

# Smarter Public Relations with Artificial Intelligence: Leveraging Technology for Effective Communication Strategies and Reputation Management- A Qualitative Analysis

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## Abstract:

Public Relations, brand managing, reputation management are one of the most important factors for any corporate. In this digital era analysing public sentiments, evaluating contents according to public opinion are crucial to deliver the perfect material to the public. Artificial Intelligence as a discipline is emerging in nature. The pressing question at the moment is the how these modern days tools affect the ethics and morals and are they aligning the values of the corporate?

The PR industry has been affected by the intersection of technology, particularly Artificial Intelligence, data science, and Machine Learning. It explores how these emerging technologies reshape PR practices across traditional and digital media platforms. The study aims to discern the key trends shaping the global PR world, analyse the impact of technological advancements and cultural changes on PR strategies, and underscore the importance of upholding ethical standards in the era of technology integration. Through thoroughly examining these elements, the research outlines priorities for the PR sector, offering insights into how professionals can effectively harness AI for innovation and uphold ethical principles in digital Communication.

**Keywords:** Artificial Intelligence (AI), Public Relations, Automation, Ethics, Machine learning, AI tools, Generative AI, Data Science, etc.

## Introduction

New technologies like AI and machine learning have transformed the global public relations industry in the era of digitalization. The increasing tasks delegated to AI and other innovative tools, PR professionals must adapt to the challenges posed by globalization, the internet, social media, and cultural diversity, demanding agile and inclusive communication strategies. Throughout the century since the Industrial Revolution, technological advancements like the steam engine, mass production machines, computer automation, and internet technology have greatly influenced human work. These innovations have enhanced productivity while sometimes replacing human labour across various sectors, including agriculture and healthcare, impacting traditional and odd jobs (Rotman, 2013). Today, in the era of Industry 4.0, Artificial Intelligence has significantly altered work dynamics, disrupting traditional human tasks. Its ongoing impact on human work is expected to persist (Grace et al., 2018). Currently, automated cars operate efficiently without drivers, and in numerous multinational corporations, robots have replaced receptionists, accurately mimicking human interactions in welcoming and greeting tasks (Glas et al., 2017). AI has been incorporated in every sector today, and its impact has been seen in productivity and the enhancement of daily tasks. According to the research, AI is forecasted to surpass humans in various domains, such as retail and healthcare industries. Within the next 45 years, there is a 50% likelihood that AI will outstrip human capabilities (Grace, J et al. 2017).

Presently, new technologies have flourished rapidly, simplifying and accelerating communication processes. Online platforms and social media have replaced face-to-face interaction for socialization or shopping. Technological advancements, especially digitalization and AI, have revolutionized Communication across health, education, art, production, and marketing. Today, technology has become an extension of people, increasing people's power and speed (McLuhan, 1994). People use these new means of Communication to access digital platforms for various purposes. Digital Platforms have become increasingly essential for every industry, institution, and organization to fulfil their needs and reach their target audiences. Similarly, the public relations industry is undergoing massive changes in its productivity, delivery of information, and all the other PR activities in a fast and furious mode. This research highlights the impact and growth of new Technologies in the PR industry and How PR professionals must conscientize themselves to digitalize and use new technologies prudently and diligently.

As technology rapidly evolves, particularly with Artificial Intelligence, data science, and Machine Learning, the Public Relations (PR) industry undergoes a significant transformation, embracing digital media while maintaining traditional channels. This shift presents a dual challenge and opportunity for PR professionals: effectively integrating these technologies to bolster productivity and global strategies while upholding ethical standards. This paper aims to explore

the adoption of emerging technologies in PR, including AI, examining ethical considerations and discerning future priorities for revitalizing the industry through technological integration.

### **Artificial Intelligence in the 21st century- A tool to revolutionize Public Relation**

Artificial Intelligence has emerged as a pioneering field and pervasive term, shifting away from its prior focus on machinery and robotics in the 1990s. The subsequent two decades have witnessed a transformative shift propelled by advancements in web technology, marking a distinct evolution in AI's journey. AI is the predominant concept encompassing machines emulating human intelligence in task execution. It is the discipline focused on constructing machines that can execute advanced cognitive tasks (Dennis, 2020); AI tools have the ability to compose music, turning scripts into short films (Wu & Yang, 2020). AI applications widely used in health, education, finance and defence and becoming a universal language across different sectors.

