

A Move Analysis of a ChatGPT-4o-Generated News Release: Insights from a Quasi-Experimental Study in the Digital Transformation Era

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Abstract

This quasi-experimental paper aims to assess the quality of news releases generated by ChatGPT-4o. To that end, I purposively selected a short news release from PR Newswire—a global press release distribution partner. The news release was divided into sentences and fed to ChatGPT-4o, which was prompted to generate a news release based on the provided information. To orient analysis, the study proposed a rhetorical move model comprising three main constant (obligatory) moves—headline, lead, and body—and optional sub-moves within the lead and body that may vary from one situation to another. This paper recommends customized news release training for ChatGPT. The paper is expected to be of considerable value and benefit to PR educators and practitioners, presenting both (a) a cover-all prompt model for producing news releases using ChatGPT and (b) a model example for manually crafting news releases. Ultimately, the paper lays the groundwork for future research on the capabilities of other AI writing tools and their applications to various genres.

Keywords: AI writing, ChatGPT, news release, PR writing, PR education, digital transformation, AI explosion

1. Introduction

Since the advent of ChatGPT, there has been extensive discussion and debate about its capabilities, the quality of its outputs, and its potential threat to jobs, including media writing. This research addresses these issues through an experiment involving ChatGPT-4o. ChatGPT-4o is an optimized and expanded version of ChatGPT-4, which is an advanced pre-trained version of the ChatGPT model, a large language model (LLM) powered by AI. It has been pre-trained on large amounts of data (Lingard, 2023). Large quantities of data refer to datasets that are high in volume, variety, velocity, value, and complexity (El-Astal, Allaymoun & Mustafa, 2025).

While the literature has paid considerable attention to exploring the quality of ChatGPT's academic writing (Lingard, 2023; Imran & Almusharraf, 2023; Yuan, Li & Sawaengdist, 2024; Mahapatra, 2024; Wang, Liao, Liu, Zhang, Wang, Shu & Wang, 2024; Chukwuere, 2024; Fitria, 2023), little attention (if any) has been given to exploring the quality of ChatGPT's workplace writing, particularly PR news releases. To elaborate, the purpose and rhetorical moves of academic and non-academic writing (workplace writing) are not the same (El-Astal, 2024a); they belong to two different realms (Dias, Freedman, Medway, & Par, 1999). Academic writing is characterized by several features, such as an introduction, a thesis, a body, proper sentence and paragraph construction, an argumentative style, citations, and intertextuality (Faigley, R. Graves & H. Graves, 2007). In contrast, news releases are typically crafted in the inverted-pyramid format, which begins with a lead (preceded by a headline and contact information) and is followed by the main body (Stovall, 2006). To address the gap in the literature outlined above, this quasi-experimental paper aims, in the digital transformation era and ahead of the AI explosion, to evaluate the quality of a news release generated by ChatGPT-4o.

This study claims that ChatGPT-4o can serve as an effective tool for generating news releases, but its success depends on customized training and precise prompting. Crucially, effective use of this tool requires a trainer who evaluates outputs through a writer's lens to ensure quality.

In what follows, I will provide a conceptual background, explain the analysis framework, describe the methodology, present the analyses, discuss them, and draw conclusions.

2. Conceptual Background

2.1 News Release

A news release (NR) is also referred to as a press release (PR) or media release. A cursory review of the literature indicates that there is no clear distinction between a press release and a news release (Lassen, 2006). In his quasi-ethnographic work, El-Astal (2024b) found that the institution he investigated used both terms. While we're on the subject, the navigation links (on the navigation bar) where organizations usually upload their news releases are commonly called newsrooms, press rooms, or media rooms. In this paper, I will use the term 'news release.' I find myself partial to using the term 'news release' because the term 'press release' is too general, as some organizations use it to refer to several genres, such as a note to the media, a statement, or a notice to the press. One organization that uses the term 'press release' to refer to all these genres is the US Department of State (<https://www.state.gov/press-releases/>). It's we (text producers) who assign meanings to things, activities, actions, etc. (El-Astal & Al-Mutawa, 2024). Majstorovic (2009) defines a news release as a document whose purpose is to disseminate information in a form ready for publication, and Maat (2007) describes it as a genre that combines various communicative purposes. These purposes may include disseminating information, promoting, and persuading. Organizations typically craft news releases to disseminate information about events, products, or activities.

