



backslash

EDGES, 2021

40 Cultural Shifts Shaping Our World

JANUARY 2021

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YEAR ZERO

Every January brings talk of fresh starts, exciting trends, and cultural phenomena. But this time, the implications are much larger. The pandemic has precipitated a cosmic reshuffle of global realities, social norms and individual beliefs. A world is ending, and another is being born. 2021 isn't just another year, it's Year Zero. And so this isn't just a trend report. It's a glimpse into a new chapter of our history.

In the face of seismic change, we find ourselves torn between fight and flight, dark and light, between the pullback of conservatism and the push forward of imagination. Radical transformation is never comfortable, but brighter tomorrows are ahead.

Our 2021 Edges tell this hopeful story in six chapters:
Chaos. Preservation. Advancement. Identity.
Liberation. Rebirth.

Within this story, you will find 40 meaningful cultural shifts shaping our world. These shifts are born from a global process that emphasizes the expertise of over 300 TBWA "Culture Spotters"—leveraging insight from Bogota to Berlin, Kigali to Kuala Lumpur, New Delhi to New York.

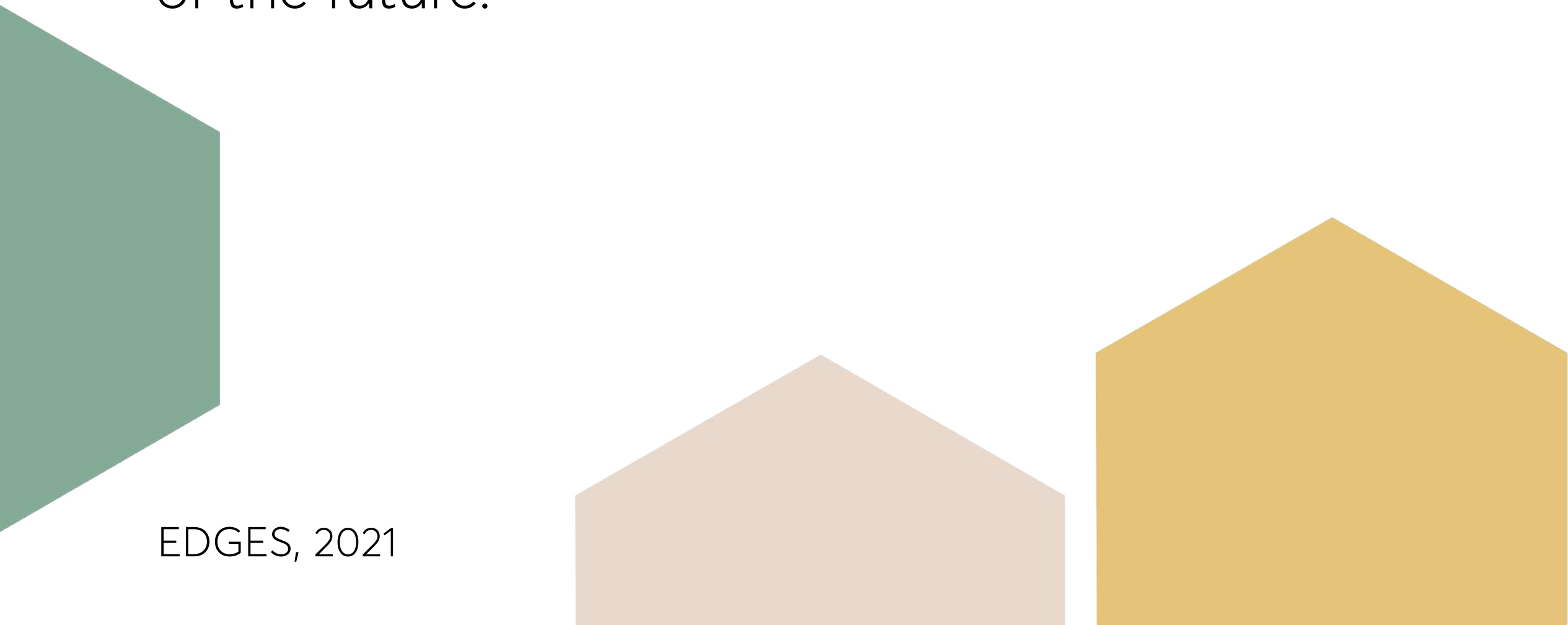
Culture is fast, often confusing, and sometimes misleading. We hope that these Edges bring optimism, inspiration for growth, and a clear direction forward. Culture is our story. And more than ever before, it's up to us to write a chapter we'll be proud of.

Welcome to 2021. Welcome to Year Zero.

WHAT IS AN EDGE?

EDGE / 'ej / noun

A meaningful cultural shift that has the scale and longevity to propel a brand toward a greater share of the future.



EDGES, 2021

- 1 Edges must be rooted in human values, be recognizable through consumer behaviors, and lead to clear business implications.
- 2 Cultural shifts must have sustained relevance for over a year before being declared an Edge, and should continue to matter for the foreseeable future.
- 3 Edges must be globally relevant, manifesting in over half of Backslash-designated regions.

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CHAOS

Precipitated by the pandemic, the forces of change have culminated into a pressure cooker of uncertainty. Every blueprint we inherited is being turned upside down, rewritten, or tossed out completely. From culture wars to information wars, from economic crisis to public health crisis, from cell to soul, nowhere is safe from conflict. In the face of chaos, our coping attempts take the form of comedy, nostalgia or mysticism. Whether it's through levity or a sense of control, we're looking for brands to provide release from the pressure.

ANXIETY INDEX \ WEALTH WARFARE \ BODY DEBATES \ HOME HQ \ DOOM
COMEDY \ KINDER CULT \ GUIDE US



CHAOS

ANXIETY INDEX

It's the era of shared despair. From climate change to class, race, and gender warfare, modern consciousness birthed infinite issues for us to care about—and now we have anxiety about all of them. As the pandemic compounds our concerns and the worldwide mental health crisis deepens, every brand will be in the business of helping us cope with the chaos. We're collectively confronting our stress with zero shame.

FOOD & DRINK, GOVERNMENT & CORPORATE, HEALTH & WELLNESS, LIFESTYLE, MEDIA & ENTERTAINMENT

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"LET IT OUT," INSPIRED BY ICELAND MEDIA

Iceland's tourism board is inviting people to release their pandemic frustrations by letting out their loudest scream. Recorded screams were broadcasted through speakers placed throughout the island's striking landscape, providing some much-needed scream therapy.

DRIFTWELL BY PEPSICO BRAND

The multinational F&B giant is entering the sleep economy with Driftwell—a functional beverage containing 200 mg of L-theanine to help you relax before bed. A culture ready to unwind is trading caffeine for de-stressing drinks.

"TOXIC PRODUCTIVITY" LANGUAGE

A term for an unhealthy compulsion to work, made worse by new COVID-19 job stressors and the pressure to over-achieve during quarantine.



SOCIAL MEDIA THERAPISTS PEOPLE

Mental health professionals are using social media and streaming platforms to reach new audiences. TikTok therapist Julie Smith (@DrJulieSmith, 2.3M) and Twitch psychiatrist Dr. Alok Kanojia (@HealthyGamer_GG, 414K) are just a few of the professionals doling out online advice for an ultra-anxious generation.

ANTI-ANXIETY CLOTHING LIFESTYLE

H&M Lab, the fashion giant's Berlin-based innovation hub, unveiled a new denim jacket with built-in sensors that give the wearer the feeling of being hugged.

VR HEADSET VISUAL

Virtual reality is being used as a visual form of therapy. For instance, Missouri startup Healium helps people manage their anxiety through VR and AR apps that display their feelings on-screen.



CHAOS

WEALTH WARFARE

The wealth gap has widened into a chasm, igniting the battle between the rich and the rest of us. COVID-19 exacerbated existing inequalities and exposed entirely new ones—waking us up to the fact that matters of privilege extend far beyond the size of your paycheck. Elitist brands beware, the uprising is here. Businesses that help build a fairer future will be on the right side of history.

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"RICH CORONA, POOR CORONA" MEDIA

New York Magazine's April 27th issue explored the pandemic's disproportionate effect on the poor and people of color in the U.S. As the cover's subhead bluntly put it, socioeconomic status is a strong determinant of "who lives, who dies, who thrives."

CLARO COLOMBIA BRAND

The telco company is shrinking the digital divide with Connected Colombia—an initiative that allows customers to sponsor internet access for low-income households. For every household sponsored by customers, Claro will give internet access to another family in need.

"PRIVILEGE TAX" LANGUAGE

Economists from Deutsche Bank are proposing that employees pay a 5% "privilege tax" for each day they choose to work remotely. Under the controversial concept, money collected from the tax would fund subsidies that support unemployed or low-income earners who can't work remotely.

JEFF BEZOS PEOPLE

Publishers from Forbes to The New York Times have featured Amazon's founder as the face of the widening wealth gap. As the pandemic pushes more people into extreme poverty—an estimated 88-115 million more to be exact—the world's billionaires are growing their fortunes to a record high of \$10.2tn. Bezos saw his net worth rise by an estimated \$48 billion during the pandemic.

"EAT THE RICH" LIFESTYLE

As noted by Amanda Hess in her New York Times op-ed, "celebrity culture is burning." During quarantine, tone-deaf reminders from Hollywood stars that "we're all in this together" were met with #Guillotine2020 hashtags and calls to "eat the rich."



"UNEQUAL SCENES" BY JOHNNY MILLER VISUAL

In his acclaimed "Unequal Scenes" series, Johnny Miller uses aerial photography to expose the stark economic divides within cities around the world. His photos capture the land where rich and poor neighborhoods meet—areas often only separated by a road, canal, or fence. Durban, Mumbai, and Detroit are among the many cities featured.



CHAOS

BODY DEBATES

Our bodies are officially a hot topic of political debate. New culture wars are erupting around our biology, and they're expanding far beyond body positivity. Decisions related to whether or not to get a vaccination, go vegan, wear a face mask, and have children are no longer private and personal. They're at the center of heated public disputes related to freedom of choice vs. societal responsibility. Your biology is now up for discussion.

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"THE POWER OF WOMEN," VOGUE POLAND MEDIA

Pro-choice Polish model Anja Rubik appeared on three covers for Vogue Poland entitled "The Power of Women" in response to the country's near-total abortion ban. Anja used her feature to make a statement, declaring that "a woman's right to choose is a litmus test for a healthy, progressive society."

NOTCO, FOOD-TECH COMPANY BRAND

The leading Latin American food tech brand is promoting a plant-based diet as simple way to create a healthier future. With a fresh round of funding and plans to expand internationally, NotCo is banking big on the plant-based revolution.

"POPULATION CONTROL" LANGUAGE

Climate change concerns have led to increasing calls for population control. Celebrity environmentalists such as Jane Goodall and Sir David Attenborough are among the many supporters of the controversial idea—fueling heated deliberations around the ethics of having children.

VACCINE INFLUENCERS PEOPLE

Celebrities and social media stars are partnering with healthcare providers to reassure the public that the COVID-19 vaccine is safe. On TikTok, scientists are answering vaccine-related questions through short videos in an attempt to quell anti-vaxx narratives.

MASK WARS LIFESTYLE

Face masks have become politicized. Depending on where you stand, wearing a mask is either considered a civic duty or an infringement on personal freedom.

INSTAGRAM NUDITY VISUAL

#IWantToSeeNyome was trending in support of Nyome Nicholas-Williams—a black plus-size model whose photos were repeatedly deleted from Instagram due to violations of the platform's nudity policy. After fans fought back—accusing Instagram of discriminately applying its nudity rules to non-white women—both Instagram and Facebook changed their policies to be more inclusive.





CHAOS

HOME HQ

Home is expanding from a hideout to the headquarters of our lives. The pandemic has forced our humble abodes to take on new roles as the office, gym, self-care space, school, 24/7 restaurant, and entertainment center. As every business moves in, preserving the sanctity of home will become its own challenge. Our desire to separate comfort from chaos will have us seeking new sanctuaries.

FOOD & DRINK, HEALTH & WELLNESS, LIFESTYLE,
SPORT & FITNESS, TRAVEL & TRANSPORT

IKEA'S 2020 "LIFE AT HOME" REPORT MEDIA

The Swedish superstore predicts that our homes will become greener and lighter—boosting demand for gardens, balconies and roof terraces that transform our living spaces into comfortable escapes.

LULULEMON BRAND

The activewear brand is banking on at-home fitness as the way of the future. They recently acquired Mirror—a \$1,500 reflective glass that streams workout classes from your home—for \$500 million in a push to make living rooms the new boutique workout studios.

"HOME OFFICE" LANGUAGE

Remote working has prompted people to invest in their home office. Companies like Shopify, Twitter, and 9gag are even supporting their employees' workstation upgrades—offering up to \$1,000 for standing desks, ergonomic chairs, and monitors.

AT-HOME HOBBYISTS PEOPLE

Home has become our new test kitchen for treats and art studio for DIY projects. UK retailer Hobbycraft reported a 200% growth in online sales since the onset of the pandemic.

IN-HOME HOTEL LIFESTYLE

The Room Service Latam app is connecting Colombians with hospitality offerings from local hotels. At-home brunch buffets, laundry services, and massages are now just a few clicks away.



MEAL KITS VISUAL

Lockdown has given "dining in" a whole new meaning. Startups like Assembly Kitchen are elevating the at-home dining experience with gourmet restaurant-prepared meal kits.



