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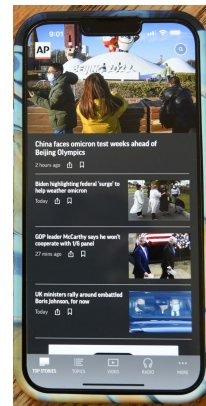
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Connecting

July 21, 2023

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Colleagues:

Good morning on this Friday, July 21, 2023.

"Genesis" reportedly is the codework for artificial intelligence that Google has been discussing with news industry leaders in recent days. The question has come up: Tool or traitor? Google is selling Genesis as a kind of personal assistant for journalists to automate information gathering and free them up for other tasks. That is instead of pushing Genesis as a replacement for actual news writers. Read more below.

Meantime, have a happy healthy day.

Peg
pcoughlin@ap.org

Google developing tools to help journalists create headlines, stories (AP)

By DAVID BAUDER AND MATT O'BRIEN

NEW YORK (AP) — Google says it is in the early stages of developing artificial intelligence tools to help journalists write stories and headlines, and has discussed its ideas with leaders in the news industry.

The rapidly evolving technology is already raising concerns about whether it can be trusted to provide accurate reports, and whether it would eventually lead to human journalists losing their jobs in an industry that is already suffering financially.

Leaders at The New York Times, The Washington Post and News Corp., owners of The Wall Street Journal, have been briefed on what Google is working on, the Times reported Thursday.

Google, in a prepared statement, said artificial intelligence-enhanced tools could help give journalists options for headlines or different writing styles when they are working on a story — characterizing it as a way to enhance work and productivity.

“These tools are not intended to, and cannot, replace the essential role journalists have in reporting, creating and fact-checking their articles,” Google said.

The Associated Press, which would not comment Thursday on what it knows about Google’s technology, has been using a simpler form of artificial intelligence in some of its work for about a decade. For example, it uses automation to help create stories on routine sports results and corporate earnings.

A debate over how to apply the latest AI writing tools overlaps with concerns from news organizations and other professions about whether technology companies are fairly compensating them to use their published works to improve AI systems known as large language models.

To build AI systems that can produce human-like works of writing, tech companies have had to ingest large troves of written works, such as news articles and digitized books. Not all companies disclose the sources of that data, some of which is pulled off the internet.

Last week, AP and ChatGPT-maker OpenAI announced a deal for the artificial intelligence company to license AP’s archive of news stories going back to 1985. The financial terms were not disclosed.

Read more [here](#).

Google's new AI tool may put newsrooms in a bind (Vanity Fair)

BY CHARLOTTE KLEIN

Some executives found it “unsettling.” And some people “said it seemed to take for granted the effort that went into producing accurate and artful news stories.”

That's how, according to the New York Times, leaders at the Times, the Washington Post, and the Wall Street Journal reacted to a new tool that Google is testing, known internally as Genesis, that uses artificial intelligence to write news articles. The tool "can take in information—details of current events, for example—and generate news content," according to the Times, which reported on Wednesday that Genesis had been demonstrated for executives at the three organizations. "Google believed it could serve as a kind of personal assistant for journalists, automating some tasks to free up time for others," the Times reports, adding that "the company saw it as responsible technology that could help steer the publishing industry away from the pitfalls of generative A.I."

The executives' reportedly queasy response to Google's pitch, though, speaks to the media's growing anxiety about artificial intelligence, and the role it may come to play in newsrooms.

Read more [here](#).

More of why newspapers in decline

[Malcolm Barr](#) - Re: the lede article "why are newspapers in decline?" I'll tell you what I think, after taking delivery of the Washington Post these past 50 years. The Post, like many of its brethren, and also, incidentally, our own The Associated Press, are indulging their readership in articles hundreds, sometimes thousands, of words long.

Gone are the days when I was operating as a AP newsman (1960s) of the 300-500 word story that told the entire tale without resorting to extraordinary verbiage (which I now find myself doing!) that we readers have neither the time nor inclination to plow through. I remember an exhortation from one of my editors regarding what he considered an overwritten story, to tell your story, and do it in 350 words or less!

If we resorted to the unofficial "350-word rule" we'd have plenty more readable newspapers to read before leaving for work, or wherever. In summary, I firmly believe our newspapers are their own worst enemies. Give us something readable and we'll continue to subscribe.

On the road with Paul and Linda



Paul, Linda, daughter Molly and grandkids Brennan and Sophie at Graceland.

Connecting wishes Happy Birthday



[John Eagan](#)

On Saturday to...

