

# What Happens When China's State-run Media Embraces AI? | Columbia Journalism Review

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In a [2016 address](#) to propaganda cadres and state-run media personnel, Chinese President Xi Jinping expressed dreams of instilling a new international media order “wherever the readers are, wherever the viewers are; that is where propaganda reports must extend their tentacles.” As Xinhua News, China’s largest state-run news agency, equips itself with “Media Brain,” an artificial intelligence (AI) newsroom to assist all stages of reporting, these “tentacles” of propaganda may extend faster.

Bringing AI to newsrooms can improve accuracy, enhance data analysis, and increase efficiency. According to a [video](#) released by Xinhua in January, the AI newsroom will do everything “from finding leads to news gathering, editing, distribution, and, finally, feedback analysis.” Last week, Xinhua [announced](#) an update to Media Brain called “MAGIC,” which will use machine generated content (MGC) for “fast-speed news production” and can automatically generate a news video in as fast as 10 seconds.

Cai Mingzhao, president of Xinhua and member of the State Council Information Office, [said](#) the company wants to use AI to “realize individualized and customized information delivery.” As technology improves, “customized information” will take many forms, from personalized digital news feeds to headlines and articles tailored to individual readers—and, likely, to propaganda. Xinhua did not respond to request for comment.

While Xinhua is discussing its AI ambitions in the context of improving user experience, the state-run agency first and foremost serves the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). Adding AI into the mix could have insidious consequences for truth-seeking individuals in China and in the numerous countries around the world where Xinhua shares its content.

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