CHAOS

DOOM COMEDY

We're combating the chaos with pure absurdism. Cringe comedy, memes about existential dread, and nihilistic humor are serving as modern-day coping mechanisms for a generation that's disillusioned with the world. Alternative forms of art and culture will emerge from the darkness—offering welcome diversions and lighthearted healing.

LIFESTYLE, MEDIA & ENTERTAINMENT, TECH

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CORONAVIRUS-INSPIRED ADS MEDIA

South African couple Donovan Goliath and Davina Mae Gordon create fake ads with a pandemic twist. Their content reimagines the names of fashion brands—Levi's becomes "Can't Leave," Dolce & Gabbana turns into "Dishes & Bananas," and Channel is simply "COVID"—with visuals that highlight the realities of lockdown.

DUREX BRAND

When a Hong Kong council member suggested that single-use masks could be reused if steamed, the sexual health brand created a tongue-in-cheek social post reminding people not to reuse condoms. Durex's timely response to the illogical claim was applauded across social media.

"SUNNY NIHILISM" LANGUAGE

Gen Z's upbeat take on nihilism. The term refers to how today's youth celebrate the notion of a meaningless existence through satirical memes, wacky viral challenges, and cynical TV series like Rick and Morty.



GEN Z ABSURDISTS PEOPLE

Gen Z is bringing the strange and nonsensical back in vogue. The Gen Z subreddit documents their affinity for absurdism, which Webster defines as "the belief that the universe is irrational and meaningless and that the search for order brings the individual into conflict with the universe."

EMO RAP LIFESTYLE

The obscure, underground world of emo rap is slowly making its way onto a bigger stage. Rap names referencing Osama Bin Laden, lyrics about mental health, face tattoos, and the "sad boy" aesthetic are all characteristic surrounding this genre.

DOOM MEMES VISUAL

Dark memes are Gen Z's way of acknowledging the very real issues of our world. Topics of the seldom-understood humor range from being drafted for WWII to preparing for the apocalypse.



CHAOS

KINDER CULT

The allure of childlike joys is stronger than ever. A generation of adults under pressure is granting itself permission to play—turning juvenile hobbies and colorful kid-inspired decor into joyful acts of resistance against grown-up rules. Tried-and-true comforts of our youth are making a comeback, while new lighthearted escapes offer a time-out from adulthood. Nostalgia’s stock is going up in price.

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DISNEY PLUS MEDIA

The wildly successful streaming platform is delivering on our desire to revisit childhood classics. Over 87 million people signed up for the flagship service in the first year, with subscriptions projected to reach between 230 million and 260 million by 2025.

LEGO GROUP BRAND

The Danish toy company is partnering with Adidas to create a clothing line that inspires creativity. The collection’s ZX8000 sneaker conveys that “you’re never too old to play.”

“ADULT PLAY” LANGUAGE

From crafting with Play-Doh to roller skating, the rise of adult play is making the old feel new again. Jeff Harry, a positive play coach, helps businesses and individuals find their purpose by rekindling the ways they used to play.

DAVID BARON PEOPLE

CEO and co-founder of Nugget, a startup selling an infinitely configurable play couch made of foam blocks. Demand for the colorful couch skyrocketed during the pandemic, with online drops selling out in minutes. It’s been dubbed “Supreme for moms.”

TOY COLLECTING LIFESTYLE

While today’s youth gravitate toward electronics, adults are finding comfort in the toys from their past. Mattel is tapping into nostalgia with Mattel Creations—an e-commerce site featuring weekly drops of limited-edition items, artist collabs, and behind-the-scenes content.



NINTENDO’S GAME & WATCH: SUPER MARIO BROS VISUAL

A 2020 revival of the original Game & Watch device from 1980—the first handheld gaming system created by Nintendo. The retro aesthetic is back.



CHAOS

GUIDE US

A world exhausted by the rational is devolving into the emotional. In the age of (mis)information overload, we're seeking answers in something bigger than ourselves. Religion is seeing a resurgence as the pandemic forces us to reckon with the fragility of life. Science denial is giving rise to modern myths. And mysticism is becoming a welcome escape from post-truth politics. When "facts" fail to help make sense of the world, spirituality is the solution.

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"CONSPIRACY THEORIES" PODCAST MEDIA

The podcast examines the stories behind the world's most controversial events—noting that "the truth is rarely the best story. And when it's not the only story, the truth deserves another look."

RITUALIST BRAND

Ritualist is among a new wave of startups bringing spiritual guidance to the corporate world. The creative studio helps businesses establish rituals that improve work culture and boost employee well-being—such as team breathing exercises to start the day or a faux funeral to put a failed new business pitch to rest.

"AGNOTOLOGY" LANGUAGE

The study of culturally induced ignorance or doubt, coined by Stanford professor Dr. Robert Proctor. From climate change denial to flat-Earthers, Agnotology tries to understand why people choose to believe fiction over fact.

RELIGIOUS INFLUENCERS PEOPLE

Modern religious figures are bringing the gospel to Instagram. A vegan priest (@vegoprasten), a pastor who runs cycling classes (@spinningpadre), and a rabbi who's also a whiskey connoisseur (@whiskyrabbi) are just a few spiritual social media stars sharing uplifting messages with their thousands of followers.

ASTRO DATING LIFESTYLE

Singles are looking to astrology to find their soul mate. When doomswiping on Tinder fails to produce a satisfying match, apps like Struck offer a more promising solution by using zodiac signs to gauge compatibility.

TIKTOK TAROT CARDS VISUAL

Gen Z psychics are using TikTok's "For You" algorithm to deliver mystical insights to the right people. The "tarot" hashtag has a whopping 2.3 billion views on TikTok, and the "tarotreading" hashtag has over 608 million views.





PRESERVATION

The transition from the old to the new world is looking more marathon than sprint. And in our efforts to fight another day, we're closing in and closing down. The new decade will require wiser conservation of our mental energy and physical resources, deeper knowledge of our past, and agile innovation. It's time to hope for the best, but prepare for the worst. When preservation is the priority, brands can step in to help us shelter, build resilience, and secure the essentials.

SURVIVALISM \ ZERO OUT \ MOOD GEISTING \ ROOTS REVIVAL \ FRUGALICIOUS \ MODERN MAKESHIFT \ STERILE SOCIETY



PRESERVATION

SURVIVALISM

The doom boom is upon us. Political instability, climate change, and a global health crisis are fueling the multimillion-dollar disaster prep industry. Emergency kits and wildfire insurance offer peace of mind for the everyday, while intensified interest in private islands and extreme survival fitness courses point to a growing prepper mentality. As we face our dystopian future, we'll look to brands that help us beat the odds.

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FITNESS

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"I'M A SURVIVOR" MEDIA

Korean reality TV show where celebrities are taught survival skills by a former officer from South Korea's Counterterrorist Special Mission Battalion.

JUDY BRAND

Maker of the first digitally connected emergency kit that can support families for up to 72 hours. In addition to supplies and first-aid essentials, Judy offers downloadable disaster plans, text alerts, and 24/7 access to leading preparedness experts.

"BUSHCRAFT" LANGUAGE

The skills required to live in the wild. Interest in survival courses is growing across the globe. Singaporean fitness company Training By Glen saw sign-ups for its bushcraft course grow by 30% in 2020. And the emirate of Ras al-Khaimah has partnered with survival expert Bear Grylls to offer a new outdoor adventure camp on Jebel Jais—the highest mountain in the UAE.

DOOMSDAY PREPPERS PEOPLE

Those who actively prepare for emergencies. Preppers share skills and best practices through online communities such as "The Prepared," and train for doomsday scenarios with fitness apps like Apocalypse Survival Training.

BUNKER HOMES LIFESTYLE

More and more people are preparing for the worst with at-home bunkers. Searches for "homes with bunkers" on U.S. property marketplace ISoldMyHouse.com have soared by 300% since June 2020.

PRIVATE ISLANDS VISUAL

The world's rich are buying safe escapes, with prices ranging from a \$105,000 islet in Finland to a \$18 million island off Sicily. Island real-estate firm Private Islands has seen daily inquiries increase by 50% during the pandemic.





PRESERVATION

ZERO OUT

From the always-on to the “Time of Off,” welcome to the reflective era. We’ve overstimulated and overstuffed our lives, and now we’re collectively hitting the pause button to reconnect to ourselves. Nothingness is our new ideology, and it’s reshaping our values, our systems, and our consumption. Absence is the antidote.

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TECH, TRAVEL & TRANSPORT

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HUMAN ONLINE MEDIA

An online space where strangers silently stare at one another for 60 seconds. The site aims to create a global movement of shared presence by helping people “reconnect with the simple joy of being.”

HEADSPACE BRAND

The popular meditation app is now promoting mental wellness in all aspects of our lives. Headspace partnered with Hinge to ease dating anxiety with pre-date meditations, and is helping remote workers unplug with “virtual commutes.”

“NIKSEN” LANGUAGE

The Dutch concept of doing nothing. Practicing nixen involves doing an activity—such as listening to music or observing your surroundings—without purpose.

FRIEDRICH VON BORRIES PEOPLE

German architect and professor who instigated “idleness grants” at the University of Fine Arts in Hamburg (HFBK). The goal of the program is to examine what happens when cultural values around achievement are turned upside down. Applicants pitched a certain activity to abstain from, and three students were awarded a €1,600 grant.

COTTAGECORE LIFESTYLE

An escapist subculture that fetishizes pastoral life and the outdoors—think farm animals, Victorian dresses, bread-baking, and gardening. Its growing follower base is a community of young millennials and Gen Zers who long for a slower pace of life, free from screens and busy cities.



NO-SCREEN PHONE VISUAL

New hacks are helping us limit our screen time. As part of its Digital Wellbeing initiative, Google designed an envelope for the Pixel 3A that hides the smartphone’s screen and limits its functionality to sending and receiving calls.



PRESERVATION

MOOD GEISTING

Human emotions are being analyzed and optimized in entirely new ways. As feelings turn scientific, a modern wave of mood-boosting products are promising to make us calmer, happier, or even euphoric. Serotonin supplements can cure your sadness. CBD bath bombs relieve stress. And emotion-monitoring wearables help you make sense of how you feel. The market for mood modulation is booming.

FASHION & BEAUTY, FOOD & DRINK, HEALTH & WELLNESS, LIFESTYLE, MEDIA & ENTERTAINMENT

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MAP OF EMOTIONS MEDIA

An Italian AI company created a COVID-19 map of emotions by analyzing social media sentiment. The map tracked the evolution of feelings across the globe, such as when fear turned into sadness, providing insight that helped institutions and the media improve their communications during the crisis.

SPOTIFY BRAND

The global streaming platform offers immersive playlists for every mood. Spotify India's lockdown campaign highlighted the range of emotionally charged playlists available, from the feel-good "Mood Booster" soundtrack (6M followers) to the more melancholy "Life Sucks" (2.8M followers).

"DIGITAL NUTRITION" LANGUAGE

Digital content is being given a nutritional value. The idea stems from the fact that the online content we consume can emotionally impact us in the same way as the food we eat. Moodrise from US-based AeBeZe Labs is the first app to provide on-demand Digital Nutrition through curated content designed to elevate your mood.



DR. KATRIN PRELLER PEOPLE

Katrin Preller, Ph.D. is conducting the first-ever large scale research study on the use of psychedelics to treat depression and alcoholism. She believes that substances like LSD and psilocybin ("magic mushrooms") could create a paradigm shift in the way we approach mental health treatment entirely.

LUXURY CANNABIS LIFESTYLE

Cannabis is shedding its stoner stigma and crossing over into high-end spaces. From upscale vape pens to CBD massages, cannabis is becoming a key ingredient for lavish products and in-demand experiences.

DREAM VISUALIZATION VISUAL

Dreams are going from private and fleeting to visualized and interpreted. Japanese scientists have invented a sort of dream-reading machine that measures your brain activity while you sleep, then decodes your dreams and plays them back to you when you wake up.



PRESERVATION

ROOTS REVIVAL

Globalization's fall from grace is allowing us to rediscover our roots. While being worldly was once a point of pride, we're now turning inward and getting in touch with our local and national heritage—gaining new appreciation for the people, land, and traditions that came before us. To know who we are, we must start by celebrating where we came from.

FOOD & DRINK, GOVERNMENT & CORPORATE,
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"SINGAPOLIDAY," SINGAPORE TOURISM BOARD MEDIA

The Singapore Tourism Board is encouraging locals to take a 'Singapoliday' staycation during the pandemic. The group is also helping Singaporeans rediscover their island home with SingapoRediscovered Vouchers that can be exchanged for cultural experiences, hotel stays, and tours.

NIKE BRAND

The sportswear giant is leaning into localism with Nike Unite—a new store format popping up in suburbs and smaller cities around the world. Every aspect of the in-store design nods to local culture—from a community wall featuring the store team and local partnerships, to fitting rooms decorated with maps that inspire nearby exploration.

"TE REO" RESURGENCE LANGUAGE

Te Reo, the Māori language, is experiencing a revival in New Zealand. Free online classes and a new Māori TV channel are helping Kiwis learn their native tongue and reconnect with their cultural heritage.

NEIGHBORS PEOPLE

New initiatives are bringing us closer to those living next door. Brazilian app Tem Açúcar? fosters a sharing economy between neighbors. Online platform Lulu Dans Ma Rue connects Parisians with craftsmen, IT specialists, and tutors near them. And Facebook is putting communities at the center with its Neighborhoods feature.

