

EPISODE 242

[INTRODUCTION]

[0:00:09] ANNOUNCER: Welcome to this week's episode of Coffee with the Journalists brought to you by the team at OnePitch. Are you looking for a more efficient way to find and pitch the right journalists? Head to our website at OnePitch.co to learn more.

Our guest on today's Coffee with the Journalists episode is Emilia David, Senior AI Reporter at VentureBeat. Emilia offers valuable insights on how to effectively pitch AI stories, emphasizing the importance of understanding her beat and the necessity of detailed research-driven subject lines.

[INTERVIEW]

[0:00:41] BB: Hey, everyone. Welcome to Coffee with a Journalists. I'm Beck Bamberger and I'm actually in a coffee shop in New York City. Emilia, you're in New York too, so – it doesn't look like you're in a coffee shop though. That's okay. Good to see you again.

[0:00:54] ED: Good to see you.

[0:00:56] BB: Yes. Witness today, everybody is Emilia. As I mentioned, Emilia David, she is the senior AI reporter, not having a fun time as we just talked about, but maybe we'll discuss, we'll discuss at VentureBeat. She is busy, so it is an honor to have you here, Emilia, because I can only imagine. Emilia, you had mentioned that I said, “Oh, it must be so fun to be in AI space.” Even though I'm saying that a bit facetiously. How are you doing? Let's just, how are you doing?

[0:01:21] ED: Well, let's just say, the past week or the past two weeks has been very, very busy, because apparently AI was a big topic during the UNGA, and because I live in New York. The UNGA –

[0:01:36] BB: Which are [Inaudible 0:01:36]

[0:01:37] ED: Yeah. So, there was a lot of CEOs. A lot of events around AI that it was a little overwhelming last week. Things are kind of the normal level now, so yeah. I'm very busy. When I say, I'm not having fun, it's just, I'm enjoying what I'm doing.

[0:01:57] BB: Yeah.

[0:01:58] ED: It's not fun for most people.

[0:02:02] BB: Oh, I cannot – yeah, I cannot. I cannot.

[0:02:04] ED: It's very interesting. It's very busy, and we are, of course, ramping up towards the end of the years, but there's also a lot of that rush to get some news out before the year ends.

[0:02:17] BB: Okay. Before we get into the inbox and all the things, how do you stay, you stay up to date with everything happening in AI? In other words, yes, you could do it by your own reporting, but do you have some secret sauce of any sort that you look towards in order to stay abreast of everything? It is the most evolving industry we could argue, currently.

[0:02:37] ED: Does our internal slack messages count? A lot of what's happening that's outside of my – concentration, I sometimes see because our news editor Carl Franzen would always post interesting tidbits that is on media or any papers that are floating around on our slack channel. Those are supposed to be like, “Hey, look at this interesting thing, maybe you'd want to do a story on it.” But that is the main way, I say, abreast of what's happening. Other than that, it's just the normal way a lot of other reporters like keep up. I read a lot of news. It took a break from political news for a while, and then AI became a thing in politics, so not –

[0:03:28] BB: You're like, it's just like avalanches upon avalanches.

[0:03:32] ED: Yeah. It's a lot of reading both the business and the tech news and like even entertainment, honestly.

[0:03:41] BB: I know you're a Swifty fan. We talked about the tickets and all that stuff. We don't have enough time to get into that Emilia, or we will be here for hours, but the point is, for the

next question. Could you describe VentureBeat's coverage area? Because I do like to ask, probably I forgot on the last before, what is the coverage area? Just to crystallize that for everybody.

[0:04:00] ED: VentureBeat, kind of pivoted in the past few years to focus mainly on AI. A lot of us reporters are AI reporters. The difference is that we need qualified our beats, basically. So, we're focusing on specific things about AI. VentureBeat's main focus within AI is enterprise AI. When I say enterprise AI, it's how large enterprises are using generative AI or anything else that is essential to AI, and how are they also bringing it to their own employees? We are not writing about the consumer-facing products. If we are writing about the more consumer-facing products, it's those coming from the enterprises instead of the tech companies.