AI stands as a leading technology utilized across diverse domains. It is characterized as the science and engineering behind crafting intelligent machines and computer programs that imitate human cognitive abilities (Council of Europe). It is designed to perform various tasks that require human Intelligence (Copeland et al., 2022). AI is a part of machine learning, including deep learning, natural language processing, and robots (Agarwal et al., 2018). It integrates image processing, NLP, robotics, machine learning, and cognitive science (Jay et al., 2018). It transcends human biological constraints, operating ceaselessly and replicating human tasks without interruption. The significance of neuroscience is underscored, although the field overlooks the biological plausibility of algorithms developed (Alpaydin, 2016). Therefore, AI differs from the Human brain. Many functions are similar to brain abilities, but these capabilities are taught to machines to have significant economic benefits.

AI is broadly spreading with the increase of algorithms. Technologies show humanoid cognitive abilities and perform humanoid functions in undertaking PR activities independently or with PR practitioners (Galloway & Swiatek, 2018). AI integration in PR is mushrooming, which is essential for understanding audience expectations. It is widely employed in digital assets, communication, content, campaign management, and press monitoring and release creation. (Capterra, 2012). Today, Communication and media organizations in developed nations extensively employ AI and machine learning technology for various functions. These encompass enhancing capabilities, expanding market share, recording sales, gathering customer insights, devising business strategies, and efficiently generating news stories. Unlike conventional software, AI technologies are increasingly intelligent and adept at analysing vast datasets and making predictive interpretations. (Kaput, 2021).

Today, communication specialists are under tremendous pressure to unlearn their traditional skills; to survive in the digital work environment, they are forced to learn new digital abilities (Panda et al., 2019). These advancements are crucial in driving change and innovation, especially for businesses. Embracing technology provides flexibility, fosters innovation, and assists in creating market-adaptive solutions, even amid projections of significant occupational changes by 2025. (Andrew et al., 2014). However, AI technologies have the potential to improve Communication by streamlining processes, empowering professionals with data-driven insights, and automating mundane tasks. Despite the capabilities of AI to automate certain functions and offer valuable guidance, these fields still rely on human expertise and discernment, which machines cannot duplicate.

### **Exploring Public Relation with new Artificial Intelligent tools**

The evolution of public relations traces back to ancient practices like Sumerian bulletins and Julius Caesar's newsletters, which evolved from one-way propaganda to mutual benefit exchanges. However, modern PR was pioneered by Ivy Lee and Edward Bernays and used for promotion and persuasion. The development of print media, radio and television accelerated the growth of PR and integrated it into mass media (Bernays, 1951). PR's journey from ancient roots to contemporary practice highlights its dynamic role in shaping communication strategies and maintaining a favourable public image within evolving media landscapes.

The evolution of web technology, notably Web 2.0 and social media, transformed public relations by enabling real-time interaction through user-generated content (Akar, 2011). Web 1.0 emphasized professional content creation, while Web 2.0 introduced interactivity. Now, Web 3.0 offers personalized browsing experiences by extracting and processing data for tailored recommendations (Abdussela et al., 2015). Technological strides propel user engagement and accessibility, ushering in a transformative era of Communication. Rapid advancement has redefined interaction, making face-to-face engagement optional for socializing, shopping, and beyond. Digitalization has opened diverse communication avenues, with AI permeating various sectors like health, education, and marketing (Demirli & Kutuk, 2010). AI is widely utilized in the Public Relations Industry, with chatbots prevalent in instant messaging and websites (Forbess, 2020; Alo Tech, 2019). AI capabilities include text-to-speech, language recognition, translation, emotion detection, and document review. Web 3.0's virtual reality facilitates virtual PR events, reducing costs and overcoming logistical barriers, thereby enhancing

participation. PR now leverages AI tools for tasks like press releases, automated emails, media monitoring, and sentiment analysis, boosting productivity significantly. However, as AI evolves, its usage is poised to surge, raising concerns about its benefits. While new technology offers convenience and advantages, it also sparks numerous problems within the PR community (Birer, 2020).

