



# Transforming the Studies in the News Workflow

An AI-Assisted Platform for the CRB Newsletter

---

The Studies in the News Workflow is an AI-assisted platform designed to streamline the weekly production of the CRB's Studies in the News newsletter, reducing manual coordination effort while maintaining quality and consistency across scouts, guest editors, and reviewers.

December 9, 2025  
Status: Design Phase

# Our Work Informs California's Most Influential Leaders

The Studies in the News (SITN) newsletter is a critical resource for over 4,200 subscribers, delivering timely, relevant, and high-quality research summaries. The quality and efficiency of our production process directly impact our ability to serve our key audience.

**4,200+**  
subscribers



## State Policy Makers

Rely on SITN for concise, unbiased information.



## Legislative Staff

Use our summaries for research and briefing.

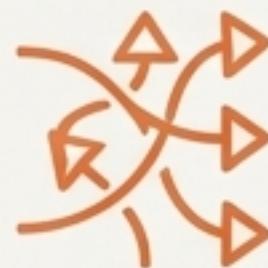


## CRB Researchers & Analysts

Depend on the newsletter for situational awareness.

# Our Current Process is Strained by Manual Effort and Fragmentation

The current production process relies on multiple manual steps across fragmented systems (OneDrive, Teams, MailChimp, Excel), creating significant friction and risk.



## Time-Consuming Coordination

Constant manual handoffs between scouts, guest editors, and reviewers.



## Inconsistent Quality

Varying interpretations of guidelines lead to inconsistent entry quality.



## Limited Scalability

Rotating roles and manual copy/paste workflows create process friction and are difficult to scale.



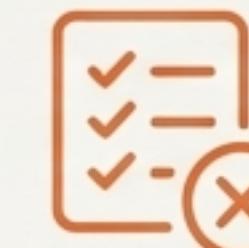
## Knowledge Silos

Processes are memory-dependent with minimal formal documentation.



## Reduced Efficiency

4-5 sets of eyes are required on each issue, straining limited staff resources.

