):** A research center based in Latin America with a collaborative work model, focusing on transnational investigations addressing "power abuses." One of its recent projects was "The Invisible Hands of Big Tech," a massive dossier on lobbying practices and the influence of technology giants worldwide.
- **DataLabe (Brazil):** DataLabe is a civil society organization based in the Maré favela in Rio de Janeiro that focuses on digital rights and data culture. The DataLabe team works to educate marginalized communities about artificial intelligence, including underlying political interests, methods of self-protection, and ways to benefit from AI in daily life and work. DataLabe also advocates for legislation and regulations to protect the population, particularly with regard to content moderation.

"Our work is dedicated to explaining to people in these communities what artificial intelligence is, what interests are behind these technologies, how we can protect ourselves in this scenario, how we as citizens can advocate for regulations that protect the population, but also how we can take advantage of the benefits of these technologies."

Elena Wesley, coordinator, Data_labe (Brazil)

"It is very interesting to start looking for concrete stories of those affected and let them be the protagonists and also generate a kind of empathy and local anchoring that these stories are also told from the territorial perspective."

Mijail Miranda, editor, Muy Waso (Bolivia)

Open content and collaboration

Information in the public interest should be open and free for access and replication throughout the ecosystem, facilitating the dissemination of investigative findings.

Who's doing it?

- **Núcleo (Brasil)** develops collaborative frameworks that enable outlets to build a 'shared community' and common infrastructure, breaking free from big tech's grip on content distribution.
- **CENIA – Chile's National AI Center (Chile)** is developing the LatamGPT²², a sovereign large language model (LLM) through partnerships with diverse organizations – including nonprofits and government entities – that contribute training data. This 'collaborative development' approach is designed to prevent unilateral data appropriation.

"It's important that Latin American culture has representation, especially in the open models that don't exist right now. We believe that if we have models that are reasonably competitive in cultural topics and capabilities, new business opportunities will be able to be created for the industry as well as for states, taking these models and doing what they need to do to innovate."

Eugenio Herrera-Berg, developer, LatamGPT (Chile)

Collaboration and collective strategy: The role of associations

Negotiation and alliances

Associations seek to gather and articulate media (including legacy and digital natives) to gain leverage and negotiating power against Big Tech.

Who's doing it?

- **Ajor (Brazil)** has a "coalition-building" strategy with other journalism sectors, including legacy media associations, instead of focusing on internal field division.
- **Adepa (Argentina)** has a project with IFPIM focused on studying and investigating what's occurring globally regarding platform regulation, legal discussions, and judicial processes in various countries (such as Spain, Canada, the United States, and Uruguay). This research work is part of a "systemic change" vision aimed at benefiting media in the medium and long term.

²² <https://www.latamgpt.org/en>

- **The Oaxaca Declaration**²³: A historical example of effective block negotiation was the Oaxaca group in early 2000s²⁴, which brought together media, academia, and NGOs. This coalition successfully pressured the Mexican state to create a transparency law²⁵. The Oaxaca Declaration was signed by 77 Mexican outlets.
- **The CTRL+J project**²⁶, with participation from **Ajor** and **IFPIM**, created "inter-regional cooperation" among Brazil, South Africa, and Indonesia to develop shared solutions in sustainability and AI governance.

"The path to a more constructive relationship is surely to work together. On one hand, media outlets of whatever type — there are traditional media, new media, smaller media, larger media — and on the other, to have a more honest conversation with the platforms."

Pablo Fernández, IFPIM manager for Latin America and the Caribbean

"We are much more in a moment of coalition construction than of division within the field."

Maia Gonçalves Fortes, Executive Director, Ajor (Brazil)

Regulatory and legal advocacy

Media outlets and journalism associations actively work to ensure journalism is included in public policies and that laws address consent, remuneration, and compensation for content use.

Who's doing it?

- **Ajor**: In discussions on the Artificial Intelligence bill in Brazil, Ajor partnered with players in the digital rights and culture fields to push for consent, transparency, and remuneration for journalistic content use. Ajor also mobilized its members, including small and medium news sites, to collect data proving the objective impact of Google AI Overview. This mobilization enabled a contribution to opening an antitrust investigation against Google at Cade, Brazil's competition investigation body.

²³ <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000098510>

²⁴ <https://www.freedominfo.org/2010/02/the-oaxaca-group-eight-years-later/>

²⁵ https://www.hrw.org/reports/2006/mexico0506/3.htm#_ftnref61

²⁶ <https://www.ctrl-j.info/>

- **Adepa** works with principles that should be implemented in Argentina regarding AI regulation, based on European, Australian, and South African legislation. Among these principles are consent (for content use by platforms and AI engines), compensation (remuneration for content use), and citation (attribution).

