

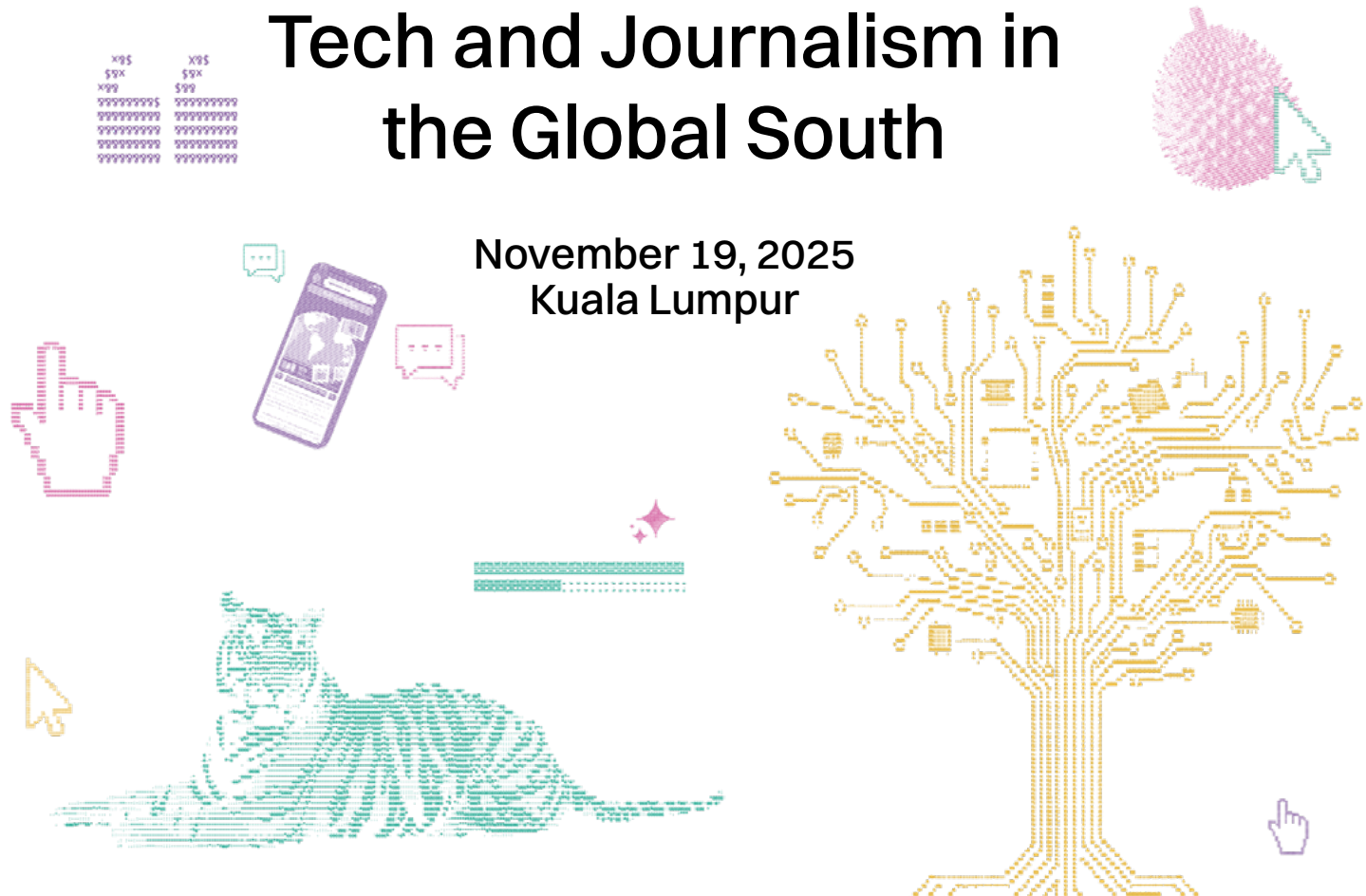


CONFERENCE REPORT

CTRL + **J** **INTERNATIONAL**

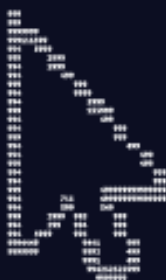
Tech and Journalism in the Global South

November 19, 2025
Kuala Lumpur



CTRL+J International was hosted in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia on November 19, 2025 by the International Fund for Public Interest Media (IFPIM) in partnership with Momentum – Journalism and Tech Task Force, the Indonesian Cyber Media Association (AMSI) and the Media Leadership Think Tank at the Gordon Institute of Business Science (GIBS). The event was sponsored by IFPIM and Luminare.

The report was prepared by IFPIM, with special thanks to our rapporteurs Aidila Razak, Nor Arlene Tan and Alex Woon.



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Introduction

Hosted in Kuala Lumpur on November 19, CTRL+J International marked a galvanizing moment in an ongoing global conversation. Over the course of 2025, journalists, media managers, academics, philanthropists, technologists and policymakers from across Latin America, Asia Pacific, Africa, and beyond gathered to examine homegrown responses to sustain journalism in the face of rapid technological disruption.

Despite their different market sizes and contexts, public interest media around the world are grappling with similar challenges: collapsing business models, widening power asymmetries, and the growing influence of big tech and AI. “We are dealing with a global puzzle that is being formed by different issues in different countries, different stakeholders, different fields, and different expertise,” said Paula Miraglia, Founder and CEO of Momentum, Brazil. “One of the trademarks of these conferences is how we’ve been building things collectively, and not only starting with ourselves, but also enlarging this community.”