Similarly, digital PR employs diverse tools like corporate blogs, websites, SEO, and social media, diverging from traditional methods. It encompasses reputation management, storytelling, and market initiatives, merging traditional practices with digital strategies. AI revolutionizes internal PR by personalizing messages and facilitating information sharing via big data (Petrucci, 2018; Rogers, 2019). Additionally, AI-driven virtual reality transcends geographical barriers, enabling global Communication and collaboration among multinational corporations (MNCs) employees.

The astounding thing is that AI technologies show humanoid cognitive abilities and perform humanoid functions in undertaking public relations activities independently or with public relations practitioners (David & Endicott-Popovsky, 2017). Many Public relations agencies are attuned with the AI tools (Marx, 2017). Many practitioners employ widely available AI-based tools like Hootsuite and other for social media analysis. Organizations rapidly use AI tools for storytelling and subscriber analysis. Similarly, PR agencies use platforms for managing visual assets to help their clients (Sennaar, 2017).

As the technology develops more advanced techniques will be utilized in the public relations. Presently, google voice assistants, Siri and Alexa have been rapidly used to for persuasion and to expand the reputation. There is also a growing AI anxiety, fear, and concern that many individuals, including practitioners, have about the steadiness and proficiencies of artificial Intelligence (Johnson & Verdicchio, 2017). Because it encompasses worries on losing jobs and raises the issues of ethics, and the possibility of humans being dominated by technologies. However, it is obvious to note that AI is not expected to replace human jobs entirely but to affect some of the menial jobs varies in degrees. While there are concerns about the impact of AI on the public relations profession, and studies have shown that only a minority of public relations tasks are susceptible to automation. Therefore, public relations professionals should focus more on understanding AI's broader societal and economic implications rather than being overly concerned about robotization (Valin, 2018).

### **Ethical considerations and approach using AI**

Early public relations practices sparked ethical concerns with a press agency approach, emphasizing exaggeration and sensationalism over truthfulness, as noted by Grunig and Hunt in 1984, creating ethical dilemmas. Most communication managers may embrace technologically mediated processes without a thorough understanding. Communication professionals acknowledge the need for further education and competency in utilizing AI tools for communication practices, recognizing AI's significant impact on the industry (Zerfass et al., 2020). It is a primary concern that evolving communication and PR technologies be approached with ethical considerations regarding AI usage. Professionals must grasp how algorithms are constructed and employed within their organizations, alongside a nuanced understanding of data ethics and the ramifications of AI implementation (Valin & Gregory, 2020).

Moreover, PR professionals must steer moral decision-making regarding AI utilization and emerging technologies, considering their development and organizational application. AI's potential to enhance communication persuasiveness and target audiences based on psychological susceptibilities raises ethical concerns regarding public opinion engineering (Bachmann, 2019). However, like any evolving profession, its historical path reflects a shift towards more self-aware and ethical communication models. By examining this progression, we witness the profession's evolution from merely disseminating information to actively fostering ethical communication practices.

Public Relations has been observed as unethical due to its behaviour of persuasion, lying, and spin doctoring; the practice itself is akin to manipulation and propaganda. Many criticize the PR industry for lacking ethics and lobbying as threats to truthful journalism (Shannon et al.). Ivy Lees's prominent practice of Public Relations emphasizes telling the truth and providing accurate information. Corporate conscience was highly focused on public relations (Ryan & Martinson). The evolution of ethics in public relations opened a broader sense of social responsibility and accountability and ethically responsible policy for balanced decision-making. Many ethical advisors in the industry have contributed to historical public relations developments with more self-aware and moral communication models. Today, the profession has matured, and the industry depends heavily on the codes of ethics of significant professional associations.

Ethical principles hold not only the broader discourse of business ethics but also in the specific realm of public relations ethics (Baskin et al.) The practitioners must be committed to serve the client's interests through upright promotion and concealment, meanwhile serve an undefined public interest (Bowen, 2004). The PR professions require making judgment calls and ethical decisions. Public relations practitioners must navigate complex situations, manage crises, and make strategic decisions. Advertisers need to consider ethical implications and societal impact when creating campaigns.

Journalists must adhere to ethical standards, verify information, and provide unbiased reporting. AI cannot make nuanced judgments and ethical decisions (Valin, 2018).