"We can only do the political work we do because we understand very deeply the day-to-day reality of organizations and the challenges that organizations face. And from that, we designed very much, from the beginning, a perspective that we had to act for public policies."

Maia Gonçalves Fortes, Executive Director, Ajour (Brazil)

Independent training

Today, many innovation, AI, and new technology training programs for journalists are offered by big tech themselves. However, there is already an effort to create independent training programs aimed at empowering journalists for more critical coverage and adoption of ethical technologies and practices internally. But much more needs to be done: Journalists and association representatives recognize the need for independent training and innovation programs, which can be conducted in partnership with civil society and universities.

Who's doing it?

- **The Latin American Center for Investigative Journalism (CLIP)**, in partnership with Núcleo (Brazil), organizes workshops on how to investigate large technology companies²⁷.
- **ADEPA (Argentine Association of Journalistic Entities)** developed a "manual" or guide with a "more strategic vision" for the use and adoption of AI in newsrooms²⁸.

"It is important for demystifying, for concretizing, because companies like to advertise that they are neutral and magical, but the role of journalism is to concretize things: To show what technologies are made of: Data centers, electricity, rare minerals, human labor."

Tatiana Dias, executive editor, Intercept Brasil (Brazil)

²⁷ <https://nucleo.jor.br/institucional/2024-05-29-nucleo-and-el-clip-announce-training-to-investigate-big-tech/>

²⁸ <https://adepa.org.ar/wp-content/uploads/2025/09/al-reshapes-the-argentine-medi-ecosystem-media-outlets-should-adapt-without-compromising-their-true-nature.pdf>

“The freedom of lions is the death of lambs”

Regulatory strategies

Although the Latin American context is extremely heterogeneous, examples from Brazil and Mexico show regulatory paths for protecting sovereignty, considering the particularities and resistance in their contexts.

Brazil

Brazil has been a vanguard actor in Latin America and the Global South, seeking to create a dynamic regulatory ecosystem focused on fundamental rights, sovereignty, and content compensation.

- **The Digital Child and Adolescent Statute (ECA Digital)** was recently approved, establishing obligations for digital platforms regarding the protection of children and adolescents online, including protection mechanisms, prevention of compulsive use, and data protection.
- **AI Bill:** Currently in the Chamber of Deputies, the project provides for adopting an asymmetric regulation model based on a risk matrix. It also requires that AI development using content protected by copyright (including journalism) be remunerated by the company using the content (not by the end user), and the author can exercise the right to opt-out (remove their content) from the system. Additionally, the project proposes rules for AI-generated synthetic images, requiring visible watermarks readable by machines. The project faces strong resistance from big tech.
- **Digital markets bill:** Aims to strengthen competition regulation (antitrust), empowering the Administrative Council for Economic Defense (CADE) to regulate systemically relevant actors. The goal is to reduce Brazilian dependence on external platforms.
- **Antitrust investigation:** Brazil's competition authority, Cade, opened a consultation to investigate Google over AI Overview, which caused a 6% to 18% loss in organic traffic for small and medium news sites.
- **Sovereignty and local headquarters:** Brazilian legislation seeks to require large platforms to have local headquarters or a legal representative in the country so they can be subject to court orders and comply with legislation.
- **Brazilian media literacy strategy:** Brazil's Digital Policy Secretariat is involved in developing this strategy.

"I'm very sure that any democratically elected government has much more capacity and much more control distance than any international platform that

arrives in a country and thinks it can defend an idea of freedom of expression that often has nothing to do with what happens in local reality."

Nina Santos, Brazil's deputy secretary of digital policy (Brazil)

Mexico

Mexico is focused on creating a regulatory framework for AI but faces the difficulty of balancing regulatory sovereignty with its economic and geographic proximity to the United States.

- **AI Regulatory Route:** The Senate's Artificial Intelligence Commission is developing a work route to approve a regulatory framework. The goal is to fill the "totally regulatory void" that exists, where the lack of rules favors large actors at the expense of smaller ones. The proposal faces several challenges. The first is US influence: Mexico's regulatory framework cannot be "diametrically different" from that of the US due to the Free Trade Agreement and economic proximity. Additionally, big tech lobbying is "very present" and intense in the Mexican Congress.
- **Permanent council:** The country is considering creating a permanent council (composed of private sector, public and legislative actors, as well as civil society) dedicated to reviewing the validity and obsolescence of regulatory frameworks on AI. The goal is for regulation to be dynamic and flexible, updating quickly in the face of technological evolution.
- **Social pedagogy:** There is a fundamental need to create a social pedagogy regarding AI to educate the population about technology, an essential step to strengthen democracy and allow citizens to minimally defend themselves from algorithms.