With a focus on the acute pressures facing media markets in the Global South, the CTRL+J series also recognized that these countries can lead the way in identifying the issues and developing homegrown solutions. Michael Markovitz, Director of the Media Leadership Think Tank at GIBS in South Africa emphasized: “What brings us together is not about the scale of our media markets, but it’s about institutional

coherence, strong regulatory processes, very organized civil society and clear political intent. [...] Without that, we’re going to struggle.”

This fourth CTRL+J convening in Kuala Lumpur built on the learnings gathered during the previous three regional events:

- ▶ In São Paulo (March 2025, co-hosted by Momentum – Journalism and Tech Task Force, the Digital Journalism Association Ajour, and IFJIM), participants recognized that industry challenges affect the entire information ecosystem and emphasized the importance of inclusiveness, and involving non-journalism groups like human rights, digital rights and underrepresented groups.
- ▶ The Jakarta conference (July 2025, co-hosted by the Indonesian Cyber Media Association AMSI, the Alliance of Independent Journalists AJI, and IFJIM) concentrated on tech preparedness and the potential for homegrown technological solutions.
- ▶ In Johannesburg (September 2025, co-hosted by the Media Leadership Think Tank at the Gordon Institute of Business Science and IFJIM), the agenda focused on addressing market power asymmetries and the challenge of regulating tech platforms.

CTRL+J International explored how cross-border collaboration, advocacy, and product development can help to bridge these gaps. The day started by examining



From left to right: Wahyu Dhyatmika, Michael Markovitz, Paula Miraglia, Irene Jay Liu

how journalism can create and capture value amid AI-driven platforms and shifting user behaviors. Participants discussed approaches such as fair compensation, collective bargaining, independent distribution and payment systems, and emerging business models. Across panels, a recurring theme was about reclaiming agency: rejecting the idea that today's AI and technology trajectories are inevitable, and calling instead for more autonomous technologies and alternative paths for developing generative AI.

The conference closed with a clear call to action: the time to build coalitions for change is now. Moving beyond dialogue, participants emphasized the need for tangible next steps that can lay the groundwork for further advocacy and experimentation. Partner organizations—including IFPIM, Momentum, AMSI, and Media Leadership Think Tank, GIBS—announced several initiatives to formalize the CTRL+J Alliance and drive these efforts in the months ahead. This includes supporting strategic cooperation and knowledge exchange among governments—including Brazil, South Africa and Indonesia—on issues related to media sustainability and emerging technologies. A new CTRL+J Microgrants program supported by Luminate will extend and deepen these discussions in 2026— funding organizations that want to draw insights from their own local contexts to convene or conduct research on these important topics.

While the discussions centered on technology and journalism in the Global South, it is precisely the resilience, resourcefulness, and creativity from these

markets that can help define new ideas and paradigms. “This is the start of a global conversation where the Global South is not a footnote in this debate,” said Wahyu Dhyatmika, Chairperson of the Indonesian Cyber Media Association. “The solutions of the Global South are global solutions—it is about shifting the conversation to move from the Global South to make these a global standard, and for these solutions to be actionable,” he added. Irene Jay Liu (Director, AI, Tech and Regulation at IFPIM) also underscored that: “We can't do it alone. That is why the International Fund believes that we need to not only bring ourselves together here, but also to find common partners and share the solutions that come from our regions and our markets to the Global North.”

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—Wahyu Dhyatmika, Chairperson of the Indonesian Cyber Media Association (AMSI)



Overview of Discussions

KEYNOTE ADDRESS 1: Minister Fahmi Fadzil

▶ Fahmi Fadzil, Minister of Communications of Malaysia

In a pre-recorded message, Fahmi Fadzil outlined four key pillars for a healthy information ecosystem:

1. **Reliable Information:** Ensuring everyone can access accurate information online, whether through social media or AI tools, and sustaining quality content from professional journalists who face economic challenges.
2. **Resilient and Sustainable Media Industry:** Addressing the collapse of traditional media business models. He highlighted the RM30 million fund (US\$7.6 million) announced by the Malaysian Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim in June 2025 to support digital transformations and sustain local journalism.
3. **Thriving Local Technology and Innovation:** Creating local technologies that reflect the realities, languages, and cultures of the communities they serve. He cited locally trained AI models, such as

“If we fail to act, disinformation will rise, newsrooms will close, and culture, language, and nuance will be lost. This is not the future we want. We must collaborate globally to defend reliable information, support local innovation, and protect our stories and culture.”

-Fahmi Fadzil, Minister of Communications of Malaysia

YTL AI Labs' Ilmu, as a way to ensure technology respects local knowledge and diversity.

4. **Shared Agenda for Collective Action:** Emphasizing that the Global South must shape the global digital narrative through collaboration among publishers, technologists, policymakers, and communities. He referenced initiatives like the Kuala Lumpur Declaration On Social Media to promote ethical AI, mitigate disinformation, and foster an inclusive digital environment.

KEYNOTE ADDRESS 2: Dr. Andry Indrady

▶ Dr. Andry Indrady, Director General, Legal Policy Strategy Agency, Ministry of Law of Indonesia

Dr. Andry presented Indonesia's proposal for a global digital copyright reform presented at the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) meeting in Geneva (December 1-5, 2025). It proposes a legally binding mechanism to ensure rights holders of digital content receive fair compensation for their work. The core idea is to create a global framework that standardizes the enforceable way value is measured and compensated (in the form of royalties) worldwide. The proposal seeks to address four structural issues, particularly affecting markets in the Global South:

- ▶ **Suboptimal Royalty Collection Framework:** Especially where institutional capacity is weak.
- ▶ **Opaque and Non-Equitable Royalty Allocation:** Addressing how revenue is divided.