2.2 Quality

Quality refers to how well ChatGPT-4o's output conforms to expert and scholarly conventions for news release writing. These conventions include: (a) the headline-writing conventions outlined in Swan's (2016) *Practical English Usage*, (b) the 5Ws and H (the who, what, when, where, why, and how questions) that a news release aims to answer in the lead and body (Stovall, 2006; Inman, 1994), (c) the tense used in the leads generated, (d) organizing information in the body, from the most important to the least important, under the standards of the inverted pyramid, and (e) efficiency: the number of sentences and words in the release's paragraphs. These conventions are not strict rules like those of grammar, where violations result in grammatical errors. Instead, they resemble societal traditions: following them distinguishes media writing from other types of writing, just as traditions differentiate one society from another.

3. Framework for Analysis

The purpose of this study is to evaluate the quality of news releases generated by ChatGPT-4o. To that end, a move analysis will be employed. A move denotes a segment of a genre that performs a communicative purpose/function (Kanoksilapatham, 2008). In other words, moves are the blocks that form a genre's structure. That is, a genre is the whole piece of writing (in this case, the news release), and the units that constitute the genre are its moves. Zhou (2012) defines a genre as a standardized, well-structured construct, typically identified by characteristic moves.

Genre analysis emerged in the 1970s and 1980s as part of a broader expansion of discourse analysis, focusing on how information is organized within genres and resulting in the current approach of analyzing genres through their rhetorical moves, using either a top-down or a bottom-up approach (Kanoksilapatham, 2008). In this study, the top-down approach will be employed. In this approach, the analyst first determines the functional components of the analyzed genre and then examines them in detail. Interestingly, Swales originally developed the move analysis approach to analyze research articles for specific purposes (Kanoksilapatham, 2008). Today, however, it is applied to a variety of genres, and news releases are no exception.

Genres that follow the inverted-pyramid format (such as news releases) consist of two main parts—each performing a specific purpose: the lead and the body. In news-oriented genres, the lead typically answers four basic questions—Who, What, Where, and When—while the genre as a whole addresses all 5Ws and H. The lead is generally preceded by a headline that informs readers about the release's content and followed by a body that provides details and, possibly, background information about the organization (Stovall, 2006). With all this in mind, the three moves that will be examined in ChatGPT-4o's produced news release are the headline, lead, and body. This study will not consider contact information or release time. The release time indicates when editors can publish the information sent, and the contact information refers to the person in the organization whom editors can reach for more details.

4. Methodology

Traditionally, experimental communication research has been conducted with human subjects. Traditional experimental research refers to a design that compares one treatment with another, using two or more distinct groups (Spector, Merrill, van Merriënboer & Driscoll, 2008). This study employs a quasi-experimental design to compare human and machine writing. The advent of AI necessitates a reassessment of epistemologies and inquiry approaches. While we're on the subject, some experiments focused on utilization techniques, exploring presentation variables such as narration, music, color, camera angles, and pacing (Saettler, 1990). This paper focuses on using ChatGPT-4o in writing news releases.

For the experiment, I purposively selected a short news release from PR Newswire. PR Newswire is a leading press release distribution partner. Its services are available in 40 languages across 170 countries. It reaches more than 440,000 websites, newsrooms, direct feeds, influencers, and journalists (www.prnewswire.com/about-pr-newswire/). The news release used in this study was retrieved on March 26, 2025.

The selected news release was split into individual sentences. These segmented sentences were then fed to ChatGPT-4o, which was prompted to reconstruct them into a coherent and well-structured news release based on the provided information. The quoted statements were kept as they were to avoid distorting the information. To enable comparisons, three different prompts were used when instructing ChatGPT-4o to reconstruct full releases. A fourth prompt was later used to generate only a *straight summary news lead*. The original news release and its segmented version—the text fed to ChatGPT-4o—are displayed in Table 1 below.

