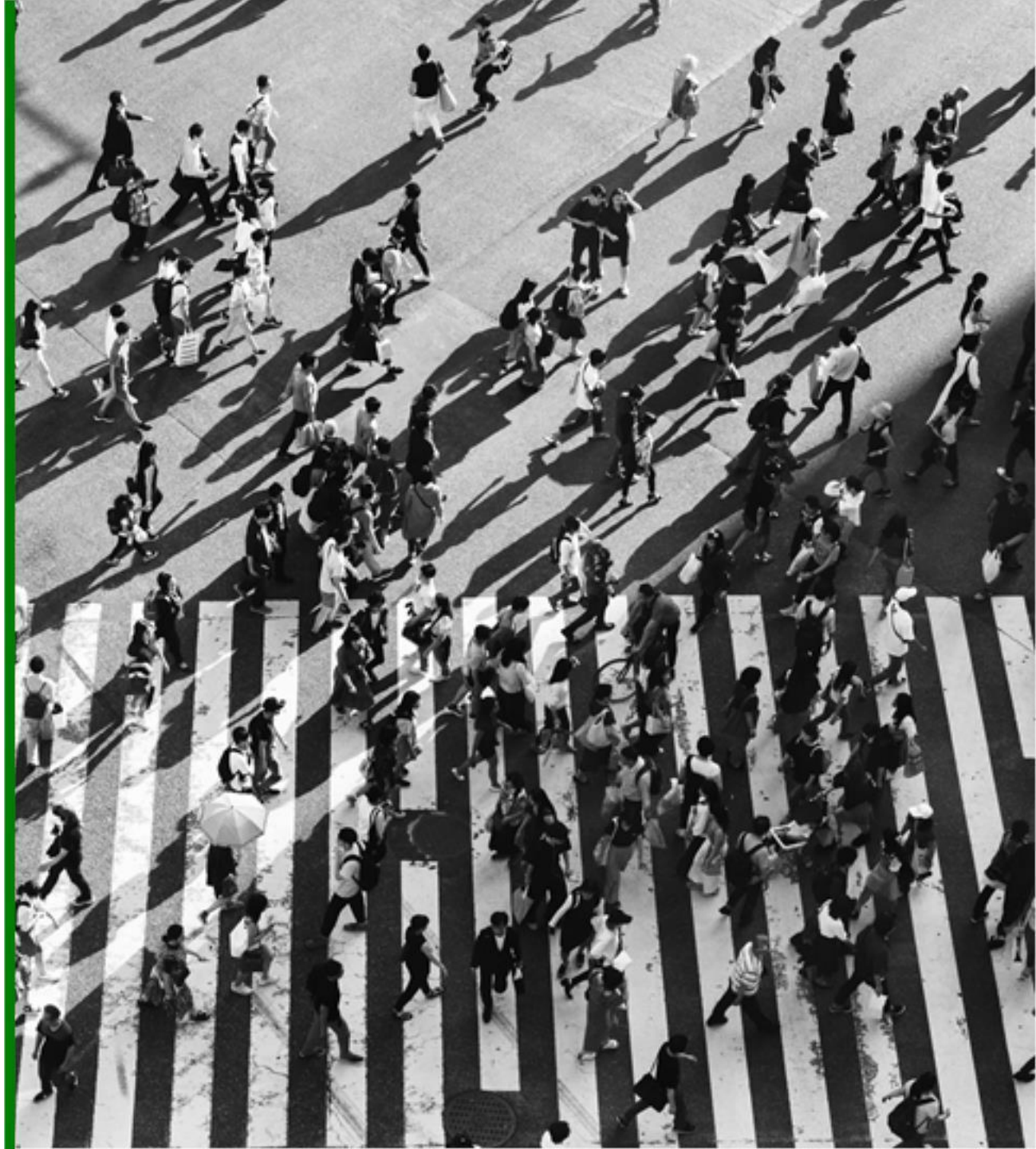




Lux for Consumer Insights

TRENDS (US)

Optimized Until Further Notice: Living, Working, and Choosing in an AI-Managed World



Executive Summary

This report examines how AI and algorithms are reshaping consumers' relationship to the internet and the ways in which it affects their minds and daily behaviors, revealing five key shifts in how consumers experience algorithms and AI as a tool for the future, a drain on their brain activity, and agent of misinformation.

