

ASU to host inaugural journalism and AI accelerator

More than 100 thought leaders in journalism, technology and business convening to transform the news industry

By Carrie Whitten Simmons, ASU News
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Artificial intelligence is reshaping how people create, share and trust information, and Arizona State University is positioning itself at the forefront of that transformation.

The ASU [Knight Center for the Future of News](#) and [NEWSWELL](#) have announced the inaugural [National Journalism + AI Accelerator](#), a three-day, invitation-only event that will convene more than 100 thought leaders in journalism, technology and business to explore how AI will redefine the creation, distribution and sustainability of trustworthy news and information.

The accelerator will take place from Jan. 6–8, 2026, at the [Walter Cronkite School of Journalism and Mass Communication](#) in downtown Phoenix.

“The rapid evolution of technology is transforming every corner of the news industry, from how stories are sourced to how they’re told and delivered,” said Battinto Batts, dean of the Walter Cronkite School of Journalism and Mass Communication. “At the Cronkite School, we’re equipping the next generation of journalists with the tools, training and the ethical foundation to lead in this new era. Hosting this conference alongside some of the most influential voices in media reflects our commitment to being at the forefront of that transformation for our students and the industry.”

Exploring the future of AI and journalism

The National Journalism + AI Accelerator will serve as a collaborative space for leaders to envision what journalism could look like five to 10 years from now, and to design practical solutions for today’s challenges.

**Nominate
someone to attend**

Participants will:

Envision future scenarios and opportunities for journalism in an AI-driven world.

Collaborate with ASU's leading AI researchers and innovators across disciplines.

Examine the ethical, accessible and sustainable use of AI in news.

Explore how AI will shape the creation, distribution, support and sustainability of trusted news and information in the years ahead and develop actionable strategies.

Are you, or someone you know, working with AI to shape the way news is sourced, created, distributed or disseminated? Apply or nominate someone else to attend the inaugural National Journalism + AI Accelerator from Jan. 6–8, 2026 in Phoenix. (Participation is by invitation only.)

“As AI reshapes how people find and trust information, the role of gatherings like this becomes critical,” said Maribel Pérez Wadsworth, president and CEO of the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation. “They give journalists, technologists and educators the chance to work together to build and imagine solutions for a rapidly changing information ecosystem.”

[Learn more](#)

A national hub for innovation in news

The event marks a major initiative for the Knight Center for the Future of News, which was launched at ASU's Cronkite School with a \$10.5 million investment from the Knight Foundation. The center's mission is to accelerate journalism's transformation and build a stronger, more trusted and financially sustainable news ecosystem.

The accelerator is hosted in partnership with NEWSWELL, a nonprofit organization within ASU's Media Enterprise that supports small and midsize newsrooms through leadership, innovation and operational expertise. NEWSWELL aims to build systems to transform local news at scale.

Building the next chapter for trusted journalism

The gathering is designed to be more than just a conference; it's a collaborative launchpad for the next phase of journalism's evolution.

“Real change happens when the right minds come together,” said Nicole Carroll, executive director of NEWSWELL. “Through partnerships like this, we're ensuring that AI innovation serves communities, helping trusted, independent, local journalists not only endure but thrive.”

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Main image



The National Journalism + AI Accelerator will serve as a collaborative space for leaders to envision what journalism could look like five to 10 years from now. Stock photo