**Theoretical Framework**

The unified theory of acceptance and use of technology (UTAUT) is formulated by Venkatesh et al (2003). This theory is the expansion of technology acceptance Model (TAM). The theory aims to explain the intentions of user to use an information system and subsequent usage behaviour. It also focuses why people adopt and utilize new technologies and emphasizes the code of conduct in using technologies. The theory consists of four main constructs. They are, performance expectancy, effort expectancy, social influence and facilitation conditions (Venkatesh et al. 2003). The first three are directed towards usage intention and behaviour and the fourth directs towards user behaviour. This theory is the consolidation of theories of reasoned action, TAM, motivational model, combined theory of plan behaviour, model of personal computer use, diffusion of innovation theory and social cognitive theory.

This theory acknowledges how individuals embrace technologies based on their perceived efficacy in fulfilling tasks relevant to their respective fields. It emphasizes how emerging technologies offer advantages across various sectors, such as healthcare, education, communication, and more. This theory emphasizes the enhancement of productivity, creativity, and job performance through new technological implementations, alongside the necessity for ongoing learning and adaptation to effectively utilize advancements. Additionally, it integrates considerations of social influence and ethical implications related to adopting new technologies. Within the realm of public relations, this theory encompasses how professionals assess the utility of AI tools in PR activities, taking into account concerns regarding data privacy and potential biases in AI algorithms.

**Research Questions**

Q1. How are the evolving trends of globalization, such as technological advancements and cultural shifts, impacting the practice of public relations and shaping its future in the globalized world?

Q2. What strategies can PR professionals employ to effectively explore to cater the diverse audiences in PR campaigns, ensuring ethical and socially responsible communication?

**Objectives**

- ✓ To identify and analyze the key trends shaping the future of the Public Relations industry in a globalized world.
- ✓ To examine how factors like technology (AI) and cultural shifts impact PR practice.
- ✓ To understand the ethical consequences and its implication of use of new technologies in PR industry

**Methodology Used**

This study employs qualitative methods incorporating primary (Interviews) and secondary data (literature review). Telephone interviews are conducted with six experienced PR practitioners, each with over three years of industry experience. Semi-structured interviews facilitated data collection, structured around two sections: (1) demographic background and (2) practitioners' perspectives on the integration of AI in PR practice, comprising five questions. Interviews are recorded and transcribed for analysis.

Secondary data is drawn from 15 recent scholarly works, including scientific journals, articles, and books relevant to the research focus. This Literature delved into how these technologies have permeated the PR and communication industries, highlighting ethical concerns. The primary objective is to gather insights from PR professionals regarding their perspectives and updates on the rapid integration of these technologies within the industry and their anticipated focus areas in the coming years.

**Data Analysis, Interpretation and Result**

**Table 1. List of Interview Participants**

Initial	Organization	Gender	Experience as PR Professional
P GN	K2	M	10 Years
HP	Kechum	M	15 Years
RB	Neo Niche	F	3 Years
SD	K2	M	35 Years
CD	Edleman	M	10 Years
PK	MSL	F	3 Years

**The evolving trends of technological advancements and cultural shifts**

Artificial Intelligence is the latest in emerging technologies. With every innovative technology, the challenges of learning are always a concern, but technologies will always help in global connectivity, and it will help in ease of work. From 1970 to 1990, computers were considered a threat to HR, but today, they are easier to work with. Data science, too, is looked



at analogously; however, industries like healthcare and research institutions will see data as an asset or knowledge capital. As Shiv Devaraaj says,

*"The future is machine-to-machine communications, which has helped revolutionize the automotive industry."* (Personal Interview, 17 March 2024).

In this digital era, we have seen a tremendous increase in new digital technologies like Artificial Intelligence, automation, and robotics, particularly over the last five years. As Prashanth G N adds,

*"Data science and machine learning are also acknowledged as crucial for handling vast data and driving innovation."* (Personal interview on 15 March 2024)

The participants focused primarily on elucidating the profound influence of cutting-edge technologies such as artificial intelligence, data science, and machine learning within the field of public relations. They emphasized the utilization of AI algorithms and data analytics to extract valuable insights from extensive data repositories, including social media, news sources, and consumer feedback in real time. This insightful approach permits proactive crisis management and facilitates the development of customized communication strategies tailored to specific target audiences, thus enhancing engagement and relevance. Furthermore, the automation capabilities inherent in these technologies streamline tasks like sentiment analysis and content curation, allowing professionals to allocate more time to strategic initiatives. Emerging technologies offer undeniable benefits for businesses, and it is overbearing that we embrace them to enhance efficiency and productivity. However, while adapting to these advancements, one must remain cautious to avoid becoming overly reliant on them, thereby potentially overlooking any inherent flaws they may possess.

