Editorial guidelines for dealing with artificial intelligence (AI)

We see generative AI and AI-supported process automation as an opportunity to organise our work processes more efficiently. This requires openness as well as a critical approach in order to minimise the associated risks.

At the same time, we must ensure that the use of AI follows our ethical principles and does not jeopardise the credibility of our journalistic work. The principles and guidelines that determine our working methods can be found here.

These AI guidelines are reviewed every six months in light of the further development of technology and practices in the media industry and are adapted as necessary.

We use AI for

- topic monitoring
- the creation of transcripts and translations
- text editing (detection of typos, grammatical checking)
- the provision of services for readers (e.g. article pre-reading function, summaries and curation of own content for automatic newsletters or social media posts)
- the distribution of content (e.g. indexing content (tagging), searching for hashtags to reach a wider audience, identifying user trends)
- data analysis
- AI-supported process automation (multilingual debate, social media posts, newsletter distribution)

How we do not use AI

We never use artificial intelligence-based technologies as the sole research tool for our journalistic work. As mentioned above, such technologies can help journalists identify topics that are of interest to our audience (topic monitoring). The critical review of this AI input as well as the further research and all interviews that serve as the basis for our reporting are carried out by the journalists in accordance with our editorial guidelines.

We also do not use artificial intelligence-based technology to create journalistic content: all of our original content is written, produced and edited by humans. Even the photos we use are originally taken by a human – usually one of our journalists or photojournalists – whose work we buy and accredit through an agency.

How we experiment with AI

We are experimenting boldly with the possibilities of AI to make our working methods and processes more efficient.

We conduct our experiments in a closed test environment and ensure data security. Our experiments are documented and transferred to regular operations only once they have been reviewed and approved by the editor-in-chief, the product board and/or the SWI management (depending on usage).
Verantwortlichkeiten beim Einsatz von KI

Responsibilities when using AI

The responsibilities for content created with the help of AI are no different from those of other journalistic processes, and the same reliability requirements apply. Every piece of content created with the help of AI is checked by a person before publication and is subject to the usual SWI quality criteria. Source-checking and fact-checking are mandatory – as is checking the results for a possible systematic bias in a certain direction.

Journalists are responsible for the accuracy, fairness, originality and quality of every single word in their articles. When using expressions suggested by AI, we should pay particular attention to inclusive language and avoid expressions that lead to prejudice and discrimination.

Transparency in dealing with AI

We are transparent in our dealings with AI in order to strengthen trust in the credibility of the media.

Content that is significantly processed with the help of an AI tool must be declared (e.g. if a translation was primarily made using an AI tool or data stories for which the analysis was created using AI tools). In these cases we add a fold-out infobox that explains how AI was used (e.g. "How we work" in the English news reports). AI tools, for example which support adaptation from one language to another or check spelling, do not need to be explicitly labelled. It is up to the editor-in-chief to decide in which specific use cases a declaration must be made and what this declaration should look like in detail.

Data protection and information security

When entering information into AI tools, the guidelines on data protection and information security must be observed. Personal data, copyrighted content, internal documents and confidential information may only be processed with tested and validated AI tools from SWI.
KI bei der Bild-, Audio und Videoerstellung und -bearbeitung

AI in image, audio and video creation and processing

SWI is committed to ensuring that the audience never has to doubt the authenticity of an image, audio or video or is even deceived – and refrains from using AI tools to create images, audio and videos.

When editing images, audio and videos, common editing steps can be supported by AI. Editing using AI is subject to journalistic due diligence.

Training

Our employees are familiar with SWI's guidelines on the use of AI tools and are regularly kept up to date on the latest opportunities and risks of AI through internal events and dialogue with other media companies. This allows us to experiment, test and learn together to provide the best service to our users.

Approval and entry into force

This SWI Artificial Intelligence (AI) Policy was approved by the SWI swissinfo.ch executive board on January 29, 2024. It enters into force on March 1, 2024.