



MJRC STRATEGY 2026-2028

Media and Journalism
Research Center (MJRC)

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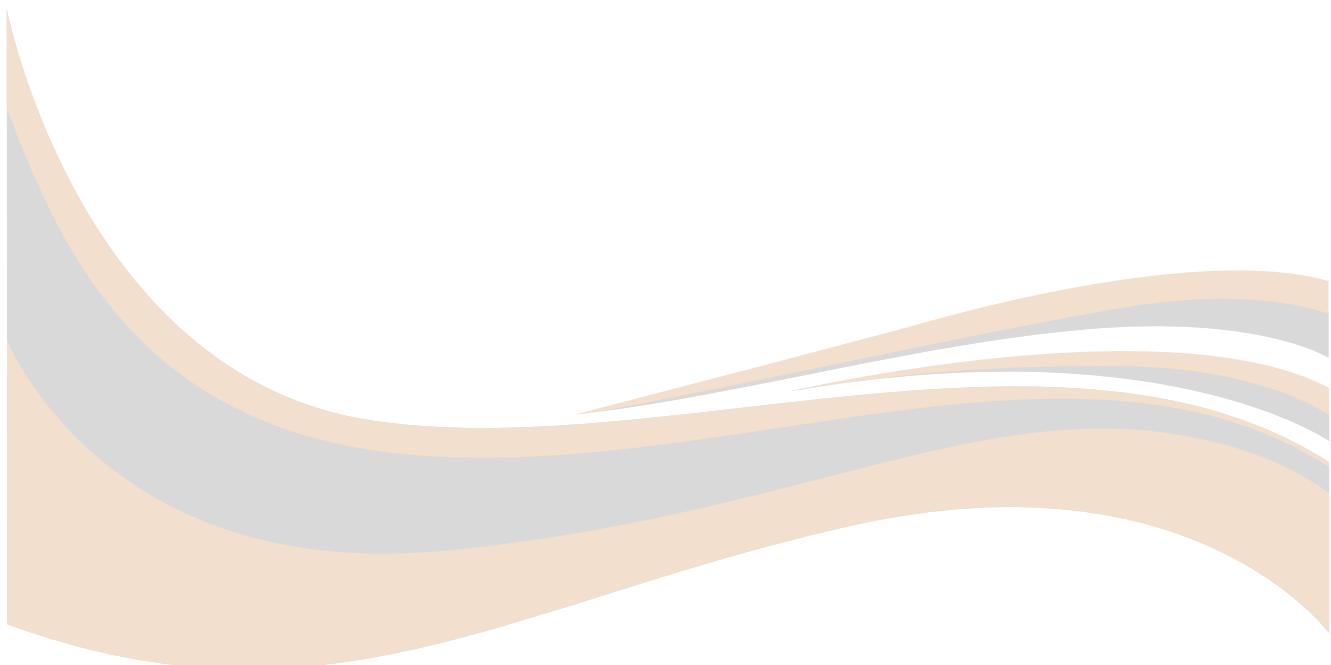
FOCUS

The Media and Journalism Research Center has designed new workplans to broaden its scope beyond journalism to mapping the entire information sphere. Our mission is to understand, protect, and improve the systems through which information is created, distributed, and trusted.

While continuing to fund and support journalistic projects, depending on available donor financing, and to help independent journalists operate in captured or fragile environments, our perspective for the next strategy period is to expand and shift priorities. MJRC has designed a research agenda aimed at documenting the provenance and influence of the actors shaping public communication, from legacy media and political parties to AI companies, data brokers, and new intermediaries that rewire how information circulates.

This strategy is the outcome of a review and consultation process held between October 2024 and June 2025, involving experts, journalists, technologists, and policy practitioners across 40 countries.

Over the next three years, MJRC's work will analyze how narrative ecosystems are formed, manipulated, and trusted in an age of algorithmic acceleration and synthetic media.



CHALLENGES

The global information landscape is undergoing a profound restructuring, one that undermines journalism's foundations while creating unprecedented possibilities for renewal. Five structural challenges that define this new phase are tackled by our strategy.

1. Media Capture 3.0

Media capture is no longer confined to transitional societies. It now permeates Western democracies, combining political patronage, corporate control, and algorithmic manipulation.

This convergence, what we term "influence capture", links policy, data, and narrative control within the same circuits of power. The rapid rise of AI companies introduces new gatekeepers. Depending on who governs them, they may counteract or reinforce capture by shaping visibility, access, and truth-validation systems at a planetary scale.

