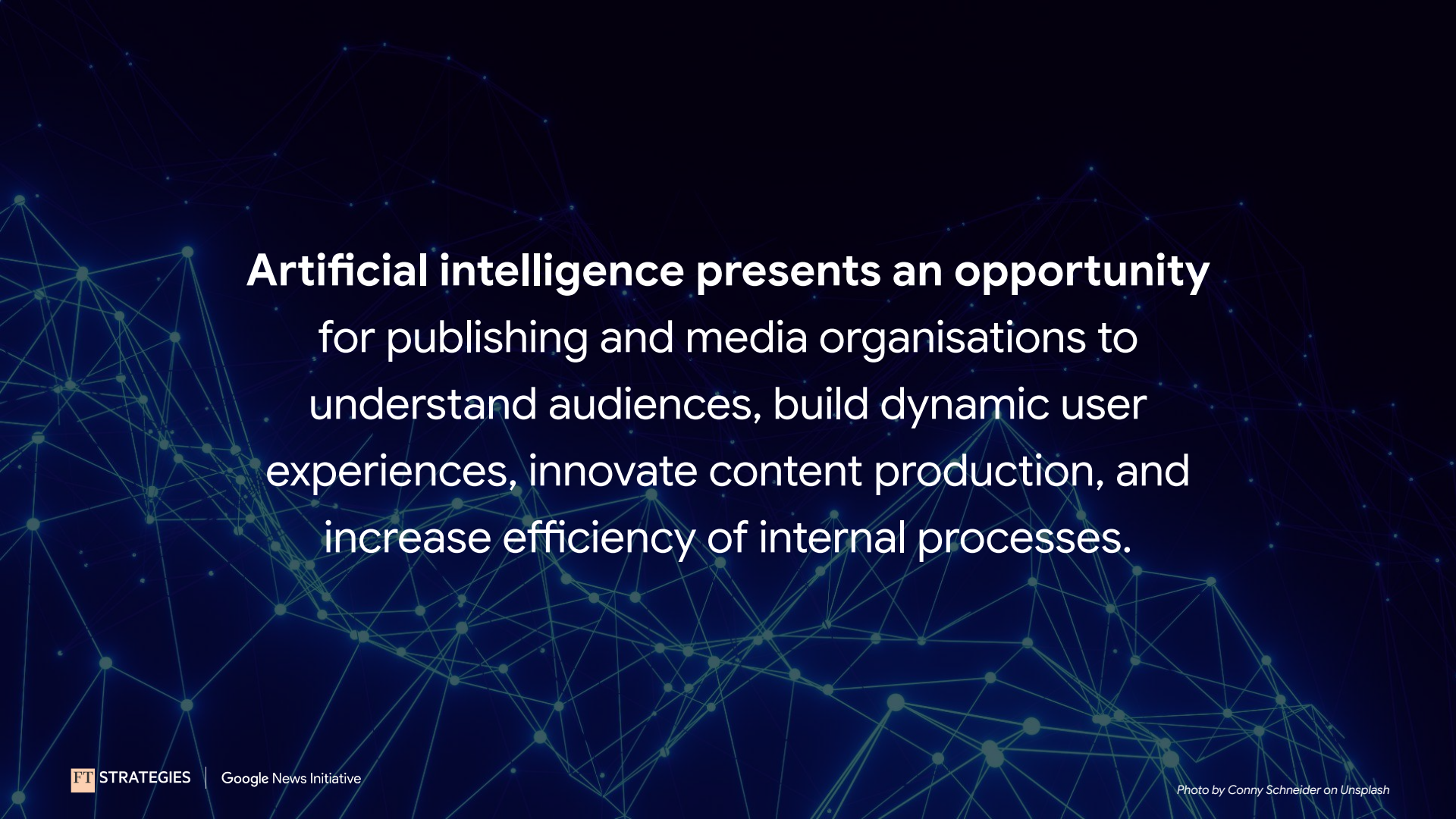# AI Design Sprint SE

Programme Explainer

October 2025

**Artificial intelligence presents an opportunity** for publishing and media organisations to understand audiences, build dynamic user experiences, innovate content production, and increase efficiency of internal processes.