The way I kind of figure it is, if you're writing about ChatGPT, but only the paid versions of ChatGPT. Because those are usually the ones that enterprises are using. Writing about the free ChatGPT, that's the one, the majority of consumers have access to. In other words, we only really write about things that other companies are using, things that other companies are doing, but not how it impacts customers outside like you and me.

[0:05:29] BB: Yeah. The public. Let's say. The consumer. Yes. Good distinction, because I think so many people are like, "Oh, my gosh, Emilia, I have a gazillion things with AI to pitch you." But no, good clarification. Okay, let's go to your inbox. How is it? It must be ballistic. It must be ballistic, but you tell us.

[0:05:47] ED: I can say this like with confidence. I woke up this morning with my phone inbox, that's my personal Gmail, my VentureBeat email, and weirdly my grad school email, because it's still on my phone. I had 78 messages.

[0:06:07] BB: Already. On East Coast time.

[0:06:09] ED: Yeah. One was for my – well, actually three, for my grad school email and that was just New York Times newsletters. My personal email probably had like 40-ish.

[0:06:23] BB: Oh, damn. Okay. The newsletters, maybe.

[0:06:26] **ED:** Newsletters also, if you've ever signed up for Etsy, they tend to –

[0:06:30] **BB:** Oh, my God. They –

[0:06:32] **ED:** Yeah.

[0:06:31] **BB:** Everything. They're like, “Oh, they look the stamp. They're sending it right now.” You're like, “I don't need to know.”

[0:06:37] **ED:** Yeah. I don't need to know.

[0:06:38] **BB:** Thank you.

[0:06:40] **ED:** Yeah. Then the rest of that were from a VentureBeat email. What's very interesting is like, like during the weekend, like once I open it on Monday, I actually have more emails on my personal email. My VentureBeat email, very often, because some people don't work weekend, so they're not going to be giving me anything, but it will still be like 70-80. There's also in my personal email, because my personal email and my VentureBeat email are very similar. People just send stuff – with my email.

[0:07:14] **BB:** You're getting hit in two inboxes then?

[0:07:16] **ED:** Yeah.

[0:07:17] **BB:** It sounds like.

[0:07:18] **ED:** Yeah.

[0:07:18] **BB:** Wow. Okay. Wow. Okay. What do you do to navigate it or is there anything to do to navigate it for you?

[0:07:25] **ED:** I'm a zero-inbox person.

[0:07:27] **BB:** You are. Yes. I'm in that club too. It's so satisfying. How does it get to zero? How often?

[0:07:32] **ED:** I check maybe every 30 minutes. Every time I end a call.

[0:07:37] **BB:** Yup.

[0:07:37] **ED:** Every time I end a call, so wait, let's be aware of this. The main tab on my browser is always my Gmail or my work email.

[0:07:47] **BB:** Same. Same for me too.

[0:07:49] **ED:** Every time I close a zoom window or anything, it goes back to my email and I will check. That's how I keep my inbox clean. I will sometimes be in a rush to read it like on my phone if I'm on the train, which I apologize to a lot of PR people. That's usually what happens when I'm like, "I'm so sorry. I thought I reply to this." It's because I looked at it on the train –

[0:08:15] **BB:** But then you didn't reply to it.

[0:08:17] **ED:** Yeah. Because I couldn't send it. So, I was like, like I flagged it, so I can read it and then I forgot that it was there. But yeah.

[0:08:27] **BB:** But the inbox is zero. You mean that?

[0:08:29] **ED:** Yeah. But I do sometimes I don't read a lot of the emails, because I'm just rushing up to the end of it. I figured out ways to try and read –

[0:08:38] **BB:** Now, so you get to inbox zero, but do you open every email or what do you do?

[0:08:42] **ED:** I do open every email. Well, okay.

[0:08:44] BB: Emilia, you were getting the award. Oh, my God, because – keep going, keep going.

[0:08:49] ED: I get to newsletter like I get the justice department email alerts, because anti-trust.

[0:08:57] BB: Yes, absolutely.

[0:08:59] ED: I made a mistake somehow when I get every criminal investigation they're doing and they can't change it. So, when I know that it isn't relevant to me, I just not read it. If I see the words top 10 states, that's that for some reason didn't go through the filter and I will – and not read it.

[0:09:20] BB: I mean, if that's coming from a publicist that's just some newswire thing.