▶ **Fragmented Global Copyright Centralization:** The lack of a centralized global copyright database.

▶ **Disparity in Royalty Valuation:** Lower royalty values and weaker bargaining power for content creators in developing countries.

The proposal explicitly covers phonogram and audiovisual content, and not explicitly “journalistic content” to sidestep varying national definitions of the latter. The logic is that mechanisms which cover phonogram and audiovisual content will also apply to news content (text, image, video) as it is increasingly treated as creative content under rights regimes. This legal instrument holds potential relevance for journalism, as it would aim to tackle digital license leakage and asymmetry (e.g., remuneration for content used by AI), difficulty in value capture due to fragmented rights, and the risk of marginalization for local newsrooms by global platforms. “Understanding the paradigm shift in the rights governance is no longer optional. It is imperative to survival and sustainability,” he said.

In his call to action, Dr. Andry invited the journalism community to support the proposal, arguing that a

structural mechanism is necessary for a fairer, more transparent, and sustainable right remuneration framework for the digital age, ensuring digital journalism is not left out of the conversation.

“Understanding the paradigm shift in the rights governance is no longer optional. It is imperative to survival and sustainability.”

–Dr. Andry Indrady, Director General, Legal Policy Strategy Agency, Ministry of Law of Indonesia



PANEL 1: The Shifting Economic Value of News

- ▶ [Dr. Andry Indrady](#), Director General, Legal Policy Strategy Agency, Ministry of Law of Indonesia
- ▶ [Gina Chua](#), Executive Director of Tow-Knight Center, Craig Newmark Graduate School of Journalism at CUNY
- ▶ [Churchill Otieno](#), Executive Director, Eastern Africa Editors Society
- ▶ Moderator: [Premesh Chandran](#), Co-founder Malaysiakini, Co-founder of Awatar

This session discussed the shifting value of journalism in the age of digital platforms and AI, and how that value can be captured to ensure sustainability, with a strong emphasis on serving audiences more effectively.

Gina Chua argued that journalism often fails to meet people where they are, leaving information gaps that tech companies and AI products now fill. She challenged the industry’s focus on compensation or “reparations” from tech companies, rather than innovating and finding ways to serve the audience better. Drawing an analogy to healthcare workers rejecting life-saving technology to protect their own jobs, she stressed that journalism’s role is to protect the information ecosystem: “We are not here to save journalism jobs, but how the public gets information,” she said. Chua added that rejecting AI or tech funding on purist grounds is counterproductive, arguing instead for diversification and rebuilding trust with audiences: “All money is dirty and corrosive and wants you to do certain things. The goal is to diversify so you are not beholden. We need to get closer to our customers. Once we have that tie, then we talk about how we fund it and pay for it.”

Churchill Otieno echoed this audience-first framing, highlighting the disconnect between journalism and communities, particularly in Africa, where fewer than 20% of people speak English, yet much journalism is produced in it. He argued that value must always be assessed from the audience’s perspective, especially where donor-funded models may prioritize external agendas over local needs. He also called for stronger public narratives about journalism’s role in society to build policy and public support: “When talking about the value of journalism as a critical part of life, we do not have the same coverage or conversation of this in the public sphere. So there is very little buy-in from the policy side. We need to bring this question to the public realm, so when we talk about creating or sharing economic value, people understand this,” he said.

Dr Andry Indrady, referencing Indonesia’s WIPO proposal, added that fair compensation and royalties are not ends in themselves but part of sustaining journalism’s public service role. Fairer remuneration, he noted, ultimately benefits consumers by strengthening the broader information ecosystem and improving the quality and accessibility of information.



From left to right: Premesh Chandran, Dr. Andry Indrady, Churchill Otieno, Gina Chua

PANEL 2: Shifting Winds: Where Geopolitics and Local Policy Collide

- ▶ [Anya Schiffrin](#), Senior Lecturer at Columbia University, United States
- ▶ [Burcu Kilic](#), Senior Fellow, Centre for International Governance Innovation
- ▶ [Michael Markovitz](#), Director, Media Leadership Think Tank, Gordon Institute of Business Science, South Africa
- ▶ Moderator: [Paula Miraglia](#), Founder and CEO of Momentum - Journalism & Tech Task Force, Brazil

Local policy interventions to ensure a fairer playing field for public interest journalism face an array of pressures and challenges. Anya Schiffrin pointed to the [OSCE report on Media Freedom in the age of AI and Big Tech](#) which captures the regulatory discussions across several jurisdictions. Based on a [mapping of copyright lawsuits vs AI worldwide](#), she noted that many lawsuits are mostly in the U.S., where a legal framework on this issue is lacking and there is a shift away from regulation. Despite the “fair use” argument, which many tech platforms use as justification to use content without payment, in May 2025, the U.S. copyright office [published](#) a piece on AI and IP, which said that the fair use doctrine protected some usage of copyrighted material, but not all. But the director of the copyright office was quickly fired by Trump, underscoring the political complexity of the issue.



From left to right: Paula Miraglia, Michael Markovitz, Anya Schiffrin, Burcu Kilic

Meanwhile in the EU, there are individual lawsuits in France, Italy and Spain, but the legal framework for remuneration for journalistic content is lacking for AI, relying on text and data mining exceptions and opt-out options. In Australia, the Albanese government is pushing forward with a digital levy as a way of incentivizing the platforms to comply with the News Media Bargaining Code, [despite](#) tariff threats.