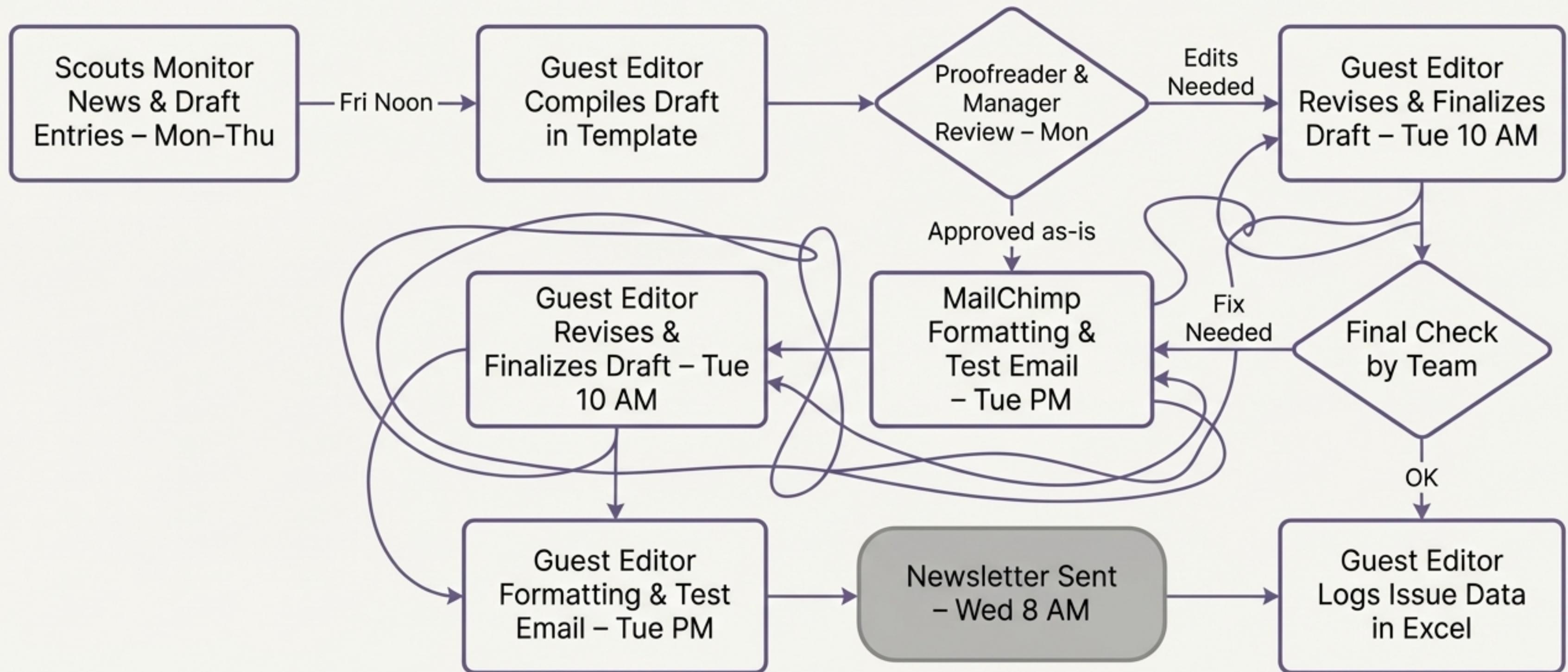


## No Automated Quality Checks

Manual detection of bias, methodology issues, duplicates, and broken links.

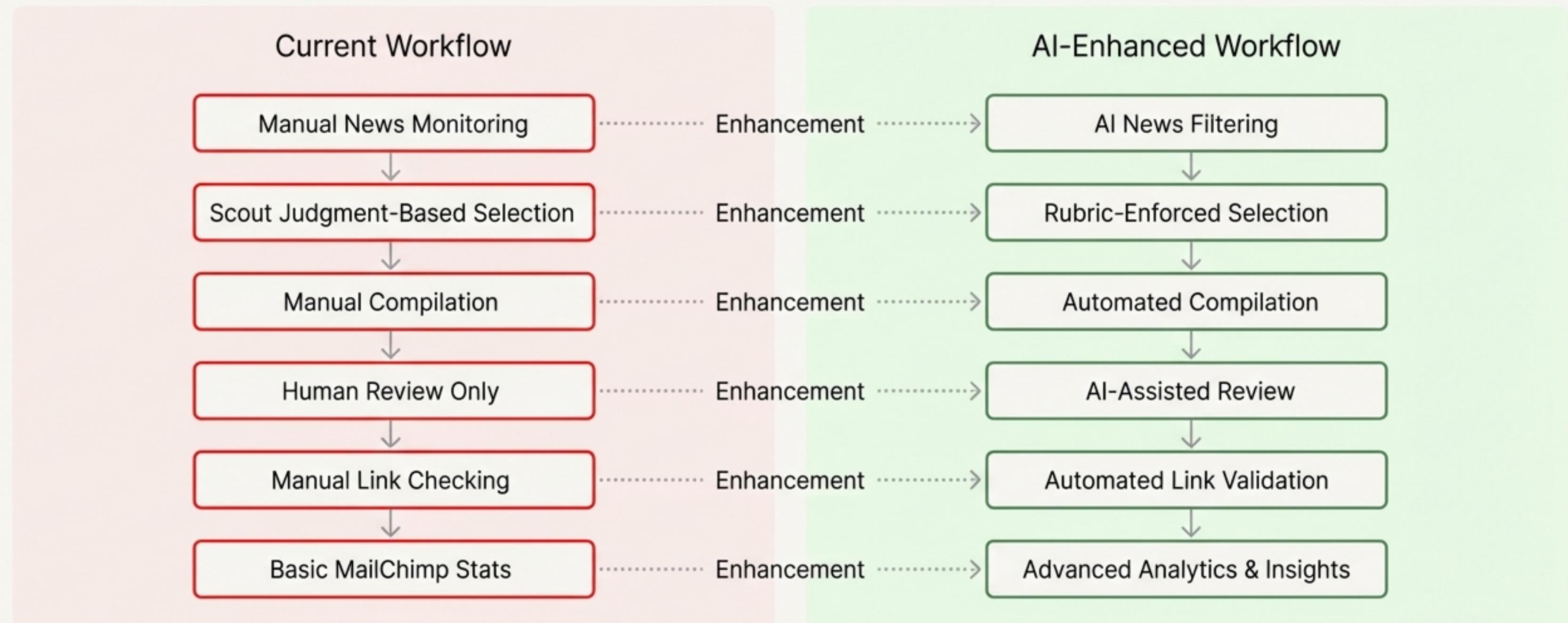
# Visualizing the Current Weekly Production Cycle

Our Friday-to-Wednesday timeline involves a complex sequence of manual compilations, reviews, and formatting checks, creating significant time pressure.



