EXECUTIVE BRIEFING & HIGHLIGHTS

Production & Distribution in the Age of AI

The essential read in five pages — the one shift, the six forces, the numbers, the voices and the moves. A companion to the full Industry Intelligence Report.

FORMAT	FORCES	VOICES	READ TIME
Executive Briefing	**Six**	**Four Leaders**	**~5 min**

PUBLISHED BY

BROADCAST MEDIA AFRICA

To access the full *"Production & Distribution in the Age of AI"* report — with the complete data, charts and notes — go to **resources.broadcastmediaafrica.com** or email **info@broadcastingandmedia.com**.

01 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

AI Is an Accelerant, Not an Author.

Four African production and distribution leaders agree: AI is already inside the daily workflow — but the value stays in the human craft, the IP and the trust it cannot originate.

A year ago the mood was defensive. Today it is method: leaders who "started the year scared" now run approved AI frameworks, and the question has moved from *whether* AI belongs in the business to *which parts* it may touch. Across a Nollywood distributor, a Kenyan streaming-tech firm, a pan-African children's studio and a Zimbabwean production house, AI is used every day — to model release dates, generate marketing assets, clean sound, dub languages, write code and cut cost — while the creative core is deliberately ring-fenced.

The strategic prize is threefold: use AI to **cut cost and scale reach**, convert **piracy into a legal market**, and ride the **rising value of African IP** — all without spending the authorship, authenticity and audience trust that differentiate the work.

The unresolved front is trust. Deepfakes are now convincing enough that genuine footage is dismissed as fake, labelling and copyright are outrunning the law, and no panellist has a settled strategy — a gap that will be tested as Nigeria heads into its election season.

The through-line: an industry handing mechanical work to machines so its people can spend more time on what machines cannot do.

THE ONE LINE

"AI won't replace people — but the people who use it well will definitely outperform the people who are not." **— Ladun Awobokun, Film One**

The headline numbers

$2.2m/day

lost to piracy in Kenya alone (~$803m/yr) — and a factor of population across every African market

~20

African countries reached by one kids' producer from a single hub — ~6–7 million children

$11bn

global microdrama revenue in 2025 — the cheap, AI-heavy format African producers are entering *[context]*

BOTTOM LINE

The operators who pull ahead will treat AI as **tooling**, piracy as a **market to convert**, IP as an **appreciating asset**, and human craft and trust as the **balance-sheet assets every other move must protect**.

02 AT A GLANCE

The Six Forces in Brief

Five pressures acting on the content business, and one asset they all put at stake.

FORCE ONE

The Human Core

Authorship, authenticity and audience trust are what AI cannot originate. Automate the mechanical layer; ring-fence the creative one.

Signal: character design, storyboarding, music and voicing stay human even where AI speeds the rest.

FORCE TWO

AI in the Workflow

Already embedded — release-date modelling, marketing derivatives, dubbing, sound repair, code — as a force multiplier for lean teams.

Signal: an 8-person firm runs 9 apps and posts across 11 platforms with AI.

FORCE THREE

Distribution & Piracy

The biggest threat is also the biggest untapped market: convert informal, offline channels into legal ones rather than only policing them.

Signal: $2.2m/day lost in Kenya; pirate shops being turned into legal outlets.

FORCE FOUR

The African IP Premium

AI raises the value of African IP by widening its reach and formats. Microdramas widen the mix without displacing long-form.

Signal: IP “100% worth more”; three years of cinema-attendance growth in Nigeria.

FORCE FIVE

The Monetisation Puzzle

Donor and ad models are fraying. Sustainability means consolidating fragmented platforms and using AI to cut cost.

Signal: one property serving ~20 markets from a single production hub.

FORCE SIX

Misinformation, Trust & the Law

Deepfakes, labelling and copyright outpace regulation. Until rules land, discipline is self-imposed.

Signal: 0 of 4 have a settled strategy; Nigeria’s election season is the test.

HOW TO READ THE MAP

The first five forces are pressures. The sixth — the human core — is the asset under pressure. Every AI, distribution and monetisation decision is judged by whether it protects or spends it.

03 HIGHLIGHTS

In Their Words, & What to Do

> *"We don't want AI to be creative on our behalf… I want to be able to make what I have in my head."*
>
> CHARLES MAWUNGWA · REAL NET MULTIMEDIA

> *"You can't solve for a problem that needs a helicopter by buying a boat."*
>
> SAMMY WANYOIKE · UBONGO

> *"It's now Africa's time to step into that spotlight — the challenge is how to maintain it."*
>
> MIKE STRANO · YAKWETU

> *"The technology ran ahead of the law… the law catches up later."*
>
> MIKE STRANO · YAKWETU

The playbook, in brief

B Broadcasters & Distributors

- **Adopt AI as a production & admin multiplier** — keep a named human accountable on air.
- **Treat offline audiences as a legal market;** partner into SD-card and shop-based channels.

P Producers & Creators

- **Ring-fence the creative core;** automate only the mechanical layer.
- **Start from the problem, not the tool,** and lock down IP, likeness & voice rights early.

F Funders & Platforms

- **Back consolidation over proliferation** — fund shared distribution rails.
- **Close the value-capture gap** and invest in structured, multi-month AI training.

R Regulators & Policymakers

- **Move on AI labelling** with enforceable consequences — ahead of election-season misinformation.
- **Clarify AI, copyright & likeness rules** and convene the industry before a crisis forces them.

THE REFRAME

Stop treating the pirate as only a thief and start treating the pirate's customer as an **underserved buyer**. The most valuable move in African distribution is a legal, offline-friendly channel that meets that buyer where they already are.

04 OUTLOOK

What to Watch Next

Intentions are cheap; conversion is the test. Five signals over the next twelve months will show whether the sector's stated direction becomes its real one.

FIVE SIGNALS TO WATCH

1 · Framework adoption. Whether more operators move from ad-hoc AI use to approved frameworks that define where AI may and may not go.

2 · Anti-piracy at scale. Whether white-label legal-distribution rails convert offline audiences across multiple markets.

3 · The microdrama entry. Whether African producers capture a real share of the format — paired with, not instead of, long-form.

4 · AI labelling law. Whether Nigeria's election season forces the first serious misinformation legislation.

5 · Consolidation vs fragmentation. Whether the sector consolidates platforms — or keeps splintering and bargaining weakly.

THE BOTTOM LINE

African content is not managing decline; it is compounding an advantage. The businesses that emerge will be faster, cheaper to run and wider in reach — but their franchise stays what it has always been: **local stories, human craft, and audience trust**. The operators who thrive will spend every efficiency AI offers to protect those three.

BROADCAST MEDIA AFRICA

To access the full *"Production & Distribution in the Age of AI"* report — with the complete data, charts and notes — go to **resources.broadcastmediaafrica.com** or email **info@broadcastingandmedia.com**.