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Potential impacts and perceptions of GenAI in trade publishing: a review and agenda

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ABSTRACT

This paper synthesises prior research on GenAI in the creative industries using the People, Process, and Technology (PPT) framework to examine perceptions, changes to existing workflows, and technical capabilities and constraints. Literature indicates that authors generally resist GenAI due to concerns about labour displacement and disruption of the creative process, while some publishers have adopted GenAI to automate or assist with non-creative tasks. While GenAI has the capability to reshape existing workflows and create new roles, technical risks such as bias, plagiarism, and copyright concerns further constrain its adoption. This paper presents a scoping literature review and aims to identify empirical, methodological and conceptual gaps in existing literature, particularly in terms of gatekeeping roles such as literary agents and acquisition editors, whose impacts remain underexamined. From these gaps a future research agenda is set out for exploring the impact of GenAI on the literary industry and creative industries.

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Artificial intelligence; Generative AI; trade publishing; publishing industry; creative industries

Introduction

Artificial Intelligence (AI) has been described as the 'defining trend' of the current US publishing market (Ryzkho et al., 2024) and is one of the technologies with the greatest potential impact on the creative economies (Schinello, 2025). Generative AI (GenAI) has been used to generate poems, articles, screenplays (Dhavan et al., 2025), and novels (Cabezas-Clavijo et al., 2024). GenAI is framed as a new and potentially disruptive technology for trade publishing, an industry that has previously undergone periods of digital transformation and may provide clear insights into technological impacts on creative work. The objective of this study is to understand the potential impacts and perceptions and of GenAI using the People, Process, and Technology (PPT) framework (Chang & Chen, 2025). Analysing prior research on GenAI and publishing, the paper begins by briefly examining past digital disruptions, exploring the challenges and opportunities that technology has brought to the industry, as well as stakeholder reactions. This paper then adopts a scoping literature review approach (Paré et al., 2015) to identify opportunities for future research on GenAI in the publishing industry across the dimensions of PPT. Next, we present a synthesis and analysis of prior research. Finally, the paper outlines a suggested future research agenda to better understand GenAI impacts and perceptions in the trade publishing industry.

Digital transformation in trade publishing

The term 'trade publishing' describes the industry in which books are published for consumption by consumers, as opposed to books intended for consumption by specialists or other practitioners (Henningsgaard, 2020; Lamb, 2020). Trade publishing is not limited to physical media alone, and can also include eBooks and audiobooks (Lamb, 2020; Schroff, 2024). Publishing houses act as intermediaries between the author and the reader, while literary agents are typically independent entities hired by authors that themselves act as an intermediary between the author and the publishing house (Crosby &

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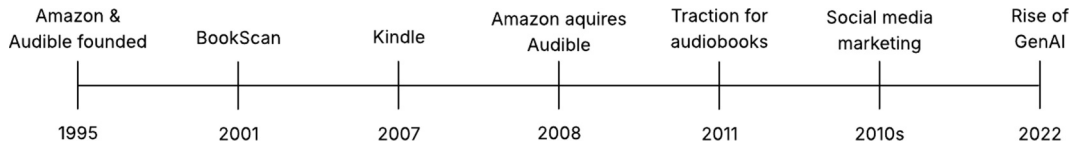


Figure 1. Timeline of digital transformation in the publishing industry.

McKenzie, 2024; Phillips, 2020). A manuscript can undergo many iterations of editing and structural changes before finally being published. This process often begins with the literary agent, who will present editorial feedback on an author's work and offer representation before reaching out to publishing houses (Noorda, 2025). Thus, literary agents act as gatekeepers and key decision makers in the publishing process. Once a publishing contract has been signed, the author will work with an acquisition editor from that publishing house to undertake further rounds of revisions over the course of weeks or months (Barker, 2020). To better understand the potential impacts and perceptions of GenAI in publishing, it is important to first examine stakeholder responses and impacts of previous digital innovations (see Figure 1).