While there are various ways to calculate what compensation is due, none of this is codified in law anywhere at the moment, with Schiffrin noting it is “the law of the jungle. It really comes down to power and what you can do.” In terms of responses to push for compensation, Schiffrin cited Cloudflare—which serves about 20% of the global web—as an example of a system that blocks AI crawlers and demands payment. She warned this could trigger a race to the bottom, with crawlers favoring outlets that charge less—such as sites in lower-income countries—over those in markets like the United States. She also noted that large LLM platforms are still unwilling to pay because they are able to afford legal battles. Smaller LLM platforms, for example a health chatbot by a private company, may be open to paying a licensing fee because risks of a lawsuit and compensation is too high.

Burcu Kilic retraced the genesis of the United States’ approach to tech regulation going back to the early days of the World Wide Web. It has informed U.S. policy on tech regulation since, and now they are exporting this policy through trade deals and tariff structures. Countries like Malaysia and Cambodia, that may not even be thinking of imposing tech regulations, are now bound by restrictive tariff deals. This affects their ability to introduce regulations that could be deemed as potentially jeopardizing U.S. commercial interests. At the same time, governments in the Global South are attracted to the investment and trade value of the AI industries. However, the actual investment value should be challenged through investigative journalism, she said. “The narrative power is strong—and we need to challenge this narrative. This community has an important role to play,” she argued.

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–Burcu Kilic, Senior Fellow, Centre for International Governance Innovation

On a parallel issue, Michael Markovitz highlighted the relevance of the [M20 declaration in Johannesburg](#), and commended efforts to raise it with the South African presidency ahead of the G20 summit. He also noted the risks that come from a non-regulated space: how disinformation, spread through tech platforms, is increasingly weaponized. In the case of South Africa, he noted the coordinated international deployment of disinformation about “white genocide” and its severe [implications](#): “If we’re not in control of informational sovereignty, then basically we are allowing external actors to define what our democracy is all about,” he said.

PANEL 3: Preparing for the Future: From Protecting Content to Building New Models

- ▶ [Natalia Viana](#), Co-founder and Executive Director, Agência Pública, Brazil
- ▶ [Claire Lim](#), Specialist Solutions Engineer, Cloudflare, Singapore
- ▶ [E.M. Lewis-Jong](#), Founder & VP, Mozilla Data Collective, United Kingdom
- ▶ Moderator: [Irene Jay Liu](#), Director, AI, Emerging Tech & Regulation (IFPIM)

This session explored not just how to protect content, but why it is important to protect it and what will create lasting value in an AI-mediated information ecosystem.

To set the backdrop for the discussion, Natalia Viana described a transnational [investigative project](#) led by Agência Pública and media partners, revealing how major tech companies use lobbying tactics to co-opt news organizations. Citing the Google News Initiative and Google Showcase programs, she explained how Google financial and other support can neutralize media as potential critics, while enrolling publishers in a product that fails to deliver promised reach and instead “rents the enemy.” So far, agreement clauses could potentially [shield](#) the company’s use of media content for AI training and protect them against future legal claims. Viana warned that generative AI’s use of journalistic content risks deepening this capture by the tech industry, urging journalists to remain vigilant to avoid repeating past mistakes.



From left to right: Irene Jay Liu, E.M. Lewis-Jong, Claire Lim

Claire Lim argued that AI crawlers used for summarization have fundamentally undermined the digital media business model. Whereas media and tech platforms

once operated symbiotically—publishers produced content and platforms drove traffic—AI summaries now remove the need for audiences to visit publisher websites. Lim added that AI crawlers also place a heavy burden on publishers’ resources by repeatedly scraping content at high volume, forcing media outlets to bear the costs without a return in organic traffic. This dynamic discourages investment in quality journalism and contributes to a rise in low-quality, AI-generated content. To counter this, Cloudflare has [adopted](#) a permission-based model in which crawlers are granted access only if they agree to a set fee, allowing publishers to set prices for all crawlers rather than negotiate individually with each tech company.

E.M. Lewis-Jong said that Mozilla Data Collective’s experience is that what data owners want is not to hoard data, but to be able to have autonomy over how they share the data, and what can be done with this data, and what they get in return. She added that the compensation might not even be monetary: data owners may agree to provide data in exchange for access to a tool built using that data, for example.

“There are not very subtle and nuanced ways to enact control right now, which means you have these downstream impacts. You limit it for one person, you limit it for everyone. There’s actually no real reason why it has to be that way. Especially if we’re not all bickering over the same existing and relatively small pool of data. If we can expand the frame of reference so that we’re actually including more knowledge sources, we have data abundance rather than data scarcity.”

—E.M. Lewis-Jong, Founder & VP, Mozilla Data Collective, United Kingdom

Lewis-Jong said that since less than 1% of global datasets are online, it meant that technologists are squabbling over data which are not all high quality due to “AI slop proliferation.” Most data, she observed, are sitting in drives that “could contribute to better, more inclusive, more representative AI.” If proper incentives and guardrails are placed, Lewis-Jong is convinced that future build would speak to sustainability and innovation.

PANEL 4: Conversation “Between Two Durians”: Winning the AI Ownership Battle

- ▶ [Karen Hao](#), Journalist and author of *Empire of AI*
- ▶ [Shuwei Fang](#), Joan Shorenstein Fellow at Harvard Kennedy School's Shorenstein Center on Media, Politics and Public Policy



From left to right: Karen Hao, Shuwei Fang

Sitting between two (fake) durians, Karen Hao and Shuwei Fang discussed the race for AI dominance, how this will change the future of journalism and how the industry can resist and reclaim ownership.