LOCAL LIVING LIFESTYLE

We're finding unexpected joy in the shops and spaces just around the corner. Bodegas are our primary grocery stores. Parks are the new place to meet up and chat. And local thrift store hauls beat online bargain hunting.



ANO: JOURNEY THROUGH TATTOOS VISUAL

Ano is a Malaysian-made video game educating players about the tattoo culture of the Kayan—a Tibeto-Burman ethnic minority of Myanmar. The AR adventure is aiming to revitalize indigenous tattoo traditions among younger generations.



PRESERVATION

FRUGAL - LICIOUS

Frugality is becoming ubiquitous. Whether it's Millennials' conspicuous passion for thrifting, or Gen Z's virtuous sobriety, a growing wave of people are turning their backs on the consumerism trap that filled their drawers and emptied their bank accounts. Simple living is no longer considered a sacrifice. It's the smart choice for our wallets, our well-being, and our planet.

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HEALTH & WELLNESS, LIFESTYLE

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ACCESSIBLE GOURMET MEDIA

Colombian retailer Éxito is sharing IGTV videos demonstrating how to make affordable yet gourmet meals under "Cocina de Mercado," a business line aiming to democratize nutritious food in Colombian homes.

KLARNA BRAND

A no-hassle shopping app that unlocks exclusive deals, notifies you when prices drop, and lets you pay in four interest-free payments at any online store. Sephora, Adidas, and H&M are just a few of the major retailers that accept Klarna.

"ZOOM TOWNS" LANGUAGE

Across the West, remote workers are ditching sky-high rent costs of big cities and settling down in "zoom towns"—gateway communities that sit outside major vacation destinations. The scenic cities have become a hotspot for professionals craving more space and lower living expenses.

KUMIKO LOVE (@THEBUDGETMOM) PEOPLE

Kumiko is an accredited financial counselor helping people "live a life you love on a budget you can afford." Over half a million people follow her on Instagram, where she explains different savings methods and breaks down the difference between being frugal and being cheap.

#DITCHYOURSTUFF LIFESTYLE

The hashtag #DitchYourStuff is trending in China as young spenders adjust to living with less. The minimalist movement is being driven by an uptick in online bargain hunting, as financial fear pushes people to rethink their spending habits and off-load their possessions.

UGLY PRODUCE VISUAL

The demand for discounted "ugly" produce (food deemed too unattractive for traditional grocers) skyrocketed during the pandemic as shoppers looked to lower their grocery bill and avoid crowded supermarkets. San Francisco-based subscription service Imperfect Foods saw sales double in 2020, saving more than 200 million pounds of food from going to waste.





PRESERVATION

MODERN MAKESHIFT

Makeshift solutions are earning their time in the spotlight. As resources become increasingly scarce and COVID-19 proves the importance of pivoting quickly, we're finding a new appreciation for frugal, low-tech solutions to everyday issues. When automation loses its allure, human ingenuity will elevate and endure. Step aside, Silicon Valley. Innovation can come from anywhere.

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"OPEN SOURCE COVID-19 MEDICAL SUPPLIES" MEDIA

A Facebook group where makers and engineers around the world share open-source designs for medical equipment needed during the pandemic. DIY coronavirus solutions like these are gaining steam in what some are calling a "medical hackathon."

AGRICYCLE BRAND

An international startup that turns food waste into new revenue streams for rural farmers. One of their initiatives creates a sustainable charcoal alternative out of coconut shells and palm kernels. Another turns unused fruit parts into gluten-free flour.

"JUGAAD" LANGUAGE

A colloquialism in South Asian languages meaning a flexible approach to problem-solving that uses limited resources in an innovative way. Interest in Jugaad has seen a recent global resurgence as COVID-19 forces people to do more with less.

TU/ECOMOTIVE TEAM PEOPLE

Dutch students at the Eindhoven University of Technology built a car made entirely of out of plastic waste. Their goal is to prove to the car industry that waste can serve as a viable raw material in manufacturing.

3D-PRINTED LUXURY RESORT LIFESTYLE

3D printing technology is now being used to build five-star stays. Kisawa Sanctuary in Mozambique will be the first 3D-printed luxury resort—using a sand and seawater combination to create building facades and flooring components.



JUNKYARD WHEELCHAIRS VISUAL

Kenyan innovator Lincoln Wamae created affordable electric wheelchairs made out of scrap materials from the junkyard and powered by old laptop batteries. Wamae's design serves a dual purpose of tackling pollution while also providing better care for society's most vulnerable.



PRESERVATION

STERILE SOCIETY

Society is getting sterilized. COVID-19 marked the start of an all-out war on germs, making contactless interactions, virus-proof goods, and public sanitization the norm. As cleaning gets promoted to a form of therapy and businesses go above and beyond to prove that they're prioritizing our protection, "cleanwashing" will become the new greenwashing. The touch-free transformation is coming.

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"CLEANEST PORN EVER," PORNHUB MEDIA

Pornhub's instructional video series where the site's top stars promote COVID-19 safety tips (e.g., social distancing and handwashing) and challenge viewers to find the most creative ways to have clean sex while in quarantine. Pandemic protection is now a part of our most intimate relationships.

"UPFRESHING" BY DIESEL BRAND

The fashion brand's "Upfreshing" capsule collection is designed to keep you clean. Its 20 items are treated with an antibacterial and antimicrobial film that fends off germs, fungi, and dust mites.

"CONTACTLESS PAYMENTS" LANGUAGE

Health concerns around COVID-19 spreading via cash have prompted new touchfree financial solutions. One Nigerian-based mobile payment service, Paga, has seen over a 200% quarterly increase in users since the outbreak. And in the U.S., Amazon One palm-recognition technology lets customers purchase items with a wave of their hand.



HEIDI AND KEN ROBOT BARTENDERS PEOPLE

The names of two robot arms serving customers at the Heineken Zer0.0 pop-up bar in Sydney, Australia. The zero-contact experience demonstrates automation's new role in making hospitality more hygienic.

PUBLIC HANDWASHING LIFESTYLE

Public displays of hygiene are aiming to create peace of mind. TransMilenio—the mass transportation system of Bogotá, Colombia—has installed over 130 portable sinks in bus stations across the city. The City of Paris is also doubling down on cleanliness—adding hand sanitizer dispensers to 1,500 bus stations and 435 public restrooms.

CLEAN TECH VISUAL

Hong Kong International Airport is testing full-body disinfectant machines that kill bacteria on skin and clothes in 40 seconds. The airport is also deploying a team of robots equipped with ultraviolet light and air sterilizers to purify public areas.



ADVANCEMENT

After three decades of accepting all technology as progress, we're finally calling its impact into question. Tech gave us openness, connection and opportunity—but increasingly, seems determined to take rights, value and autonomy away. As our dependence grows, so does the need for structure. Are we really ready to sacrifice privacy for convenience, worth for automation, or humanity for optimization? Companies willing to slow down and take responsibility for the externalities of progress will win the race. It's time to balance the scales and put humanity—not just customers—first.

PLATFORM POLITICS \ DATA RUSH \ HELICOPTER TECH \ AI-IFY \ OPTIMIZED
ANATOMY \ STABILITY PURSUIT \ STEALTH MODE



ADVANCEMENT

PLATFORM POLITICS

Say goodbye to the Wild West of social technology. In the fierce battle against misinformation, filter bubbles, and data collection, platforms are under crackdown. And they're adapting their products to help us identify fake news, break free of echo chambers, and fight tech addiction—or at least, telling us they are. The pressure is on for big tech to rewrite its wrongs. Regulate or be regulated.

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"THE SOCIAL DILEMMA" MEDIA

Netflix documentary featuring technologists, researchers, and former Silicon Valley executives discussing the dark side of social media manipulation. Searches for "deactivate/delete Facebook" grew 250% following the film's release.

CANON BRAND

Truthmark is a global database by Canon Nordic aiming to stop the use of press photos in fake news. The site gives photographers a platform to tell the true story behind their photos, then encrypts the information to make sure it stays attached to the photo.

"TECHLASH" LANGUAGE

The growing backlash against Big Tech companies, the issues their products created, and their slow response to fixing these problems. Fake news has become a focus of the recent techlash—as seen in ad campaigns from RTÉ and The New York Times, as well as misinformation crackdowns ahead of national elections.



MARK ZUCKERBERG PEOPLE

As CEO of the biggest social media platform in the world, Mark Zuckerberg has found himself at the center of highly public controversies related to tech and ethics. His decisions, as well as the outcome of the antitrust lawsuits brought against Facebook, will have a massive impact on the future of social media.

ANTI-ALGORITHM LIFESTYLE

A push to break free from AI-generated content suggestions. A filter bubble simulator called TheirTube shows how YouTube creates "recommendation bubbles," preventing users from seeing content that may challenge their political and cultural beliefs.

INSTAGRAM ANTI-BULLYING FEATURES VISUAL

The social network is stepping up its anti-bullying efforts with new features that automatically hide hate speech and remove comments containing specific keywords. Pinned Comments also allow users to give more visibility to positive interactions.



ADVANCEMENT

DATA RUSH

The data rush is underway—and corporate giants and consumers are in fierce competition to get their share. Savvy users are starting to trade their data for currency. And tech giants are banking on data mining as the path to prosperity. As data becomes a prized asset, we'll see the end of unchecked data grabs and vague permissions, and the start of a more formal data exchange economy.

FINANCE, GOVERNMENT & CORPORATE,
LIFESTYLE, TRAVEL & TRANSPORT, TECH

WIBSON MEDIA

An app that purchases your data in exchange for "Wibson points," which can be redeemed for rewards such as Spotify Premium accounts, Visa gift cards, and Uber credits. The startup is part of the European Union's PimCity project, which aims to ensure that citizens and companies can make ethical use of personal data.

TENCENT BRAND

The world's largest video game vendor, creator of WeChat, and a 15% stakeholder in ecommerce site JD.com. The Chinese multinational company is among the world's top 10 companies with a data-based platform.

"DATA EXHAUST" LANGUAGE

The data generated as a by-product of your online activity. It's collected by trackers, sold to advertisers, and then used to target you with new products and services.

YUVAL NOAH HARARI PEOPLE

The Israeli historian and author of 21 Lessons for the 21st Century believes, "Those who own data own the future." He foresees authority shifting from humans to computer algorithms once Big Data systems know people better than they know themselves.

DATA EXCHANGE LIFESTYLE

A recent partnership between Jaguar Land Rover and IOTA allows car owners to earn cryptocurrency in return for handing over their driving data. Drivers can redeem the credits for coffee, parking tickets, and car charging.



DATA VISUALIZATION VISUAL

From infographics to interactive heat maps, the art of data visualization is now recognized as an invaluable business tool. The global data visualization market is expected to grow from USD 8.85 billion in 2019 to USD 19.20 billion by 2027.



ADVANCEMENT

HELICOPTER TECH

Governments, brands, and devices are monitoring our every move. From apps discreetly tracking our data to drones keeping a watchful eye on social distancing efforts, surveillance is becoming inescapable. But a society fighting for its right to privacy is starting to demand more transparency. Before we allow more Helicopter Tech into our lives, we'll want to know what's in it for us.

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PRIVACY LABELS MEDIA

Apple now requires developers to share privacy labels on the App Store—a move that's setting new industry standards around data transparency. Similar to food nutrition labels, privacy labels clearly list the types of personal data that apps collect.

CLEARVIEW AI BRAND

US-based Clearview AI is leading the charge in facial recognition. The startup's software allows organizations to match pictures of people's faces to a database of over three billion images scraped from the internet—a system far beyond anything constructed by tech giants or the FBI.

"SMART CITIES" LANGUAGE

Technology-powered smart cities are promising to make urban life safer and more sustainable through the use of cameras, sensors, and constant data collection.



SPOT THE ROBOT DOG BY BOSTON DYNAMICS PEOPLE

During the pandemic, Spot the robo-dog was busy reminding Singaporean park-goers to stay socially distant. The camera-equipped canine is now available for sale commercially, and is being used for everything from facility inspection to public security.

SMART HOME SECURITY LIFESTYLE

Homeowners desperate for peace of mind are investing in high-tech security systems. Ring (United States), Hikvision (China), and Samsung (South Korea) are just a few of the companies bringing surveillance into the home.

QR CODES VISUAL

The black and white barcodes are becoming ever-present, letting us pay via smartphone, open a digital menu, or display our health status. With help from apps like WeChat and Alipay, China is embracing QR code technology to promote cashless transactions and aid in surveillance.



ADVANCEMENT

AI-IFY

AI is getting personal. What started as a mass movement to make over entire industries is transforming into a tool for individual improvement. A new wave of AI innovations are promising to make us smarter, strengthen our relationships, and guide our daily decisions. But as ethical concerns push us to audit the role of algorithms in our lives, we'll start separating the practical applications from the emotional. It's time to hold AI accountable.

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AIID (ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE INCIDENT DATABASE)

MEDIA

AIID is a public platform hosting more than 1,000 examples of AI gone wrong—from autonomous car accidents to inappropriate videos masked as kids cartoons. Anyone can submit an incident, and developers can tap into the database to avoid repeating the same mistakes.

MICROSOFT BRAND

Microsoft's "Productivity Score" feature came under fire after employees learned that their managers could see their personal stats, such as how many emails they send a day and how much they collaborate in shared documents. Criticism from privacy advocates led to Microsoft removing individual user names.