[Jim Anderson](#)

[Lindel Hutson](#)

On Sunday to...

[Hank Ackerman](#)

Stories of interest

Disinformation reimaged: How AI could erode democracy in the 2024 US elections

(The Guardian)

By NICK ROBINS-EARLY

A banal dystopia where manipulative content is so cheap to make and so easy to produce on a massive scale that it becomes ubiquitous: that's the political future digital experts are worried about in the age of generative artificial intelligence (AI).

In the run-up to the 2016 presidential election, social media platforms were vectors for misinformation as far-right activists, foreign influence campaigns and fake news sites worked to spread false information and sharpen divisions. Four years later, the 2020 election was overrun with conspiracy theories and baseless claims about voter fraud that were amplified to millions, fueling an anti-democratic movement to overturn the election.

Now, as the 2024 presidential election comes into view, experts warn that advances in AI have the potential to take the disinformation tactics of the past and breathe new life into them.

AI-generated disinformation not only threatens to deceive audiences, but also erode an already embattled information ecosystem by flooding it with inaccuracies and deceptions, experts say.

Degrees of trust will go down, the job of journalists and others who are trying to disseminate actual information will become harder.

"Degrees of trust will go down, the job of journalists and others who are trying to disseminate actual information will become harder," said Ben Winters, a senior counsel at the Electronic Privacy Information Center, a privacy research non-profit. "It will have no positive effects on the information ecosystem."

Read more [here](#).

AI, the media, lessons of the past (CJR)

By MATTHEW INGRAM

On Tuesday, the American Journalism Project, a nonprofit organization that aims to revitalize local media in the US, announced a ten-million-dollar partnership with

OpenAI, the company that owns and operates the artificial-intelligence tool ChatGPT. Under the terms of the arrangement, OpenAI will give the AJP five million dollars in cash, which the organization plans to disperse in grants enabling ten of the local media outlets with which it has partnered (out of a total of forty-one) to experiment with AI. Sarabeth Berman, the CEO of the AJP, told Axios that the funds will also go toward an in-house product studio that will help the project's partners and share any lessons learned with other media outlets. OpenAI will hand over the remaining five million dollars in credits that local news publishers will be able to use to pay for ChatGPT and other tools (for which OpenAI charges on a per-use basis).

In a statement released before the OpenAI announcement was made, Berman said that the AJP believes it is essential that AI "is used as a tool for journalists, not as a replacement," and that the idea behind the partnership is to "improve workflows so that editorial staff can spend more time on hard-hitting reporting and the stories that matter most." She said that AI might also be able to help newsrooms sort through complex databases, or allow product teams to personalize content. For his part, Sam Altman, the CEO of OpenAI, said that he was "proud to back the American Journalism Project's mission to fortify our democracy by rebuilding the local news sector." The AJP partnership was announced less than a week after OpenAI announced a two-year deal with the Associated Press, in which the AP agreed to license some of its archive of content, dating back to 1985, to help train OpenAI's algorithms in exchange for access to OpenAI's tools and expertise (although the full details of the arrangement are still unclear).

Under the terms of the AP deal, OpenAI will get a license to use its content as fodder to train ChatGPT, which is what experts call a "large language model," meaning that its "intelligence" (to the extent that it has any) is based on ingesting and understanding massive quantities of content and the relationships between words in order to answer questions posed by users. As The Verge noted the best part of a decade ago, the AP was one of the first major news organizations to use automated technology in its news reports, mostly for corporate earnings reports and coverage of local sports; earlier this year, it launched an AI-enabled search tool to allow its member newsrooms and other clients to find photos and videos using natural descriptive language. Until now, however, the AP has not used AI to generate full stories.

Read more [here](#).

A Stanford student paper's excellent work leads to a major resignation (Poynter)

By TOM JONES

Top-notch reporting by the student newspaper at Stanford University has led to the resignation of the university's president.

Stanford University president Marc Tessier-Lavigne is stepping down after an independent review found significant flaws and uncorrected mistakes in studies he supervised going back decades. In addition, he will retract or add corrections to five

papers in which he was the main author because the investigation found “manipulation of research data.”

However, the investigation determined that Tessier-Lavigne did not falsify data or commit fraud.

Still, Tessier-Lavigne is stepping down as president, a post he has held for seven years. And his departure from the office all tracks back to stories written by Theo Baker in The Stanford Daily last December. At the time, Baker talked to my colleague, Barbara Allen, saying, “As a student, I would prefer not to have any of this sort of thing going on. But as a journalist, I think it’s really important to talk about this sort of stuff.”

