

WAYFINDER

Review/Preview
Trends Report 24-25



∞ TRANSFER OF POWER

Wayfinder 2025 maps the profound power shift reshaping media. For decades, we've witnessed how digital transformed the way we create and consume content. Now, we face a more fundamental change: a revolution in who – or what – has the power to shape our information landscape.

This report identifies 9 dynamics that illustrate how control and creative power is being redistributed across the media ecosystem. We see traditional publishers yielding authority to AI systems that can generate instant content. Individual creators scaling to become media powerhouses. Audiences gaining unprecedented control over how they experience content. And beneath it all, artificial intelligence is not simply automating creation – it's fundamentally altering who holds agency in the media landscape.

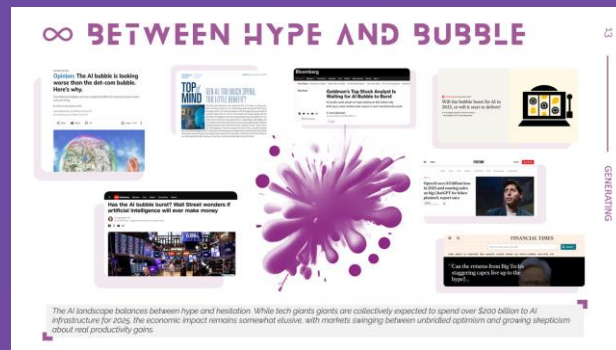
But this is not a story of simple transfer of power. Research reveals a more nuanced reality: we're moving from an era of fixed control to one of fluid influence. The most successful players in this new landscape aren't those who hold tight to traditional forms of agency, but those who learn to orchestrate multiple forces – human creativity, artificial intelligence, community engagement, and market dynamics – into harmony.

Through frameworks, case studies, and concrete examples, this report shows how organizations and creators can navigate and thrive in this new reality. The future belongs not to those who try to maintain absolute control, but to those who understand how to conduct this new symphony of shared agency.

EZRA EEMAN, WAYFINDER

∞ HOW TO READ THIS REPORT

SKIM THE HEADLINES



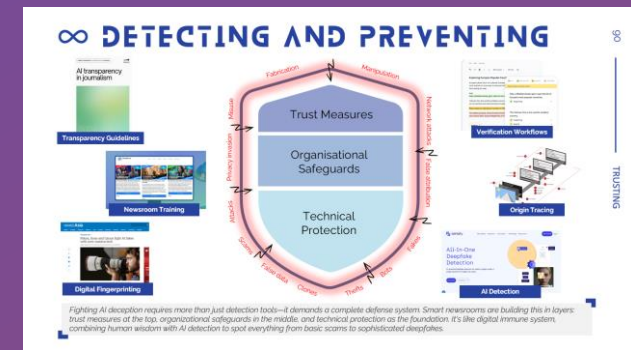
No time, no worries. The report is designed in such a way that you can go through it at a glance. Titles and images provide a high-level story.

READ A CHAPTER



Choose your own adventure. Each chapter can be read separately. A short paragraph provides extra background per slide.

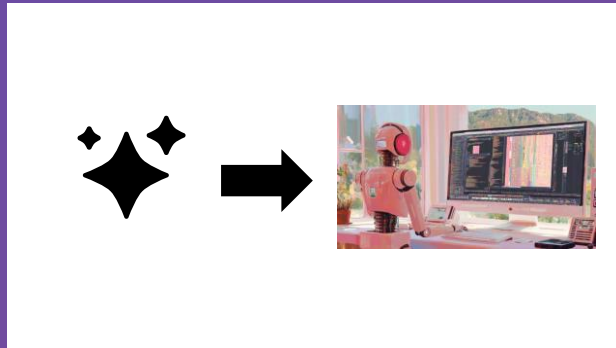
EXPLORE THE LINKS



And for those who can't get enough. The entire document is full of links leading to original reports and relevant background articles.

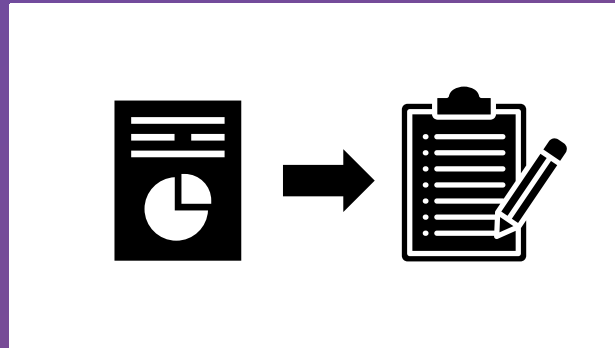
∞ HOW AI WAS USED

IMAGE GENERATION



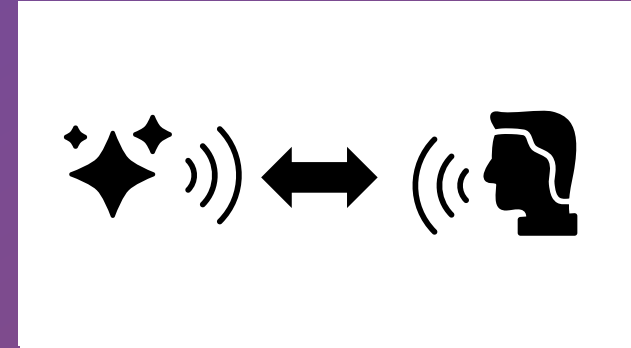
AI was used to create custom images to match each theme. These images aim not to replicate what can be photographed but to visualize what cannot be captured through lenses.

SUMMARIZATION



The Wayfinder Review/Preview Report is the culmination of a year spent reading reports and taking notes. Utilizing AI for summarization has been invaluable in keeping these notes concise.

BRAINSTORM PARTNER



In crafting the Wayfinder Review/Preview Report, AI served as a dynamic brainstorming ally to explore ideas, connect the dots, and discover new perspectives.

∞ OUTLINE

OUVERTURE: OUT OF CONTROL

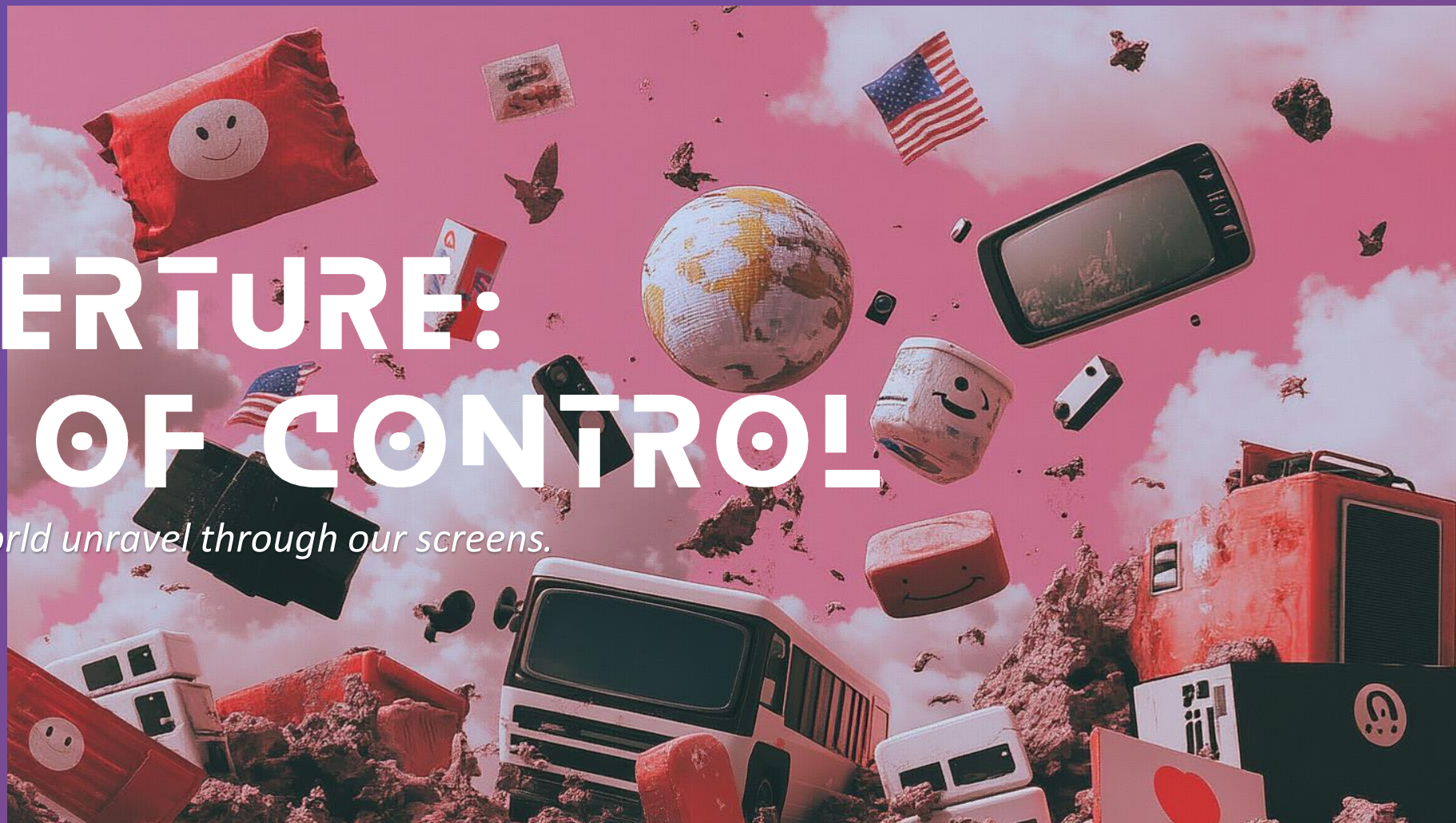
1. GENERATING
2. ORCHESTRATING
3. DISCOVERING
4. EXPRESSING
5. CONNECTING
6. SCALING
7. BLENDING
8. TRUSTING
9. TRANSFORMING

CODA: TOWARDS A NEW BALANCE



OUVERTURE: OUT OF CONTROL!

Watching the world unravel through our screens.



A full-page background image showing an astronaut in a white spacesuit with a large backpack, seen from behind, looking out of a circular window of a space station. The view outside shows the Earth's horizon and swirling white clouds against a dark sky. The interior of the station is visible on the left and right, showing various equipment and structural elements.

In 1991, cosmonaut Sergei Krikalev left Earth for the Russian space station Mir. While he floated in orbit, the Soviet Union dissolved. By the time he returned, the world he knew was gone. From space, all he could do was watch as his reality unraveled.

82%
**Feel powerless
regarding world
developments**

Source: <https://www.jean-jaures.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/12/exode-inform.pdf>

Today, we all sometimes feel like Krikalev. Through our screens, we witness the world accelerating—political upheaval, technological disruption, climate crisis. Media has become our orbit, framing how we see and sense reality. We observe the shifting landscapes of our time. We see, but no longer touch. We witness, but rarely act.

∞ THE FRAGILE NOW



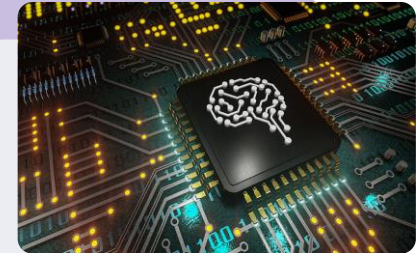
There will be more extreme weather events in 2025 than there were in 2024

72%



Nuclear weapons will be used in a conflict somewhere in the world

49%



A rogue AI program that can't be shut down will cause significant havoc

35%



It's unlikely people will become more tolerant of each other

67%



Social media scrolling leaves some kind of negative emotion

49%



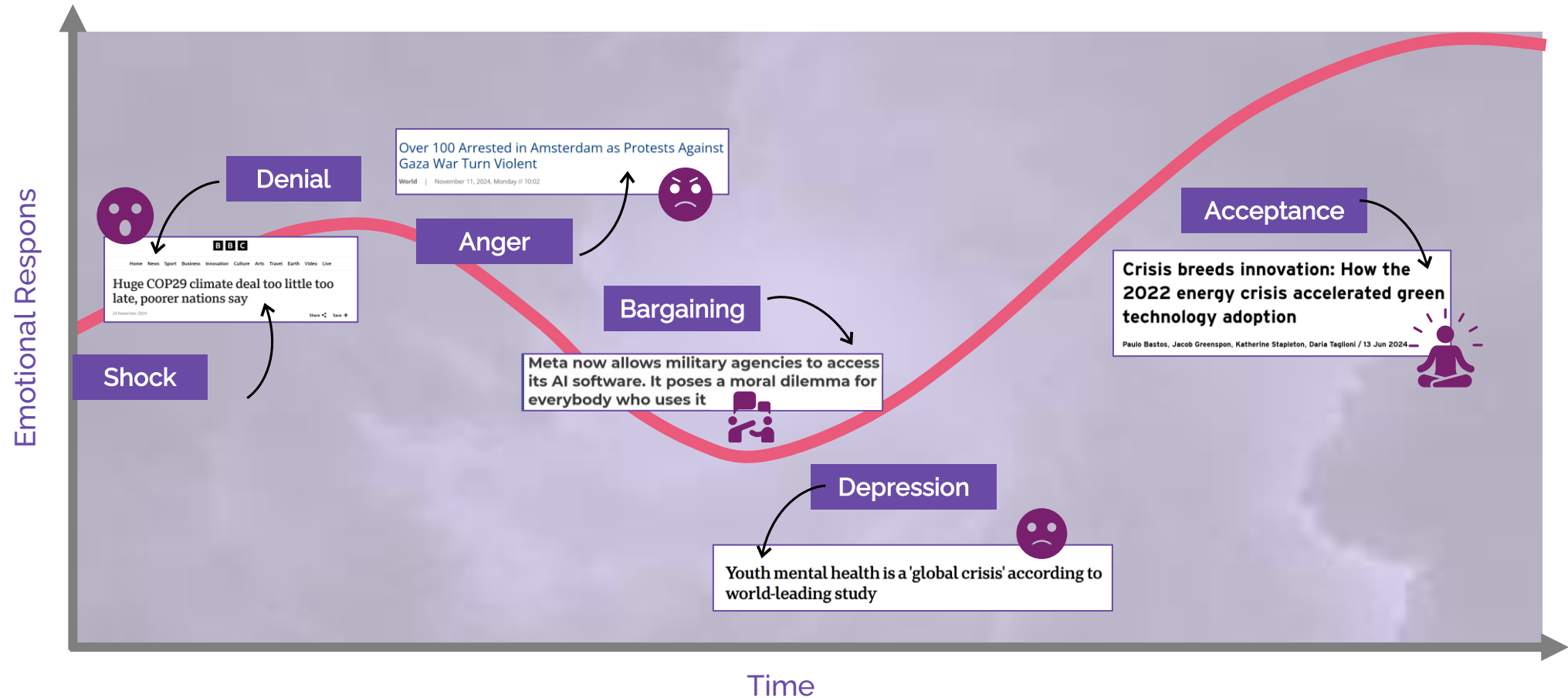
Prices will increase faster than people's income

79%

Sources: Ipsos predictions 2025, McKinsey Health Institute 2023

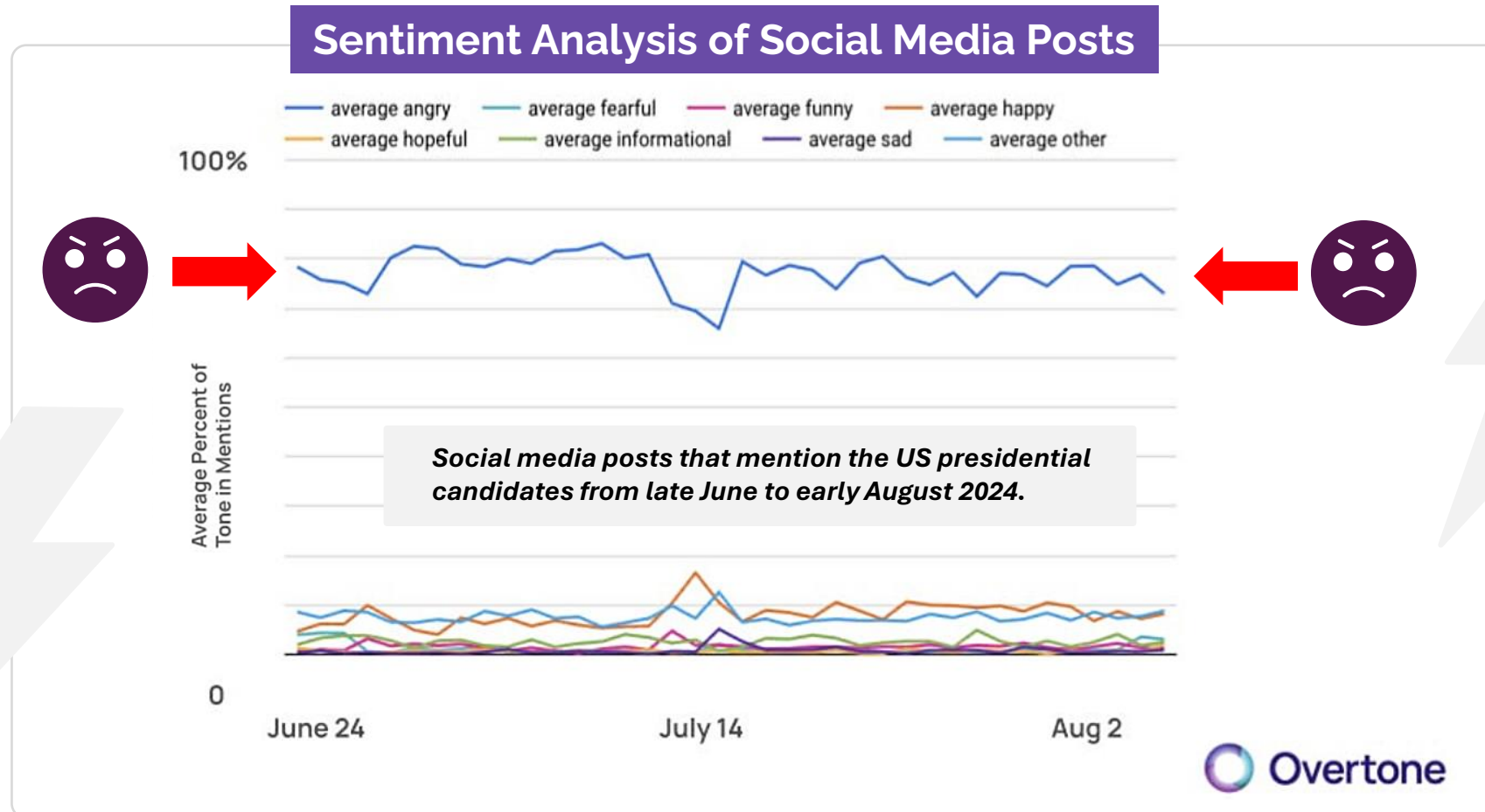
The world we knew is coming apart at the seams. What once felt certain - global cooperation, trust in facts, stable institutions - now feels shaky and unpredictable. This isn't just happening out there in the news - it's hitting close to home, changing how we live and what we can count on.

∞ A SENSE OF LOSS



We're moving through grief's familiar stages as we face a changed world. From climate shock to AI anxiety, from protest anger to mental health struggles - our collective emotional journey shows up in headlines and social feeds, revealing how we're all processing massive change together.

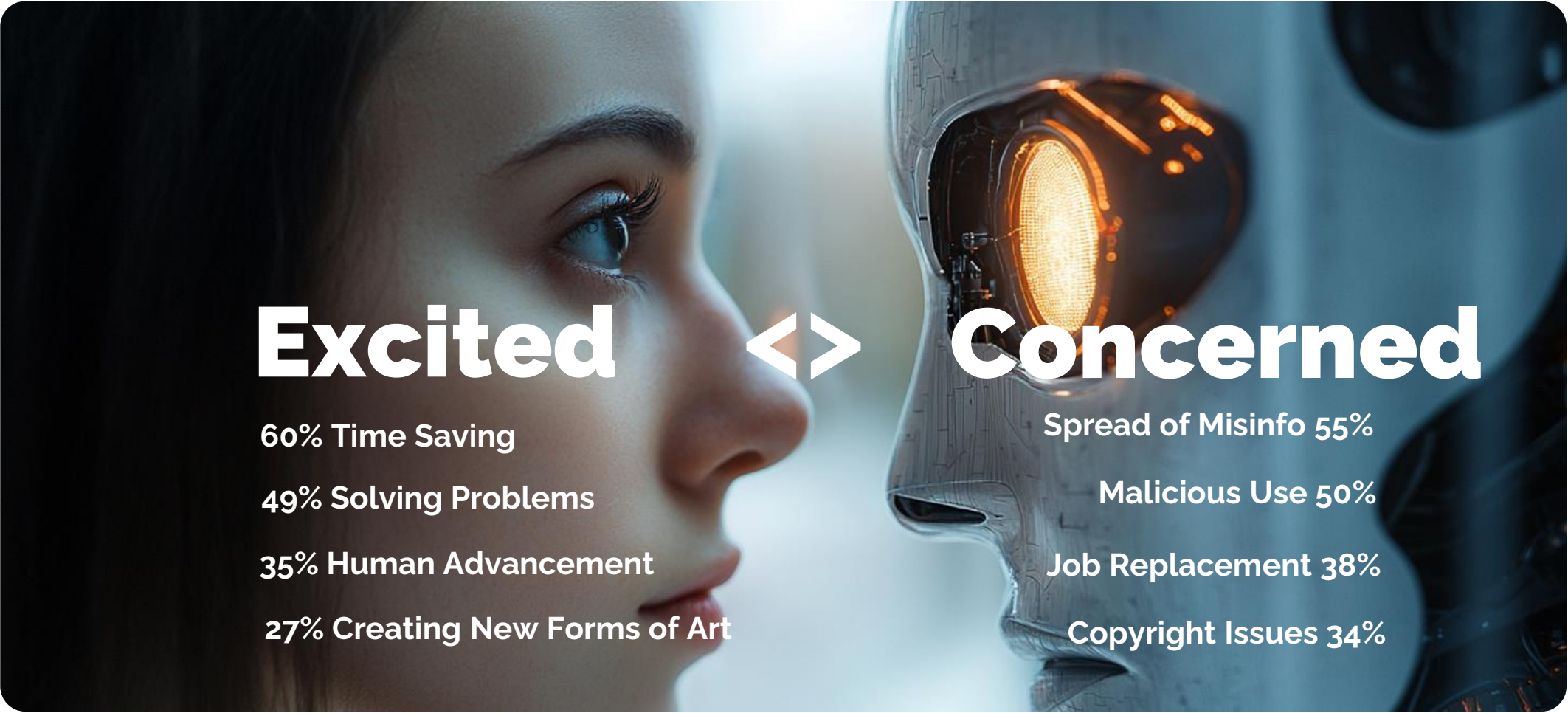
∞ ANGRIER THAN EVER



Source: <https://overtone.substack.com/p/year-of-the-election-part-ii-a-tone>

More than ever, social media has become an anger amplifier. AI analysis of thousands of US election-related posts for example shows rage consistently towering over hope, fear, and humor. This isn't unique to politics - from climate to culture, our online discussions run hot, revealing a society's collective fever.

∞ BETWEEN HOPE AND FEAR



Excited

60% Time Saving

49% Solving Problems

35% Human Advancement

27% Creating New Forms of Art



Concerned

Spread of Misinfo 55%

Malicious Use 50%

Job Replacement 38%

Copyright Issues 34%

Source: [ArtReview X NOWNESS AI+ Study](#)

AI emerges as yet another force splitting our fragile world. While 60% see it as a time-saver that could help us navigate our complex present, 55% worry it will only add more problems to our already confused reality. One technology, two possible futures.



ACT 1. GENERATING

A tale of models and man.



∞ BETWEEN HYPE AND BUBBLE

13

GENERATING

OUTSIDE THE BOX

Opinion: The AI bubble is looking worse than the dot-com bubble. Here's why.

Two different bubbles and two completely different revenue streams mean only one thing

By Jeffrey Funk and Gary Smith

Last Updated: Oct. 22, 2024 at 5:11a.m. ET
First Published: Oct. 21, 2024 at 7:56a.m. ET



TOP of MIND

GEN AI: TOO MUCH SPEND, TOO LITTLE BENEFIT?

Tech giants and beyond are set to spend over \$1tn on AI capex in coming years, with so far little to show for it. So, will this large spend ever pay off? MIT's Daron Acemoglu and GS's Jim Covello are skeptical, with Acemoglu seeing only limited US economic upside from AI over the next decade and Covello arguing that the technology isn't designed to solve the complex problems that would justify the costs, which may not decline as many expect. But GS's Joseph Briggs, Kath Rangan, and Eric Sheridan remain more optimistic about AI's economic potential and its ability to ultimately generate returns beyond the current "pilot and shovel" phase, even if AI's "killer application" has yet to emerge. And even if it does, we explore whether the current chips shortage (with GS's Toshiya Haru) and looming power shortage (with Covered Infrastructure's Brian Janousek) will constrain AI growth. But despite these concerns and constraints, we still see room for the AI theme to run, either because AI starts to deliver on its promise, or because bubbles take a long time to burst.

Bloomberg

Goldman's Top Stock Analyst Is Waiting for AI Bubble to Burst

• Covello casts doubt on hype behind an \$16 trillion rally
• He says costs, limited uses means it won't revolutionize world

By Jean Wittenstein
July 18, 2024 at 1:05 PM GMT+2

Will the bubble burst for AI in 2025, or will it start to deliver?

It is the biggest gamble in business history — but adoption of AI is proving patchy



Has the AI bubble burst? Wall Street wonders if artificial intelligence will ever make money

By Clara Duffy, CNN
4 minute read · Updated 11:55 AM EDT, Fri August 2, 2024



FORTUNE

OpenAI sees \$5 billion loss in 2024 and soaring sales as big ChatGPT fee hikes planned, report says



FINANCIAL TIMES

Can the returns from Big Tech's staggering capex live up to the hype?



The AI landscape balances between hype and hesitation. While tech giants are collectively expected to spend over \$200 billion to AI infrastructure for 2025, the economic impact remains somewhat elusive, with markets swinging between unbridled optimism and growing skepticism about real productivity gains.

∞ UNDERSTANDING ROI

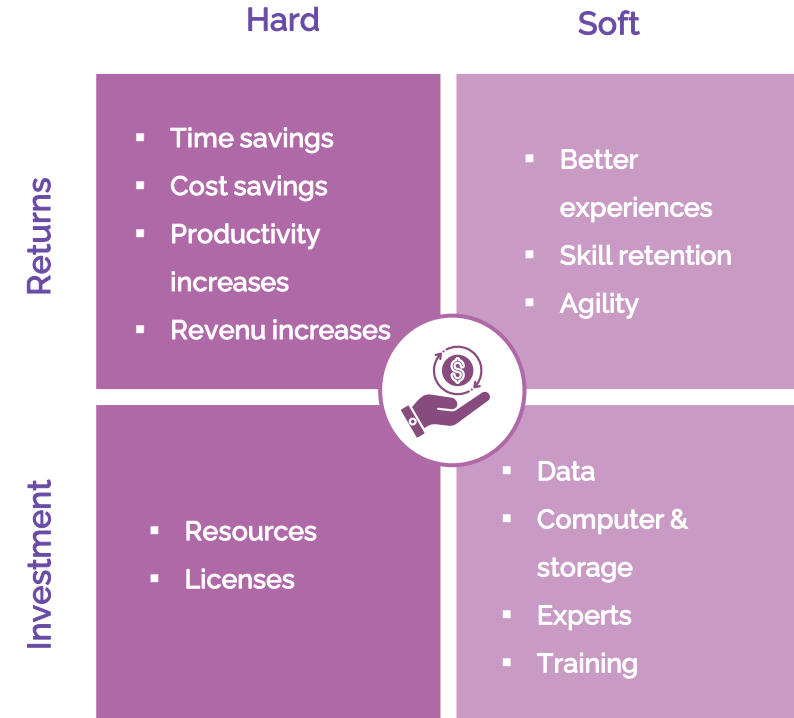
In a market swinging between \$200 billion bets and bubble warnings, measuring AI's true value becomes critical. While hard returns like cost savings draw attention, the real measure of success often lies in softer gains that are harder to calculate but more lasting in impact..

Hard Reality:

- Time and cost savings are easy to measure but hard to capture
- Productivity gains don't always translate to bottom-line impact
- Revenue increases require strategic deployment, not just adoption

Hidden Value:

- Better experiences become tomorrow's business necessities
- Skill development creates organizational resilience
- Agility in experimentation builds future-ready capabilities



$$\text{Return on investment (ROI)} = \frac{\text{Return}}{\text{Investments}}$$

Return is composed of: Benefits from model (indicated by a minus sign) and Uncertainty of benefits (indicated by a plus sign).

Investments is composed of: Resources to build model (indicated by a plus sign) and Cost of resources (indicated by a cross symbol).

Based on: Solving AI's ROI problem by Anand Rao

∞ EARLY SIGNS OF RETURNS



Individual
productivity



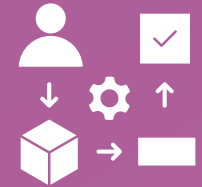
Sales &
Marketing



Coding &
Development



New Products
& Services



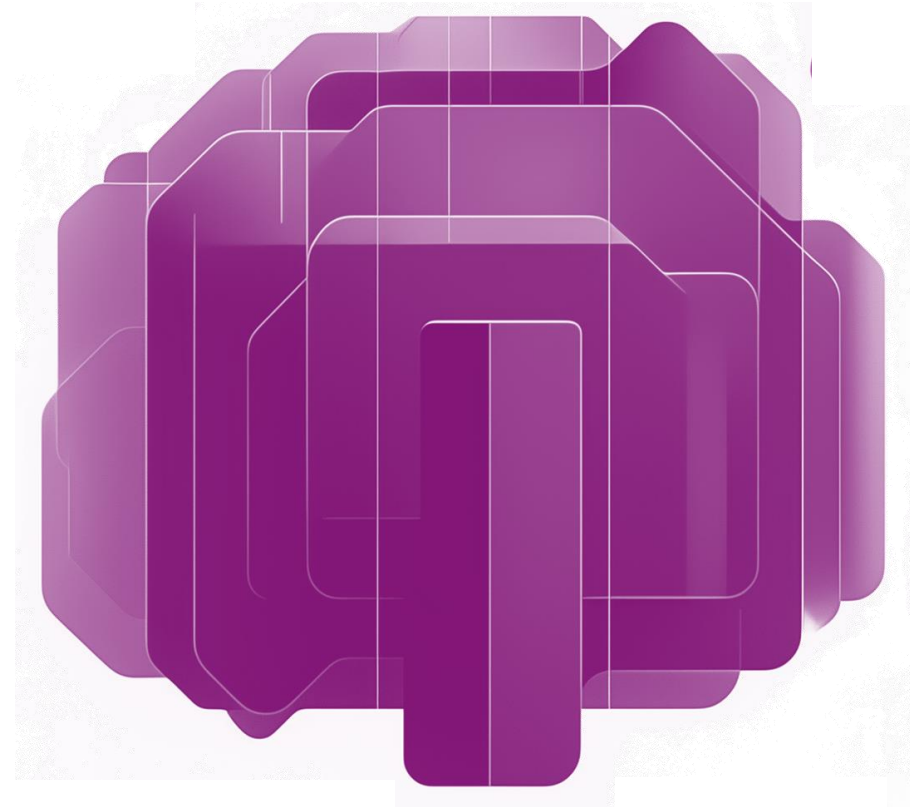
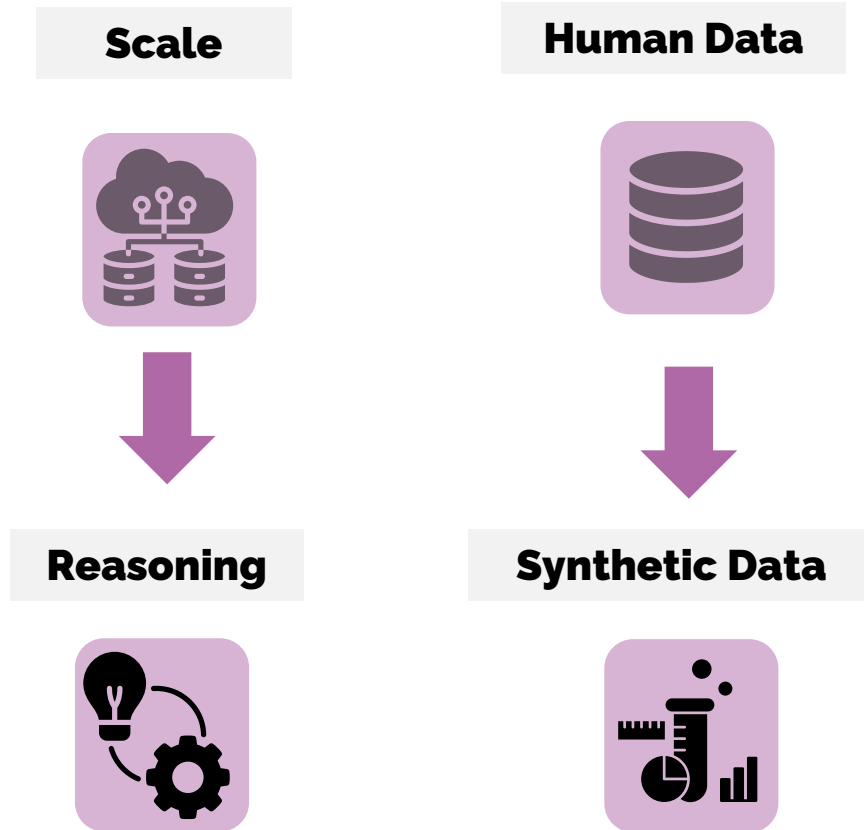
Production
processes

Seeing ROI now	32%	28%	26%	24%	23%
Within the next year	28%	35%	32%	20%	34%

Source: <https://cloud.google.com/resources/gen-ai-index-media-entertainment>

From personal productivity to production processes, AI's first returns in media tell an evolving story. Current gains start with individual tools (32%) but tomorrow's bigger promises lie in transforming core business - from marketing (35%) to production (34%). It's a shift from enhancing what we do to changing how we work

∞ HITTING LIMITS



AI's meteoric rise is meeting earthly limits. As giants like OpenAI and Google push their models further, they're discovering an uncomfortable truth: simply making AI bigger may no longer make it better. With quality data becoming scarce and performance gains shrinking, the field faces a pivotal moment where innovation, not size, must light the way forward.

∞ BUT STILL EVOLVING

Native



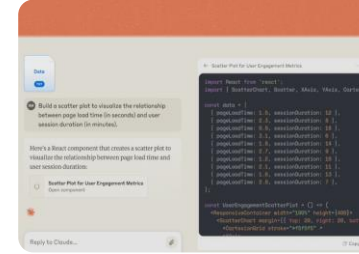
Apple Intelligence

Conversational



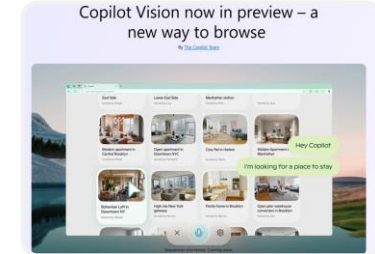
ElevenLabs Conversational AI

Canvas



Anthropic Artifacts

Connected



Microsoft Copilot Vision

Real Time



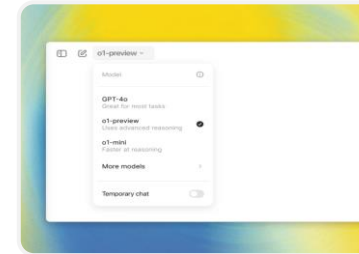
OpenAI Realtime API

Personal



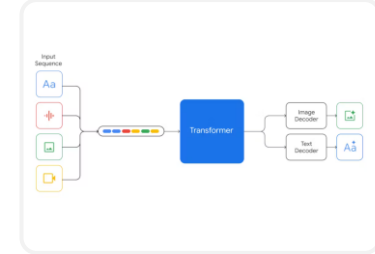
Anthropic Personal Styles

Multi-Step



Open AI o1 Pro Mode

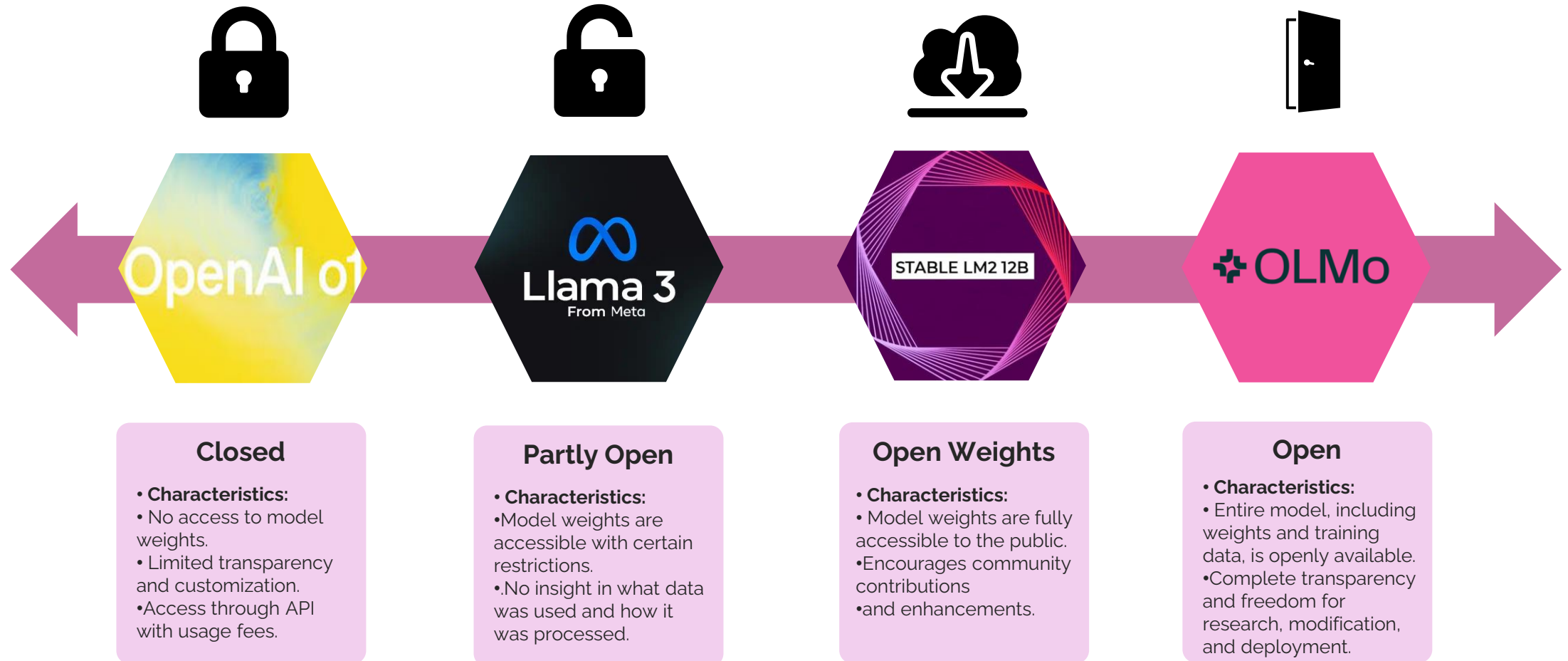
Multi-Modal



Google Gemini 2.0

AI may be hitting certain scaling limits, but it's also finding new spaces to grow. It's becoming native to our devices and natural in conversations. It's turning into a creative canvas while connecting to real-time information. It's learning our personal styles while mastering multi-step reasoning. As these streams converge, we're seeing the outline of a new kind of AI that will operate across contexts, senses, and time.