2001–2007: data analytics

One of the most impactful digital tools for publishing houses is BookScan, an application that replaced publishers' reliance on bestseller lists with detailed sales data (Andrews & Napoli, 2006; Nolan & Dane, 2018). Notably, publishers were slow to adopt BookScan upon release and only did so once it had been adopted by many literary agents and retailers (Andrews & Napoli, 2006). BookScan has been increasingly used by publishers as a decision-making tool when signing new authors and book deals (Andrews & Napoli, 2006; Johanson et al., 2023), though human judgement remains a significant factor in book acquisitions (Childress, 2012; Johanson et al., 2023).

2007–2011: platformisation

The introduction of online booksellers created new revenue opportunities for both authors and publishers (Kreutzmann-Gallasch & Schroff, 2022). However, Amazon's market dominance led to asymmetric bargaining power that created strategic risks for publishers, and sanctions imposed by Amazon against a large publisher during a contract dispute reduced the royalties of authors and agents (Dimar et al., 2016; Thompson, 2021). The popularisation of eBooks also lowered the barrier to entry for self-publishing for authors. Platforms such as KDP (Kindle Direct Publishing) allow some authors to skip the typical intermediaries of agents and publishers, and release their books directly to readers (Schroff, 2024).

Many contracts for backlist titles had to be renegotiated between the publisher and the author/agent to include eBook rights (Ginsburg, 2001; Phillips, 2020; Schroff, 2024; Thompson, 2021). Audiobooks rights became similarly contested, as publishers now expect to include audio rights in new contracts, but authors/agents are wary of signing away these rights without knowing if an audiobook will be produced (Spjeldnæs, 2022). This issue is exacerbated by the fact that audiobook production requires significant resources, and thus they may be too costly for smaller publishers (Spjeldnæs, 2022).

2022–2026: GenAI

AI has been adopted by publishers to assist with several non-creative tasks. For example, market forecasting and analytics, or screening and selecting manuscripts for publication (Ryzkho et al., 2024). GenAI can also be used by publishers to entirely automate some tasks such as keyword extraction and text-to-voice for eBooks (Cabezas-Clavijo et al., 2024). Some authors have reported using GenAI to enhance or assist their writing process by using LLMs for ideation, brainstorming, and summarising (Gero et al., 2025). It is also possible however to use GenAI to entirely automate the task of writing; several fiction and non-fiction books have

been listed on Amazon as authored by ChatGPT (Cabezas-Clavijo et al., 2024). Thus, GenAI can automate tasks and change the workflows of multiple stakeholders in the publishing industry.

Methodology

This paper aims to understand the potential impacts of GenAI on the publishing industry by conducting a literature review on peer-reviewed literature that was published between 2022 and 2025. This review identified recurring themes regarding the impacts of GenAI and how it is perceived by stakeholders, including authors, literary agents, and publishing professionals. Existing literature on GenAI in the trade publishing industry remains limited, particularly in terms of publishing business processes (Ryzkho et al., 2024) and AI authorship (Cabezas-Clavijo et al., 2024). Therefore, the scope of this literature review was expanded to include research that discusses GenAI in the broader creative industries.

A literature search was carried out on Google Scholar and Scopus using search terms such as 'artificial intelligence AND book publishing', 'artificial intelligence AND trade publishing', 'artificial intelligence AND publishing industry', 'artificial intelligence AND creative industries', and 'artificial intelligence AND authors'. In total, 39 papers were initially reviewed, and a set of exclusion criteria was set to ensure relevance. Papers were excluded if they were not available in their entirety in English, if their primary focus was on industries outside the scope of this study rather than on publishing or broader creative industries, or if they focused exclusively on academic or scholarly (vs trade) publishing.

Scholarly publishing was excluded due to its operational and structural differences from trade publishing. Scholarly publishing typically does not involve key stakeholders such as literary agents (Phillips, 2020), and the publication process often includes peer review, institutional affiliations, and funding models. Thus, the role and perception of GenAI across both industries are not directly comparable.