Along with digitalization, several cultural shifts are impacting global public relations practices. There has been growing concern about diversity and inclusion, which requires PR to represent a broader range of voices and perspectives. It requires the use of culturally sensitive language, understanding the needs of diverse audiences, and promoting initiatives that reflect societal values. As Chetan rightly says,

*"Today, consumers are increasingly making choices based on a brand's social and environmental impact, and PR needs to help companies and organizations communicate their purpose and values in a genuine way and not just through greenwashing."* (Personal interview 17 March 2024).

The company must work towards the emerging changes in the audiences who look forward to something sustainable and environment-friendly. Stakeholders have been empowered and are open to two-way communications and dialogue. Social activism keeps rising; therefore, PR professionals need to be apt for the proposals of strategies that are engaged in open dialogue. The messages need to be tailored according to the needs of audiences through digital media channels rather than depending on traditional media. The art of storytelling needs to be changed, and compelling narratives with audiences must be focused on an emotional level, which can help brand loyalty and advocacy. As Shiv Devaraaj rightly says,

*"It is an essential time for a PR professional to be more adaptable, culturally aware, and strategic in their communications approaches."* (Personal Interview, 17 March 2024)

The progressive development of technologies is exerting a growing influence on daily life, significantly impacting communication and media organizations, including public relations.

### **Impact of AI in the Practice of Public Relations**

AI tools are crucial in managing the extensive data generated by PR activities. It accelerates task completion significantly. Content creation experiences the most profound impact from AI, from analysing large datasets to condensing them into concise 600-word articles, all accomplished in record time. This paradigm shift in PR content creation highlights AI's transformative potential. As Shiv Devaraaj rightly says,

*"AI holds promise for enhancing operations across TV, print, and web media platforms. Given PR's close association with technology, its path is inherently linked to the rapid technological advancements."* (Personal Interview, 17 March 2024)

Participants claim that the AI tools are powerful research assistants, handling the mundane tasks of monitoring and analysis, freeing them to focus on overarching strategies such as campaign planning and fostering genuine relationships with journalists and influencers. As Poonam exclaims that,

*"AI goes beyond simply lightening our workload and tailors our communication efforts. Consider being able to discern sentiment from online comments or pinpoint trending topics of interest to our audience."* (Personal Interview, 20 March 2024)

AI tools can personalize messages to resonate with specific groups, fostering more meaningful interactions and engagement. Therefore, it is essential to keep one updated; PR professionals must adeptly incorporate digital technologies.

As Rithika Barua rightly says,

*"It is essential for every PR firm to establish an internal studio dedicated to training in these technologies, allocating a set number of hours each week to ensure they stay abreast of emerging trends. This includes mastering social media, which has evolved into a multifaceted communication channel."* (Personal Interview, 19 March 2024)

AI in PR helps in content management and creation and helps budding PR enthusiasts with support services. The AI tools help with the decision-making process and documentation. As PR is highly a research and documentation process industry, AI will help in quicker ways to create corporate dossiers and enable the team to work on linear models. Another important

aspect is the extensive use of WhatsApp at work for client interaction, servicing, communications, and sending clippings. As Shiv rightly says,

*"WhatsApp has been revolutionary software, which is used extensively by the PR professionals for communications and group chats."* (Personal Interview, 17 March 2024)

Group chats are the most common ways to interact officially and unofficially for most of the corporates and institutions. These platforms create an echo chamber where professionals from different culture and background come together to discuss, to which we can call it a melting pot situation. The ability to adapt and being flexible is one of the most common attributes a professional need to acquire to this digital professional space.

### **The era of Quick Responses**

QR codes for news stories have become integral to the corporate world. QR codes embedded in print publications such as magazines, newspapers, and catalogues enable readers to access added digital content, videos, or interactive experiences by scanning the codes with their smartphones. Another essential tool is social media marketing, which has transcended its former status and stands out as the bursting epicentre of conversations spanning many topics. Today, many PR professionals are closely working with the social media influencers to promote and boost their client's reputation and productivity. The influencer market is thriving and the recent report shows the huge surge in the influencer marketing in India is projected to reach INR 2,200 Cr by 2025 (WA Consult Report).