Fang argued that we are heading into an AI-mediated information ecosystem, shifting from information as artifacts to information in a liquid permeable form which easily flows into and converts into different shapes and forms. This renders traditional journalism, where the artifact is the article, somewhat obsolete if value is captured only at the artifact level. Instead, the value lies in the journalistic process, the verification, accountability and sense-making which Fang sees as potentially having “more value than ever.” This pushes the content creation industry to bifurcate into two forms: At the high end, where journalism moves up the value chain to produce high value but high production premium cost products. On the other end, is the information market where information is consumed by the AI machines to be reproduced and mediated into other forms. These producers will compete on scale: “We’re at the point where the question is whether or not new models can be identified and built around those intangible parts of the process (...) What if we let go of the artifact and stopped equating value with that and focused on the process instead?” she asked.

Hao said big technology and AI platforms’ vision of the future and the way they are going about it is parallel to

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–*Shuwei Fang, Joan Shorenstein Fellow at Harvard Kennedy School’s Shorenstein Center on Media, Politics and Public Policy*

imperial powers. Like imperial powers, they push their agenda through using up natural and human resource without due compensation, and justify this by propping up a narrative that the AI revolution will bring humankind to a next level of civilization. While Hao believes AI technology could bring tremendous benefits, there needs to be a better way for it to be produced, owned and envisioned, where the power does not sit only with the owners of capital at the peril of those who do not. “Why aren’t we fundamentally rethinking what are the new types of AI technologies, the new types of paradigms, the new value generation frameworks that we should be using rather than inheriting one that was explicitly designed to undermine us?” she asked.

“Why aren’t we fundamentally rethinking what are the new types of AI technologies, the new types of paradigms, the new value generation frameworks that we should be using rather than inheriting one that was explicitly designed to undermine us?”

–*Karen Hao, Journalist and author of Empire of AI*

Hao also rejected the notion that journalists should shrink their output to meet the new ways of media consumption through AI mediation. She cited examples of top podcasts which are very long, which remain in high demand because of the value of the products: “We do not have to accept these empires as service providers, we can be building our own version of technology, as well as going to other providers that engage in fair value exchange,” she argued.

PANEL 5: Preparing for the Future: Reclaiming Market Power

- ▶ [Karen Rønde](#), CEO, Danish Press Publications Collective Management Organisation, Denmark (Recorded presentation and joined live online discussion)
- ▶ [Paula Fray](#), Panel member on the South African Competition Commission's Media and Digital Platforms Market Inquiry, South Africa
- ▶ [Courtney Radsch](#), Director, Center for Journalism and Liberty at the Open Markets Institute, United States (Joined live online)
- ▶ [Martha Dark](#), Co-Founder and Co-Executive Director, Foxglove, United Kingdom
- ▶ Moderator: [Wahyu Dhyatmika](#), Chairperson of the Indonesian Cyber Media Association (AMSI)

From collective licensing and legislation to litigation and competition commission efforts, this panel reflected on what market-based strategies are bearing fruit to correct imbalances and build leverage for public interest journalism in the age of AI.

Karen Rønde kicked off the conversation with a recorded presentation on efforts by the Danish Press Publications Collective Management Organisation (which represents 99 percent of Danish publishers) to form a collective to demand fair compensation from large tech platforms. She listed six parallel tracks that are helping to push for change:

1. **Licensing:** “Value begins at the source.” Fair compensation and data access is a top priority.
2. **Legislation:** Working with governments, policymakers and civil servants on national, European and global levels to push for strong laws that respect creative rights and contribute concrete proposals when the current legislation fails (e.g. arbitration models as seen in Australia, Canada, and the UK).
3. **Literacy:** “We must win minds and hearts to create lasting change.” This means reaching out across borders and to a variety of sectors, such as schools, NGOs, industry associations and youth organizations.
4. **Leadership:** Leaders must step up and be willing to take risks.
5. **Leveraging technology and innovation:** We must take learnings from other sectors and be open-minded in creating new tools.

6. **Litigation:** Policy and enforcement go hand in hand. That is why the Danish Press Publications CMO has filed lawsuits against OpenAI and LinkedIn for unauthorized use of content. Even if it does not work, Rønde said it can serve as a test case for other countries.

“Our story to the people must be a story of hope, a story that lifts people up, that shows it’s possible to act and change things when we believe in each other and collaborate and of course, take concrete actions.”

–Karen Rønde, CEO, Danish Press Publications Collective Management Organisation, Denmark

Paula Fray, who served as a panel member of the South African Competition Commission's Media and Digital Platforms Market Inquiry, spoke in Kuala Lumpur a few days after its [final report](#) was released. Fray said the inquiry was significant because it gathered evidence of harm to news publishers’ revenue caused by tech platforms. Alongside other remedies such as prioritizing South African content in Search, one noteworthy feature of the final report is the agreement between the Commission and Google to pay R688 million rand (~US\$43 million) over five years. Meta will be required to provide advertising credits to local media producers, helping surface their content against international outlets and enabling monetization. While not the first inquiry of its kind globally, Fray highlighted that it was particularly important for South Africa because it drew evidence based on national context, and relied on regulatory collaboration: “During the whole process, we didn’t just think of what remedies we were going to impose, but who do we need to be talking to?”

Courtney Radsch noted that similar competition inquiries in the Global South, including a recent [inquiry](#) in Brazil, have managed to surface good evidence of harm. Similarly, in the UK, an inquiry looking into AI and copyright is deliberating on whether Apple and Google should have strategic market status. This could impact other upcoming legislation around the world. “These things are interrelated and an opportunity for us to provide evidence of the decline in traffic (...) And I think that we need to be proactive in proposing legislation,” she argued, emphasizing the need for transparency.

Martha Dark explained that Foxglove has engaged in multiple litigations against Google in the EU, South

“During the whole process, we didn’t just think of what remedies we were going to impose, but who do we need to be talking to?”

