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# The Augmented Journalist: Assessing AI Adoption and Institutional Readiness in the UAE Media Industry via Journalistic Insights

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## Abstract

This study investigates the integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) within the UAE media landscape, utilizing the Index of Media Innovation (IMI) to quantify professional and institutional maturity from the perspective of 74 senior media practitioners. The findings reveal a normalized sector score of 60/100, characterizing the industry as experiencing "Moderate Innovation". A profound structural paradox emerges while technological localization for Arabic Natural Language Processing (NLP) is rated as "Excellent" (Stage 5), institutional governance and organizational readiness remain at "Ad Hoc" or "Emerging" levels. The research identifies a critical "Verification Gap," where high individual adoption of generative tools (76.7%) for production speed contrasts with minimal institutional use of deepfake detection (12.5%) and fact-checking (28.6%) technologies. Journalists report a "Bottom-Up" adoption model, in which innovation is driven by individual "Shadow AI" use rather than top-down institutional strategy. The study concludes that moving toward an "Optimized" state requires bridging a "Digital Divide" in licensing costs for small newsrooms and resolving a 70% training disconnect through specialized certifications in prompt engineering, cybersecurity, and AI ethics.

**Keywords:** Artificial Intelligence (AI), Journalist Performance, Media Innovation, Index of Media Innovation (IMI), Arabic NLP, Digital Divide, Newsroom Dynamics