As consumers come to terms that AI is here to stay, they are working to insulate themselves - and reap the benefits- from this groundbreaking technology that is poised to change the world. They are becoming saturated with AI and algorithms at every turn and are looking for cues to discern what is useful and what is not. This AI ecosystem presents challenges and opportunities for brands who seek to stay relevant without appearing to succumb to the hype. Success looks like intentional, thoughtful deployment of AI that offers consumers concrete benefits, rather than a nebulous, salvific promise of eternal optimization.

We ask:

- How do consumers perceive algorithmic influence in daily routines?
- How do algorithms mediate daily consumption?
- How are consumers renegotiating agency in an algorithmic world?
- What new expectations and anxieties are emerging as AI becomes ambient and unavoidable?



Table of Contents

- 1** Culture Overview
- 2** Key Consumer Themes
- 3** Zone of Innovation
- 4** Lead Consumers in this Culture
- 5** Appendixes





Culture Overview



Consumers want to maximize the efficient, positive aspects of algorithms and AI but worry about the effects of a powerful, addictive technology.

Consumers are looking for concrete, tangible effects of AI that actually improve their lives while also looking to revert to an offline utopia of haphazard discovery.

The culture of Algorithms and AI sits in the Mainstream Acceptance stage of development. Currently, a maximum of **126.4M** consumers are showing interest in this topic, and this number is poised to **grow by 22.5% in the next 1-2 years.**

Strategic Implications

Deploy AI sparingly and strategically: Consumers are becoming highly attuned to poorly thought-out AI slop that is tacked onto services, rather than intentionally deployed. AI assistants that yield real-world results through price comparisons or daily-task organization are top of mind for consumers.

Resist constant algorithmic influence: Consumers now recognize that when tech is free, they are the product and feel like a number when their phone is constantly trying to sell them something. Ease up on generalized advertising and opt for genuine value propositions over algorithmic repetition.

Lean into analog product experiences: Consumers yearn for the tactile, personal feel of yesteryear and gravitate towards offline activities like crafting, building, and gardening. Use AI and algorithms to get them in the door then curate an offline experience that feels genuine and unique based on how they engage or create.

Integrate human connection and AI when upskilling: They're not ready to give up in-person networking. Use AI to funnel networkers and job applicants to the right people, rather than using AI to filter out applicants.

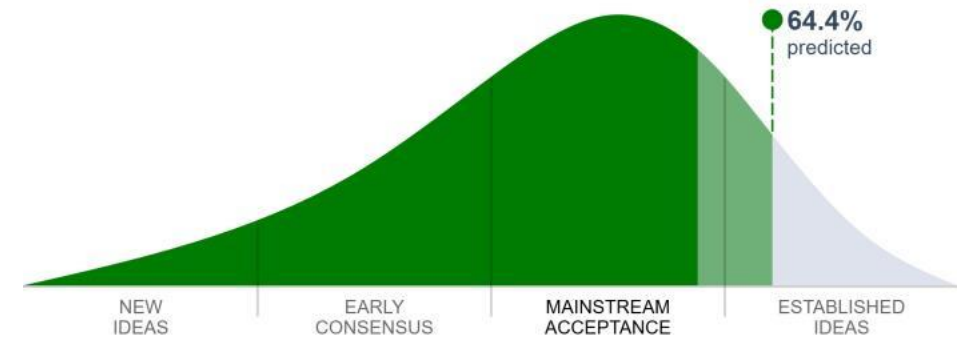
Culture Overview

Currently, consumers are forming opinions and assumptions about what AI can do for them but are still grappling with AI technology as it progresses faster than they can digest it. With AI entering the mainstream and consumers feeling its saturation, **now is the time for brands to selectively optimize their use of AI because its oversaturation diminishes value for consumers, leaving them feeling overwhelmed and skeptical. Small doses of strategic algorithmic and AI assistance that create real-world results will reduce consumer fatigue and keep them engaged at a sustainable pace.**

