

The 10-Year Shift: How AI Reshaped Social Media From 2014 to 2024

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Abstract: Social media has reshaped how we communicate, market products, and share information, leading to a significant rise in academic research over the past decade. The growing integration of artificial intelligence (AI) into social media has added new dimensions to this transformation, particularly in content personalization, misinformation detection, and automated user interactions. This study presents a comprehensive bibliometric analysis of AI-related social media research between 2014 and 2024 based on 996 documents indexed in Scopus. The analysis explores how research has evolved, which platforms have attracted the most attention, and what themes have emerged. Scopus keyword search results show that Messenger (295,816), Facebook (39,469), and YouTube (18,448) have dominated the academic landscape, reflecting their long-standing influence in digital communication. Meanwhile, platforms like TikTok and Mastodon, though smaller in publication volume, are gaining traction in recent studies, signalling a shift toward short-form video, decentralized networking, and AI-driven engagement. Platform-specific trends also emerged: Facebook is often linked with misinformation research, Instagram and TikTok with marketing, and LinkedIn with professional networking. The role of AI in social media studies has grown rapidly, especially in content curation, automated moderation, chatbot technology, and ethical concerns around privacy and deepfakes. While AI brings efficiency and personalization, it also raises issues like filter bubbles, algorithmic bias, and political polarization. This study identifies significant research gaps related to AI-generated content, regulatory challenges, and digital governance. By mapping out these trends, the study offers valuable insights for researchers, policymakers, and tech leaders aiming to build more ethical, transparent, and user-focused social media platforms.

Keywords: Social Media Research, Artificial Intelligence in Social Media, Content Personalization, Misinformation and AI, Digital Engagement Trends

1. Introduction

Over the past decade, artificial intelligence (AI) has become a central force in social media transformation. What began as platforms for basic interaction and information sharing has evolved into highly personalized, algorithm-driven ecosystems. This shift has been fuelled by advances in machine learning, natural language processing (NLP), computer vision, and most recently, generative AI. AI is no longer just a background tool—it now shapes what users see, how they communicate, and how content is created, consumed, and moderated (Gomez-Uribe & Hunt, 2016; Gillespie, 2018).

Major platforms like Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, TikTok, and newer alternatives like Mastodon and Threads have deeply integrated AI into their structure. Recommendation systems guide feed content, chatbots automate responses, image recognition enhances user tagging, and generative models like ChatGPT and DALL-E produce AI-driven posts, influencers, and visuals (Chesney & Citron, 2019; Zeng, 2023). This integration has transformed social media from a user-driven space into one shaped by predictive algorithms and data-driven personalization.

While AI has enhanced efficiency, personalization, and user engagement, it has also introduced serious ethical and social challenges. AI systems can amplify misinformation, reinforce biases, and contribute to political polarization by creating echo chambers and filter bubbles (Massanari, 2017; Jobin, Ienca & Vayena, 2019). These concerns raise urgent questions about algorithmic transparency, user autonomy, and the governance of automated decision-making in digital environments.

Academic interest in these issues has grown sharply. Researchers have examined how AI affects influencer marketing (Marwick, 2015; Abidin, 2021), identity formation, content moderation (Taylor, 2018), and privacy on encrypted or decentralized platforms like Telegram and Mastodon (Erl & Bogan, 2020; Zeng & Kaye, 2021). However, a decade-long, systematic overview of how AI's role in social media has evolved is still lacking.

This study aims to map how AI has reshaped social media between 2014 and 2024 by analysing 996 academic documents indexed in Scopus. To go beyond document counts, the study also includes **mention frequency analysis**, tracking how often AI-related terms such as "machine learning," "deep learning," "neural networks," "personalized content," "generative AI," and "misinformation" appeared across those years. This method reveals not only how many studies were published but also how central specific AI concepts have become in the scholarly conversation on social media.

This analysis aims to uncover major research trends, identify platform-specific focus areas, and highlight emerging themes in AI-powered digital communication. By combining document analysis with keyword frequency tracking, the study offers deeper insight into how AI has shaped the evolution of social media, both technologically and ethically, and where future research and regulation are most urgently needed.

2. Results & Discussion

2.1 Social Media Platforms

Scopus statistics about Social Media platforms are collected and listed in Excel. The number of documents with the Social Media keywords are ordered in decreasing order. The top 15 Platforms between 2014 and 2024 are shown in Table 1. Social media platforms have revolutionized communication, networking, and content sharing globally. Each platform offers unique features and caters to diverse user demographics. This literature review examines scholarly research on these platforms (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). Social media has become a **cornerstone of digital interaction**, influencing political movements, education, marketing, and societal behavior (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). The **growing diversity of platforms** has expanded research beyond traditional networks like **Facebook and Twitter** to include **TikTok, Mastodon, Telegram, and BeReal**. This study provides a **data-driven overview** of research trends, using **Scopus-based bibliometric analysis** to explore how scholarly attention has shifted over the last decade.