"ETHICAL AI" LANGUAGE

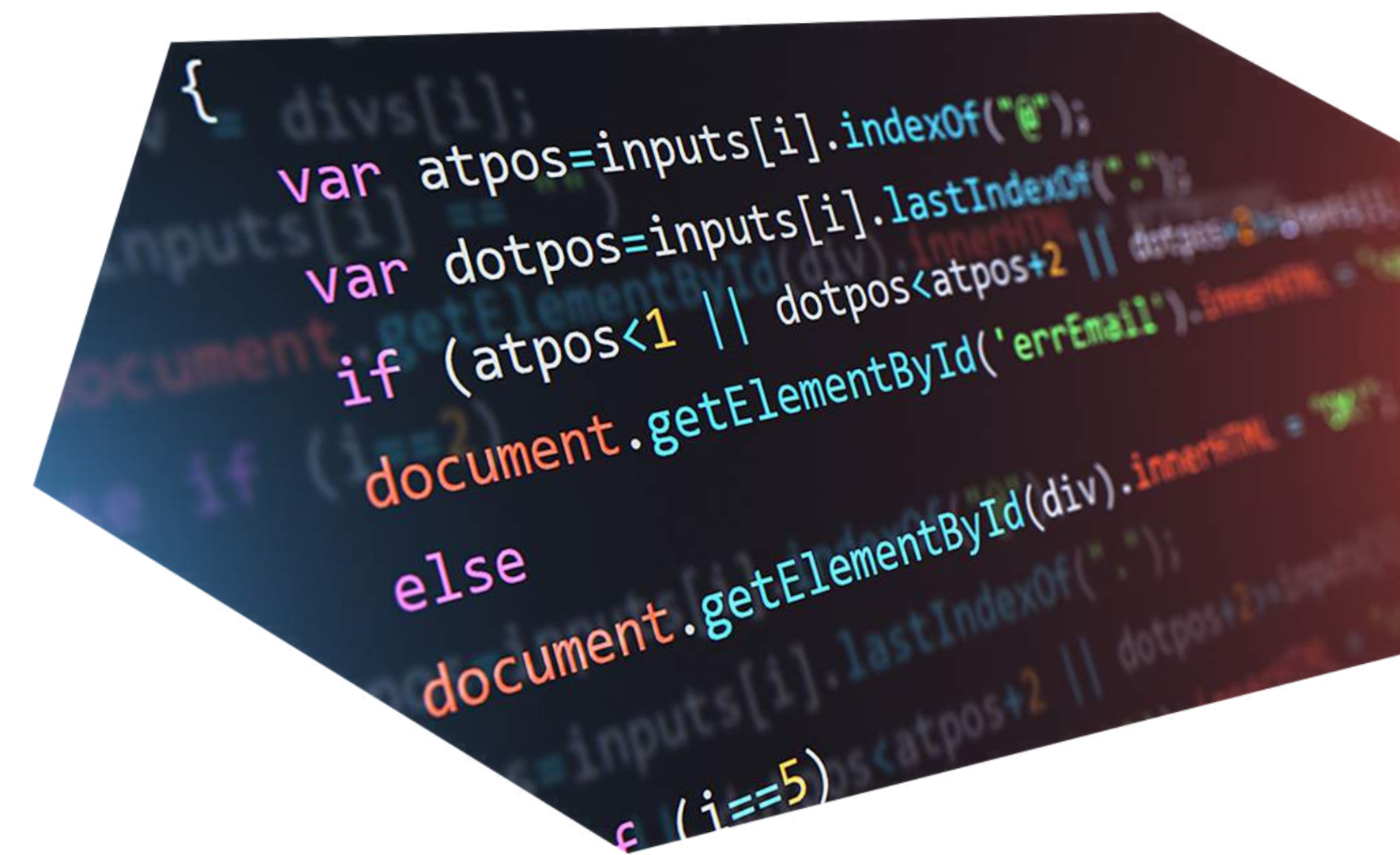
Solving AI's inherent bias is something even the top tech companies can't quite seem to crack. As AI cements itself as the way of the future, it's imperative that we get it right.

ELON MUSK PEOPLE

The Tesla and SpaceX CEO's latest innovation is a wireless brain-computer interface that's claiming to solve a number of medical conditions—including paralysis, dementia, and hearing loss. Musk's ultimate goal with Neuralink is to fuse humankind with AI, "achieving some AI symbiosis."

AMAZON HALO BAND LIFESTYLE

In addition to tracking movement and sleep, Amazon's Halo Band listens to your tone of voice and tells you how you come across to others. Whether you sound happy, concerned, or irritated, your wearable will let you know.



AI SKINCARE VISUAL

Skin care startups are combining data and dermatology to create hyper-personalized solutions. FaceGenius recommends products based on results from an ultra-magnified SkinScanner camera. And Atolla creates custom serums based on results from at-home testing tools plus online assessments.



ADVANCEMENT

OPTIMIZED ANATOMY

We can now beat the limitations of our minds and bodies. New technologies and wellness trends are empowering a growing number of people to improve upon what nature gave them. From simple diet tweaks that boost brain power to high-tech exosuit overhauls—self-optimization is big business. Our desire for control has us taking biology into our own hands.

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GENGMEI MEDIA

China's GengMei app uses AR to score your attractiveness, then makes suggestions for cosmetic surgery improvements. Users can read surgeon reviews and book appointments directly through the platform.

URGO BRAND

French startup that created a \$500 high-tech headband that measures your brain activity during the day, then creates a custom program that trains your mind to sleep better at night.

"SMART DRUGS" LANGUAGE

A class of substances designed to boost brain performance for improved focus, attention, memory, or even creativity. The global brain health supplements market size is expected to reach USD 10.7 billion by 2025.

SURANGA NANAYAKKARA PEOPLE

Founder of Augmented Human Lab—an initiative out of the University of Auckland focused on creating human-computer interfaces that act as extensions of our body, mind, and behavior. Suranga is on a mission to humanize technology through inventions that expand our abilities.

BIOHACKING LIFESTYLE

Also known as "DIY biology," biohacking is the practice of manipulating your brain and body in order to optimize performance. The Silicon Valley-born trend is now gaining traction globally—with Americans taking probiotics to improve their microbiome and Swedes injecting NFC-readable microchips into their hands.

EXOSUIT VISUAL

A wearable powered skeleton that provides support and increases strength. The Innophys exosuit has pressurized air-powered "muscles" that provide back support, allowing Japan's aging society stay in the workforce longer.





ADVANCEMENT

STABILITY PURSUIT

A shaky job landscape is making stability sexy again. From rapid automation to pandemic-driven shutdowns, disruptive forces are sweeping the global economy and rendering mass amounts of jobs irrelevant. As the transition to the “next” accelerates into a blur, reliable sectors will find new desirability. Safety nets are reclaiming their essential status.

FINANCE, GOVERNMENT & CORPORATE
LIFESTYLE, TECH

TIKTOK RECRUITING MEDIA

Employers are using TikTok to attract Gen Z talent. One example is Swiss electrical company Jaisli-Xamax, which shared a series of upbeat videos in order to get young people excited about working in the electrical world.

LAZADA MALAYSIA BRAND

Malaysia’s leading e-commerce platform joined forces with job search platform WOBB to launch an online career fair for people laid off during the pandemic. Potential applicants could shop for over 1,000 in-demand positions just by searching “Jom Cari Kerja” (Let’s Find A Job) in the Lazada app.

“CLIMATE CAREERS” LANGUAGE

Battling climate change is a full-time job. An International Labor Review study indicates that climate change will create more than 24 million jobs by 2030—with opportunities ranging from urban farming to water refreezing.

PABLO IGLESIAS PEOPLE

As Spain’s deputy prime minister for social rights and the leader of Podemos, Pablo Iglesias is calling for a Europe-wide minimum income to protect the most vulnerable. The push comes following the rollout of a national minimum income in Spain, where the nation’s 850,000 lowest-income households receive at least \$500 a month.

EMPLOYEE SHARING LIFESTYLE

In an effort to lay off fewer workers, agile organizations are temporary moving employees in slow sectors (such as airlines and hospitality) to industries that are booming during the crisis (such as health and logistics). Hema—Alibaba’s grocery chain in China—has employed over 3,000 people from different sectors through its employee sharing plan.



MEDICAL SCRUBS VISUAL

Young people are aligning their career ambitions with the needs of the world. Medical school applications in the U.S. have jumped nearly 20% during the pandemic—an unprecedented spike that’s being attributed to a newfound admiration for frontline workers. Some are naming it “the Fauci effect” after America’s most famous disease expert.



ADVANCEMENT

STEALTH MODE

Privacy is the new premium. From accessories designed to outsmart facial recognition to secure search engines, a growing wave of tech startups are putting privacy back in the hands of those who can afford it. In the age of 24/7 intrusion, escaping surveillance will cost you. Anonymity is now for the elite.

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PRIVACY BROWSERS MEDIA

New browser extensions and search engines are giving us back our privacy. Startup Ghostery is launching a \$5 a month plug-in that prevents advertisers from tracking your internet activity.

BLACKLIGHT BRAND

Blacklight is exposing online trackers in an effort to stop the snooping. Enter a web address, and Blacklight will tell you which trackers it has, what they do, and who they're sending your data to.

STEALTH WEALTH LANGUAGE

Today's rich are paying big money to keep a low profile. From mansions hidden from Google street view to bespoke cyber security services, the wealthy are sparing no expense for online and offline anonymity.

SIR TIM BERNERS-LEE PEOPLE

The inventor of the internet is unhappy with how things are going. His startup, Inrupt, is aiming to decentralize the web with new technologies that put users in control of their data.

PRIVACY ARMOR LIFESTYLE

Anti-surveillance clothing and accessories are helping us battle infringements on our privacy. T-shirts with trippy designs make the wearer invisible to AI, and a "bracelet of silence" prevents Amazon Alexa from eavesdropping.

DAZZLE MAKEUP VISUAL

Protestors are using bold makeup to disguise themselves from facial recognition technology. Think cubist-like shapes on key facial features and colorful designs that make a statement.





IDENTITY

Societal constructs past their expiry date are being put out to pasture in favor of a more fluid and forgiving approach. Your job, gender, and relationship status no longer shape your identity. In 2021, your contributions to building a better world are what define you. And as we embrace a new way of "being," we're even pushing the boundaries of what it means to be human—defying our physical existence with digital doppelgangers. Brands that empower us to evolve will secure their place in the future.

VAPORIZED \ ~~GENDER RULES~~ \ WORK-LIFE BOUNDARIES \ RELATIONSHIP
REBELLION \ ACTIVIST AWAKENING \ NEW SCHOOL



IDENTITY

VAPORIZED

The physical world is turning to vapor. We're entering a new era of on/off-line blur where celebrity holograms are headlining music festivals. Where we're outfitting our avatars in the latest fashion. And where a larger portion of our paycheck is going toward digital goods. As the division between virtual and IRL is broken down, we'll redefine the "real world" far beyond what's tangible.

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ENTERTAINMENT, TECH, TRAVEL & TRANSPORT

ANIMAL CROSSING: NEW HORIZONS MEDIA

When quarantine kept us at home, life moved on to Animal Crossing. The online video game has quickly become a mainstream destination for protests, virtual vacations, university classes, and more.

BURBERRY BRAND

The British heritage brand is establishing itself as a leader in Vapor-wear. Burberry's Spring 2021 collection debuted on Twitch—marking a first in luxury fashion. The fashion giant has also gamified the shopping experience on Snapchat, and even created its very own game—B surf—where players are outfitted in the latest Burberry garb.

"METAVERSE" LANGUAGE

Also dubbed the mirror world, the AR cloud, the Magicverse, and the Spatial internet—the metaverse refers to a not-so-distant future where our physical reality merges with the digital universe. Whatever you want to call it, it's coming, and brands are racing to build it.

AESPA PEOPLE

The K-pop girl group is made up of both real people and digital avatars. Through their music, Aespa explores the theme of "experiencing a new world via the encounter of the 'avatar,' your other self."

AVATARS LIFESTYLE

Our digital doppelgangers are becoming increasingly lifelike, creating a booming industry of their own. Genies, the world's leading avatar company, boasts over \$42.8M in funding. And Fortnite sold over \$1B in Avatar skins in 2019 alone.



DEEPPFAKES VISUAL

Deepfakes are no longer just used to create AI-generated imposters of public figures. They're now gaining popularity as a way to both express yourself online and to protect your identity from facial recognition algorithms.



IDENTITY

~~GENDER~~ ~~RULES~~

Our gender no longer defines us. And we don't want it to. From home life, to personal style, to the workplace, we're unraveling the roles that gender boxed us into. As we say goodbye to binary gender divisions, we'll lean into new identity markers that transcend our physical sex.

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"HOTSPOT" PODCAST MEDIA

Swiss podcast "Hotspot" is featuring a special series called "The Gender Trap." Discussions range from the "dad day," to the modern part-time housewife, to gender-based targeting in marketing.

GUCCI MX BRAND

The Italian fashion house has a new non-binary, gender-fluid section on its website that features ready-to-wear items, accessories, shoes, and handbags. Everything about the category is completely genderless, from the sizes offered to the models featured.