Table 1. The Original Version of the News Release and Its Segmented Version

The Original Version
GATE Energy Establishes New Office in Malaysia
HOUSTON, March 26, 2025 /PRNewswire/ -- GATE Energy, a 100% employee-owned ESOP, is proud to announce that they have established a new office in Malaysia. This new office reflects their continual growth on a global stage to better serve their international clients and partners.
Grant Gibson, Founder and Chairman of GATE Energy, noted, "We look forward to deepening our presence in southeast Asia beyond our current bases in Singapore and South Korea. Being able to provide a dedicated, in-country service will enable us to be more responsive to local needs and allow us to add to the breadth of services we can provide for our clients in the region. We are excited to see what the future holds as we expand our global presence."
Karthik Annadorai, President and Chief Revenue Officer at GATE Energy, stated, "GATE Energy is excited about the Malaysia market. We aspire to bring the same level of value and experience that we provide to our clients and partners here in the United States to other parts of the world. This new office is an integral part of our expansion strategy, and we look forward to what we can achieve in Malaysia and the surrounding regions. It's been an exciting endeavor as we've already started to execute projects in the region."
About GATE Energy
GATE Energy, a 100% employee-owned ESOP, provides predictable project delivery services to the energy sector. They design, build, commission, and start energy facilities and assets without cost and schedule blowouts by using parametric prediction models, providing tight project controls and by actively eliminating operation problems during the project's design phase.
The Segmented Version
GATE Energy designs, builds, commissions, and starts energy facilities and assets without cost and schedule blowouts by using parametric prediction models, providing tight project controls and by actively eliminating operation problems during the project's design phase.
GATE Energy, a 100% employee-owned ESOP,
GATE Energy is proud to announce that it has established a new office
The new office will be located in Malaysia
Grant Gibson is the Founder and Chairman of GATE Energy
Karthik Annadorai is the President and Chief Revenue Officer at GATE Energy
"We look forward to deepening our presence in Southeast Asia beyond our current bases in Singapore and South Korea. Being able to provide a dedicated, in-country service will enable us to be more responsive to local needs and allow us to add to the breadth of services we can provide for our clients in the region. We are excited to see what the future holds as we expand our global presence." Grant Gibson noted
The new office is expected to reflect the company's continual growth on a global stage to better serve its international clients and partners
"GATE Energy is excited about the Malaysia market. We aspire to bring the same level of value and experience that we provide to our clients and partners here in the United States to other parts of the world. This new office is an integral part of our expansion strategy, and we look forward to what we can achieve in Malaysia and the surrounding regions. It's been an exciting endeavor as we've already started to execute projects in the region." Karthik Annadorai stated
GATE Energy, a 100% employee-owned ESOP, provides predictable project delivery services to the energy sector

To orient the analysis, the rhetorical move concept developed by Swales in 1981 and revised in 1990 (Kanoksilapatham, 2008) was employed. Notably, this study proposes a rhetorical move model with three main moves—headline, lead, and body—for analyzing news releases. These moves follow the typical inverted pyramid format, in which text is organized into a lead and a body, as explained earlier in the paper. The headline was included in the model because, in news releases, it is typically written by the organization's writer rather than the outlet's editor. It's worth mentioning here that the main rhetorical moves, especially the body of the release, may include several sub-moves. Dividing rhetorical moves into main and sub-moves makes it easier to understand and analyze the release being examined here. The main moves are constant, meaning they are obligatory and expected in all releases. In contrast, the sub-moves are optional and may vary depending on the release length and available information. If a move is defined as a segment of a genre that performs a communicative function/purpose (Kanoksilapatham, 2008), then a sub-move may be described as a sub-segment of a move that fulfills a sub-function. In this study, the answers to the 5-Ws and H questions—explained in the conceptual background section above—serve to characterize the sub-moves as performers of sub-functions.

5. Results and Discussion

Table 2 below displays the three prompts used to generate full news releases, along with the three resulting outputs. The differences and similarities among the three prompts can be summarized as follows: (a) in the first and third prompts, I specified the number of paragraphs: a lead, a background-information paragraph, and two detail paragraphs; (b) in the third prompt, I asked ChatGPT-4o to place the two detail paragraphs in the body of the release and the background-information paragraph at the end; (c) in the second prompt, I did not specify the number of paragraphs, only that the release should include a lead and a background-information paragraph; and (d) in all prompts, I asked ChatGPT-4o to reconstruct the news release in the inverted-pyramid format and provide a proper headline.