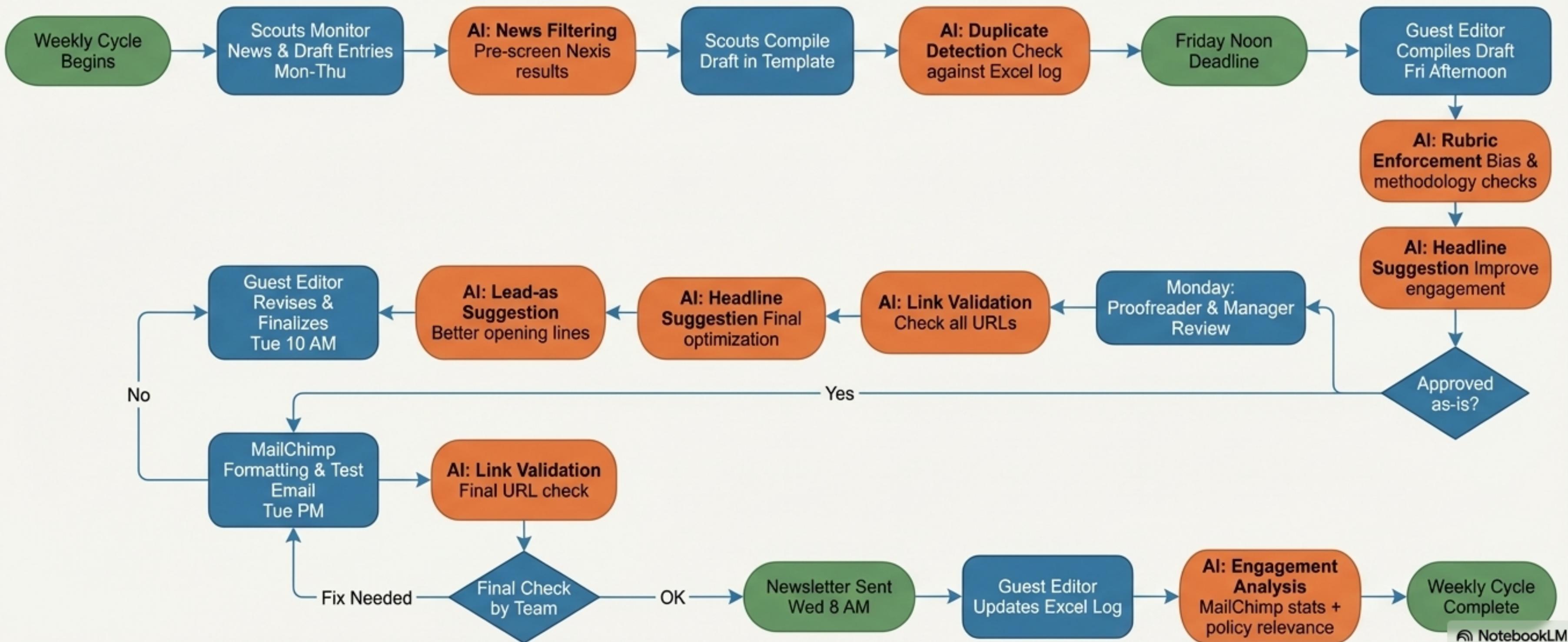
# The Solution: A Unified Platform to Automate, Assist, and Analyze

We are building a Next.js-powered web application that centralizes the entire workflow, leveraging AI to enhance each stage of the process from content discovery to analytics.



# Our Future State: An AI-Enhanced Workflow

The new application embeds intelligent automation directly into the production cycle, reducing manual tasks and empowering the team to focus on high-value work.



