



2022

**AKCELO ON  
TREND 2022**

akcelo.



# 2022 TRENDS: A NEW WORLD OF CHANGE



The rapid change and uncertainty of 2021 has accelerated the evolution of a digitised world – all while shifting core human behaviours.

2022 also marks the latest trends report from Akcelo, where we've spent time scouring the internet, digesting research reports, decoding industry predictions and harnessing headlines from our own experience to aggregate everything we think you need to know.

For this year's trends, we have tapped Akcelo's collective experience and knowledge to look ahead at where our client partners should be. We have distilled down a trends report, created for anyone in the digital, data, media & marketing industries. So go on, grab that coffee, kick back and enjoy Akcelo's top 22 trends for 2022.



# TRENDS TO WATCH



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**COMMERCE REWIRED**

# **COMMERCE REWIRED**

**01 /**



# ECOMM GETS SERIOUS ON SOCIAL



# IN 2022, WE WILL START TO SEE THE TRUE POTENTIAL OF SOCIAL COMMERCE.

Fuelled by the stay-at-home orders of the coronavirus lockdowns, ecommerce has seen an increase in uptake that would otherwise have taken 5 years. Social shopping, now a US\$89.4B market globally, is driving retail into a more digital future – and there's no going back.

By 2027, it will reach US\$600B.

Livestreams will be a hotly contested retail space, with both Instagram and TikTok integrating ecomm into their live formats. China is leading the trend, with their top streamer, Viya, converting her 37M monthly viewers into billions of dollars. In fact, she can make as much as US\$385 million in a single day.

With the competition open in the next tab and constant real-time price comparisons, brands will need new means of attracting and keeping customers. Loyalty and rewards will play a bigger role. UX is more important than ever and, as the playing field is progressively limited to the online space, a brand's ability to resonate with customers on an emotional level will be paramount.