"The background of these debates about AI and journalism is the geopolitical struggle for the dominance of this technology."

Alonso Tamez, Technical Secretary of the Senate AI Commission (Mexico)

A letter from Latin America

Five strategies to reinvent journalism

The next chapter of journalism will not be written by big tech. It will be written by us — if we have the courage to act together, invest in our autonomy, educate our audiences, fight for our rights, and reconnect with our fundamental purpose.

1. Build alliances

How can we move from competition to collaboration and create a unified Latin American voice, strong enough to negotiate with big tech on equal terms?

The moment demands that we set aside isolated competition and embrace strategic collaboration. The formation of multisectoral Latin American coalitions is not just desirable — it's essential for our survival. When journalists, media associations, civil society, and academia unite, we create negotiating power capable of confronting big tech dominance.

Next steps:

- Ensure journalism is literally "in the negotiation room" for regulatory decisions
- Share not just content, but business models, technology development, and engagement strategies
- Create permanent discussion spaces to exchange learnings and act as a block on public policy and sustainability issues
- Create a regional Latam journalism coalition

"Journalists in Latin America are much more aligned regarding what needs to be done to prevent AI from becoming a harmful technology for us. People are very aligned in this thinking about collaboration, sharing, articulation, and holding big tech companies accountable."

Sérgio Spagnuolo, founder and executive director of Núcleo Jornalismo (Brazil)

2. Our technology, our rules: rebuilding digital sovereignty

What would it look like if Latin American journalism controlled its own technological destiny?

It's time to invest in local strategic innovation that allows us to control our own digital future. This means creating our own infrastructure, developing alternative technologies, and cultivating regional knowledge.

"A major recommendation we make is: Develop your own technology, seek out other platforms, diversify your revenue models, your distribution, your journalism production, and your collaboration with other newsrooms so that we don't remain concentrated only in the same space, in tools that we have no control over and that can often end up being harmful to our business."

Sérgio Spagnuolo, founder and executive director, Núcleo Jornalismo (Brazil)

Next steps:

- Develop Latin American artificial intelligence models, trained with our data and reflecting our culture
- Create common repositories of content and knowledge, collective property of media outlets
- Develop browser extensions and direct public distribution platforms
- Customize existing open models with regional expertise
- Promote collaborations among journalism, civil society, and academia in producing knowledge about innovation and creating spaces for collaborative experimentation

True press freedom in the 21st century includes technological freedom. We cannot be editorially independent if we are structurally dependent.

"The data we're using for training all comes from alliances, which I believe is a development model that hasn't occurred in the industry. We've reached out to nonprofit organizations, states, etc., and they've given us their data because they know we won't profit from it at their expense. It would be wonderful if we manage to create a good model because we believe it would open doors to a new type of super-collective development, because it's at a South American level and also global."

Eugenio Herrera-Berg, developer at LatamGPT (Chile)

3. Unveiling the black box: media literacy and algorithmic transparency

In what ways can journalism hold technology companies accountable and educate citizens on how to critically navigate the AI-driven information landscape?

Journalism has a dual mission in the artificial intelligence era: To Monitor big tech power and educate the public. We need to open the "black box" of algorithms and materialize debates that seem too abstract.

Next steps:

- Investigate and expose lobbying mechanisms and corporate finances of technology companies. Name individuals and lobbyists acting on behalf of big tech, generating real accountability.
- Transform complex technical issues into accessible and human narratives. Center coverage on affected people: Exploited workers, victims of algorithmic discrimination, giving visibility to impacts on Latin American territories and communities.
- Create basic education programs about new technologies and AI, independent of big tech, with alliances with civil society and universities for critical training of reporters and editors.
- Create a common and dynamic knowledge repository, articulating civil society, universities, and specialized journalists.
- Promote information exchanges and work in coalitions among outlets.

It's not enough to denounce. We must investigate, explain, and empower citizens to understand how socio-technical systems shape their lives.

"I would say that, in reality, the black boxes are the corporations. So , that is what must also be put at the center: Not just the algorithms, but corporations themselves are the great black boxes that are concealing everything."

