

Automation, Artificial Intelligence, and digital infrastructure: A critical analysis of the Dead Internet Theory

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ABSTRACT

This article looks at the relationship between the automation of digital content production, algorithmic mediation, and the energy consumption of Internet infrastructure, aiming to understand how much these factors support or challenge the arguments tied to Dead Internet Theory. It's a qualitative study with an exploratory and descriptive approach, carried out through a literature review of studies on Artificial Intelligence, bots, algorithms, content production automation, computational infrastructure, Data Centers, and the energy use of digital technologies. The analysis shows that the growing use of AI, bots, recommendation systems, and other algorithmic mechanisms is changing the way digital content is produced, shared, and consumed, while also increasing the demand for processing power, storage, and energy. The material dimension of digital transformation is also discussed, considering the environmental, economic, and geopolitical impacts associated with the expansion of computing infrastructure. The results indicate that, although there isn't enough evidence to say that most interactions on the Internet are produced exclusively by automated systems, the growth of synthetic content production and algorithmic mediation is a real phenomenon. It is concluded that the Dead Internet Theory has greater analytical potential when understood not as a literal description of reality, but as a critical metaphor for the changes brought about by automation, algorithmic mediation, and the expansion of digital infrastructure.

RESUMO

Este artigo analisa a relação entre a automação da produção de conteúdo digital, a mediação algorítmica e o consumo energético da infraestrutura da Internet, buscando compreender em que medida esses fatores sustentam ou problematizam os argumentos associados à Teoria da Internet Morta. Trata-se de uma pesquisa qualitativa, de natureza exploratória e descritiva, desenvolvida por meio de revisão bibliográfica de estudos sobre Inteligência Artificial, *bots*, algoritmos, automação da produção de conteúdo, infraestrutura computacional, Data Centers e consumo energético das tecnologias digitais. A análise evidencia que a crescente utilização de Inteligência Artificial, *bots*, sistemas de recomendação e outros mecanismos algorítmicos vem transformando a produção, a circulação e o consumo de conteúdos digitais, ampliando simultaneamente a demanda por capacidade de processamento, armazenamento e energia. Discute-se, ainda, a dimensão material da transformação digital, considerando os impactos ambientais, econômicos e geopolíticos associados à expansão da infraestrutura computacional. Os resultados indicam que, embora não existam evidências suficientes para afirmar que a maior parte das interações na Internet seja produzida exclusivamente por sistemas automatizados, a expansão da produção sintética de conteúdos e da mediação algorítmica constitui um fenômeno concreto. Conclui-se que a Teoria da Internet Morta apresenta maior potencial analítico quando compreendida não como uma descrição literal da realidade, mas como uma metáfora crítica das transformações decorrentes da automação, da mediação algorítmica e da expansão da infraestrutura digital.

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Introduction

In recent decades, the Internet has stopped being just a means of communication and has become central to many different aspects of social life. Communication, work, shopping, entertainment, and the exchange of information have come to rely, to varying degrees, on digital environments. However, this process hasn't just been about expanding access or creating new ways to interact. The development of Artificial Intelligence (AI), algorithmic systems, and various automation tools is changing the very conditions under which content is produced, shared, and consumed by users (Silva, 2023; Souza; Santos, 2025). Whereas in the past, human involvement was more obvious in producing the information available online, nowadays, an increasing portion of these activities is carried out, organized, or mediated by computer systems.

At the same time, the operation of this environment has come to depend on an increasingly extensive computational infrastructure (Furtado; Cunha, 2024). The expansion of Data Centers, the need to process and store growing volumes of data, and the rising demand for electricity are aspects that cannot be separated from the development of digital technologies. Artificial Intelligence applications, recommendation engines, automated interaction systems, and platforms that handle large amounts of information daily require material resources to keep running. In this way, digital transformation is not limited to the seemingly immaterial space of screens and networks: it is supported by large physical installations and produces effects that reach economic, environmental, and geopolitical dimensions (Furtado; Cunha, 2024).