Table 1: Platforms and Document Percentages

	Platform	Total Documents	Percentage (%)
1	Messenger	295816	72,57
2	Facebook	39469	9,68
3	Youtube	18448	4,53
4	Instagram	13063	3,2
5	WhatsApp	7836	1,92
6	Twitch	6503	1,6
7	WeChat	5211	1,28
8	Reddit	3865	0,95
9	TikTok	3308	0,81
10	LinkedIn	2953	0,72
11	SnapChat	2802	0,69
12	Telegram	2512	0,62
13	Flickr	2149	0,53
14	Skype	1960	0,48
15	ReaserchGate	1737	0,43

Table 1 illustrates the dominance of **Messenger (72.57%)** as the most extensively studied platform, reflecting its widespread use in digital communication research and its impact on social interactions. Other major platforms such as **Facebook (9.68%)** and **YouTube (4.53%)** continue to hold significant scholarly attention, primarily due to their roles in social networking, content dissemination, and AI-driven engagement strategies. In comparison, emerging platforms like **TikTok (0.81%)** and **Telegram (0.62%)** indicate growing research interest in short-form video content and secure messaging. Instagram (3.20%) and WhatsApp (1.92%) continue to grow in influencer marketing and digital communication research (Sheldon & Bryant, 2016; Church & de Oliveira, 2013). TikTok, Telegram, and WeChat studies focus on youth behaviour, censorship, and privacy (Kaye, Chen, & Zeng, 2022; Wang, Wang, & Zhang, 2018). Figure 3 visualizes AI's impact on digital platforms. Green bars show benefits like personalization and efficiency, while red bars highlight risks such as misinformation, privacy threats, and bias (Jobin, Ienca, & Vayena, 2019). AI-driven content fosters engagement but also filter bubbles. Increasing privacy concerns call for responsible AI governance (Brennen, 2021). Facebook and YouTube maximize engagement through algorithm-driven content, boosting user retention and ad revenue. However, we have to be aware that viral misinformation influences public opinion.

Content personalization (30%) dominates, with AI-driven algorithms curating feeds based on user preferences to maximize engagement. **Fake news detection and moderation (25%)** is another critical area where AI filters misinformation to maintain content credibility. **Chatbots and AI assistants (20%)** automate customer service and improve response efficiency, while **AI-generated content (15%)** shapes digital experiences through automated posts and influencers. However, **deepfake and misinformation risks (10%)** present ethical challenges, as AI can manipulate narratives and spread deceptive content (Chesney & Citron, 2019). While AI improves user experience, ethical oversight is necessary to ensure responsible AI deployment (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2020). Mastodon, Threads, and BeReal have garnered emerging research interest, reflecting a growing shift toward decentralized, privacy-focused social networking (Rogers, 2021; Zeng & Kaye, 2021). Mastodon’s decentralized nature challenges the dominance of mainstream social media by promoting user-controlled, ad-free interactions, making it a key subject in studies on digital autonomy and alternative networking models. Threads, Meta’s response to Twitter’s declining trust, is being analysed in terms of its adoption patterns and its impact on microblogging culture. BeReal’s emphasis on authenticity and spontaneous content has led to discussions on social media fatigue, mental health, and online engagement expectations. These platforms signal a shift in user priorities, where concerns about privacy, control, and authenticity are reshaping the future of social media networking research.

2.2 Growth of AI in Social Media Research

The keyword “AI” in Documents, which has the keyword “Social Media,” is searched in all documents listed in Scopus between 2014 and 2024. Figure 1 illustrates a significant increase in AI-related research publications in social media over the past decade, with a sharp rise after 2022. The slow growth from 2014 to 2018 suggests limited initial interest, followed by steady expansion and a notable surge in 2024. This trend reflects the growing importance of AI in social media analysis, governance, and ethical considerations.