2. Collapse of Narrative Coherence

Borrowing from information theory, narrative entropy describes a condition where meaning, authority, and source integrity deteriorate amid hyperproduction of automated content. As generative systems replicate human tone and emotion, factual anchors dissolve, producing cognitive overload and a collapse of narrative coherence.

In the new strategy period, we attempt to map and measure this new reality, tracing how synthetic narratives displace or reshape verified information.

3. Audience Atomization

Audiences keep migrating from mass platforms to micro-publics, tight, interest-driven spaces that operate through intimacy and shared codes rather than reach.

These fragmented communities, often opaque to researchers, are where influence now resides. Understanding them is important to anticipate new trust economies and the re-localization of communication.

4. Policy Overload and Impact Underdelivery

The regulatory field is saturated with new media, tech, and AI frameworks, yet implementation remains weak and uneven. Even well-intentioned policies risk being co-opted or weaponized. The gap between normative ambition and practical effect is widening, especially as governments seek to regulate AI with limited understanding of its informational consequences.

5. Automation of Research and the Human Gap

As AI systems harvest and classify information at scale, human research value shifts from data collection to interpretation, provenance tracking, and ethical contextualization. MJRC's approach in the new strategy period is therefore going to shift towards database-driven, source-traceable research that preserves the human ability to discern significance amid automation.

6. The Decline and Transformation of Journalism

Journalism itself is being re-engineered. Its traditional economic, ethical, and epistemic pillars are eroding as generative AI absorbs tasks once reserved for human editors, reporters, and analysts. MJRC does not see this transformation as an existential threat but as a structural mutation, one that demands protection of the individuals behind journalism, not rejection of the technologies. Our commitment is to mold this change responsibly, defending editorial integrity, provenance, and authorship in the AI era.

OUR RESPONSE

MJRC has designed workplans that combine research of media and journalism with targeted capacity support, reoriented toward the *provenance, influence, technological infrastructures (including the emerging quantum internet), and public acceptance* dimensions of the new information order.

1. Research Pillar: Mapping Provenance and Influence

Our comparative, database-centric research is planned to focus on three axes:

Regulators and Policymakers: analyzing how governance and regulation affect information integrity and resilience.

Ownership and Funding: expanding beyond media to include tech companies, political organizations, AI enterprises, and retail conglomerates, tracking who they are, how they are financed, and how their decisions shape narratives.

Audiences and Communities: through Local Signal and Who's Listening projects, studying how people interact with information in small-scale, immersive environments.

Plans to expand and revamp existing flagship initiatives:

State Media Monitor: plans to enrich it with partner collaborations, expert interviews, and more regular data updates.

Media Influence Matrix: plans to integrate the Global Media Finances Map under Media Influence Matrix project, with a revamped methodology that captures political, technological, and financial interlocks.

Media Capture Monitoring Report: plans to expand geographic reach and introduce tech-related indicators in the methodology.

Media Sustainability: plans to refocus it on funding flows and emerging post-advertising revenue models.

Media Power Monitor: MJRC has taken over and integrated the Media Power Monitor platform into its operations, repurposing it from a journalistic content outlet into a Narrative Intelligence Repository (NIR): a hybrid platform combining journalistic reporting with data-driven mapping of influence networks and storylines.

2. Journalism and Support Pillar

MJRC aims to continue funding journalism that exposes power relations behind information systems. Through philanthropic partnerships, it supports independent journalists and small outlets operating under capture or disinformation pressure, providing both financial and methodological backing.

3. Academic and Community Pillar

Our cooperation with the University of Santiago de Compostela (USC) anchors academic rigor and teaching engagement. We also have plans to expand the Media and Journalism Exchange (MJX) into a 40,000-member network by 2028, linking researchers, journalists, technologists, and students to exchange knowledge and co-develop projects.

4. Quantum Internet and Trust Infrastructure

As global communication networks evolve toward quantum-secure architectures, the foundations of security, verification, and public trust are entering a new phase. The quantum internet will enable communication channels and authentication systems that cannot be intercepted, spoofed, or decrypted, reshaping how institutions safeguard information and verify identity. During the 2026–2028 strategy period, MJRC will begin preparing for this transition by adopting quantum-resilient communication practices, implementing tamper-evident provenance for its publications, and developing frameworks to help media outlets, regulators, and civil-society organizations navigate the emerging environment. This work includes the establishment of monitoring and advisory capacities to track the rollout of quantum networks globally and their implications for journalism, public communication, and democratic governance. Through this pillar, MJRC aims to contribute to strengthening trust and information integrity in the quantum era.

STRATEGIC GOALS

Map the Information Sphere: Contribute to building an integrated, provenance-oriented data infrastructure connecting ownership, funding, and influence networks across media, technology, and AI.

