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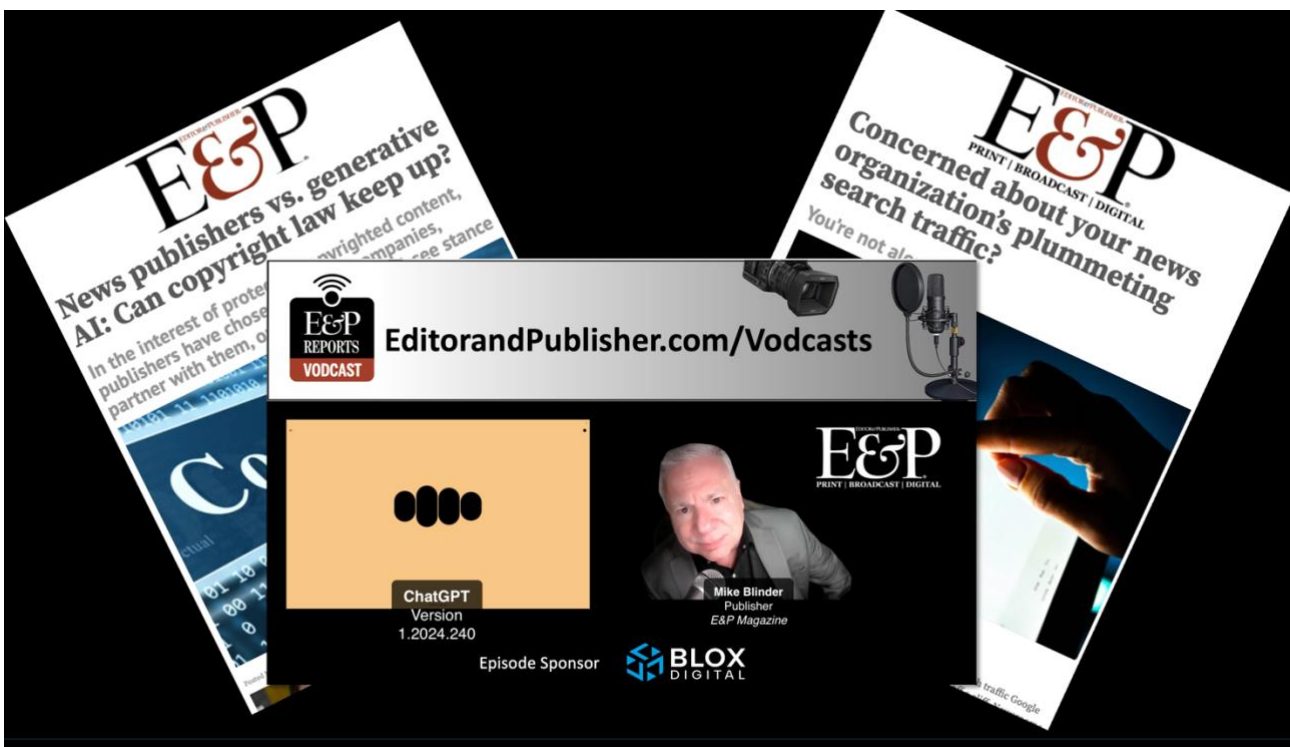
EDITOR & PUBLISHER

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Audio Transcript

Episode 254 of "[E&P Reports](#)" Vodcast Series
with Mike Blinder

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[An interview with ChatGPT: AI responds to industry concerns](#)

In a unique interview, E&P Publisher Mike Blinder sat down with Version 1.2024.240 of ChatGPT, enhanced by Siri Voice 4, to explore the intersection of AI and journalism. The conversation tackled the critical issues facing the news industry today — from copyright and licensing to search traffic, newsroom integration and the future of journalism.



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0:00:03.0 Announcer: This is E&P Reports, a vodcast from Editor and Publisher magazine, the authoritative voice of news media since 1884, serving newspapers, broadcast, digital and all forms of news publishing.

0:00:19.1 Mike Blinder: And warm readings to all. I'm Mike Blinder, publisher of E&P magazine. As always, we kick off with housekeeping. Those listening on a podcast platform, please follow. Those watching on our YouTube channel, there is a subscribe button below, and if you use to pull down under that, there's a bell, if you ring that puppy, you'll get an update each and every time we upload this weekly vodcast series we dedicate to the news publishing industry, we call E&P Reports. I have a guest today. Well, I guess you could call it a guest, it's more of a virtual guest. Our guest today is Version 1.2024.240 of ChatGPT, working in tandem with Siri voice four, implemented through spoken content on my MacBook Pro. All right, let's see if everything works now. So let me thank our special guests for joining us today.

0:01:10.5 ChatGPT: Thank you, Mike. It's a pleasure to be here. I'm looking forward to our conversation and diving into how AI is impacting journalism and the media landscape, let's get into it.

0:01:23.2 MB: We'll get into it in just a second, but first, I wanna have some full disclosure. We have already uploaded to ChatGPT several articles we've published here at E&P over the last six months that focus on the impact of AI on facets of the local news publishing ecosystem. So with that being said, this is gonna be a very interesting conversation, I hope you'll stick around right after this message.