GENDER-NEUTRAL GREETINGS LANGUAGE

Japan Airlines has eliminated gendered language from on-board addresses. For example, "ladies and gentlemen" is now replaced with "attention all passengers." Other progressive moves from the airline include removing gender-specific dress codes for flight attendants and advocating for LGBTQ+ inclusivity.



VICTORIA VOLKOVA PEOPLE

As Playboy Mexico's first transgender cover model, Victoria Volkova is hoping to make people "more curious about how trans people live in this country and in the world and what they have to go through to live a dignified life."

PATERNITY LEAVE LIFESTYLE

Paternity leave policies are becoming more generous across the globe. France is doubling its paid paternity leave from 14 to 28 days and including coverage for same-sex couples—making the country a leader in paternity leave offerings.

FEM-MEN VISUAL

From male manicures to grooms donning wedding dresses, men are breaking down gendered constructs around fashion. Following Harry Styles' Fine Line promotional tour, searches for men's pearl jewelry increased 31% according to Lyst.





IDENTITY

WORK-LIFE BOUNDARIES

Demand for work-life boundaries is the new employee uprising. COVID-19 killed the office, dissolving the lines between work and home along the way. And a burnt-out workforce is becoming dissatisfied with business as usual. Achieving balance will become the new ambition as we aim to put always-on work culture back in its 9-to-5 box. The jobs that put life first will attract the talent of tomorrow.

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THRIVE GLOBAL MEDIA

American company founded by Arianna Huffington that's on a mission to end the burnout epidemic. Their platform offers science-based media and digital tools designed to enhance employee well-being.

DROPBOX BRAND

The file sharing software company is going "virtual-first" and converting its 13 global offices into meeting studios. The virtual-first model is meant to combine the best of both worlds—offering the flexibility of remote work plus the creativity, ideation, and team bonding that's enabled by in-person collaboration.

"OFFICE-OPTIONAL" LANGUAGE

The new work-from-home model, promoted by Silicon Valley titans like Facebook and Twitter, that gives employees more flexibility in where they work.

JACINDA ARDERN PEOPLE

New Zealand's Prime Minister believes a four-day work week will boost productivity and improve work-life balance. She sees the progressive idea as a way to rebuild New Zealand's economy in the wake of COVID-19.

REMOTE WORK STAYCATION LIFESTYLE

Barbados and Estonia are just two of over 16 destinations that have introduced special travel visas for remote workers. These so-called "digital nomad" visas are aiming to revitalize tourism and boost local economies.



BURNOUT CASTLE VISUAL

Human Tempo is a healing center in France solely dedicated to treating people who are suffering from burnout. Beginning in 2022, overworked patients will be able to stay in the newly-renovated castle for five days, where they'll experience group therapy sessions, one-on-one coaching, massages, yoga classes, and more.



IDENTITY

RELATIONSHIP REBELLION

Our relationship with relationships is changing. Intimacy is breaking free from institutions and being shared amongst untraditional pairs—whether it be with your BFF, your pet, or your therapy robot. As we separate societal expectations from personal desires, we'll say goodbye to prescriptive labels and old-school relationship rules. A world falling in love with independence is championing a different kind of companionship.

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UTHANDO NESTHEMBU MEDIA

Popular South African reality TV show that follows the life of businessman Musa Mseleku and his four wives. The series gives an honest look at how they navigate life, polygamous relationships, family dynamics, and tradition in a modern world.

SK-II BRAND

The Chinese skincare brand has shown continued support for young, single Chinese women reckoning with societal pressures to get married and have kids. Sandeep Seth, Global CEO of SK-II, hopes their efforts "empower women to live life on their own terms."

"SUGAR DATING" LANGUAGE

A mutually beneficial relationship where young people ("sugar babies") offer their companionship to adults ("sugar daddies" or "sugar mommies"), usually in exchange for financial incentives, mentorship, or even career advancements. The unconventional relationship trend has taken off during the pandemic, largely driven by soaring unemployment rates.

RELATIONSHIP ANARCHIST PEOPLE

A term coined by Andie Nordgren referring to someone who's non-hierarchical (i.e., sees their romantic and platonic relationships as equal), often non-monogamous, and has no set standards about what a partnership must look like.

BFF HOMEBUYING LIFESTYLE

Marriage and homebuying are being decoupled, turning traditional money milestones upside down. BFFs around the world are pooling their savings to buy property together. And couples are committing to a mortgage before committing to marriage.

ROBO-COMPANIONS VISUAL

High-tech companions are helping make life less lonely. Lovot, by Japanese company Groove X, is a huggable device designed to offer comfort, make you feel relaxed, and lift you up when you're feeling down. According to its makers, "it's a little like feeling love toward another person."





IDENTITY

ACTIVIST AWAKENING

Showing you care is the latest form of self-expression. From hashtag takeovers to pop culture-inspired protests, today's youth are finding purpose and belonging in communities dedicated to creating change. Brands that amplify their voice and provide a platform for their POV will earn their support. In the empathy age, being an activist is the ultimate badge of honor.

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MILK TEA ALLIANCE MEDIA

An online coalition of young activists in Hong Kong, Taiwan and Thailand who have rallied together in solidarity with their respective pro-democracy movements. The hashtag #MilkTeaAlliance has become a way to cross-promote political causes and share protest tactics.

HELLMANN'S BRAND

The condiments company used Animal Crossing to raise awareness around food waste and help real people in need. Once inside Hellman's Island, players could drop off turnips that otherwise would have gone bad. For every turnip received, Hellmann's donated to Second Harvest—Canada's largest food rescue charity.

"HASHTAG TAKEOVER" LANGUAGE

Social-savvy activists are drowning out online hate by reclaiming negative hashtags. K-pop fans spammed #WhiteLivesMatter with memes of their favorite artists in order to bury white-supremacist messaging, and LGBTQ+ couples took over #ProudBoys from the far-right group of the same name.

DORA DORADO (@DORACRYBABY) PEOPLE

@DoraCrybaby is one of many micro-influencers rising to fame in the Philippines for calling out social injustices happening throughout the country.

PARLIAMENT TAKEOVER LIFESTYLE

222 young Malaysians convened online for "Parlimen Digital," a two-day debate that mimics governmental proceedings. Over 200,000 viewers tuned in to watch the youth representatives share their policy ideas.



#ENDSARS EMOJI VISUAL

The #EndSARS movement calls for the ban of the Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS)—a notorious unit of the Nigerian police with a long record of abuses. In solidarity with the protest, Twitter launched a special raised fist emoji in the colors of the Nigerian flag, offering users a simple way to show their support.



IDENTITY

NEW SCHOOL

Learning is no longer reserved for the classroom. The pandemic put the education system to the test, upending the old ways of exchanging knowledge. School curriculums are moving outdoors and onto TikTok. Peer-to-peer learning platforms are disrupting the instructor-student hierarchy. And adults are aspiring to be more self-sufficient—using their time in lockdown to boost professional skills and personal passions. The new school system knows no bounds.

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SKILLSHARE MEDIA

The e-learning platform helps thousands of independent professionals share skills—such as hairdressing, coding, and using Adobe Creative Cloud—via on-demand, personalized virtual lessons. Skillshare has 12 million members, with its largest audience growth coming from India.

DISNEY WORLD RESORT BRAND

The Four Seasons Resort Orlando at Walt Disney World Resort now offers “schoolcations”—family holidays that allow kids to attend their virtual classes from a supervised, socially distant learning space inside the resort. Once they’re finished with school, kids can head to the water park for the ultimate playtime.

“LEARNING PODS” LANGUAGE

Also called “micro-schools”—a new approach to education where parents gather their children into small, in-person groups to attend virtual classes together or learn from a hired tutor. The learning trend took off in the wake of COVID-forced school closures.



TIKTOK TEACHERS PEOPLE

Italian professor Sandro Marenco (@sandromarenco, 11.2M likes) is one of the many educators across the globe sharing lessons on TikTok during lockdown. The trending hashtag #LearnOnTikTok has amassed over 47B views.

ANTI-COLLEGE LIFESTYLE

A growing wave of skeptics are questioning if the cost of college is worth it. Google, Apple, and 12 other major American companies no longer require employees to have a college degree. And online platforms like Grow with Google are teaching the practical skills needed to land high-paying tech jobs.

OUTDOOR CLASSROOM VISUAL

Scotland championed open-air learning as part of its pre-pandemic “curriculum for excellence.” Now, schools and universities across the globe are experimenting with outdoor education as a way to keep students safe and boost well-being.



LIBERATION

It's the great undoing. A culture craving authenticity is setting itself free from constraints, toxic polarization, perfectionism, and needless consumerism. As we pave a healthier path forward, we'll improvise with new frameworks and shatter any leftover taboos along the way. Brands who play it safe risk falling behind, while those who celebrate raw transparency, creativity, and experimentation will offer a breath of fresh air. Freedom's bells are ringing.

COUNTER CANCEL \ UNGLOSSED \ CONSCIOUS CONVENIENCE \ MONEY
OUT LOUD \ DEATH UNDONE \ HEALTH HEDONISM



LIBERATION

COUNTER CANCEL

Cancel culture is causing both brands and individuals to tiptoe around important issues from fear of being boycotted. But as “woke fatigue” sets in, a growing group of people are refusing to participate in a hyperpolarized world. The Counter Cancel movement will favor healthy, nuanced debate over public shaming. And will trade toxic intolerance for a commitment to progress.

GOVERNMENT & CORPORATE, HEALTH & WELLNESS,
LIFESTYLE, MEDIA & ENTERTAINMENT, TECH

CANCEL CULTURE CALL-OUTS
MEDIA

Cancel culture is increasingly being called out in the media. One assertive Irish Times article is titled “Cancel culture is poisonous and frightening. It needs to be cancelled.” Australian rock star Nick Cave has said that cancel culture is akin to “bad religion run amuck” on BBC. And former U.S. President Barack Obama cautioned today’s woke youth that “the world is messy; there are ambiguities” in an interview about youth activism.

BOL.COM
BRAND

When the leading Dutch e-commerce company announced that it would stop selling products with Zwarte Piet (“Black Pete”) on them—a Dutch blackface tradition—supporters of the custom responded with calls to #BoycotBol. Rather than backing down, Bol.com respectfully addressed the online hate by stating that they refuse to support a racist practice.

“WOKE FATIGUE”
LANGUAGE

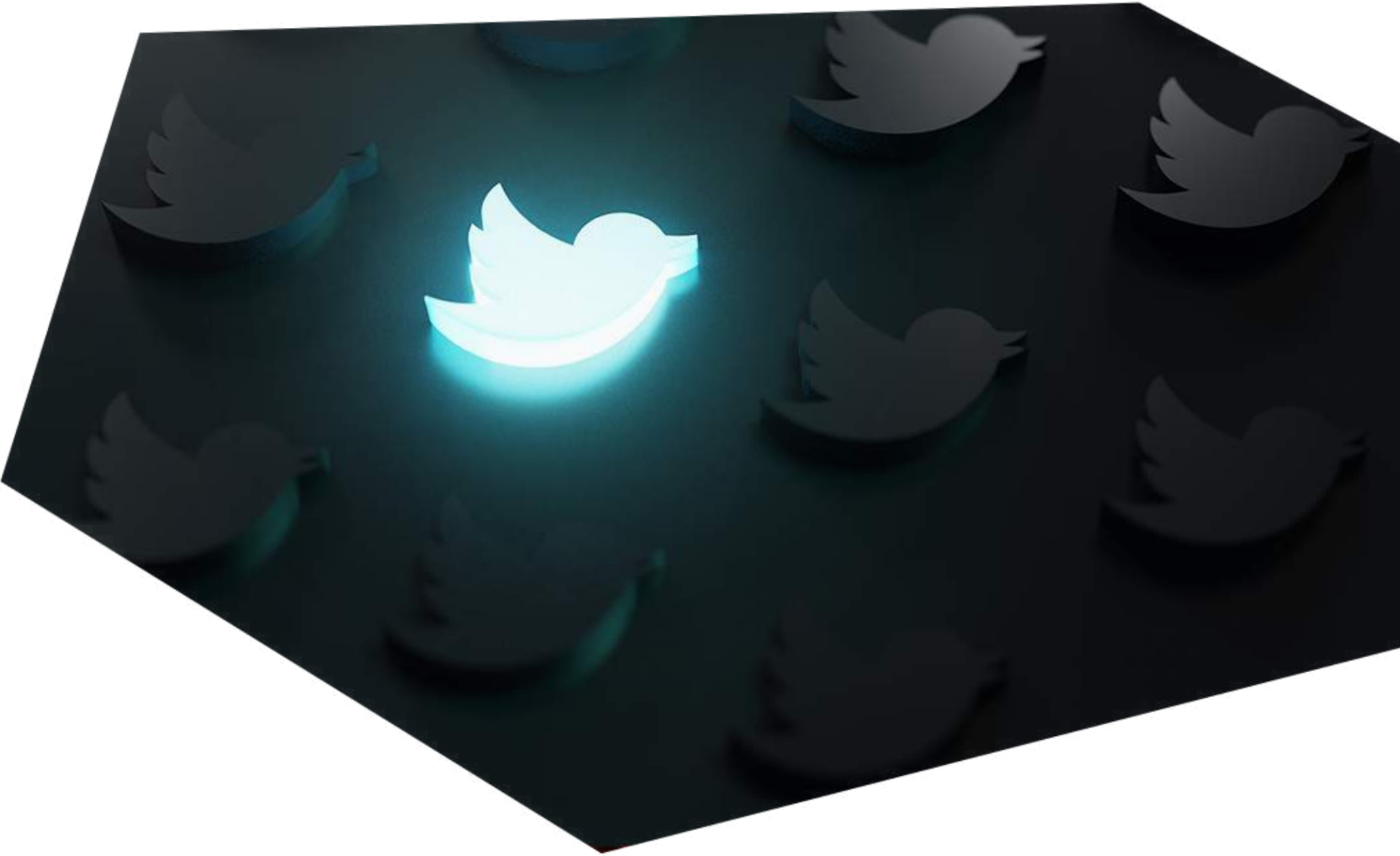
A term Urban Dictionary defines as “the growing distaste towards displays of online social activism brought about by self-righteous leftists using ‘woke’ culture to browbeat, bully, and police others while assuming the moral high ground.”