The New York Times’ Stephanie Saul wrote on Wednesday, “The accusations had first surfaced years ago on PubPeer, an online crowdsourcing site for publishing and discussing scientific work. But they resurfaced after the student newspaper, The Stanford Daily, published a series of articles questioning the accuracy and honesty of work produced in laboratories overseen by Dr. Tessier-Lavigne.”

Tessier-Lavigne will no longer be president but will remain at Stanford as a professor of biology.

In a statement, Tessier-Lavigne said, “Although the report clearly refutes the allegations of fraud and misconduct that were made against me, for the good of the University, I have made the decision to step down as President effective August 31.” The university review said some of the papers had “serious flaws” and that Tessier-Lavigne failed to “decisively and forthrightly correct mistakes” when concerns about the papers were brought to his attention.

The Stanford Daily won a 2022 George Polk Award for its work on this story. It was the first time an independent, student-run newspaper won that highly regarded award. Baker was honored with a “Special Award.”

Baker is the son of New York Times chief White House correspondent Peter Baker and Susan Glasser, a staff writer at The New Yorker.

This, again, shows impressive and important work done by student journalists.

Earlier this month, Northwestern University football coach Pat Fitzgerald was fired after the student paper there — The Daily Northwestern — published a story about hazing within the football program.

The final word



Today in History - July 21, 2023



By The Associated Press

Today is Friday, July 21, the 202nd day of 2023. There are 163 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On July 21, 1925, the so-called "Monkey Trial" ended in Dayton, Tennessee, with John T. Scopes found guilty of violating state law for teaching Darwin's Theory of Evolution. (The conviction was later overturned.)

On this date:

In 1861, during the Civil War, the first Battle of Bull Run was fought at Manassas, Virginia, resulting in a Confederate victory.

In 1944, American forces landed on Guam during World War II, capturing it from the Japanese some three weeks later.

In 1954, the Geneva Conference concluded with accords dividing Vietnam into northern and southern entities.

In 1969, Apollo 11 astronauts Neil Armstrong and Edwin "Buzz" Aldrin blasted off from the moon aboard the ascent stage of the lunar module for docking with the command module.

In 1972, the Irish Republican Army carried out 22 bombings in Belfast, Northern Ireland, killing nine people and injuring 130 in what became known as "Bloody Friday."

In 1998, astronaut Alan Shepard, the first American to travel to space, died in Monterey, California, at age 74.

In 1999, Navy divers found and recovered the bodies of John F. Kennedy Jr., his wife, Carolyn, and sister-in-law, Lauren Bessette (bih-SEHT'), in the wreckage of Kennedy's plane in the Atlantic Ocean off Martha's Vineyard.

In 2002, Ernie Els won the British Open in the first sudden-death finish in the 142-year history of the tournament.

In 2008, former Bosnian Serb leader Radovan Karadzic, one of the world's top war crimes fugitives, was arrested in a Belgrade suburb by Serbian security forces. (He was sentenced by a U.N. court in 2019 to life imprisonment after being convicted of genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes.)

In 2009, prosecutors in Cambridge, Massachusetts, dropped a disorderly conduct charge against prominent Black scholar Henry Louis Gates Jr., who was arrested by a white officer at his home near Harvard University after a report of a break-in.

In 2011, the 30-year-old space shuttle program ended as Atlantis landed at Cape Canaveral, Florida, after the 135th shuttle flight.

In 2016, Donald Trump accepted the GOP presidential nomination with a speech in which he pledged to cheering Republicans and still-skeptical voters that as president, he would restore the safety they feared they were losing, strictly curb immigration and save the nation from what he said was Hillary Clinton's record of "death, destruction, terrorism and weakness."

Ten years ago: Belgium's King Albert abdicated after a 20-year reign; his son Philippe took over as the fractured nation's seventh king. Phil Mickelson won the British Open, shooting a 5-under 66 to match the best round of the tournament and win his first claret jug. Britain's Chris Froome won the 100th Tour de France.

Five years ago: Reacting to the disclosure that his former lawyer had secretly taped their discussion about a potential payment for a former Playboy model, President Donald Trump called such taping "totally unheard of & perhaps illegal," but added that he "did nothing wrong." A store employee was shot and killed when a gunman who was being chased by police ran into a busy Los Angeles supermarket, where he held hostages for about three hours before handcuffing himself and surrendering; police determined that the employee, Melyda Corado, had been hit by a bullet fired by a police officer during an exchange of fire with the suspect.