It is essential for the PR industry to stay abreast of emerging trends, maintain an open mindset toward learning, and cultivate exceptional communication skills to foster deeper human connections. Trending AI tools like ChatGPT, Gemini, Copilot, and Bard have emerged as ubiquitous tools in PR activities, while translation tools have become indispensable in their newer iterations. Additionally, various tools are now employed extensively across social media platforms. As Prashanth GN exclaims,

*"PR Professionals are constantly seeking the newest and most innovative tech solutions to incorporate into the arsenal. Resources such as media monitoring, data analytics, and social listening enable us to grasp the online sentiments surrounding our brand and gauge the effectiveness of our campaigns."* (Personal Interview, 15 March 2024)

Today, the PR industry leverages big data, analytics, media monitoring tools, and podcasts. AI assistants aid in data analysis and content creation, while immersive experiences through VR and AR are becoming prominent, especially in training. Live streaming and chatbots are rapidly becoming integral parts of various industries, with bots engaging in conversations across sectors like insurance. Video content holds substantial sway in the telecommunications and social media landscapes. Ensuring trust and safety in the digital realm is crucial, especially with the ongoing digital payment revolution, notably evident in India.

However, it is also crucial to remember that while these tools are valuable, success still hinges on creativity, strategic foresight, and the cultivation of meaningful relationships. New technologies can make data-driven decisions but cannot replace human qualities like empathy, emotional intelligence, and ethical judgment.

### **The compelling ethical concerns and socially responsible communications strategies for PR Professionals**

AI-driven tools have liberated PR professionals to concentrate on strategic and imaginative endeavours, such as client counsel, fostering relationships, and crafting compelling narratives. These tools can discern customer preferences, purchasing behaviours, and habits, enabling personalized messaging to enhance brand loyalty and optimize PR campaigns. Concurrently, it is essential to heed ethical considerations regarding the utilization of these technologies, ensuring they are employed not merely for the sake of innovation but effectively for the greater good of as many people as possible. As Chetan D highlights,

*"PR Professionals must strive to be transparent in their Communication with stakeholders, providing accurate and truthful information. Being accountable for communication efforts is necessary while dealing with clients. Honesty, respecting privacy, and avoiding misleading or deceptive tactics must be practiced."* (Personal Interview 17 March 2024)

Comprehending the full scope of AI algorithms is crucial, as they can perpetuate biases and discrimination, reinforcing existing inequalities and prejudices. PR practitioners must acknowledge these biases and take proactive steps to mitigate them. Transparency in AI technologies is paramount, promoting accuracy and adhering to best practices within the industry.

As the technologies refurbish day by day, the priority for communication professionals is to understand not only the general ethical concerns with AI but also how AI is used in the organization for which they work, which allows them to consider the implications and consequences of AI, and to accurately communicate the use and impacts of AI to all stakeholders. Ethics should be a top priority in this age of technology. As Harry P. rightly points out,

*"Ethical practice and Governance are important in every business irrespective of technological advancement. Without this, companies will not exist for long. So also, how one conducts one's business with values and trust."* (Personal Interview, 21 March 2024)

This adherence to ethical standards underscores the importance of transparency in communications. Trust plays a crucial role in PR—integrity, privacy, and accountability in strategy when collaborating with competing clients. Data reliability and accuracy are the crux of any business—professional ethics and competency in sharing real-time data and executing

by communicating facts. Ensuring proper governance is followed religiously by being tax-compliant as per Government norms is considered an ethical practice.

Every Communication must prioritize transparency, with originality as the guiding principle in PR endeavours. Ensuring privacy and responsible data usage is paramount, necessitating careful consideration of how data is collected, protected, and utilized, with full consent and safeguards for personal information. While automated systems and AI tools enhance Communication and accuracy, it is crucial to supplement them with human judgment and ethical considerations in decision-making processes. PR professionals must be mindful of relying on AI systems. As Rithika B says

*"PR professionals need to be prudent in using AI tools because there can be flaws in the data and data processing that can lead to inaccurate or biased outcomes."* (Personal Interview, 19 March 2024)

Hence, AI-generated content also raises the issue of reliability and fairness; if not attended to, it can harm stakeholders directly or indirectly, including bias and discrimination, and affect people's perceptions.