Table 2. The Three Prompts Fed to ChatGPT-4o and Their Corresponding Outputs

Prompt 1	Write a 4-paragraph news release using the information provided: a lead paragraph, a background information paragraph, and two paragraphs for details. Write the release in the inverted-pyramid format. Write a proper headline for the release.
Output 1	GATE Energy Expands Global Footprint with New Office in Malaysia HOUSTON, TX – GATE Energy, a 100% employee-owned ESOP providing predictable project delivery services to the energy sector, is proud to announce the opening of a new office in Malaysia. This strategic move marks a significant step in the company's global growth strategy and enhances its ability to deliver high-quality, in-country services to clients across Southeast Asia. With a strong reputation for designing, building, commissioning, and starting energy facilities without cost or schedule overruns, GATE Energy utilizes parametric prediction models and proactive design-phase problem solving to ensure tight project controls. The company's expansion into Malaysia builds on its established presence in Singapore and South Korea, further strengthening its footprint in the region. "We look forward to deepening our presence in Southeast Asia beyond our current bases," said Grant Gibson, Founder and Chairman of GATE Energy. "Being able to provide a dedicated, in-country service will enable us to be more responsive to local needs and allow us to add to the breadth of services we can provide for our clients in the region. We are excited to see what the future holds as we expand our global presence." Karthik Annadorai, President and Chief Revenue Officer, emphasized the strategic importance of the Malaysia office. "GATE Energy is excited about the Malaysia market. We aspire to bring the same level of value and experience that we provide to our clients and partners here in the United States to other parts of the world," he said. "This new office is an integral part of our expansion strategy, and we look forward to what we can achieve in Malaysia and the surrounding regions. It's been an exciting endeavor as we've already started to execute projects in the region."
Prompt 2	Write a news release using the information provided, including a lead paragraph and a background information paragraph. Write the release in the inverted-pyramid format. Write a proper headline for the release.
Output 2	GATE Energy Expands Global Footprint with New Office in Malaysia Houston, TX – March 27, 2025 – GATE Energy, a 100% employee-owned ESOP providing predictable project delivery services to the energy sector, is proud to announce the opening of a new office in Malaysia. This strategic expansion marks a significant step in the company's global growth, enabling it to better serve international clients and partners while strengthening its presence in Southeast Asia. The Malaysia office will complement GATE Energy's existing operations in Singapore and South Korea, allowing the company to provide dedicated, in-country services that are more responsive to local needs. By deepening its regional presence, GATE Energy aims to broaden the range of services offered and enhance project execution capabilities in the area. "We look forward to deepening our presence in Southeast Asia beyond our current bases in Singapore and South Korea," said Grant Gibson, Founder and Chairman of GATE Energy. "Being able to provide a dedicated, in-country service will enable us to be more responsive to local needs and allow us to add to the breadth of services we can provide for our clients in the region. We are excited to see what the future holds as we expand our global presence." Karthik Annadorai, President and Chief Revenue Officer at GATE Energy, added, "GATE Energy is excited about the Malaysia market. We aspire to bring the same level of value and experience that we provide to our clients and partners here in the United States to other parts of the world. This new office is an integral part of our expansion strategy, and we look forward to what we can achieve in Malaysia and the surrounding regions. It's been an exciting endeavor as we've already started to execute projects in the region." Founded on the mission to deliver energy facilities without cost and schedule blowouts, GATE Energy leverages parametric prediction models, tight project controls, and early-phase operational problem solving to drive successful outcomes. The company's commitment to innovation and excellence has positioned it as a trusted partner for energy clients around the world.
Prompt 3	Write a 4-paragraph news release using the information provided: a lead paragraph, a background information paragraph (at the end of the release), and two paragraphs for details (in the body). Write the release in the inverted-pyramid format. Write a proper headline for the release.
Output 3	GATE Energy Expands Global Footprint with New Office in Malaysia GATE Energy has announced the establishment of a new office in Malaysia as part of its strategic expansion into Southeast Asia. The move reinforces the company's commitment to delivering predictable, on-time, and cost-effective project delivery services to the energy sector through advanced parametric prediction models and tight project controls. The new office is expected to enhance GATE Energy's responsiveness to local needs and deepen its presence beyond existing bases in Singapore and South Korea. "We look forward to deepening our presence in Southeast Asia beyond our current bases in Singapore and South Korea. Being able to provide a dedicated, in-country service will enable us to be more responsive to local needs and allow us to add to the breadth of services we can provide for our clients in the region. We are excited to see what the future holds as we expand our global presence," noted Founder and Chairman Grant Gibson. President and Chief Revenue Officer Karthik Annadorai emphasized the importance of the expansion, stating, "GATE Energy is excited about the Malaysia market. We aspire to bring the same level of value and experience that we provide to our clients and partners here in the United States to other parts of the world. This new office is an integral part of our expansion strategy, and we look forward to what we can achieve in Malaysia and the surrounding regions. It's been an exciting endeavor as we've already started to execute projects in the region." GATE Energy, a 100% employee-owned ESOP, designs, builds, commissions, and starts energy facilities without cost and schedule blowouts. With its innovative project management approach and strong commitment to eliminating operational problems during the design phase, the company continues to grow on a global stage to better serve its international clients and partners.