It is in this environment of changes that the so-called Dead Internet Theory - DIT, gained visibility. Its origin is usually linked to discussions held on Internet forums themselves, although the literature still shows disagreements about when and under what circumstances the hypothesis arose (Kleina, 2024; Bordin, 2025; Melo, 2025; Sarmiento, 2025). In its most well-known formulation, the theory suggests that a significant portion of the activity found on the web is no longer the direct result of human action, but rather the work of bots, automated systems, and Artificial Intelligence. The hypothesis, therefore, draws attention to a possible reduction of human centrality in digital interactions and to the growing presence of artificially produced content. Although it has become strongly associated with conspiracy narratives (Bordin, 2025; Kleina, 2024; Melo, 2025), DIT can also be taken as a starting point to discuss changes that are actually observable in the digital environment. The increase in synthetic content production, the mediation done by algorithms, and the economic logic based on attention capture are real phenomena that help explain why this hypothesis has gained so much traction. In this sense, Berghel (2026), when discussing data related to automated traffic and disinformation networks, considers that some of the elements mobilized around DIT deserve to be examined critically, even if that does not mean fully accepting its most radical formulations.

So, the main issue isn't really about immediately deciding whether the Internet is "dead" or not. It's more useful to look at what changes have led to this interpretation gaining traction. The expansion of generative Artificial Intelligence, the increasing presence of bots, how recommendation systems work, and the growth of computing infrastructure all change the user experience and the way information circulates. The so-called "Dead Internet" is therefore interesting less as a factual claim that can simply be confirmed or rejected and more as a lens to question the paths the digital environment has taken.

This transformation also requires considering what usually stays hidden when talking about automation. Producing and distributing content at scale depends on computational processing, storage, and energy, and the development of increasingly complex Artificial Intelligence models amplifies these demands. The expansion of Data Centers and debates about the environmental, economic, and geopolitical impacts of this infrastructure show that digitalization has a material dimension that can't be ignored. So, the discussion about the current Internet involves both what happens on the platforms and the physical conditions that make these platforms work.

Given this scenario, this article aims to analyze the relationship between the automation of digital content production and the energy consumption of Internet infrastructure, trying to understand to what extent these processes help support or challenge the arguments associated with the Dead Internet Theory. The analysis starts from the understanding that the DIT should not necessarily be taken as a literal explanation of how the Internet currently works. Its analytical interest also lies in the possibility of using it to think about structural changes related to the expansion of Artificial Intelligence, the automation of content production, and the computational infrastructure that supports the digital environment.

From this perspective, the article proposes bringing together three dimensions that often appear separately in discussions on the topic: Automated content production, mediation carried out by algorithmic systems, and the material and energy conditions that support the Internet. Connecting these dimensions allows us to discuss the Dead Internet Theory not as a definitive statement about the reality of the network, but as a critical metaphor for understanding transformations that are already underway.

Methodological procedures

The research has a qualitative approach, with an exploratory and descriptive nature, and was developed based on a literature review. This choice is related to the nature of the subject itself, which involves socio-technical processes located in an area where different fields meet, especially Computer Science, Communication, Artificial Intelligence, and studies on digital platforms.

The survey considered scientific articles, dissertations, technical reports, and institutional documents, giving priority to publications from the last decade. Works related to Artificial Intelligence, algorithms, content production automation, computational infrastructure, Data Centers, and energy consumption associated with digital technologies were searched for. To find this material, databases like Google Scholar and the Capes Journal Portal were used, with descriptors in Portuguese and English, including “Dead Internet Theory”, “*Teoria da Internet Morta*”, “*Inteligência Artificial*”, “bots”, “*algoritmos*”, “*infraestrutura digital*” and “Data Centers”.

Since the Dead Internet Theory is a recent topic and still has limited presence in scientific research, especially in Brazil, the *corpus* also included materials published by tech-focused websites, technical reports, and popular science texts. Including these sources is justified because a significant part of the debate about DIT happens in these spaces and more immediately reflects the changes brought by the rise of Artificial Intelligence and automation. These materials were not considered on their own as scientific proof of the claims being analyzed. They were used as part of the documental material and cross-checked with the available academic literature, helping to understand a phenomenon whose conceptual development is still ongoing.

The interpretation of the material aimed to put these different dimensions in relation. So, the goal wasn't just to gather information about the growth of digital technologies, but to understand how the expansion of Artificial Intelligence, automated content production, and computational infrastructure relates to the emergence and circulation of Dead Internet Theory. It also sought to identify the limits of this interpretation in light of the currently available evidence.