[0:09:24] ED: Oh, no, that's coming from some PR.

[0:09:26] BB: Oh, interesting.

[0:09:27] ED: I've been in states that are interested in AI. I don't care.

[0:09:31] BB: Okay. Yeah. Okay, noted.

[0:09:33] ED: I do know specifically which ones that I'm not going to be reading. Oftentimes, I end up clicking on something, because I thought the subject line was something relevant. Then it turns out that it's not, but yeah.

[MESSAGE]

[0:09:49] ANNOUNCER: Today's interview will continue after this brief message brought to you by OnePitch. Are you curious to learn about the unique ways OnePitch helps brands engage with the right journalists? Head to onepitch.co and create your own custom media list in five minutes or less. Now back to today's episode.

[INTERVIEW CONTINUED]

[0:10:12] BB: What about relationships? You are here in New York City. Do you want to meet? I mean, we've seen you, Emilia, so we know. But do you want to meet publicist? Do you want to have any relationships with them? What's or tell us how we could do that.

[0:10:26] ED: I'm in a we work phone booth right now. The reason I'm in a we work phone booth is that should be just fully remote, but I go outside, the outside world, because I'm often meeting people. I met with a CEO today. Last night I had dinner with a publicist. I do go out and meet people. Then I end up, because I have other calls, I end up having to go to a we work, because I have trouble working from a coffee shop and I have to talk to someone, because I have record.

[0:11:00] BB: Yeah.

[0:11:01] ED: Yeah. If it's, I like having coffee with publicist. I like just chatting about which clients they have. Of course, to also clarify what my beat is, what our coverage area is, because they feel terrible that I sometimes can't write some stories, but it's how it is. I like clarifying that. It also keeps my inbox nice and streamlined. I tend to meet with a lot of CEOs who might be rolling into town if they have something interesting to say. I may be willing to go and meet with them in person.

[0:11:37] BB: Okay. Maybe willing. Maybe willing is the key thing. Okay. We talked about relationship building sounds like you meet people in person. If it makes sense, what about sources for you? What type of sources are you, if any, are you looking for like, "Oh, I'm the AI expert from NYU." Whatever. I'm an author of this book and so forth. So, what are those sources look like?

[0:11:58] ED: VentureBeats, audience are the technical decision makers. If we could talk to the technical decision makers, whether it's the CEO, or the CTO, or the product lead or something, I'd love to them. We are also always looking for engineers, senior engineers or even just engineers who are working on very interesting projects. We think that the people who really are building these technologies or maybe seeing the impact of a lot of these different models and

applications are the engineers and the developers. Oftentimes, they have clearance to say something.

We're also very much looking for a lot of those people who have more hands-on variance using a lot of technology to give us their opinions, to give us an idea of if yeah, we definitely are using open AI 01, because it's great for reasoning. Those are fantastic. We'd love to hear though. We do very much prefer people who are making the technical decisions and who have the experience and are really using and working with this technology, with generative AI.

[0:13:16] BB: Okay. The people on the trenches, the technical people with the pedigrees in terms of probably the titles.

[0:13:22] ED: Yeah.

[0:13:23] BB: Okay. CTOs. Probably your gems.

[0:13:26] ED: Yeah. I actually just met with the CEO this morning.

[0:13:30] BB: Oh, well, you said CEO, but like CTOs as well.

[0:13:32] ED: Yes. CEO, CTO, product lead. Yeah.

[0:13:38] BB: Okay. Notice. Question. We have an audience ask. I don't know who asked it in our community, we call it, Pitch Posse, but the audience ask is what recommendations do you have for reporters and PR professionals to effectively integrate AI techniques into their work? Do you have any, what's is that you like being the report? This is interesting, because I haven't asked a reporter who covers AI. What you use for AI.

[0:14:02] ED: Yeah. I can talk about like how and why I use it. So, like all reporters, I use author AI.

[0:14:09] BB: Okay. Great.

[0:14:10] ED: All reporters. I said earlier, I record my conversations. I do. I record my interviews. Part of it is the training I've had in previous jobs. Part of it is I don't understand my notes very often. I'm also the type of person that sometimes my brain floats away and it comes back and it's like, "Oh, no, I missed that." Which is why I record my conversations. I use Author AI. I've also been using I've been a beta tester for another transcription product. I don't know if I can say the product.

