The transformation of aesthetic and creative editorial tasks in the age of AI: Influence at the periphery

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In this PHD proposal, we desire to propose a qualitative exploration of the changes currently occurring in the publishing industry through the rising integration of AI. In recent years, the publishing industry has been heavily affected by the consequences of AI popularization. Recent data points out that 35% of editors use AI every week in their everyday tasks in France (Souillot, SNE, 2025). While this technology is not yet as hegemonic as one might think, it has made headways into the Publishing landscape. Even though quantitative data regarding the penetration of AI in publishing tasks exist, literature on its qualitative impact remain scarce and largely speculative: namely, we need to know how AI is currently affecting Aesthetic and creative practices in publishing houses (Otmar, et Al. (2025))? Through a thematical literature review, semi-directed interviews (19 at this stage) with book market professionals (editors, authors…) and observation of editorial sessions and committees, this research aims at exploring the topic of aesthetic judgment in the publishing industry and how it collides with AI's impact in the operations of creative tasks. Initial findings show that while professionals seem to advocate for a complementary integration of AI, elements indicate that AI integration in creative tasks could already, at the periphery, overstep such framework and prove to be more disruptive by influencing both directly and indirectly aesthetic and creative tasks occurring in the book publishing industry. This is line with previous innovation waves where new technological tools also influenced directly and indirectly aesthetic and creative tasks as well as decisions. (Squires, C. (2017); Kim, K. (2024)). Through this research we desire to contribute to the discussion surrounding the transformation of creative work practices but also more largely on the interplay between aesthetic and creative considerations with business constraints.