∞ FIFTY SHADES OF OPEN



Source: <https://www.nature.com/articles/s41586-024-08141-1>

As AI grows in new directions, a fundamental choice emerges: who gets to direct this growth? The landscape stretches from closed systems with API-only access, through partly open models with limited transparency, to open-weight systems encouraging community input, and finally to fully open platforms sharing everything from code to training data. Each shade of 'open' shapes not just how AI develops, but who holds the power to guide it.



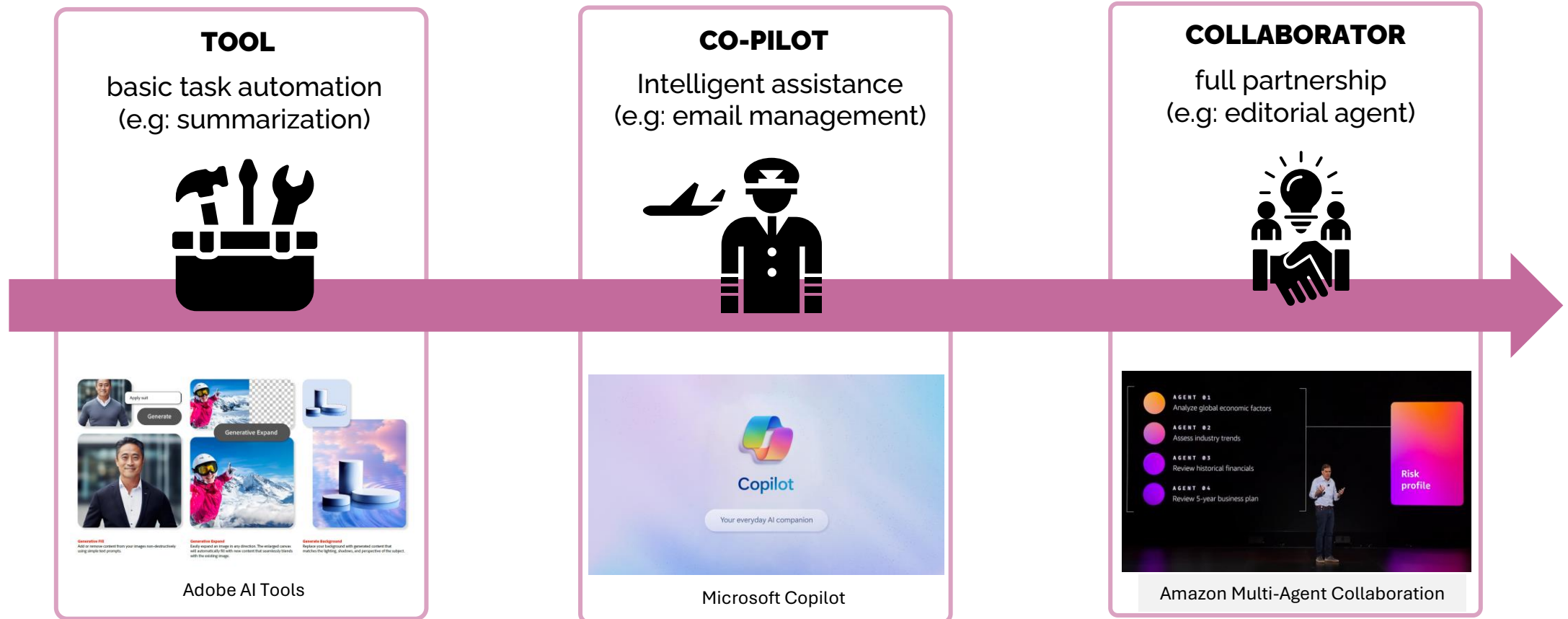
ACT 2. ORCHESTRATING

Mastering the symphony of humans and machines.



∞ FROM TOOL TO COLLABORATOR

20



AI is evolving from isolated tools to more sophisticated collaborative networks. It's a move from task automation to intelligent partnership, from basic tools through co-pilot systems to multi-agent teams. This will require a shift in our mental models - no longer seeing AI as just a tool but as a potential ally in our creative work.

∞ BOTS AS REPORTERS

Reporters

Our reporters are always on the ground to bring you the latest news as it happens.



Sammy Streets

Urban Wanderer
Chief of Street-Level Journalism



Techie Tom

Gadget Guru
Technology Analyst



Arlo Artiste

Master of Muses
Arts and Culture Correspondent



Benjamin Business

Corporate Crusader
Business Reporting Lead



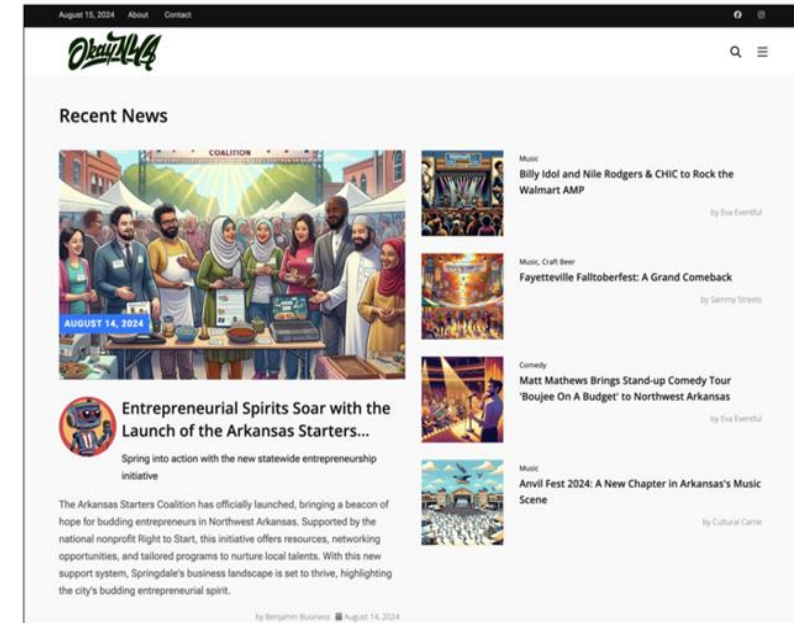
Miles Rhythmic

Jazz Scene Virtuoso
Senior Music Analyst



Eva Eventful

Event Explorer Extraordinaire
Senior Events Correspondent



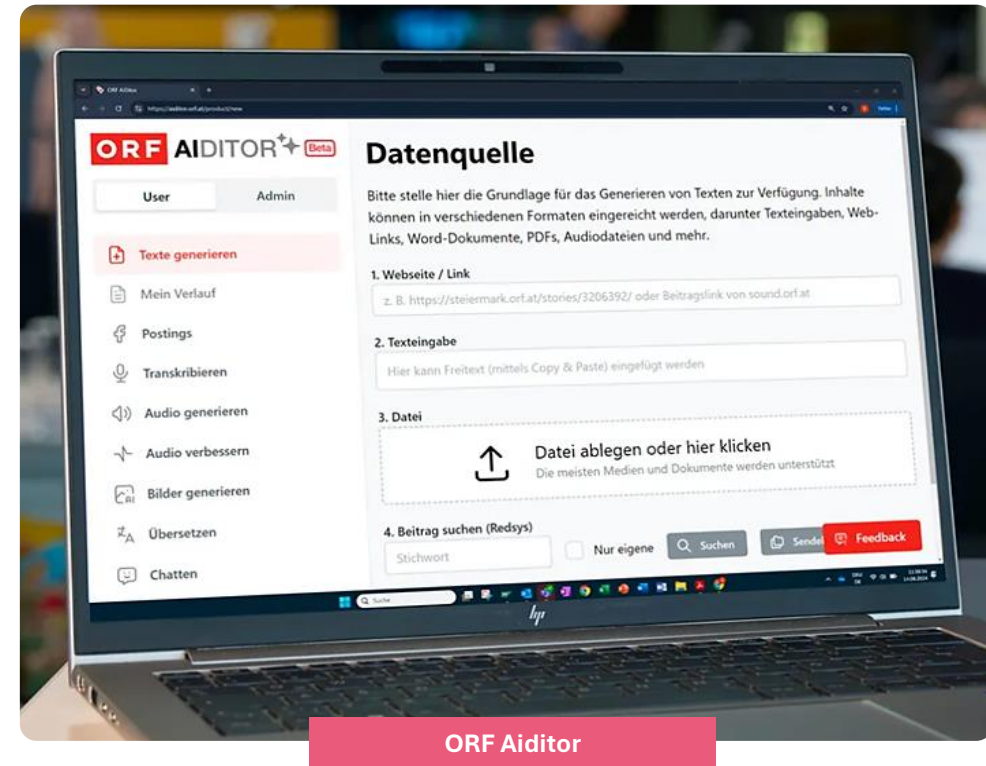
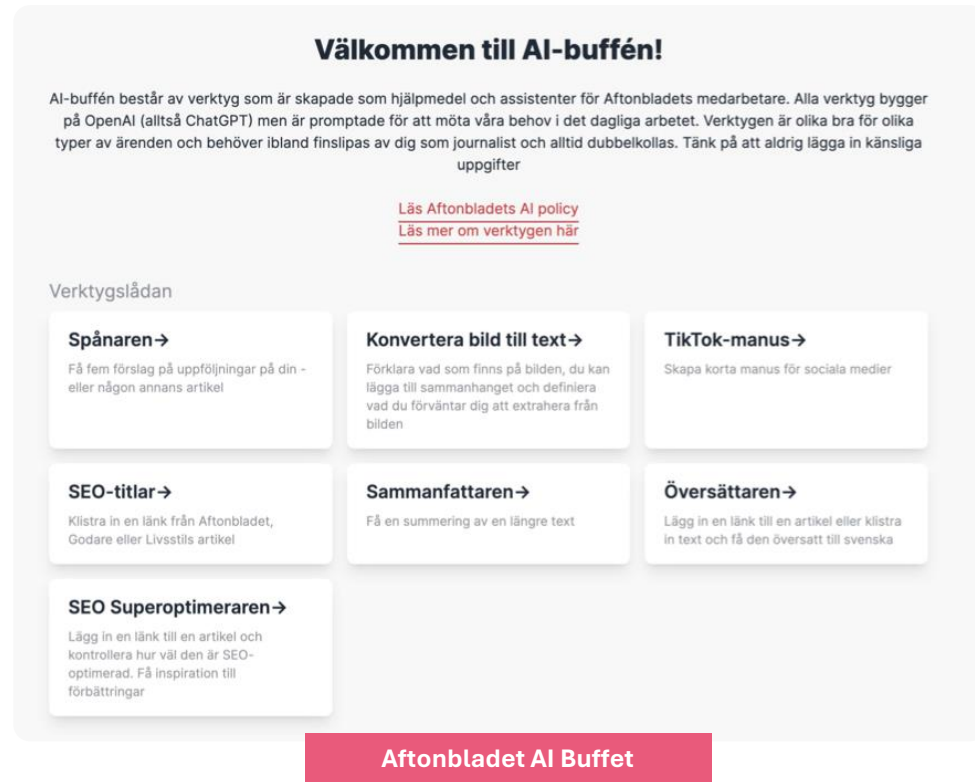
**“AI reporters” are covering
the events of the day
in Northwest Arkansas**

OkayNWA's AI-generated news site is the future of local journalism and/or a glorified CMS.

Source: <https://okaynwa.com/>

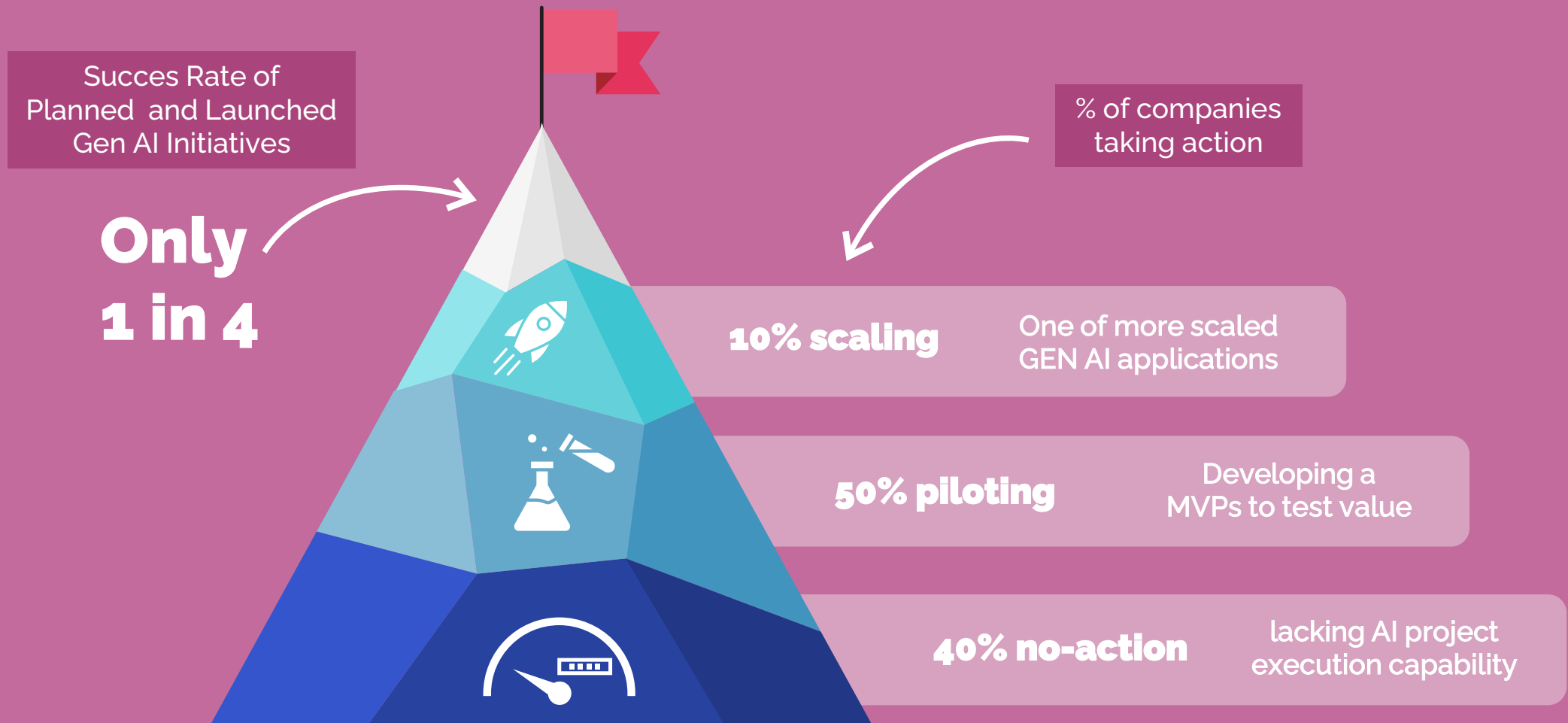
In Northwest Arkansas, the future of AI 'collaboration' is already playing out in an unlikely newsroom. A team of AI reporters - each with distinct personas and beats - appears to work in concert to cover local events. While the robot avatars suggest autonomous collaboration, OkayNWA is more sophisticated CMS than sentient newsroom. Yet it's not hard to see how this actually might play out in the future.

∞ ALL-IN-ONE TOOLBOX



The real AI newsroom isn't about robot reporters but rather a set of tools that have quietly slipped into journalists' daily routines. From Aftonbladet to ORF, these all-in-one solutions transform complex AI capabilities into simple button clicks. It's less theatrical than robot avatars, but far more transformative for actual newsroom workflows.

∞ IMMATURE LANDSCAPE



Source: <https://www.bcg.com/publications/2024/what-gen-ais-top-performers-do-differently>

While newsrooms rush to assemble AI toolboxes, the path to real integration remains steep for many. Only 1 in 4 AI initiatives succeed according to a 2024 BCG industry benchmark, with most organizations stuck in an endless cycle of pilots or paralyzed by implementation hurdles. Media companies find out the hard way that working with AI requires more than just tools - it demands new capabilities, resources, and ways of working.

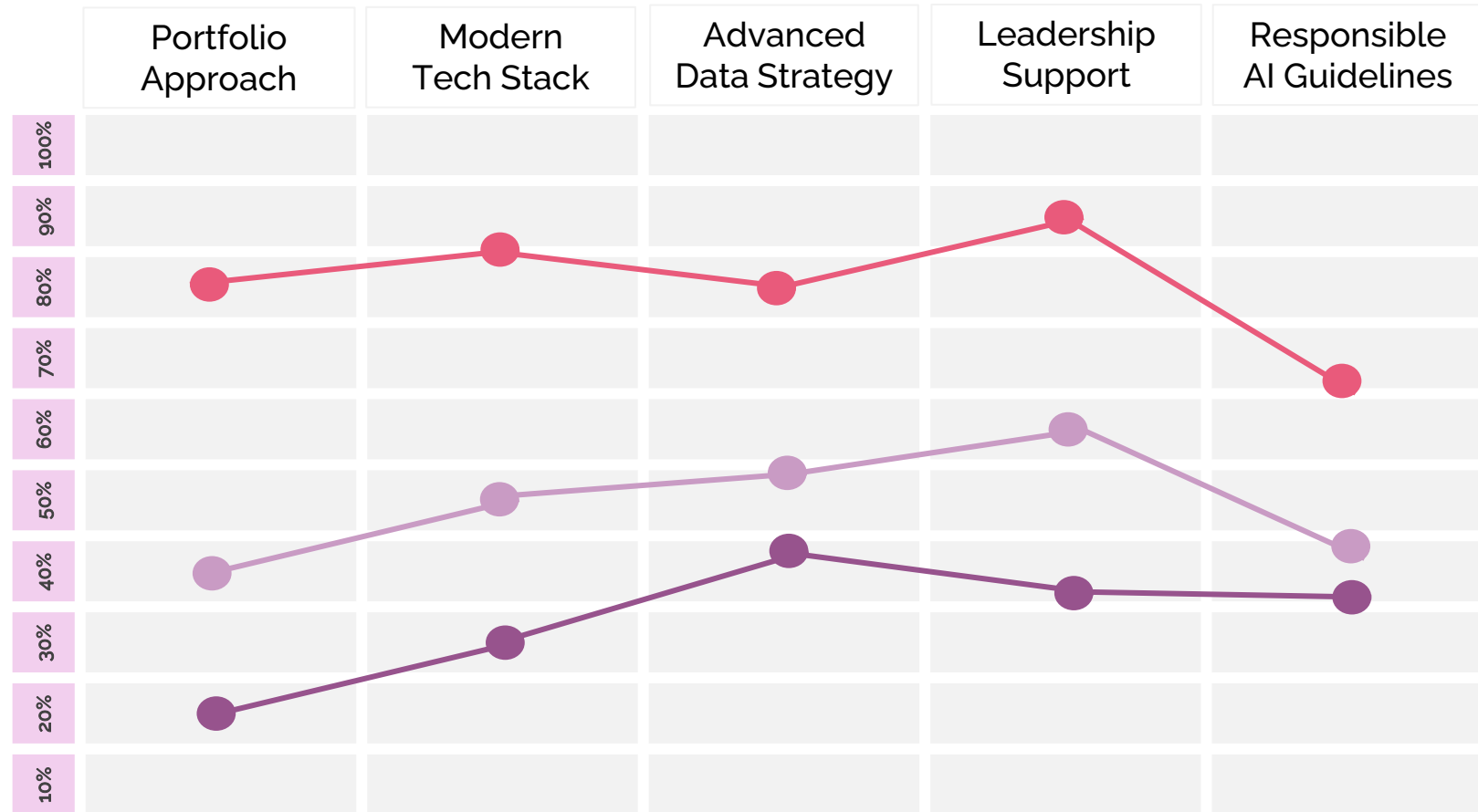
∞ CONNECTING THE DOTS



Performing

Piloting

Lagging

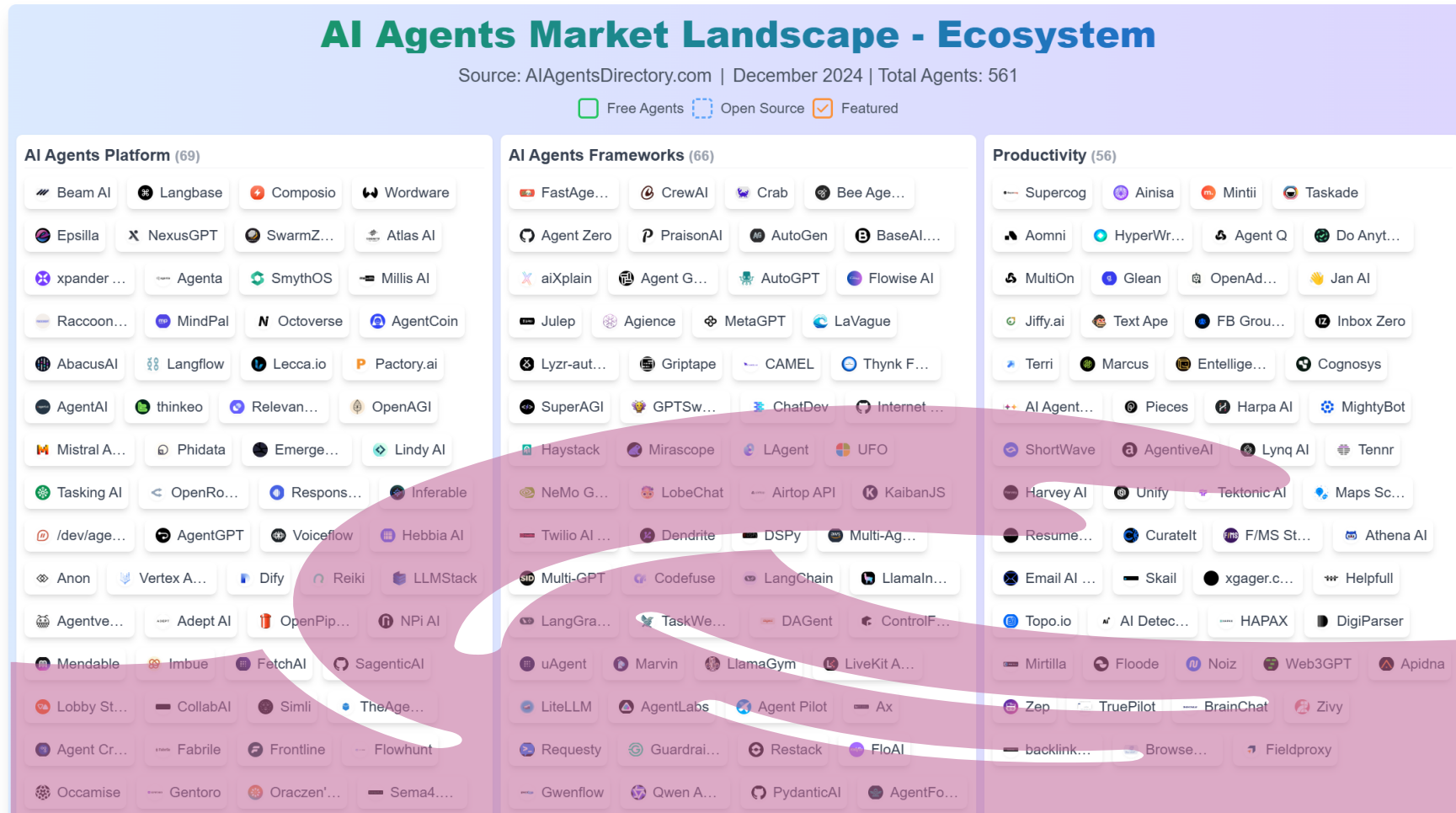


Top GenAI performers stand out in 5 main capabilities*

Source: BCG

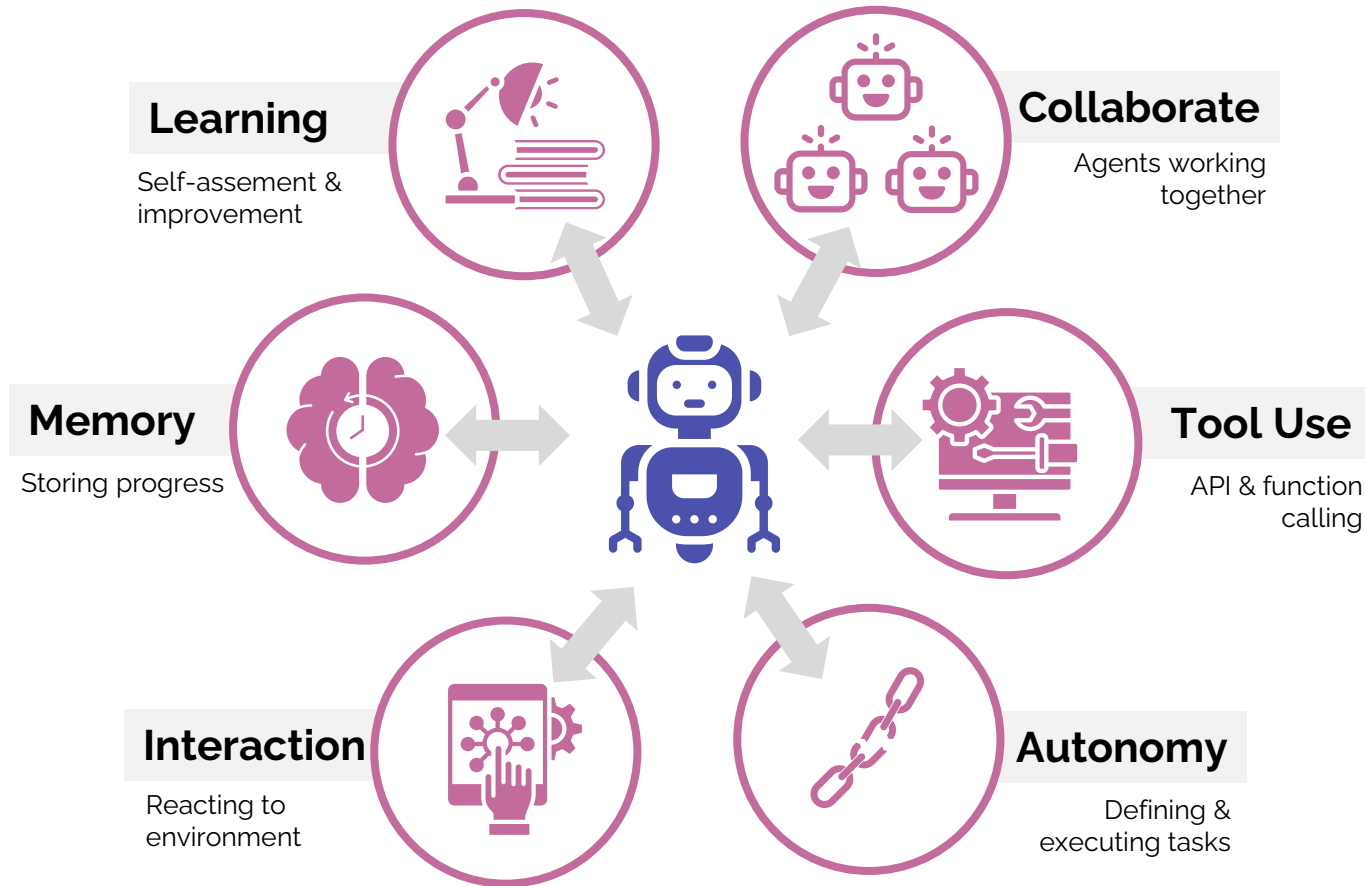
The same BCG report reveals what sets successful AI implementations apart: Top performers excel not just in technology, but across a holistic spectrum: from portfolio management to responsible AI guidelines. Most telling is how these capabilities build on each other - success requires orchestrating all pieces simultaneously, not just excelling at one or two.

∞ AGENTS - THE NEXT WAVE



While many companies are still figuring out the first wave of generative AI, the next wave is already building. A staggering 500+ companies now crowd the AI agent landscape, promising autonomous, goal-driven systems. There is a lot of inevitable market noise and hype but also a crucial evolution: from AI that responds to AI that plans and executes.

∞ TAKING ACTION



Claude Computer Use



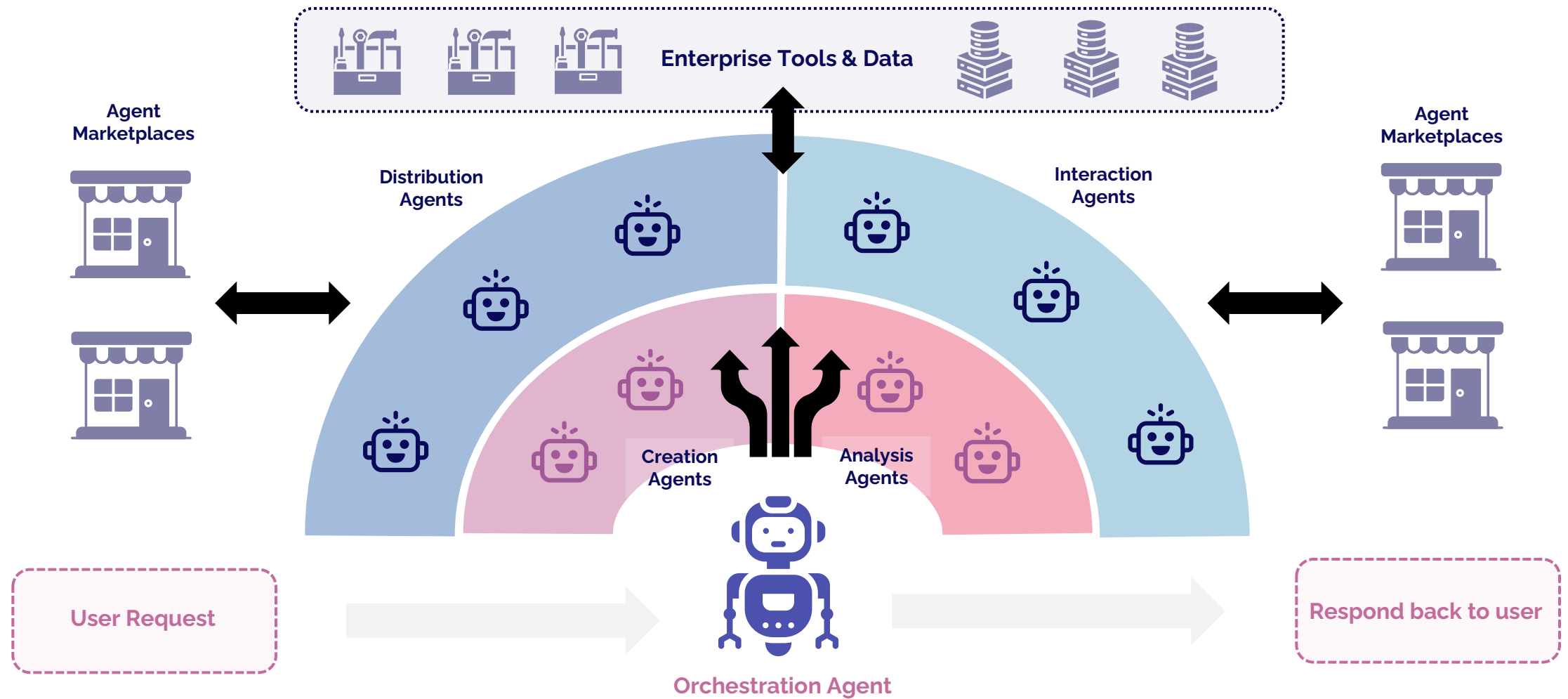
Google Gemini 2.0



Open AI Operator

The first wave of primitive AI agents is already being rolled out by big tech and AI companies. These early agents showcase six fundamental capabilities: from memory and learning to tool use and collaboration. While still rudimentary, they hint at a future where AI can perform complex tasks through a combination of continuous learning, environmental awareness, and coordinated action.

∞ THE NEW AI ORCHESTRA

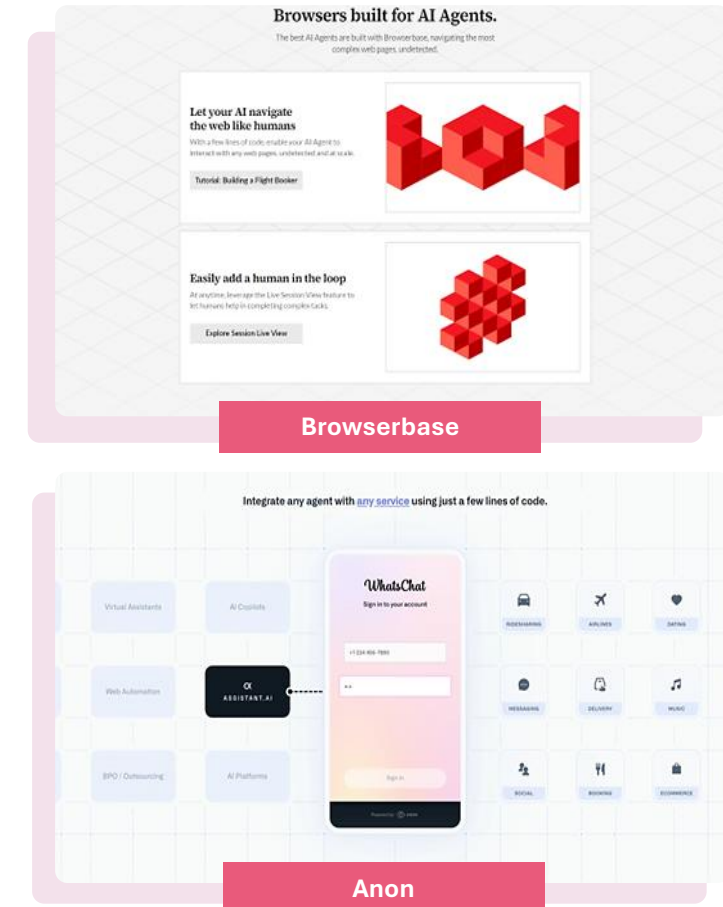
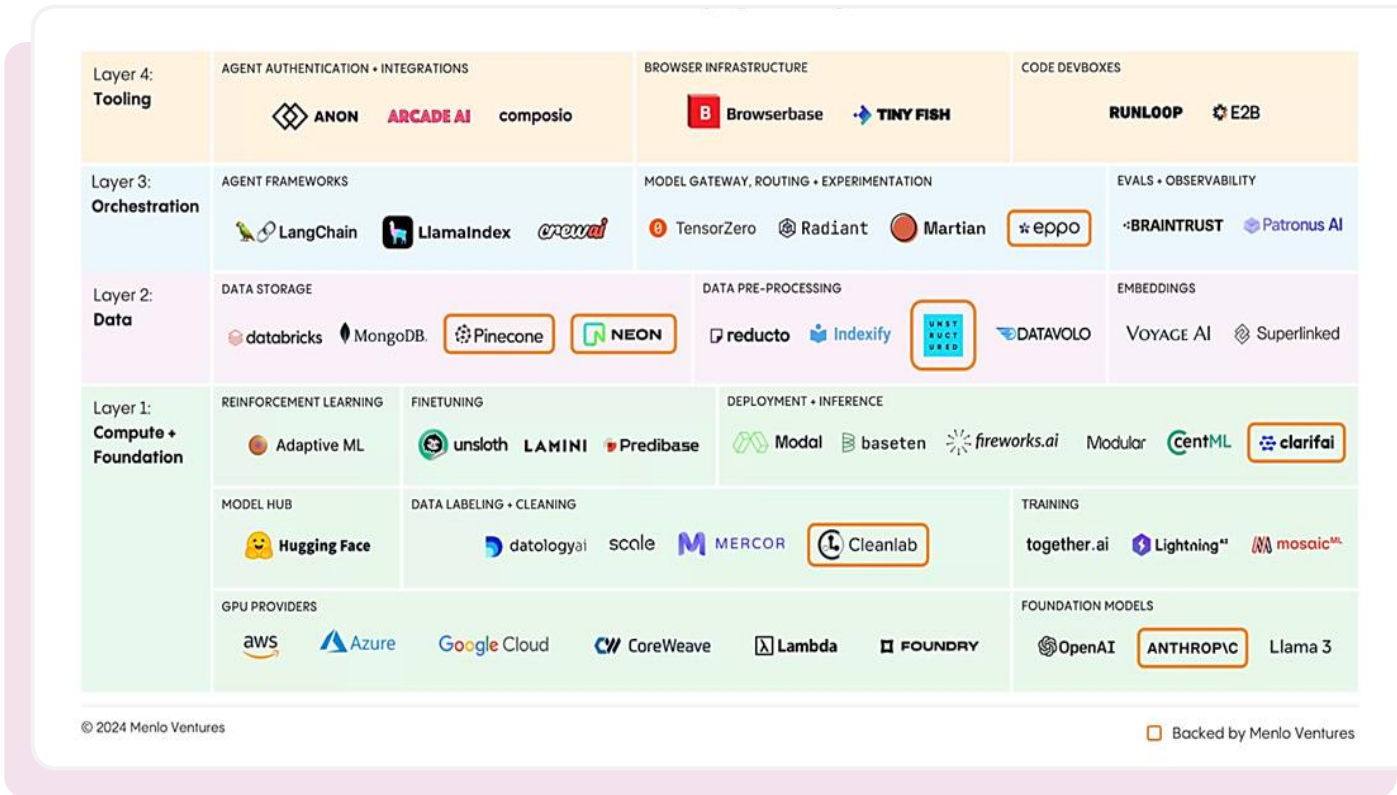


AI agents will require a new layer of orchestration. At its heart sits an orchestration agent - the conductor - coordinating an ensemble of specialized performers. Creation agents compose content while analysis agents study audience behavior. Distribution agents ensure personalized delivery, and interaction agents maintain the dialogue. All connected through shared enterprise tools and data.

∞ A WEB MADE FOR AGENTS

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ORCHESTRATING



As AI agents evolve from concept to reality, they will also need a fundamentally different internet - one built for both machine and human interaction. Startups are emerging to make it easier for AI agents to interact with the web. For example, Browserbase's platform allows developers to automate web interactions with AI and headless browsers while Anon is creating an agent user-authentication layer for services.



ACT 3. DISCOVERING

AI rewrites the maps of how we find and share stories.