### **Online Reputation Management using Artificial Intelligence**

ORM has also evolved through AI-driven technologies. This can analyse massive data online-based on machine learning capabilities by identifying all forms of social media posts, reviews, and even news articles which may pose a threat to the reputation of an organization. In addition to that, these systems are capable of identifying underlying trends and patterns in online sentiment; thus, it will not take long before the organizations can address things appearing on negative publicity. For instance, NLP is used by sentiment analysis tools to mark online content as either positive, negative, or neutral and feed such information back to the companies in real-time (Agarwal & Mittal, 2023). AI can also automate the response process such that companies can respond to customer complaints and feedback in real-time. AI powered chatbots facilitate interaction with the user in real time that ensures their issues are solved before they become larger problems (Kumar et al., 2022). Predictive analytics, a sub-set of AI, aids in predicting possible reputation risks since early trending features can be detected, hence providing companies with the opportunity to take anticipate measures (Zhang et al., 2021).

It can process the amount of data at speeds that no traditional ORM software can do, heavily relying on monitoring through human eye surveillance, which takes time and is ineffective, especially when involved with global brands (Gomez & Roberts, 2022). AI will go through huge data streams in real-time and this benefits companies through quicker responses to positive and negative comments.

More importantly, AI can ensure accurate detection of nuances in online conversations. Advanced NLP models can detect sarcasm, irony, as well as other complex forms of language than may not be marked by human monitors (Chen et al., 2021). This increases the overall effectiveness of reputation management strategies.

Finally, AI enhances personalization of ORM strategies. The algorithms of machine learning can be used to analyse consumer behaviour and preferences as the basis of reputation management by companies. Personalized responses and targeted campaigns create a tighter relationship with stakeholders and contribute to long-term brand loyalty (Agarwal & Mittal, 2023).

Despite all these benefits, AI-based ORM still faces many challenges. One such challenge in AI-based ORM is that how automatically interactive it may become in that it probably fails to prove empathetic. Although chatbots can rapidly respond to complaints, they may not offer that personalized human touch that has been awaited by some consumers. This, again, further exacerbates those feelings of dissatisfaction, according to (Kumar et al.2022).

Besides, the data on which AI systems are trained may contain bias, thus perpetuating the same bias. An AI model trained on biased data might end up unfairly categorizing some kinds of feedback or may fail to pick out important cultural nuances, worsening a reputational crisis (Chen et al., 2021).

### **Discussion**

There is an urgent need for public relations professionals to proactively engage with emerging tools such as AI and generative AI. They must position themselves as early adopters rather than lagging, actively seeking to enhance their understanding and proficiency in new technologies. The Literature emphasizes the importance of PR professionals acquiring sufficient knowledge of AI and related technologies to provide informed guidance to clients. As the scholars say, instead of fearing job displacement (Valin & Davis, 2018, & Weiner & Kochhar, 2016), they focus on leveraging AI capabilities to enhance storytelling through personalized messaging that resonates with individual emotions. This advanced technology and advancements in digitalization have made global business more effective, profit-making, and productive. Some critical observations exist on how AI Tools gain the upper hand in PR activities.

Firstly, there is immense potential in leveraging AI applications for content creation, task automation, reporting, and fostering agency-client relationships. Quick and faster responses will enhance creativity by the use of AI tools. Storytelling and creative writing would be compelling because of the use of AI tools and human emotional touch, which can easily attract the attention of the targeted public. AI tools identify the needs and habits of the customers and frequently create appealing content for them. As it is rightly said, companies can use AI tools to generate messages for the targeted audience (Panda, Upadhyay, et al. 2019). AI will have the most negligible impact on human critical thinking (Valin, 2018). Beyond

content creation, AI enhances human creativity and intuition with powerful analytics and insights. Similarly, the replacement of creativity through AI is impossible (Ristic, 2017). PR professionals rightly argue that PR requires creativity, such as ensuring the voice or message of written communications or executing a creative stunt. A bot cannot lay claim to emotional intelligence. AI has a multiplicity of public relations roles, which will increase in the coming years. Secondly, PR professionals have seen the enhancement of strategic Communication through AI tools in the PR industry. AI has enhanced decision-making processes and improved customer experience. Using Brand24 and Mention for effective communications (Shiv, 2024), like news tracking, and sentiment analysis, has reduced the burden of some of the mundane and tedious PR jobs (Panda, Upadhya, et al. 2019). The use of AI tools also boosted faster results, allowing the PR practitioners to meet their responses faster. As Rogers (2019) rightly says, AI processes data and gives faster responses. Artificial intelligence (AI) boosts PR efficiency and is poised to transform decision-making. Instead of relying on intuition alone, PR professionals will be empowered by data, facts, and trends to make creative choices (Peterson, 2019). Today, AI is transforming traditional approaches and making campaigns more personalized, receptive and impactful.