–Paula Fray, Panel member on the South African Competition Commission’s Media and Digital Platforms Market Inquiry, South Africa



Paula Fray with Martha Dark in background

Africa, Italy, the UK, and the US, with plans to expand actions to Brazil and other jurisdictions, arguing that the company is abusing its dominant market power by using journalists’ work to fuel AI Overviews without permission or compensation. Independent research cited shows some newsrooms reporting advertising declines of 50-70 percent since the introduction of AI Overviews. She emphasized that facing off a global company requires a coordinated international response: “International legal work is only ever, in my view, effective when there’s mobilization across borders. And I think the media industry also has a really crucial role to play in this.” Dark concluded by stressing that this is a moment for international solidarity among regulators, publishers, and newsrooms, and invited collaboration, including sharing existing complaints or jointly filing new ones in additional jurisdictions.

“International legal work is only ever, in my view, effective when there’s mobilization across borders. And I think the media industry also has a really crucial role to play in this.”

–Martha Dark, Co-Founder and Co-Executive Director, Foxglove, United Kingdom

**PREPARING FOR THE FUTURE:
RECLAIMING MARKET POWER**

CTRL + J INTERNATIONAL

IT'S NOT JUST ABOUT OUR FINANCIAL SURVIVAL, IT'S ABOUT SAFEGUARDING **DEMOCRACY**

IF MEDIA IS IMPORTANT TO DEMOCRACY, THEN WHAT ROLE DOES GOVERNMENT & BUSINESS PLAY?

WE MUST KEEP OUR EFFORTS DIVERSIFIED...

- LICENSING
- LEGISLATION
- LITERACY
- LEADERSHIP
- LEVERAGING (TECH & INNOVATION?)
- LITIGATION

NATIONAL CONTEXT MATTERS!

WE NEED TO SEE **STRUCTURAL REMEDIES** THERE HAS TO BE A COST FOR MONOPOLY!

AI'S 'FAIR USE' ARGUMENT

ALL COPYRIGHT LAWS SPECIFICALLY CALL OUT MARKET REPLACEMENTS ...

... AND THERE IS CLEARLY A MARKET FOR OUR DATA!

GOOGLE IS A GLOBAL COMPANY, AND THEREFORE REQUIRES A GLOBAL RESPONSE

WE WILL NEED TO PUT UP WITH SOME **SHORT-TERM PAIN** TO FIX THE SYSTEM!

WE NEED TO HAVE A STRONG, UNITED FRONT WITH THE CREATIVE COMMUNITY TO TACKLE OUR COMMON CHALLENGES!

OUR STORY HAS TO BE ONE OF... **HOPE**

PANEL 6: Bridging the Gaps: Navigating Platforms, from Reaching Users to Monetizing Content

- ▶ Jacque Manabat, Co-Founder, Amber Studios MNL, The Philippines
- ▶ Luciano Banchemo, Co-Founder & Chief Creative Officer, Posta, Argentina
- ▶ Maurice Otieno, Executive Director of Baraza Media Lab, Kenya
- ▶ Moderator: Ain Husniza, Gen Z activist and founder of Pocket of Pink, Malaysia

This session examined strategies for growing and sustaining audiences, fostering inclusivity across the media value chain, and using both broadcast and new media to drive profitability. It was moderated by Ain Husniza, a young Malaysian social activist who was catapulted into the spotlight as a 17-year-old when her TikTok video commentary about a rape joke made by her teacher went viral. At the time, she only had 53 Tiktok followers. Since then, she has led movements for school safety and feminism among young people.

Jacque Manabat also found new ways of reaching audiences through her TikTok content. As a broadcast journalist with ABS-CBN in the Philippines, she was intrigued with how people were so engaged with content on Tiktok (e.g. making Dalgona coffee during Covid lockdown), but less engaged with traditional news content. This led her to produce news explainers on TikTok in a more informal and engaging way, garnering huge followings. She started her own studio supporting and mentoring a new generation of independent news creators. It also provided her with a lifeline and a sustained connection to her audience, after ABS-CBN lost its license under the Rodrigo Duterte government.

Luciano Banchemo described how his organization Posta became Argentina’s leading podcast producer by adapting the U.S. trend of narrative investigative podcasts. With support from funders like Luminare, partnerships with platforms such as Spotify, and innovative storytelling from the Posta team, the organization built a sustainable business model. However, early partnerships came at a cost: after a deal with Spotify ended, Posta discovered the platform owned rights to content produced during that period. This experience shaped Posta’s approach to future partnerships, which now focus on values-aligned brands, civil society groups like Amnesty, and collaborations



Ain Husniza, a young Malaysian activist, spoke on her experience using social media to advocate for school safety

with investigative journalists. It also shifted Posta’s view, Banchemo said: “We’ve learned to treat platforms more like bridges than homes,” a sentiment that resonated with experiences felt by fellow panelist Maurice Otieno from Kenya.

Otieno described how investigative journalist John-Allan Namu built a direct-payment platform with support from Baraza Media Lab, using Kenya’s widely adopted mobile money service, M-PESA. Despite having a vast online following on YouTube, Namu earned only about US\$400 per investigative video due to the platform’s unfavourable rates for Kenyan creators. Meanwhile, production costs 10 times more. Exasperated by the situation, Namu teamed up with popular Kenyan afropop band Sauti Sol to launch its own pay-per-view platform called Shahara. By releasing an exclusive investigation on Shahara instead and promoting it on YouTube, he earned around US\$3,000 in a week—from micropayments, even with lower reach. The “tip-jar-style” platform supported other creators, who use YouTube and Instagram for promotion while directing audiences to pay locally, and enabled new collaborations between journalists and storytellers that combine reach with creative engagement.