One year ago: The House Jan. 6 committee made the case in its final hearing that Donald Trump's lies about a stolen election fueled the grisly Jan. 6, 2021 attack on the Capitol. The panel delved into 187 minutes in which it said Trump did nothing to stop the violence but instead "gleefully" watched on television. President Joe Biden tested positive for COVID-19 and isolated with "very mild symptoms," the White House said. A federal judge sentenced former Minneapolis police Officer Thomas Lane to 2 1/2 years in prison for violating George Floyd's civil rights, calling Lane's role in the restraint that killed Floyd "a very serious offense in which a life was lost" but handing down a sentence well below what prosecutors and Floyd's family sought.

Today's Birthdays: Movie director Norman Jewison is 97. Actor Leigh Lawson is 80. Singer Yusuf Islam (also known as Cat Stevens) is 75. Cartoonist Garry Trudeau is 75. Actor Jamey Sheridan is 72. Rock singer-musician Eric Bazilian (The Hooters) is 70. Comedian Jon Lovitz is 66. Actor Lance Guest is 63. Actor Matt Mulhern is 63. Comedian Greg Behrendt is 60. Retired soccer player Brandi Chastain is 55. Rock singer Emerson Hart is 54. Rock-soul singer Michael Fitzpatrick (Fitz and the Tantrums) is 53. Actor Alysia Reiner is 53. Country singer Paul Brandt is 51. Christian rock musician Korey Cooper (Skillet) is 51. Actor Ali Landry is 50. Actor-comedian Steve Byrne is 49. Rock musician Tato Melgar (Lukas Nelson & Promise of the Real) is 46.

Actor Justin Bartha is 45. Actor Josh Hartnett is 45. Contemporary Christian singer Brandon Heath is 45. Actor Sprague Grayden is 45. Reggae singer Damian Marley is 45. Country singer Brad Mates (Emerson Drive) is 45. Former MLB All-Star pitcher CC Sabathia (suh-BATH'-ee-uh) is 43. Singer Blake Lewis ("American Idol") is 42. Latin singer Romeo Santos is 42. Rock musician Johan Carlsson (Carolina Liar) is 39. Actor Vanessa Lengies is 38. Actor Betty Gilpin is 37. Actor Rory Culkin is 34. Actor Jamie Waylett ("Harry Potter" films) is 34. Figure skater Rachael Flatt is 31.

Got a story or photos to share?

Connecting is a daily newsletter published Monday through Friday that reaches more than 1,800 retired and former Associated Press employees, present-day employees, and news industry and journalism school colleagues. It began in 2013. Past issues can be found by clicking Connecting Archive in the masthead. Its author, Paul Stevens, retired from the AP in 2009 after a 36-year career as a newsman in Albany and St. Louis, correspondent in Wichita, chief of bureau in Albuquerque, Indianapolis and Kansas City, and Midwest vice president based in Kansas City.



Got a story to share? A favorite memory of your AP days? Don't keep them to yourself. Share with your colleagues by sending to Ye Olde Connecting Editor. And don't forget to include photos!

Here are some suggestions:

- **Connecting "selfies"** - a word and photo self-profile of you and your career, and what you are doing today. Both for new members and those who have been with us a while.
- **Second chapters** - You finished a great career. Now tell us about your second (and third and fourth?) chapters of life.
- **Spousal support** - How your spouse helped in supporting your work during your AP career.
- **My most unusual story** - tell us about an unusual, off the wall story that you covered.
- **"A silly mistake that you make"** - a chance to 'fess up with a memorable mistake in your journalistic career.
- **Multigenerational AP families** - profiles of families whose service spanned two or more generations.

- **Volunteering** - benefit your colleagues by sharing volunteer stories - with ideas on such work they can do themselves.

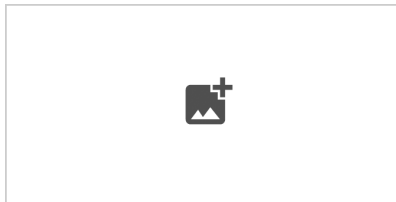
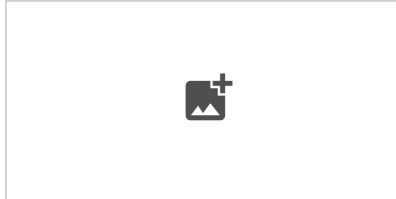
- **First job** - How did you get your first job in journalism?

- **Most unusual** place a story assignment took you.

Paul Stevens

Editor, Connecting newsletter

paulstevens46@gmail.com



Connecting newsletter | 14719 W 79th Ter, Lenexa, KS 66215

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