The AI Design Sprint^ will provide a structured approach for helping your organisation to seize this opportunity.

Based on proven design methodologies, the programme includes **practical guides, expert sessions and a facilitated workshop to accelerate AI design and implementation.**

*^a structured process for collaborative idea generation and solution prototyping*

# The AI Design Sprint will accelerate publishers' efforts to understand and implement AI

## Objective

The AI Design Sprint programme centres on a practical one day immersive in-person workshop. The free-of-charge programme enables a cohort of publishers to accelerate their AI efforts with a **focus on designing the future implementation of a single AI use case**. Based on Google's Design Sprint methodology and incorporating aspects of the Financial Times' product discovery process, the Design Sprint will encourage participants to assess both business challenges and opportunities to identify relevant use cases for AI, to think strategically in order to prioritise them, and to design potential solutions.

Each publisher will leave with:

- ★ An **action-plan document** which captures details of and next steps for a tangible AI proof-of-concept design
- ★ The **longlist of use case ideas** and other notes generated on the day, including a view of how use cases support an overall vision for AI
- ★ A **worked example of the discovery process** to guide future AI initiatives
- ★ An **opportunity to have discussions** with other publishers, FTS consultants and other subject matter experts present on the day

## Expert delivery

The Design Sprint workshop will be delivered by FT Strategies consultants with support from subject matter experts from the FT and Google. The one-day event will be hosted in person at the Google offices in Milan, Italy on October 9th 2025.

# Before the Design Sprint: Participants will receive educational materials and practical exercises to complete

1. **Educational pre-read**
   Learning materials providing an introduction to AI and machine learning

2. **Guidance on suggested use cases**
   A prioritised shortlist of AI use cases, based on industry analysis, to serve as the starting point for solution design in the workshop

3. **AI 'activities/vision snapshot'**
   Guiding questions to help participants think about their organisation's current approach and overall vision for using AI - *to be completed by the participants in a virtual workshop prior to attending the Design Sprint*

# Before the workshop: Publishers will also be inspired and informed by expert speakers

*Illustrative (topics TBC)*

**INSPIRATION SESSION 1**

**Inspirational uses of AI:**
- Linking AI to the Customer Lifecycle
- LLMs (outside of content generation)
- Other case studies

Publishers feel **inspired**, understand the major **opportunity areas**, and receive **structured strategy templates**

**INSPIRATION SESSION 2**

**Technical foundations:**
- Data requirements for AI
- Importance of data models / taxonomies / metadata
- Making data available e.g. data systems and pipelines

Publishers **understand the different requirements** for technical AI implementation

**INSPIRATION SESSION 3**

**Doing AI responsibly:**
- Ethics frameworks
- Managing experimentation
- Developing usage and governance policies

Publishers **understand the building blocks of governance** and are **enabled to build their own** bespoke frameworks

**INSPIRATION SESSION 4**

**Preparing for the day:**
- **Identifying business problems to solve [exercise]**
- Jargon-buster
- What to expect on the day

Participants are equipped with common definitions and knowledge to **maximise value of the in-person workshop**

# The in-person workshop will help publishers to explore, identify and plan an AI solution

**1. Explore the demand-side**
- What challenges are teams facing in your business?
- Where do users (internal & external) experience processes which are repetitive, involve data and involve prediction?

**3. Design the solution**
- How would the AI solution work?
- What inputs does it require?
- What outputs will it produce?
- How does the organisation adapt to support AI?

**5. Measuring ROI**
- How do I measure success?
- What KPIs will enable me to make informed decisions?
- Do I have the right decision-making frameworks?
- How do I manage AI at a portfolio level?

**2. Identify and prioritise solution ideas**
- What are the potential solutions to the challenge/opportunity?
- Which solutions are highly valuable and feasible?

**4. Build vs. buy**
- Which scenario best fits my business context?
- How to select, onboard and manage vendors efficiently?

**6. Summary and presentation**
- How can the initiative be efficiently communicated back to the wider business?
- What can we learn from others?
- What advice can we get from subject matter experts?