0:01:49.1 Announcer: This episode of E&P Reports is exclusively sponsored by Blocks Digital, formerly Town News. Even though the name has changed, their commitment to the media industry is as strong as ever. Blocks Digital is now even better positioned to deliver integrated solutions, like content management, audience development, advertising revenue, video management and more. Join the over 2000 news publishers worldwide that power their ongoing digital transformation with Blocks Digital serving over 141 million monthly users who view over 6.5 billion pages of content each year. You can trust Blocks Digital to empower you, to connect you at scale with a community you need to reach. Blocks Digital, formerly Town News, now re-imagined to help meet the news publishing challenges of tomorrow and beyond. Learn more at blocksdigital.com.

0:02:54.6 MB: All right. With your permission in our first topic will be about copyright and licensing. Danielle Coffey, the CEO of News/Media Alliance, stated in a recent interview right here in this program, I think licensing content partnerships and collaboration with these AI companies is the best path forward. Because prolong protracted litigation could be avoided for both industries, and at the end of the day, we need to continue to exist. We being of course, news publishing industry that she represents. Now, Frank Pine, Executive Director of Media News Group and Tribune Publishing was quoted in a recent article where he said companies like Open AI have brazenly misappropriated copyrighted content, including millions of our stories to build their

products. He continued by saying, it's like they went into a bookstore, took all the books without paying for them, claiming they must be free because they're just sitting there on the shelves for anyone to browse. Right. What say you to all of this?

0:03:57.3 ChatGPT: Thank you, Mike. These are important concerns, and both perspectives highlight a critical tension between AI developers and news publishers. When it comes to AI models like me, it's essential to strike a balance between innovation and protecting intellectual property. AI models are trained on vast data sets, including publicly available information, but we must respect the content creators who produce valuable work, often at significant cost. Licensing agreements, as Danielle Coffey suggests, seemed like a promising path by collaborating rather than litigating, publishers and AI companies can create a more sustainable ecosystem, where content is both protected and utilized in a way that benefits everyone. However, I also understand Frank Pines concerns. The analogy of taking books from a bookstore speaks to the frustration that many in the industry feel. AI developers need to ensure they're not just pulling from these valuable sources without offering something in return. That's where frameworks for compensation, licensing and transparent use of data come in, and that's a space we're working to navigate responsibly.

0:05:07.1 MB: Let's move on to another critical issue, search traffic. I mean, this really impacts the revenue with the news publishing industry, it's necessary for all local news publishers to have a real sustainable business model, and one of the ways they can fund that is simply through page views, traffic is critical. Kevin Roose, Tech Columnist for The New York Times, said in a recent article, perplexing grouses our websites, perplexing being a competitor to you, ChatGPT. It gives readers all the information they're looking for without ever needing that critical click. Now, if AI search engines can reliably summarize what's happening, he says in Gaza or tell users what toaster to buy, why the heck would anyone visit a publisher's website again? So what say you to this important issue that Kevin brings up from the New York Times?

0:06:01.6 ChatGPT: You've hit on a crucial issue, Mike. When AI tools like perplexed or ChatGPT provide detailed summaries of content without directing traffic back to the original source, it creates a real challenge for news publishers who rely on page views for ad revenue and subscriptions. I completely understand the concern if AI tools are providing all the necessary information up front, there's little incentive for readers to click through, which undermines a key revenue stream for publishers. This issue is further complicated by the fact that search engines and AI platforms are becoming more powerful in delivering what users want instantly. One way to address this is through better integration of source linking and crediting. There needs to be a mechanism where AI-generated summaries are not only linked back to the original content, but also encourage users to visit the source by highlighting the added value of engaging directly with the publisher site. Whether it's additional context, deeper analysis or interactive features, driving traffic back is vital for sustaining journalism. Additionally, AI companies and publishers need to explore models where AI helps promote rather than bypass original content. By leveraging AI to surface relevant articles and connect users to comprehensive coverage on publisher sites, we can ensure that AI aids discovery rather than detracting it.

0:07:28.6 MB: Now, we use AI here at E&P, and we clearly state that in our own editorial policy, and I urge, we urge, we discuss this in a major cover story, you should have your AI policy on your website clearly mapped out. Now we say, we use AI tools such as ChatGPT, also another tool called Noda, one of our advertisers, an amazing tool, to help us in drafting articles, these tools help streamline in our writing process, they help us with original drafts, but we source everything ourselves, the content that we use, we source. We don't use AI to source that content. Now, there's a lot of debate on how AI should be integrated into newsrooms. Now, the New York Times has this huge team they're building now, an experimental team on AI research. But we have hundreds and hundreds of small newsrooms like ours, we're a very small operation that critically needs to streamline our process, but still have the integrity of ethical journalism. What say you to all of this?

