

Wan-Ifra and Reporters Without Borders form committee to develop AI Media Charter

The rapid advancement of Artificial Intelligence in the news media poses incredible opportunities but also threats to the integrity of information.



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In response to this unprecedented challenge, Reporters Without Borders (RSF) and international partners, including Wan-Ifra, are launching a committee, chaired by Nobel Peace Prize laureate Maria Ressa, to draw up a charter to advise regulatory initiatives in this area.

The committee comprises 21 distinguished members from 13 countries, academics and professionals in journalism, AI and digital technologies. Led by Maria Ressa, a journalist and the 2021 Nobel Peace Prize laureate, the international committee will deliver the results of its work before the end of the year 2023.

Set of principles

The committee's role is to develop a set of principles, rights, and obligations for information professionals regarding using AI-based systems. RSF will manage the initiative in partnership with leading NGOs defending journalism (FPU, EJM, CPJ, IPI, GFMD), media representative organisations for the press (Wan-Ifra) and TV (ABU, EBU), as well as investigative journalism consortia (ICIJ, OCCRP). The members' reputation and the partner organisations' diversity should make this text a reference in the media industry.



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Wan-Ifra, which represents more than 18,000 publications through its 60 member associations, is joining the initiative to facilitate effective coordination of efforts between the committee's member organisations and other initiatives of its associate members worldwide. "Faced with this major challenge, it is important that the profession, both the representatives of editorial teams and media owners, act in a concerted manner," said Vincent Peyrègne, CEO of Wan-Ifra.

List of the committee members

- Maria Ressa (chair), 2021 Nobel Peace Prize laureate, journalist and founder of Rappler media (Philippines).
- Charlie Beckett, professor at the Department of Media and Communications at the London School of Economics (United Kingdom).
- Emily Bell, professor at the Columbia School of Journalism and Director of the Tow Center for Digital Journalism (United States).
- Veysel Binbay, director of Technology at the Asian Broadcasting Union (ABU) (Malaysia).
- Lisa Campbell, director of Communications at Independent Television Network (ITN) (United Kingdom).
- Camille François, Faculty, Columbia University School of International and Public Affairs (France).
- Jodie Ginsberg, president of the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) (United States).
- Ruth Kronenburg, executive director of Free Press Unlimited (Netherlands)
- Gary Marcus, professor emeritus of psychology and neural science at New York University, author and entrepreneur (United States).
- Frane Maroevic, executive director of the International Press Institute (IPI) (Austria)
- Mira Milosevic, executive director of the Global Forum for Media Development (GFMD) (Serbia).
- Tabani Moyo, convenor of IFEX, Regional Director of the Media Institute of Southern Africa (MISA) (Zimbabwe).
- Bruno Patino, president of the Franco-German channel Arte (France).
- Paul Radu, co-founder of the Organized Crime and Corruption Reporting Project (OCCRP) (Romania).
- Martha Ramos, president of the World Editors Forum at the World Association of News Publishers (WAN-IFRA) (Mexico).
- Gerard Ryle, director of the International Consortium of Investigative Journalists (ICIJ) (Ireland).
- Stuart Russell, professor of Computer Science at the University of California, Berkeley and founder of the Center for Human-compatible AI (CHAI) (United States).
- Eric Scherer, chair, News Committee at the European Broadcasting Union (EBU) and Director of News MediaLab and International Affairs at France Télévisions (France).
- Anya Schiffrin, director of the Specialization in Technology, Media, and Communications at Columbia University (United States).
- Wairagala Wakabi, executive director of the Collaboration on International ICT Policy in East and Southern Africa (CIPESA) (Uganda).
- Aidan White, founder of the Ethical Journalism Network (EJN) and former secretary general of the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ) (United Kingdom).

Editorial independence

AI will radically transform the world of journalism. How can we guarantee the right to reliable information when AI generates most texts and images? How can we ensure editorial independence if newsrooms use proprietary language models to suggest, proofread, or even write articles? How can we prevent the fragmentation of the information landscape into a multitude of information bubbles fuelled by recommendation algorithms? These are just some of the questions that editorial organisations around the world are asking themselves.

In recent months, media groups published guidelines to steer their use of artificial intelligence. However, given the immense economic incentive to exploit AI for productivity and audience share gains, guidelines are needed to ensure all players adopt a cautious and reasoned approach regarding information integrity. That's why the committee convened by RSF will develop the foundational principles of shared ethics in media in the era of AI.

"Artificial Intelligence systems present a crucial challenge for both journalism and media. Unfortunately, there isn't enough encouragement for any single entity to utilise these tools ethically and judiciously. What we need is a collective global commitment, anchored in sound principles, to uphold the ethics of journalism and harness AI for preserving the right to information. We believe that the charter, to be drafted under the leadership of Maria Ressa and with the contribution of this committee composed of prominent figures, will become a strong international reference," said Christophe Deloire, secretary general of RSF.

"Economic competition should not dictate the speed at which the media industry seizes one of the most revolutionary technologies of our time. That would be a disaster for the information space. I am honoured to lead this Charter initiative, aiming to prioritise long-term, ethical concerns over short-term gains," commented Maria Ressa, journalist and Nobel Peace Prize laureate.

"We are already seeing signs of the profound effect AI will have on journalism, newsrooms and the wider information ecosystem. Strong ethical frameworks are critical as usage increases, and I am ready to contribute to the work of this important committee on behalf of WAN-IFRA and the World Editors Forum," added Martha Ramos Sosa, chief editorial officer of the Organización Editorial Mexicana (OEM) and chairperson of Wan-Ifra's World Editors Forum Board.

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