Analysis and discussion of the results

Content production automation, Artificial Intelligence, and the reconfiguration of the Internet

The Internet today occupies a central position in the processes of production and circulation of information. However, the network that was consolidated in the 1990s and 2000s has different characteristics from those found in the current digital environment. In that period, the direct participation of users and the human production of content had greater visibility and the forms of interaction were relatively decentralized. With the development of platforms, this scenario incorporated mechanisms of automation, personalization, and algorithmic selection, which began to interfere more intensely in what is produced, made available, and seen by users (Silva, 2023; Braga; Montenegro, 2023).

The change can also be seen in the evolution of the Web itself. Silva (2023) shows that the environment, initially focused on providing information, gradually started incorporating interactive features and, later on, mechanisms capable of adapting content to users' behaviors. In this process, algorithms began to take on a role that goes beyond just performing technical tasks. They help organize the flow of information and influence which content is more or less likely to reach certain users, consequently affecting their experiences and digital consumption patterns.

In this article, content production automation is understood in a broad sense. It involves computational processes that use algorithms, Artificial Intelligence, and other mechanisms capable of producing, selecting, organizing, recommending, or distributing content with little direct human intervention. So, it's not just about automatically generated texts, images, or videos. This process also includes systems that affect content circulation, its visibility, and the reach it achieves within platforms.

The development of generative Artificial Intelligence has significantly expanded this process. Texts, images, videos, and other materials can be produced in large quantities and in much shorter periods than what was required for purely human production. Companies, platforms, and users have started to incorporate these tools into their activities, making tasks that were previously done by people partially executed by automated systems. This change helps to place the emergence and impact of the Dead Internet Theory. Kleina (2024) and Bordin (2025) note that, despite uncertainties about its origin, the hypothesis is linked to the idea that a significant portion of activity on the Internet would be driven by bots, automated systems, and Artificial Intelligence. In this view, the reduction of human participation would be accompanied by an expansion of artificial content production and changes in the user experience.

Taking this issue just as a dispute between what is produced by people and what is produced by machines, however, overlooks important elements. Souza and Santos (2025) place the growth of automation within broader transformations related to platformization, the attention economy, and the reorganization of economic relations in the digital environment. This helps to understand that automation doesn't have to be seen as the result of an explicit plan to replace human activity. It can also be understood as part of an operating model in which platforms aim to expand their ability to organize, distribute, and monetize information and attention flows.

On digital platforms, the battle for users' attention holds an important place. Increasing interactions, keeping people connected, and the pursuit of greater engagement drive the use of mechanisms that can operate on a large scale and continuously. In this context, bots, recommendation systems, and Artificial Intelligence tools have started to perform functions that affect both content creation and circulation. Braga and Montenegro (2023) show how bots can be strategically used to circulate information and generate engagement. Berghel (2026),

in turn, points out the significant presence of bot-produced content on the Internet. These elements, by themselves, don't confirm the more radical formulation of the DIT, but they help us understand the conditions that made its hypothesis more plausible in the eyes of some users.

The consequences of this change aren't limited to the technical workings of platforms. Personalized recommendations, the creation of more closed-off information environments, and the growing difficulty of distinguishing certain content made by people from that generated by AI systems all affect how users experience digital interactions. The problem shows up in different social spaces. Artistic production, communication, and scientific research, among other fields, are already dealing with content created or modified by automated tools (Araújo; Holanda; Assumpção, 2025; Marques, 2025; Rossetti; Garcia, 2023). So, automation has stopped being just an experimental possibility and has become part of everyday internet life.

Some recent events help to visualize this shift. The episode involving Boris Eldagsen, who refused the award he received at the Sony World Photography Awards after stating that the winning image had been produced with Artificial Intelligence (Rossetti; Garcia, 2023; Araújo; Holanda; Assumpção, 2025), made the growing difficulty of establishing a clear separation between human creation and automated production visible. Something similar can be observed in the academic field, where generative tools have started to be used in the production of texts and other materials, including situations that led to article retractions because they contained AI-generated content (Marques, 2025). The phenomenon, therefore, goes beyond strictly technological issues and reaches ethical, professional, and educational questions.

The discussion proposed by Sommerer (2025) adds another dimension to the problem by linking the Dead Internet Theory to Baudrillard's reflections on simulation and artificial intelligence. From this perspective, the issue isn't just about the existence of machine-generated content, but involves a shift in the relationship between the signs circulating in the digital environment and the social experiences that gave rise to them. This reading helps to think about the possibility of an Internet where the multiplication of artificial content not only increases the amount of information available but also changes the very perception of what it means to create and consume content online.