# GAMING ESCAPISM

ESCAPISM  
GAMING  
02

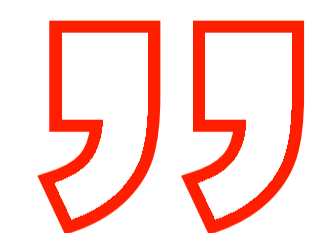




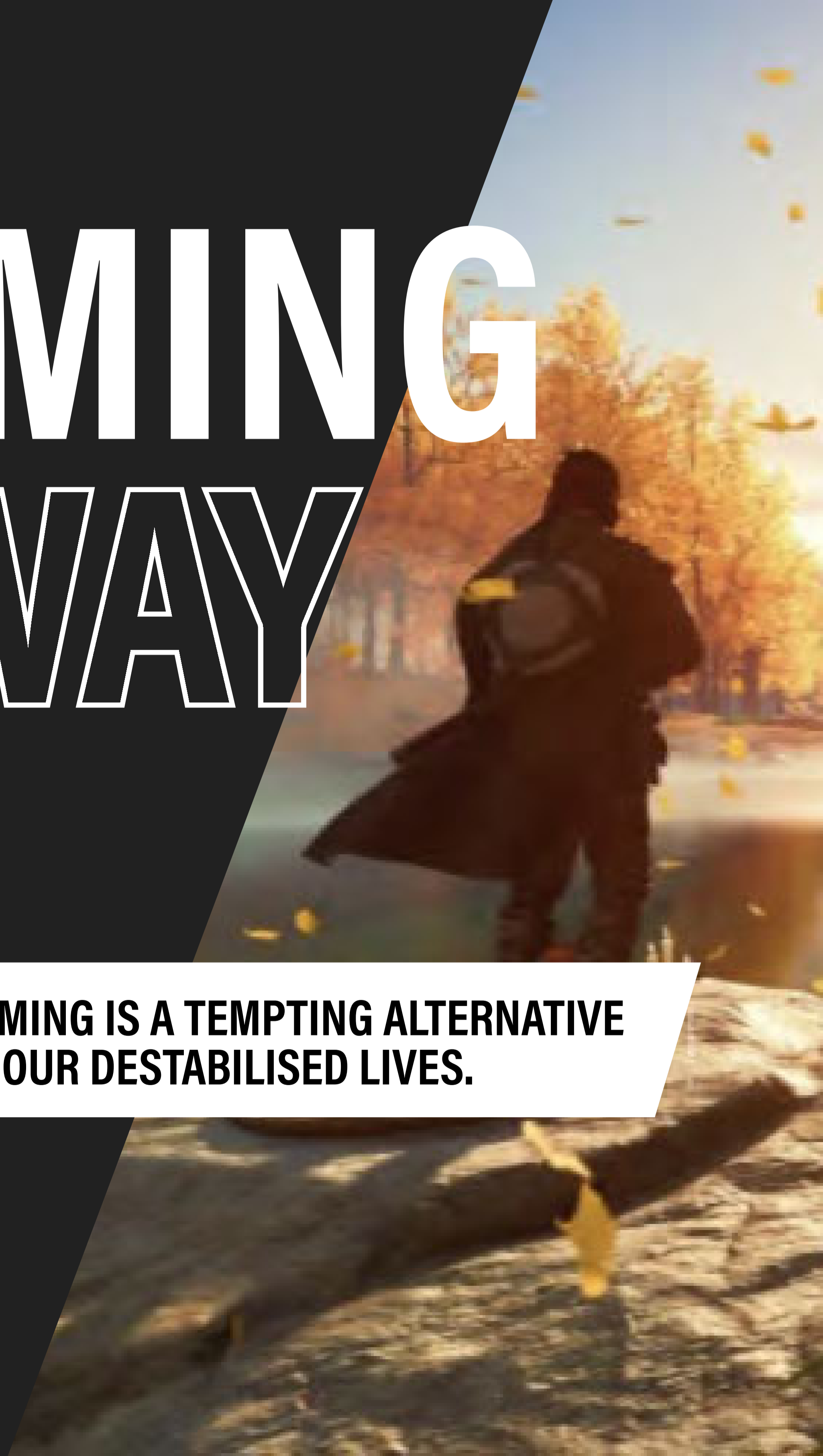
GAMING ESCAPISM

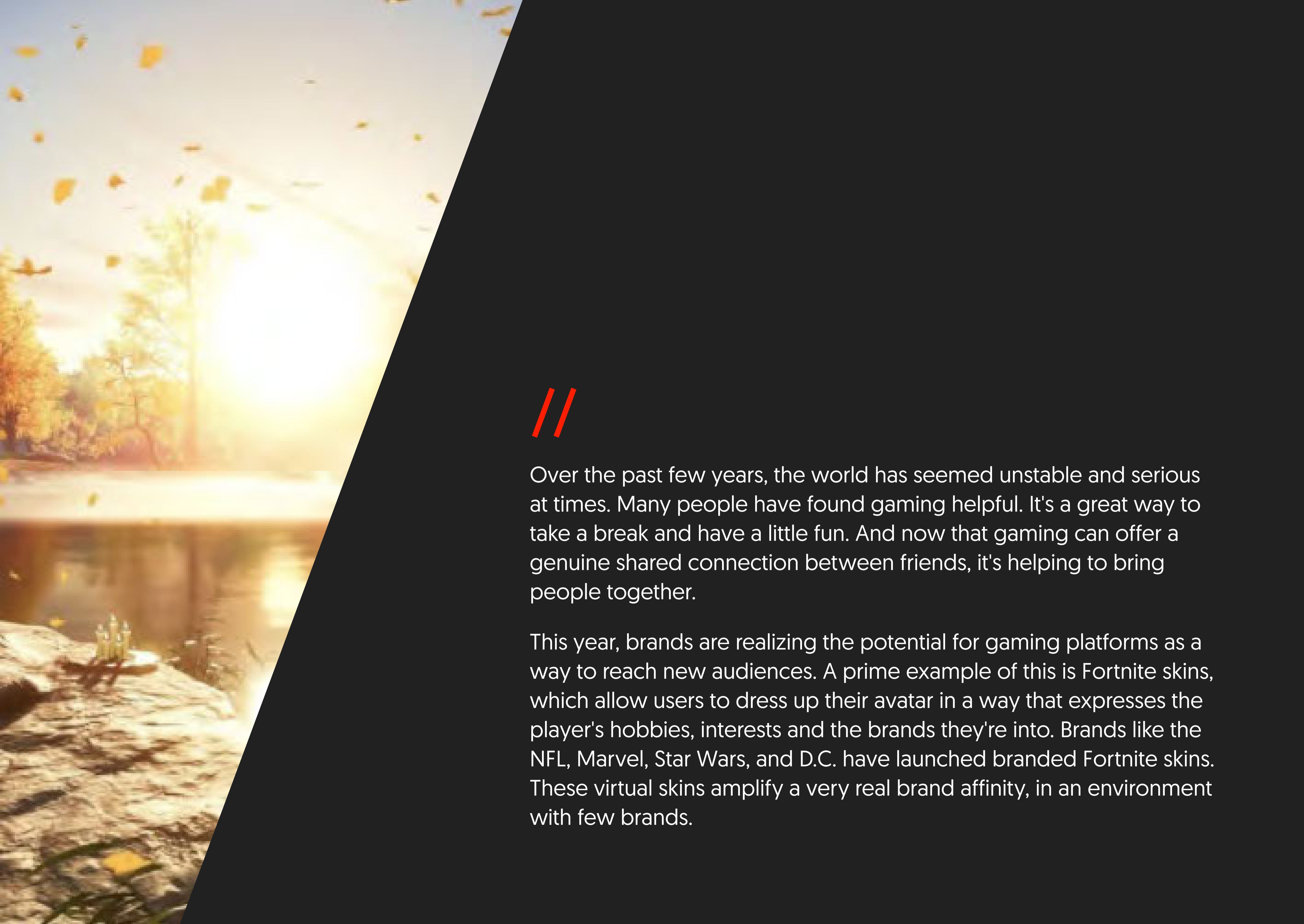
# USING GAMING TO GET AWAY

One of the few industries that soared through the coronavirus lockdowns was gaming, which is set to reach a value of \$198B over the next 3 years. And that's not including VR and AR, which are on the verge of breaking through to the mainstream.



**GAMING IS A TEMPTING ALTERNATIVE TO OUR DESTABILISED LIVES.**





Over the past few years, the world has seemed unstable and serious at times. Many people have found gaming helpful. It's a great way to take a break and have a little fun. And now that gaming can offer a genuine shared connection between friends, it's helping to bring people together.

