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Four Futures for Brazilian Journalism: Sustainability, Technology and Regulation through 2035

In July 2026, The New York Times published the article [*Google Is Building an A.I. Fence Around the Internet It Once Championed*](#), which analyzes changes in users' behavior on Google amid the growing integration of artificial intelligence tools into search engines. Among these changes is the increasingly frequent use of Gemini as an interface for accessing information, in a context in which users do not always consult or verify the sources used to construct the answers.

This transformation affects not only how people find information on the internet, but also the conditions under which journalism circulates and is financed. As AI-generated answers begin to replace pages, links, and original sources, news organizations may lose audience and traffic. At the same time, the importance of understanding how these tools use, summarize, and redistribute journalistic content increases. The phenomenon therefore raises important questions about the economic sustainability of news media and the integrity of the information ecosystem.

These changes have also mobilized civil society organizations and research institutions in Brazil. In this context, Reporters Without Borders (RSF) and the Laboratório de Estudos sobre Organização da Pesquisa e da Inovação (Lab-GEOPI), at Unicamp, developed the study [*Futuros do jornalismo: cenários e implicações para o jornalismo íntegro e de confiança para os próximos 10 anos*](#). Momentum – Journalism and Tech Task Force was part of the Advisory Committee responsible for monitoring the research's development, alongside the Associação Brasileira de Jornalismo Investigativo (Abraji), Associação de Jornalismo Digital (Ajour), ARTICLE 19 Brazil, Federação Nacional dos Jornalistas (Fenaj), and Instituto Vladimir Herzog.

The study starts from a context of profound technological, economic, and social transformations to discuss different possibilities for the future of journalism and their implications for the production of accurate and reliable information. In this brief, we examine the main questions raised by the research.

How the Research Built Possible Futures

Rather than projecting a single trend for Brazilian journalism, the study uses scenario planning to address a highly uncertain context. The scenarios are not forecasts and are not assigned probabilities. The aim was to construct a broad set of plausible futures and, from them, identify risks, opportunities, and strategies that can strengthen journalism under different circumstances.

The process began with a review of the literature and secondary data, including prospective studies, technical reports, databases, and academic research. Based on this review, trends, drivers of change, and critical uncertainties were mapped — elements with the potential to significantly alter the future conditions of journalism. These uncertainties were organized into five dimensions: journalism segments; sources of funding; consumption preferences and the attractiveness of journalism; conditions for the full exercise of journalistic activity; and actors involved in producing and disseminating information. The Advisory Committee discussed and validated the assessment, which served as the basis for developing a trends document.

On October 10, 2025, a workshop held in São Paulo brought together 46 representatives from 36 organizations, including media organizations, news outlets, communication researchers, and public-sector representatives. Divided into groups, participants discussed the five dimensions identified in the previous stage and their possible implications for the future of journalism.

Based on these uncertainties and the workshop discussions, the group constructed four scenarios for Brazilian journalism through 2035. Each scenario was subsequently analyzed in terms of its implications for content, distribution, financial sustainability, public policies, regulation, technologies, especially artificial intelligence, and relationships with different audiences.

Four possible futures for Brazilian journalism

The scenarios developed by the study make it possible to observe which problems journalism would need to confront in each configuration and which responses could expand its conditions for survival and integrity.

Scenario	What is at stake?	Suggested strategic responses
Platform Hostages	Digital platforms and social networks become the main intermediaries of information. News organizations' dependence on algorithms and moderation policies increases, while large groups gain an advantage through scale. Sustainability remains strongly associated with advertising and the ability to diversify revenue.	Occupy platforms strategically; strengthen networks, partnerships, and connections among news organizations; create mechanisms for recognizing trustworthy information; advocate for algorithmic transparency, protection of authorship, and remuneration for the use of journalistic content by AI systems; and diversify revenue sources.
Qualified Public Sphere	Platform regulation and public policies that value journalism create more balanced conditions for the circulation of information. AI can increase the competitiveness of smaller outlets, while accurate information and human agency are valued.	Expand training on the journalistic method; create trustworthiness labels; mobilize journalists, civil society, companies, and governments; and maintain an ongoing regulatory debate to keep pace with new technologies and prevent setbacks. Funding models become more diverse, including advertising, services, partnerships, grants, and remuneration for the use of content by AI.
The Future Is Local	The fragmentation of the ecosystem favors local, community-based, and niche initiatives, with relationships based on proximity and belonging. Membership, philanthropy, thematic grants, and micro-targeted advertising models provide smaller outlets with stable support, but proximity to the audience does not, by itself, guarantee information integrity.	Define niches and understand their audiences; make the criteria for reporting, verification, objectivity, and source diversity explicit; create direct dialogue channels; develop funding models based on connection and trust; maintain editorial consistency; and use trustworthiness labels.
End of Journalism	AI, platforms, and propaganda and disinformation networks progressively replace journalistic mediation. Direct access to sources declines, financial sustainability becomes unviable, and local and independent outlets disappear. Journalists face violence, self-censorship, and loss of relevance, while platforms and AI systems begin to determine what is distributed as information.	Preserve structures dedicated to public-interest journalism; build coalitions among news organizations, universities, the judiciary, and international bodies; develop proprietary technologies and channels with traceability and authentication; strengthen information literacy; share data, methodologies, and open infrastructures; and preserve journalistic archives.

What the four scenarios have in common

Although they present very different futures, the four scenarios converge on one fundamental point: the future of journalism will not be determined solely by technological developments. Regulation, funding models, relationships with audiences, the capacity for cooperation, and, above all, the possibility of making the journalistic method recognizable and valued will also be decisive. This is why the study identifies what it calls robust trajectories: strategies that remain relevant across different configurations of the information ecosystem.

These include making the journalistic method more transparent and better known to the public, strengthening efforts to combat disinformation, expanding cooperation networks, diversifying financial sustainability models, investing in media literacy, and building a regulatory environment favorable to journalism.

The main contribution of the scenarios, therefore, is to demonstrate that different futures require different responses and that some choices need to be made now.

This discussion becomes even more urgent as Brazilians already incorporate new tools into their information habits. The Aláfia Lab study, [Como os brasileiros percebem a circulação da desinformação e o uso da inteligência artificial](#) published in June 2026, shows that AI tools are already part of everyday life for a significant share of the population: 42% of respondents said they use ChatGPT and 25% Gemini, while 37% said they had never used this type of tool. Use, however, is not evenly distributed: it is more frequent among younger people and those with higher income and education levels.

These figures do not, by themselves, allow us to conclude that artificial intelligence is replacing journalistic sources. They do indicate, however, that the transformation projected in the RSF and Lab-GEOPI scenarios already has a concrete dimension in Brazil. The challenge for journalism, therefore, is not only to produce quality information, but also to ensure that it continues to be found, recognized, accessed, and valued in an ecosystem increasingly mediated by platforms, algorithms, and artificial intelligence systems. This brings to the center of the agenda questions that cut across all four scenarios: how to finance journalism in an environment where distribution is increasingly intermediated; how to build relationships of trust amid the fragmentation of sources; how to make visible the method that distinguishes journalism from other types of content; and what rules can ensure more balanced conditions for public-interest information to continue circulating. In this space between transformations already underway and futures that remain contested, room exists for sector-wide coordination.