Advance Narrative Intelligence: Develop metrics and tools to identify the origin, flow, and manipulation of narratives across human and automated channels.

Strengthen the Trust Infrastructure: Promote verified, transparent, and accountable information ecosystems through certification and integrity registries. This includes preparing for emerging secure communication environments such as the quantum internet and establishing standards for provenance, authentication, and verification in next-generation information systems.

Empower Local Knowledge: Expand research in small communities as laboratories for future media models.

Bridge Research and Practice: Continue translating research findings into actionable tools for policymakers, investors, educators, and advocates.

RESOURCES AND FUNDING

MJRC operates as a research-focused think tank, legally incorporated in Estonia, with academic cooperation anchored at USC (Santiago de Compostela). Funding derives from philanthropic foundations, academic grants, and institutional collaborations, complemented by a growing share (target 50% for 2028) from licensing, data-access, and certification services such as the Human Proof Registry. All of the center's income is reinvested into research, innovation, and community development.

PEOPLE AND NETWORK

MJRC's primary asset is its international network of researchers, journalists, and analysts, now active in about 80 countries. By 2028, we plan to increase this base and establish four regional hubs, mostly through academic partnerships, to enhance local collaboration and physical presence, strengthening the trust that underpins our research.

AUDIENCES

For the 2025–2028 period, MJRC has redesigned its engagement model to better serve both traditional and emerging constituencies across the information ecosystem. Each group plays a distinct role in shaping and sustaining a trustworthy information sphere, and our new strategy sets out tailored ways of engaging with them.

Renewed focused:

Young citizens are central to our future vision. MJRC plans to significantly expand its applied research programs for students through academic partnerships, mentorships, and field placements, helping to build a generation of researchers and journalists equipped for the quantum internet era.

Civil society and advocacy organizations will receive renewed attention. MJRC plans a major expansion of public-facing engagement, connecting its research and narrative intelligence tools to the wider public through community partnerships, media literacy initiatives, and participatory research formats.

Private sector actors and investors are a rapidly growing part of our network. We plan to build on the existing strategic partnerships with organizations and investment funds interested in supporting independent research and data integrity, most of them based in Europe.

Traditional focus:

Journalists and media professionals remain at the core of our mission. Our work continues to be designed around their information needs, providing verified research, data tools, and methodological support to help preserve their autonomy, safety, and editorial integrity in the AI transition.

Regulators and policymakers continue to remain a target for our comparative studies and analytical frameworks. We plan to maintain our collaboration with them, ensuring that evidence-based guidance and field intelligence inform governance and media policy reforms.

OUR POSITION IN THE FIELD

Amid the technological and geopolitical shifts redefining how information is produced and trusted, MJRC is transitioning into a hybrid intelligence lab, an institution built to bridge human expertise, computational insight, and field-based understanding.

While computational tools and algorithmic analysis are now in high supply, original fieldwork and firsthand information are rapidly disappearing from the global knowledge commons. The internet is filling with machine-generated data but shrinking in verified, context-rich observation. Part of our renewed mission is to help reverse that trend. Our workplans are increasingly oriented toward spaces where AI cannot reach, local realities, under-documented regions, areas and actors, and communities whose knowledge and experiences remain invisible to automated systems.

This transition is not about rejecting technology but about redefining how it is used. We integrate computational methods and AI-assisted tools into our research while ensuring that they serve, rather than replace, human judgment and contextual intelligence. The expansion of the Media and Journalism Exchange (MJX) reflects this philosophy, connecting an increasing number of experts, researchers, and journalists who bring local and experiential knowledge into our collective analysis.

Through this hybrid approach, MJRC documents who shapes information, how influence circulates, and where trust collapses or is rebuilt. Our goal, to map the key actors in the new information sphere, positions us among the organizations that work toward understanding provenance and influence in the upcoming quantum internet era.

We also recognize that the battle to protect the human core, ethical independence, and civic function of journalism may not always succeed. Yet it is a battle we are committed to patiently and persistently fight as we believe that, without journalism, societies will lose much of their moral and democratic anchor.



Media and Journalism Research Center

Legal address
Tartu mnt 67/1-13b, 10115,
Tallinn, Harju Maakond, Estonia

Postal address
6 South Molton St, London,
W1K 5QF, United Kingdom

Academic affiliation
Universidade de Santiago de Compostela (USC)
Colexio de San Xerome, Praza do Obradoiro s/n,
CP 15782 de Santiago de Compostela.

Contact
www.journalismresearch.org
mjrc@journalismresearch.org



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