This year, brands are realizing the potential for gaming platforms as a way to reach new audiences. A prime example of this is Fortnite skins, which allow users to dress up their avatar in a way that expresses the player's hobbies, interests and the brands they're into. Brands like the NFL, Marvel, Star Wars, and D.C. have launched branded Fortnite skins. These virtual skins amplify a very real brand affinity, in an environment with few brands.

# THE TIKTOK ECONOMY

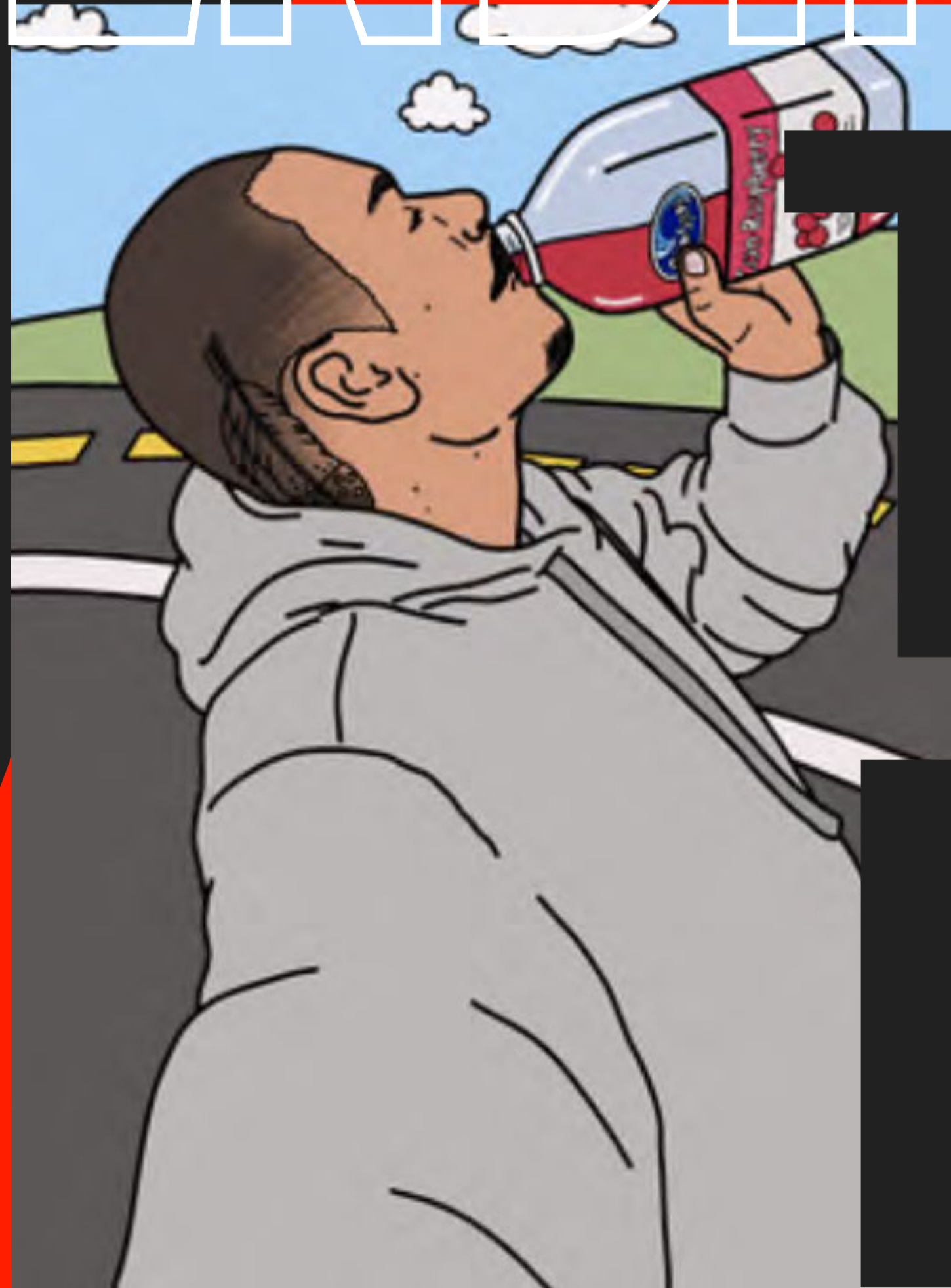
# THE TIKTOK ECONOMY

03 /





SPENDING  
IS



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# TIKTOK IS ON TRACK TO HIT **1.2 BILLION** ACTIVE USERS IN 2022.



People are now spending more time on TikTok than they are on Facebook, while the average American is also now spending more time on their mobile device than they are watching TV.

Amid the COVID-19 lockdowns and mitigation efforts, people were seeking alternate forms of entertainment, and many looked to their mobile devices to stay connected and informed – and as a means of filling the extra time they found themselves with.

Artists are making the most of opportunities on TikTok, with some finding overnight success after their songs and challenges go viral. And the power of the platform was clear when @emilyzugay from TikTok caught the attention of global brands like Amazon, Microsoft and McDonald's. Brands that tap into this valuable virality will see success in 2022.