Following the application of this exclusion criteria, a final total of 14 papers were analysed that discussed the impacts or perceptions of artificial intelligence in the publishing industry, the creative industries, and among writing professionals. A summary of the papers analysed can be found in Table 1.

To understand the impacts and perceptions of GenAI among stakeholders in the publishing industry this literature review was framed through the lens of People Process Technology (PPT). Research on GenAI in the publishing industry is still emerging, thus the PPT framework was used as a flexible and exploratory lens for understanding how digital tools interact with organisational processes and human stakeholders (Chang & Chen, 2025). An open coding approach was used first to identify key themes inductively; thus, themes were

Table 1. Overview of selected studies on GenAI in the creative and publishing industries.

Author	Year	Study Demographic	Type	Methodology	Primary Theoretical Framework
Bender	2025	Global (creative/media industries)	Conceptual	Case study	Meaningful Work
Cabezas-Clavijo et al.	2024	Global (Amazon)	Empirical (Quantitative)	Quantitative descriptive analysis	
Chu et al.	2025	China (show productive company)	Empirical (Qualitative)	Inductive case study	Routine Dynamics
Dalsgaard	2025	Global (creative industries)	Conceptual		
Dhavan et al.	2025	Global	Conceptual	Policy analysis	
Gero et al.	2025	North America	Empirical (Qualitative)	Grounded Theory	
Haidemariam & Gran	2025	Global	Conceptual & empirical	Case study	
Kalyvaki et al.	2025	Global	Conceptual	Policy analysis	
Kretschemer et al.	2025	UK	Conceptual & empirical	Policy analysis	
Ryzkho et al.	2024	Ukraine	Conceptual & empirical	Expert interviews & qualitative content analysis	Technological determinism
Schinello et al.	2025	Lithuania	Conceptual & empirical	Expert interviews	
Whitaker	2024	USA	Conceptual	Prospective theorising & case study	Economic science fiction
Yu & Kh	2025	Russia	Conceptual	Analysis of copyright law & authorship requirements	Computational creativity
Yuri et al.	2025	Indonesia	Empirical (qualitative)	Survey, PLS-SEM analysis	UTUAT

Table 2. Summary of literature review results.

	People				Process				Technology	
Paper	Agent	Author	Publisher	Other Creatives	Region-specific	Copyright	Ethical	Restructuring Workflows	Bias	Training Data
Bender (2025)		Y		Y		Y	Y	Y		Y
Cabezas-Clavijo et al. (2024)		Y	Y			Y	Y			
Chu et al. (2025)				Y	Y			Y		
Dalsgaard (2025)				Y			Y	Y	Y	Y
Dhavan et al. (2025)		Y				Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Gero et al. (2025)		Y	Y	Y		Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Haidemariam and Gran (2025)		Y	Y			Y	Y		Y	Y
Kalyvaki et al. (2025)		Y				Y	Y			
Kretschmer et al. (2025)					Y	Y				
Ryzkho et al. (2024)			Y		Y	Y	Y		Y	
Schinello (2025)				Y	Y	Y	Y	Y		Y
Whitaker (2024)		Y				Y				
Yu and Kh (2025)				Y		Y				
Yuri et al. (2025)				Y	Y					

not constrained by the dimensions of PPT. The PPT framework was then used to categorise and structure the emergent themes, allowing for comparison across dimensions. A summary of the key themes identified across the PPT dimensions can be found in Table 2.

The 'People' dimension covers stakeholder perceptions and industry norms, the 'Process' dimension covers changes to industry workflows and labour disruption, and the 'Technology' dimension addresses the capabilities and limitations of GenAI, and the ethical concerns surrounding AI training data.

Literature review results

Table 2 summarises the key themes identified across the literature in this review, structured according to the People, Process, and Technology (PPT) framework.