From left to right: Ain Husniza, Jacquie Manabat, Maurice Otieno, Luciano Banchemo

PANEL 7: Preparing for the Future: Building Homegrown Tech

- ▶ [Sebastián Cifuentes](#), Tech Lead at the National Center of Artificial Intelligence (Cenia), Chile
- ▶ [William Tjhi](#), Head of Applied Research, AI Singapore
- ▶ [Nasubo Ongoma](#), Director of Technology Economy at Qhala, Kenya
- ▶ Moderator: [Elina Noor](#), Senior Fellow in the Asia Program at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace

This session explored the opportunities and challenges of developing local tech solutions.

Nasubo Ongoma explained that Qhala is developing a local large language model to serve Kenya’s young population, where the median age is just 20, and where most global LLMs fail to meet needs because they operate primarily in English. “It costs sometimes up to three times more than building in English,” she said, making affordability a central challenge. Qhala’s work focuses on reducing development costs, educating communities on how to build and use LLMs, and creating models in local languages that are genuinely valuable to young people, who she described as “the primary beneficiaries” of this technology. For Ongoma, tech sovereignty is paramount: “the North Star is sovereignty. You have the data. You have the compute. You have the algorithms. But you have to start from somewhere.”

Sebastián Cifuentes described CENIA’s efforts to build local AI capacity in Chile and Latin America through partnerships that provide infrastructure and strategic investment. “We have people, really skilled people, that know a lot about this kind of technology and can build this kind of technology, but to build a language model or to build any kind of artificial intelligence, we need the proper infrastructure,” he said, noting that Latin America largely consumes technology from the U.S., China, and Europe and must “change the game” to become creators. While algorithms are open source and data can be shared, access to GPUs remains a big barrier to tech autonomy in the Global South. CENIA has already supported local LLMs with real community impact, including reducing public healthcare waiting times.

William Tjhi shared how Singapore’s SEA-LION LLM was built through sustained government investment, guided by a national AI strategy and supported by a mature ecosystem and “openness, spirit and collaboration.” Major investments were made in talent and physical infrastructure to attract investor confidence. While

“The North Star is sovereignty. You have the data. You have the compute. You have the algorithms. But you have to start from somewhere.”

–*Nasubo Ongoma, Director of Technology Economy at Qhala, Kenya*

SEA-LION is built in Singapore, it was developed collaboratively with big tech partners like Google and Alibaba, as well as partners in the region. “We see ourselves as an infrastructure builder... We empower people to build on top of what we have,” Tjhi said, framing the goal as tech autonomy rather than sovereignty—ensuring countries have the capacity to decide and build for their own cultural and linguistic contexts.



From left to right: William Tjhi, Sebastián Cifuentes, Nasubo Ongoma

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–*Sebastián Cifuentes, Tech Lead at the National Center of Artificial Intelligence (Cenia), Chile*

Key Takeaways

1. Global South markets have a leading role to play in defining global standards.

The Global South is not merely a recipient of ideas: innovations born of constraint, diversity, and resilience in these markets can help shape new global standards. Participants highlighted the urgent need for a comprehensive and fair global regulatory framework for AI, copyright, and digital platforms—one that protects creators' rights and remuneration, as illustrated by Indonesia's proposal at WIPO.

2. Sustaining journalism requires structural reforms.

Sustaining journalism amid technological upheaval requires legal, regulatory, and market solutions rather than temporary deals and fixes, with regulation compelling platforms to invest in a fairer system. Compensation, speakers emphasized, is a means to an end: it helps to preserve journalism's public service role and strengthen the information ecosystem.

3. Policy battles are getting shaped by geopolitics.

Discussions revealed how tech regulation is entangled with trade agreements, tariffs, and geopolitical pressure. Regulatory restraint is being exported through trade deals, and positive AI investment narratives can often mask limited local benefits. The journalistic community has an important role to play in challenging these narratives.

4. Market power must be reclaimed collectively.

From Denmark's collective licensing model to South Africa's competition inquiry and Foxglove's multi-jurisdiction litigation, the strongest leverage comes from collective action. No single newsroom or country can confront global platforms alone: coordination across borders and within countries is essential to develop strategies and gain bargaining power.



Key Takeaways

5. Agency and alternatives matter.

Participants rejected technological determinism and the idea that journalism must simply adapt to AI systems built elsewhere. There are opportunities to build more autonomous pathways through sustained investment, a strong talent pool, and collaboration with national and regional partners to build shared AI infrastructure. This can empower others to innovate with technologies that reflect diverse cultural and linguistic contexts.

6. Value is defined by users, not just by platforms or funders.

As content becomes increasingly commodified, the challenge is to develop new ways to leverage journalism's distinctive value in order to survive and continue serving the public interest. This is where the journalistic process itself can reclaim value—through verification, accountability, and sense-making.

7. New business models are emerging outside platform dependency.

Examples from Argentina, Kenya, and the Philippines showed viable alternatives: direct payments, value-aligned brand partnerships, creator-journalist collaborations, and independent distribution channels. These models prioritize trust, values, and community over scale at all costs.

8. Protecting content requires rethinking ownership and control.

Panels moved beyond “blocking or paying” towards more nuanced frameworks of data autonomy. Data owners want control over how their data is used and what they receive in return—monetary or otherwise—rather than blanket restrictions.