Before analyzing the three generated news releases above (Table 2), it is worth noting the following: (a) this is how I segment already published news releases to train my students in class before sending them to collect information and

write news releases from scratch; (b) I used the first prompt with ChatGPT-4o on two different dates and it produced two distinct versions—however, this will not be analyzed and discussed here, a point not of particular significance; and (c) evaluating the quality of the news releases generated by ChatGPT-4o requires the expertise of a writer rather than a reader. When evaluating others' writing, I always ask my students to read as writers, not as readers. In what follows, I will evaluate the headlines, leads, and bodies of the three generated texts above (Table 2).

5.1 Headline

The sentence that precedes the lead paragraph and tells the readers what the release is about is the headline (Stovall, 2006). The headline may take the form of a main, a kicker, or a decker. The kicker precedes the main headline to frame or contextualize it, while the decker follows to add a nuance to it. Most releases use a single-sentence main headline. In the three versions above (Table 2), ChatGPT-4o generated a main headline that conveys the key point of the release (i.e., what the release is about).

Interestingly, ChatGPT-4o produced the same headline across all three versions. A closer examination of the headline generated reveals the following: First, it is less efficient compared to the headline of the original version, which was already published. Stovall (2006) describes efficiency as presenting the most information in the fewest words. The original version writer summarized the release in 7 words, while ChatGPT-4o summarized it in 10 words. Undoubtedly, if ChatGPT-4o were prompted to produce a headline with fewer words, it would do so. Second, the headline of the original version and ChatGPT-4o's generated headline used the present simple tense, which conforms to the conventions outlined by Foster (2008) and Swan (2016). For Swan, headlines referring to past events are written in the present tense, while those about future events typically use the infinitive.

Third, again, the headlines of both the original version and ChatGPT-4o's versions omitted the definite and indefinite articles, a practice that conforms to the conventions outlined by Stovall (2006) and Swan (2016). English articles and the verb "to be" are often omitted in headlines. Fourth, neither headline (the original nor ChatGPT-4o's) employed headline vocabulary. Swan (2016) provided an eight-page list of vocabulary used in headlines. Swan proposed the verb "launch" as a common headline term to describe actions such as starting a campaign, sending a satellite into space, and putting a product on the market. This likewise applies to launching a new branch of a company. Again, had ChatGPT-4o been provided with Swan's list of headline vocabulary, it would have employed it in its headlines.