[0:14:44] BB: We don't need to say it, but a transcription product.

[0:14:46] ED: But I definitely, I've relied on transcription tools since maybe 2016, no, not 2016, maybe 2017, 2018 when, because I hate transcribing. I hate it.

[0:15:01] BB: Who does that? No, no.

[0:15:03] ED: I definitely use that. I mostly through the necessity of my job, I do pay for the premium subscriptions for ChatGPT, Gemini, Claude, and Perplexity. The reasons for that is sometimes there are product launches that they have that are specific moving for subscriptions.

[0:15:27] BB: Oh, you use it as a scoop way.

[0:15:29] ED: Yeah. Well, not so much as a scoop way, it's when they have the press release, I want to be able to see and –

[0:15:37] BB: Verify. Oh, yeah. Yeah. Yeah.

[0:15:40] ED: Yeah. I read a lot of research papers about these new models, these new techniques. I often don't really understand a lot of first go. So, I honestly – a lot of these papers into ChatGPT or NotebookLM.

[0:15:59] BB: Oh, my God. This is so Meta. You take the AI report and you put it through AI to tell you what it's – oh, God. Wow.

[0:16:07] ED: Then I ask if like what's the – I ask you to summarize this. If there's a specific thing I want to do, I ask, it's like, what does this paper say about entropy? For example. How does it use entropy with large language models? Then it would give me the answer. If I find it faster this way, I still do read the paper, because I need to be able to quote it. But it gives me a better idea of the technical information that's in the paper in a much faster way than if I spent three hours reading it, which is what normally happens. Then the other way I use AI is at VentureBeat. We use Midjourney and DALL.E and anything else. A lot of these AI image generators generate the header photos for our stories.

[0:17:01] BB: Oh, good to know.

[0:17:04] ED: Basically, so we can make stock photos, but it's always within a certain, it has to look like comic book. We don't like get to anything.

[0:17:13] BB: Yes. Exactly. Exactly.

[0:17:15] ED: But we very much like credit that it's made from made using an AI image generator, but that's a lot of the usage that I use AI apps for.

[0:17:28] BB: Okay. Good answer. Again, I don't know who you ask that on our question list here, but hey, that was great. Okay. We don't have too much time, but I am going to ask you, because I can't help myself. What's your take on AI? Are you like, you can get super – like on a scale of one to 10, how high is it? 10 being over the, this is going to be the next dotcom go like the bus and like buckle your seatbelt or you're like, no, this is going to profoundly change pretty much everything.

[0:17:51] ED: I'm about a six, 6.5. I do not believe that AGI will happen in the next five years. I will be the first person to say that AI isn't very intelligent. What's intelligence comes from how humans have been feeding information. I personally have not played a lot with a one just yet, because I haven't even put it. You can't upload the PDF documents for a one to read with yet. So, that's my main use of ChatGPT, so I don't code, so I can't ask the code –

[0:18:30] BB: Yeah. I was so mad yesterday, Emilia, I put, I copied my whole entire PR book, Immediate Relations book, that is coming out for everybody. It's like 50,000 words. I was like, "Write me a summary." It was like, "Oh, exceeded capacity." I'm like, "What? What? What?" I'm like, done. I can't.

[0:18:49] ED: I mean, honestly, it helped make my life easier.

[0:18:53] BB: Yes.

[0:18:54] ED: It's made my understanding or at least the time that I normally devote to something much shorter, but that's been the promise of AI even before it became generative. That's what machine learning was for. Actually, that's more cool baseline algorithms were always for. It was to make things go faster. Do I think it's going to be transformative? Yes. I do believe that it's going to be as transformative in the way the internet has been transformative.

[0:19:23] BB: I think so, too. Yeah. But there's a lot of crap right now.

[0:19:28] ED: It will not, both our flights suggest yet, because there's so much other stuff that goes on to get to that point. Agents don't talk to each other. Models still have a hard time interoperating. I do think, however, that the most impact generative AI will have not necessarily be on consumers. Consumers will get the fun stuff, but it's actually on the enterprises and that's always the case ever since AI began in the 80s. It was always going to be in the enterprises.