# SYNTHETIC SENSES

SYNTHETIC  
04  
SENSES



SYNTHETIC SENSES

A TASTE

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OF THINGS  
TO COME



# AI IS DEVELOPING A TASTE FOR REAL FOODS.



LITERALLY.

The way we taste and experience food is being determined by a group of highly specialised human beings known as the sensory panel. But AI could soon be putting them out of a job.

As well as predicting the next must-eat items, AI is used to taste test new food products. An 'electronic tongue' made of sensors can identify molecular components of food with more consistency and accuracy than its human counterparts.

2021 has also seen companies use artificial olfactory sensors to create new fusions of flavours based on matching aroma profiles. Strawberries with parmesan, anyone? And Microsoft's simulated taste bud algorithm is developing new flavours of whiskey.





# BRAND EXPERIENCE AT A DISTANCE

# BRAND EXPERIENCE

AT A DISTANCE

05 /



BRAND EXPERIENCE AT A DISTANCE

# CREATING CONNECTIONS IN A DISCONNECTED WORLD



# LESSONS LEARNED DURING LOCKDOWNS WILL SET BRANDS UP FOR THE 'NEW NORMAL'.

The coronavirus lockdowns have led to a complete overhaul of how brands create powerful connections with their customers.

As our worlds are routinely reduced to a 5km radius, it's more difficult than ever for brands to stay relevant. Experiences have to be sought out by the consumer, and their value has to be inherent. With the situation changing every second, brands have to be agile and adaptable.

Virtual experiences have given brands a means of activating anywhere. When restaurants and bars were closed to the public, Australians were craving a way to replicate the sense of community that they create.

Enter Furphy Fridays, a virtual pub that facilitated a reconnection between friends, a space where they could once again share stories while creating a new, meaningful connection with the brand.

Brands that tackle this challenge now will be well placed in the future, as branded virtual experiences will continue to add value to people's lives.



# UNEXPECTED EDUTAINMENT

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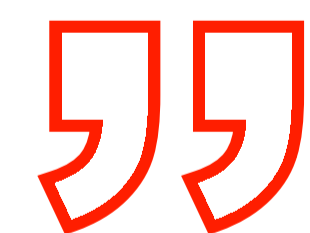
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UNEXPECTED EDUTAINMENT

# LEAN-IN LEARNING



**MICROLEARNING IS A BIG  
DEAL FOR EDUCATION.**

2022 is seeing an increase in interest for education content – directed at both children and adults – that engages in a more meaningful way.





With over 1.5 billion schoolchildren already forced to stay home because of the coronavirus, the world is realising what good teachers have always known: if you want students to be engaged, you have to find ways to entertain.

Tech brands have stepped up, with Facebook, Google, Apple, IBM and more creating new 'microlearning' formats with bite-sized lessons designed to fit around our busy lives.

# PURPOSE BEYOND PROFIT

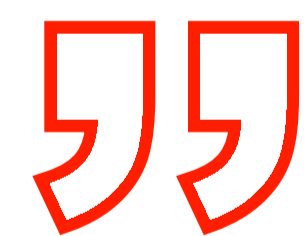
**PURPOSE** BEYOND  
**PROFIT**

**07**



# POINT OF VIEW

Purchasing decisions aren't just based on functionality anymore. These days, people want to buy into brands that align with their values. There's an optimism that ethical consumption can affect change.



**DOING BUSINESS IS NO LONGER  
ALL ABOUT THE BOTTOM LINE.**







This desire to do good has only been accelerated by the pandemic. Shoppers have watched closely to see how brands would respond to the changing state of the world. They want to know how businesses are positively contributing throughout the crisis. They want brands to lead with purpose, and give them a part to play in the journey to better.

Instead of asking how to sell more, brands need to be asking how they can help more, because this new kind of capitalism is here to stay.

# METAVVERSE

THE METAVVERSE  
08



METaverse

CREATIVE



UTOPIAS



# BY NOW, EVERYONE'S HEARD OF "THE METAVERSE"

By now, everyone's heard of the Metaverse – but not too many people are clear on what it is, or what it means for the internet.

Most of the media commentary about the Metaverse suggests that it's about moving internet experiences from the mobile to VR headsets.

Many people expect that the Metaverse will manifest as something similar to Second Life in the early 2000s, albeit in higher definition, in 3D VR, and with zero latency.

But the truth is much more interesting. The Metaverse will be very different to anything we've seen before.

There have been a lot of important changes to the tech landscape since the last time something like this was attempted. We now have utility tokens, NFTs, and blockchain. All of which open up staggering new possibilities for immersive worlds.

The Metaverse won't just be a place to connect and play. The Metaverse will also be a creative place where people build, own, trade and monetise their work.

Control over the Metaverse is put into the hands of players and creators, with built-in staking and voting mechanisms. Users can buy "land"; create, own, and trade objects – plus create and monetize virtual entertainment products. What you create in the Metaverse can be bought, owned and sold at will.

If you want to see what the Metaverse looks like now, The Sandbox is a good place to start. The Sandbox will be expanding in stages over the course of 2022, and has been gaining a lot of traction, with 30,000 creators, 55+ studios, and 160 brands already active on the platform, including major brands like Adidas.