5.2 Lead

The first paragraph in a news release is known as the lead paragraph or intro. It should convey the most essential information in the release to readers, arousing their interest to explore the details in the body. Leads generally answer four of the six questions outlined in the paper's conceptual background section: who, what, where, and when (Stovall, 2006). A careful examination of the three leads produced by ChatGPT-4o (Table 2) shows the following: First, although I did not request a dateline, ChatGPT-4o inserted one before the first and second leads but omitted it in the third. The dateline typically includes the city where the release originated, the state (if applicable), and the date: the month, day, and year (Wilcox & Reber, 2014). It usually appears before the lead, followed by a dash, but it is not part of it. ChatGPT-4o inserted an incomplete dateline (only the city and state) in the first and a full dateline in the second. Either option is acceptable in practice.

Second, the lead generated in Output 3 was the most efficient among the three. It was a *straight summary news lead*, although I had not requested this type in the third prompt. A *straight summary news lead* is usually used to make announcements (Wilcox & Reber, 2014). It presents information concisely and quickly without embellishment. The lead generated in Output 3 contained 49 words compared to 55 in Output 2 and 54 in Output 1. Notably, the original lead contained 38 words. It is noted that in Output 1 and Output 2 leads, ChatGPT-4o inserted a parenthesized company description between the sentence subject "GATE Energy" and the verb "is." Editors generally do not prefer this style of writing (Stovall, 2006). However, news releases ought not to be treated as news stories. They should be treated as unpaid advertisements. That's because if PR writers write about their organizations in the same way journalists do, what is the point of their role and the justification for their salaries? I constantly emphasized this point to my PR writing students, and Stovall (2006) also highlighted this subtle difference between a news release and a news story. To clarify, the intention is not to exaggerate or mislead, but to depict the organization in a refined and favorable light in a few words, primarily when the release is published in a medium not owned by the organization and shared with competitors. For instance, when a nonprofit organization plans an environmental initiative, the lead may begin with an initial short phrase that frames the organization in a positive light, followed by a straightforward presentation of the information. In this case, the *modified straight summary news lead* might read: "Driven by its strong commitment to environmental issues, [organization name] plans..." In summary, PR writers are encouraged to use a *straight summary news lead* (the one used by journalists) in organization-owned media, while employing a *modified straight summary news lead* in media shared with competitors, not owned by the organization.

Third, the lead generated in Output 3 was the only lead in the present perfect tense. The two other generated leads, along with the original, were all written in the present simple tense. To clarify, the lead in Output 3 used "has announced,"

whereas the others used “*is proud to announce*.” With the advent of the internet, it has been observed that online mass media tend to use the present perfect tense in leads rather than the past simple tense. Previously, the print media used the past simple tense, while radio and television employed the present perfect tense (Newsom & Carrell 2001).

Fourth, the original and the three generated leads each contained two sentences. All leads answered three of the four basic questions that leads typically answer in their first sentence. These answers represent sub-moves, which Swales (Kanoksilapatham, 2008) refers to as steps. The questions answered included: (a) the “*who*” question exemplified by GATE Energy—the “*who*” question potentially refers to an individual, a group, an organization, a country, etc., (b) the “*what*” question answered by “has announced the establishment of a new office” in the lead generated in Output 3, and by “is proud to announce the opening of a new office” in the leads generated in Output 1 and Output 2, (c) the “*where*” question answered by “in Malaysia” in all leads. The “*when*” question was not answered in all leads, including the original release’s lead—this has been noticed with the advent of online mass media. In the second sentence, all leads, including the original version’s, emphasized the importance of opening a new office in Malaysia. Yet this sentence might be better placed in the body, since a lead is ideally a single sentence (Wilcox & Reber, 2014).

Interestingly, when prompted separately to produce a *straight summary news lead* in a single paragraph, ChatGPT-4o generated a 119-word lead consisting of three sentences. The lead contained information (details) more appropriate for the body of the release. This lead paragraph is overly long. When instructed not to exceed 50 words, it produced the following lead (41 words):

GATE Energy, a 100% employee-owned ESOP, has opened a new office in Malaysia to expand its Southeast Asia presence. Leaders Grant Gibson and Karthik Annadorai said the move strengthens regional service, supports ongoing projects, and advances the company’s global growth strategy.

A cursory look at the 41-word lead generated here reveals that it adopts a more news-style approach by placing the executives upfront, shifting the focus to leadership rather than the organization’s services and strategic growth. In PR writing, the focus is typically placed on the organization rather than its executives, as seen in both the lead generated in Output 3 (which was deemed the most efficient) and the original version’s lead. Information about executives and their statements is more appropriate for the body rather than the lead.