# Core Capabilities of the New Platform

The application is built around six core capabilities designed to address every stage of the newsletter production lifecycle.

## 1. Scout Workflow Management

Centralized content discovery, entry creation, and submission tracking.

## 2. AI-Assisted Quality Control

Automated rubric enforcement, bias detection, and methodology checks.

## 3. Guest Editor Dashboard

Streamlined compilation interface with automated duplicate detection.

## 4. Collaborative Review System

Integrated editing and approval workflow with real-time collaboration.

## 5. MailChimp Integration

Automated formatting and test email distribution.

## 6. Analytics & Insights

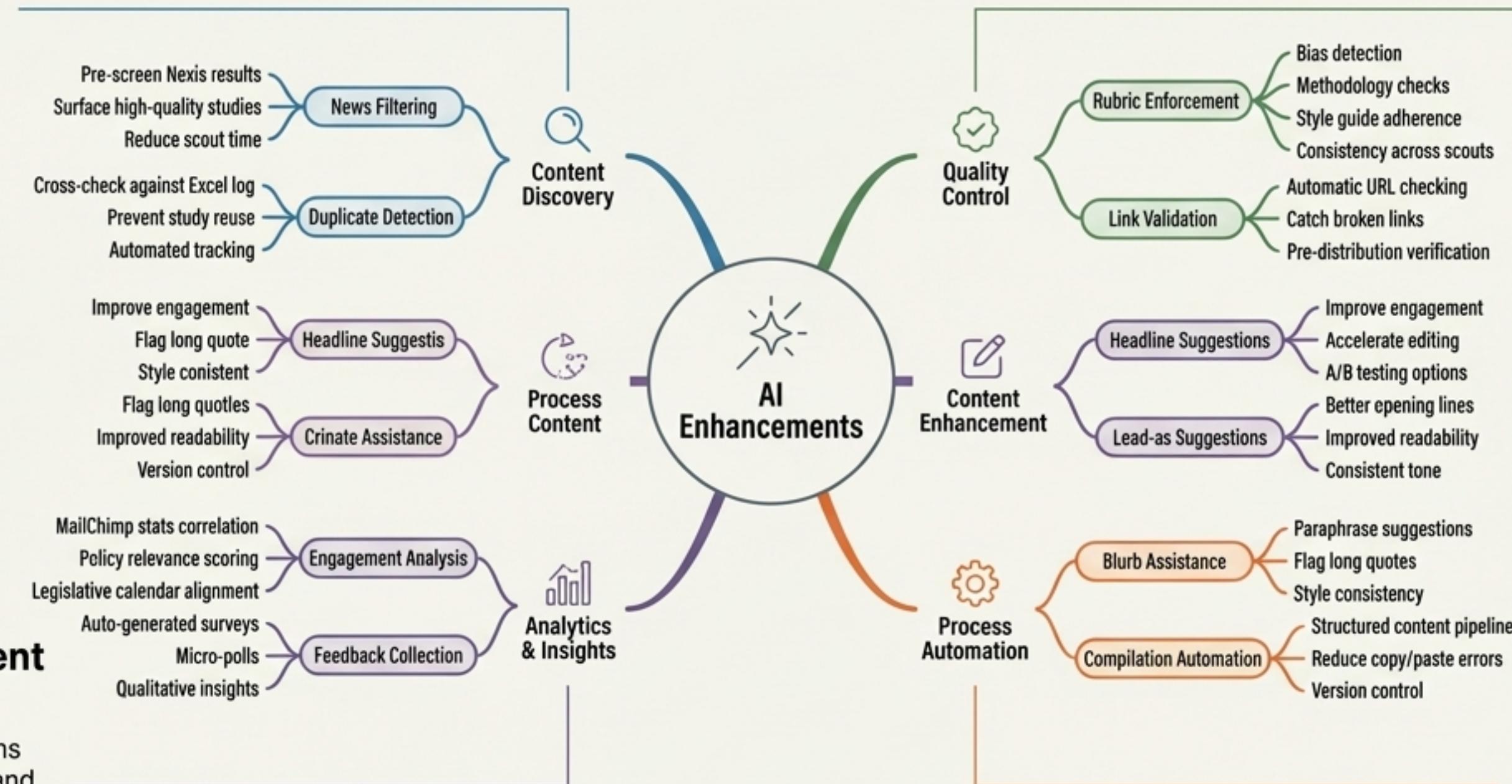
Engagement tracking, policy relevance scoring, and feedback collection.