Maturity Curve for Culture: algorithm

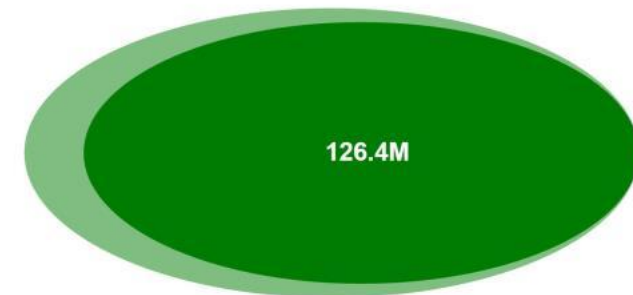
Maturity Curve

52.5%
current



This topic scores **52.5%** on the maturity curve and is expected to expand to **64.4%** in 12-24 months.

This culture is currently relevant to **126.4M** people and is expected to grow by **22.5%** in 12-24 months.



● 126.4M People ● 154.9M 22.5% Predicted People





Key Consumer Themes



Here are the five themes relevant to Algorithms and AI:

- 1 Signal: Upskilling to Survive**
Algorithms and AI = Ensuring they become AI-proof in the workforce.
- 2 Becoming Unquantifiable**
Algorithms and AI = Attempting to become invisible to the algorithm to retain a sense of their humanity.
- 3 Outsourcing Quotidian Tasks**
Algorithms and AI = Balancing efficiency and human connection in an automated world.
- 4 Seeking Authentic Perspectives**
Algorithms and AI = Attempting to stay grounded in reality despite algorithmic influence.
- 5 Fighting for Attention**
Algorithms and AI = Guarding their minds against algorithm-induced cognitive erosion.



Signal: Upskilling to Survive

Algorithms and AI = Ensuring they become AI-proof in the workforce.



Algorithms and AI = Ensuring they become AI-proof in the workforce.

CORE BELIEF

- **Consumers believe that** upskilling to be efficient with AI as well as mastering skills AI can never manage is what makes them resilient in an ever-changing professional landscape. They think the constant drive to integrate AI into every aspect of business comes with its shortfalls and they think they become irreplaceable when they know when and when not to use AI and algorithms in professional settings.