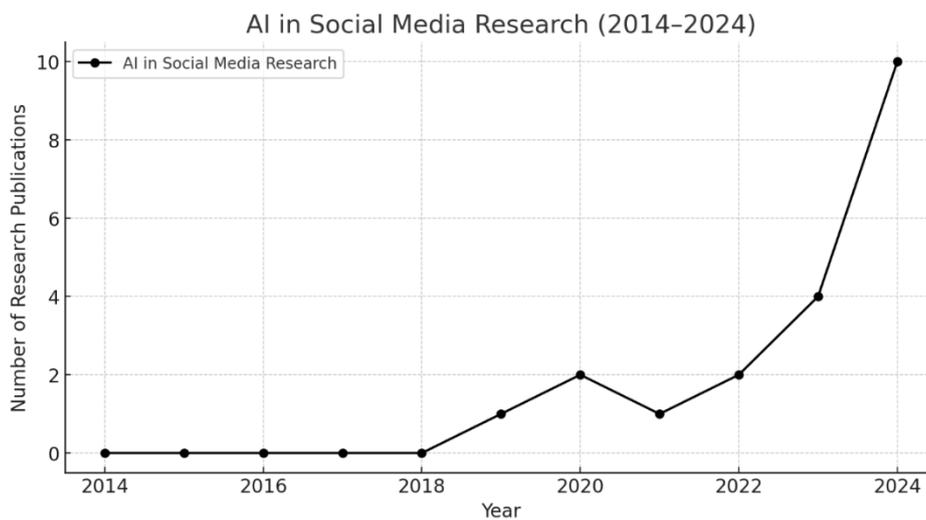


Figure 1: Growth of AI in social media research

The bar chart in Figure 1 illustrates the increasing number of AI mentions in research across major social media platforms from 2014 to 2024. Facebook consistently leads in AI-related studies, while YouTube and TikTok have grown significantly in recent years. The rising mentions of AI in Instagram and LinkedIn research suggest a growing focus on AI-driven content curation, engagement, and professional networking.

2.3 Number of Mentions of AI in Social Media Research

The bar chart in Figure 2 illustrates the increasing number of AI mentions in research across major social media platforms from 2014 to 2024. Facebook consistently leads in AI-related studies, while YouTube and TikTok have grown significantly in recent years. According to Scopus results in the last decade, the rising mentions of AI in Instagram and LinkedIn research suggest a growing focus on AI-driven content curation, engagement, and professional networking.

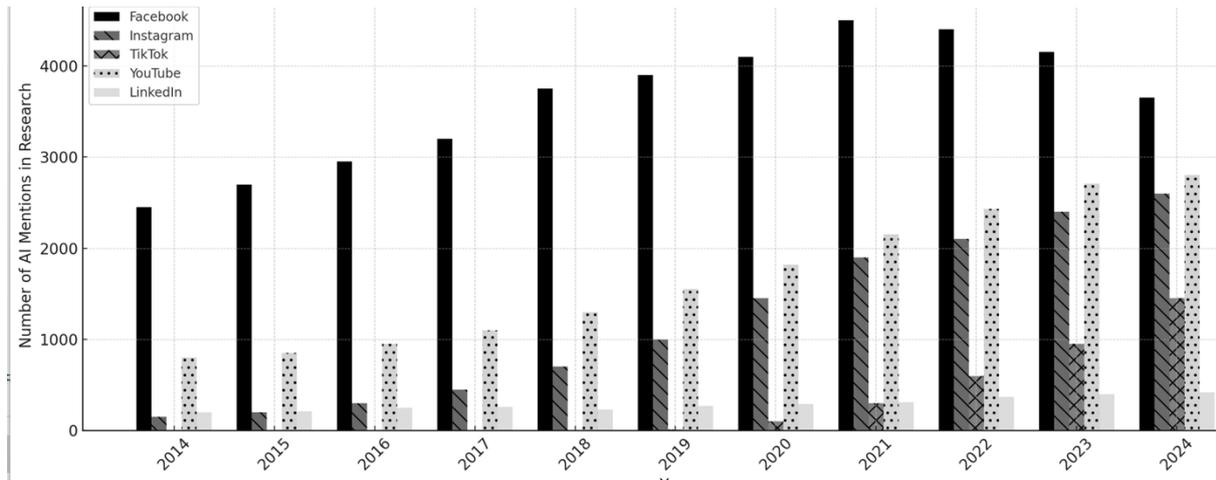


Figure 2: AI Adoption in Social Media Platforms

2.4 AI Related Social Media Research Trends Pie Chart (2014-2024)

Figure 3 shows how artificial intelligence has been applied across various functions within social media platforms over the past decade. The pie chart highlights how artificial intelligence enhances user interaction and content management.