# How AI Will Elevate Our Workflow

AI enhancements are strategically applied across the workflow to improve efficiency, quality, and content engagement.

## Intelligent Content Curation

AI-powered news filtering and automated duplicate detection to surface the best content faster.



## Enhanced Content Creation

AI-generated suggestions for engaging headlines and improved lead-as sentences to accelerate editing.

## Automated Quality Control

Real-time checks for bias, methodology, rubric compliance, and broken links to ensure consistency.

## Process Automation

Tools to assist with blurb writing and newsletter compilation, reducing manual copy/paste errors.

# A Human-Centered Design Built for Our Team

Every feature is directly mapped to the needs of the people who produce the SITN newsletter, from initial content discovery to final approval.

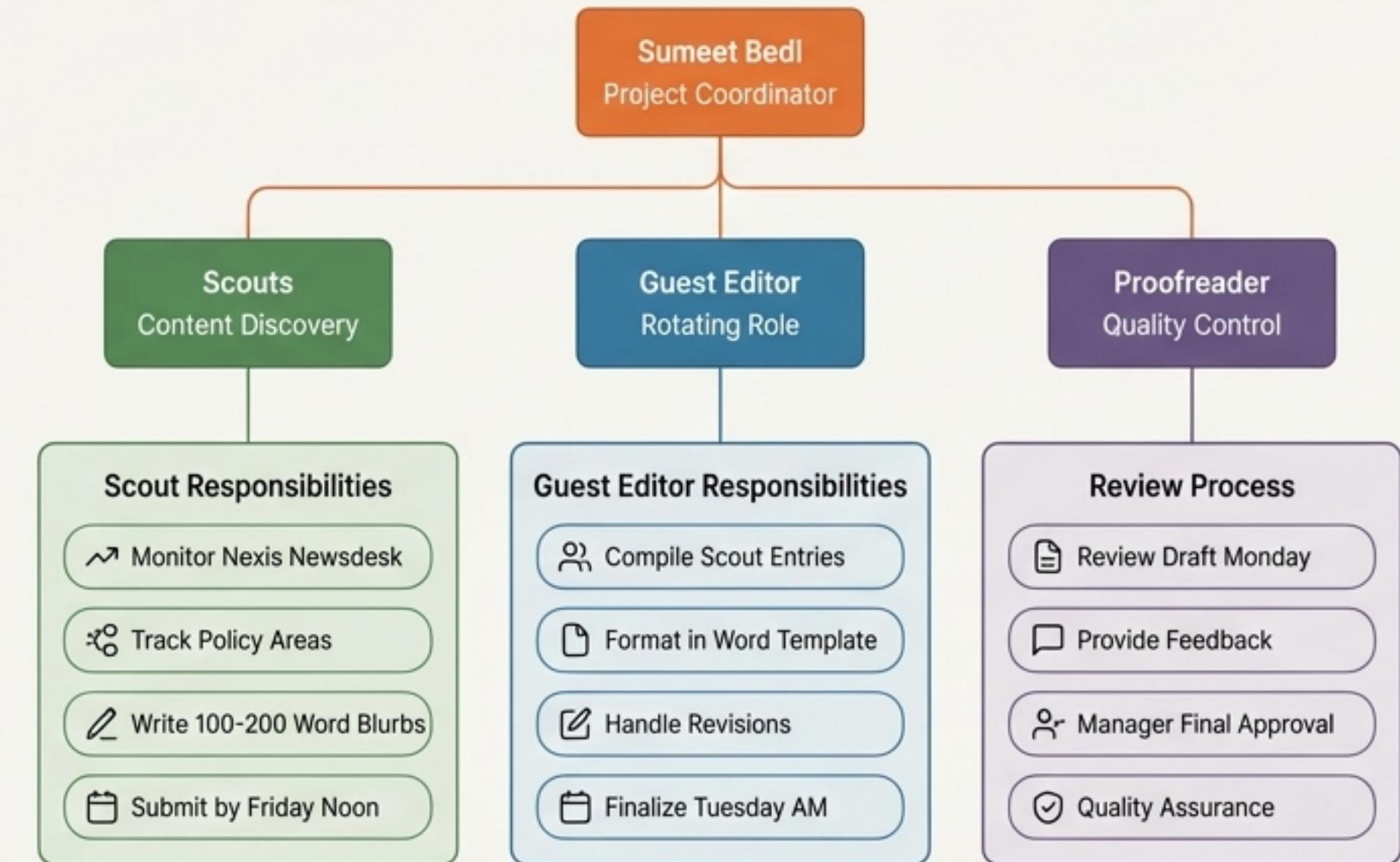
**For Scouts:** Clear guidelines and real-time AI