MANIFESTATIONS

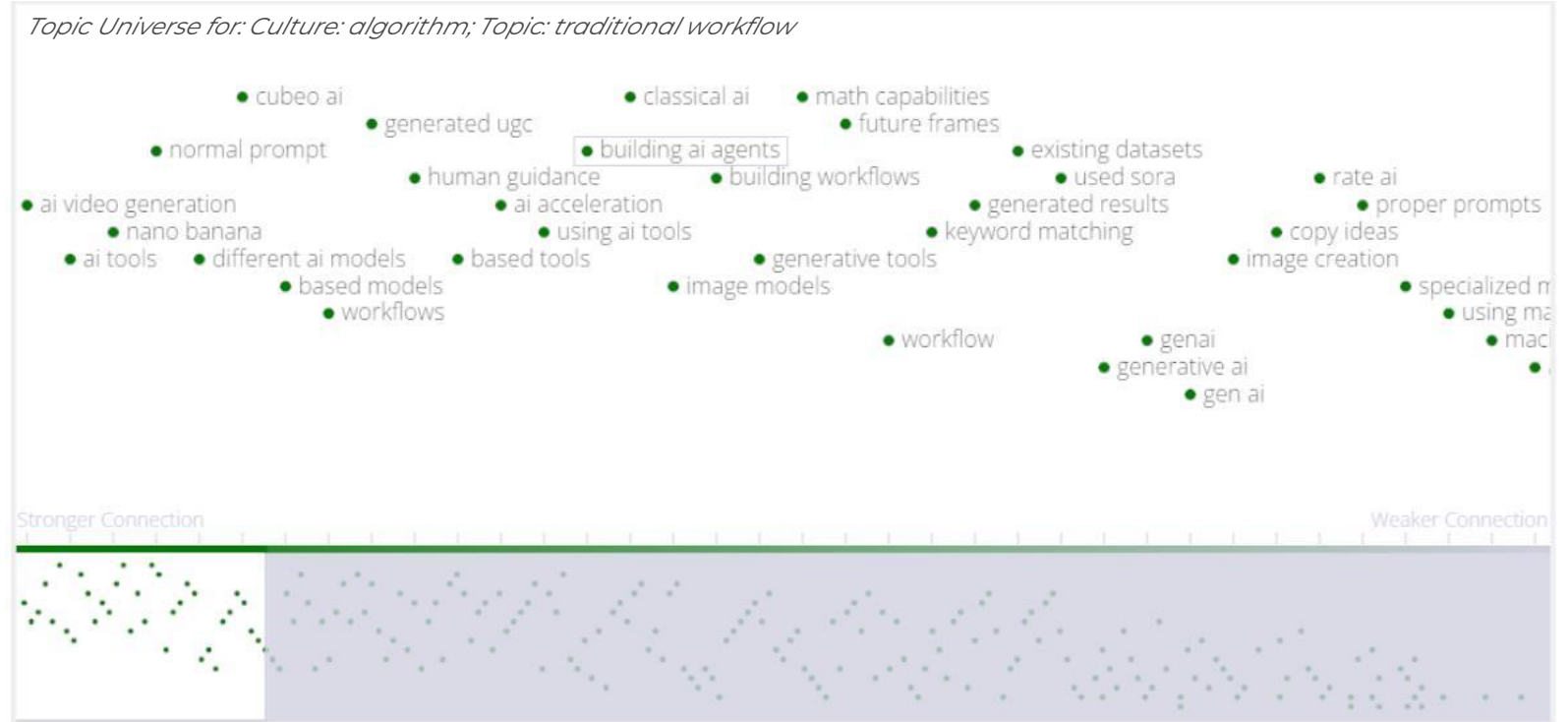
- **Consumers say developing dynamic and up-to-date skills with AI in the work place improves productivity and helps them get ahead.** E.g. They are reading that becoming expert prompt engineers and knowing how to harness AI for data analysis (e.g., Power BI) is non-negotiable and research courses to optimize their skills (e.g., Coursera's AI for Everyone).

- **These consumers say becoming AI-proof means demonstrating human intuition and emotional intelligence in decision-making beyond what AI can do.** E.g. They are reading that emotionally intelligent skills like active listening, clear communication, and strategic problem solving are soft human skills that AI cannot fully grasp or replicate.
- **They mention that learning to manage AI's backend by building assistants and designing workflows sets them apart from the crowd.** E.g. They are learning how to build AI agents to have autonomous workflows, dynamic decision making, and adaptive planning, rather than chatbots that follow rote prescriptions without deviation or innovation.

Algorithms and AI = Ensuring they become AI-proof in the workforce.