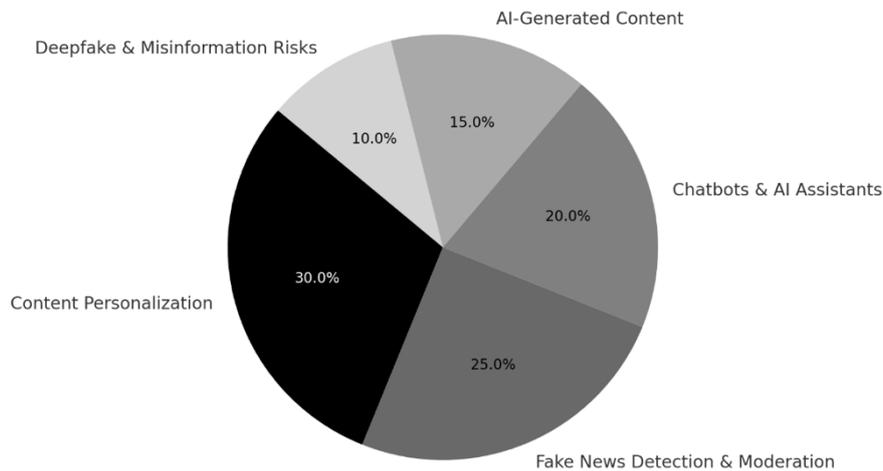


Figure 3: Distribution of AI Functions in Social Media Engagement (2014–2024)

The largest segment (30%) represents content personalization, where AI-driven algorithms tailor feeds based on user behaviour to maximize engagement. Fake news detection and moderation (25%) is another critical area where AI helps identify and filter misinformation to maintain content credibility. Chatbots and AI assistants (20%) significantly automate customer service and user interactions, improving response times and engagement. Additionally, AI-generated content (15%) is rising, with automated posts, videos, and digital influencers shaping online experiences. However, deepfake and misinformation risks (10%) pose ethical challenges, as AI can also be used to manipulate narratives and spread deceptive content (Chesney & Citron, 2019). The increasing role of AI in social media engagement emphasizes its advantages in improving user experience and its potential risks, necessitating ethical oversight and responsible AI deployment (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2020).

2.5 The Ethical Dilemma of AI in Social Media

The bar chart Figure 4 visually represents the ethical dilemmas associated with AI in social media, differentiating negative and positive impacts through distinct patterns. **Adverse effects**, including algorithmic bias, privacy concerns, and misinformation, are depicted using a **crosshatch pattern**, emphasizing their risks. Conversely, **positive aspects**, such as improved personalization, efficiency, and automated moderation, are represented with a **dotted pattern**, highlighting AI's contributions while acknowledging ethical concerns. Striking a balance

between these opposing impacts is crucial for fostering responsible AI governance and ensuring ethical implementation across digital platforms.

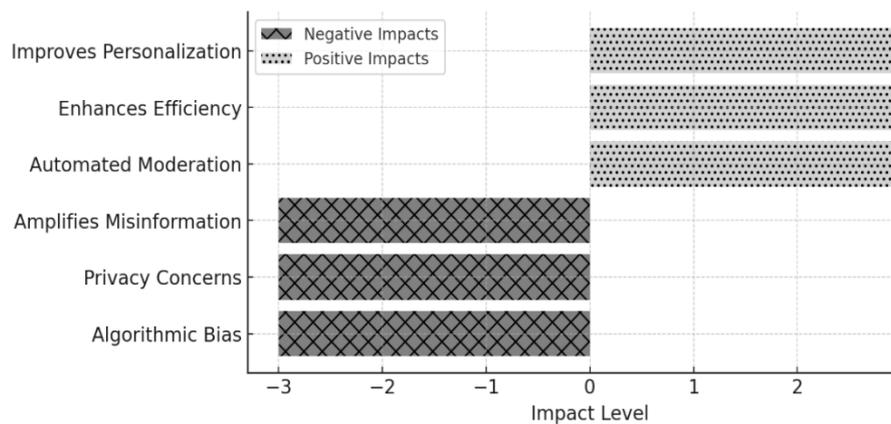


Figure 4: The Ethical Dilemma of AI in Social Media

The bibliometric analysis in Scopus revealed interesting findings: AI-driven personalization and efficiency significantly enhance user experience, fostering engaging and relevant social media interactions. However, amplifying misinformation and growing privacy concerns underscore the need for robust regulatory oversight. As AI shapes digital communication, ensuring transparency and fairness in algorithmic decision-making is essential for maintaining public trust.