**For Scouts:** Clear guidelines and real-time AI feedback to create high-quality entries efficiently.

**For Guest Editors:** An automated dashboard to streamline compilation and eliminate manual duplicate checks.

**For Proofreaders & Manager:** An integrated review system with automated link validation and headline suggestions to focus on quality assurance.

**For the Project Coordinator:** A holistic view of the entire process to ensure consistency and reduce manual oversight.



# Our Phased Implementation Roadmap

We will deliver value incrementally over a 12-month period, starting with low-friction wins and progressing to full-scale optimization and sustainability.

## Phase 1: Pilot (Months 1-3)

**Theme:** Focus on low-friction wins like a news filtering model and rubric checker prototype.

- 🔍 News filtering model
- 📋 Rubric checker prototype
- 📰 AI-generated newsletter template

## Phase 2: Scaling (Months 4-6)

**Theme:** Standardize processes with a bias detection dashboard and scout workflow integration.

- 📊 Bias detection dashboard
- 📄 Automated draft generation
- 🌐 Scout workflow integration

## Phase 3: Optimization (Months 7-9)

**Theme:** Deliver strategic insights with policy coverage analytics and relevance scoring.

- 📋 Policy coverage analytics
- ⌚ CA relevance scoring
- 🤖 Training chatbot for new scouts

## Phase 4: Sustainability (Months 10-12)

**Theme:** Ensure continuous improvement with automated action items and periodic process reviews.

- ↗ Continuous improvement:
  - Automated action item capture
- ⟳ Iterative rubric refinement
- ⌚ Periodic process reviews