People, the public will always just get the fun stuff, but like the way people work or the way the public kind of understands things is through experience and actual physical things. That's what makes life enjoyable. Honestly, I'm also of the camp of the way AI will actually change the public consumers. It's if it can make the work that they do easier, so they can spend time with their families. It's not behaving for them. I think we need an AI that can do my laundry, so I can actually have more fun with my friends.

[0:20:40] BB: Yup. I'm with you, Emilia. I'm so glad I asked that. I know we were coming up on time, because we had to go down this juicy path of all the AI stuff real quick. I have my quick little list of some rapid-fire questions, so let's hit it real quick. Video or phone interview?

[0:20:55] **ED:** Honestly, both. It's the same for me.

[0:20:59] **BB:** Bullet points or paragraphs and pitches?

[0:21:01] **ED:** Oh, bullet points.

[0:21:03] **BB:** Okay. Short or long pitches?

[0:21:04] **ED:** Long.

[0:21:05] **BB:** Long. Oh, my gosh. I'm getting like more and more people saying long. Wow. Okay, we're on to something.

[0:21:11] **ED:** Well, not too long. Just right amount of long.

[0:21:13] **BB:** Okay, the right amount of long. Basically, so you don't have to follow up with more questions.

[0:21:16] **ED:** Yes.

[0:21:17] **BB:** There we go. There we go. Okay. Images attached or a drop box zip file?

[0:21:22] **ED:** Drop box.

[0:21:23] **BB:** Drop box. Okay. Email or a DM on your social somewhere, LinkedIn, X?

[0:21:28] **ED:** Email.

[0:21:29] **BB:** Wow. All the things. All the things. Direct or creative subject lines?

[0:21:34] **ED:** Direct.

[0:21:34] **BB**: Oh, yeah. Press release or media kit?

[0:21:36] **ED**: Oh, press release and media kit.

[0:21:39] **BB**: Wait, press release and media kit?

[0:21:41] **ED**: Press release in the media kit.

[0:21:43] **BB**: Oh, in the media kit. Oh, okay. Haven't gotten that answer before. Good. You just mentioned too that you already do reading of your emails pretty much every 30 minutes. You got to get that thing to zero.

[0:21:53] **ED**: Yes.

[0:21:53] **BB**: You got to get that thing to zero. Emilia, is there anything else you would like to promote, tell, celebrate about you and your fabulous self? Hopefully you're going to a Taylor Swift concert again, soon?

[0:22:03] **ED**: No. I still didn't get any.

[0:22:06] **BB**: Damn.

[0:22:07] **ED**: I no longer am willing to fly to a concert. I'm out of the need, because of all the concerts I've been to. Honestly, I'm open to pitches, but I would really love it if you research what my beat was.

[0:22:22] **BB**: Yes, please. Everybody, please.

[0:22:25] **ED**: Yeah. I think honestly, that's it. Please read VentureBeat.

[0:22:29] **BB**: Please, read VentureBeat, everybody. Please, send Emilia good, direct subject lines so you don't get zeroed out on her inbox zero initiative. Bravo to you, Emilia. Bravo to you. It's a small club in the journalist world that has zero. Looking at you.

[0:22:47] ED: It's called anxiety, but sure.

[0:22:49] BB: Sure. Sure. We'll take whatever. Emilia David, thank you so much for being on today. Everybody, enterprise. Enterprise AI. She's a Senior AI reporter at VentureBeat. Thank you, Emilia. Hopefully I'll see you soon, again. That'd be so fun.

[0:23:02] ED: Yes. Bye. Actually, eating a 30 French again next week.

[0:23:06] BB: Oh, great. Oh, so good. Okay, everybody. That's a place in the east. It's super delicious. We had a dinner there, it was fabulous. Thanks, Emilia. See you.

[0:23:15] ED: Bye.

[END OF INTERVIEW]

[0:23:16] ANNOUNCER: Thanks for listening to this week's Coffee with a Journalist episode with Emilia David, Senior AI reporter at VentureBeat. For more exclusive insights about the journalists on this podcast, subscribe to our weekly podcast newsletter at onepitch.co/ podcast. We'll see you next week, but until then, start great stories.

[END]