Nina Santos, Nina Santos, Brazil's deputy secretary of digital policy (Brazil)

"The rise of AI is also an opportunity to engage with it and demystify it — that is, to get familiar with it, understand it, understand the risks it poses, the opportunities, also who's behind it, who's driving it, know who to hold accountable as journalists, and be able to convey all this information to the public, which in the end is what journalism aims for."

Angela Cantador, reporter and data coordinator, El Clip (Costa Rica)

4. Regulate to protect, regulate to innovate

What regulatory standards are necessary to establish a level playing field in which journalism can thrive, and the rights of citizens are safeguarded against platform dominance?

Latin American countries should actively work to establish clear regulatory standards for AI systems and digital platforms. Despite platforms' active lobbying efforts, initiatives from countries like Brazil have already shown it is possible to ensure self-determination to protect their citizens' interests. The challenges are many: Data protection, copyright, transparency, and AI's potential to deepen existing inequalities. The goal is to ensure accountability from tech companies and protect the rights of citizens and journalists.

Next steps:

- Mobilize the journalistic sector to push for clear regulatory frameworks
- Seek dynamic regulation models that consider Latin American realities
- Establish strategic alliances with digital rights lawyers
- Drive litigation and create jurisprudence against large companies
- Ensure regulations address data protection, copyright, transparency, and equity

Regulation is not the enemy of innovation — it's the guarantee that innovation happens fairly. We need rules that protect journalistic work and citizens' rights.

5. Back to the roots: Reconnecting with audiences and social purposes

How can we transition from focusing on algorithmic metrics to making a meaningful impact that addresses the real needs of our communities?

Amid algorithmic chaos and infinite content proliferation, journalism needs to rediscover its essence. It's not about producing more, but mattering more. And not about reaching everyone but truly having an impact.

Next steps:

- Rethink volume metrics in favor of social impact metrics
- Strengthen individual relationships with audiences through active listening
- Detect real needs of the communities we serve
- Create methodologies to measure and communicate journalism's social value
- Establish partnerships with civil society organizations for concrete social advocacy
- Develop sustainable and autonomous models that reconnect journalism with its essential purpose

- Create legal frameworks that guarantee the autonomy and strength of independent journalism

Journalism's future is not in competing with algorithms for attention, but in recovering what makes us irreplaceable: Our capacity to create meaning, promote social cohesion, and serve the public interest.

"The business model was about the number of articles, number of users, clicks, reactions, interactions, and based on that, they assessed the price of ads. I think the big tech companies are necessarily going to have to change that model. Because they no longer have the same impact from ads as they used to. We have the great opportunity to have that one-to-one relationship with the reader based on transparency and a review of ethical principles. It's not about looking for 25 million users, but the 100 who really need to see you, who believe in you for whatever reason — they believe in you or they see themselves reflected in your outlet."

Martha Ramos, Executive Director, Organización Editorial Mexicana (Mexico)

"To continue valuing quality journalism — which although it may be somewhat abstract for audiences, means recognizing when you find information that was useful, that served a purpose, that wasn't fabricated. There's important work to be done in education, and also for media outlets to work on making their content somehow more relevant and to restore journalism's value in the face of other ways of generating information."

Pablo Fernandez, Grants and Partnerships Manager, Latin America & the Caribbean, IFPIM (Argentina)

Conclusion

The challenges facing journalism in the AI era are profound, but they are not insuperable. What emerged clearly from our collective discussions is that isolation is not an option — our strength lies in collaboration, our power in unity, and our future in reclaiming the essence of what makes journalism indispensable to democracy.

The five strategies outlined in this report — building alliances, achieving digital sovereignty, promoting transparency and education, fighting for regulatory frameworks, and reconnecting with our core purpose — are not just aspirations. Innovative outlets, associations, and regulators across Latin America are already practicing them. Examples include Mutante's participatory journalism in Colombia, La Diaria's sustainable, reader-supported model in Uruguay, Brazil's pioneering regulatory efforts, and Chile's sovereign AI development through the Chilean non-profit research center Cenia (National Center for Artificial Intelligence). Latin America is demonstrating that another path is possible.

"We are relevant actors not just in replicating things being done in other parts of the world, but above all in developing innovative solutions in dialogue with the societies we live in — societies that were colonized in the past and still bear the marks of that today, that have very high levels of inequality, but also have social solutions that were built over time and can often provide lessons for contexts like Europe and the United States other ways forward."

Nina Santos, Brazil's deputy secretary of digital policy (Brazil)

"I would love for us to think about or turn around that idea of putting artificial intelligence first in everything and say, 'No, put people first, put communities first, and in any case, artificial intelligence should be at the service of better coexistence among them.'"