Month 1

Month 3

Month 6

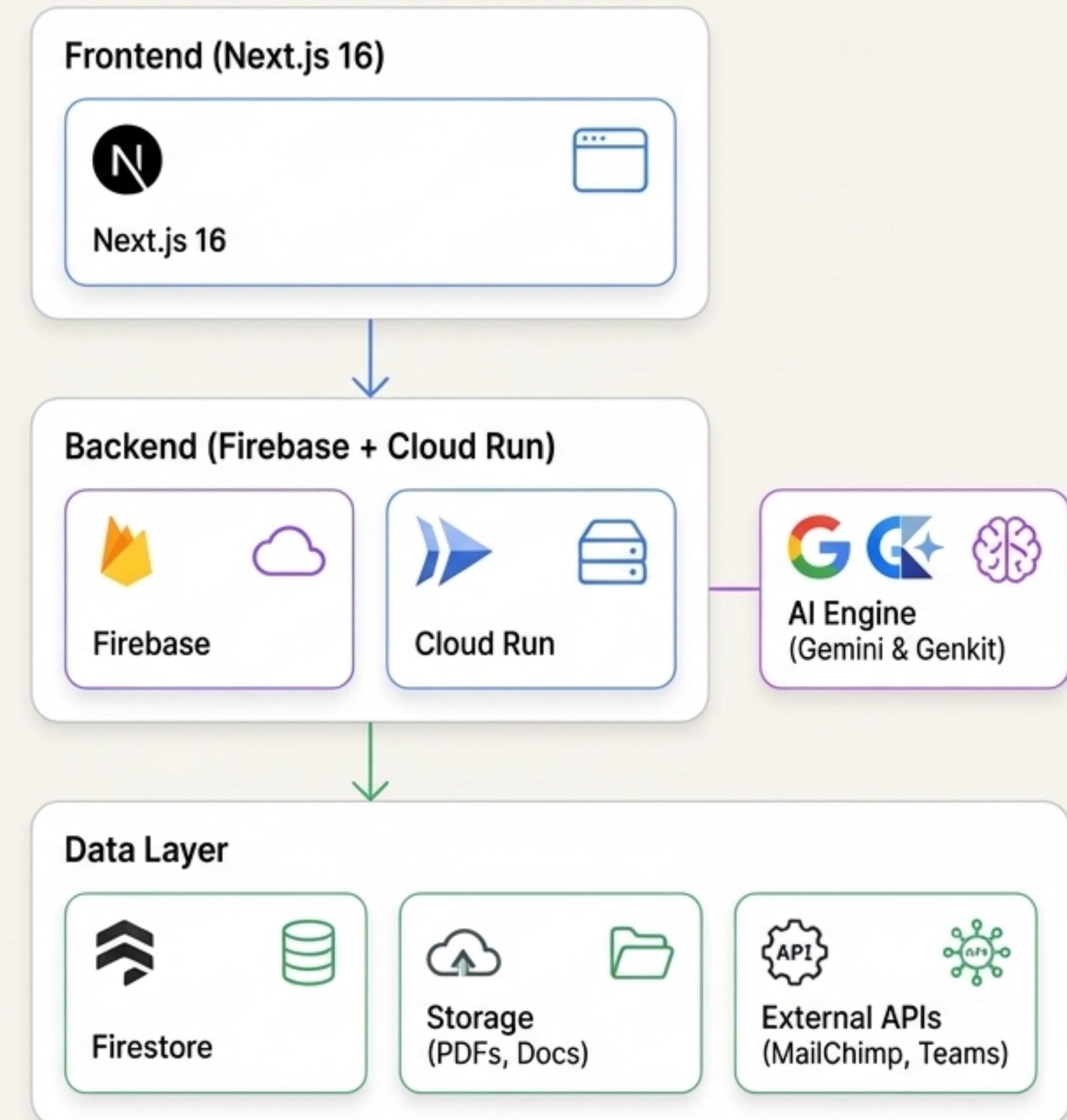
Month 9

Month 12

# Built on a Modern and Scalable Technology Stack

The application leverages a cloud-native architecture to ensure performance, reliability, and security.

- \* **Frontend:** A responsive web application built with **Next.js 16**.
- \* **Backend:** Serverless logic and AI runtime powered by **Firebase** and **Cloud Run**.
- \* **Data Layer:** Secure and scalable data management using **Firestore**, Storage, and external APIs.
- \* **AI Engine:** Intelligence driven by **Gemini** models via the **Genkit** framework.



# Key Project Milestones and Timeline

The project is already in the Design Phase, with development planned to deliver an MVP in Q1 2026.



## MVP Workflow Foundation

Q1 2026

Core application with scout entry, guest editor compilation, and basic review system.



## AI-Assisted Quality Control

Q2 2026

Integration of bias detection, methodology checks, and rubric enforcement.



## Full Automation Integration

Q3 2026

MailChimp integration, automated Excel logging, and analytics dashboard.

# How We Will Measure Success

The project's success will be evaluated against specific, measurable improvements in efficiency, quality, and staff satisfaction.



Time to Compile Draft  
**< 2 hours**



Review Cycle Time  
**< 4 hours**



Duplicate Prevention  
**100% detection**



Link Validation  
**100% valid links**



Quality Consistency  
**> 90% rubric  
compliance**



Staff Time Saved  
**> 30% reduction  
in manual effort**



Process Satisfaction  
**> 4.0 / 5.0**

# The Strategic Impact: More Time for High-Value Work

By transforming our workflow, we are not just building a tool; we are investing in our ability to deliver exceptional value to our readers. This platform will empower the CRB team by driving key improvements across the board.

## Increased Efficiency

Radically reducing time spent on manual coordination and repetitive tasks.

## Enhanced Quality

Ensuring consistency and accuracy through automated checks and rubric enforcement.

## Greater Scalability

Seamlessly supporting rotating roles and future growth without process degradation.

## Higher Staff Satisfaction

Freeing up team members to focus on strategic analysis and content curation, not process management.