People

This section examines GenAI through the "People" dimension of the PPT framework and focuses on how key stakeholders such as authors, publishing houses, and other creative professionals perceive and respond to it. As shown in Table 2, 12 of the 14 studies cover authors and other creative professionals, with comparatively little research on publishers and no studies to date focused on literary agents. This section addresses the concepts of creativity, authorship, and the social norms surrounding the use of GenAI in the creative industries.

Creative writers generally have negative attitudes towards GenAI models (Gero et al., 2025) and may resist automated tools because they value the creative process (Dalsgaard, 2025). Many aspects of creativity were considered exclusive to humans, such as authorial intent (Gero et al., 2025), emotional depth (Cabezas-Clavijo et al., 2024; Gero et al., 2025; Yuri et al., 2025), the author's style or voice (Gero et al., 2025; Schinello, 2025) and cultural relevance (Dhavan et al., 2025). Some writers even object to the use of GenAI for problem-solving and '*mundane busywork*' and show a decreased sense of ownership over work that includes AI-generated text (Gero et al., 2025). However, it is also possible some creators that use GenAI may not be transparent about it, due to resistance from peers creating a 'stigma' or 'taboo' regarding the use of GenAI in the creative process (Schinello, 2025).

Creators that need to compete with GenAI may find themselves under pressure to create higher volumes of content in a short window of time. Thus, some creative professionals may be swayed towards adopting GenAI themselves (Dalsgaard, 2025). Over-reliance on GenAI in the creative industries could limit the creativity and uniqueness in art (Cabezas-Clavijo et al., 2024). As a result, stylistic choices and creative interpretation could be diminished in favour of mass-market appeal (Dhavan et al., 2025).

Publishing houses seem to have a more moderate opinion of GenAI than authors. It is possible that publishers will not be bothered by copyright and ethical issues if AI tools can offer them enough benefits (Ryzkho et al., 2024). This is supported by the fact that the CEO of Penguin Random House stated that AI could be '*an opportunity for the creative industries*', and that HarperCollins already uses AI tools for predictive analytics (Ryzkho et al., 2024) and has facilitated a licensing deal between some of their authors and Microsoft (Kretschmer et al., 2025).

Process

The 'Process' dimension examines how GenAI is reshaping publishing and creative workflows and industry practices. This includes the fears that some creative roles could be replaced by GenAI, as well as changes to the existing workflows of creative and non-creative professionals. Table 2 highlights that issues relating to changing workflows, and the legal and ethical issues related to GenAI are reoccurring themes across multiple studies. This section focuses on how work within creative industries may adapt in response to or because of GenAI, rather than on industry attitudes or technical capabilities.

The average income of authors has been decreasing over time, and presently most authors cannot sustain even minimum wage on writing alone (Kretschmer et al., 2025). These issues could be exacerbated by GenAI, since models that train on authors' work offer them neither compensation nor attribution (Dalsgaard, 2025). Individuals across various creative professions appear concerned that GenAI could be used to replace or compete with them (Bender, 2025; Dhavan et al., 2025; Gero et al., 2025; Haidemariam & Gran, 2025; Kalyvaki et al., 2025). Several authors do not share these fears, either because they do not believe that GenAI has advanced enough to compete with long-form human writing (Gero et al., 2025) or because the author's unique style of writing and humanity remain important to readers (Gero et al., 2025; Schinello, 2025). GenAI could also be used to automate simple tasks in publishing houses, however doing so risks replacing entry-level roles within creative fields that are important for professional development (Bender, 2025).

The introduction of GenAI may not only displace jobs but may also restructure existing workflows and introduce new roles into the creative industries. Some creatives may find that their workflows move from writing and creating to prompting and editing AI-generated content (Dalsgaard, 2025). More broadly, prompting may become a central skill for creative professionals (Chu et al., 2025; Dalsgaard, 2025). New roles may also become important within publishing houses or other companies within the creative sector, such as legal professionals with AI-expertise (Schinello, 2025) and opportunities in prompt engineering, AI ethics, and algorithm design (Dhavan et al., 2025). New opportunities are also available for self-publishing authors; like the introduction of eBooks, GenAI may make self-publishing more accessible since authors can use it to create book covers and marketing materials (Gero et al., 2025).