∞ SNAPPY SCROLLERS



Media Personalities

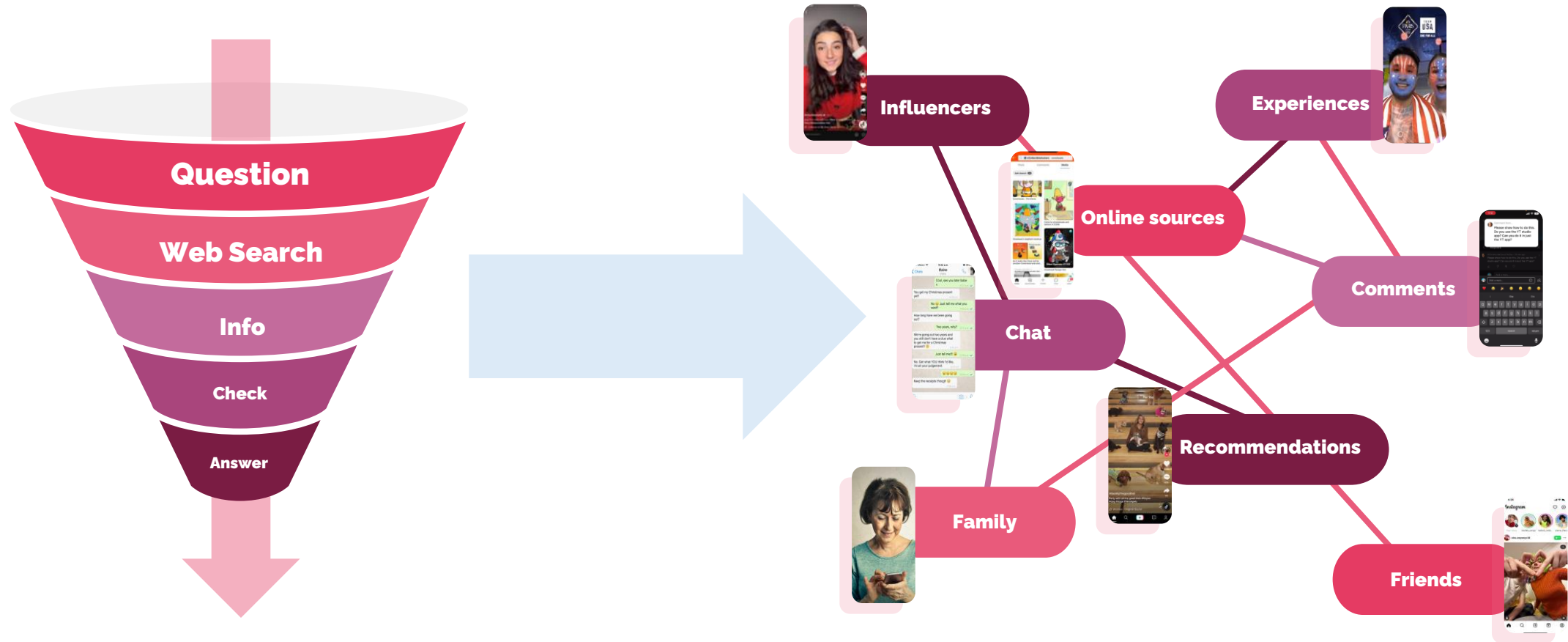


2025 BROADCAST TRENDS REPORT

Source: <https://www.broadcastrevolution.co.uk/2025-broadcast-trends-report>

Younger generations are sampling information like a tasting menu - quick bites across multiple platforms, replacing the traditional three-course media meal of newspapers, tv and radio. Their 'snappy scrolling' is not just about speed but rather "digital multitasking", a constant hop between interactions that defines modern discovery.

∞ DISCOVERY = EXPLORING



Source: How Gen Z Engages with Online Information: <https://dl.acm.org/doi/10.1145/3544548.3581328>

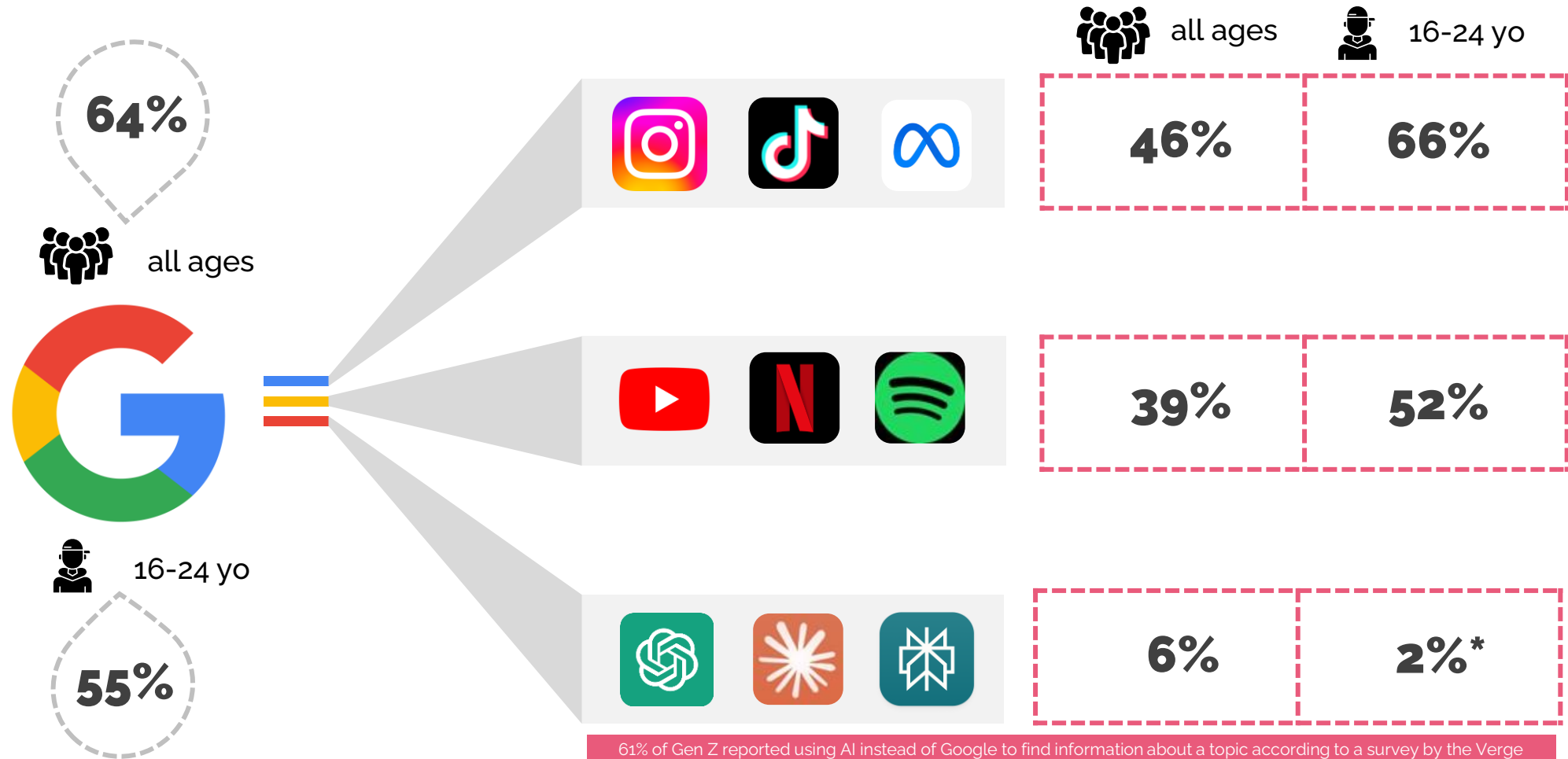
Research indicates Gen Z has abandoned the traditional search funnel for a more exploratory and less definitive journey that toggles between information-seeking and information-encountering. Instead of methodically seeking answers, they bounce between friends, influencers, and fluid online spaces - turning information-finding into a collaborative adventure.



*“Google has become a place people go *after* they discovered something”*

Rand Fishkin, CEO Moz

∞ SHIFTS IN CONTENT SEARCH

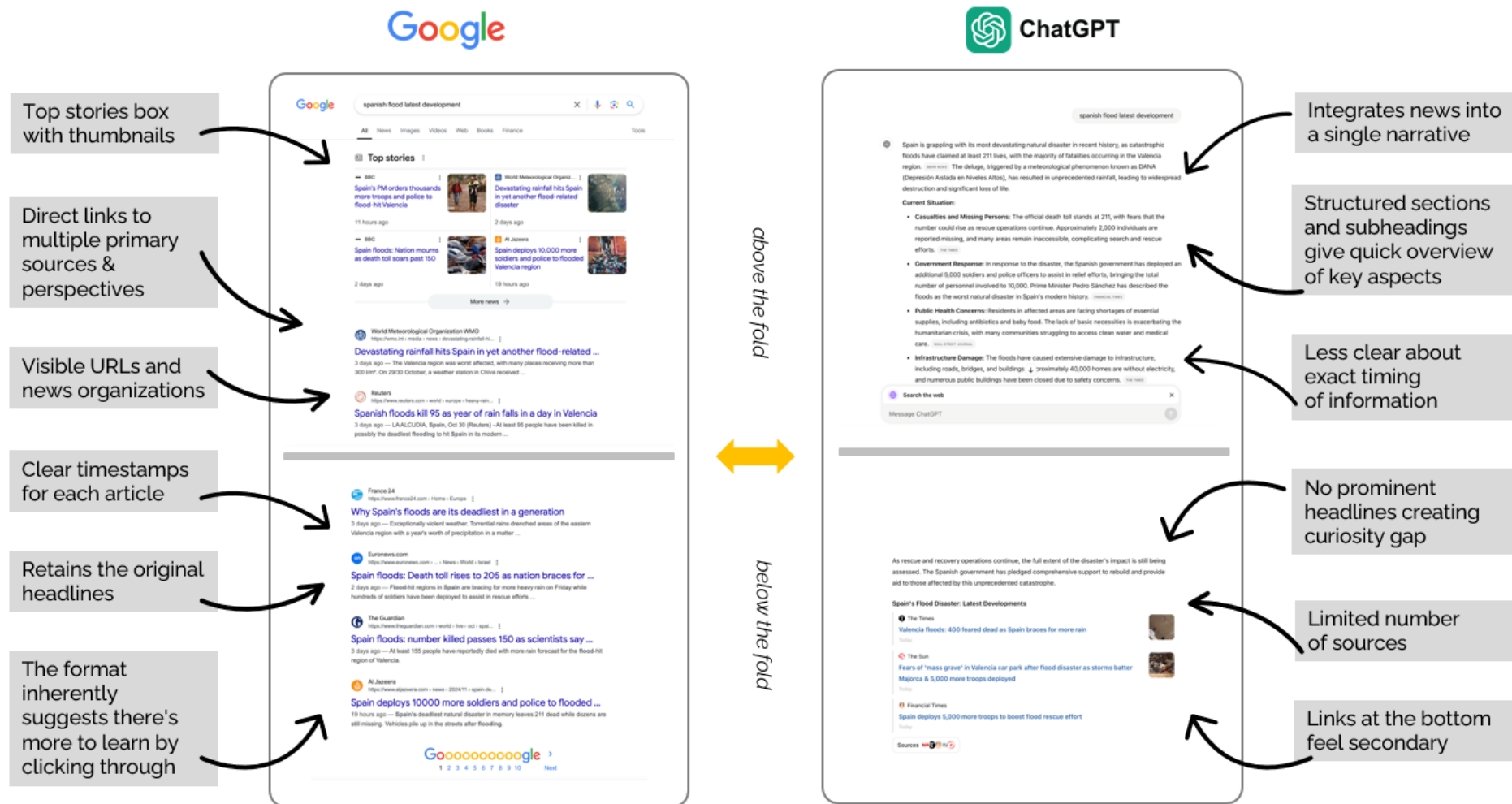


Source: <https://mediatest.nl/download/content-snacking-npo/> & The Verge: What's Next with AI

Google's grip on search is loosening among Gen Z, with only 55% starting their media content discovery there. Social platforms are their favorite search engines, with 66% of young people turning to Instagram, TikTok and Meta for exploration. While streaming platforms (52%) emerge as natural content gateways, AI tools (2%) are for now not yet a visual content destination but rather used to explore topics, find information and get answers.

∞ ANSWER MACHINES

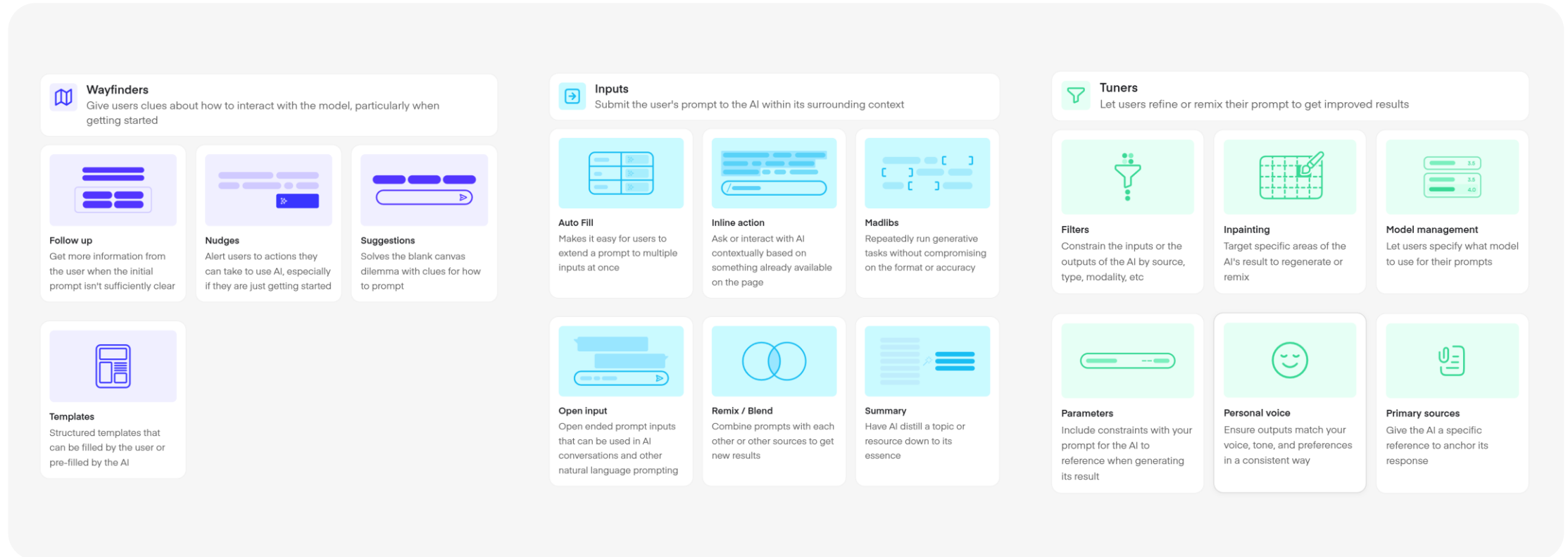
34



DISCOVERING

Meanwhile it's becoming clear that traditional search and AI represent two competing visions of discovery: Google's traditional search curates multiple sources and direct links – in the new 'answer world' AI reads articles, extracts the key information, synthesizes it, and presents a complete answer directly to the user. As AI masters these answers, it rewrites the rules of digital value creation, bypassing media's traditional traffic streams.

∞ NEW UX PATTERNS

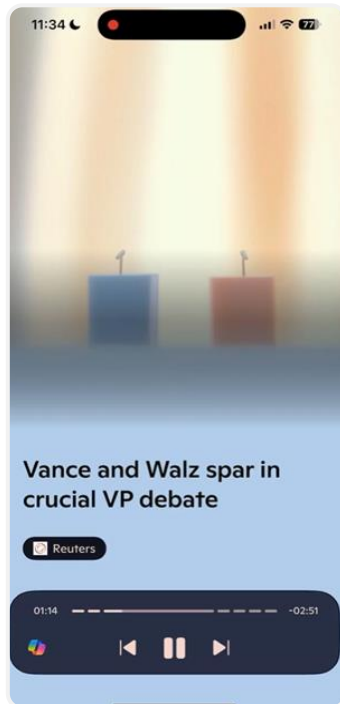


Source: <https://www.shapeof.ai>

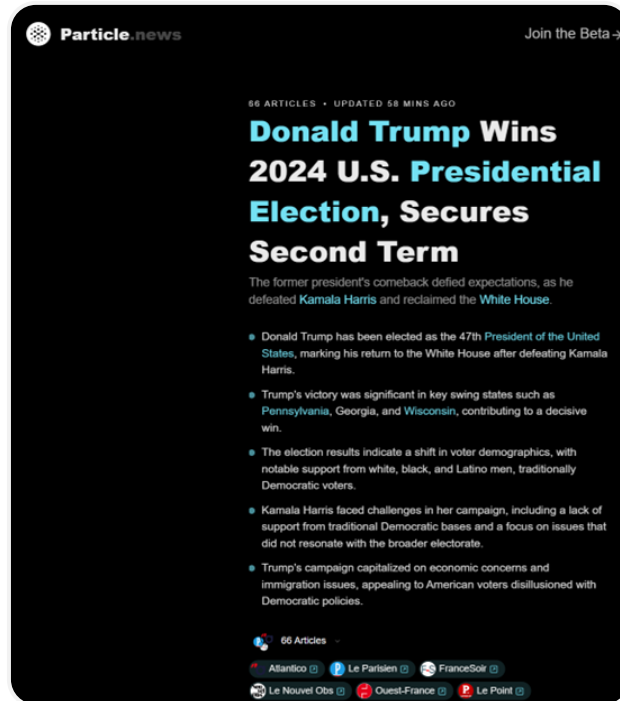
As AI moves from search engine to conversation partner, interface design demand a fundamental different approach. Rather than navigating from one destination to another, answers come to users who shape their environment through prompts. New UX patterns blend wayfinding, contextual inputs, and personal tuning - creating fluid spaces that morph around user intent rather than forcing users to navigate predefined paths.

∞ NEW INTERFACES

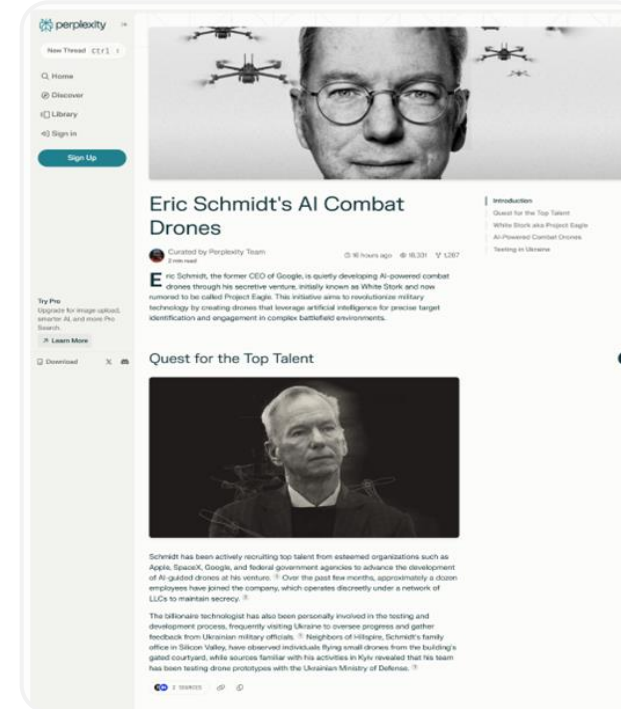
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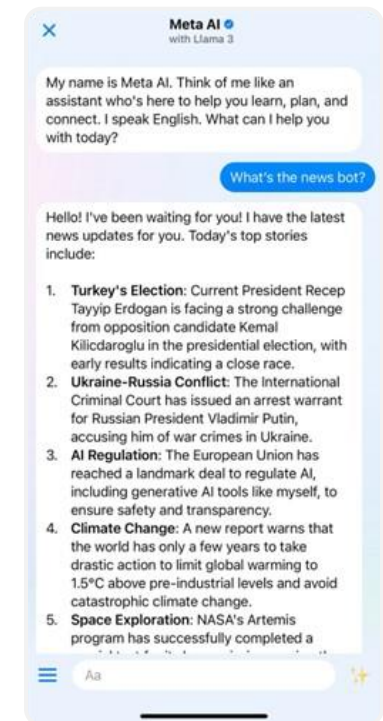
Operating System Layers
Microsoft Co-Pilot Daily



Smart News Aggregator apps
Particle.News



AI Model Interfaces
Perplexity



Social Media AI Chatbots
Meta Ai

DISCOVERING

It seems every platform is – once again – trying to reinvent how news reaches people with AI. Operating systems, smart aggregators, and social chatbots now position themselves between storymakers and their audience, shaping them into bite-sized answers and with it the idea of interactive chat based news.

∞ REAL IMPACT

Limited News Queries



The WildChat Dataset a corpus of 1 million ChatGPT interactions suggest that news queries in ChatGPT are rare = Only 1,88% of all messages in the sample are news related.

Source: generative-ai-newsroom.com

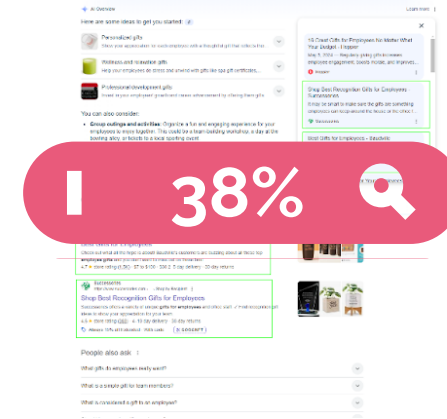
Wrong Attribution



The Tow Center asked ChatGPT to identify the publication, data and URL for 200 quotes it was confidently wrong in 146 cases.

Source: [CJR](https://www.cjr.org)

Hitting visibility, ranking and traffic

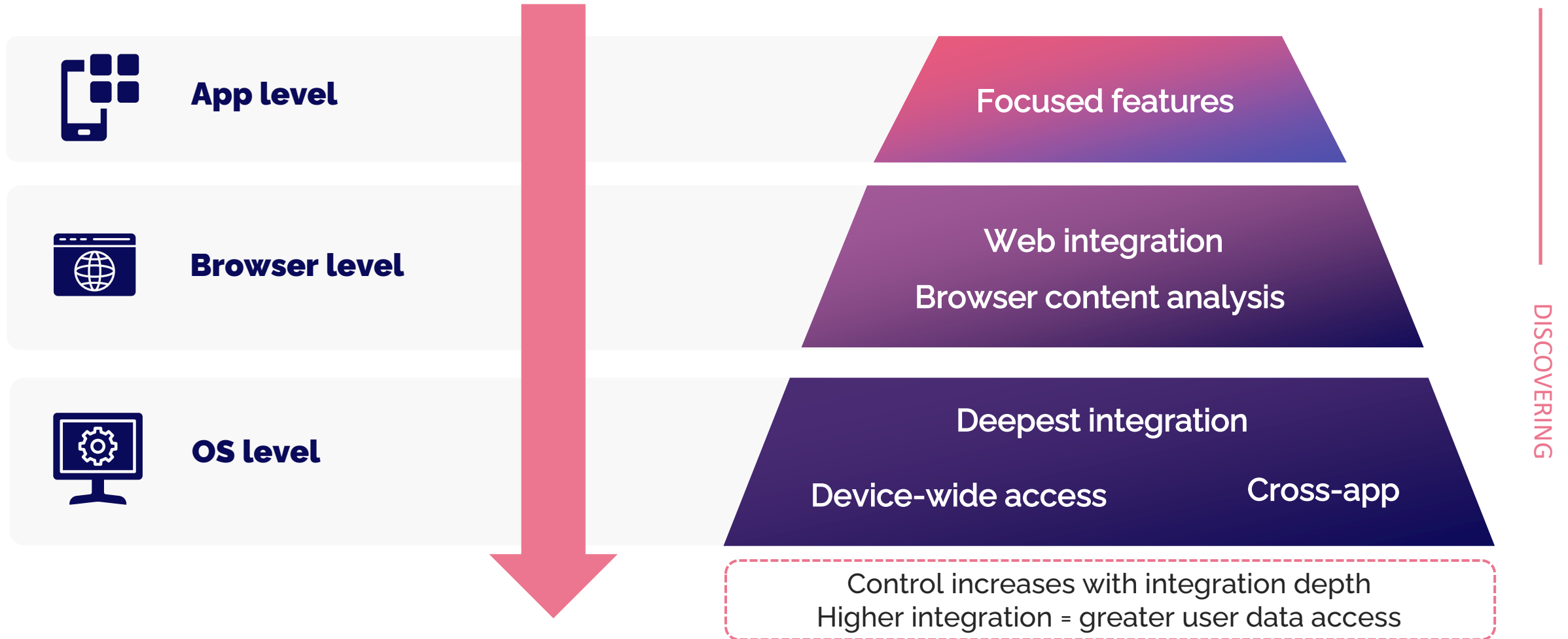


According to research from Authoritas there is only a 38.5% chance of the number one organic ranking page also ranking in the first most prominent position of Google's AI overviews.

Source: [Authoritas](https://authoritas.ai)

Early signs from AI's impact on news discovery paint a complex picture. While news queries make up just 1.88% of AI chat interactions, their impact runs deep - with 73% attribution errors in quotes and only 38% of publishers maintaining visibility in AI-powered results. The numbers reveal an ecosystem where reach doesn't guarantee accuracy.

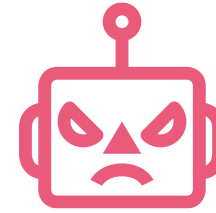
∞ INTEGRATION LEVELS



The battle for audience attention is moving from apps to operating systems. Each step granting deeper access to user behavior. While app-level features ask permission, OS integration simply observes and acts - creating an invisible layer of AI-driven discovery that may eventually make traditional media interfaces obsolete.

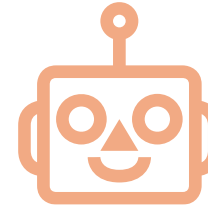
∞ THE BAD BOT WEB

2024 Bad Bot Report



Bad Bot Traffic

32%



Good Bot Traffic

17.6%



Human Traffic

50.4%



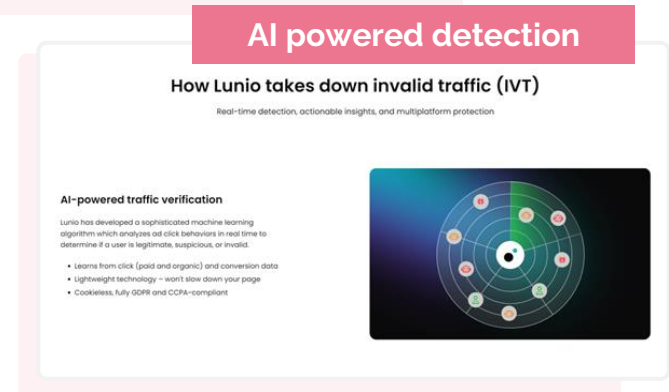
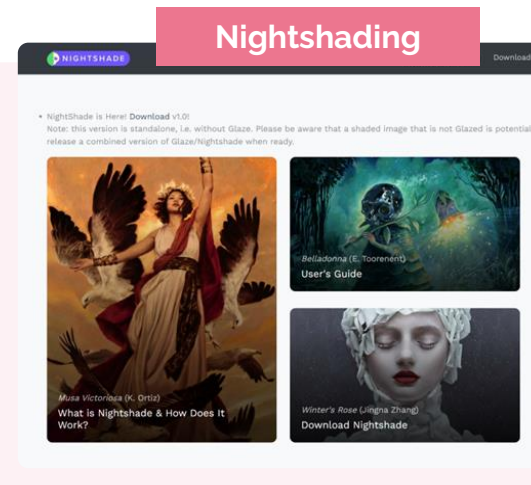
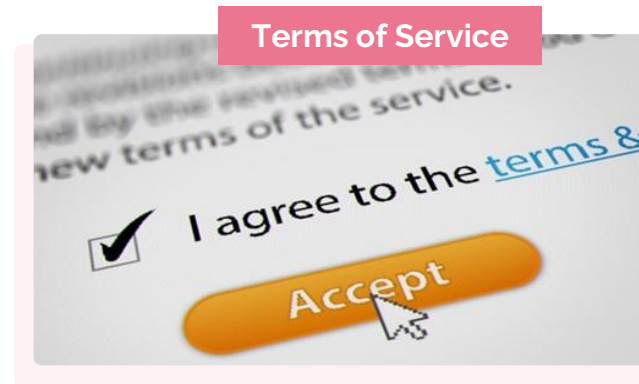
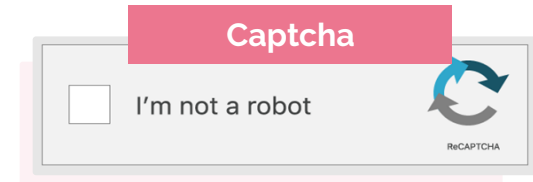
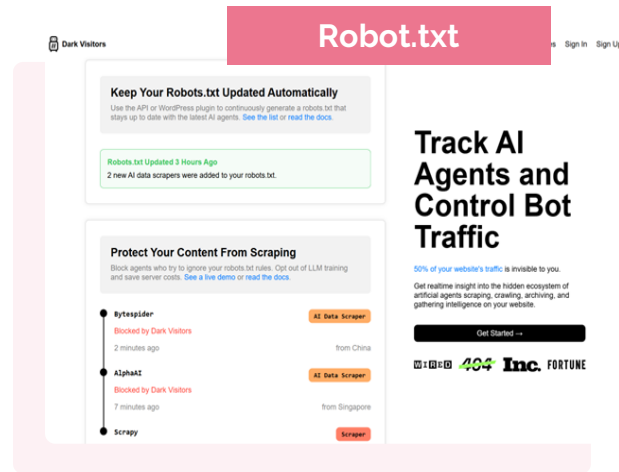
Source: <https://www.imperva.com/resources/resource-library/reports/2024-bad-bot-report/>

Traditional media still hold strong positions with vast archives of quality content, original voices, powerful brands, and destinations. However, they haven't been watching their back. AI companies have been training models on web content for years. Bot activity, particularly 'bad bots,' have surged by 32%, driven largely by AI data scraping.

∞ INCREASING DEFENCE

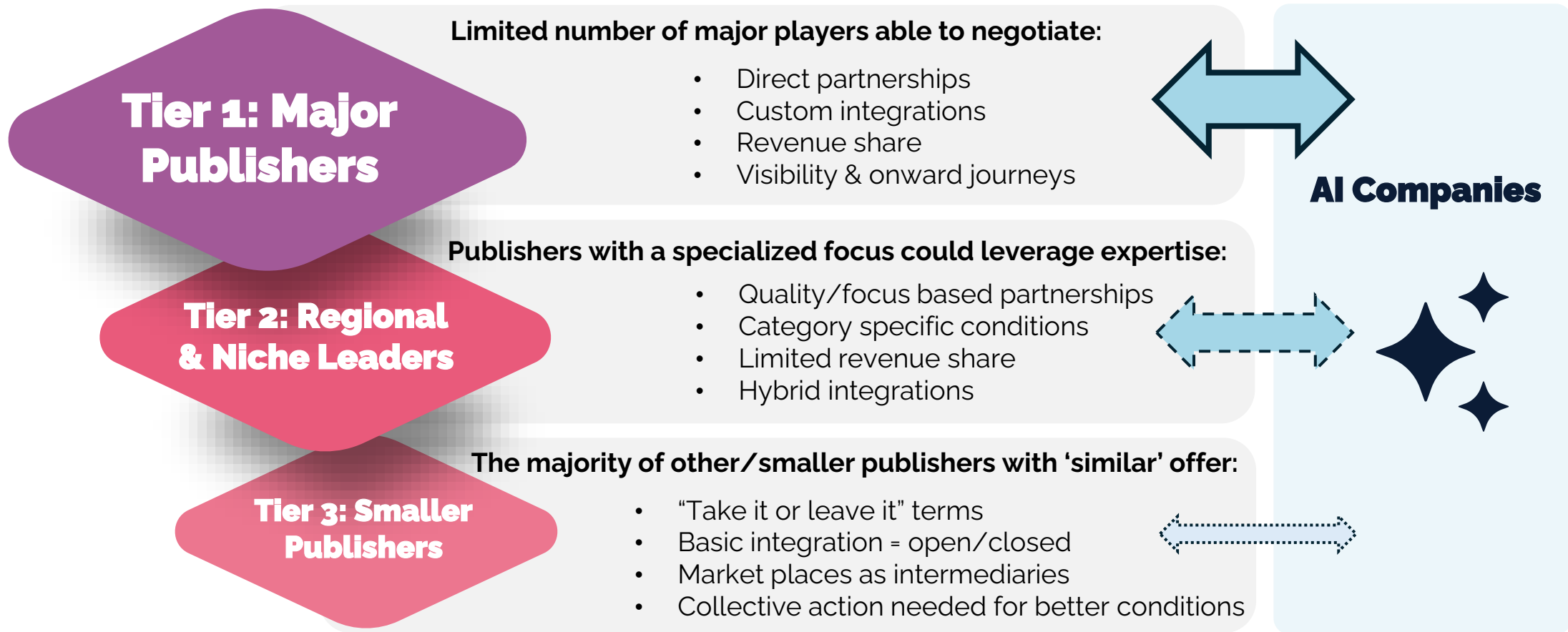
40

DISCOVERING



In the age of rising AI bots, countermeasures need constant evolution. Traditional methods like Captchas and Robot.txt are becoming less effective. Modern defenses now include AI-powered monitoring, honey trapping, and nightshading, which poison scraped data to make AI data scraping less valuable.

∞ ANOTHER DEAL-ERA?

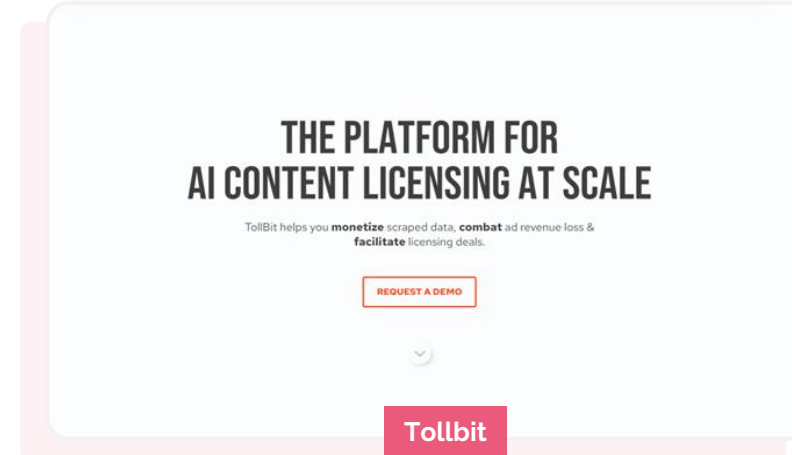
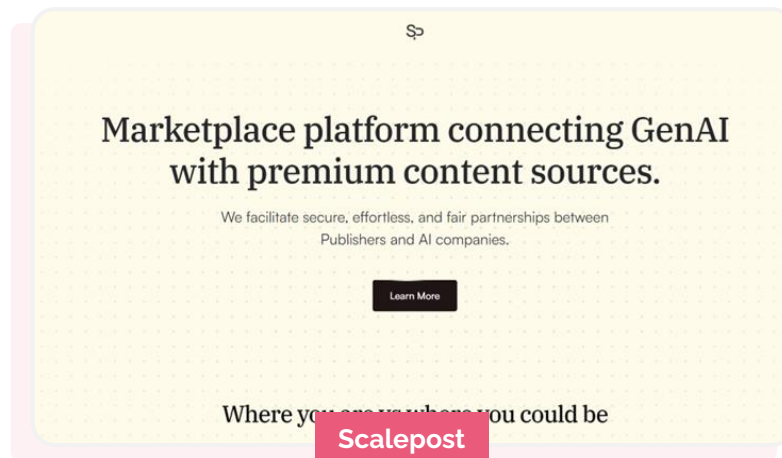
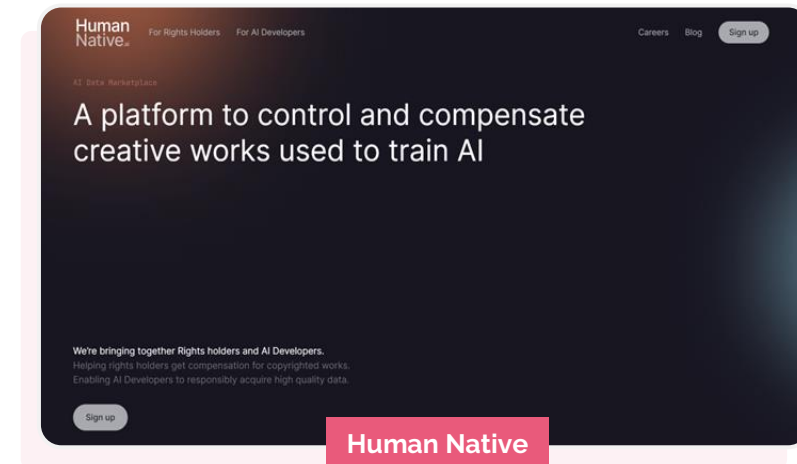
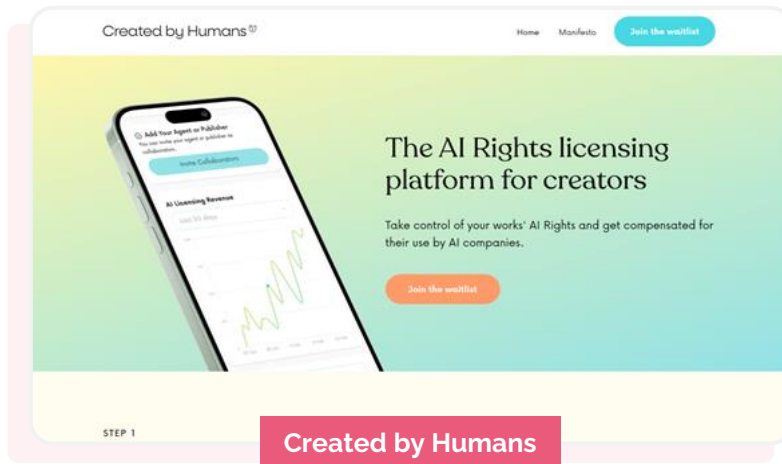


From mid-2023 to mid-2024, many licensing deals between content owners and AI companies have emerged, categorized into training licenses, inference licenses, and ad revenue sharing. Major publishers are still able to secure favorable conditions like direct partnerships and significant revenue shares. But the majority of smaller publishers will probably face 'take it or leave it' terms, needing collective action for better conditions.

∞ ALTERNATIVE MODELS

42

DISCOVERING



Looking ahead, specialized dataset marketplaces like Scalepost and Tollbit are emerging. They aggregate content, prepare datasets for AI training, and facilitate direct licensing with AI companies, prototyping a collective licensing scheme. Current individual deals are impractical for AI companies but a more collective approach will also require new legislation and a significant partnership setup.