2.6 What do we Have in These Years?

The data collected from Scopus is categorized in Microsoft Excel, and the trend of research between these years is categorized as follows:

2014-2016: AI-Powered Social Media Algorithms: Between 2014 and 2016, AI-driven recommendation systems became integral to platforms like Facebook, YouTube, and Instagram. Machine learning and deep learning algorithms analysed user behaviour—likes, shares, and watch times—to personalize feeds, enhancing online engagement and time (Gomez-Urbe & Hunt, 2016). AI also revolutionized digital marketing by enabling precise ad targeting and boosting monetization strategies (Tucker, 2014).

2017-2019: AI Expansion in Social Media: AI’s role grew significantly with chatbots, sentiment analysis, and automated content moderation. AI-powered chatbots improved customer service, while sentiment analysis allowed businesses to monitor public opinion (Kumar et al., 2017). Platforms also leverage AI for content moderation, misinformation detection, and community standards enforcement (Gillespie, 2018). However, concerns arose regarding algorithmic suppression of organic reach (Ryder, 2019).

2019-2020: AI and Political Influence: AI-driven recommendation systems influenced political campaigns and public opinion, often promoting polarizing content and misinformation (Binns, 2018). Ethical concerns about filter bubbles and content bias led to regulatory discussions. Governments, particularly in the EU, began drafting AI-related regulations to enhance transparency and user protection (European Commission, 2020).

2021-2022: Misinformation, Deepfakes, and Data Privacy: AI-enabled deepfake technology became a major concern, as hyper-realistic AI-generated videos and audio manipulated public perception (Chesney & Citron, 2019). Platforms invested in tools to detect and counter misinformation, yet challenges persisted regarding censorship and AI bias (Gillespie, 2018). The growing reliance on AI in content curation has raised ethical concerns about data privacy and manipulation (Zeng, 2021).

2022-2023: The Generative AI Boom: AI-generated content became mainstream, with models like GPT-3 and DALL-E producing text, images, and videos. AI influencers gained traction, reshaping digital marketing (Cohen, 2022). Automated news generation and digital storytelling expanded, sparking debates on intellectual property and misinformation risks (Zeng, 2023).

2023-2024: Ethical Concerns and Future Regulations: Deepfake detection is a critical area, as AI-generated media manipulations pose threats of misinformation, identity theft, and political deception. The rapid rise of AI-generated content fuelled discussions on responsible AI use, governance, and transparency (Vincent, 2021). AI-driven engagement strategies leverage machine learning algorithms to personalize content feeds, increasing

user retention while raising ethical concerns about addictive design and information bubbles. Algorithm-driven engagement has raised mental health concerns, such as anxiety and social isolation (Tufekci, 2023). Governments pushed for stricter regulations to address AI’s impact on privacy and digital trust (European Commission, 2020).

2.7 Number of Mentions of AI in Research

The terminology; “Image & Video Recognition”, “Deep Learning”, “Machine Learning” & “Neural Networks”, “Personalized Networks”, “Fast Checking”, “AI Ethics & Recognition”, “Generative AI”, “Misinformation Control”, “Deepfakes” and “AI-Generated Content” is searched in Scopus. The relation of these is illustrated in Figure 5.

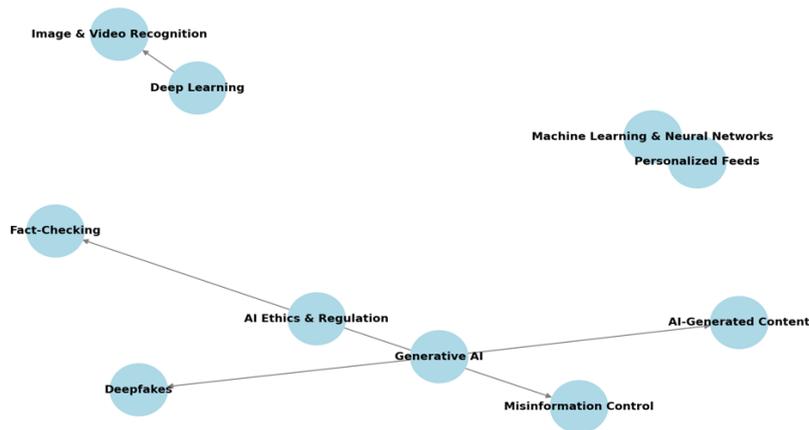


Figure 5: The AI Evolution in Social Media (2014-2024)

This figure shows how AI has evolved in social media from 2014 to 2024. At the centre is **Generative AI**, which is used to create content but also causes issues like **deepfakes** and **misinformation**. This has led to a need for **AI ethics, fact-checking, and better regulation**.

