Media Influence Matrix – Methodology 2025+ (AI-Era, Database-Driven)

Media and Journalism Research Center (MJRC)

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1. Introduction

The Media Influence Matrix (MIM) was launched in 2017 to examine the forces shaping journalism and the wider information environment. The project originally relied on narrative country reports based on three core areas: regulation, funding, and technology.

The information system of the 2020s is radically different. News and journalism now operate within a broader and more complex information sphere, influenced by artificial intelligence companies, cloud and platform corporations, quantum communication infrastructures, telecommunications operators, data brokers, and transnational regulatory bodies.

To address these changes, MIM has transitioned from static, text-based reporting to a database-driven methodology that maps actors shaping information flows, tracks regulatory, economic, technological, and infrastructural power, and enables standardized, comparable datasets that integrate with the Global Media Finances Map (GMFM).

2. Conceptual Framework

The information sphere refers to the environment in which information is produced, distributed, and monetized. It encompasses journalism, platforms, telecom networks, AI systems, public communication, and data infrastructures. Power in this sphere is exercised through legal authority, capital and ownership, control of infrastructure and algorithms, and influence on public and policy agendas.

The methodology is organized around three pillars: 1) Regulation and policy influencers; 2) Provenance and funding; and 3) Technology, AI, and infrastructure.

3. Pillar 1 – Regulation and Policy Influencers

This pillar captures state and para-state institutions involved in governing the information environment, including their mandates, resources, and influence dynamics.

Regulatory authorities include broadcast and spectrum bodies, press regulators, digital content authorities, data protection agencies, competition regulators, telecommunications authorities, cybersecurity agencies, electoral commissions, advertising oversight bodies, and AI or algorithm governance structures.

Data collected includes mandates, tasks, powers, governance structures, appointment rules, budgets, transparency, independence indicators, controversies, and significant enforcement actions.

4. Pillar 2 – Provenance and Funding

This pillar maps ownership, market power, revenue structures, and funding flows shaping the information sphere. It integrates economic and ownership data with the Global Media Finances Map.

Media and information companies include broadcasters, publishers, online outlets, news agencies, and hybrid actors. Variables include ownership structures, cross-sector holdings, revenues, profits, audience reach, editorial orientation, political affiliations, and AI integration.

Funders include advertisers, corporations, philanthropic organizations, political parties, donors, and government bodies. Variables include total spending, allocation criteria, recipients, mechanisms, and political patterns.

5. Pillar 3 – Technology, AI, and Infrastructure

This pillar covers the technological ecosystem structuring information flows—from telecommunications infrastructure to artificial intelligence.

Technology and infrastructure actors include AI developers, platforms, quantum networks, telecom operators, cloud providers, data brokers, cybersecurity firms, and device ecosystems. Variables include market penetration, local operations, ownership, compliance, and impact on news visibility.

The methodology also examines ranking systems, data flows, interoperability, platform APIs, algorithmic effects on news distribution, technology–government relations, and technology–journalism dependencies.

6. Data Model and Database Structure

The methodology uses a standardized relational model with entities such as Regulator, Person, Company, Media Outlet, Tech Entity, Funder, Ownership Link, Funding Flow, Regulatory Action, Influence Link, and Distribution Dependency. These are structured with time-series variables to enable comparison and integration with GMFM.

7. Data Collection Templates

Standardized templates guide the collection of regulatory, financial, technological, and institutional data across countries, ensuring consistency and enabling direct import into the joint database.

8. Implementation Guidance

Research teams combine desk research, database entry, interviews with stakeholders, and cross-checks with GMFM data. Updates should be performed regularly to reflect regulatory changes, shifts in ownership, and technological evolution.

9. Versioning

Media Influence Matrix – Methodology 2025+, Version 1.0. Updates will be issued as the information sphere continues to evolve.