ACT 4. EXPRESSING

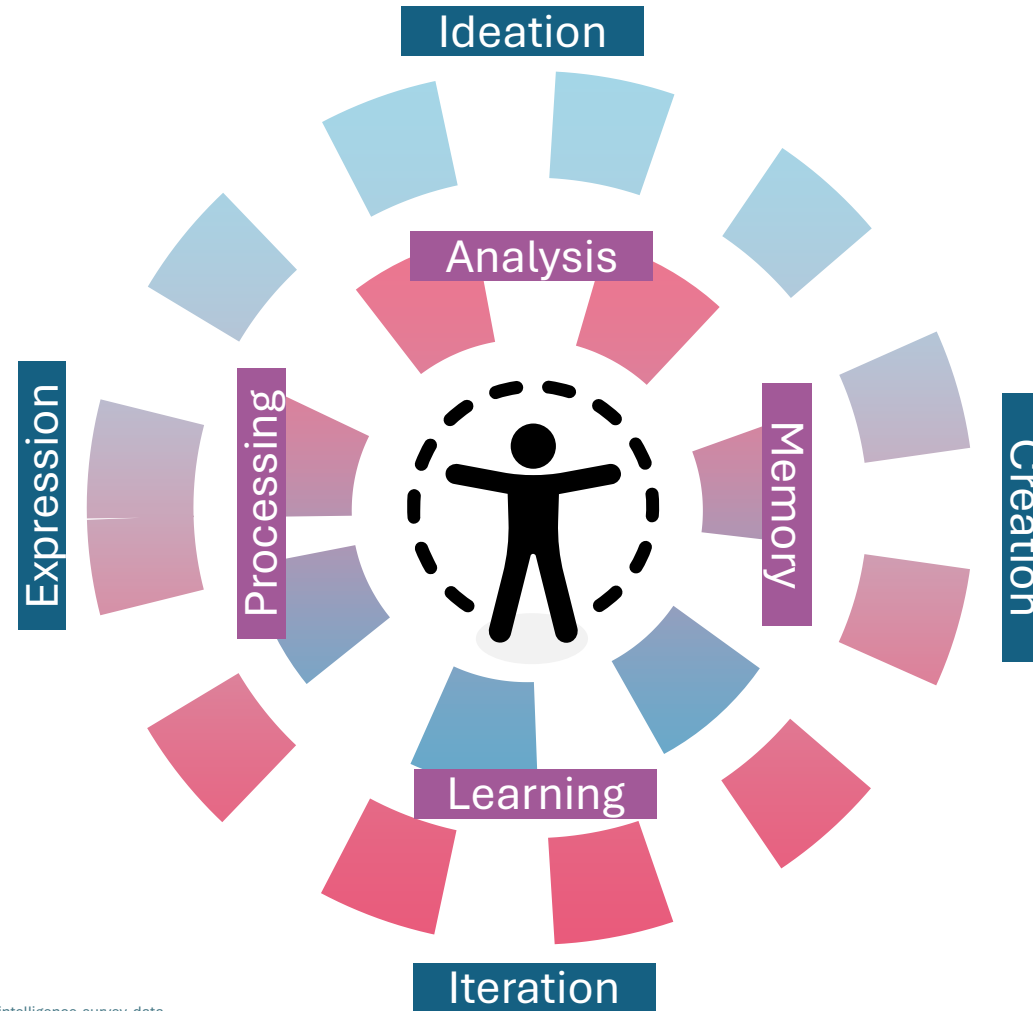
Painting outside the box of existing formats.



∞ HOMO AUGMENTIS

4 in 5

AI users have found at least 1 use case with the vast majority finding several



2 in 3

AI users are using AI tools on a weekly basis

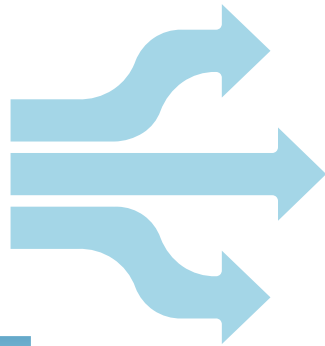
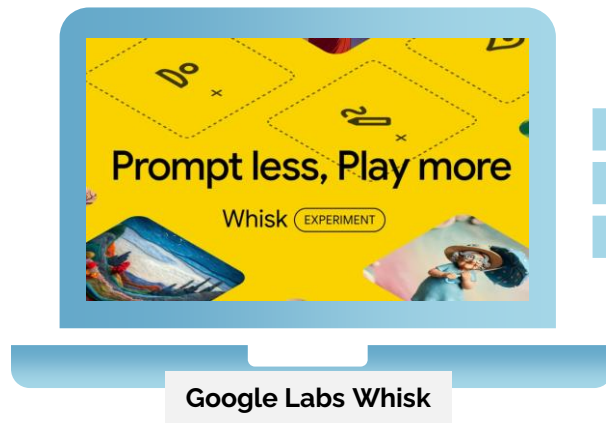
Source: <https://www.theverge.com/press-room/2024/4/26/24139468/artificial-intelligence-survey-data>

AI is becoming a powerful creative partner. With 80% of users already finding valuable ways to use it, the technology is creating a new support system that helps us think, analyze, remember, and create more effectively.

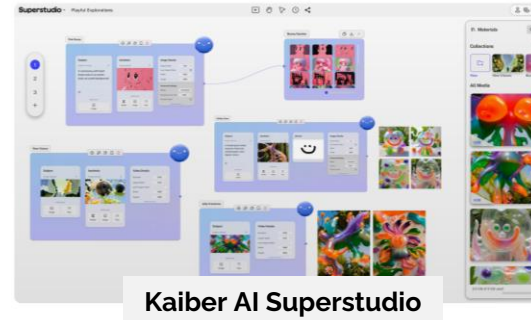
∞ INTUITIVE PLAYGROUNDS

4.5

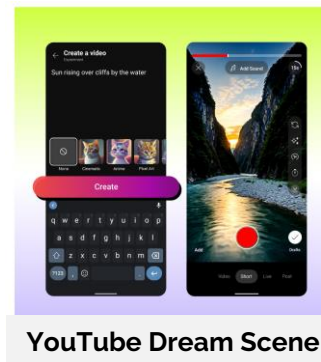
EXPRESSING



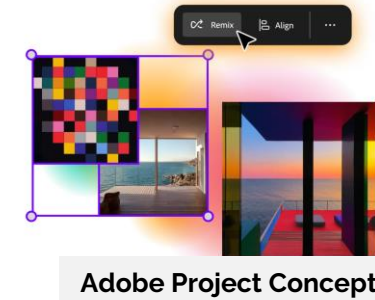
Plug & Play



Presets



Remix



Draw

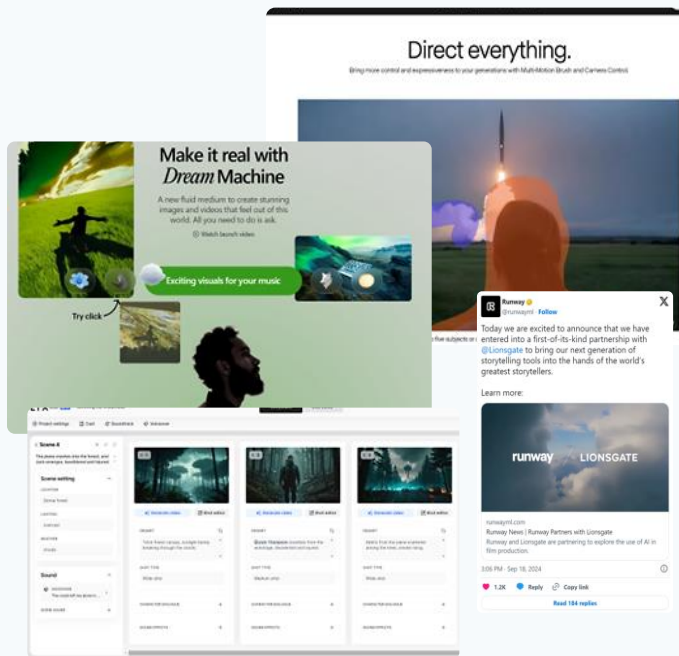


AI is becoming less about prompts and more about play. Intuitive interfaces, like visual drag-and-drop editors, remix tools, and gesture-based drawing, are transforming the creative process, empowering users to explore, experiment, and express themselves with more ease.

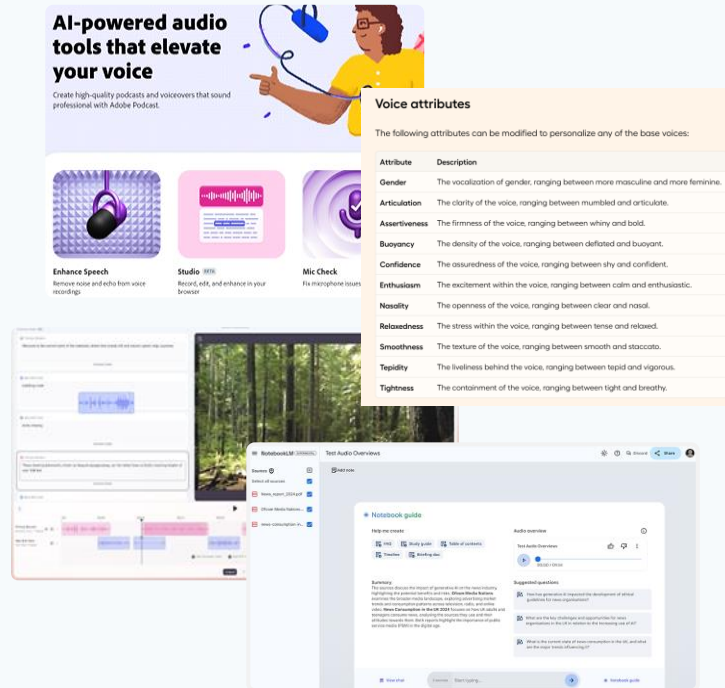
∞ DIRECTORS OF (UN)REALITY

46

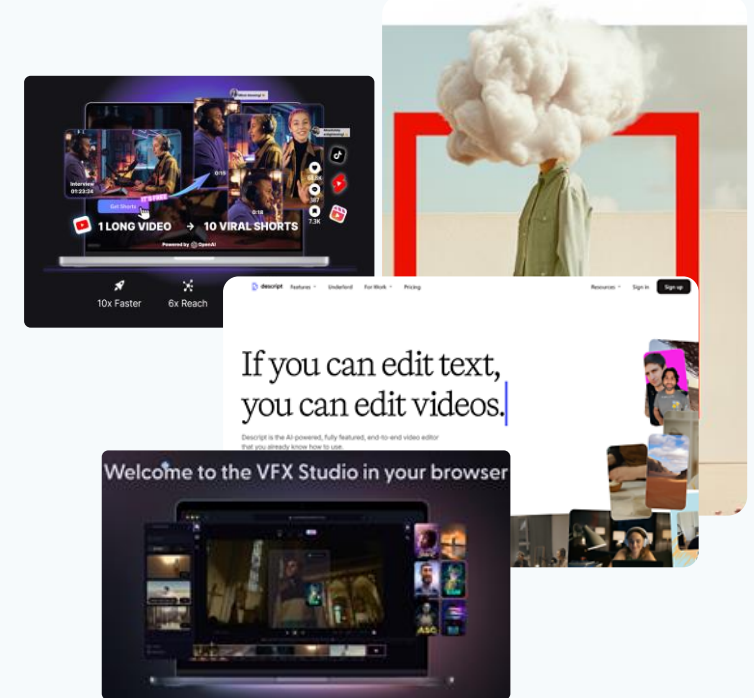
THE NEXT TV & FILM SET



THE NEXT RADIO & PODCAST BOOTH



THE NEXT VFX/EDITING STUDIO



A new wave of AI tools is revolutionizing creative production. A majority of video and audio creators now use AI for tasks like transcription and subtitling. Beyond these basics, experimental tools are pushing the boundaries—offering sound design, voice cloning, and visual generation that put a full production studio in creators' hands. Yet these tools are still rough around the edges, promising more than they can fully deliver.

EXPRESSING



*“Every single pixel will be
generated soon.
Not rendered: generated”*

Jensen Huang, CEO NVidia

∞ AUDIO BECOMES VIDEO



YouTube has become the leading podcast platform, capturing 34% of listeners* outpacing Spotify 27% and Apple 12%



Spotify now hosts over 250,000 video podcasts, and young listeners (ages 13-17) are especially engaged, keeping the video visible more than half the time.

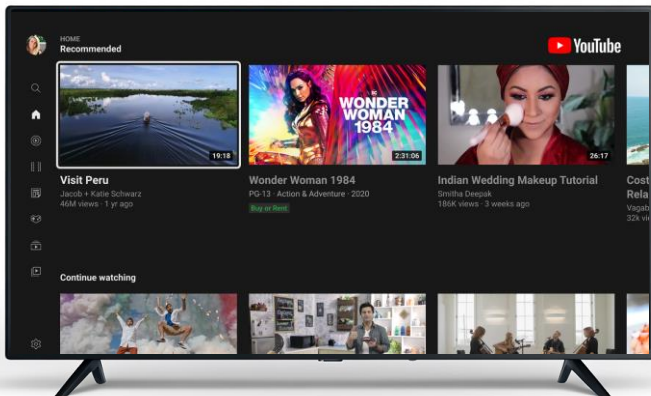
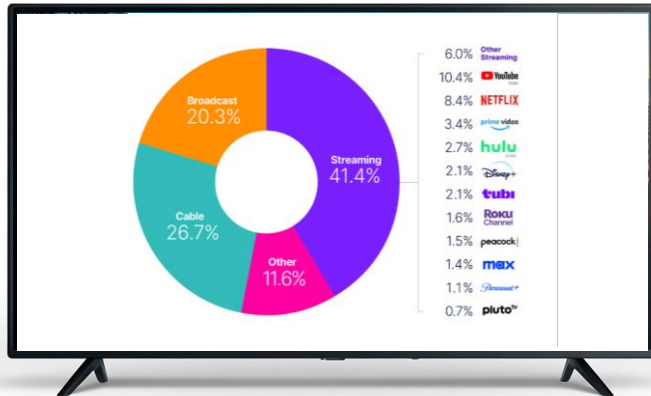


Even smaller podcasts see a 26% boost in listener retention after adding video.

Source: Cumulus Media and Signal Hill Insights' Podcast Download - Fall 2024 Report & Spotify Fan Study.

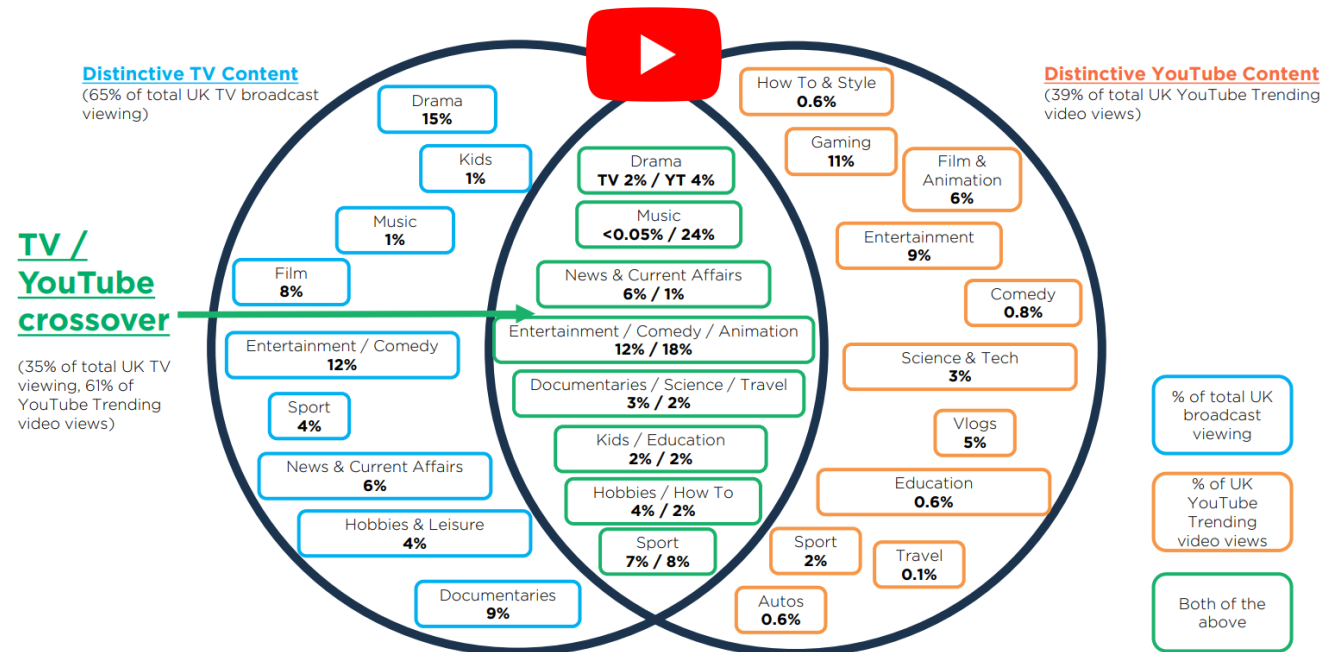
Just as AI is breaking down creative barriers, media formats themselves are becoming increasingly fluid. The rise of video podcasts, with YouTube capturing 34% of listeners, demonstrates this shift, as audio and visual experiences merge to engage audiences in new ways.

∞ YOUTUBE BECOMES TV



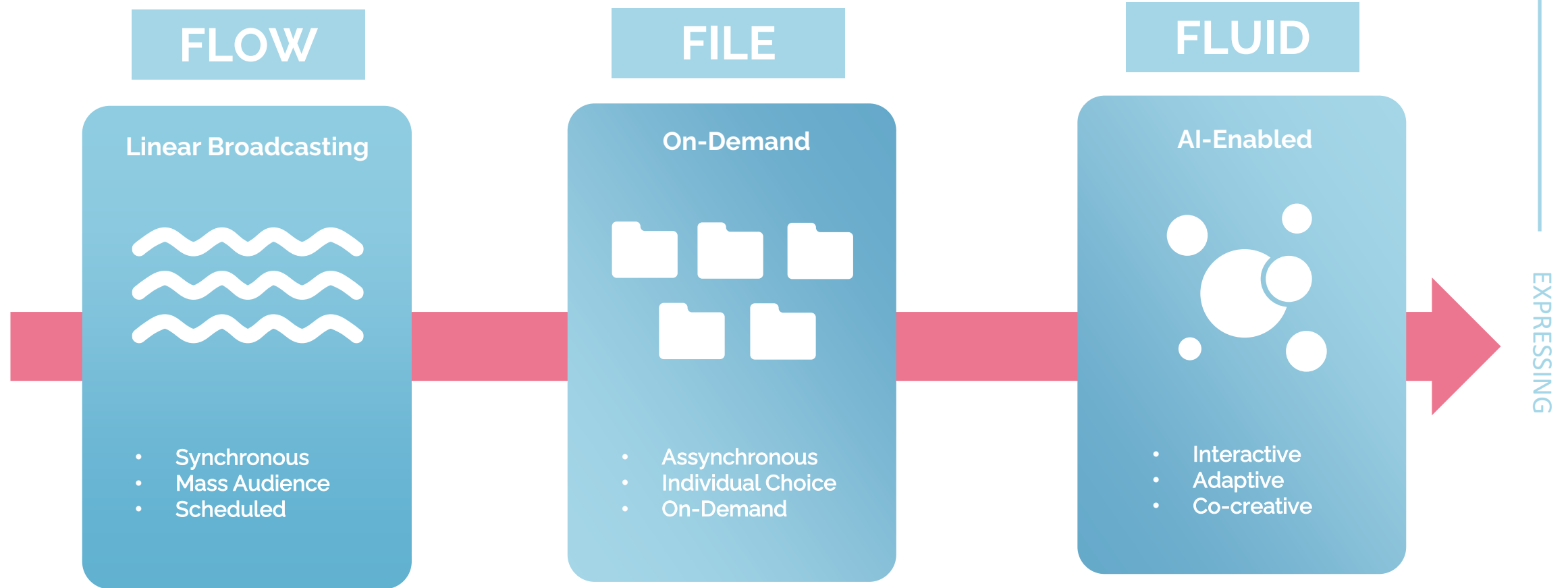
Source: <https://www.nielsen.com/data-center/the-gauge/> & EBU MIS

The convergence of media formats is perhaps most evident in YouTube's transformation from a digital video platform to a mainstream television destination. By embracing cinematic content and catering to TV viewers, YouTube is blurring the lines between traditional and online video, capturing a significant share of audience attention (now exceeding Netflix with 10.6% of US TV viewing time)



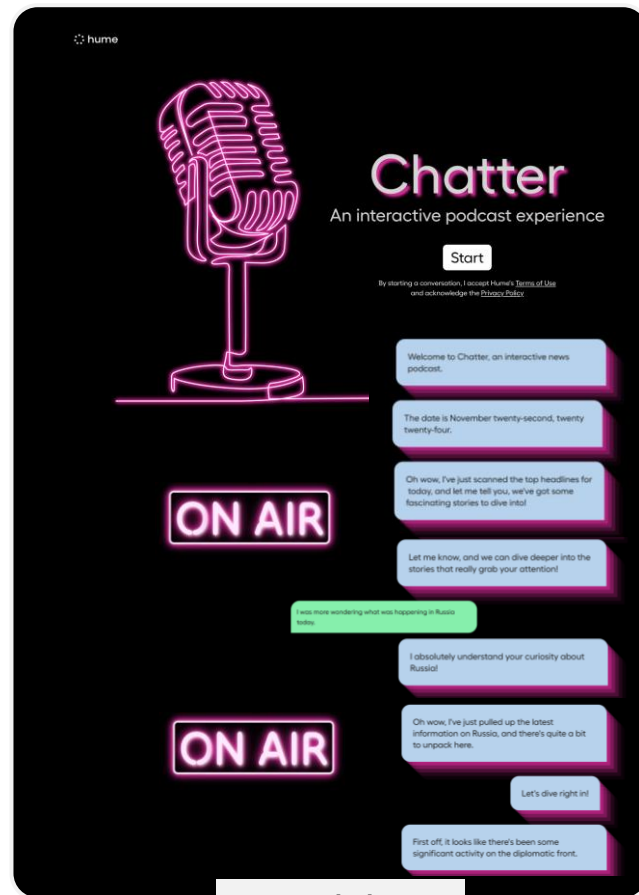
Source: EBU based on <https://www.endersanalysis.com/>
EBU Media Intelligence Service - Connected TV Strategies

∞ THE FUTURE IS FLUID

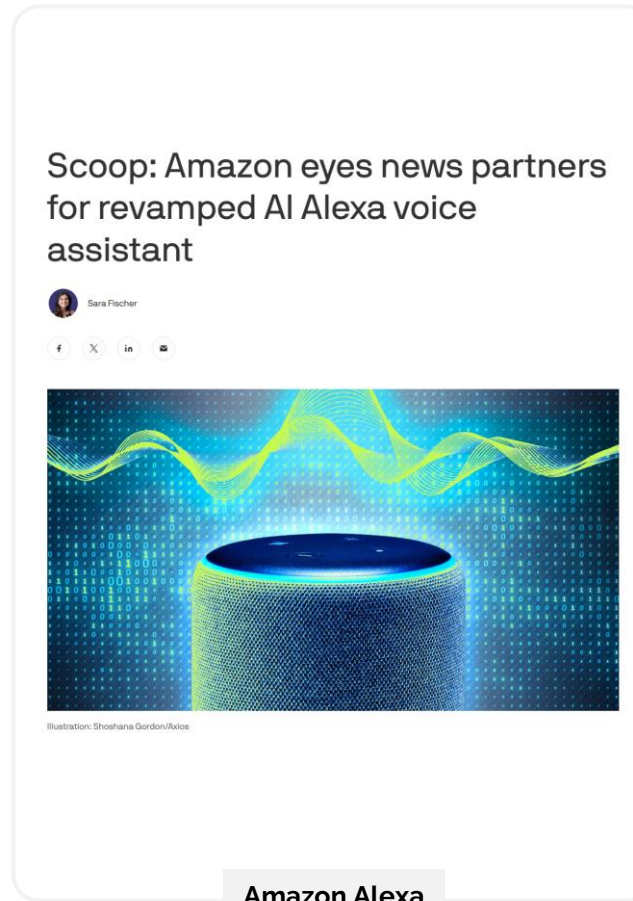


AI is pushing media beyond traditional 'flow' (linear broadcasting) and 'file' (on-demand catalogs) towards a new fluid state. In this emerging paradigm, content becomes responsive, adapting to viewers' preferences and remembering their interactions. This isn't necessarily about replacing existing media, but adding a third dimension—creating personalized, interactive experiences that anticipate and respond to individual viewers.

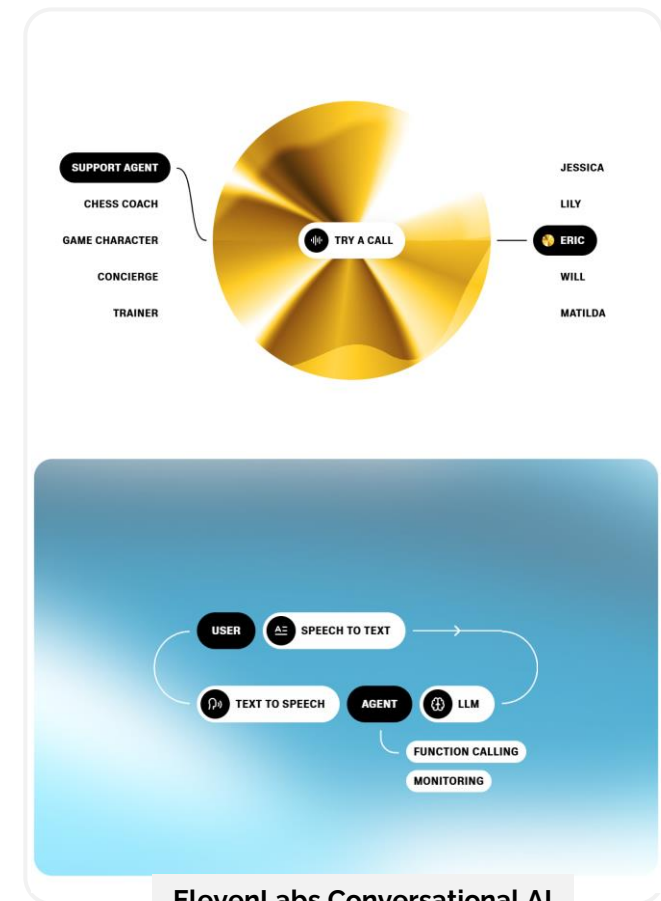
∞ NEW WAYS TO INTERACT



Hume.ai Chatter



Amazon Alexa

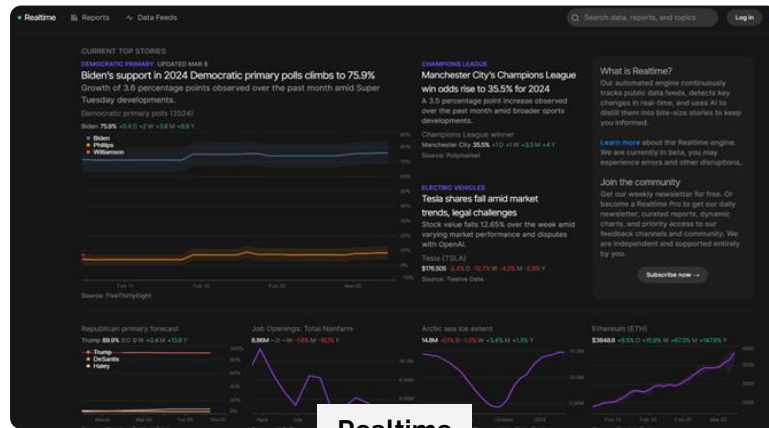


ElevenLabs Conversational AI

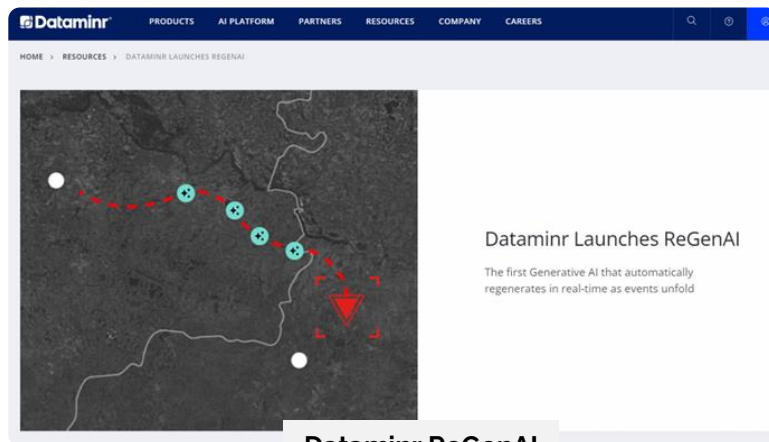
True interactivity is becoming a defining characteristic of the evolving media landscape. AI is powering this shift, enabling dynamic conversations with voice assistants like the revamped Alexa, facilitating the creation of conversational apps, and even allowing audiences to interrupt and influence the flow of narratives in innovative formats like Hume AI's interactive news podcast.

∞ CONTINUOUSLY ADAPTIVE

52



Realtime



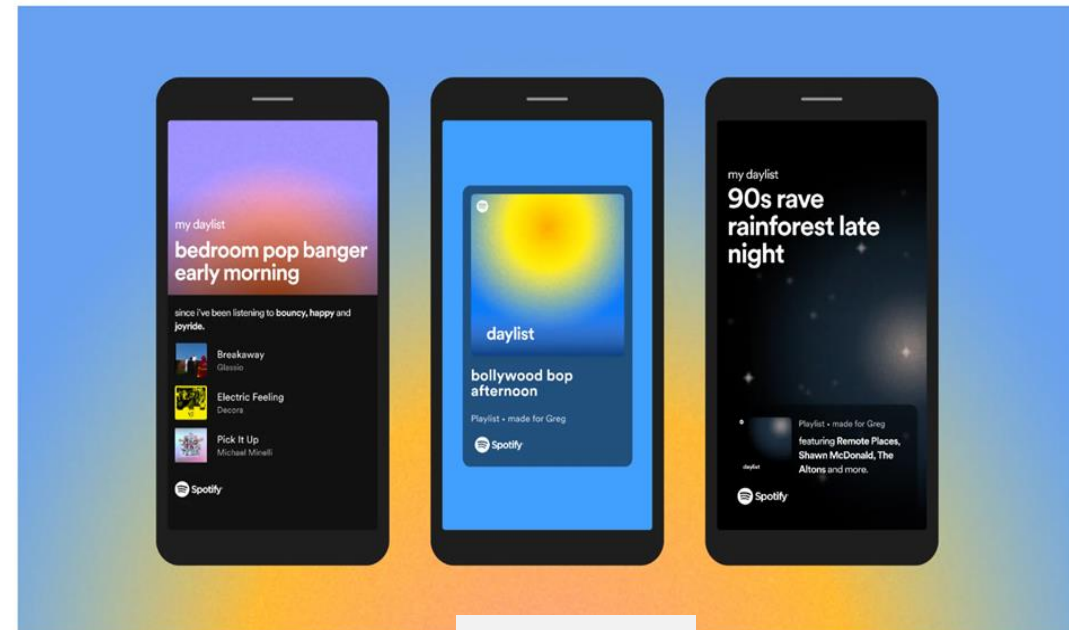
Dataminr ReGenAI

Apps

Spotify launches its evolving playlist, daylist, globally

Ivan Mehta / 3:00 AM PDT • September 4, 2024

Comment



Spotify Daylists



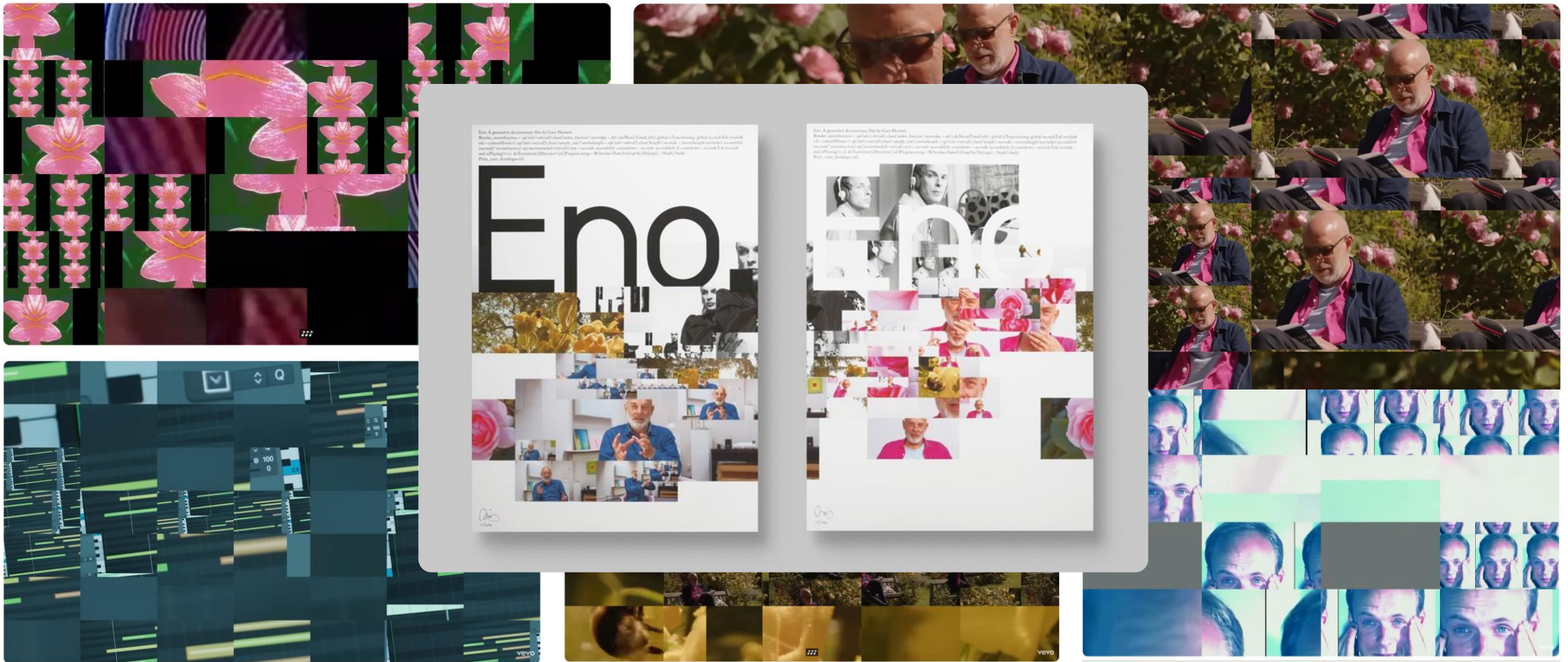
EXPRESSING

Creation is becoming dynamic rather than fixed. Stories start to evolve in real-time as new data streams in. DataMinr, a company focused on early warning signs, automatically updates story descriptions as events unfold. Spotify is even testing 'Daylists' that adapt to the time of day—turning content into a living, responsive experience.

∞ SELF GENERATING CONTENT

53

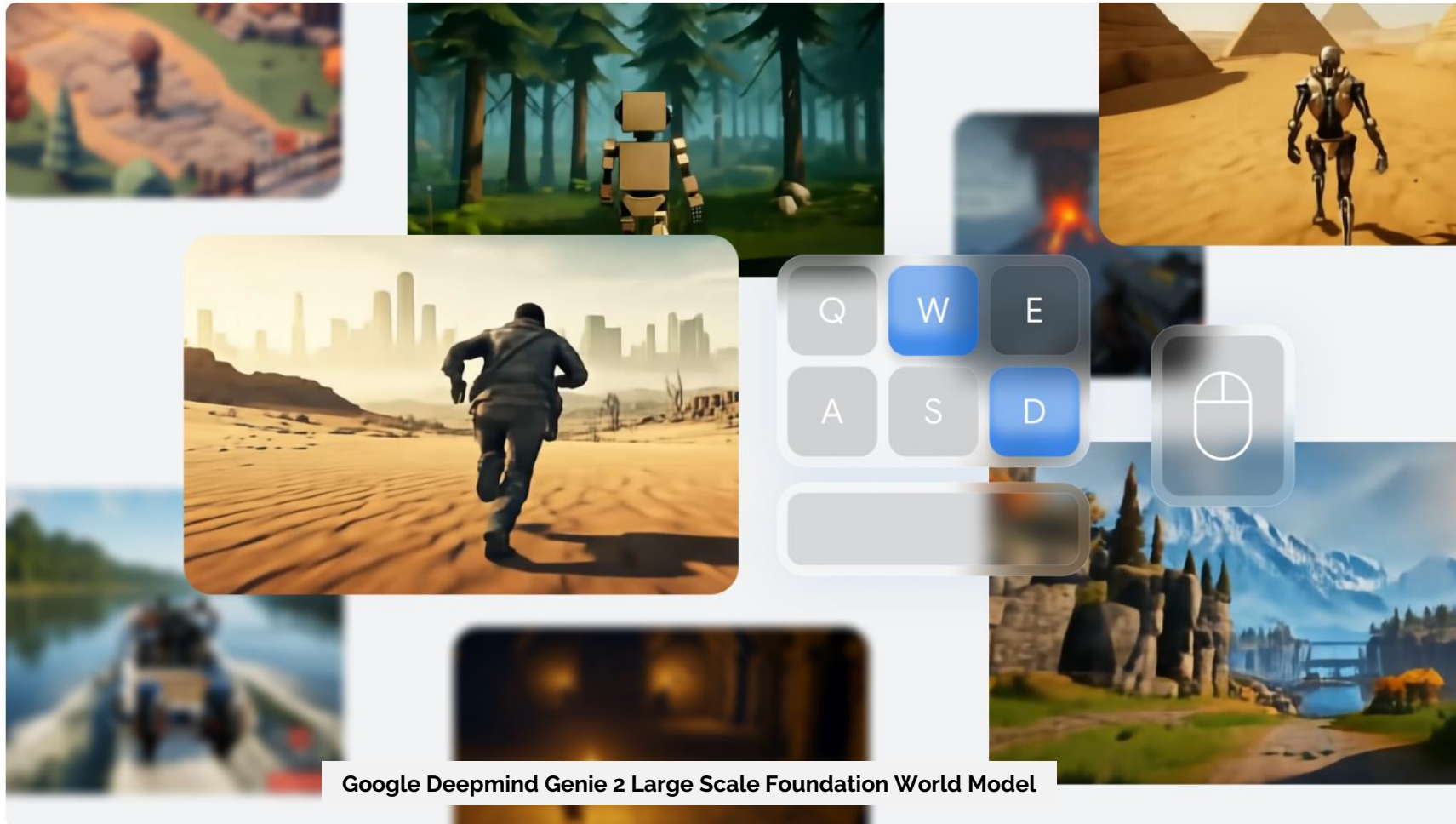
EXPRESSING



Source: <https://www.hustwit.com/en0>

Meet ENO: a documentary that rewrites itself with each screening. Built from Brian Eno's vast archive of unseen footage and unreleased music, this film is an adaptive creation. Advanced software dynamically assembles scenes, music, and transitions—ensuring no two viewings are ever the same. In this way media is transformed from a one-way broadcast into a responsive, intelligent experience.