PROFESSOR LORETTA J. ROSS
PEOPLE

The Smith College professor who challenges her students to call people in rather than calling them out. She argues that cancel culture leaves no room for learning, whereas calling people in involves compassion, conversation, and context.

POLARIZATION PARALYSIS
LIFESTYLE

Nearly every topic has become politicized—creating a rising tension between the pressure to have an opinion on everything, and the fear of that opinion being criticized. As a result, people and businesses are treading more cautiously than ever.



FLEETS
VISUAL

Fleets—as in “fleeting thoughts”—are tweets that disappear in 24 hours. The self-destructing posts were launched to create a “lower-pressure way for people to join the conversation” after Twitter found that many users are fearful of posting permanent tweets due to the potential for social backlash.



LIBERATION

UNGLOSSSED

An uptight world is ready to loosen up. Society is turning its back on impossible standards around one-note beauty, buttoned-up professionalism, and picture-perfect lifestyles—ushering in a new, unapologetic attitude. We’re breaking free of unrealistic expectations by shamelessly indulging in life’s pleasures and flaunting our flaws. Aspiring to perfection is outdated.

FASHION & BEAUTY, GOVERNMENT & CORPORATE,
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“30 MOST DISAPPOINTING UNDER 30” MEDIA

The New Yorker’s parody of the annual Forbes 30 under 30 list. The anti-inspirational piece brings extreme ambition back to reality, helping readers feel a little better about being average.

BILLIE BRAND

The personal care brand’s short film Are We Doing Video? was inspired by the realization that women were too often apologizing how they looked on Zoom. After showing women saying sorry for everything from gray roots to under eye bags, the film asks “What if we stopped apologizing for looking like ourselves?”

“UGLY MAKEUP” LANGUAGE

The imperfect, sloppy, chaotic makeup trend aiming to squash societal expectations around beauty. Eszter Magyar, the Berlin-based makeup activist behind the Ugly Makeup Revolution, wants to make it clear that “It’s not about ugliness, it’s about irregularity. Ugly is just a word that makes you pay attention.”

MALFEITONA PEOPLE

Helena Fernandes is a Brazilian tattoo artist making waves with what she calls “tatuagens peba,” which literally translates into “trash tattoos.” Her artist name, Malfeitona (“badly done”), speaks to her rejection of the technical rules of the craft. And it’s precisely why people are signing up to have her funky designs inked into their skin.

TIKTOK’S “OH NO” CHALLENGE LIFESTYLE

The viral TikTok trend is bringing embarrassing moments into the spotlight. The challenge involves sharing videos of epic fails, blunders, and comical injuries set to the tune of Capone’s “Oh No”—marking a refreshing departure from carefully curated Instagram feeds.

UNFILTERED BY DEFAULT VISUAL

Retouching options will be turned off by default for the front-facing camera on the Pixel 5, Pixel 4, and Pixel 4a 5G. In an attempt to remedy the self-image issues caused by filters, Google will also relabel the retouching options to avoid using any judging words, like “beauty.”





LIBERATION

CONSCIOUS CONVENIENCE

An economy built on “me,” “more,” and “now” is turning a new page. As consumers wake up to the fact that one-click commands come at a cost, they’ll start thinking twice before sacrificing sustainability for speed, or workers’ rights for savings. Ethical shopping apps are helping people use their purchasing power wisely. And businesses are cutting overproduction by bringing made-to-order from premium to mass. The convenience economy is growing a conscience.

FASHION & BEAUTY, FINANCE, GOVERNMENT &
CORPORATE, PRODUCT & DESIGN, TECH

NEUTRAL MEDIA

The browser extension that reveals the carbon footprint of items on Amazon—prompting shoppers to consider the environmental cost of their purchases.

REEBOK BRAND

The athletic clothing brand is working to minimize waste with “First Pitch,” a new digital platform that lets consumers decide which footwear designs make it to market. A shoe will only be produced if at least 500 people commit to purchasing it

“SLOW FASHION” LANGUAGE

A more thoughtful, ethical, and high-quality alternative to fast fashion. According to Lyst’s 2020 Conscious Fashion Report, the term “slow fashion” generated over 90 million social impressions—“suggesting the beginning of a shift in shopping behaviors.”

GORDON RENOUF & SANDRA CAPPONI PEOPLE

Founders of Good on You, a website and app that scores more than 2,000 fashion brands based on how they impact people, animals, and the environment.

MADE-TO-ORDER LIFESTYLE

The no-inventory business model that’s gaining steam among luxury and mass-market brands alike. Unmade is a London-based startup helping some of the world’s biggest businesses connect demand directly to production.



H&M BODY SCANNER VISUAL

At an H&M store in Stockholm, a body scanner will take your measurements, let you choose your fabric and fit, then send your info to a factory where your custom jeans will be made to fit just right. The high-tech device is being tested as a way to tackle overproduction.



LIBERATION

MONEY OUT LOUD

Culture is getting candid about the role money plays in our lives. Financial therapists and financial wellness programs are confronting the intersection between money and mental health. Salary transparency and financial literacy courses are empowering people to build a better financial future. And TikTok influencers are making money part of pop culture. Money talk is moving outside the bank.

FINANCE, GOVERNMENT & CORPORATE, HEALTH & WELLNESS, LIFESTYLE, MEDIA & ENTERTAINMENT

“OPEN UP: THE POWER OF TALKING ABOUT MONEY” MEDIA

Alex Holder’s book is out to prove that there’s power to be found in talking about money. It shows how breaking the silence can both improve personal relationships and lead to progress in solving bigger societal issues, like the fight for a living wage.

STEP BRAND

Step is an all-in-one platform that lets Gen Z manage their money in the same way they manage their social media. By kickstarting teens’ financial journey early, Step will help them build positive credit while boosting their financial literacy.

“FINANCIAL THERAPY” LANGUAGE

A new kind of counseling that sits at the intersection of money and mental health. Financial therapists help people unpack subconscious hurdles so that they can save, spend, and invest in alignment with their values.



MRS. DOW JONES PEOPLE

Haley Sacks—better known as Mrs. Dow Jones—is blending her money smarts with her love of pop culture to make finance less intimidating. During the pandemic, she offered a free seven-week digital learning program covering everything from “WTF is a stimulus package?” to how to deal with unemployment.

FEM-FINANCE LIFESTYLE

Women are rejecting the idea that money management is a man’s job. In Germany, the Finanz Heldinnen (“Financial Heroines”) initiative is helping women achieve financial independence through an app-based learning program, online content, and in-person events.

SALARY-SHARING SPREADSHEETS VISUAL

Workers across industries are anonymously entering their salary into widely shared online spreadsheets. By including demographic information as well as details related to years of experience and location, employees are able to expose any unfair pay discrepancies.



LIBERATION

DEATH UNDONE

Death is getting a new life. An aging population looking to relieve the dread of death is forcing an antiquated end-of-life industry to change its tune. Enter the death wellness movement. From death cafes and death doulas normalizing mortality talk, to biodegradable burial pods making death more sustainable—we’re shedding a brighter light on our inevitable finale of life. The reexamination of death is just beginning.

FINANCE, GOVERNMENT & CORPORATE,
HEALTH & WELLNESS, LIFESTYLE,
MEDIA & ENTERTAINMENT

“ASK A MORTICIAN” MEDIA

Caitlin Doughty’s educational YouTube series, “Ask a Mortician,” has been viewed almost 150 million times. Through her online presence and three New York Times bestselling books, Caitlin advocates for the acceptance of death and the reform of Western funeral practices.

DEAD HAPPY BRAND

The U.K. pay-as-you-go life insurance provider is using humor to break the ice around a not-so-thrilling topic. In addition to life insurance and near-death insurance, the insurtech startup offers “deathwishes” that range anywhere from paying off the mortgage to releasing your ashes to the edge of space.

“DEATH POSITIVE” LANGUAGE

The Death Positive movement is starting a more open and honest conversation around our inevitable demise—helping people accept and plan for death, so they can get on with living their life.

DEATH DOULAS PEOPLE

Much like midwives assist with the birthing process, death doulas help the dying and their loved ones navigate the end-of-life process. Death doulas are filling a gap in care—providing emotional, spiritual, and physical support.

DEATH CAFES LIFESTYLE

Death Cafes are where people, often strangers, gather to discuss their fears about death over tea and cake. Since starting in Europe a decade ago, more than 11,800 Death Cafes have been hosted in over 73 countries. The cafes are now going virtual as COVID-19 forces many to confront their own mortality.



BIODEGRADABLE BURIALS VISUAL

Biodegradable coffins, caskets that turn your body into a tree, and conservation burials—where burial fees help cover land protection—are experiencing an uptick in interest among people who want to feel good about how they go.



LIBERATION

HEALTH HEDONISM

Health and wellness are converging. A once-sterile healthcare industry is taking cues from the pleasurable parts of wellness, ushering in a more holistic and hyper-personalized approach to medical care. From hospitals that feel like luxury hotels, to at-home test kits that offer exciting insights into our biology, healthcare is going from dreaded to embraced. Who says the journey to better health can't be enjoyable?

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LUMIHEALTH
MEDIA

Created in partnership with the government of Singapore and Apple, the LumiHealth app is empowering Singaporeans to adopt a more holistic approach to well-being. The personalized program rewards users for completing wellness challenges—leveraging the Apple Watch to boost the country's collective health.

JUNO BIO
BRAND

The health startup aiming to close the gender health gap with an affordable at-home test that analyzes your vaginal microbiome. The company also offers one-on-one consultations with a vaginal coach and a support network for women to discuss their health issues.

"UNIVERSAL SELF-CARE"
LANGUAGE

Not to be confused with universal health care, the rallying cry for universal self-care is a call to action for brands to recognize the need for increased self-care and provide means, where appropriate, to help. The building blocks of self-care are a return to basics—eating healthy, exercising, spending time with loved ones, and doing something to unwind every day.

SUHAS MISRA
PEOPLE

Creator of Mistery—a "men's confidence company" in India providing individually tailored solutions for touchy male issues like premature ejaculation and hair loss. In a country where sex wellness has been kept in the shadow, Misra is making strides to break the stigma.

INSTAGRAMMABLE DENTIST OFFICES
LIFESTYLE

Dentist offices are getting a millennial-friendly glow up. New York startups Tend and Dntl Bar have trendy modern interiors, seasonal toothpaste flavors, and even let you stream Netflix during your visit.

DOMSTATE ZORGHOTEL
VISUAL

A rehabilitation center in Utrecht designed to look like a four-star hotel, rebranding healthcare as a high-end experience. According to Dezeen, the studio design proves that "optimal functioning of care processes and well-being don't have to be mutually exclusive."





REBIRTH

Science, history, and ethics all point to the need for a new kind of world. One where inclusivity is prioritized from the start. Where females have a fair chance and a powerful voice. Where even entertainment has a worthwhile purpose. And where our actions and investments give thorough consideration to the planet. The time for rebirth is here and now. As we set out to heal our self-inflicted wounds, we'll look to brands to be the divergent thinkers of a new cultural renaissance. It's year zero. Disruption is upon us.