Even so, the growth of these technologies doesn't by itself allow us to conclude that the stronger assumptions of Dead Internet Theory are proven. There's evidence of increased use of bots and automated systems, but that's different from showing that most interactions on the Internet are produced exclusively by Artificial Intelligence. Some interpretations associated with DIT go beyond what the data actually supports, especially when they assign coordinated and deliberate actions to governments or big corporations without enough evidence to back up such claims.

Recognizing this limit, however, does not mean downplaying what is actually happening. The expansion of Artificial Intelligence, algorithmic mediation, and the synthetic production of content is an observable and documented process in the literature analyzed. These changes affect the ways information is produced, distributed, and consumed, and precisely for this reason, they help explain the attention gained by the Dead Internet Theory. The interest in the hypothesis, in this study, is less about its literal confirmation and more about its ability to raise questions about the transformation of digital experience.

Digital platforms and algorithmic mediation

The expansion of Artificial Intelligence and automated content production has changed the dynamics of the Internet, but these changes also need to be understood based on how the platforms themselves operate. It's not enough to just look at what technologies are available. It's necessary to consider how digital environments organize the content that reaches users. Search systems, recommendation engines, and different forms of algorithmic sorting are part of this organization and influence the visibility of information and posts (Braga; Montenegro, 2023; Silva, 2023).

This process follows the changes happening on the web and the growing centrality of platforms. Silva (2023) notes the shift from an environment initially focused on providing information to increasingly complex forms of interaction. Along the way, platforms have started to play a decisive role in organizing information flows. Braga and Montenegro (2023) draw attention specifically to this intermediary capacity, showing that the criteria used by platforms not only distribute content but can also influence users' behaviors, interests, and choices.

Much of this selection happens without the user having detailed knowledge of the criteria used. Research done, videos watched, posts shared, and other actions leave records that can be incorporated into platform systems. This data feeds personalization processes and allows recommendations to be continuously adjusted. So, what each user finds on the Internet is less and less the result of a uniform distribution of content and more and more a mix of commercial interests, browsing history, behavior patterns, and engagement indicators.

It's in this environment that content production automation takes on a whole new dimension. Artificial Intelligence tools have boosted the ability to create texts, images, videos, and other materials at high scale and speed. At the same time, bots can handle tasks like publishing, sharing, and interacting automatically with this content. The combination of automated creation and distribution increases the ability to circulate certain materials on platforms and makes it harder to identify the agents involved in this process, as Rossetti and Garcia (2023) and Araújo, Holanda, and Assumpção (2025) point out.

Walter (2025) draws attention to the emergence of so-called "AI influencers" and the changes this presence brings to the logic of social media. The relevant point, for the discussion

developed here, is that the presence of artificial agents and content shifts part of the social media experience to a logic where content production and consumption gain more importance compared to human interaction. This change helps to question the initial promise of social networks as spaces for bringing people together and allows us to see how algorithms have started to play a much bigger role in determining what is seen, consumed, and shared.

These changes help to understand the wider circulation of the Dead Internet Theory. There isn't enough evidence to say that most of the Internet is produced solely by automated systems, but the growing presence of synthetic content, bots, and recommendation algorithms makes the line between human participation and automated operation less clear. The sense that a significant part of what shows up on platforms might have been produced, curated, or boosted by machines creates ground for the "Dead Internet" hypothesis to gain traction in public discussion.

For this reason, the issue isn't just about figuring out whether a certain text, image, or video was made by a person or a machine. We also need to look at the path that this content takes after it's created and the mechanisms that determine its visibility. Automation is involved not just in creating the materials but also in recommendations, personalization, and organizing information flows. So, the user experience ends up being the result of a mix of content, algorithms, automated systems, and the platforms' own decisions.

The growing presence of these mechanisms also changes the criteria by which content gets highlighted. The visibility of a post doesn't just depend on its appeal or relevance to the person receiving it. Engagement metrics, recommendation systems, and automated distribution processes all play a role in this and can boost certain information over others. So, the circulation of content increasingly depends on a close relationship between users, platforms, and AI systems. This makes the digital environment more complex and makes it harder to explain information production as just a simple opposition between humans and machines.

This dynamic also has an important material consequence. The production, circulation, and storage of large volumes of content require proportionally greater computing power. The more data platforms process and the more operations automated systems perform, the greater the need for servers, storage, and processing tends to be. That's why discussions about automation and algorithmic mediation inevitably lead to the physical side of the Internet, especially the expansion of Data Centers that support much of these services.