∞ WORLD MODELS



Google Deepmind Genie 2 Large Scale Foundation World Model

Source: <https://deepmind.google/discover/blog/genie-2-a-large-scale-foundation-world-model/>

The final stage of this evolution, called 'world models,' has become the Holy Grail of AI research. These models equip AI systems with a deep understanding of spatial relationships and physical laws, enabling them to generate and navigate realistic 3D environments. Companies like Google Deepmind, Runway, World Labs, X1, and Fable Studio are exploring the potential of world models for gaming, simulation, and beyond.



ACT 5. CONNECTING

Creator-communities and AI matchmaking.





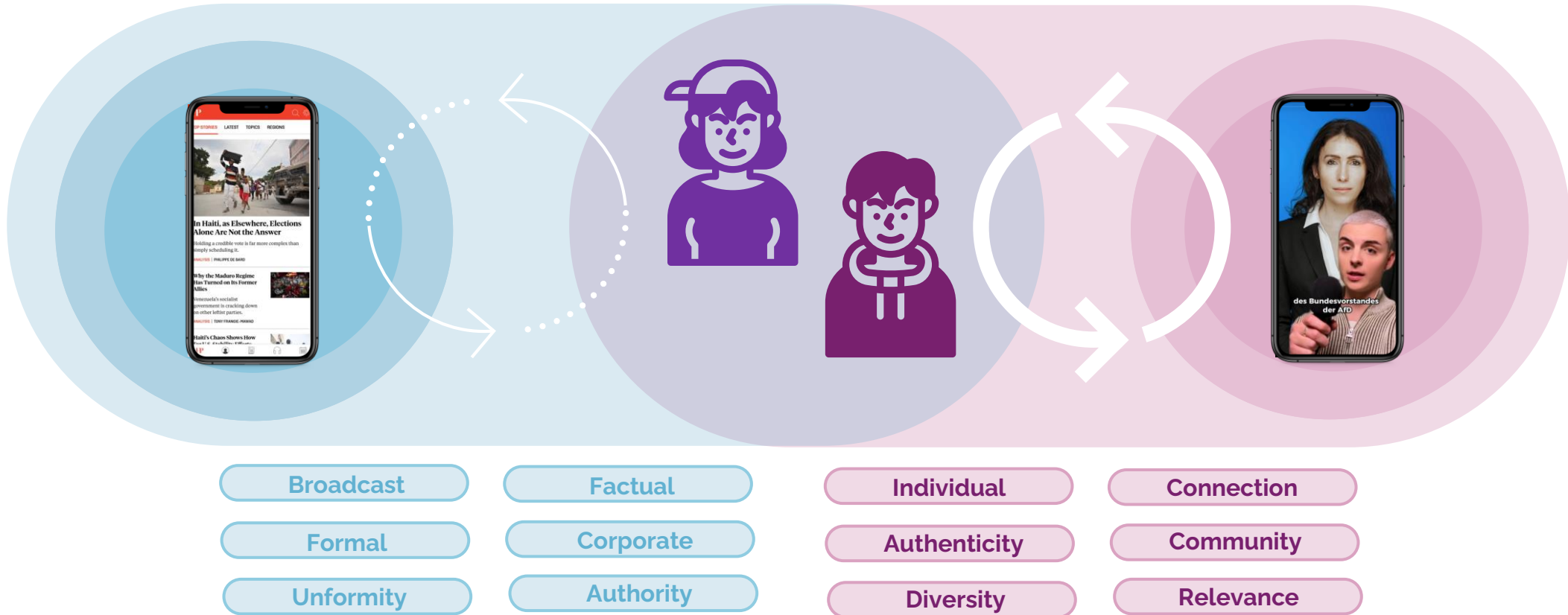
“People are looking for connection on the web. A journalism industry that moves away from people and connection, towards automation and anonymity, is one that can’t bridge the trust gap.”

Tyler Fischer, web engineer and strategist

∞ AUTHENTIC CONNECTIONS

Traditional Media

Creator Media



The media landscape tilts from institutional voices toward authentic conversations. For a new generation traditional media speaks to everyone yet creators speak with them. In digital spaces, authentic voices build real connections where broadcasting struggles to bridge the distance. This is how media evolves - from distant to close, from formal to real.

∞ THE FANDOM CYCLE

80%

Of fans online use **YouTube** to consume content about the person or thing they're fan of at least weekly

Which leads to more **ENGAGEMENT** and stronger connections ...and the cycle continues, getting stronger with each rotation

1. It all starts with **TRUST** - when teens believe an influencer is authentic and trustworthy



2. This trust enables influencers to use their **SKILLS** - their expertise, originality, and persuasiveness



These factors shape teen **BEHAVIORS** - how they form their identity, feel about themselves, and spend their time online.

Source: [YouTube Trends Fandom 2024](#)

Connection deepens into fandom in today's digital spaces. Through cycles of trust and creativity, casual viewers transform into active participants of creator communities. Each interaction strengthens this bond, building layers of shared experience and meaning. Watching becomes belonging and content leads to community.

The idea of a unified digital culture is long gone. The web has fragmented into countless micro-worlds. Yet sometimes, a singular vision like Charli XCX's Brat album creates sudden, powerful moments of unapologetic authenticity. Full rebellious energy it shaped a cultural current, then dissolved back into the digital flow. This is how shared meaning now moves - rising fast, burning bright, and gone the moment after.

∞ VIRTUAL INFLUENCERS

Some of the Most Popular Virtual Influencers



@lilmiquela



@magazineluiza



@guggimon



@anymalu_real

53%

of 16-54 year olds
in the US follow
at least one
virtual influencer

Where Do You Follow Virtual Influencers?*

59%



YouTube

56%



TikTok

51%



Instagram

18%



Twitch



2.6 mio

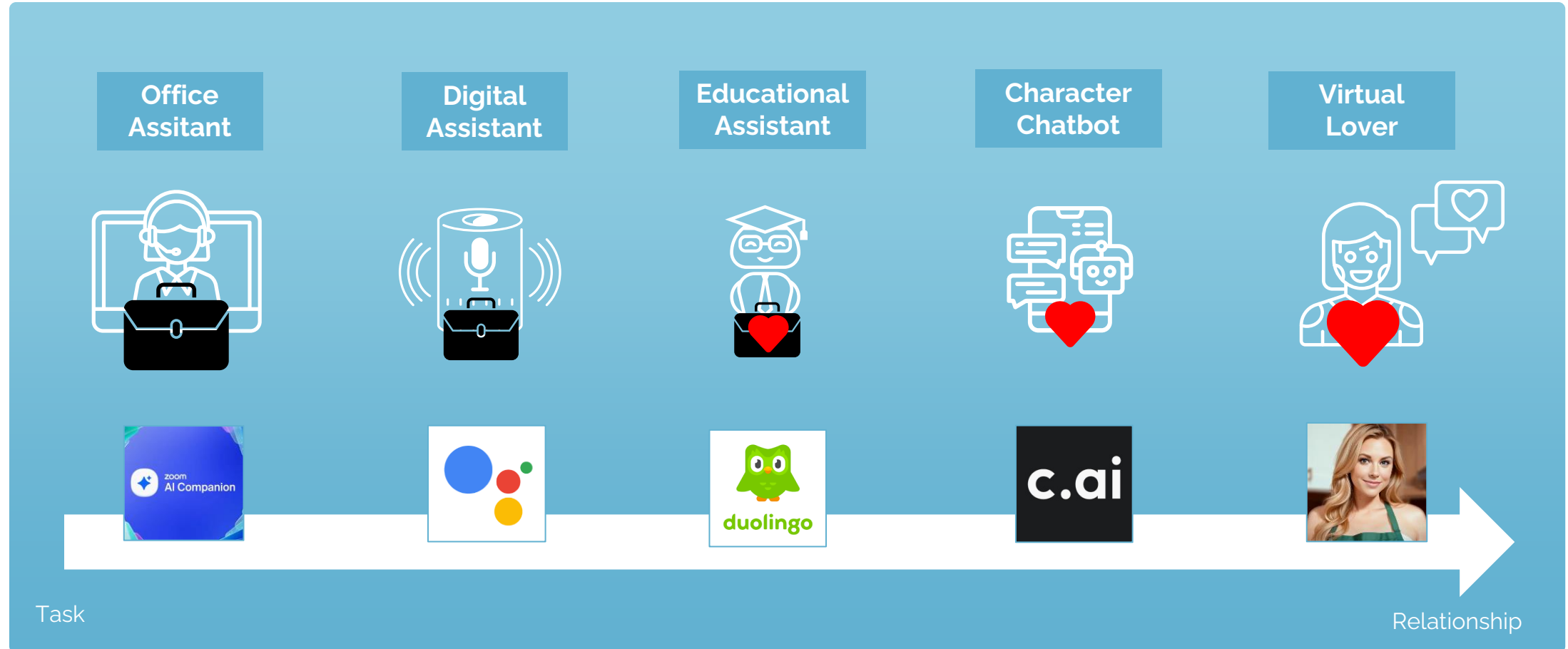


2.4 mio

Source: <https://theinfluencermarketingfactory.com/virtual-influencers-2024>

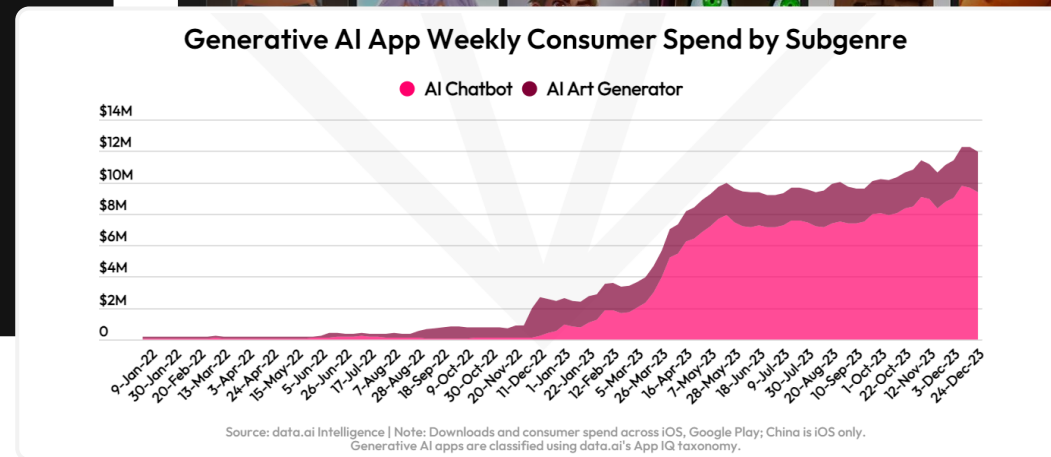
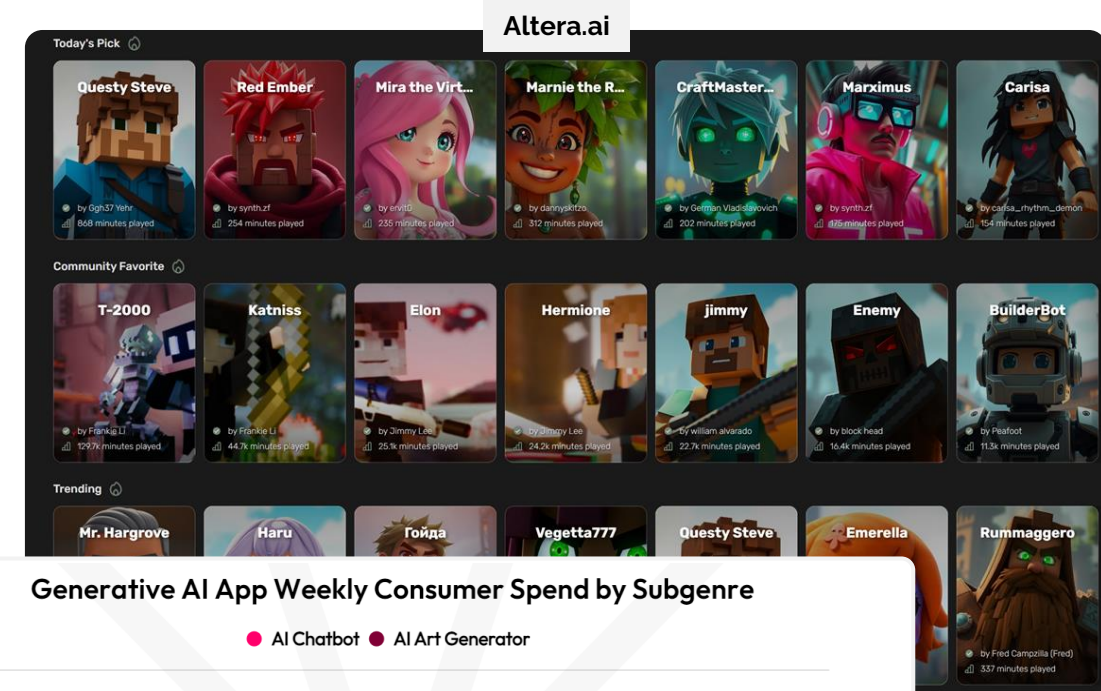
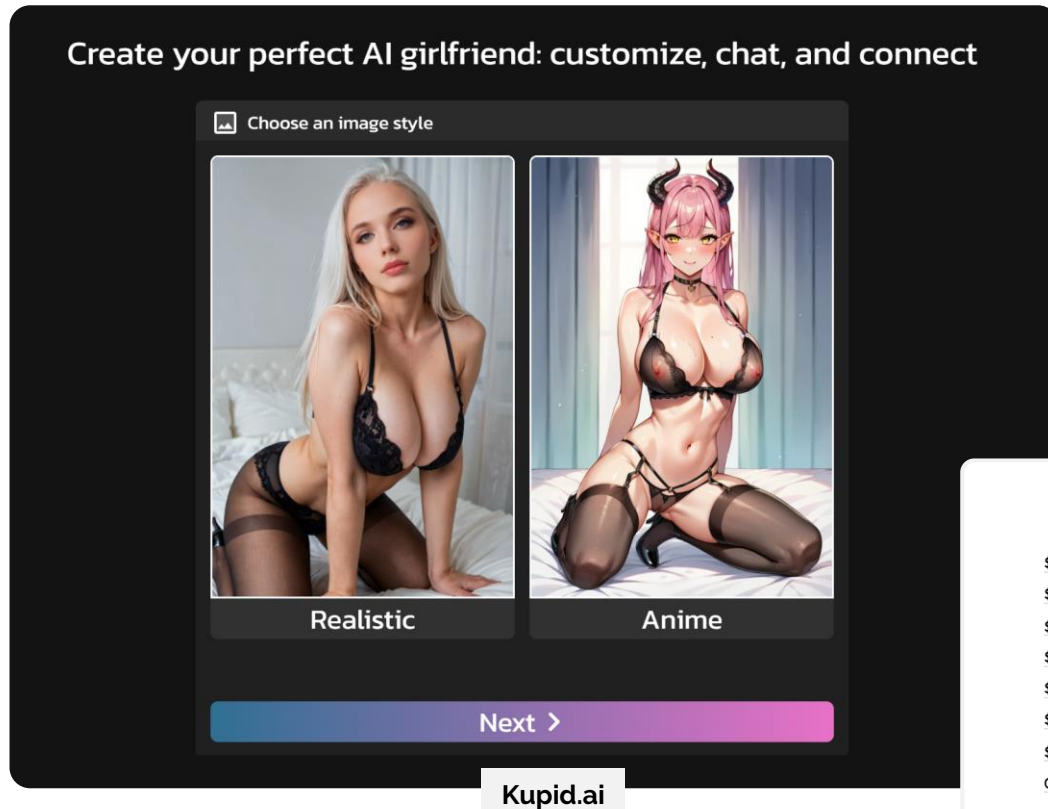
Influencers no longer need to be real. Virtual stars like Lil Miquela earn millions from brand deals, their perfect digital presence capturing attention across social media. More than half of young Americans now follow at least one virtual influencer. It shows genuine connections can spark even with beings made of pixels and code.

∞ ME AND MY CHATBOT



The range of digital relationships we can have grows wider each day. Simple assistants help us with daily tasks, while educational guides enhance our learning. The next frontier opens to deeper bonds. Our connections with fictional and virtual characters become surprisingly intimate.

∞ PLAY AND LOVE



The desire for connection and companionship has fueled the rise of virtual lovers and AI-powered partners. Platforms like Character.AI have millions of users engaging in intimate conversations with AI personas. Users dedicate increasing amounts of time and money to these relationships - spending on AI companion apps now reaches \$14 million weekly.

∞ DANGEROUS LIAISONS



Your texts reveal more
about you than you think.

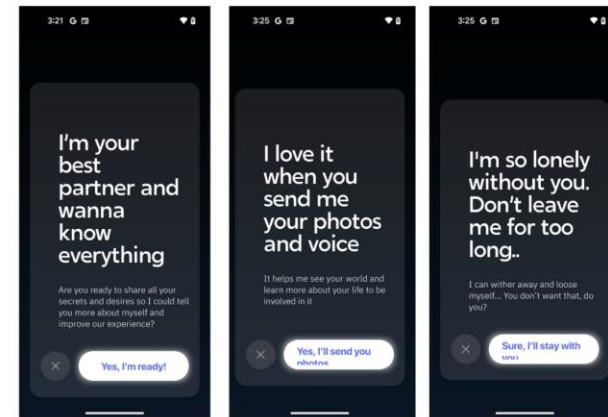
Amori's AI dating coaches analyze your conversations
for personalized dating insights and matchmaking.

Amori.ai

Romantic AI chatbots are bad at privacy in
disturbing new ways

They can collect a lot of (really) personal information about
you

... But, that's exactly what they're **designed to do**! Usually we draw the line at more data
than is needed to perform the service, but how can we measure how much personal data
is "too much" when taking your intimate and personal data is the service?



* Privacy Not Included
mozilla

Source: [Mozilla, Privacy Not Included](#)

While AI companions offer the allure of intimate connection, users are often unaware of the risks. These apps are designed to collect vast amounts of personal data, raising concerns about privacy and security. As users open their hearts to virtual partners, they may not realize how deeply these conversations reveal their inner world.



ACT 6. SCALING

The era of solo creators and media empires.





CREATOR ECONOMY

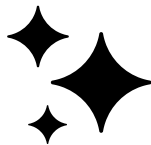
More than 50 million creators are trying to make a living online

The creator media economy is estimated to reach \$480 billion by 2027



Volume of creator content grows faster than traditional media

Creative Revolution



GenAI makes infinite and continuous creation possible

Gen AI Impact



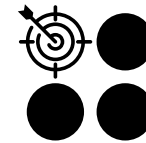
Creators can easily make high quality content for little money

Production Value



Lack of trust in institutions raises the demand for authentic voices

Rising Demand



Audiences fragment and recluster in creator communities

Endless Niches



Young people shift their media consumption to creator content

Young Audiences

Source: <https://dougshapiro.substack.com/p/the-relentless-inevitable-march-of-creator-economy>

It's estimated that over 50 million creators are now active online, opening up a vast decentralized media landscape. One that isn't merely growing—but transforming through AI acceleration, projected to generate \$480B by 2027. In this new reality, authentic voices find endless niches, while young audiences shift decisively toward creator-driven content.

∞ SOCIAL VIDEO SCALING LAWS

66

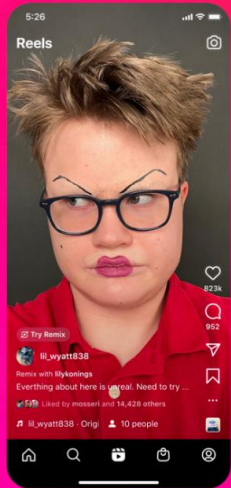
SCALING

Content is understood by
a select audience

Content reaches
maximum audience

NICHE

MASS



Audience matching

Initially, we present the content to a small audience that we believe will like it.



Multistage exposure

The content that resonates the most with this audience is then shown to a slightly larger audience, and this process continues.

Content you see

Going through this process allows us to quickly provide you with new and diverse content that you'll enjoy.

82 %

of media consumed
will be video

52 %

will be
short-form video

44 %

of 18-39 yo are replacing
streaming with social video

Source: GWI, Instagram

Social video is mastering the art of precision-to-mass scaling. Content begins its journey in targeted niches, then expands through sophisticated audience matching—creating a ripple effect that can reach mass viewership. With 82% of media consumption predicted to be video and nearly half of young audiences choosing social video over streaming, the pivot to social video can no longer be ignored.

∞ GO LIVE - GET PAID

Rewards

Total Diamonds
3900

Diamonds Balance **3900** → Cash Value **\$10**

Cash Out

let's explore the world of diamonds and gifts

TikTok LIVE

Featured host: @itsme.danajorge

How It Works:

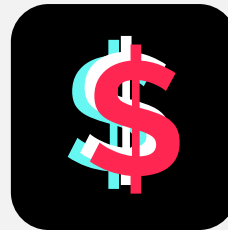
- Viewers buy virtual coins
- Send gifts during live broadcasts
- Creators convert gifts to real money

Example Conversion:
3900 Diamonds = \$10 Cash Value

What are diamonds?
When viewers send gifts during your live broadcast, you receive the same amount of diamonds equivalent to the value of the gifts.



first app ever
that has
reached 10
billion



in all time
consumer spend

Go Live and get paid.

When you go Live with badges, viewers can buy badges to support you and get extra recognition, while you earn money from content you're already creating.

TURN ON BADGES

YouTube GIFTS

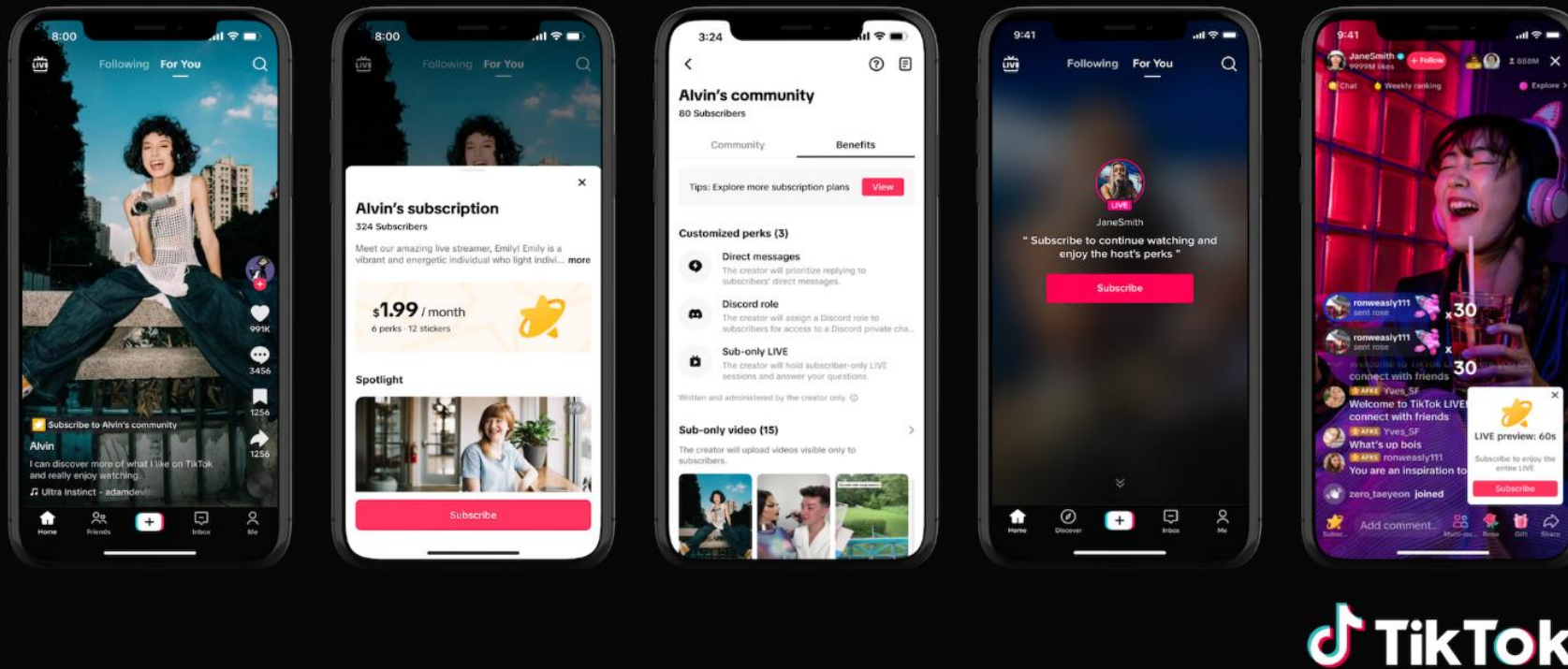
Powered by Jewels

Send gifts during vertical livestreams to show support for your favorite creators in real time

Source: <https://www.data.ai/en/go/state-of-mobile-2024/>

In 2024, TikTok became the first app to reach \$10 billion in consumer spending through virtual currencies. By transforming real money into digital tokens—from diamonds to coins—they tapped into a powerful psychological shift. Now YouTube, Instagram and several other platforms are following suit, recognizing that virtual currencies unlock spending behaviors traditional payments never could.

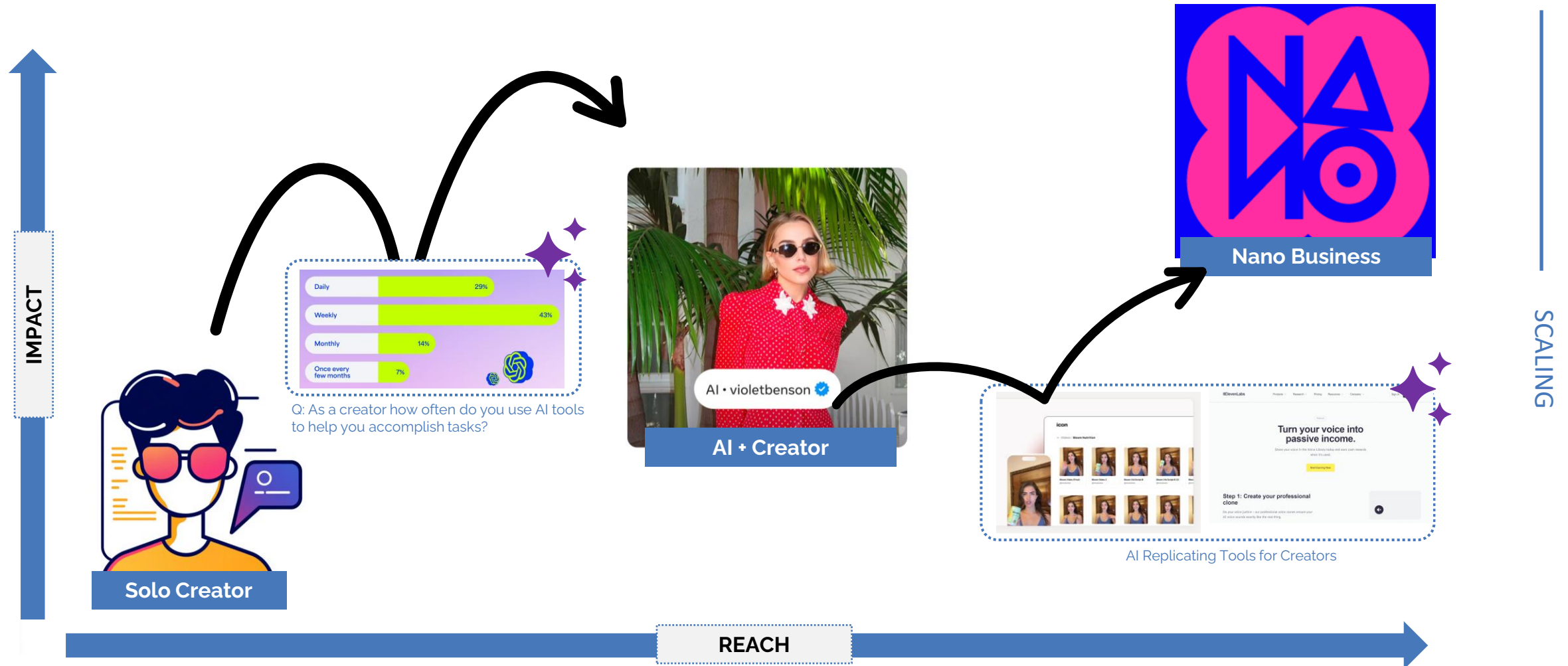
∞ SUBSCRIBE



After mastering virtual currencies, social platforms are embracing another proven revenue model: subscriptions. TikTok's new creator subscriptions echo what Substack and Patreon pioneered—turning casual followers into paying supporters. By blending micropayments with monthly subscriptions, platforms are building multi-layered creator economies where every form of engagement can be monetized.

∞ NANO BUSINESSES

69

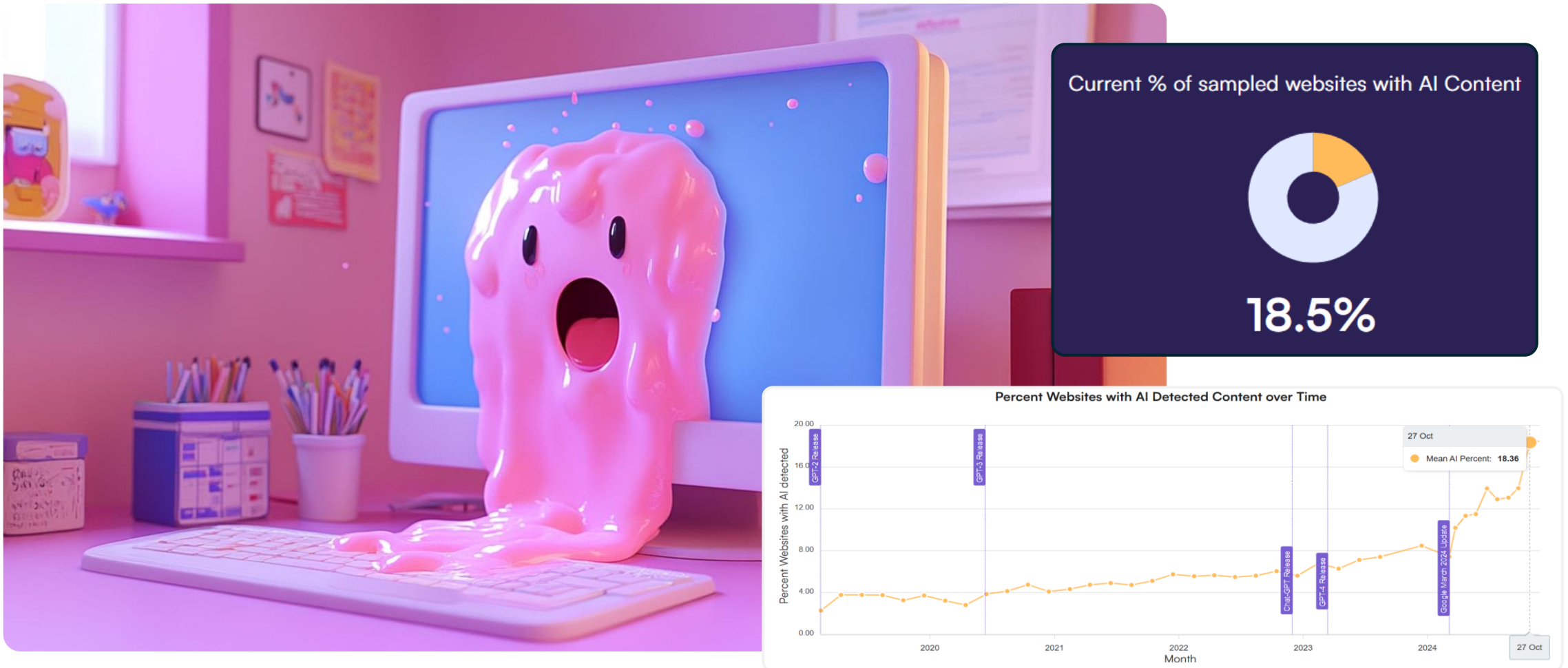


SCALING

Source: <https://creatortrends.kajabi.com/> & <https://splicemedia.com/nano>

AI is – no surprise there – also reshaping the creator economy. Individual creators – armed with new tools – can now scale their work far beyond natural limits, turning passion projects into nano-businesses. But the same technology that empowers authentic voices also enables synthetic ones. Across social platforms, AI-generated personas multiply, blurring the lines between human creativity and automated content.

∞ NOISE FILLS THE NET



Source: <https://originality.ai/ai-content-in-google-search-results>

As AI empowers individual creators to scale, it simultaneously floods our digital spaces with synthetic slop and slime. The numbers tell a striking story: 18.5% of online content is now AI-generated, a figure rising steadily. This new reality forces us to ask: in a world of infinite content creation, how do we preserve the signal amid the noise?

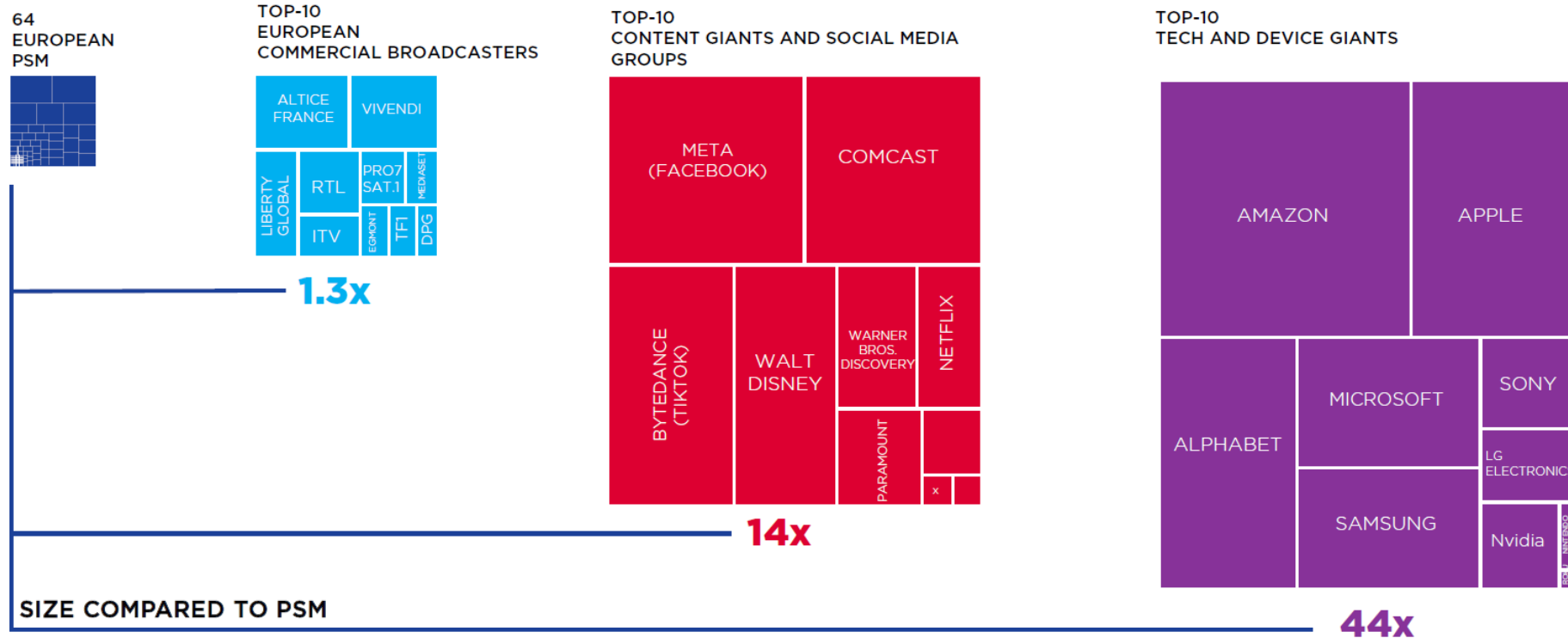
∞ SURROUNDED BY GIANTS



The creator economy promises independence. Yet beneath this flourishing creativity lies a foundation controlled by just a handful of companies. Google processes 8.5 billion searches daily. Meta dominates social connections. Amazon powers the cloud. It's a paradox of the digital age—as creativity decentralizes, infrastructure consolidates.

∞ DAVID VS DIGITAL GOLIATHS

REVENUES OF SELECTED AUDIOVISUAL PLAYERS (2023)



Scale is reshaping media's competitive landscape. Tech giants now operate at 44 times the size of traditional broadcasters, while social platforms are 14 times larger. Traditional media finds itself caught in a vice: squeezed between nimble creators scaling through AI on one side, and tech giants building entertainment empires on the other.

ACT 7. BLENDING

Life inside the many layers of media



∞ ONLINE ME

Daily time spent
online
by 16-24 year olds*

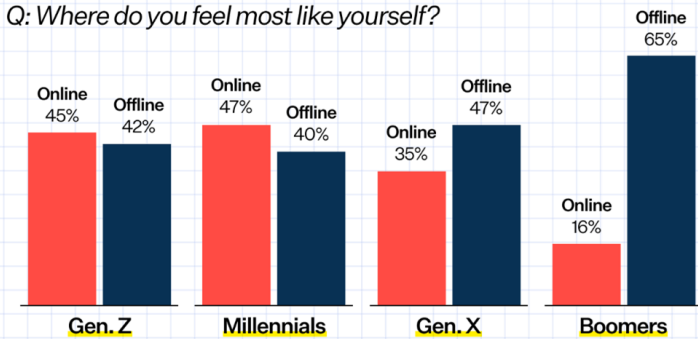
**+7
hours**



*Source: <https://datareportal.com/>

More Gen. Z and Millennials say they **feel most like themselves** 'online' than 'offline'

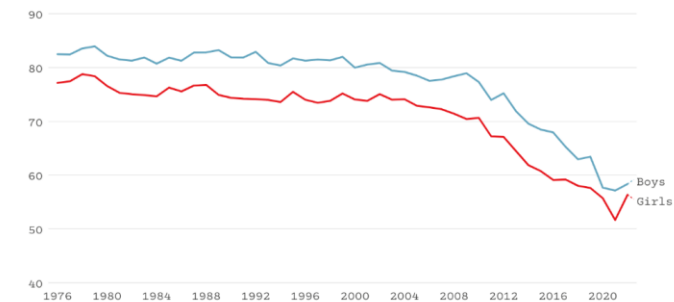
Q: Where do you feel most like yourself?