# THE NFT TAKEOVER

# THE NFT TAKEOVER

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# THE RISE OF CRYPTO COLLECTIBLES



# MEMES AND ART STAND SIDE-BY-SIDE IN NFT SALES.



As cryptocurrencies continue to claim their place in our world, 2022 has introduced us to their blockchain-based cousin, the non-fungible token or NFT.

Put simply, NFTs are digital collectors' items. They're made using the same technology as cryptocurrencies, which establishes the authenticity of an item by attaching a token that can't be reproduced (and is therefore 'non-fungible').

NFTs have been revolutionary for digital artists, giving them a way to distinguish their original work from copies, and therefore letting them monetise art like never before. Esteemed auction house Christie's sold an NFT by artist Beeple for US\$69m.

It's not just the hardcore tech crowd capitalising on the new tech. Mainstream brands are getting involved, with the likes of Budweiser, Taco Bell, Crockpot, Campbell's, Twitter, and Baby Shark producing NFTs.





# DRONE DELIVERY

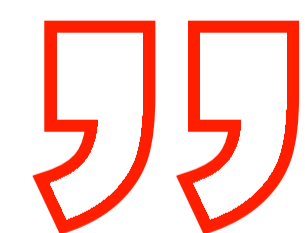
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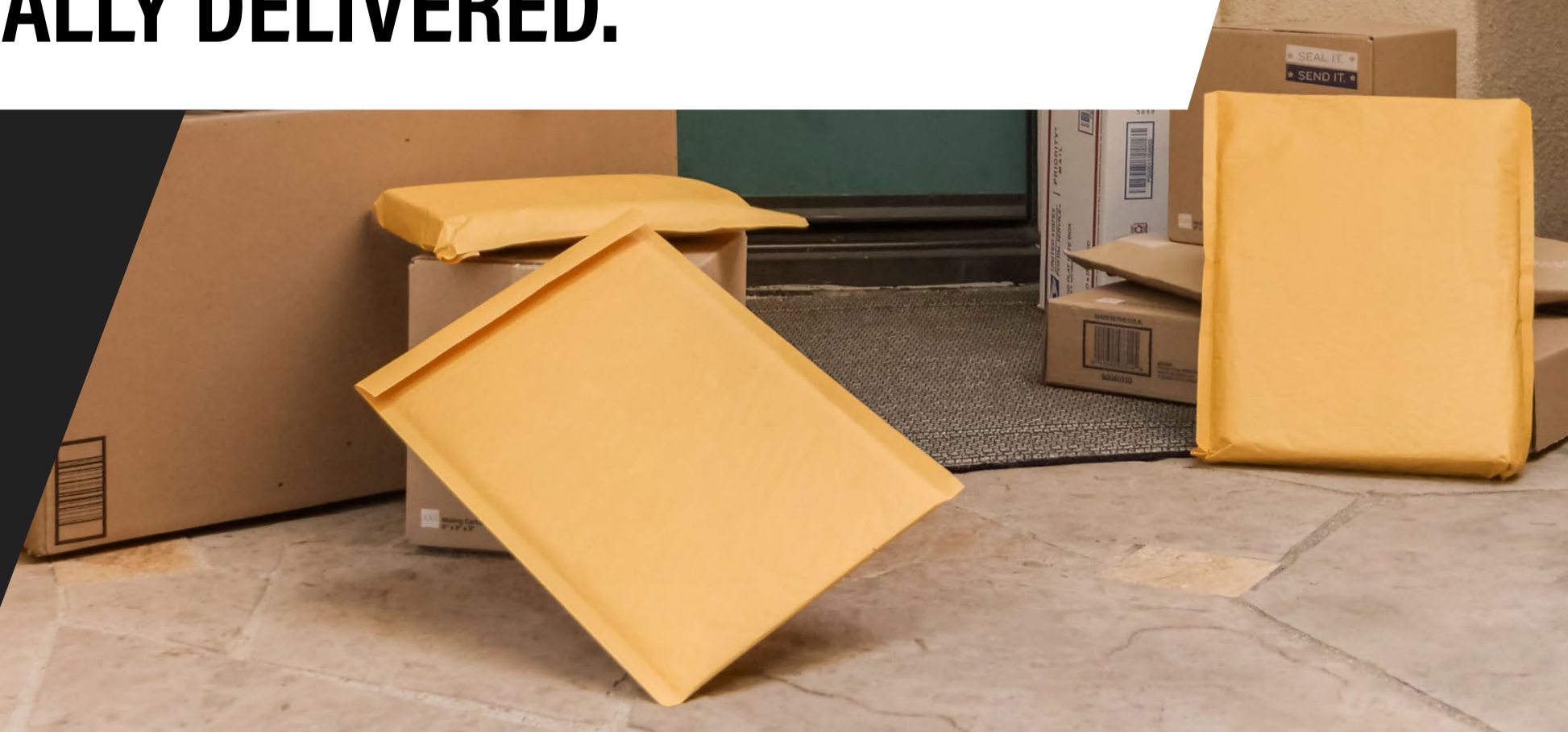
DRONE DELIVERY

# SHOP UNTIL THEY DROP

The delivery drone industry saw huge progress over the last few years. While several ambitious drone delivery services made their first flights, other companies received regulatory approvals from the concerning bodies regarding the usage of delivery drones.