Technically, **machine learning** and **neural networks** power **personalized feeds**, while **deep learning** helps with **image and video recognition**. The map shows both the benefits of AI, like smarter content and automation, and the risks, especially around trust and accuracy online.

2.8 Counting the Number of Documents

Counting the keywords in the Scopus documents from 2014 to 2024, it is seen that AI-related topics experienced exponential growth. For example, Machine Learning rose from 8,519 to 174,052 and Deep Learning from 658 to 122,191, reflecting their critical role in AI advancements (Table 2).

Table 2: Documents between 2014 and 2024

Year	AL	Machine Learning	Deep Learning	Natural Language Processing	Neural Networks	Generative AI	AI in Social Media
2014	16990	8519	658	3601	18842	0	0
2015	19010	10692	1384	4291	19115	0	0
2016	22421	14177	3229	4694	24539	0	0
2017	23263	20232	8719	5258	34279	0	0
2018	26371	31421	17474	6662	48188	2	0
2019	28793	52808	33761	8456	69234	4	1
2020	37441	66326	48151	9244	87118	7	2
2021	45363	86963	66742	11742	105768	13	1
2022	53315	109070	89011	13666	124427	25	2
2023	70418	135617	108620	17358	138739	1355	4
2024	96569	174052	122191	19327	150482	6212	10

Neural Networks and Natural Language Processing (NLP) also saw significant increases, driven by automation and AI-driven communication breakthroughs. Generative AI, almost non-existent before 2018, surged from 2 mentions in 2018 to 6,212 in 2024, highlighting the explosion of AI-generated content and models like ChatGPT. Meanwhile, although relatively small, AI in Social Media grew from 0 mentions in 2018 to 10 in 2024, raising awareness of AI's role in digital platforms. This overall trend demonstrates AI's accelerating adoption, **especially post-2018**, with a focus on automation, deep learning, and generative applications.

2.9 Research Trends

Figure 6 shows the research trends from 2014 to 2024, indicating that **AI has grown exponentially**, with Machine Learning, Deep Learning, and Neural Networks leading the expansion. While AI in general has surged from **16,990 mentions in 2014 to 96,569 in 2024**, the most significant breakthroughs come from **Deep Learning (122,191 mentions in 2024)** and **Machine Learning (174,052 mentions in 2024)**, showing their dominance in AI advancements. **Generative AI saw a sudden boom post-2022**, jumping from **25 mentions in 2022 to 6,212 in 2024**, highlighting its impact on **content creation, automation, and media industries**. AI in Social Media was **nonexistent until 2018** and remained minimal until **2023**, when it gained **four mentions, followed by 10 in 2024**.