INCLUSIVE BY DESIGN \ FEMPOWERMENT \ PLAY IT FORWARD \ CLIMATE CREDIT \ TRAVEL RIGHT \ FLUID SPACES \ REWILD RESILIENCE



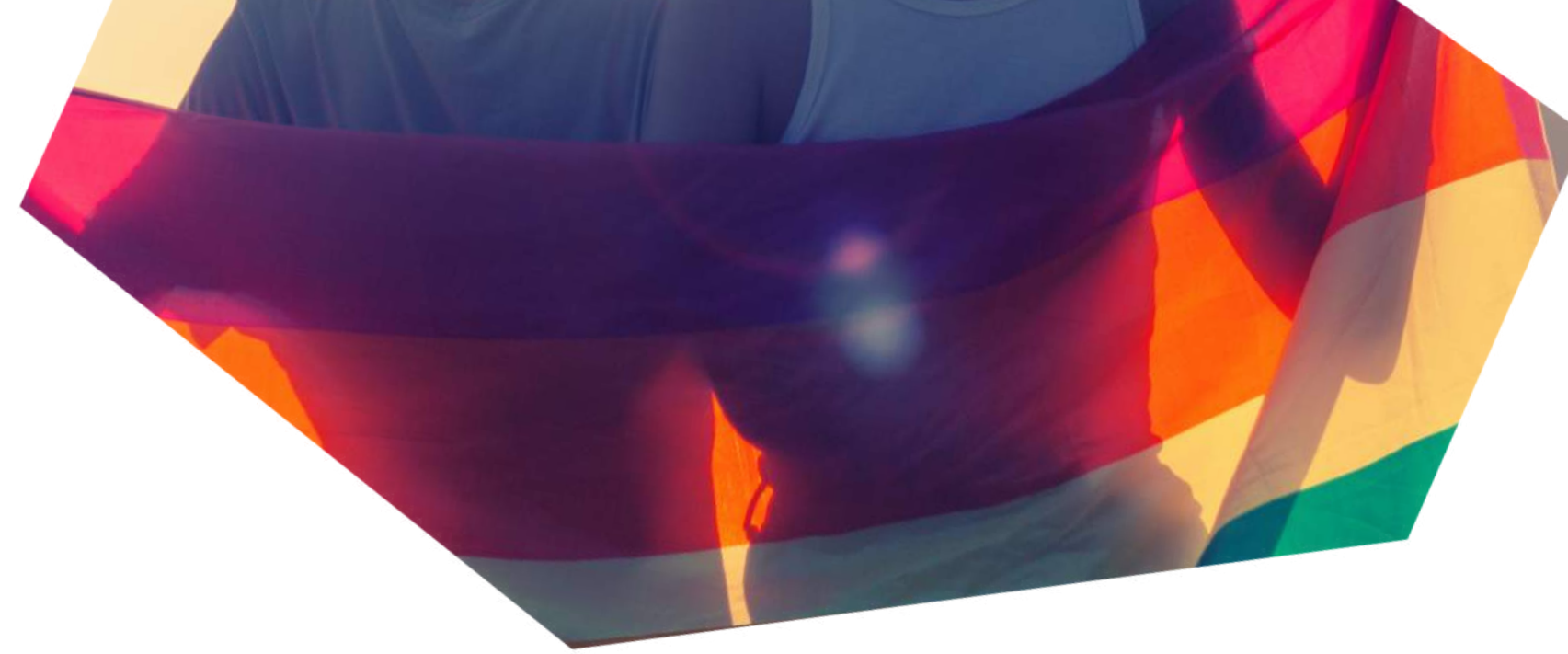
REBIRTH

INCLUSIVE BY DESIGN

True inclusivity isn't a checkbox, it's a form of design thinking. As expectations around inclusivity reach new heights, hyper-critical consumers will sniff out tokenism and expose empty brand promises. Genuine inclusion requires an entirely new blueprint—building systems, spaces, and products to be accessible and representative from the bottom up. New inclusivity-driven disruptors are stepping up and setting a gold standard.

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"PULL UP OR SHUT UP" CHALLENGE MEDIA

An online movement challenging brands to publicly share the number of black employees they have at a corporate level and in leadership roles. Sephora, L'Oréal USA, Glossier, and Kylie Cosmetics were among the many beauty brands to participate—acknowledging that transparency is a necessary step forward.

FENTY BEAUTY BRAND

Rihanna launched the global cosmetics company "so that people everywhere would be included," and offers 50 shades of foundation. The brand's success led to what has been dubbed "The Fenty Effect"—creating a chain reaction of companies doing more to challenge the status quo.

"SUPERHUMAN SPORTS" LANGUAGE

Japan's SuperHuman Sports Society is using tech and special equipment to create a level playing field where both abled and disabled people can compete together fairly. The group has certified over 12 new sports that anyone can play, regardless of their physical abilities.

MARY PRYOR PEOPLE

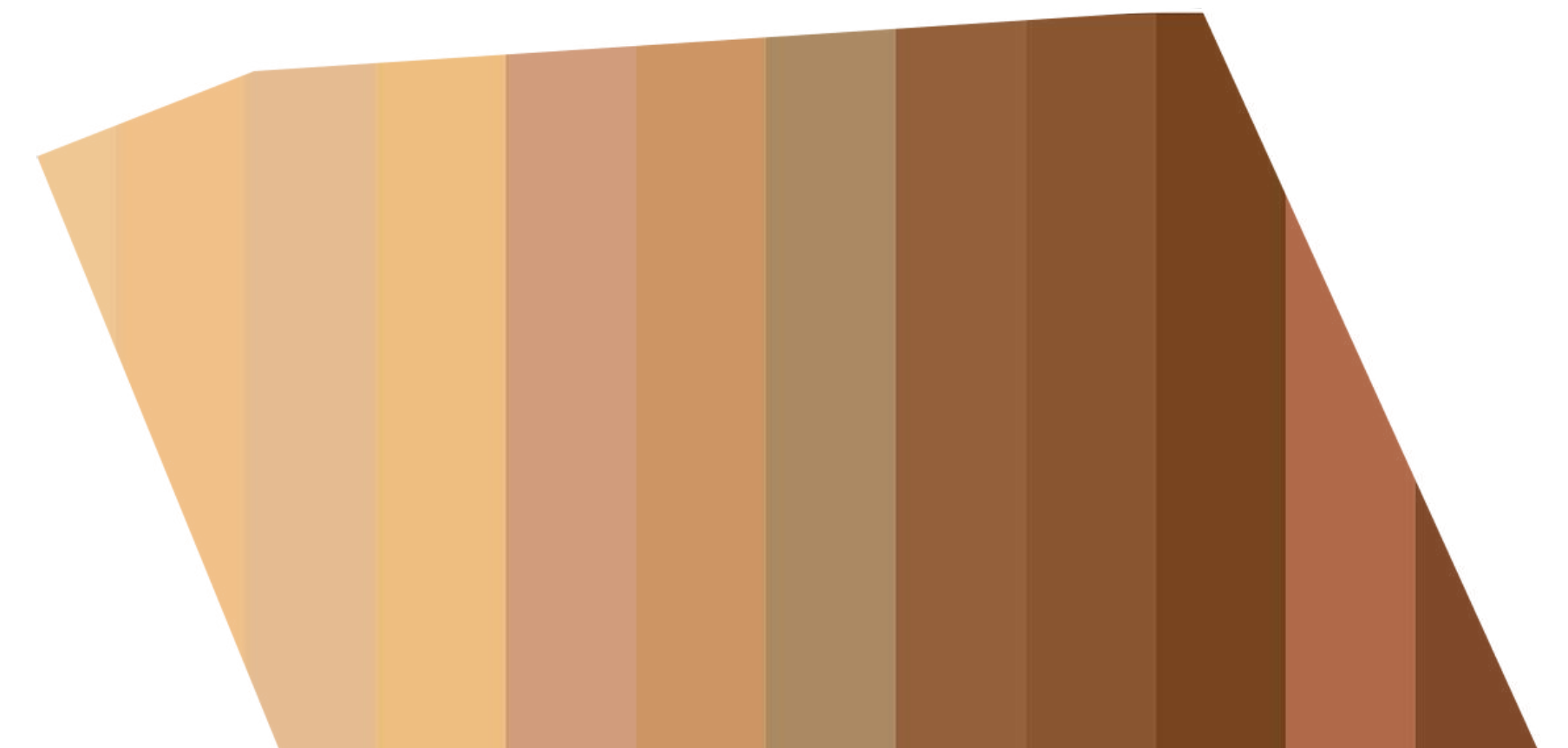
Mary Pryor is on a mission to solve cannabis' inclusivity issue. She co-founded Cannacclusive, a collective that drives fair marketing representation and advocates for minority-owned cannabis companies.

ACCESSIBLE PLAYGROUNDS LIFESTYLE

Singapore's National Council of Social Service is making play more inclusive. Over thirteen playgrounds have been built with equipment that can be enjoyed by children with and without special needs—such as wheelchair accessible merry-go-rounds.

SKIN INCLUSIVITY VISUAL

Inclusivity is driving innovation in product design. Band-Aid now produces bandages in various black and brown tones, and Animal Crossing offers 19 different skin types for your avatar—including acne, psoriasis, vitiligo, scars, stretch marks, and prosthetics.





REBIRTH

FEMPOWERMENT

A man's world is being reimagined for women. Femtech startups are squashing male bias in the medical field, governments are establishing mandatory boardroom quotas for women, and a sex revolution is emboldening females to find power in pleasure. When it comes to the fight for equality, no gender gap can be left unclosed.

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MENSTRUATION TV MEDIA

"Seiri Camp" is Japan's first television series on menstruation. The show is bringing period talk out of the shadows and educating viewers on how to use feminine hygiene products.

DIPSEA BRAND

Dispea is empowering listeners to get in the mood with sexy, feminist audio stories. The app was built based on the notion that sex wellness starts with your mental state. Welcome to the erotica revolution—where sex care is self-care.

BIGUP.AI LANGUAGE

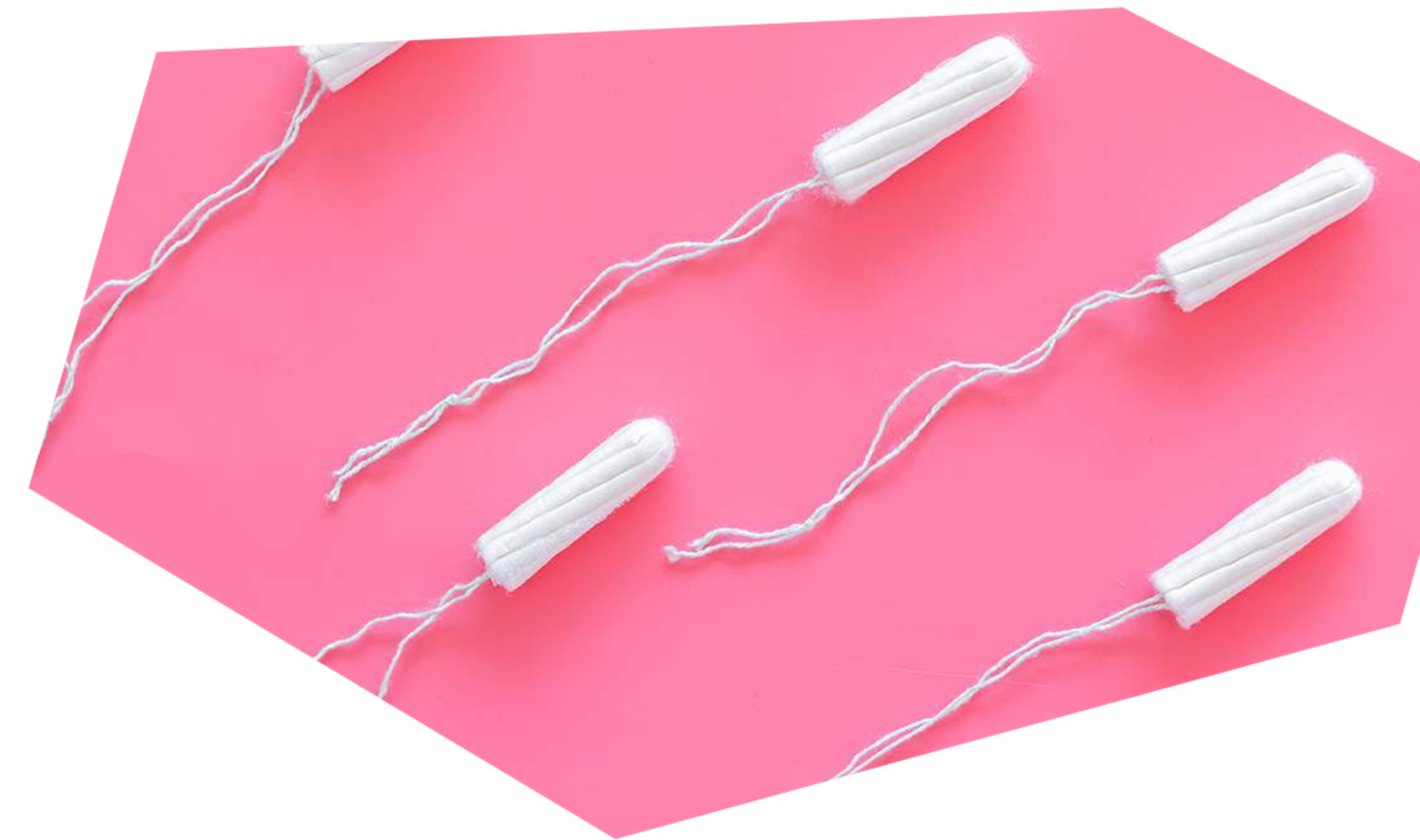
Women are 4x more likely to downplay their professional success. That's why creative agency AnalogFolk created BigUp.AI. The online tool turns modest, passive language into confident, assertive statements. For example, "I am a good problem solver" will be 'bigged up' to "My intelligence elevates every project I work on."

TABAN LO LIYONG PEOPLE

The legendary South Sudanese poet's latest book *After Troy* is reimagining Greek mythology through the eyes of African women. His artistic efforts are proving that female empowerment isn't just a woman's job.

BREAST MILK DELIVERY LIFESTYLE

Bosch's Project Milky Way is bringing working moms closer to their babies through a unique breast milk delivery service. Nursing mothers returning to work can use the app to get their breast milk delivered from their workplace to their caregiver safely and efficiently.



FEMALE-FRIENDLY CITIES VISUAL

Cities built by men are getting a female-friendly redesign. Led by mayor Ada Colau's feminist agenda, Barcelona is implementing urban planning initiatives that better suit the needs of women—from creating safer spaces to a new bus network.



REBIRTH

PLAY IT FORWARD

Game play is getting purposeful. A society done sitting on the sidelines is embracing play as a strategy for real-world problem solving. Crowdsourced COVID-19 research is turning citizen science into a popular pastime. In-game therapy sessions and prescription video games are merging mental health with pop culture. And online simulations are exposing how fake news spreads. The change-maker generation is getting its head in the game.