Next Steps and Conclusion

CTRL+J International closed with a shared conviction that this is a moment for coalition-building, experimentation, and action. In order to confront platform power imbalances, weak bargaining positions, fragmented rights regimes, and policy capture, the conversations highlighted the urgent need to develop collaborative solutions that are context-specific and tailored to the Global South. The future of journalism will not be shaped by technology alone, but by who organizes, collaborates, and claims agency in shaping it.

After four successful global conferences, the priority is now to consolidate and share the collective knowledge generated—bringing together reports, session recordings, and insights on the [CTRL+J platform](#) so they can remain accessible to all. The co-hosts also emphasized the need to formalize this momentum through the creation of the CTRL+J Alliance, which will carry forward the ideas and lessons developed across these convenings.

Looking ahead, speakers highlighted the importance of deeper collaboration and practical exchange, particularly around homegrown technology and digital sovereignty.

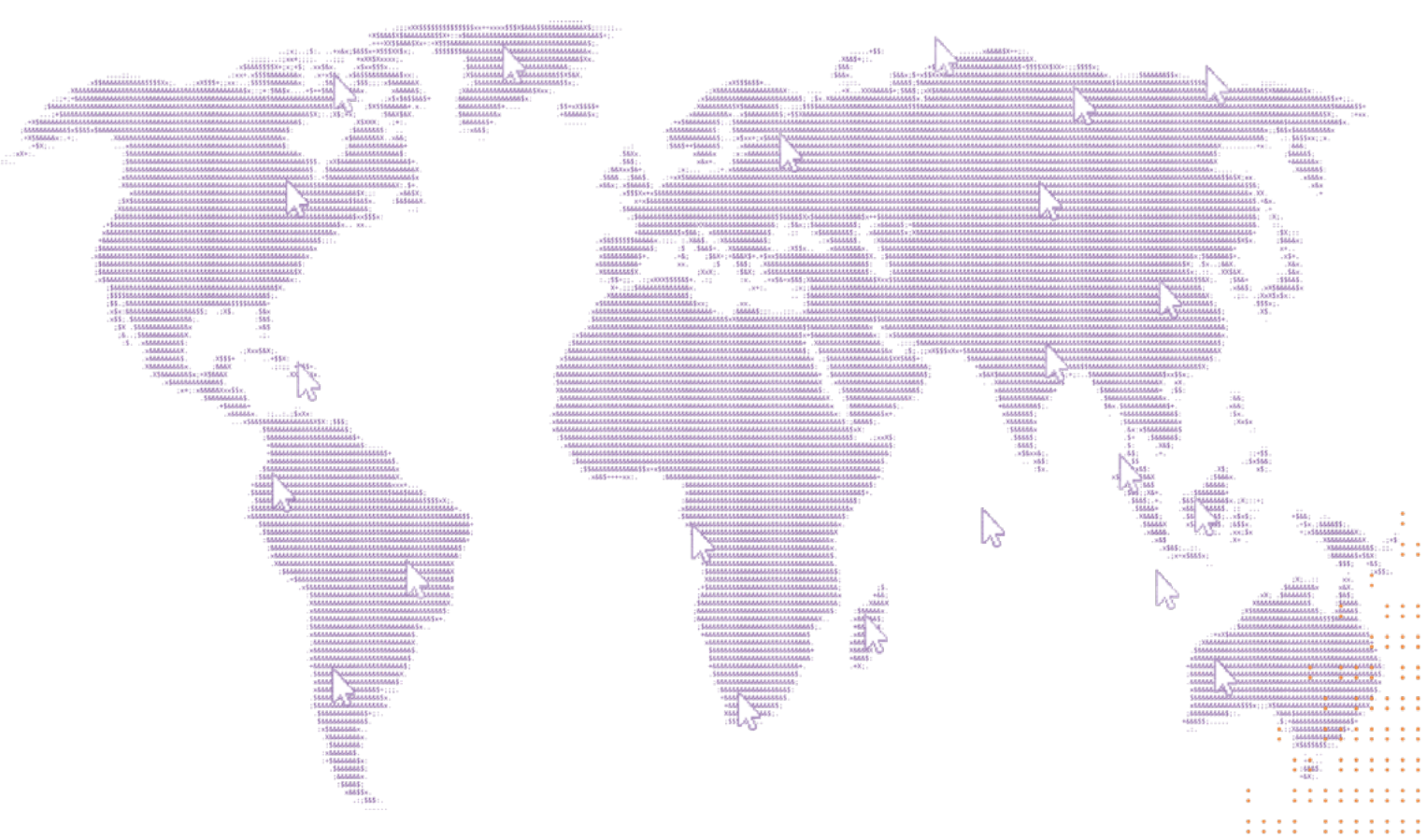
Backed by concrete support for experimentation and implementation, the next phase focuses on turning shared insights into sustained, collective impact.

Next steps:

- ▶ Launch the CTRL+J Alliance to formalize collaboration and steward the initiative's long-term vision.
- ▶ Consolidate and publish outputs from these conversations to build a common repository of knowledge on the CTRL+J platform.
- ▶ Launch a microgrants program to support small convenings and research projects to deepen the conversation on these issues across Global South markets.
- ▶ Build cross-regional networks to share lessons and align strategies focusing on the nexus of technology and journalism with the goal of creating a stronger, robust ecosystem.
- ▶ Formalize strategic alliances with partners, including an intergovernmental group to promote cooperation and knowledge exchange on issues related to media sustainability and emerging technologies.



CTRL+J conference series organizers; the International Fund for Public Interest Media, Momentum – Journalism and Tech Task Force, the Digital Journalism Association Ajour, Indonesian Cyber Media Association AMSI, the Alliance of Independent Journalists AJI, the Media Leadership Think Tank at the Gordon Institute of Business Science and sponsor, Luminare.



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