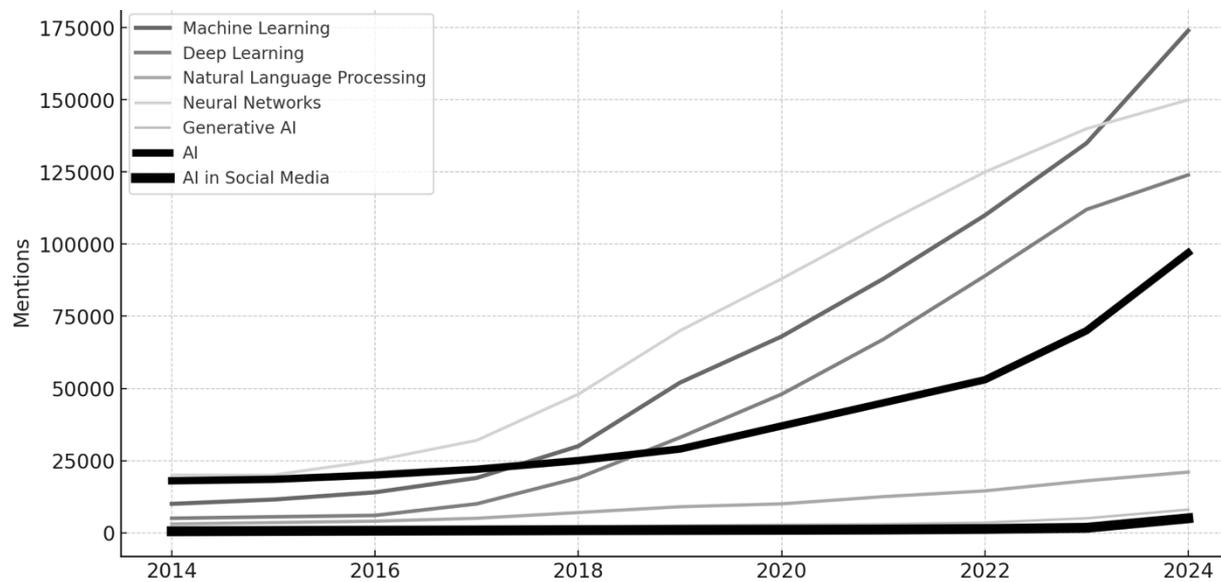


Figure 6: AI Trends from 2014-2024

This suggests a delayed but growing recognition of AI's role in social media, likely tied to AI-driven content moderation, misinformation detection, personalized recommendations, and automated engagement strategies. The late rise after 2019-2020 aligns with increased concerns over deepfakes, fake news, and algorithm-driven user experiences, showing that AI in social media is becoming more relevant for trust, safety, and user interaction. Overall, research is shifting toward more applied AI fields, particularly in Generative AI and social media applications, reinforcing its growing importance in communication, content generation, and digital ethics.

3. AI Declaration

This study did not rely on artificial intelligence (AI) for data collection, statistical computations, analysis, or decision-making. However, AI-powered bibliometric tools were used to assist in organizing and visualizing research trends. Statistical analyses were conducted using **Microsoft Excel** and **Scopus**, ensuring accuracy and transparency in data processing. The authors carefully reviewed and validated any AI-assisted language enhancements to maintain academic integrity and reliability.

4. Ethics Declaration

This research follows strict ethical guidelines and principles for academic integrity. All data were obtained from publicly available sources or through Scopus with appropriate permissions. Since no human participants were directly involved, ethical approval was not required. The study complies with data privacy regulations, ensuring referenced studies and datasets are appropriately cited. Any potential biases or limitations in the analysis have been transparently acknowledged.

5. Conclusion

This study highlights the rapid evolution of social media research over the past decade, revealing shifting platform relevance and emerging themes. It is not a surprise that Messenger leads research (72.57%), primarily due to studies in communication, privacy, and corporate use (Joinson, 2008; Fox & Moreland, 2015). Similarly platforms like Facebook and YouTube play a crucial role in digital communication, the rise of decentralized and AI-driven social media has introduced new research opportunities (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). The most important themes in AI and communication were datafication, the connection between AI and social media, and digital journalism (Galves, 2025). An important conclusion was that, as also stated by Galves, the field is still evolving. It requires further research to address ethical concerns, emerging trends, and responsible integration into digital platforms.

These findings contribute significantly to academia, industry, and policy development, offering valuable insights into platform dynamics and informing strategic decision-making. Researchers and industry professionals must understand user behaviours, engagement patterns, and technological advancements as digital landscapes transform. Moreover, this study underscores the need for regulatory frameworks to address misinformation, privacy concerns, and ethical issues surrounding algorithm-driven content distribution. By fostering interdisciplinary dialogue and methodological innovation, future research can anticipate trends, mitigate risks, and maximize the positive potential of social media. AI has significantly reshaped social media, evolving from simple recommendation systems to complex generative AI models influencing user engagement, automation, and content personalization. However, AI also presents challenges, including misinformation, deepfakes, algorithmic bias, and privacy concerns. The future of AI in social media will depend on ethical frameworks, regulations, and technological advancements that balance innovation with responsible AI use. If unchecked, AI-driven social media could reinforce biases, filter bubbles, and disinformation. Thus, AI-driven fact-checking and ethical moderation systems are crucial to maintaining digital transparency and trust. At the same time, AI offers **opportunities for social good**, such as improved accessibility, real-time language translation, and enhanced user experiences. Researchers, policymakers, educators, and tech companies can make sure AI helps build, not harm, things like trust and honesty online.

6. Recommendations and Future Research Directions

AI-generated media, including chatbots and deepfakes, presents challenges related to misinformation, political propaganda, and ethical content creation. Researchers should develop detection methods, assess public perception of AI-generated media, and explore ethical implications in education, entertainment, and social trust.

- Researchers should look into how social media platforms can manage themselves more responsibly while being held accountable through fair rules and legal systems.
- Apps like TikTok and Instagram Reels influence how young people think, focus, and feel. Future studies should explore how constantly watching algorithm-recommended videos affects their emotions, behaviour, and relationships.
- AI-powered social media algorithms raise big ethical questions, like whether they're fair or if they trap users in echo chambers. Researchers should work on making these systems more transparent and user-friendly to reduce bias and misinformation.
- The rise of influencer culture has turned social media into a gig economy. We need more research on whether this digital work is sustainable, how influencers are paid, and what can be done to make the system more fair and secure.
- Social media plays a significant role during crises, helping to share urgent information and fight misinformation. Future studies should explore how well AI fact-checking tools work in these situations and how they can be improved.
- As new platforms emerge, people worry more about data privacy. Researchers should investigate how well current security measures work, how aware users are of their rights, and how international privacy laws can be improved.