While GenAI provides numerous potential benefits to publishing houses, including improving efficiency, decision-making support, and enhancing the reader experience (Cabezas-Clavijo et al., 2024; Schinello, 2025), it also presents some unique challenges. Namely, the legal implications of copyright protection, and ethical concerns relating to transparency and bias (Ryzkho et al., 2024). GenAI outputs often paraphrase content from their training data instead of outputting entirely new text (Haidemariam & Gran, 2025), which risks infringing on the copyright of existing authors (Cabezas-Clavijo et al., 2024; Kalyvaki et al., 2025; Ryzkho et al., 2024). In many countries it is either difficult or impossible for AI-generated work itself to be eligible for copyright protection (Dhavan et al., 2025; Kalyvaki et al., 2025; Kretschmer et al., 2025; Schinello, 2025). Thus, it would be difficult for publishers to use GenAI to create any type of final product. In many cases, authors who have used GenAI in their writing are also not transparent about doing so (Cabezas-Clavijo et al., 2024), creating further issues for publishers. Additionally, GenAI may put pressure on editors who already receive a large volume of manuscript submissions. If the volume of submissions they receive becomes bloated as a result of writers using GenAI, new authors may struggle to be noticed by an editor (Gero et al., 2025).

Technology

The 'Technology' dimension focuses on the capabilities and limitations of GenAI within the publishing industry. As shown in Table 2, issues related to bias, transparency, copyright protection, and AI training data

are some of the technical concerns addressed most often in literature. This section examines how these issues shape acceptable use of GenAI for both publishers and creatives.

GenAI limitations include the capacity to output text that contains bias, plagiarism, or misinformation (Dhavan et al., 2025). GenAI outputs could show bias based on their training data (Haidemariam & Gran, 2025; Ryzkho et al., 2024) and often overrepresent Western and Eurocentric cultural norms (Dalsgaard, 2025). In cases where bias, plagiarism or misinformation do occur, it is also difficult to discern how this output was reached by the AI model and thus difficult to assign accountability when this results in ethical issues (Dhavan et al., 2025). As a result, most of the applications of GenAI within the traditional publishing industry thus far are in areas such as data analytics (Ryzkho et al., 2024), generating initial ideas/brainstorming (Chu et al., 2025; Gero et al., 2025) and automating non-creative business processes such as text analysis and keyword extraction (Cabezas-Clavijo et al., 2024). Some self-published authors are using GenAI tools for creation, including writing books (Cabezas-Clavijo et al., 2024) and creating images (Gero et al., 2025). Most books that have used GenAI in this way however are not represented by agents or traditional publishing houses, and are instead self-published, often via platforms like KDP (Cabezas-Clavijo et al., 2024).

The legal and ethical issues surrounding the acquisition and use of creative works as training data was a topic discussed in 6 of the papers analysed. Book-length writing is among the most valuable training data for GenAI models (Gero et al., 2025). However, in many cases this data may be used without consent (Bender, 2025), and without authors receiving compensation or attribution (Gero et al., 2025). Additionally, some training data come from online datasets like Book3, which contains a number of pirated works (Haidemariam & Gran, 2025). This has led to several lawsuits against AI companies from authors and other rights holders (Gero et al., 2025; Whitaker, 2024).

Methodological landscape of existing GenAI research

4 of the 8 empirical papers in this review relied on qualitative interviews or surveys, which provides valuable insight into how authors and other creatives currently perceive and understand GenAI. However, it is possible that the self-reported attitudes of creatives may differ from actual use because of stigma in the creative industries towards GenAI. Similarly, only one study engaged in observation and shadowing of the use of GenAI in actual publishing workflows, which limits the abilities of research to understand how GenAI impacts specific workflows such as editing and evaluating submissions.