Digital infrastructure, energy consumption, and the limits of Dead Internet Theory

Debates about Artificial Intelligence usually focus on what's most immediately visible to users: The possibilities of generative systems, task automation, and the changes brought by platforms. However, there's a less visible dimension that's essential to understanding this

process. Every activity carried out in a digital environment relies on a physical structure. Servers, storage equipment, transmission networks, and, above all, Data Centers are part of the infrastructure needed to handle the huge amount of information circulating today.

The expansion of Artificial Intelligence should, therefore, also be seen as the expansion of the infrastructure that makes it possible. The increased use of automated systems means a greater need for processing, storage, cooling, and a continuous energy supply. This material aspect often disappears from the everyday experience of the user, who only notices the quick response of an AI application or tool. Behind this apparent simplicity lies an extensive technological chain, made up of equipment and servers that need to stay available and process large amounts of data. The interaction that seems instant is, therefore, the result of a complex infrastructure and energy consumption that remains mostly invisible to those using these services.

Furtado and Cunha (2024) help bring this material dimension to the center of the discussion by linking the growth of Artificial Intelligence to the expansion of Data Centers and the energy needs of these facilities. The infrastructure needed to maintain digital services also involves other resources, including water used in cooling systems and materials used in the manufacture of equipment. In this way, the effects of digital transformation are not limited to the virtual space. They reach the environment and also involve economic and geopolitical issues that need to be considered when analyzing the expansion of AI.

The materiality of this infrastructure is also linked to economic and strategic disputes. The equipment used in Data Centers depends on production chains that involve minerals and components unevenly distributed around the world. Furtado and Cunha (2024) show that the expansion of this demand can reinforce technological dependence and deepen differences between territories that supply raw materials and those that concentrate companies, knowledge, and the capacity to develop digital technologies. Internet infrastructure, therefore, is also part of broader power relations and the uneven distribution of resources needed for the digital economy.

This perspective makes it possible to understand that the development of Artificial Intelligence doesn't just rely on creating more sophisticated models. It's necessary to have the material conditions to train, store, and run these systems on a large scale. Processing capacity has become a strategic resource for companies and countries competing for positions in the digital economy, and Data Centers have taken on a role that goes beyond just storing information. They form the physical foundation responsible for keeping platforms, information flows, and automated systems running. Considering this dimension helps to understand why the expansion of automation also depends on material processes that, although barely noticeable to the user, are crucial for the existence of the digital environment.

In this context, Brazil shows a relevant situation. Information from the Ministry of Development, Industry, Commerce and Services (Brasil, 2023), along with studies by Andrade

(2024) and Gouveia (2024), point to the prominent position the country has come to hold in the Latin American data center market. Among the factors associated with this expansion are the relative availability of renewable energy sources, geological features, and conditions considered favorable for new investments. The growth recorded between 2013 and 2023 shows that the expansion of digital infrastructure is also linked to economic and investment strategies that go beyond strictly technological aspects.

This movement, however, brings together opportunities and contradictions. The installation and expansion of Data Centers can boost investment, innovation, and specialized jobs, but it also increases energy and other natural resource use and presents new sustainability challenges. Artificial Intelligence therefore relies on an infrastructure whose expansion comes with material costs that don't disappear just because the services are accessed virtually. The digital economy shifts some of this materiality to facilities that usually remain out of the user's sight. This observation helps bring the debate about infrastructure closer to the Dead Internet Theory: As automated content production becomes more common, the systems that enable its creation and circulation remain largely invisible. The growth of computing power shows that the automation of digital interactions is not just a future possibility, but part of how the Internet works today.

That doesn't mean, though, that the growth of Data Centers is proof of the Dead Internet Theory. The expansion of computing capacity shows that the Internet relies on increasingly robust structures, but it doesn't lead to the conclusion that most of the interactions happening online are produced exclusively by Artificial Intelligence or automated systems. There is a connection between these phenomena, but it's not direct. That's why the analysis needs to avoid both denying the ongoing changes and jumping to deterministic conclusions that go beyond the evidence available.

This is where the Dead Internet Theory can become more interesting for analysis. Its value isn't necessarily in literally describing how the Internet works, but in provoking reflection on what happens when automation starts to take up more and more space in communication, information production, and social interactions. Seen this way, the hypothesis stops being just a statement about the "death" of the web and can be used as a critical metaphor to observe changes associated with Artificial Intelligence, algorithmic mediation, and the concentration of digital platforms.