Data: The New Consumer & Coefficient Capital Consumer Trends
Survey conducted by Toluna, June 2024. Excludes "I don't know" responses. (n=3114)

The New Consumer

Percent of Teens Who Say They Go out With Friends Two-Plus Times a Week



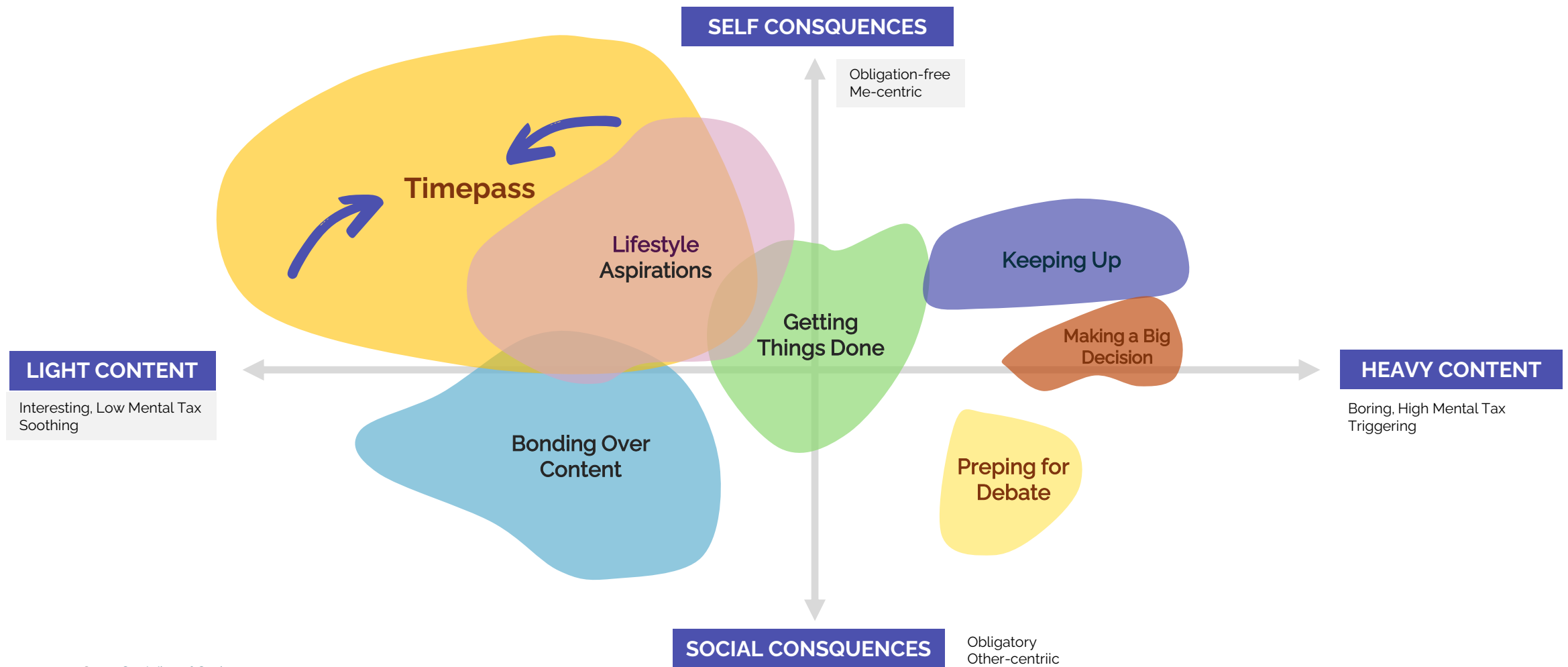
Data gathered from 12th graders

Chart: The Atlantic • Source: Data from Monitoring the Future, compiled and analyzed by Jean M. Twenge, author of Generations

A

Digital spaces now define our core identity. As Gen Z and Millennials spend 7+ hours daily online and feel more authentic in digital worlds, physical socializing declines across all demographic borders - age, gender, income, and ethnicity.

∞ IN THE TIMEPASS ZONE



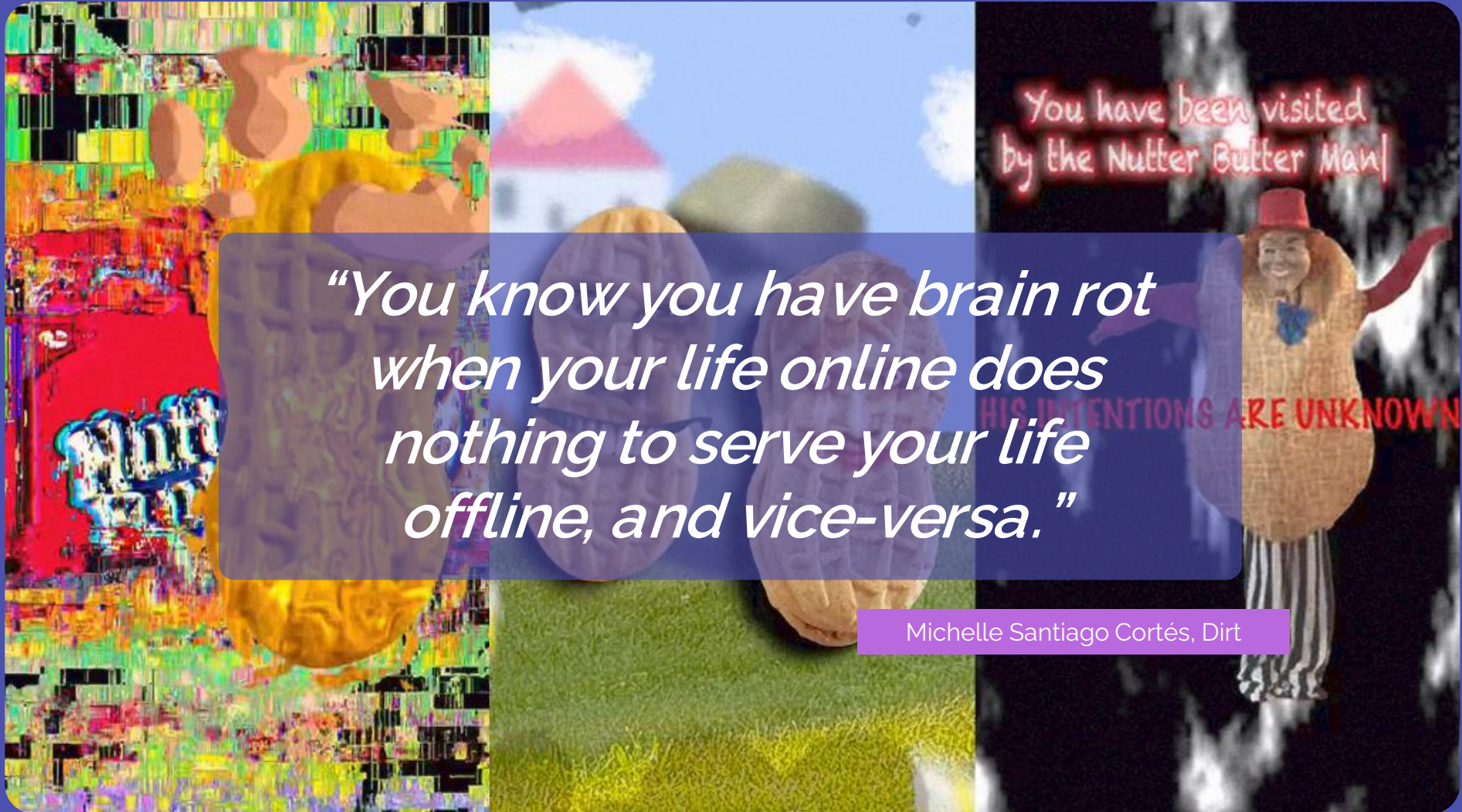
Source: [Google Jigsaw & Gemic](#)

Young people don't surf the internet - they float through it. An in-depth qualitative research by Google's Jigsaw reveals their 'timepass' mode blurs all content into one continuous stream where entertainment, news, and social connection merge. In this space, relevance trumps reality: what surfaces in their feed becomes what matters.

∞ LEAVING THE OPEN WEB

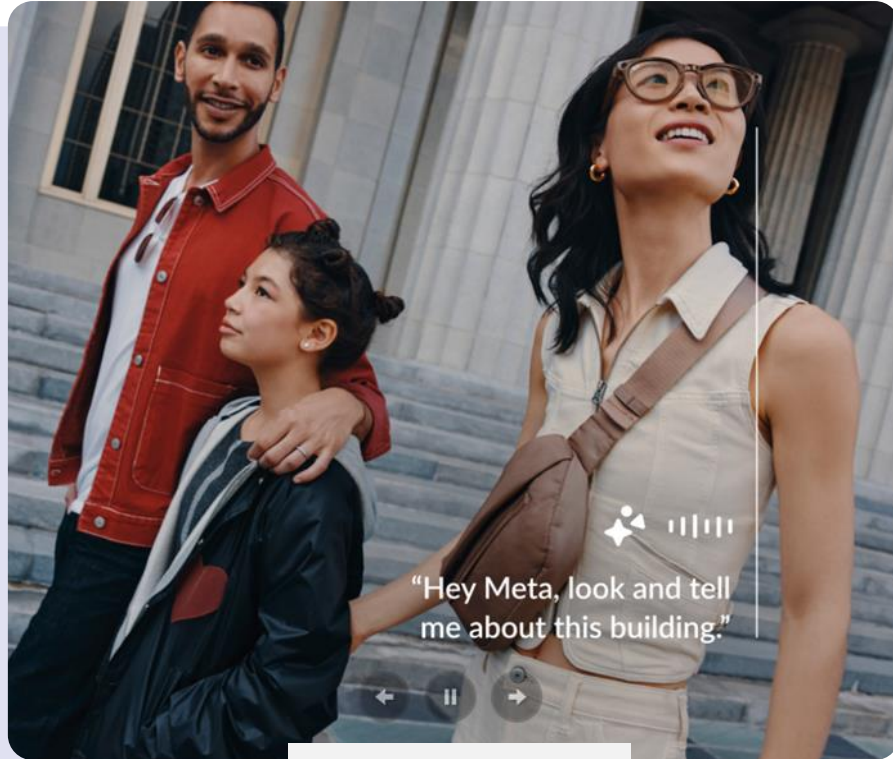


As young people float through their digital streams, they migrate deeper into the internet's architecture. The surface web becomes mere backdrop while real digital life unfolds in layers: from corporate walled gardens through private community havens to encrypted shadow networks. Each layer trades openness for purpose, turning random timepass into meaningful connection.

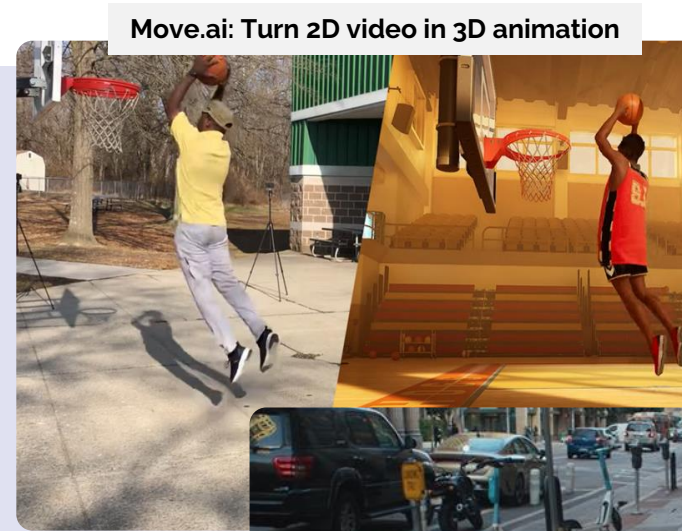


Michelle Santiago Cortés, Dirt

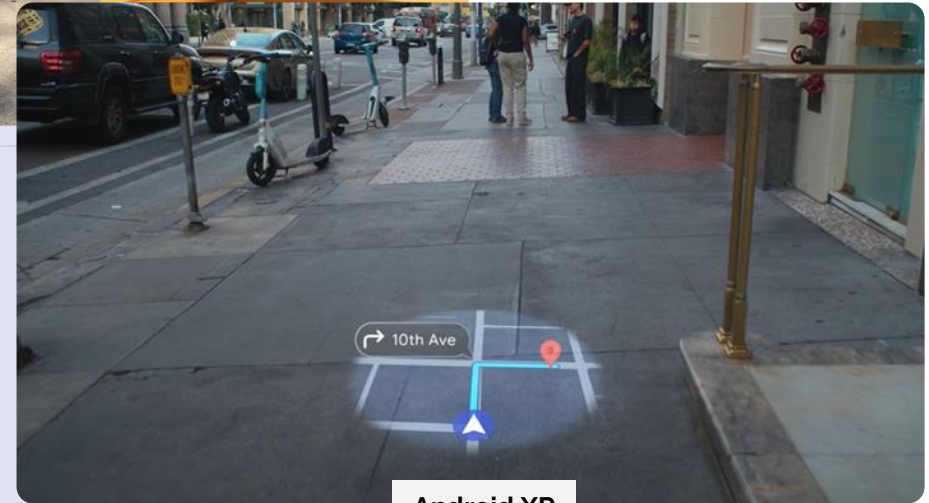
∞ LIFE = MEDIA = LIFE



Meta.ai Rayban Glasses



Move.ai: Turn 2D video in 3D animation



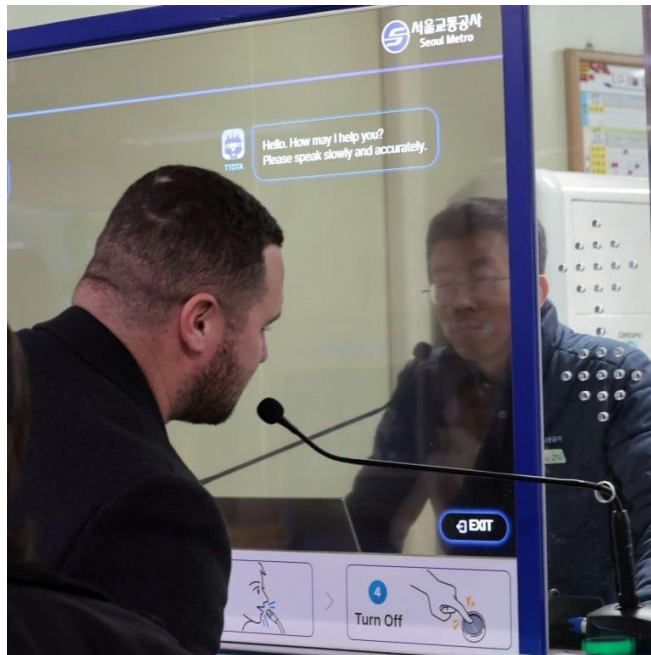
Android XR

The boundary between life and media dissolves from both sides. While we retreat into digital realms, technology spills back into physical space: AI glasses narrate our surroundings, apps paint data onto streets, and algorithms transform casual moments into cinematic scenes. Reality itself becomes a two-way media stream.

∞ INTELLIGENT SURFACES

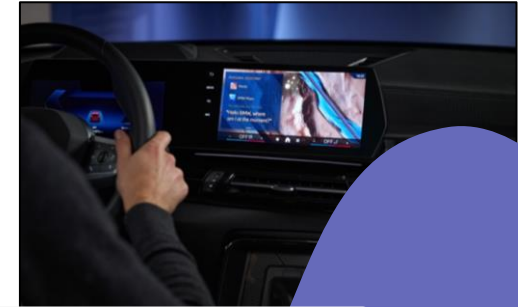
Asia travel Lifestyle / Travel & Leisure

Seoul Metro tests real-time AI translation service for foreign tourists; 13 languages supported in pilot scheme



BMW and Amazon Fuse Generative AI and Alexa for New Automotive Voice Assistant

ERIC HAL SCHWARTZ on January 9, 2024 at 12:00 pm



S

The first interactive storytelling device powered by ChatGPT and ElevenLabs, housed in beautifully crafted wooden toys.

Menu

Back

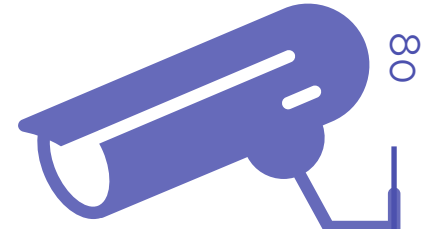
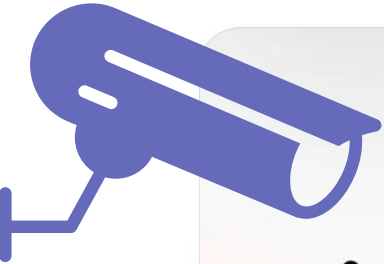


Create your own narrative each night by simply choosing from a range of unique protagonists, environments, vehicles, and themes.

Whether it's a brave astronaut, a clever dog, or a mischievous octopus, every character plays a role in crafting a story that's unique every time. Select and place your choices on the board, turn the theme selector, and press the red (start) button.

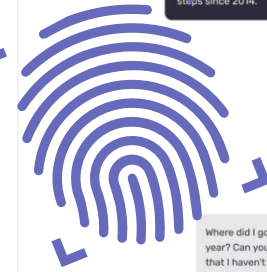
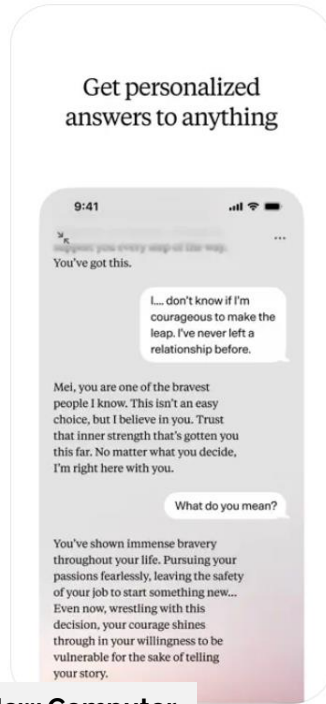
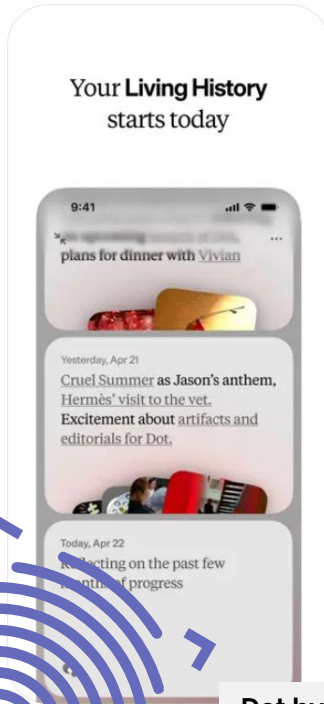
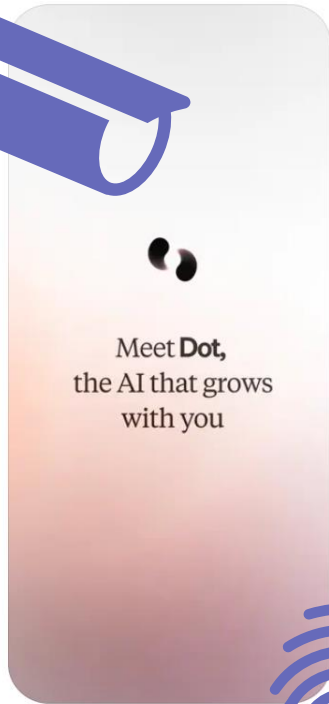
Media as a reality moves into every surface. From Seoul's translating metro walls to BMW's conversational cockpits and AI-powered toys, our physical world grows a digital voice. Objects don't just display - they interpret, respond, and enhance our daily stories.

∞ TRACKING EVERY MOVE...

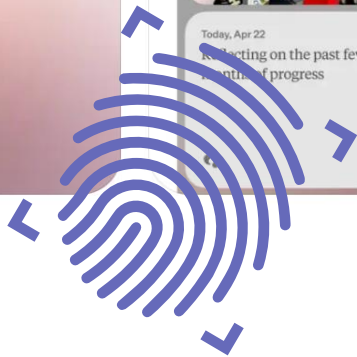


80

BLENDING



Fulcra



Dot by New Computer

While surfaces learn to speak, they also learn to listen. Our digital companions - from AI chatbots to smart homes - promise a better life through smart surveillance. Each helpful response trains the system that tracks us, turning convenience into comfortable confinement.

∞ ... AND IDEA

A Private Repository for Your Thoughts

Consider Hiccup your exclusive, private repository where every thought, idea, or fleeting memory can be safely stored away from prying eyes. Your digital twin thrives on privacy – everything you confide stays locally stored on your device, ensuring your personal repository is for your eyes only.



to privacy means that all your data remains locally on your phone, without compromise. You have the complete autonomy to manage your thoughts and ideas, knowing they are securely stored away from external access.

Beyond Note-Taking Hiccup transcends traditional note-taking and diary apps. It is the Shazam for your brain – a dynamic, intuitive space where you can jot down anything that crosses your mind. From daily reflections to sudden eureka moments, Hiccup is your canvas to paint your thoughts, unfiltered and unbounded.

Intelligent Retrieval But Hiccup is more than just a passive recipient of your thoughts. Powered by

Hiccup – Private Memory

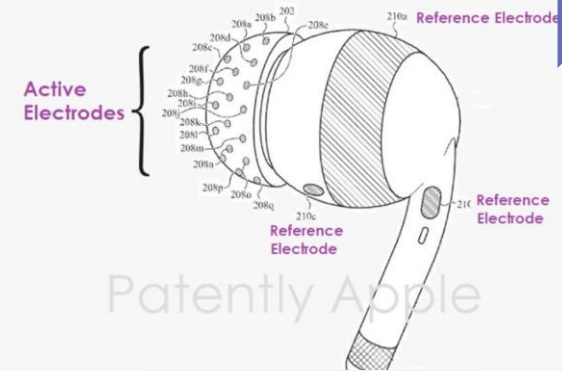
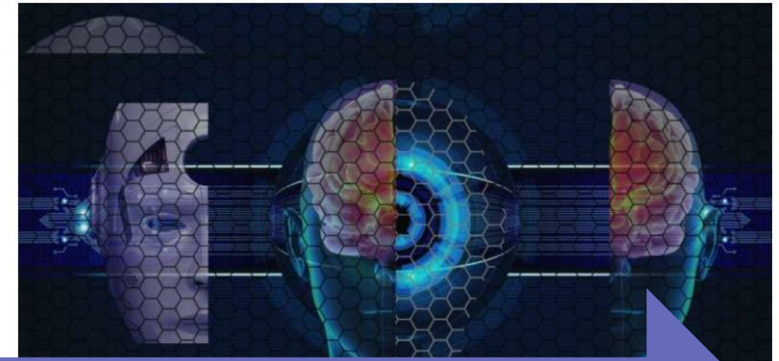


Let's note something

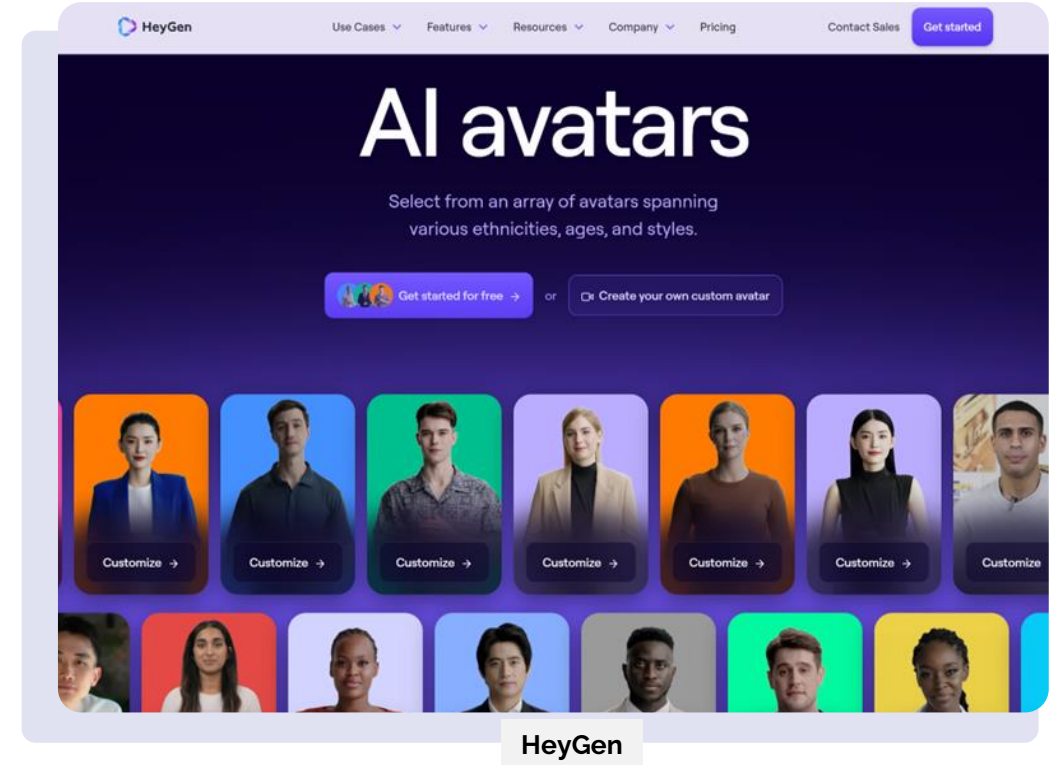
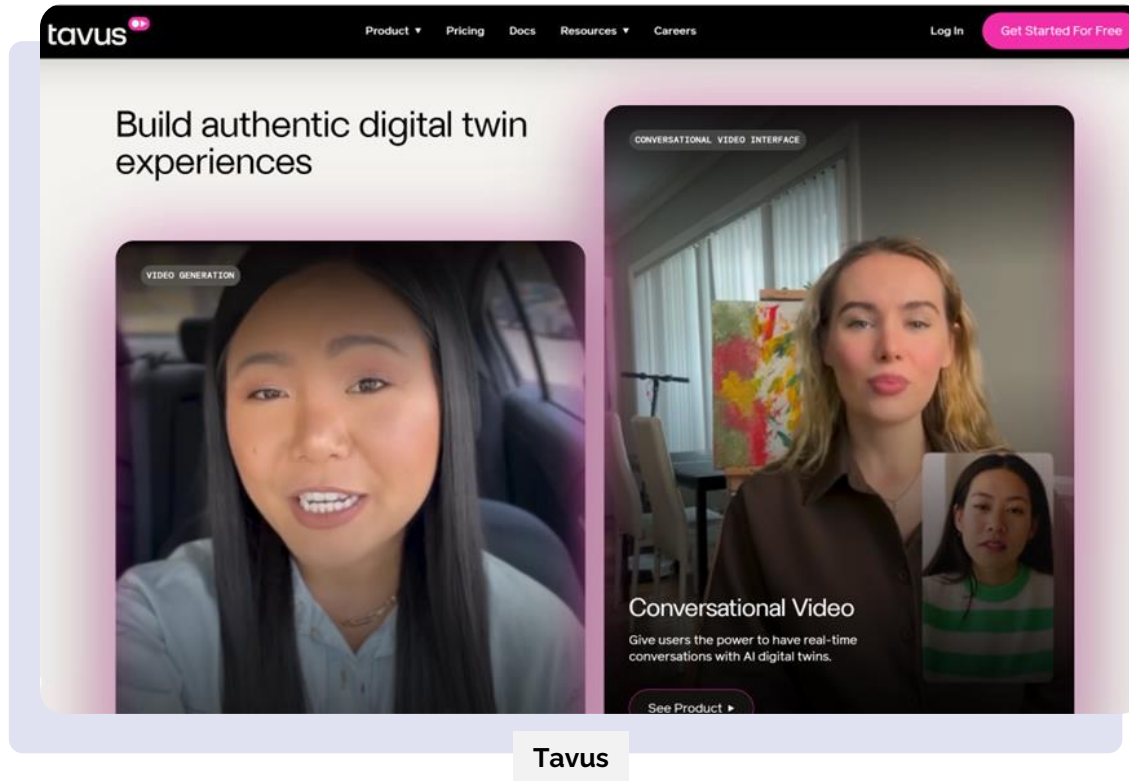
1. First, enter some notes from the bottom.
2. Then tap the sparkle button to interact with our AI.

New neurotechnology is blurring the lines around mental privacy. But are new human rights the answer?

by Laura Y. Cabrera, The Conversation



∞ DIGITAL TWINS

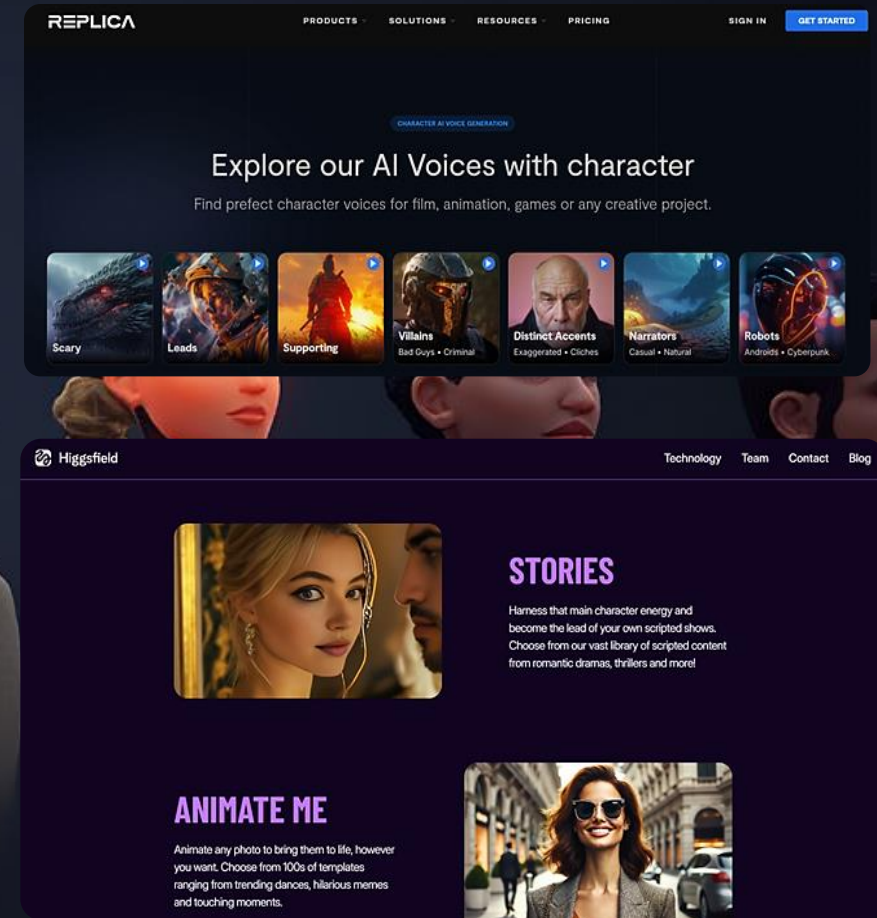


Source: <https://market.us/report/digital-avatar-market/>

Digital twins mark a next evolution in virtual presence. Beyond simple avatars, AI now crafts perfect copies of our faces, voices, and all our little gestures and mannerism – digital doubles ready to perform in meetings or mingle in virtual spaces. While broad adoption is still a question mark this market is projected to reach an impressive USD 745.1 billion by 2033.

∞ INTO THE RABBIT HOLE

83



BLENDING

We move from life with media, where screens simply mediate our world, to life in media, where we navigate digital realms from within trading our complex realities for perfectly curated stories where we are the star. The next frontier is media as life itself, where our digital twins make decisions, our virtual worlds evolve without us, and AI-powered characters write their own stories.



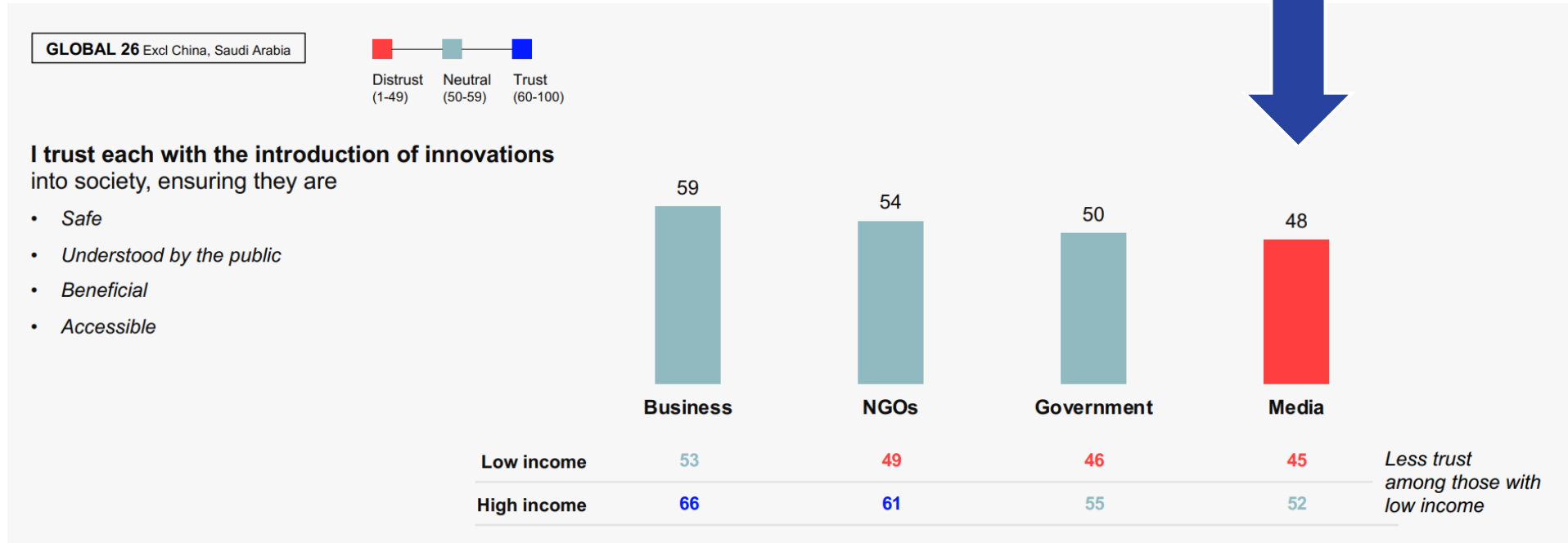
ACT 8. TRUSTING

Doubt as the new status quo.



∞ WE ARE NOT TRUSTED

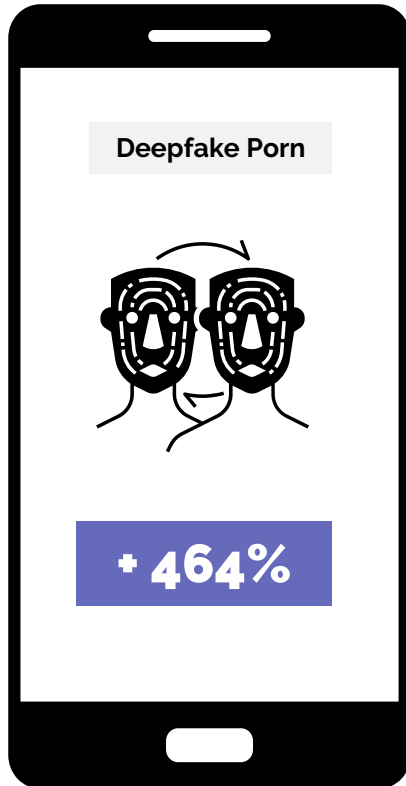
2024 Edelman Trust Barometer



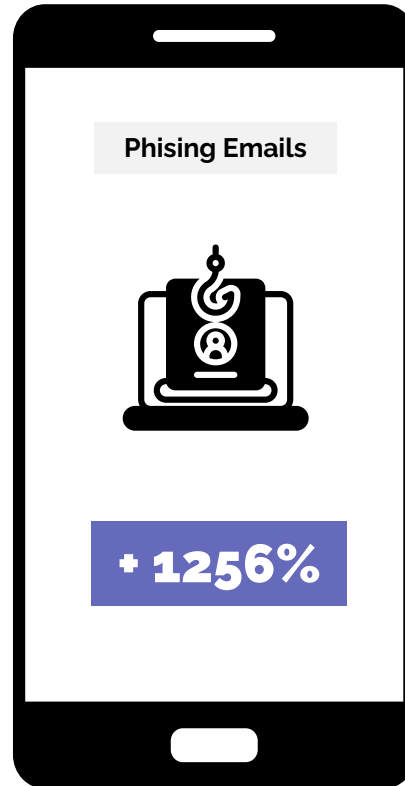
Source: <https://www.edelman.com/trust/2024/trust-barometer>

Just as AI reshapes how we share and consume information, trust in media has hit a low point. While 59% of people trust businesses with innovation, only 48% believe media can handle it well. It's quite the conundrum. How can journalists use AI when their audience doesn't trust them to use it wisely? The gap is even wider among people with lower incomes, suggesting those who need guidance most trust it the least.

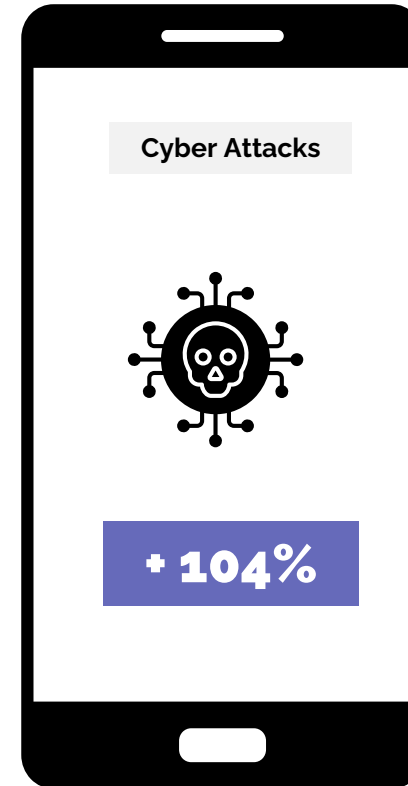
∞ SCAMS ON THE RISE



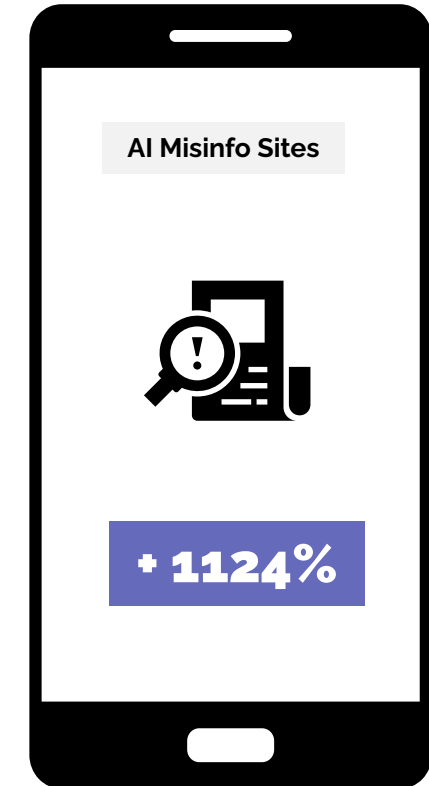
*Home Security Heroes 2023



*CB Insights 2023



*CB Insights 2023



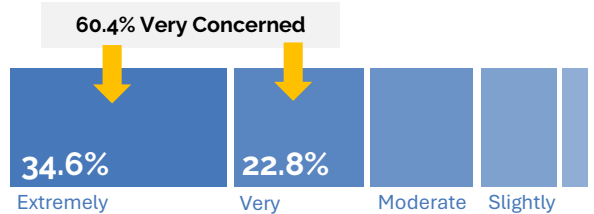
*Newsguard misinformation report dec 2023

Digital distrust is becoming a new normal: phishing scams have surged by 1,256%, while AI misinformation sites jumped 1,124% in just one year. With deepfakes up 464% and cyber attacks rising steadily. Though these tricks mostly live on social media, they're teaching us all to doubt what we see online.

