

Special Issue

Visual Reporting at the Crossroads: AI-Generated Imagery, Public Trust, and the Future of Visual Evidence in the Age of AI

Message from the Guest Editors

AI-generated synthetic imagery has evolved from an experimental novelty into a transformative force in public communication, reshaping our notions of evidence and trust. Its ability to produce hyper-realistic "evidence" at will, coupled with minimal technical barriers, challenges the fundamental principles of visual truth-telling. While synthetic images are still rare in reputable news reporting, they proliferate explosively across social media ecosystems, where the boundaries between journalism, strategic communication, and manipulation dissolve. This rapid diffusion is driven by accessible tools, polarized audiences, and unregulated digital spaces. However, as AI-generated images increasingly permeate hybrid information ecosystems, such as social media, messaging apps, and partisan outlets, they risk eroding not only trust in journalism but also trust in visual reality itself. This contributes to an epistemic trust crisis where all visual evidence becomes negotiable.

Guest Editors

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