Thirdly, PR professionals must develop an adequate understanding of AI to offer informed, valuable, and practical advice to customers (Galloway & Siatek, 2018). By gaining sufficient hold over AI tools and new technologies, can be effectively used to enhance the PR activities with proper ethical conduct to bring maximum effect and productivity. It is also essential that PR professionals must be vigilant and explore the risks factors of AI. The emerging factors like deepfake, fake content generated by AI tools are dangerous in managing reputation. It's prudent to understand the threats created due to advent of new technologies. PR professionals must develop strategies to identify and counteract misinformation created by the AI tools. Therefore, it is advised to remain informed and abreast with the new technologies.

Despite the advancements in AI, its capability for moral decision-making remains limited, relying primarily on correlations within extensive datasets. Additionally, the shifting business models of social media companies, increasingly driven by surveillance capitalism, demand scrutiny regarding the gatekeeping influence of recommendation algorithms on society. Given these intricacies, PR professionals must develop a heightened critical literacy concerning AI's societal impacts. The literature indicates a trend where communication experts engage with AI with a partial understanding, underscoring the necessity for a comprehensive evaluation of AI's moral and ethical ramifications. Emerging PR or communication professionals can readily acquire the necessary skill sets to explore an environment where technology plays a significant role. Today, mobile technologies, digitalization, and early exposure to social media contribute to individuals becoming digital natives who quickly adapt to new technologies and research capabilities. Hence, embracing AI must not be an optional but essential to remain more effective, impactful and resourceful at the forefront of their field. Here, the unified theory of acceptance and use of technology (UTAUT) is significantly used. The theory delves into how people adopt and utilize new technologies in different sectors. The major work is accepting the emergence of AI in the communication sector, especially in the public relations industry. As the theory suggests, PR professionals worldwide have adopted AI tools for practical PR activities while keeping a code of conduct regarding technological advancements to enhance different human activities. It helps humans be more creative and productive and reduces the workload so that focus can be moved towards more creative activities than mundane ones. Accepting new technologies also results in behaviour change and enhances human communications. Public relations professionals have acknowledged the rise of AI. They are gaining and updating with new knowledge to use these technologies effectively and understand the cause and effect of using the new tools. Hence, UTAUT narrates the link between public relations and emerging technologies like AI.

## Conclusion

Hence, as the Public Relations industry embraces Artificial Intelligence and other emerging technologies, it marks a significant shift in how professionals engage with audiences and manage communication strategies. Presently, AI in PR is currently focused on data monitoring, analysis, content creation, and there is a huge potential for growth and innovation. Despite not reaching High-Level Machine Intelligence (HLMI), individual use of AI tools, particularly Generative AI, is prevalent, enhancing productivity and work quality.

Additionally, incorporating emotional and cognitive components in AI systems holds promise for crafting more creative and engaging PR campaigns. PR professionals must approach the use of AI responsibly, considering evidence, outcomes, and epistemic concerns. It is essential to educate themselves about AI, including understanding the data types used for algorithms and the processes involved in data collection and processing.

Artificial Intelligence as a subject is ever evolving landscape where everyday new researches are being done. Managing a brand or corporate is not an easy task. AI comes as an aid to this solution. Online reputation management is a draconian task now, with proper ethical consideration Artificial intelligence tools can come hands on to do this task with a little effort.



As we observe the evolving scope of Public Relations, there is a clear opportunity for the industry to flourish by leveraging these emerging technologies. By embracing AI responsibly and supporting its integration into PR activities, professionals can streamline their work processes and attract young, creative minds to join the industry. In doing so, PR professionals can widen the complexities of the modern media landscape with agility and innovation, ensuring continued relevance and effectiveness in communication strategies.

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