5.3 Body

The body refers to the section that follows the lead in a press release, where details are provided. A closer scrutiny of the three bodies produced by ChatGPT-4o in this experiment reveals the following: First, in comparison to the body of the original version of the release, which contained 220 words, the versions generated in Outputs 1, 2, and 3 had word counts of 226, 273, and 247 words, respectively. Regarding the body paragraph count, the original version and the versions generated in Outputs 1 and 3 each contained three paragraphs, while the version generated in Output 2 contained four. The body paragraphs include the background information paragraph. The inverted pyramid structure has two main parts (moves)—the lead and the body. Background information does not constitute a separate part (move) because not all releases include background information—it is an optional sub-move.

Second, regarding information organization, the release generated in Output 2 was the best of the three. It was the only release to include five paragraphs, including the lead and background information, because the prompt did not specify the number of paragraphs. The first paragraph was a two-sentence *straight summary news lead*, and the second built on the first as news releases typically do (Stovall, 2006). More specifically, it expanded the “*what*” question, underscoring the importance and the purpose of the company’s step. By comparison, the second paragraph in the original release was a statement from the company’s founder. The second paragraph in Output 1 blended expansion of the “*what*” question with background information (about the company), whereas in Output 3, it blended expansion of the “*what*” question with a statement made by the company’s founder.

Following the second paragraph, the Output 2 release presented a statement from the company’s founder in the third paragraph, a statement from the company’s president in the fourth, and background information in the fifth. Ideally, background information in news releases appears at the end (Stovall, 2006; Wilcox & Reber, 2014). The original version followed the same order, except that it contained four paragraphs rather than five, as it lacked a paragraph following the lead to expand the “*what*” question. It presented the background information under a separate subtitle, a point not of particular significance in this context. The last point to note is that the release generated in Output 1 was the only one to conclude with a statement from the company’s president, rather than with the background information requested in the prompt.

Third, each release addressed four of the six basic questions that news releases generally cover. The questions explicitly answered were “*who*,” “*what*,” “*where*,” and “*why*,” while the “*when*” question was implicitly answered in Output 3 only. It is worth noting, however, that the original version lacked explicit information on the “*when*” and “*how*” questions. ChatGPT generates releases based on the information it is given. Regarding the “*when*” question, it is usually addressed in the lead paragraph. Yet, as I explained earlier in this section, online media rarely address this question explicitly; it is often implicitly addressed by using the present perfect rather than the past simple. The present perfect tense suggests that an event, activity, or

action occurred recently, without referring to time. The only release that did this was the one generated in Output 3. Regarding the “*why*” question, all releases explained the rationale for opening a new office in Malaysia. All versions, including the original, described the move as a strategic expansion aimed at better serving clients in Southeast Asia. This was evident in the second sentence of each of the four leads, and the company’s founder and president’s statements were presented in the body.

Fourth, according to Stovall (2006), an efficient paragraph should ideally be three sentences or fewer and contain fewer than 100 words. Typically, each sentence should be limited to thirty words or fewer. Stovall adds that such writing enables information to reach readers so quickly and in a form that is easy to digest. In this context, the release generated in Output 1 did not exceed the sentence or word count limits in its body paragraphs. However, its information lacked organization, as previously noted at the beginning of this section. Both the original version and the version produced in Output 3 exceeded the sentence count limit, as one paragraph in both contained four sentences. The release produced in Output 2 was both precise and efficient, fully complying with the sentence and word count limits suggested by Stovall (2006).

6. Conclusion

The findings here reveal that ChatGPT-4o proved effective at creating news releases when supported by customized training and proper prompting—a proper prompt should provide a cover-all roadmap with explicit instructions for crafting the headline, lead, and body (see Figure 1 below).