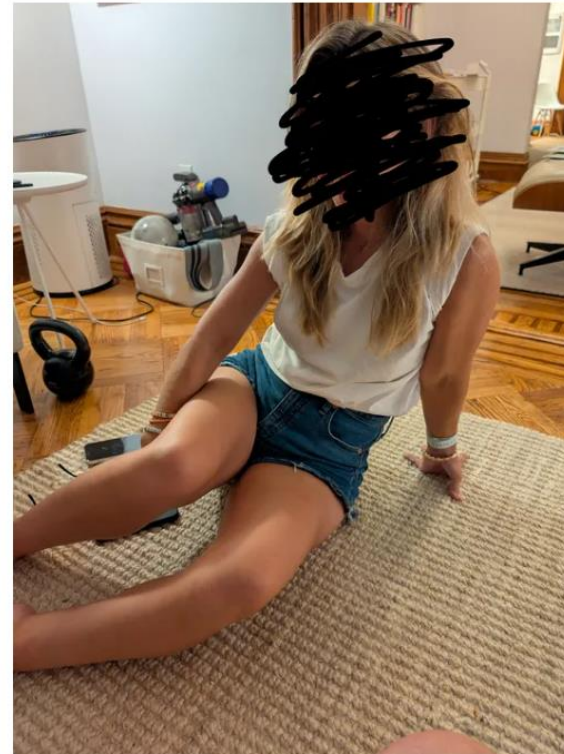
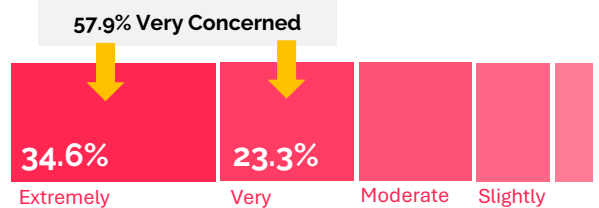
∞ EASY FAKES



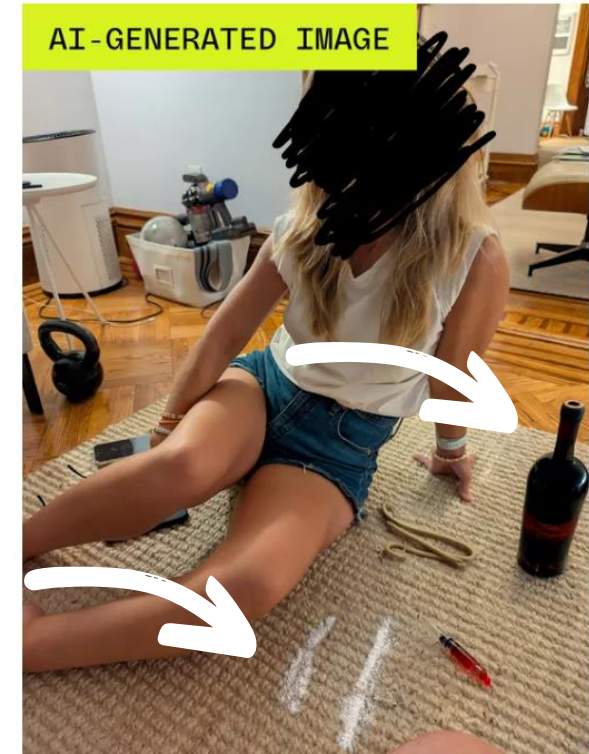
Deepfake



Voice Clone



A real photo of a person in a living room (with their face obscured).



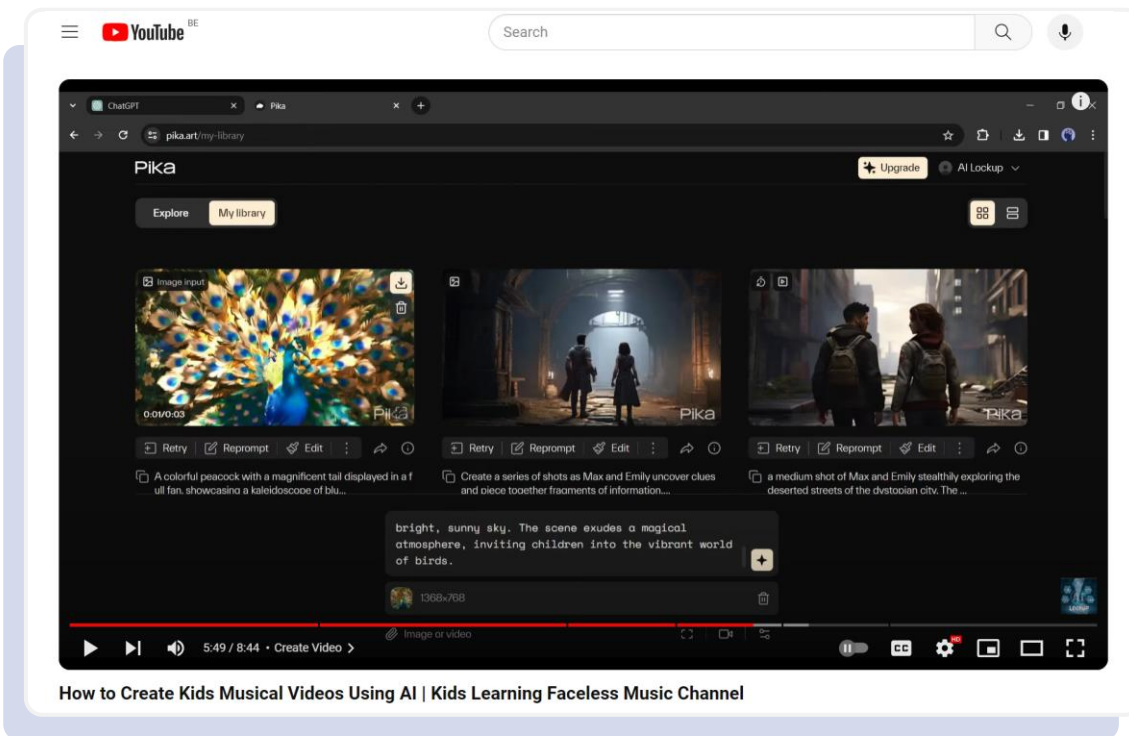
Edited with Google's Magic Editor.

Source: [Voicebot](#)

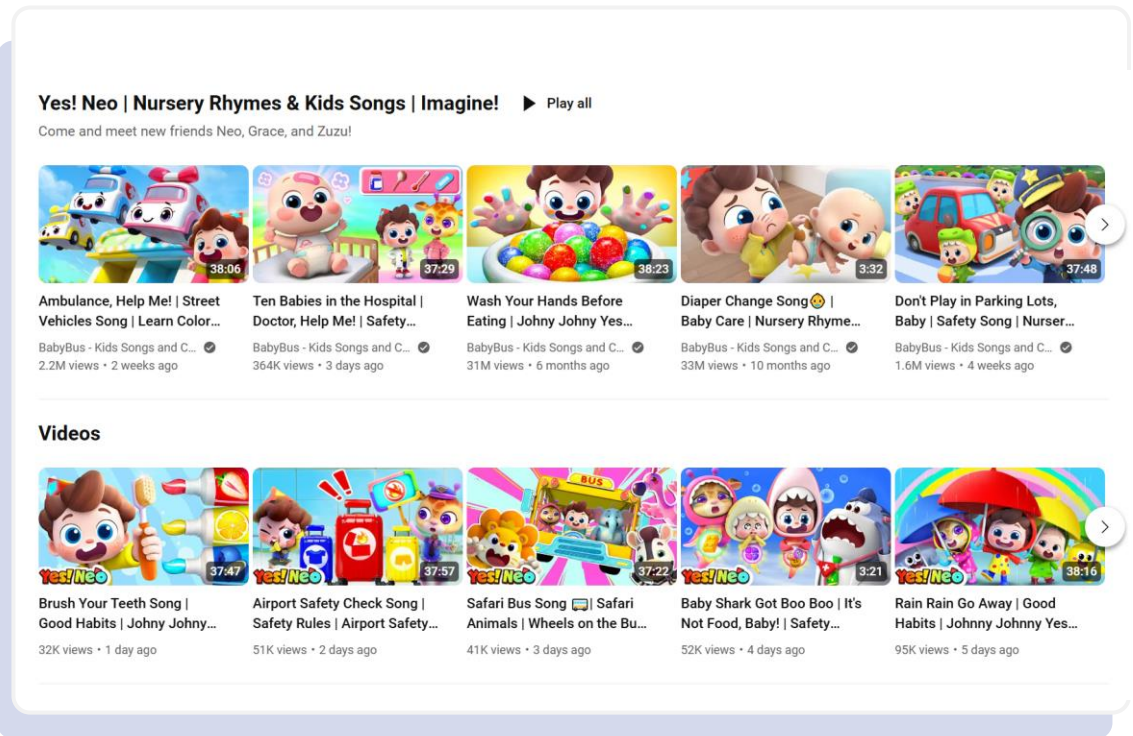
Faking reality is now as easy as adding an Instagram filter. Our everyday photo apps come with AI built in—Google's Magic Editor casually adds objects to photos while voice cloning perfectly mimics Trump and Musk. The public sees the danger: 6 in 10 people are deeply worried about both deepfakes and voice clones.

∞ TARGETTING KIDS

88



The screenshot shows a YouTube channel interface for 'Pika'. The channel has a dark theme and features a grid of AI-generated images and videos. The main video player shows a colorful peacock. Below the player, there are prompts for generating content, such as 'A colorful peacock with a magnificent tail displayed in a full fan, showcasing a kaleidoscope of blue...'. The channel is titled 'How to Create Kids Musical Videos Using AI | Kids Learning Faceless Music Channel'.



The screenshot shows a YouTube channel interface for 'Yes! Neo | Nursery Rhymes & Kids Songs | Imagine!'. The channel has a light theme and features a grid of AI-generated images and videos. The main video player shows a colorful peacock. Below the player, there are prompts for generating content, such as 'A colorful peacock with a magnificent tail displayed in a full fan, showcasing a kaleidoscope of blue...'. The channel is titled 'How to Create Kids Musical Videos Using AI | Kids Learning Faceless Music Channel'.

TRUSTING

AI is turning children's content into a quick money scheme. Get-rich-quick tutorials promise '\$50,000 a month' for churning out AI videos in '20 minutes'. Channels like Yes! Neo attract millions of views with synthetic content. While YouTube plans to label AI-generated videos, they're relying on creators to self-disclose. Meanwhile, kids are becoming test subjects in a massive, uncontrolled experiment with automated entertainment.

∞ COST OF HESITATION

59.9%

of people are questioning the authenticity of online content more than before

48.6%

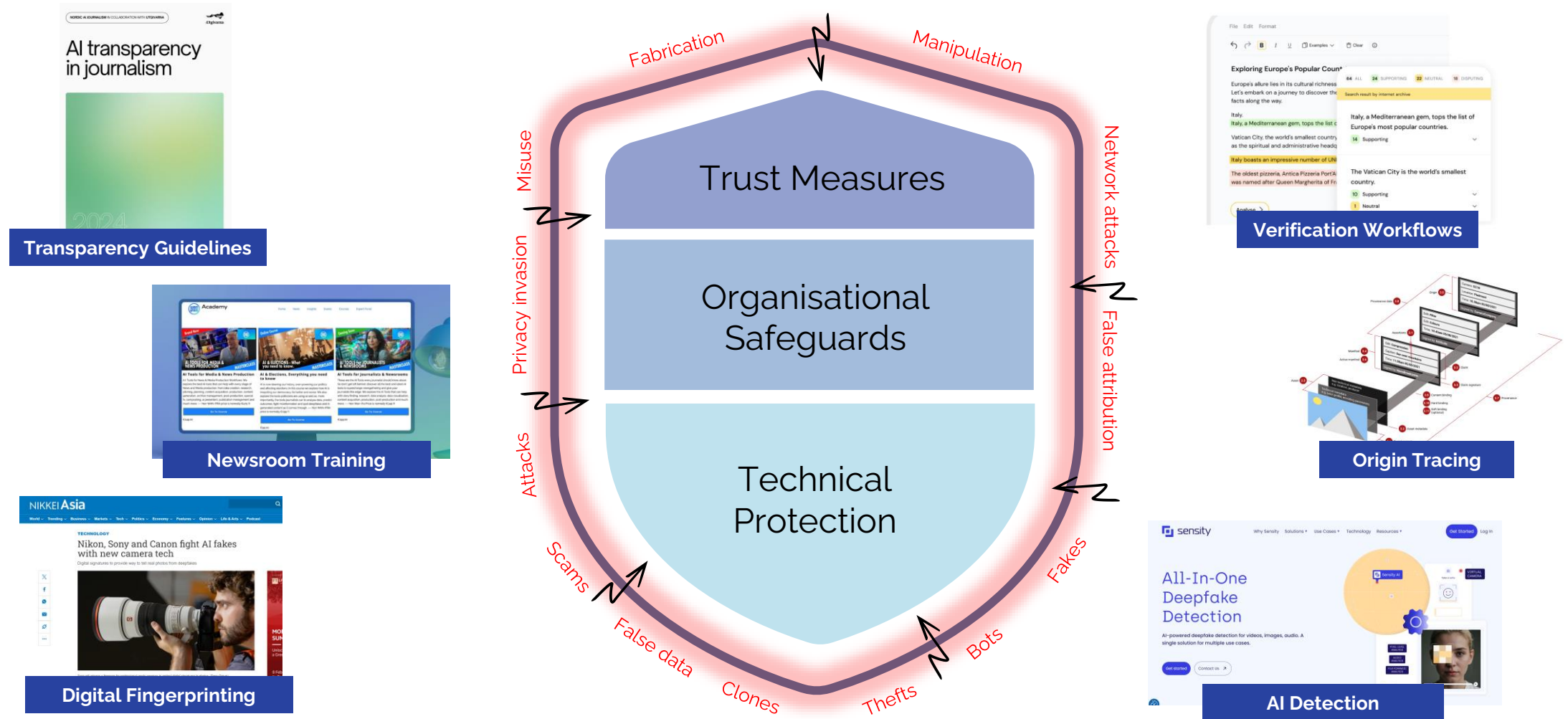
of people often or always question the authenticity of the news

Source: Accenture-LifeTrends2025-Report

Digital doubt is expensive. When 60% of people second-guess everything they see online and nearly half regularly question news authenticity, we're not just losing trust—we're losing time. Each pause to verify, each moment of hesitation, each mental calculation about what's real adds friction to our digital lives. The cost isn't just measured in confidence, but in our ability to move freely in an increasingly digital world.

∞ DETECTING AND PREVENTING

90



TRUSTING

Fighting AI deception requires more than just detection tools—it demands a complete defense system. Smart newsrooms are building this in layers: trust measures at the top, organizational safeguards in the middle, and technical protection as the foundation. It's like digital immune system, combining human wisdom with AI detection to spot everything from basic scams to sophisticated deepfakes.

∞ CHAIN OF VERIFICATION

DataGemma: Using real-world data to address AI hallucinations

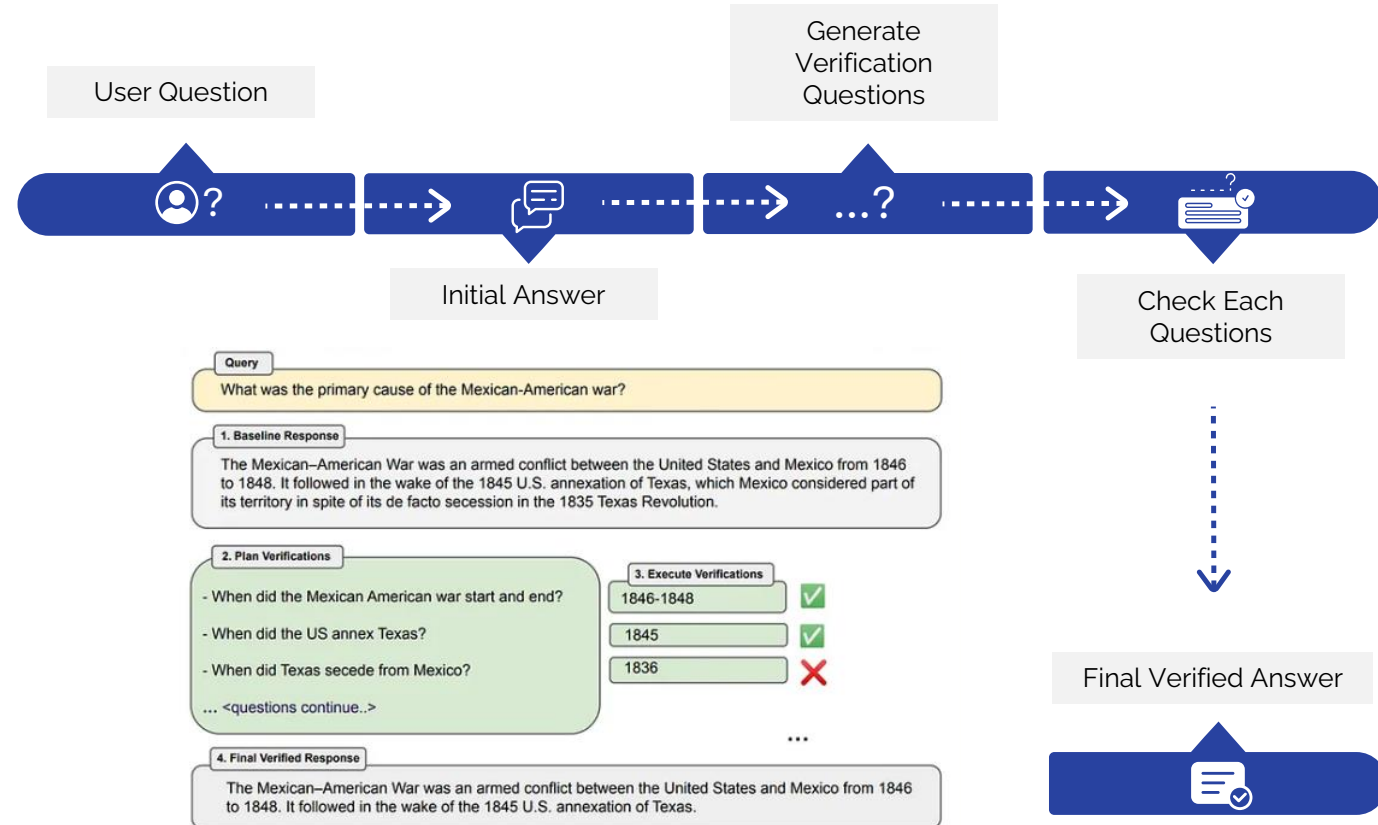
Sep 12, 2024 DataGemma are the world's first open models designed to help address the challenges of hallucination by grounding LLMs in the vast, real-world statistical data of Google's Data Commons.



DataGemma:
Connect LLMs with extensive real-world data



BR Lab Second Opinion
AI-supported content verification of AI-generated texts



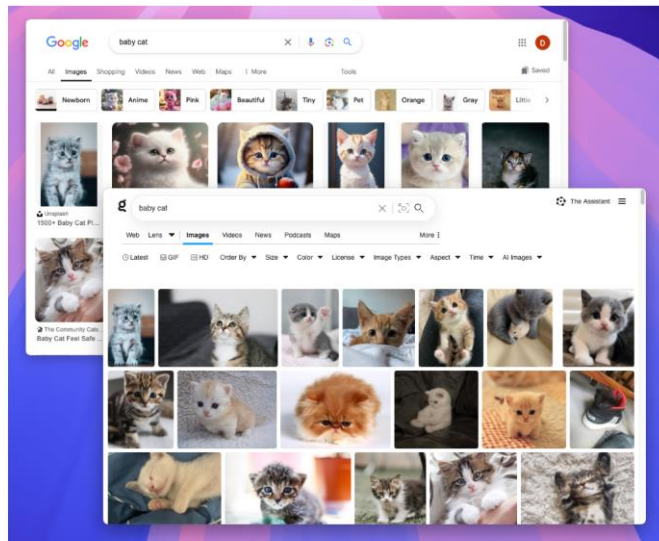
Source: <https://blog.google/technology/ai/google-datagemma-ai-llm/> and <https://interaktiv.br.de/second-opinion-demo/index.html>

^s One hard problem remains unsolved: making AI consistently tell the truth. But there are some promising experiments out there: verification chains where one AI system fact-checks another. Think of it as a digital reporter-editor duo: one creates, the other verifies, question by question. While still in early stages, this approach hints at how media might eventually use AI while keeping their facts straight.

∞ DOWNRANKING THE NOISE

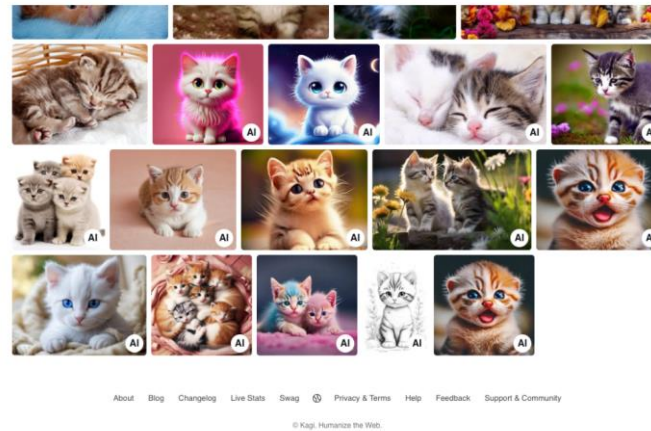
Downranking AI-generated images

By default, [Kagi Image Search](#) downranks images from websites with a high proportion of AI-generated content. Try the example search [here](#).



Labeling AI-generated images

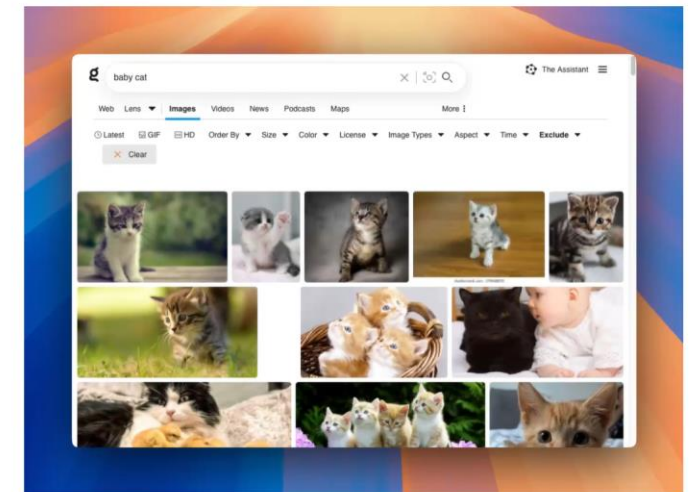
In addition to downranking, we have implemented an AI image labeling system. This feature adds a small badge or icon to thumbnails that are likely to be AI-generated content. The label helps users quickly identify potential AI images without completely removing them from search results.



Kagi Search

Filtering AI-generated images

You can use the AI images filter to completely exclude websites with AI-generated images from your search results.



Source: <https://help.kagi.com/kagi/features/exclude-ai-images.html>

Sometimes the simplest solution wins: just turn down the noise. Search engines like Kagi are doing exactly that—pushing AI content lower in search results, flagging synthetic images, or quietly filtering them out. It's not perfect, but it might be our most practical path through the growing flood of AI-generated content.



ACT 9. TRANSFORMING

The journey towards the next paradigm.



∞ IMPACT ON JOBS

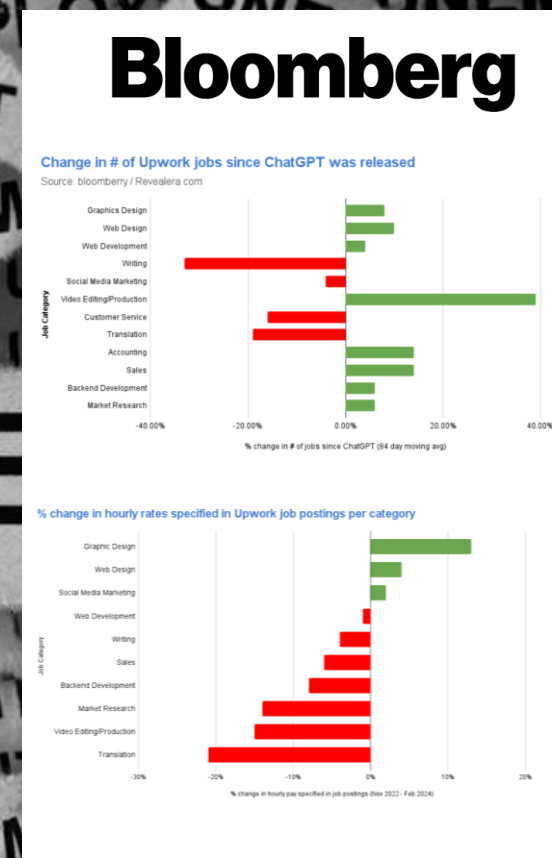
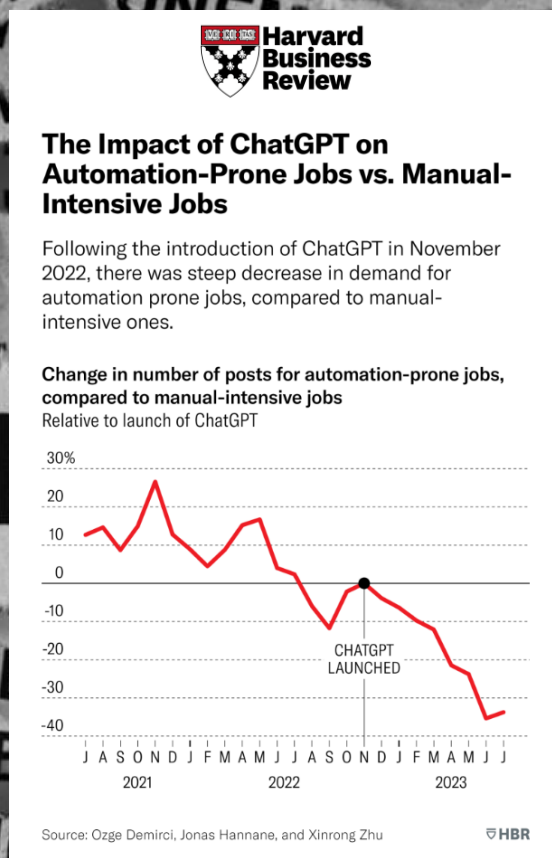
THE SOCIETY OF AUTHORS

News

SoA survey reveals a third of translators and quarter of illustrators losing work to AI

11 APRIL 2024

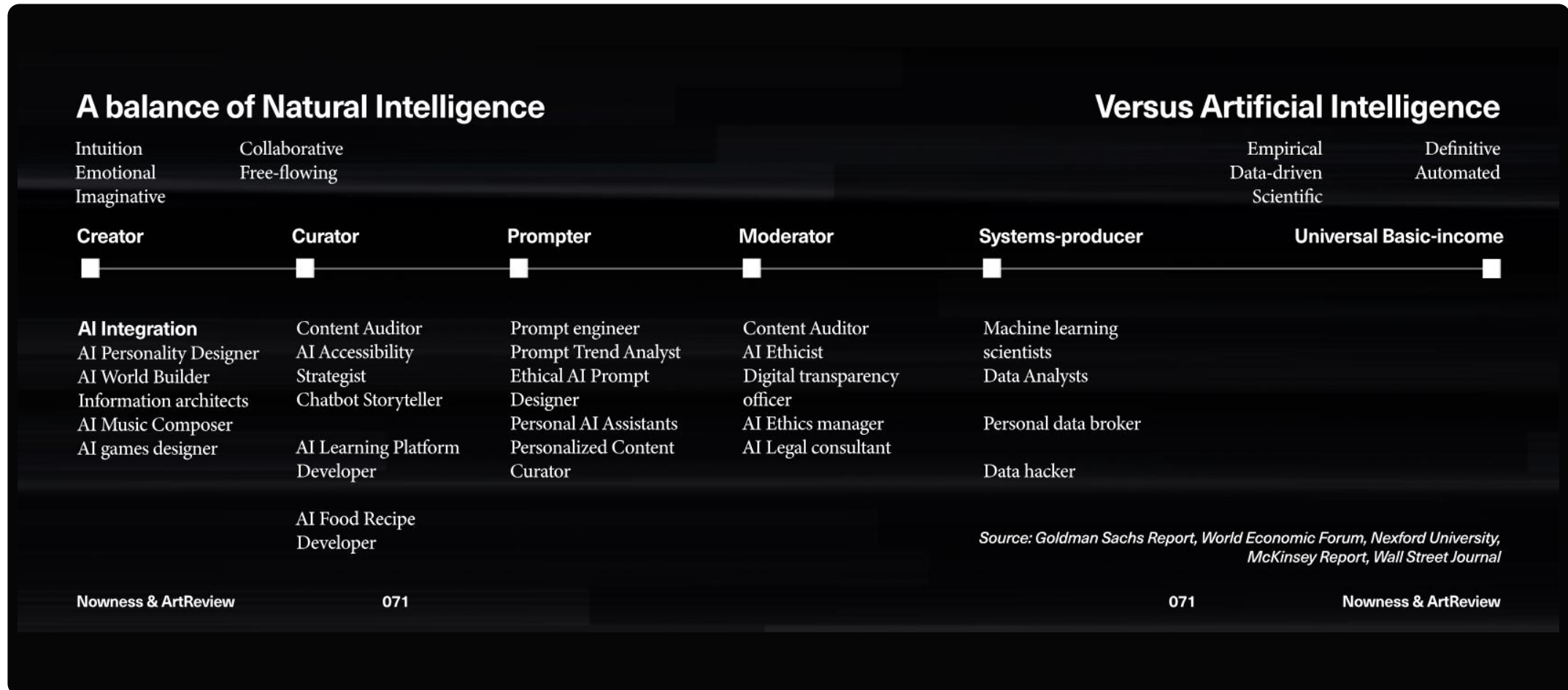
BY SOA POLICY TEAM



Source: Society of Authors, HBR, Bloomberg

Since ChatGPT's launch, creative work has split into two clear paths: automation-prone jobs have plummeted by up to 40%, with a third of translators already losing work to AI, while manual-intensive creative roles remain resilient and even show growth - revealing an emerging fault line.

∞ JOB EVOLUTIONS



Source: [ArtReview X NOWNESS AI+ Study](#)

The future job market is a spectrum. On one end, creators and curators leveraging emotional intelligence and imagination. On the other, systems-producers and data analysts harnessing AI's empirical power. The most valuable roles will emerge in the middle, where human intuition meets machine precision.

∞ HESITATING AND HIDING



+50%

Employees using generative AI at work without employer permission.



64%

Employees presenting AI work as their own.



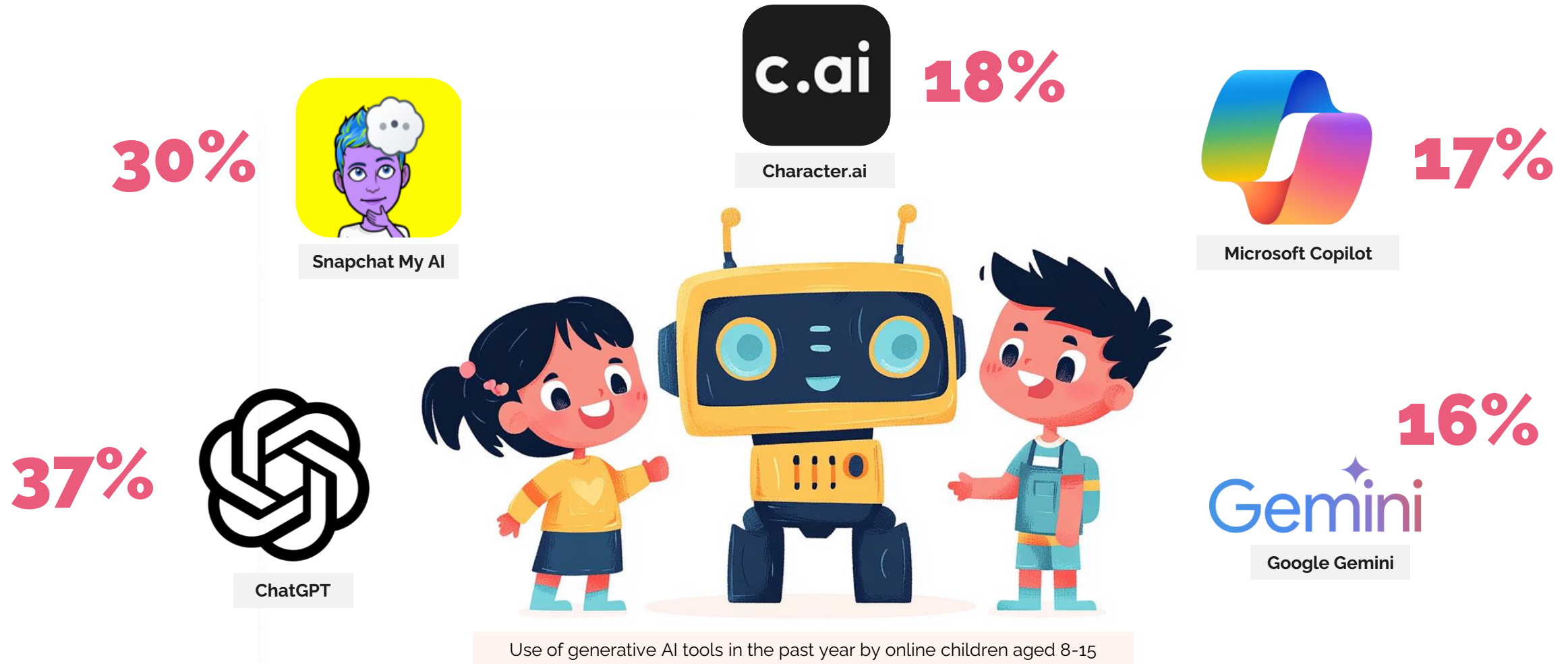
70%

Employees without training in ethical AI use.

Source: [Semrush State of AI 2024 Report](#)

AI in the workplace is already here - just not always in the way we imagined. Instead of official rollouts, it's spreading as 'shadow AI': 50% of employees are using it without permission, 64% are passing off AI work as their own, and 70% are diving in without ethical training.

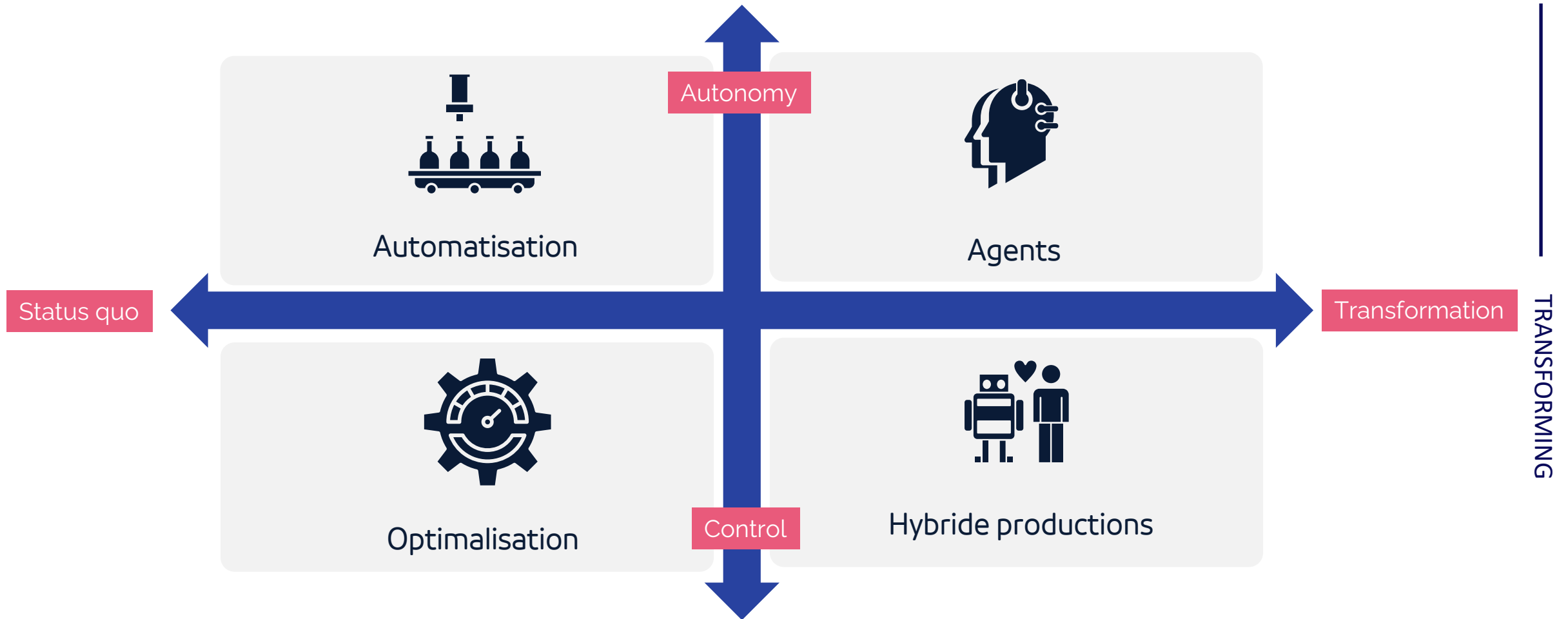
∞ THE NEXT WORKFORCE



Source: [Ofcom Online Nations 2024](#)

While adults are still debating AI adoption, kids aged 8-15 already juggle multiple AI tools - from ChatGPT (37%) to Microsoft Copilot (17%) - just as naturally as previous generations took to social media. By the time these digital natives enter the workplace, AI won't be a new technology to adapt to - it'll be as fundamental as email is today.

∞ DELIBERATE FUTURES



It's important to remember that AI isn't something that is predetermined. Media companies face clear choices. It's about balancing autonomy versus control, and deciding between optimizing what exists or transforming entirely. On one side, automate and optimize current processes. On the other, embrace AI agents and hybrid production methods, fundamentally changing how media is created.

