

MEASURING OPINIONATED COMMUNICATION

Trusting the News in the Age of Artificial Intelligence: A Comparative Study of the United Kingdom, Slovakia, and Hong Kong

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This study examines how:

- Trust in news relates to attitudes towards AI journalism
- Use of AI chatbots as a news source influences perceptions of AI-generated news
- Political-cultural contexts shape these relationships

Compares three contrasting cases:

- 🇬🇧 United Kingdom: high media freedom, high news trust, stable democracy and Public Service Media
- 🇸🇰 Slovakia: moderate media freedom, low news trust, democratic backsliding
- 🇭🇰 Hong Kong: low media freedom, v. high news trust, undergoing autocratisation

RQ: How do trust in news, AI chatbot use, and attitudes towards AI journalism vary across different political-cultural contexts?

Data : Reuters Institute Digital News Report (2025 & 2026); V-Dem (2026)

Across all three markets

- AI chatbot users were more comfortable with AI-assisted journalism and have greater trust in news from AI chatbots
- Higher news trust was associated with greater comfort with AI-assisted journalism and AI-produced news

Cross-national differences

🇬🇧 United Kingdom	🇸🇰 Slovakia	🇭🇰 Hong Kong
✅ Comfortable with AI-assisted journalism ❌ Uncomfortable with mostly AI-produced news ➡ Trust in AI appears to remain anchored in human editorial oversight.	❌ Uncomfortable with AI-assisted journalism and mostly AI-produced news ➡ Low trust in journalism did not translate into trust in AI.	✅ Comfortable with AI-assisted journalism and AI-produced news !! AI users viewed AI-news comparing to journalist as: • More accurate • More trustworthy • More unbiased • More transparent

Significance

- !! While trust in news was measured through a cross-national survey, the Hong Kong case suggests that people interpret the *meaning of trust* may differently in different political-cultural contexts.
- In high-trust, strong media freedom society (UK), AI is accepted as a tool assisting journalists.
- In low-trust, moderate media freedom society (Slovakia), distrust of journalism does not translate to trust in AI.
- !! In more restrictive information environments (Hong Kong), AI may be used as an alternative channel for accessing information.

As AI becomes a growing gateway to news, trust in AI-generated information may increasingly compete with, complement, or even surpass trust in human journalism, depending on the political-cultural context in which citizens live.