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WILDVERSE MEDIA

An AR video game that teaches wildlife conservation by having players track and protect apes. Once a mission is complete, players are connected with an actual conservationist who helped develop the game. The Kenyan game company's founder, Gautam Shah, is hoping "to turn the 2 billion people playing games today into wildlife lovers and supporters of conservation efforts."

INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE OF THE RED CROSS BRAND

Players act as aid workers in Liferun—an online game created by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and Fortnite. By tasking players with rescuing civilians, rebuilding schools, and removing mines, the ICRC is aiming to start a conversation about the reality of violence and conflict in our world.

"PRESCRIPTION GAMING" LANGUAGE

Video games are now being prescribed for mental health disorders. EndeavorRX is first game to be approved by the FDA as a treatment for kids with ADHD. One-third of kids "no longer had a measurable attention deficit on at least one measure of objective attention" after playing for 25 minutes a day, five days a week, for four weeks.



CITIZEN SCIENTISTS PEOPLE

A growing cohort of citizen scientists are making meaningful medical contributions by simply playing a game. Foldit is one of several online games enlisting the help of citizen scientists to support research for anti-corona drugs.

CROWDSOURCED URBAN PLANNING LIFESTYLE

A/B Streets is a traffic-simulator game that lets players redesign Seattle's streets in order to improve their commute—whether that be by car, public transit, bike, or foot. The ultimate goal is to use insights from the game to test out real world policies.

LOVE YOUR VULVA VISUAL

Love Your Vulva is an approachable web app using elements of play to break down feminine hygiene taboos. Through interactive games and quizzes—including a "build your own vulva" feature—users can learn about topics ranging from body confidence to pleasure to female genital mutilation.



REBIRTH

CLIMATE CREDIT

The pressure to gain climate cred is on. With wallets as their weapon, individuals and businesses are taking action. Sustainability is the springboard for innovation and investment in the boardroom. And across the globe, the growth of green banks, ESG, carbon capture companies, and bio-inspired technologies are all evidence of the burgeoning business of climate action. Capitalism is getting a new spin. Welcome to the climate change economy.

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BLOOMBERG GREEN MEDIA

Bloomberg's subdivision focusing on climate change, green innovation, renewable energy, and sustainable business.

CERVEJARIA COLORADO BRAND

Brazilian brewery and maker of Colorado Amazon—a wheat beer that changes price according to the deforestation rates in the Amazon. The higher the deforestation rate, the more expensive the beer costs.

"GREENHUSHING" LANGUAGE

When companies deliberately underreport their sustainability efforts in order to avoid being called out for greenwashing. The term was coined by the consulting firm Treehugger after noticing that companies they met with were timid about their environmental initiatives—born out of a fear that they weren't doing enough.

MAURO COZZI, EDUARDO GOMEZ, AND BEN PEDDIE PEOPLE

Founders of Emitwise, an accounting software that help businesses monitor and manage their carbon footprint in real-time. The London-based startup's ultimate goal is to make it possible for any company to quickly address its contributions to climate change without having to work with pricy consultants.

GREEN BANKING LIFESTYLE

The practice of putting money into financial institutions that support sustainable initiatives and renewable energy projects. Examples of green banks include The Connecticut Green Bank (U.S.) Triodos Bank (Europe), and the Clean Energy Finance Corporation (Australia). Green finance solutions are also being developed in India, Chile, and Mexico, with the help of the NRDC.



CARBON THUMBPRINT VISUAL

Australian telco Belong created an app that helps users visualize the carbon footprint of their data usage. It is estimated that mobile data networks in Australia contribute upward of 500,000 tons of CO2 every year.



REBIRTH

TRAVEL RIGHT

The pandemic pause forced a mass reappraisal of how we get from A to B. Mobility considerations are moving beyond comfort and convenience as we collectively question the effect transportation has on our health, our planet, and societal well-being. From EV incentives to hyperlocal travel—policy makers, passengers, and brands are betting on mobility to make the world right again.

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CULTURE TOKEN MEDIA

A new app from the City of Vienna rewards those who use public transit, bike, or walk with “culture tokens” that can be exchanged for free tickets at museums, concerts, and cultural experiences. The initiative aims to lower CO2 emissions by encouraging car-free travel.

AIRBNB BRAND

The vacation rental marketplace has pivoted to promote staycations during the pandemic—urging people to “Go Near.” Their partnership with the Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada highlighted indigenous travel experiences across the country.

“REGENERATIVE TRAVEL” LANGUAGE

While sustainable tourism aims to counterbalance the social and environmental impacts associated with travel, regenerative travel takes the goal one step further—pushing us to leave a place better than we found it.

PAUL ISAAC MUSASIZI PEOPLE

CEO of Kiira Motors, the Uganda-owned company making Africa’s first electric bus. Production of the Kayoola Solar Bus is set to begin in summer 2021—marking a major step forward in tackling the continent’s urgent air pollution problem.

15-MINUTE CITY LIFESTYLE

An urban planning concept where residents have all their basic needs met within a 15-minute bike ride or walk from their home. Paris’ mayor Anne Hidalgo championed the idea in her 2020 reelection campaign, calling for a return to a more local and somewhat slower way of life.

FLYING TAXIS VISUAL

Passenger drones are coming to a city near you. Spain’s air navigation authority Enaire announced plans to have airborne taxis operating in Barcelona by 2022. Uber is also planning to launch drone transport networks in Dallas, Los Angeles, and Melbourne by 2023.





REBIRTH

FLUID SPACES

A waste-not world is giving physical spaces a second life. COVID-19 has emptied offices and storefronts, accelerating the transformation of urban environments. Think co-living communities that combine work, school, and family life; sharing services that make the most of vacant spaces; and hotels that double as virtual schooling hubs. As we rethink the role of physical space, businesses will remix their real estate for round-the-clock purpose and profit.

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AKIPPA MEDIA

Japanese app that lets you reserve an empty parking lot in 15-minute increments. People who own vacant lots can post them for rent on Akippa, making the most of unused space.

UNIQLO BRAND

The clothing company believes that retail spaces shouldn't just be for shopping. Its recent Yokohama Bayside location demonstrates this idea, with the store's roof doubling as a park.

"MEANWHILE SPACES" LANGUAGE

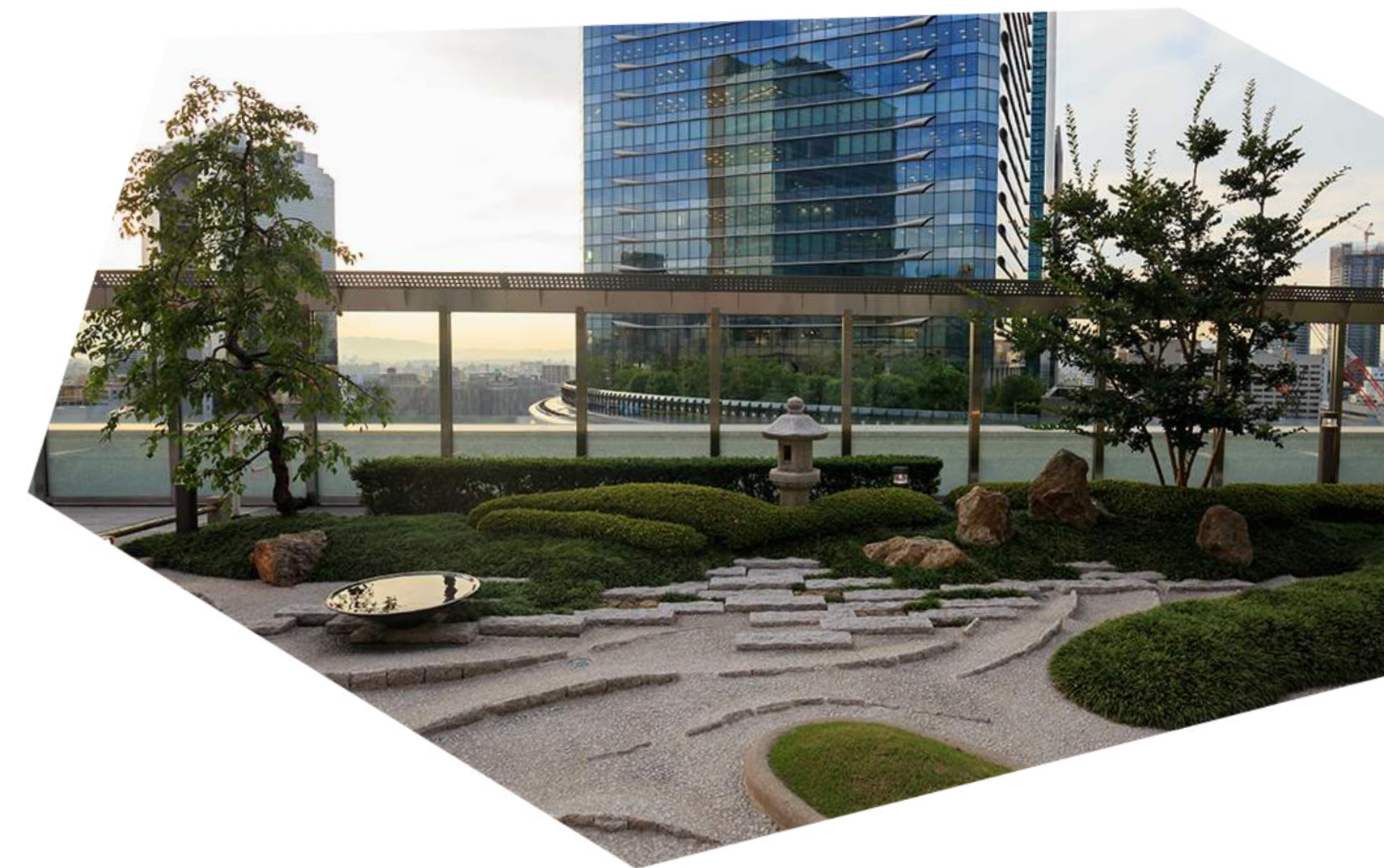
Vacant shops temporarily rented by community groups, small businesses, or individuals. The UK-based Meanwhile Foundation—which aims to "create socioeconomic value from vacant property"—notes that these spaces provide outlets for artist, startups, and nonprofits to thrive.

THIERRY TEYSSIER PEOPLE

Founder of 700,000 Heures—the world's first wandering hotel that moves locations every 6 months. Thus far, the unique travel experience has made its way to Italy, Cambodia, Brazil, Paris, and Japan.

"CO" LIFESTYLE

Co-living and co-working spaces are delivering on our desire for a stronger sense of community. Modern villages like TREHAUS in Singapore are reimagining how families can work, live, and learn together under one roof.



THE "UN-CAR" VISUAL

Autonomous driving technology will push the boundaries of what a car can do. Imaginative companies are giving our four-wheeled friends new roles as sleep pods, mobile movie theaters, and mini wellness centers.



REBIRTH

REWILD RESILIENCE

It's time to welcome back the wild. Science is waking us up to the fact that restoring biodiversity is essential to our survival, and we all have a role to play. Governments are expanding green spaces. Individuals are keeping backyard beehives and learning to forage for food. And global players are working to reintroduce lost species. We're letting nature reclaim its place in our world.

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SEEDBALLS GAME MEDIA

A video game created by Kenyan tech startup Usiku Games where players reforest land by dropping seeds. Seedballs is a part of a new wave of indie games educating users about climate change.

VOLVO BRAND

The car company's UK branch is partnering with the Durrell Wildlife Conservation Trust, an international charity working to save species from extinction. Together they'll recover threatened wildlife, revive ecosystems, and reconnect people to the natural world.

"URBAN FORESTS" LANGUAGE

Miniature forests being built on patches of land in urban areas to create green space, absorb CO2, and increase biodiversity. Many are created using the Miyawaki method—an approach by Japanese botanist Akira Miyawaki that prioritizes the natural development of forests using native species.



SIR DAVID ATTENBOROUGH PEOPLE

Renowned British broadcaster and environmentalist. In his latest work, Netflix documentary David Attenborough: A Life on Our Planet, he recounts human's impact on Earth and offers a vision for the future where we learn to live with nature.

FORAGING LIFESTYLE

The practice of identifying and collecting edible foods growing wild in urbanscapes and suburbs, which has seen an uptick in interest since the pandemic. Nordic chef René Redzepi launched an initiative called Vild Mad (Danish for "Wild Foods"), which teaches foraging through an online site, organized trips, and an app.

GREEN FACADE VISUAL

The architectural decision to cover buildings with plants, while not new, is becoming increasingly common across Asia and Europe. The Kö-Bogen II Düsseldorf building by Ingenhoven Architects is Europe's largest green facade with 30,000 hornbeam hedges. The eco-conscious design provides natural cooling and creates cleaner air.



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330
SPOTTERS

70
OFFICES

45
COUNTRIES

8
REGIONS





Backslash is a cultural intelligence unit powered by a global network of over 300 Culture Spotters from 70 offices across the TBWA collective. Together, we closely observe and analyze worldwide developments so that TBWA—and our clients—can better understand and anticipate cultural change.

Through a dynamic hybrid of strategy, data, and journalism, Backslash turns today's stories into tomorrow's opportunities.

Discover more at backslash.com.

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