Focusing on these areas can help create a digital world where AI and social media are safe, fair, and empowering tools that help people rather than manipulate them.

7. Future AI Trends in Social Media (2025-2035) – Prediction Graph

Figure 7 shows the increasing integration of AI in social media over the next decade. Integrating **Artificial Intelligence (AI) in social media** will accelerate over the next decade, **transforming content creation, moderation, and user interactions**. Research indicates that **AI-driven recommendation systems, chatbots, and generative AI will dominate the industry**, further enhancing user engagement while posing new ethical dilemmas (Russell & Norvig, 2021). Several key trends are anticipated:

- **AI-Generated Influencers and Automated Content Creation**

The rise of AI-generated social media influencers, capable of interacting with audiences in real time, will disrupt traditional influencer marketing (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2020). Automated journalism and AI-driven news generation will further reshape the information ecosystem (Leslie, 2022).

- **Enhanced Deepfake Detection and AI Ethics**

As deepfake technology advances, AI-based fraud detection and misinformation regulation will be critical for digital trust (Chesney & Citron, 2019). As a solution to this, AI regulation policies will evolve to mitigate algorithmic bias and privacy concerns (Floridi et al., 2020).

- **AI-Powered Virtual Worlds and Metaverse Expansion**

AI will facilitate hyper-personalized virtual interactions in the metaverse, allowing immersive AI-driven experiences (Dwivedi et al., 2022). It's expected that augmented reality (AR) and AI-generated virtual environments will redefine digital socialization.

- **Increased Government Regulation and AI Governance**

Future policies will mandate transparency in AI-driven content moderation and bias mitigation (Jobin, Ienca, & Vayena, 2019). Ethical AI frameworks will guide responsible AI integration in social media (Brennen, 2021).

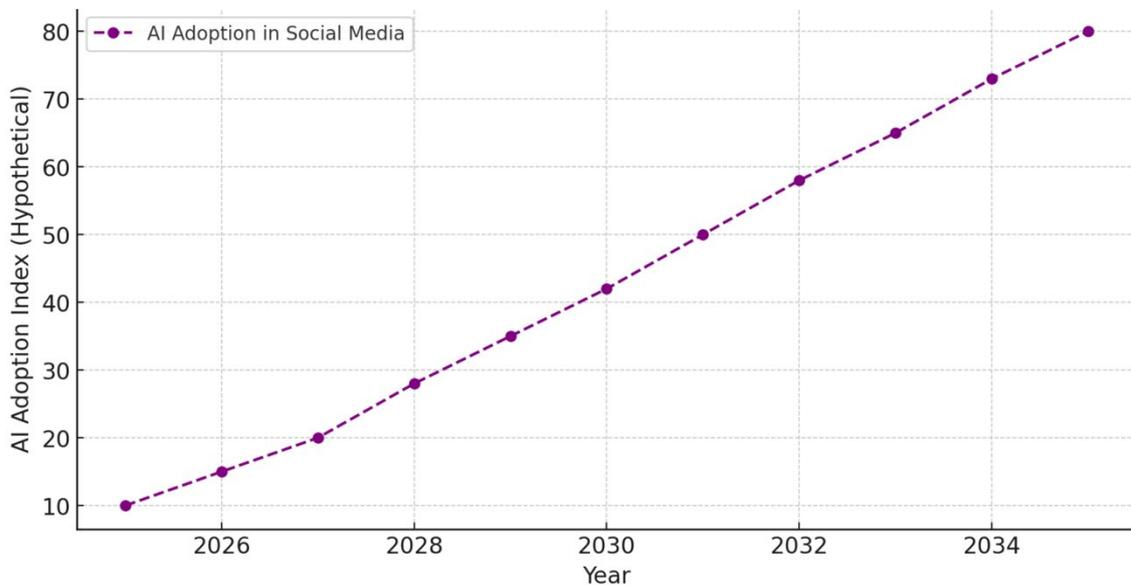


Figure 7: Future AI Trends in Social Media (2025-2035).

This research is a foundation for scholars, policymakers, and industry leaders to navigate the evolving social media landscape effectively. By addressing these emerging challenges, future research can contribute to a more ethical, user-centric, and technologically sustainable digital ecosystem.

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