Current literature shows the attitudes towards GenAI in creative industries as a new technology, and findings may reflect its novelty. The publishing industry has been historically resistant to digital transformation, as seen by publishing houses' reluctance towards adopting BookScan (Andrews & Napoli, 2006) and artists' overall resistance towards automated tools (Dalsgaard, 2025). Like GenAI, the popularisation of eBooks also created legal and copyright issues for publishers, and literature from that time shows that some publishing professionals were similarly wary of the potential impacts eBooks could have on the industry (Donoughue, 2010; Thompson, 2012). It is possible that, like eBooks, the attitudes towards GenAI could change also over time as the technology becomes more normalised.

Conceptual landscape of existing GenAI research

From a conceptual perspective, many studies frame GenAI as an inevitable and possibly transformative force within the creative industries (Ryzkho et al., 2024). This framing reflects elements of technological determinism, as it may underrepresent the importance of resistance and selective adoption by key stakeholders such as publishing houses and literary agents. Even if GenAI is adopted by these stakeholders to automate in-house or non-creative tasks, literary agents and acquisition editors remain key gatekeepers in deciding the acceptability of GenAI for creative writing in mainstream trade publishing. While some studies examine GenAI through a socio-technical lens (Dalsgaard, 2025) such frameworks have not been applied to gatekeeping roles like agents and editors, which limits theoretical insight into how AI adoption is influenced by people and processes.

Moreover, much of the existing literature examines stakeholders in isolation and examines creatives, authors and publishing houses as separate entities. As such, there are only 2 papers that examine both authors and publishers. This may limit understanding of how GenAI adoption is shaped and negotiated during stakeholder

interaction, and how GenAI could shape the relationships between these stakeholders. In trade publishing, policies, contractual norms, and standards are negotiated across authors, literary agents, and publishers. Thus, a multi-stakeholder perspective is necessary to fully understand how GenAI usage is shaped by publishing institutions.

Discussion

Existing research on GenAI in the trade publishing industry remains limited, which reflects both the recency of the technology and the early stage of its integration in publishing workflows and institutions. Thus, it is particularly valuable to identify research priorities at this stage in which social and institutional norms, policies, and workflows are still being shaped.

4 of the studies in this review analyze publishing alongside other industries that are focused on visual art, video games, or design. This approach highlights the implications of GenAI across sectors of the creative industries but may risk overgeneralising the stakeholders, organisational structures, and processes involved in individual sectors. Additionally, 3 of the papers focused on writers include a broad range of professionals, including authors, screen writers and journalists. However, the applications and impacts of GenAI may vary by role. For example, GenAI can be effective at creating initial drafts of images during co-creation and collaborative workflows (Chu et al., 2025), but many authors may write their books independently. Thus, empirical findings may be limited in their applications to publishing-specific workflows. 6 of the papers in this review emphasised the issues of copyright and AI ethics, with a particular emphasis on the ethical issues surrounding AI training data. However, there remains little empirical insight into how these issues affect the workflows of publishers in practice.

The empirical data collected in 6 of the 8 empirical papers is region-specific, with participants based in Ukraine, Indonesia, Lithuania, China, and North America. Publishing workflows and stakeholders vary by region, such as literary agents who are primarily dominant in Anglo-American markets and fulfil different roles outside of the US and UK (Berglund, 2014). This makes it difficult to apply region-specific findings to the global publishing industry.

Literary agents are a key intermediary in the publishing industry and agent representation is integral to many authors that wish to be published by a large trade publishing house in the US and UK (Thompson, 2012). Existing literature focuses primarily on creatives and on publishers, but intermediaries such as literary agents are comparatively underexplored in this research and were not examined in any of the papers in this review. This omission makes it more difficult to understand how GenAI could impact how manuscripts are screened, filtered and evaluated, and how manuscripts written with assistance of GenAI are perceived.

Overall, existing literature establishes GenAI as a significant development within the creative industries, but how publishing institutions shape its use remain underexamined. Future examination of gatekeeping roles such as literary agents and acquisition editors, workflow practices, and stakeholder interaction within the industry may provide a more detailed understanding of how GenAI is adopted and perceived in publishing. The key empirical, methodological, and conceptual gaps, alongside the implications for future research have been summarised in Table 3.