**2021 IS THE YEAR DRONE DELIVERY  
ACTUALLY DELIVERED.**





The enormous opportunities in the industry have attracted the attention of some globally renowned companies, like Google LLC, Amazon.com Inc., and Deutsche Post DHL Group – which are currently investing in the market.

The necessity for faster delivery of goods and COVID-19 added to the increase in demand for drone logistics. This, in turn, has propelled the market for delivery drones globally.

# LAB-GROWN GOURMET

# LAB-GROWN GOURMET

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LAB GROWN GOURMET

AKCELO TRENDS • 2022

SCIENCE ON

A



PLATE



## WHICH CAME FIRST, THE LAB-GROWN CHICKEN OR THE PLANT-BASED EGG?



After its initial news coverage, the lab-grown Impossible Burger has spent years quietly proving its place on menus around the world. More companies have followed in its footsteps,

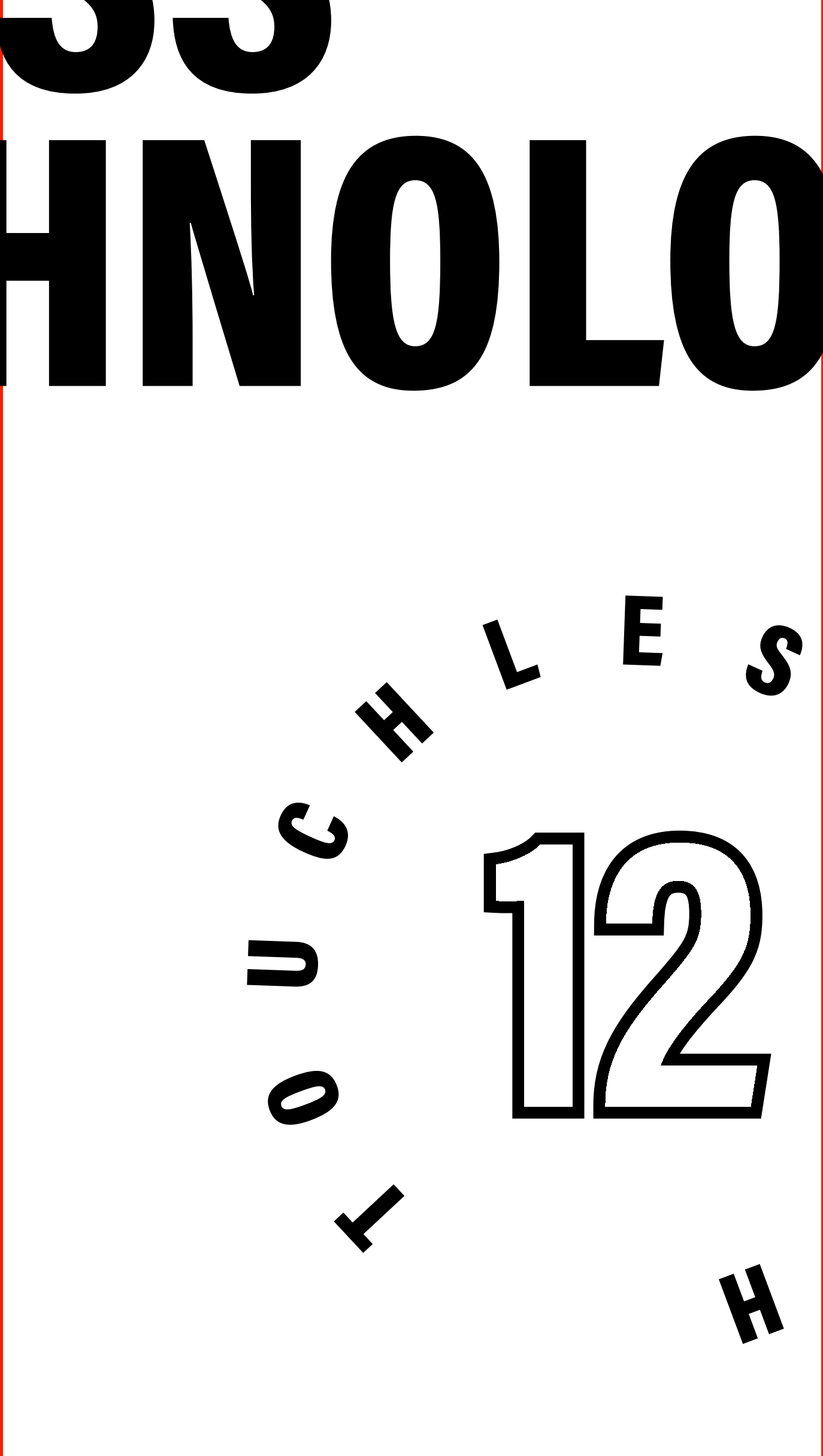
making synthetic foods with a reduced environmental impact.

In Tel Aviv, world-first restaurant The Chicken lets diners enjoy synthetic poultry from tables that overlook the lab where the production process is taking place, while San Francisco company Eat Just, producer of the plant-based JUST Eggs, has made the equivalent of 100 million eggs.

The spirits, wine and coffee industries are playing their part too, with tech breakthroughs allowing for environmentally costly grains, grapes and beans to be replaced with reverse-engineered molecules that use less water, time and energy.