The elements analyzed point in that direction. There isn't enough evidence to support the idea that human production has been predominantly replaced by automated systems, but there is a continuous expansion of automation, synthetic content, and the infrastructure needed to keep them running. These processes change the user experience and help explain why the Dead Internet Theory has gained traction in recent discussions. The main point, then, isn't to confirm the literal truth of the theory, but to understand what real changes make a hypothesis like this seem increasingly plausible.

Final Considerations

The analysis conducted makes it clear that the main contribution of Dead Internet Theory isn't about giving a literal explanation of how the Internet actually works today. Its value lies in raising questions about the changes happening with the rise of Artificial Intelligence, automated content production, and the infrastructure that supports the digital environment. So, the theory is stronger as a tool for questioning than as a factual description of the network.

The changes that have happened over the past few decades show that the transformation of the Internet can't be explained just by the emergence of new tools or by the increase in the number of people online. Artificial intelligence, algorithmic systems, and automation have started to affect the ways we produce, distribute, and consume information. At the same time, how these resources work depends on a complex computing infrastructure, whose expansion involves a growing demand for energy and other material resources.

The analysis results indicate that the presence of bots, recommendation systems, personalization mechanisms, and Artificial Intelligence tools is already part of the organization of digital platforms. At the same time, this expansion relies on a physical structure that includes, especially, Data Centers. The growth of these facilities shows that digital transformation has material, energy, and environmental costs that don't always come up when technological innovation is discussed only in terms of its applications and possibilities.

On the other hand, the elements gathered in the study don't allow us to say that the Internet has become predominantly automated. Synthetic content production and algorithmic mediation are on the rise, but that doesn't mean there's been a widespread replacement of human production by AI or bots. This distinction is key so that the Dead Internet Theory isn't treated as an empirical conclusion that the available data still can't support.

That's exactly why this work chose not to turn the analysis into an attempt to categorically confirm or deny the Dead Internet Theory. The idea was to treat it as a category capable of raising questions about the changes happening in the digital environment. From this perspective, the DIT works better as a critical metaphor for the transformations associated with the platformization of communication, the strengthening of algorithmic mediation, and the growing presence of artificially produced content than as a literal description of the Internet.

Including computing infrastructure and energy consumption broadens this discussion. Debates about the Dead Internet Theory tend to focus on aspects related to communication, technology, and forms of interaction, while the material conditions that make these processes possible get less attention. By linking the expansion of Artificial Intelligence to increased processing power, the growth of Data Centers, and energy demand, the study shows that

understanding digital transformation requires considering its technical, economic, environmental, and geopolitical aspects at the same time.

In this way, the main contribution of this article is to propose a reading of the Dead Internet Theory that connects three dimensions: the automated production of content, algorithmic mediation, and the material infrastructure responsible for supporting the digital environment. This approach allows us to move beyond a simplified interpretation based only on the opposition between an Internet created by humans and one created by machines. What we see is a more complex configuration, where people, algorithms, AI systems, platforms, and physical infrastructure all jointly participate in the production and circulation of the digital experience.

As a limitation, it is acknowledged that the study was developed based on a literature review and that the subject itself is still in the process of being consolidated. The speed at which Artificial Intelligence technologies are advancing and the still limited number of empirical studies specifically focused on Dead Internet Theory indicate the need for further research. These studies could more accurately measure the participation of automated systems in content production and examine their effects on information quality, social interaction, and the sustainability of computational infrastructure. In this regard, understanding DIT as a critical metaphor shifts the focus from trying to prove or disprove its literal formulation to analyzing the structural changes that have been redefining the Internet. It's in this shift that the main contribution of this study lies, which isn't meant to close the discussion but to contribute to a debate that is likely to become more important as automation increasingly changes how the network operates.

Conflict of interest statement

The authors state that they do not have any financial, commercial, personal, or academic interests that could have influenced the results or interpretation of this manuscript.

Artificial intelligence use declaration

Generative artificial intelligence tools were used solely for linguistic editing, reference standardization, and improvement of textual clarity. The tools were not employed to generate ideas, hypotheses, interpretations, analyses, results, or scientific conclusions. The authors confirm that the manuscript contains no fabricated, manipulated, or fully AI-generated content, and that all information has been manually verified. The authors assume full ethical and scientific responsibility for the final content.

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