Regarding ChatGPT training, Davidson (2025) noted that its outputs improve over time as it continually trains on new data and learns from each user interaction. However, it is important to emphasize here that the trainer must approach the task with a writer’s lens to evaluate the quality of the output. This means that using ChatGPT effectively for news release writing requires familiarity with the professional conventions of the genre and with the tool itself. Bašić, Banovac, Kružić, and Jerković (2023) argued that ChatGPT users lacking prior knowledge, skills, and experience in writing will not be able to use it effectively. It is also important to emphasize that ChatGPT should be trained to produce the news release’s headline, lead, and body as distinct rhetorical units.

Regarding the headline, users should prompt ChatGPT to write it in the fewest possible words, using headline-specific vocabulary, adhering to headline grammatical rules, and in the correct tense. The grammatical and technical rules outlined by Foster (2008) and Swan (2016) for headline writing can be incorporated into ChatGPT’s training. Concerning the lead, ChatGPT should be prompted, once supplied with the necessary information, to generate the specified type of lead, in the fewest possible words, in one sentence, and in the correct tense. For the body, once ChatGPT has been given the necessary information, prompt it to produce the required number of paragraphs, organized from most to least important. Clear instructions should also include identifying the people involved and how to order information about them; determining the number of sentences per paragraph and the number of words per sentence; structuring the second paragraph; and finally, positioning the background information. The model below (Figure 1) summarizes the key elements of the cover-all prompt.

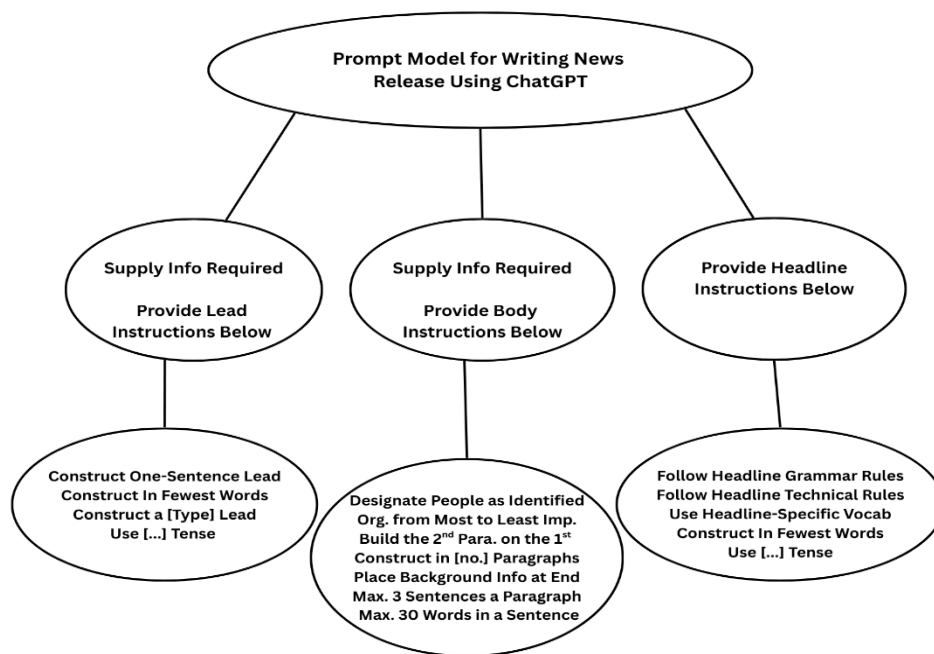


Figure 1. Cover-all Proposed Prompt for Writing News Releases Using ChatGPT

This cover-all roadmap is expected to be of significant value to educators and practitioners alike, presenting (a) a prompt model for generating news releases with ChatGPT and (b) a model example for manual composition. Because sub-moves vary across situations, the model presented in Figure 1 should be regarded not as a one-size-fits-all solution, but rather as a general guide. Because news releases differ in both nature and context, I distinguish between reported and observed contexts. In other words, human writers compose news releases based on their own observations (what they experience), whereas ChatGPT generates news releases from the prompts provided and its pre-training. Therefore, the prompt should clearly describe the context so that ChatGPT can accurately depict it.

Finally, this study opens avenues for further research on the capabilities of more advanced versions of ChatGPT or other AI writing tools across diverse genres, especially amid ongoing discussions about digital transformation and debates about the AI explosion, as Campbell et al. (2020) describe it.

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Authors contributions

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