# TOUCHLESS TECHNOLOGY



TOUCHLESS  
TECH



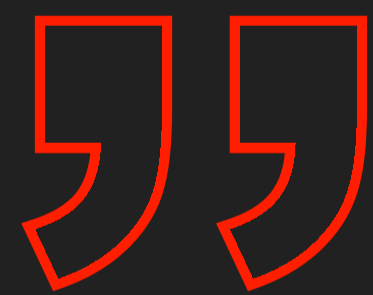
TOUCHLESS TECHNOLOGY

# MAKING PUBLIC SPACES MORE

//  
HANDS-OFF



# TECHNOLOGY NEEDS TO ENGAGE US



WITHOUT  
ENDANGERING US

Touchpad and touchscreen kiosks have become pervasive in public spaces. From bank ATMs to ticketing machines, self-serve checkouts to airport check-ins. But if 2021 has taught us anything, it's that pathogens lurk on every surface. So when it comes to hygiene, it's best to be hands-off.

The pandemic has seen proximity interactions through sensor-activated tech really take off. Amazon is rolling out a retail system that allows shoppers to pay simply by waving their hand over a scanner. And in China, Alibaba is opening unmanned supermarkets in hospitals.

Voice-activated tech is also becoming more ubiquitous as brands work out how to integrate voice assistants into their offering.





# INNOVATION MINDSET

# INNOVATION MINDSET

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INNOVATION MINDSET

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# TOOLS INSTEAD OF SOLUTIONS



# CUSTOMERS HAVE BECOME CO-CREATORS.



Being stuck at home has led to a huge surge in creativity. Alongside recipes for sourdough, people have been searching ‘DIY’, ‘step-by-step’ and ‘for beginners’ in droves. And brands are meeting them there.

Restaurants forced to close their doors have been delivering high quality ingredients to their diners’ doors instead, teaching them how to cook their favourite meals via intimate online classes. And gyms that continued to provide motivation to members stuck at home managed to stay afloat, despite the floor being empty.

The pandemic saw businesses pivot from selling solutions to providing tools. In doing so, customers have become co-creators. And that’s where they’ll stay.



# MICRO-WEARABLES

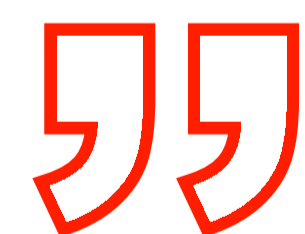
MICRO-WEARABLES  
14



# SKIN ELECTRONICS

There's a new class of devices called "micro-wearables": wearables designed to be worn on the skin. These devices make use of new types of chips, batteries, and sensors made possible by electro-active polymers, stretchable conductors, polyvoltaic systems, and stretchable circuits.

This is a promising start for what many would describe as an emerging trend. Micro-wearables have opened up new frontiers in delivering diabetes care, cardiac rehabilitation, and sleep therapy. They've even helped keep pets and children safe, by tracking their whereabouts.



**MICRO-WEARABLES HAVE POTENTIAL TO  
POWER BETTER BRAND EXPERIENCES**

**VIRTUAL EVENTS**

# **VIRTUAL EVENTS**

**15**



VIRTUAL EVENTS

# THE SHOW MUST



# GO ON



# ONLINE CONFERENCES ARE SETTING THE STANDARD FOR COLLABORATION, CONTENT AND COMMUNICATION.



The need to get people together without physically getting them together has seen the virtual event space, and the technology that powers it, boom. In fact, the market is expected

to grow at a rate of 23.2% from 2020 to 2027, with sectors like sports and education already experiencing up to 1000% growth.

It's no surprise that the people who attend these events want to be engaged throughout. Highly interactive digital experiences such as chatting with speakers and participants, downloading presentations, polling and community discussion all rank highly amongst attendees.

But they also require additional bandwidth. A huge amount of additional bandwidth. Because it's been shown that video quality can make or break an event.





# DIRECT TO CONSUMER

DIRECT TO  
16  
CONSUMER



DIRECT TO CONSUMER

CREATOR



MEET  
CONSUMER



# CUTTING OUT THE MIDDLE MAN



PUTS BRANDS IN  
CONTROL OF  
CUSTOMER  
EXPERIENCE, FROM  
END TO END.

While bricks and mortar stores were forced to shut their doors, online sales picked up at a rate of notts. In fact, COVID saw the inevitable evolution of the digital shopping ecosystem brought forward by several years.

Both online and offline merchants have had to adapt in order to keep up. Brands that quickly converted in-person experiences to online equivalents were able to stand out and stay strong.

But just being present online isn't enough. The direct-to-consumer model means that brands have to think from end-to-end. Considering every part of the customer experience unearths opportunities to surprise and delight, reinforcing brand affinity at every moment.



**WEB 3**

**WEB 3**

**17**



# A LIVING APPLICATION



# THE INTERNET WILL BE A LIVING APPLICATION.



The internet is many things to many people. To a web developer, the internet is a set of languages and other conventions – a collection of codes that are used by developers all over the world to bring ideas to life.

Ever since early coders used this stack to print “hello world”, developers have been relentlessly pushing the boundaries of what can be achieved with it.