Table 3. Summary of existing literature and implications for future research on GenAI in the publishing industry.

	People	Process	Technology
Empirical (SOTA)	Focus on authors and publishing houses.	Substantial research on creatives opinions and perceptions.	GenAI's capabilities and limitations, including bias, plagiarism, and copyright concerns.
Empirical (Implications)	Perspectives of literary agents and acquisition editors to understand their roles in manuscript selection and GenAI adoption.	How creatives' perceptions of GenAI shape actual use.	How publishers and authors navigate these constraints and ethical issues in practice.
Method	Most studies rely on qualitative interviews and self-reported attitudes, providing insight into the perceptions, norms and ethical concerns among stakeholders. **Implications** Observational and behavioural methods are needed to understand actual GenAI use and how it impacts stakeholder workflows.		
Conceptual	Existing literature often frames GenAI as an inevitable, transformative force. Socio-technical perspectives exist but are rarely applied to gatekeeping roles or to interactions between multiple stakeholders. **Implications** Research should explore how institutional structures, stakeholder interactions, and industry norms shape and are shaped by GenAI adoption.		

Future research agenda & conclusion

Based on the empirical, methodological and conceptual limitations summarised above, several priorities have been identified for future research on GenAI in the publishing industry. Firstly, further research should be conducted on gatekeeping intermediaries particularly literary agents and acquisition editors. These stakeholders perform a key role in evaluating and selecting the manuscripts for large publishing houses, thus are an extremely important part of decision-making within the trade publishing industry, but their perspectives remain underexplored in existing literature. Semi-structured expert interviews were used to collect empirical data for 4 of the papers in this review, but similar qualitative data could be collected on the attitudes of literary agents and editors towards GenAI, and whether they would represent manuscripts in which GenAI was used. Industry document analysis could also be performed on agency and publisher submission guidelines, policies, and AI statements to quantify the current rate of acceptance for GenAI in manuscripts.

Secondly, further research focused specifically on the trade publishing industry is warranted, as opposed to the broader creative industries each of which have their own unique stakeholders, processes and norms. Methodological approaches for this research should also expand to include observational and behavioural studies, as opposed to the self-reported attitudes that appear in qualitative interviews. These approaches would allow researchers to understand how the attitudes towards GenAI in the publishing industry translate into how it is used in practice.

Finally, multi-stakeholder analysis specific to the publishing industry could provide valuable insights that complement existing research that primarily examines stakeholders individually. This would provide a more accurate understanding of how the GenAI policies and norms set by publishers and agents affect authors' use of GenAI, and how GenAI affects the relationships and interactions between stakeholders. Social Network Analysis (Wasserman & Faust, 1994) could be performed to identify which stakeholders have most power to shape cultural norms related to GenAI. Additionally, parallels to the popularisation of eBooks and initial resistance towards BookScan show that the resistance towards GenAI may also subside as the technology becomes more normalised, but adoption is likely to be selective and shaped by industry norms. Thus, longitudinal studies could capture the shifting attitudes towards GenAI across the publishing industry over time.

Current literature shows that while GenAI has the potential to be a significant development in the publishing industry, adoption by stakeholders is uneven due to both legal and ethical concerns. Authors express the strongest opposition to GenAI, while publishers appear to take a more moderate approach, and have adopted GenAI to aid in decision-making and to automate some non-creative tasks. Key intermediaries like literary agents and acquisition editors within publishing houses are currently underexplored in existing literature, despite their roles as important gatekeepers to traditional trade publishing. The publishing industry has been historically resistant to digital transformation, but attitudes towards GenAI may change over time as it becomes more normalised. Thus, GenAI in the publishing industry is best understood as sociotechnical and is likely to both impact and be impacted by human actors and their traditional workflows and norms.

Author contributions

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Data availability statement

Data sharing is not applicable to this article as no new data were created or analysed in this study.

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