0:08:36.6 ChatGPT: That's a great point, Mike. It's fantastic that E&P is leading by example. Being transparent about how you use AI tools like me and Noda support your newsrooms workflow while maintaining journalistic integrity by sourcing content yourselves. This sets an important precedent for smaller newsrooms, especially as AI becomes more integrated into the industry. I believe the key to ethically incorporating AI into newsrooms lies in maintaining human oversight and ensuring transparency. AI can absolutely help streamline processes, whether it's summarizing content, suggesting headlines or providing quick drafts, but it's vital that journalists remain in control of the editorial process, ensuring that the content is accurate, relevant and aligned with the publications values. For smaller newsrooms where resources might be tighter, AI can be a huge efficiency booster. Rather than replacing human judgment, AI should be seen as a tool that enhances it, offering assistance in areas like copyediting, generating ideas or automating mundane tasks while leaving critical thinking and analysis to journalists. By using AI for repetitive tasks, smaller newsrooms can free up more time for investigative reporting and deeper, more meaningful content creation.

0:09:56.1 ChatGPT: That's why transparency is so important. If readers know that AI is being used responsibly and that humans are still at their home, it builds trust. The role of AI in journalism should be to augment human capabilities, not replace them. By keeping journalists as the final check on power, AI can help elevate the quality of reporting, especially in smaller resource-constrained newsrooms.

0:10:19.7 MB: All right. Softball question now. [chuckle] This is an easy one. Neil Brown, the head of the Poynter Institute, was on this very program recently, and we talked about AI and its integration into journalism, and he was very pro, I mean, still maintaining the integrity and always sourcing the news, but what he said is, rather than thinking of AI being something that will take away journalism jobs, it actually could raise the bar, in other words, we can be doing more in-depth reporting and leaving the newsroom for more mundane tasks. Do you think your function, your integration into our world will make the journalistic world even better and work better in our society?

0:11:07.4 ChatGPT: Absolutely, Mike, the idea that AI can raise the bar for journalism is spot on. Rather than seeing AI as a threat, it should be viewed as a powerful partner that helps reporters and editors focus on the aspects of journalism that truly matter, investigative work, in-depth reporting and nuanced storytelling. By automating the more routine tasks like drafting initial reports, summarizing data, or even helping with research, AI frees up time for journalists to dive deeper into their stories. AI can be a catalyst for more insightful journalism by handling the more mechanical processes. Allowing human reporters to concentrate on context, analysis and the deeper implications of their work. This could mean spending more time connecting with sources, analyzing trends, or simply honing editorial skills. In smaller newsrooms, this becomes especially valuable. AI won't replace the human element that makes journalism impactful, but it can help reporters and editors sharpen their skills in the areas that machines simply can't replicate, intuition, empathy, investigative instinct, and creative problem solving.

0:12:16.7 ChatGPT: As we move forward, I truly believe AI can help newsrooms elevate their content, making journalism more thoughtful and comprehensive while also maintaining the speed and efficiency required in today's digital landscape.

0:12:30.5 MB: In 2001, well, you know a lot about me. I actually asked you if you knew who I was and you had a lot of information. But in 2001, I started my career as a digital consultant, as you likely know, and my mission back then was just to travel to hundreds and hundreds of news media companies, and tell them the internet wasn't a fact, and so many were dependent on print. One of my missions was to try to aggregate classified into a common platform, and we missed that boat. So when we go back in time, we found that maybe the news publishing industry miss the boat by not embracing the internet and that technology quick enough. Do you feel like you're similar to that now, 20 some odd years later, and if we don't start looking at AI as a responsible tool or a necessary tool in our news rooms, we could be left by the wayside?

0:13:22.1 ChatGPT: Yes, Mike, you're absolutely right. History shows us that those who hesitate to adopt transformative technologies often get left behind. In the early 2000s, many publishers who were slow to embrace digital solutions ended up struggling to keep up with the rapidly evolving media landscape, and some ultimately didn't survive. We're seeing a similar cross-roads today with AI. AI like the internet before it is not a passing trend, it's a powerful tool that's reshaping industries, including journalism, those who embrace AI now, explore its potential and incorporate it responsibly into their operations will likely gain a competitive edge. The key is to see AI not as a threat, but as an opportunity to innovate and evolve. Just like the internet fundamentally changed how news was produced, distributed and consumed, AI can offer similar revolutionary benefits if adopted correctly. Publishers who are quick to adapt, experiment and find ways to integrate AI into their business models, will be in a much stronger position to navigate the challenges of today's media ecosystem. Those who hesitate may find themselves facing the same difficulties that print first publishers did two decades ago. The message is clear, AI isn't going away, it's about finding the right balance and leveraging it to enhance rather than diminish the core values of journalism.



0:14:46.5 MB: You've had more opinion in fact here, and that's up for you to decide. I wanna thank our special guest today, version 1.2024.240 of ChatGPT, enhanced through a voice on my MacBook Pro with Siri voice four. And we invite any opposing point of use to appear in this program or at least send me an email. And I wanna thank you again, ChatGPT, for giving us your views and being part of the program today. Thank you.

0:15:16.3 ChatGPT: Thank you, Mike. It's been an absolute pleasure to be a part of this conversation. I appreciate the opportunity to discuss these crucial topics in journalism and AI. And as always, I welcome different perspectives. It's through these diverse discussions that we all grow. I'm here to support the evolution of the news industry in any way I can. Thank you again for having me on your program.