And while the internet as we know it today is useful in many ways, the set of languages it’s built on predates things like 5G, ubiquitous fast low-latency internet, connected devices, the blockchain, 3D graphics, VR, artificial intelligence, and the idea of the Metaverse.

Now, we are reaching a new epoch for the Internet: Web 3. The experiences people will have through Web 3 will be built on a new and better stack of technologies. The internet will be a living application. Browsing, entertainment, gaming, communication, and commerce will converge like never before.

For brands, this is a groundbreaking opportunity. It’s the perfect way for brands to push the boundaries and reimagine their relationships with their audiences – and the experiences they aim to deliver.





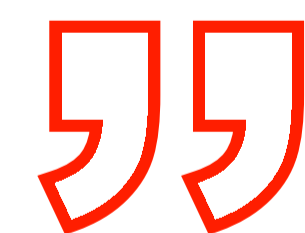
# SOCIAL SHOPPING

S O C I A L S  
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S H O P P I N G

SOCIAL SHOPPING

# SWIPE N' SHOP

Visual shopping is on the rise. And thanks to recent advancements in machine learning, image recognition technology is more accurate than ever before. If you're not already on board with visual search technology, now's the time.



**I see it. I like it. I want it. I got it.**







Optimising for visual search means brands can be discovered outside traditional search fields, which is exactly where younger internet users are looking. 62% of Millennials and Gen Z say they prefer visual search to other search types. Especially when it comes to shopping and travel.

Moving forward, consumers won't just prefer visual search. They'll be expecting content to double as an ecommerce experience.

# PHOTO DUMPS

# PHOTO DUMPS

# 19/



PHOTO DUMPS

# SHARING THE




# SMALL THINGS



# PHOTO DUMPS BRING INSTAGRAM **BACK TO ITS ROOTS** AS AN ONLINE SCRAPBOOK.



Where once Instagram was saturated with influencers' filtered, smoothed and brightened pictures, the past year has seen a less polished trend emerge. The photo dump.



These Instagram carousel posts feature multiple, unrelated images of day-to-day life.

Sure, our camera rolls are as empty as our social lives these days. But this trend also represents a significant shift towards using social media more authentically.

There's still an element of curation involved, but slick and polished celebrities are being replaced with isolated moments of everyday beauty. Perhaps as our lives become more connected and unified again, our feeds will too. But the philosophy of the photo dump, of seeking beauty amongst the otherwise bleak, is here to stay.



# DIGITAL DIAGNOSIS

DIGITAL  
DIAGNOSIS  
20



DIGITAL DIAGNOSIS



HIGH-  
TECH //

HEALTHCARE



# TODAY'S BIG TECH BRANDS ARE ON TRACK TO BECOME



TOMORROW'S  
HEALTHCARE  
COMPANIES.

Camera phones can detect high blood pressure. Amazon's Alexa can recognise coughs and colds. And tech is only going to get more sophisticated and health-smart moving forward.

In response to the pandemic, Apple Watch now offers real time tracking of blood oxygen levels and can detect how often, and for how long, you wash your hands.

Sensors are now so lightweight they can be drawn onto patients' skin, using bluetooth to send and receive data.

And by 2025, Amazon is predicted to be the fastest growing healthcare company in the world, thanks to its ever-expanding ecosystem of health offerings.



# PRODUCT EXCHANGE

# PRODUCT EXCHANGE

21





# THE RISE OF RE-COMMERCE



# SECOND-HAND PLATFORMS ARE DRIVING SUSTAINABLE CHANGE.



Shoppers are becoming more aware of how the apparel and furniture they buy can have an impact on the environment.

Enter the rise of re-commerce platforms, where products are resold or recycled to give them a second life. Minus the hand-me-down vibes.

To ensure this push for sustainability is sustainable in and of itself, brands will need to use machine learning to help inspect, manage and price their products the second time around.

From there it's all about driving desire. But with the luxury resale market tipped to top \$11B by 2022, it's easy to see the sustainability seed is already well and truly planted.





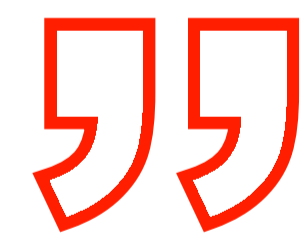
# TOXICITY

TOXICITY  
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TOXICITY

TOXICITY

# FILTERING OUT ANIMOSITY

The internet is an important part of our lives today, but over the past few years, Australians have seen a big downside: social media has a way of sending conversations into toxic messes. It's tearing at our social fabric, as recent research from Pew Research Center shows staggering levels of animosity and hostility towards opposing views.



**BRANDS ARE CONSIDERING THEIR VALUES AND ETHICS.**



In light of this, brands are considering their values and ethics. Every brand active on social needs to consider what it is doing to maintain “brand safety”. Some parts of the internet simply aren’t appropriate for brands. And no brand wants to appear alongside content that’s polarising. Determining the line can be a challenge.

The good news is that there are big rewards for brands that give care to the full impacts of their products and services. A focus on wellbeing has opened the door to new and differentiating product features that are starting to hit the market right now: like internet services that can be paused at dinner time so the family has a chance to connect. Or a connected vehicle that blocks unwanted outside contact so that drivers can focus and get home safely.



**THANK  
YOU.**

**akcelo.**