Jazmin Acuña, co-founder, El Surtidor (Paraguay)

The path forward requires us to be bold. We must demand seats at negotiation tables where decisions about our digital future are made. We must invest in our own technological infrastructure rather than remain perpetually dependent on systems designed elsewhere for other purposes.

We must educate both ourselves and our audiences about how these technologies work and whom they serve. We must use every legal and regulatory tool available to protect our rights and our work. And above all, we must remember why journalism matters — not for clicks or

metrics, but for its capacity to create shared understanding, strengthen social cohesion, and defend democracy.

The big tech companies have enormous resources, but we have something they cannot buy: Legitimacy, trust, deep community connections, and a commitment to truth and the public good. These are our competitive advantages, and they become exponentially more powerful when we act collectively.

This is not the end of journalism — it is an opportunity to write its next chapter. But that chapter will only be written if we have the courage to collaborate across borders, resist extractive models, and reconnect with the fundamental purpose that makes our work essential. The future of journalism in Latin America — and indeed globally — depends on the choices we make now.

"I believe that despite all the difficulties, we've never been so prepared in historical terms to move forward."

Nina Santos, deputy secretary of digital policy (Brazil)

About this report

This report was developed from insights and strategies shared by representatives from independent media outlets, journalist associations, legislators, and researchers who participated in The Next Chapter: Journalism in the age of AI workshop, organized by DW Akademie in Mexico City, November 2025.

As we discussed, AI tools could be useful in journalistic work, improving productivity and reducing the time needed for specific tasks. The findings from the workshop — which included interviews, methodologies (such as the World Café methodology), and conversations among all participants — were systematized with the help of Google's Pinpoint and NotebookLM and Anthropic's Claude, to identify points of connection between the different topics discussed. AI tools were also used for transcribing more than 8 hours of recordings. All use of AI had human supervision and fact-checking.

"The real optimism is to be non-conformist to show how these platforms work, to explain them, abandoning apocalyptic narratives in favor of an optimistic non-conformism."

Alvaro Liuzzi, journalist, communications professor, and digital media consultant (Argentina)

The workshop brought together 26 participants from across Latin America and Europe representing 11 countries: Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Germany, Mexico, Paraguay, Spain, and Uruguay. This diverse group collectively addressed the challenges journalism faces in the AI era, sharing experiences, strategies, and building a common vision for the future of journalism in the region.

The Latin American journalistic field has never been more diverse, more innovative, or more urgent. This report represents a call to action — and an invitation to join a growing movement of journalists, technologists, regulators, and citizens committed to ensuring that the next chapter of journalism serves democracy, not algorithms.

References

ADEPA (2025) *AI is Reshaping the Argentine Media Ecosystem: Media Outlets Should Adapt Without Compromising Their True Nature*. Available at: <https://adepa.org.ar/wp-content/uploads/2025/09/ai-reshapes-the-argentine-medi-ecosystem-media-outlets-should-adapt-without-compromising-their-true-nature.pdf> (Accessed: 17 December 2025).

CEPAL (2025) *Índice Latinoamericano de Inteligencia Artificial (ILIA) 2025*. Santiago: Comisión Económica para América Latina y el Caribe. Available at: <https://www.cepal.org/pt-br/node/70285> (Accessed: 17 December 2025).

Momentum News & Tech (2025) *'Bills Addressing the Regulation of Digital Platforms and AI Technologies with Implications for Journalism'*, 21 May. Available at: <https://momentumnewsandtech.org/en/2025/05/21/bills-addressing-the-regulation-of-digital-platforms-and-ai-technologies-with-implications-for-journalism/> (Accessed: 17 December 2025).

Newman, N. et al. (2025) *Reuters Digital News Report 2025*. Oxford: Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism. Available at: <https://reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk/digital-news-report/2025> (Accessed: 17 December 2025).

Omdia (2024) *2024 Digital Consumer Insights: Digital Consumer Services*. London: Informa Tech. Available at: <https://omdia.tech.informa.com/om123539/2024-digital-consumer-insights-digital-consumer-services> (Accessed: 17 December 2025).

Telecom Argentina *AI in Journalism Guide [Guía de Periodismo e IA]*. Available at: <https://institucional.telecom.com.ar/prensa/redacciones/periodismo-ia> (Accessed: 17 December 2025).

Fundación para Libertad de Prensa (Flip) *The Algorithm Does Not Investigate: Challenges and Stakes for Colombian Journalism in the Face of AI*. Available at: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1JygP9Gva20LZQVZkZYtKgmnZiboqOY6l/view> (Accessed: 17 December 2025).