*The workshop utilises Google's Design Sprint methodology, best known for injecting speed and innovation into product development, and incorporates elements of the FT's product discovery process.*

# Publishers will leave with enhanced knowledge, processes and action-plan for what comes next in their AI journey

### IDEA GENERATION

The longlist of use case ideas and other notes generated on the day

### KNOWLEDGE SHARING

Opportunities to network with other participants, GNI and FTS representatives

### STRUCTURED APPROACH

A worked example of the discovery process to guide future AI initiatives

### SUBJECT MATTER EXPERT ADVICE

Discussions with FTS consultants and other SMEs present on the day

### ACTION-PLAN DOCUMENT

A document capturing details of and next steps for a tangible AI proof-of-concept design

*The Action-Plan document will accelerate participants' AI journey beyond the duration of this programme by specifying next steps for development of the AI solution which is designed in the workshop, highlighting stakeholders who can serve as internal 'champions', and identifying practical ways to build relevant organisational capabilities.*

# The programme is designed to accelerate the efforts of publishers who are prepared to explore AI implementation
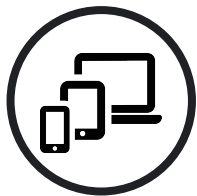
### HQ in Southern Europe with an established digital base

The programme is designed for news publishers in Southern Europe with an existing base of digital readers, typically >250,000 monthly unique viewers.

### Equipped to explore an AI initiative

Publishers may have already begun to experiment with AI, but at a minimum must have the capacity and ability to take the first steps on their journey.

During the programme, you will design a proof of concept for an AI use case - this is not a tech build exercise, but you should have the people, technology and processes in place to take this next step after the end of the programme.

### AI recognised as offering growth potential

Senior leadership must be ready and willing to embrace the opportunity that AI offers and be inclined to action over the next 6-12 months.

Publishers who are able to explore potential AI use cases, and to identify and commit to practical next steps in terms of developing their organisational capabilities, will realise the most value from the programme.

# To fully benefit from the experience, attendees should commit to the following:

✓ **Senior attendees**
Nominating a board-level sponsor to attend the in-person workshop is strongly recommended. It is important that your participation in the programme is sponsored by those able to drive strategic change after the programme (e.g., CEO).

✓ **Representatives from across the business**
You should assign a maximum of 5 individuals to the team, drawn from a wide range of departments, but with product and data/tech departments attending as a minimum.

✓ **Time commitment**
Your team should be prepared to participate and attend the full-day in-person workshop in Milan, Italy on October 9th 2025.

✓ **Pre-workshop exercises**
Your team should be prepared to review the explainer materials, including Inspiration Session recordings and explainer documents, and attend the virtual Opening Workshop prior to the Design Sprint.

✓ **Travel**
While there is no attendance fee, you will be responsible for arranging and funding your own travel and expenses in Milan.

✓ **Participation**
You should be prepared to fully participate in the in-person workshop, involving collaborative discussion, creativity and enthusiasm. The programme will be delivered in English.

✓ **Follow-ups**
You should happy to be featured in industry reports, case studies and to respond to follow-up questions from FT Strategies asking about your experience.

# The AI Design Sprint is a collaboration between the Google News Initiative and FT Strategies

## Google News Initiative

**The Google News Initiative** represents Google's largest-ever effort to help journalism thrive in the digital age. In collaboration with editors and journalists worldwide, the Google News Initiative (GNI) strives to foster a more sustainable, diverse, and innovative news landscape. Through a comprehensive suite of programs, digital tools, training, and resources, the GNI empowers journalistic endeavors, enabling journalists to effectively discover, verify, and narrate compelling stories while upholding the highest standards of quality journalism.

### Google teams will:

★ Manage success of overall programme
★ Provide advice and expertise
★ Connect participants to the GNI network

## FT STRATEGIES

**FT Strategies** is the specialist media and publishing consultancy from the Financial Times. FT Strategies' deep expertise enables its clients to future-proof their business, empower their teams, and fulfil their goals with our proven data, digital and change consulting expertise.

### FT Strategies teams will:

★ Lead execution of programme including the Design Sprint workshop and inspiration sessions
★ Advise on AI developments within the industry, drawing on our experience of working with 700+ publishers and our own in-house experience

To apply for the programme, please fill in the **application form**

**Thank you**

# Thank you