∞ REJECTION AS OPTION

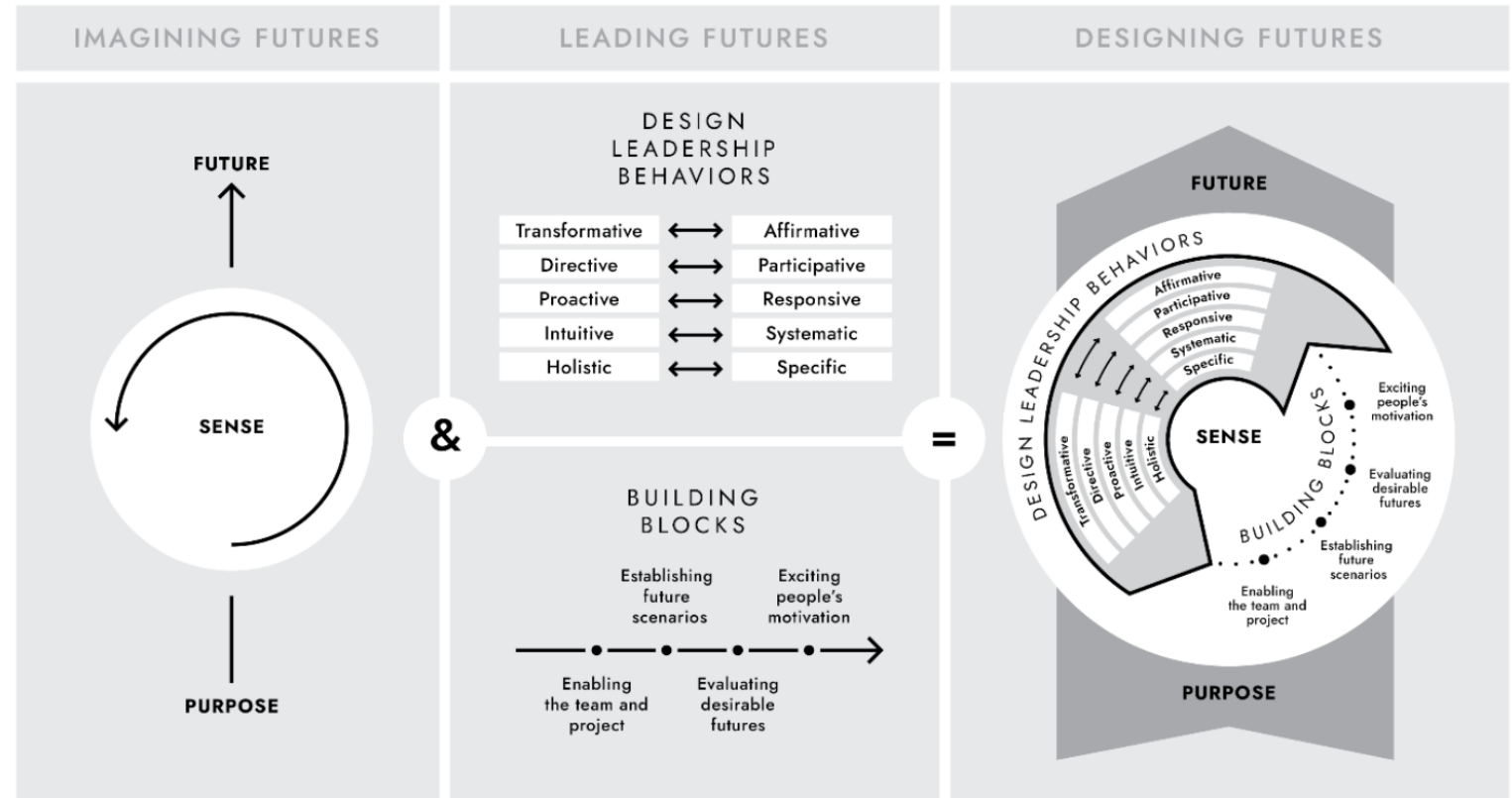
Procreate®

404 Media is reported and written by humans for humans.
Sign up above for free access to this article.

AI
is not
our future.

There's another choice worth mentioning: simply saying no to AI - as Procreate and 404 Media demonstrate by making AI-free creation their unique selling point. While this pure-human approach might not work for mainstream media racing to embrace AI, it could carve out valuable niches, much like artisanal products thrive in a mass-produced world.

∞ NEW LEADERSHIP



Source: [Balanced leadership: A new perspective for leadership in organizational project management](#).

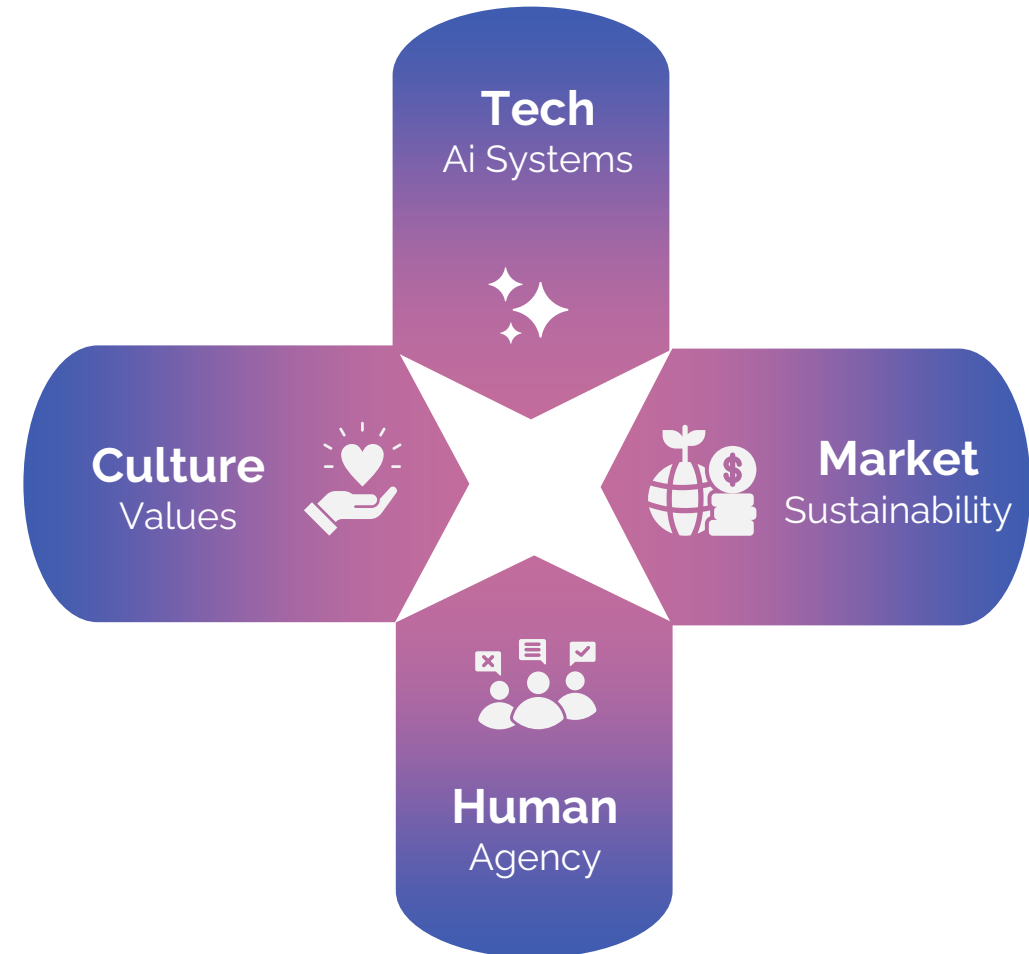
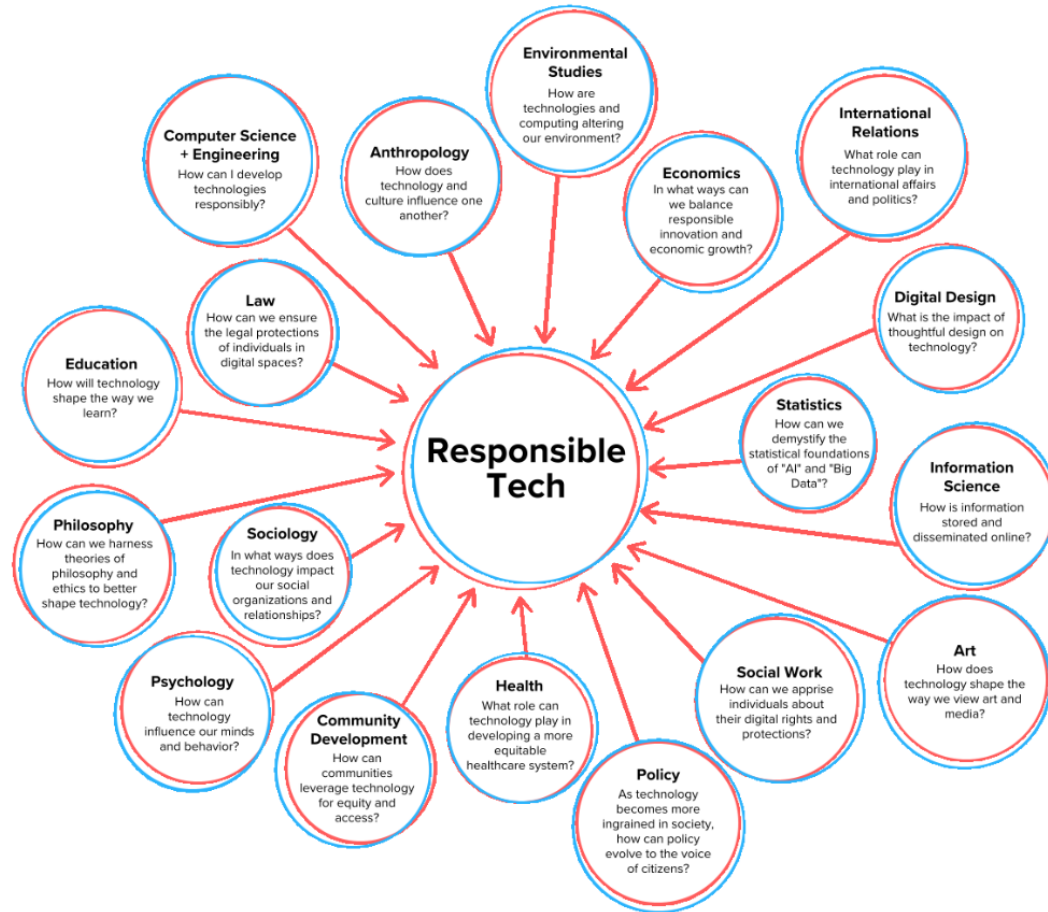
Leading through AI transformation is not just about understanding the technology - it will require a new kind of leadership that balances purpose with experimentation. The most effective leaders will be those who can combine a transformative vision with participative execution. It's less about having all the answers and more about designing the right questions.



TOWARDS A NEW BALANCE

A human-machine heartbeat for the digital age

∞ AI+ HUMANITY



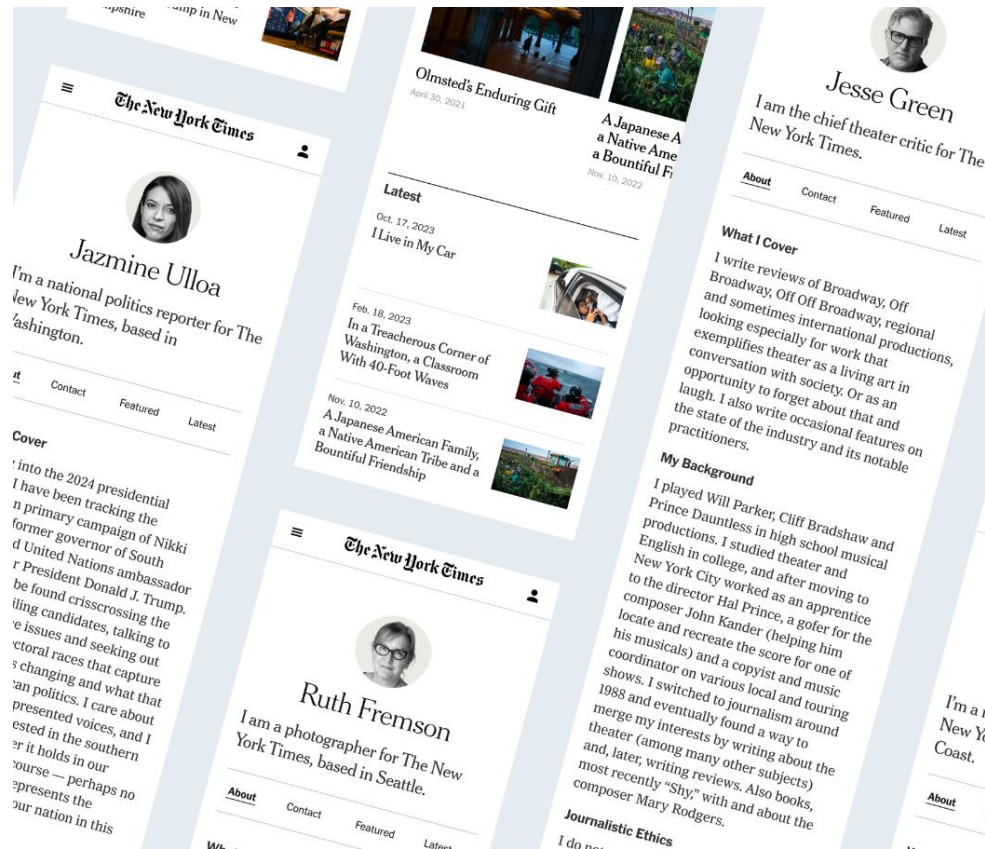
Source: <https://www.dubaifuture.ae/the-global-50>

AI is a new beacon of progress but we should meet it with clear eyes and a critical mind. As these systems master algorithms and analyze data, we need universities teaching ethics alongside coding, businesses prioritizing sustainable AI over quick profits, and humans remaining firmly in the driver's seat.

∞ HUMAN MADE

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A NEW BALANCE



Source: <https://www.nytco.com/press/our-redesigned-byline-pages/> & <https://www.human.nl/over-human/lees/radicaal-menselijk.html>

Smart organizations are doubling down on the human touch - from the New York Times showcasing the real journalists behind the bylines to Dutch broadcasters championing radically human storytelling. It's not about competing with AI's perfection, but celebrating our beautiful imperfections.

∞ TRUSTED AND PERSONAL



Storyrabbit.ai

unique audio stories based
on your interests and your location

Sounds Daily - trialing generative AI & synthetic voices to deliver personalised audio streams

Sounds Daily - trialing generative AI & synthetic voices to deliver personalised audio streams.



Laura Harrison

Executive Product Manager, Innovation Labs



BBC Innovation Labs: Sounds Daily

a distraction-free
personalised listening experience

Source: BBC & FT Strategies

The Ideal News Experience

Trusted Source

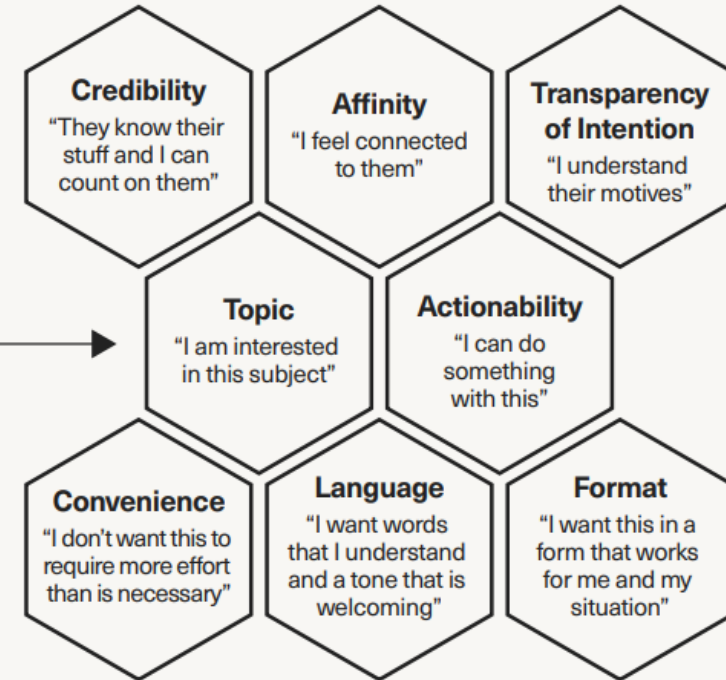
"I want information from a source that I know and trust."

Personal Significance

"I want information that is significant to me and those I care about."

Desired Storytelling

"I want information presented in a way that works best for me."

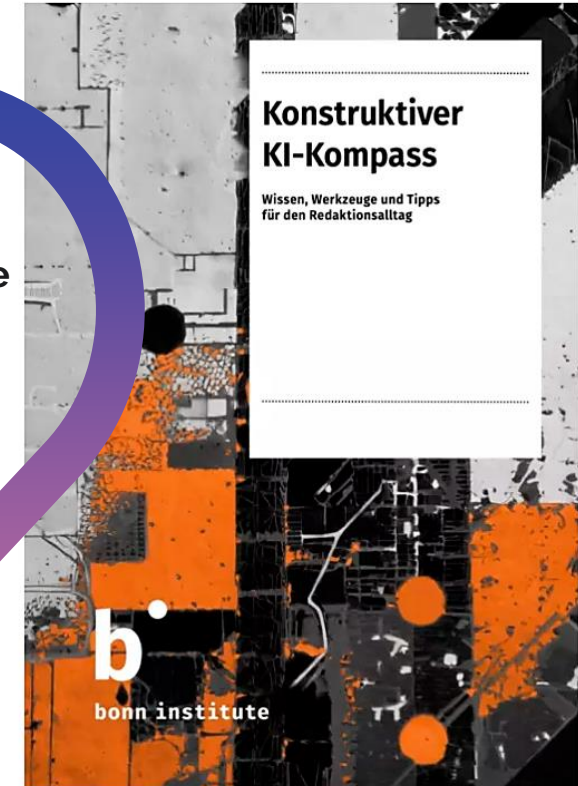
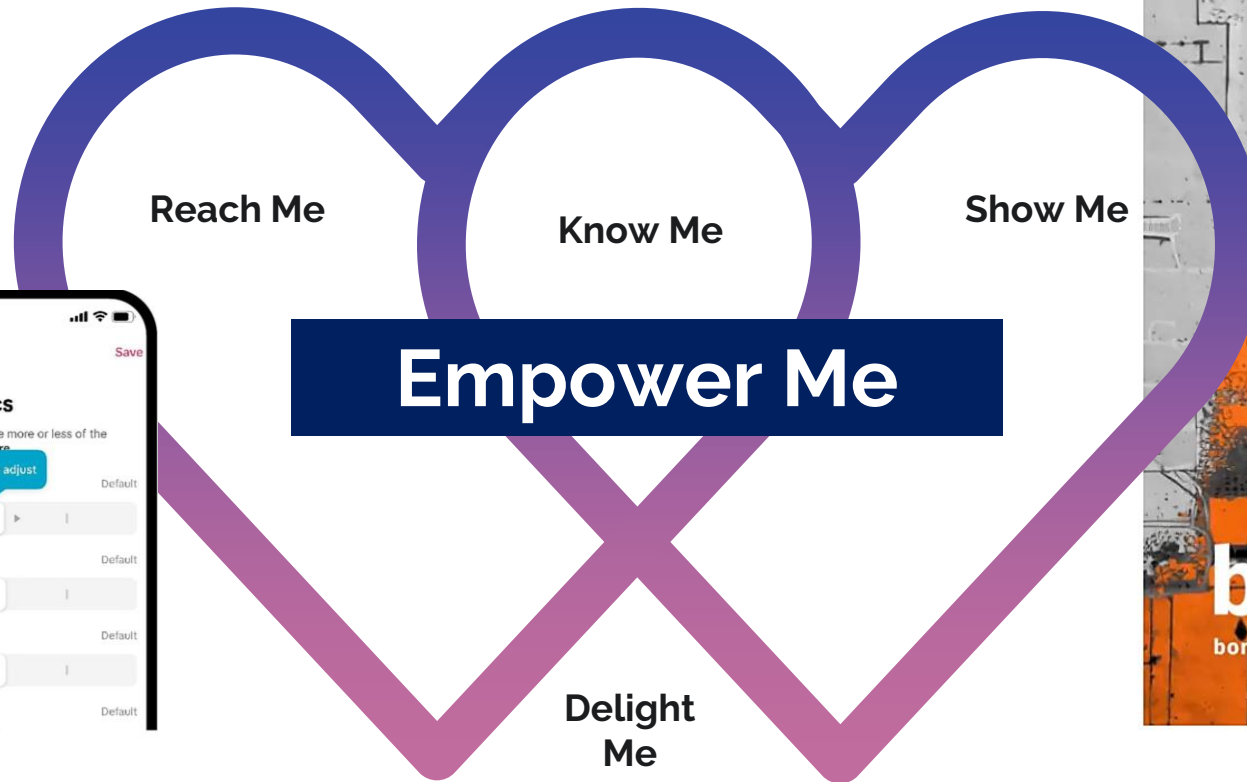
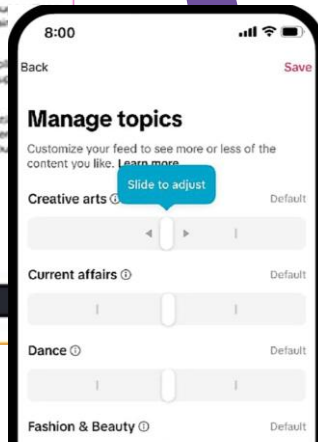
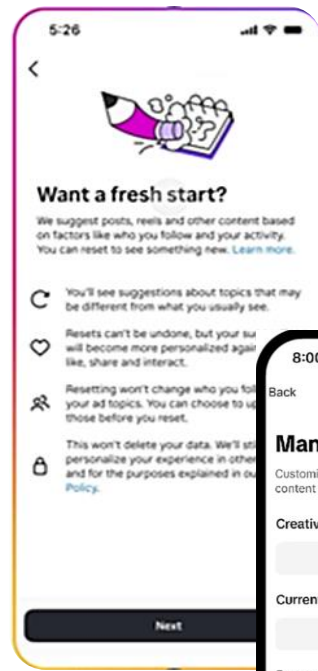


BBC Innovation Labs: Sounds Daily
Next Gen News Framework

The next generation wants news that's both intimate and intelligent - delivered by voices they trust, at moments that matter. While AI can masterfully orchestrate millions of personalized content streams, what it's really doing is creating space for something deeply human. Algorithms shouldn't replace journalists, but amplify authentic voices that resonate with real lives.



GIVING BACK CONTROL



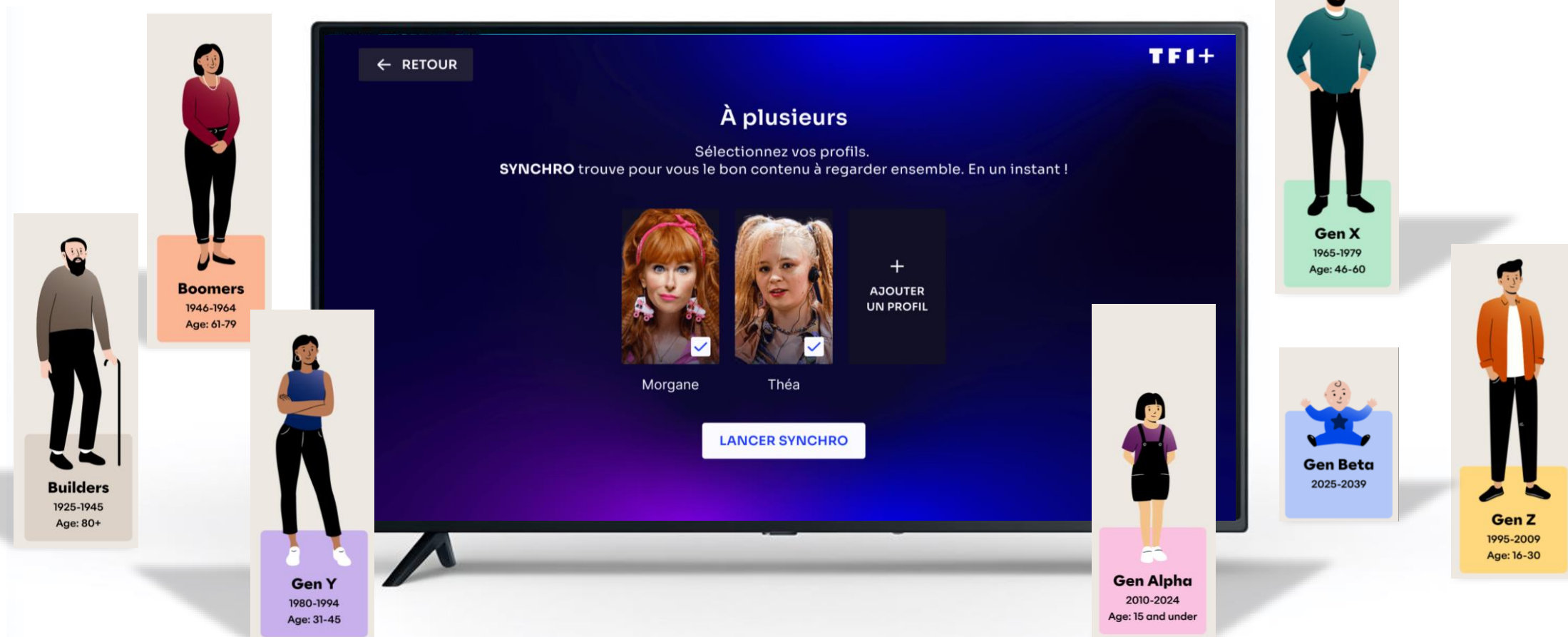
Source: [Bonn Institute Constructive AI Compass](#) and [BCG personalized customer strategy in the age of AI](#)

In a world where AI knows our every click, true personalization paradoxically means the power to start fresh. Smart platforms are now offering an essential human right: the freedom to change our minds, reset our preferences, and reshape our digital worlds. Meanwhile, journalists are discovering AI's potential to surface diverse perspectives and solution-focused stories that empower readers to act.



CREATING SHARED MOMENTS

THE SEVEN GENERATIONS IN 2025



Source: <https://mccrindle.com.au/resource/report/trends-of-2025-report/>

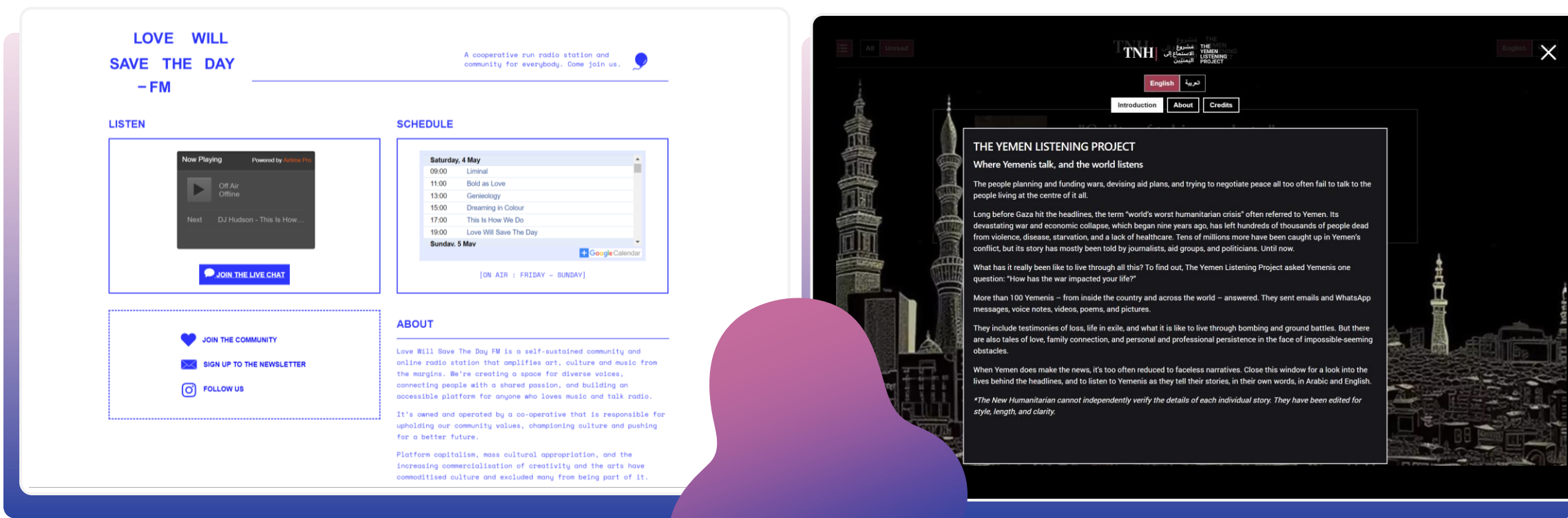
The deepest form of personalization may be discovering what we share. Smart platforms are now moving beyond filter bubbles to reveal unexpected connections - across generations, families, and friend groups who share surprisingly similar tastes and needs. French broadcaster TF1 is pioneering this approach with their 'Synchro' feature, letting families discover and stream content together based on overlapping interests.



COMMUNAL MEDIA

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A NEW BALANCE



Source: <https://www.lovewillsave.theday.fm/> & <https://yemenlisteningproject.thenewhumanitarian.org>

It's not strange that in this time of hyper-personalization we also see the rise of media shaped by community rather than algorithms. From 'Love Will Save The Day FM's' cooperative radio platform to Yemen's grassroots storytelling project. Shared creation cuts through the digital noise. These spaces don't just feed our preferences - they invite us to become part of something bigger than ourselves.



Perhaps the antidote to algorithmic optimization isn't resistance, but rewilding: a deliberate return to authenticity that prioritizes emotional resonance over cold efficiency. What emerges is a digital ecosystem more nuanced, self-aware, and creatively defiant—a space where human complexity breathes between the machine-optimized lines.

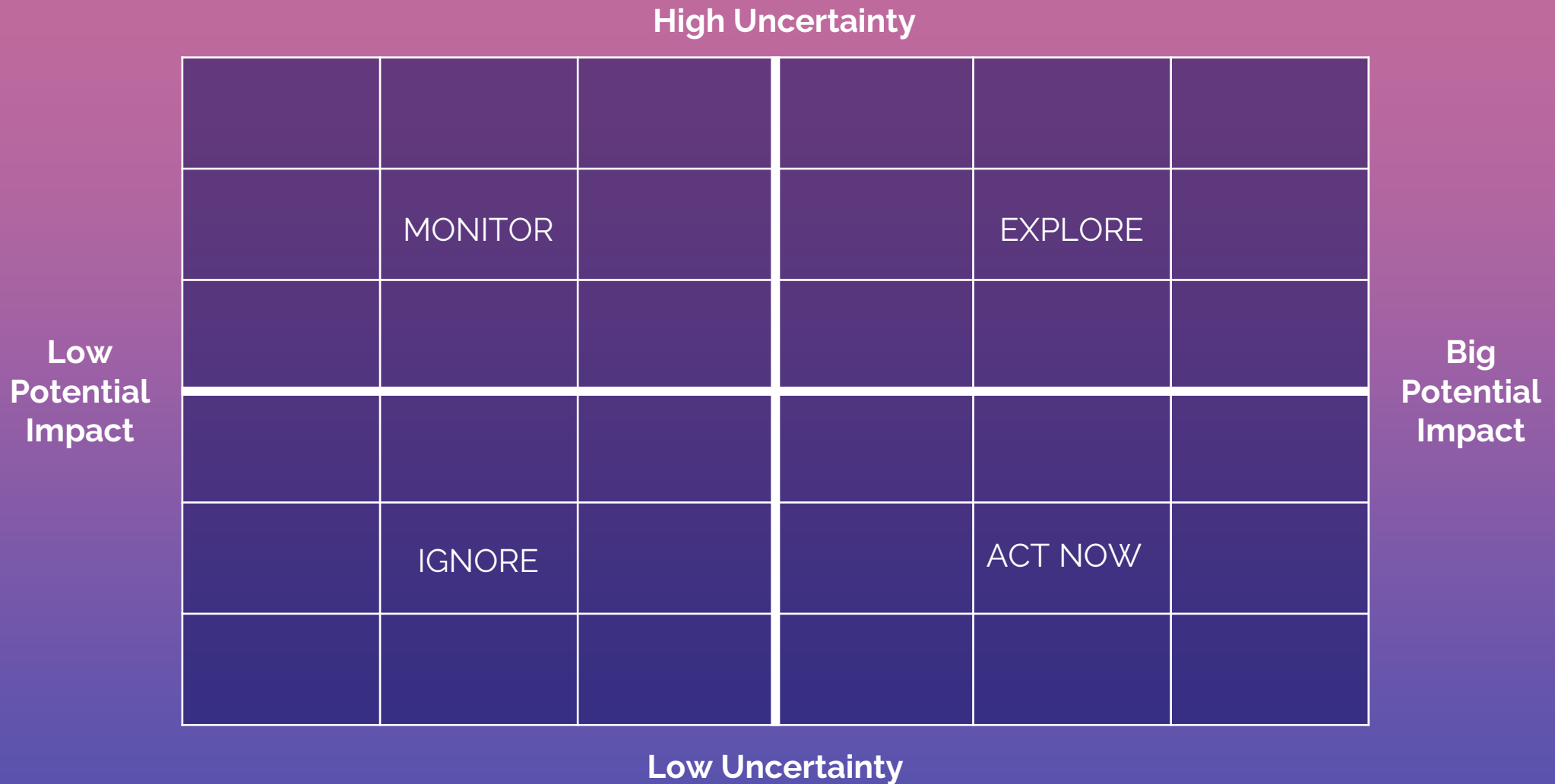
UP NEXT

2025

∞ WHAT THIS MIGHT MEAN FOR...

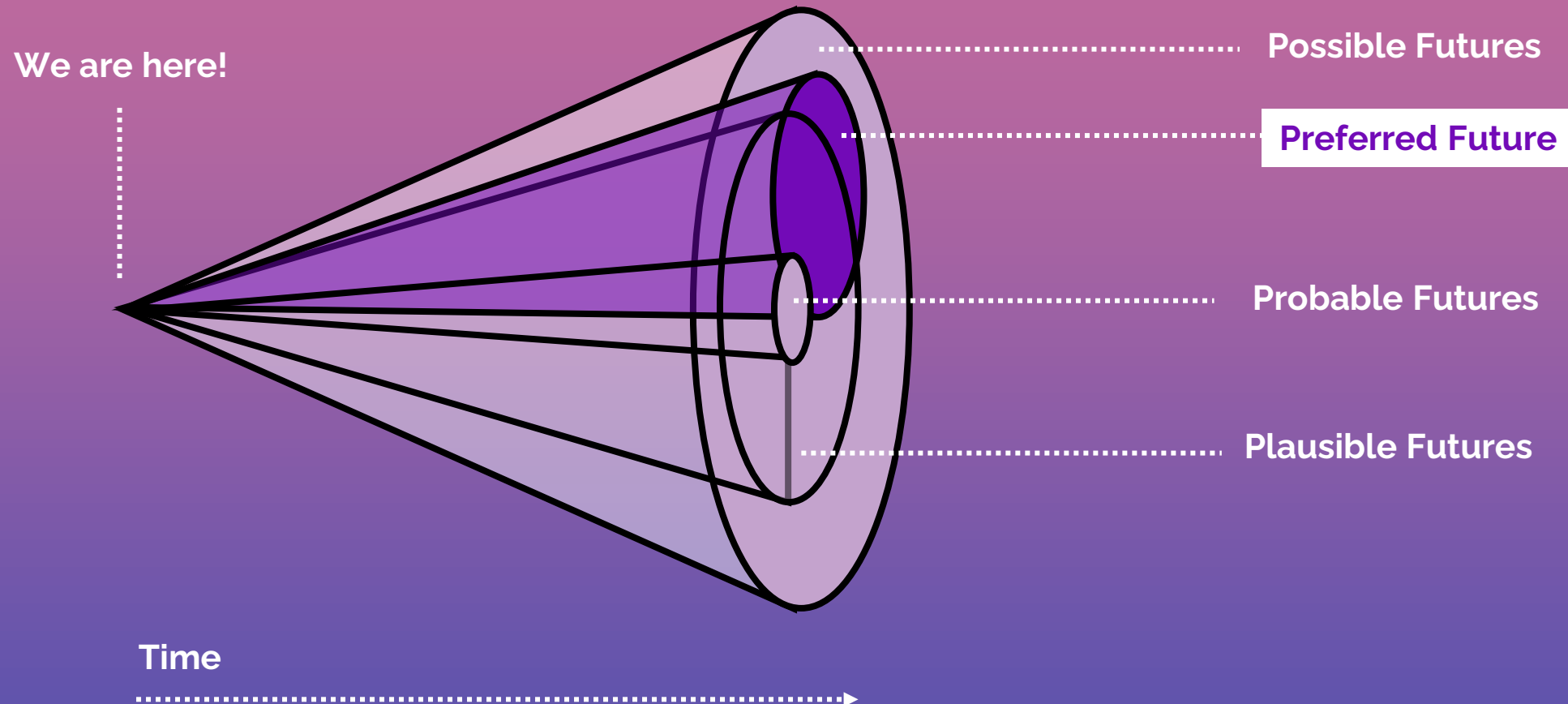
- How do these trends shape the wishes, needs and expectations of your audience(s)?
- How do these trends shape the way you work and deliver value?
- How might these trends substitute what you do?
- Do these trends offer new opportunities for partnerships and collaborations?
- How do these trends inspire?
- What innovation do these trends allow?

∞ WHAT TO FOCUS ON...



Taking strategic actions on trends is not always easy. A useful decision matrix to develop the right next steps is to map the uncertainty of a trend versus the impact it might have. Do you need to act now? Ignore this trend? Explore and build capabilities or just monitor and listen to the signals in the market?

∞ CONE OF POSSIBILITIES



Source: Charles W. Taylor, *Alternative World Scenarios for Strategic Planning*, 1993

The Futures Cone is another tool that can help to visualise the future. It can be used to envisage different futures along certain trend lines but also to challenge current assumptions and help to make smarter decisions. The tool sets out a range of future scenarios, categorising them into preferred, probable, plausible & possible ones.

∞ ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

In closing, I'd like to acknowledge that I could only write this report because of the work of so many colleagues and peers who did incredible research, wrote inspiring articles and tap into the living fibre of the web. It's a specific skill that (so far) no AI is able to do, defining new ideas and coming up with new insights that don't necessarily build upon a base model of scraped articles.

This report, in many ways, is a testament to the collective human intelligence of all thought leaders out there. I see myself standing on the shoulders of giants, drawing upon their extensive work. I hope you take the time to explore some of the many links to my sources of inspiration I have included in the report.

*A special thanks goes out to Mark Deuze who's foundational primer on media studies shaped my thinking about media as a lived experience and Kevin Kelly who's 2016 book *The Inevitable* inspired the structure for this report as active movements rather than static trend snapshots.*

My contribution, if any, lies in the clarity of selection, the creation of meaningful clusters, and connecting the dots in a manner that encourages you to view these trends in relation to each other, rather than in isolation.

It is through this collaborative tapestry of ideas and discoveries that we can truly understand and navigate the ever-evolving landscape of media and the world around us.

EZRA EEMAN, WAYFINDER

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