Conversation Topics Decoded

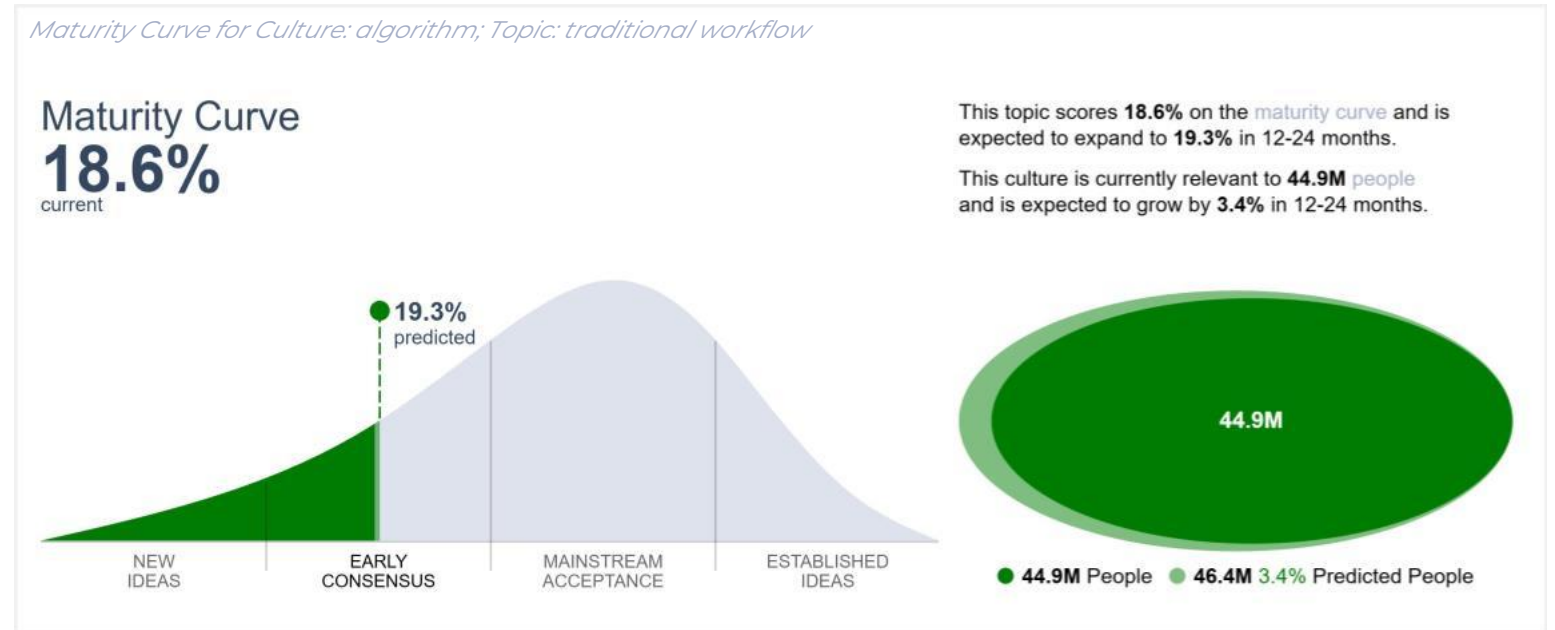
leveraging ai tools, real insights, unrealistic goals, creative strategy, investing time, learning something, new ai tools, strategy expert, drives decisions, real networking, repetitive tasks, own workflows, full resume, recognize errors, algorithmic thinking, building ai agents



The theme of Upskilling to Survive sits in the Early Consensus stage of development and is expected to grow by a modest 3.4% in the next 1-2 years.

The theme of Signal: Upskilling to Survive is best represented by the topic "traditional workflow". When consumers use the topic "traditional workflow" they refer to balancing the need to be skilled with AI and algorithms and ensuring they will never be replaced by it.

Signal: Upskilling to Survive in the context of Algorithms and AI is currently relevant to **44.9M** consumers and is anticipated to **grow by 3.4% in the next 12-24 months.**



Becoming Unquantifiable

Algorithms and AI = Attempting to become invisible to the algorithm to retain a sense of their humanity.



Algorithms and AI = Attempting to become invisible to the algorithm to retain a sense of their humanity.

CORE BELIEF

- **Consumers believe that** surveillance capitalism embodied in algorithms flatten the nuances of humanity into predictable and commodifiable behaviors that take the spark out of the randomness and unforeseen beauty that is human culture. They think learning to become unquantifiable and invisible to the algorithm recovers a feeling of autonomy when every aspect of their lives is pushed towards optimization and curated aesthetics.

MANIFESTATIONS

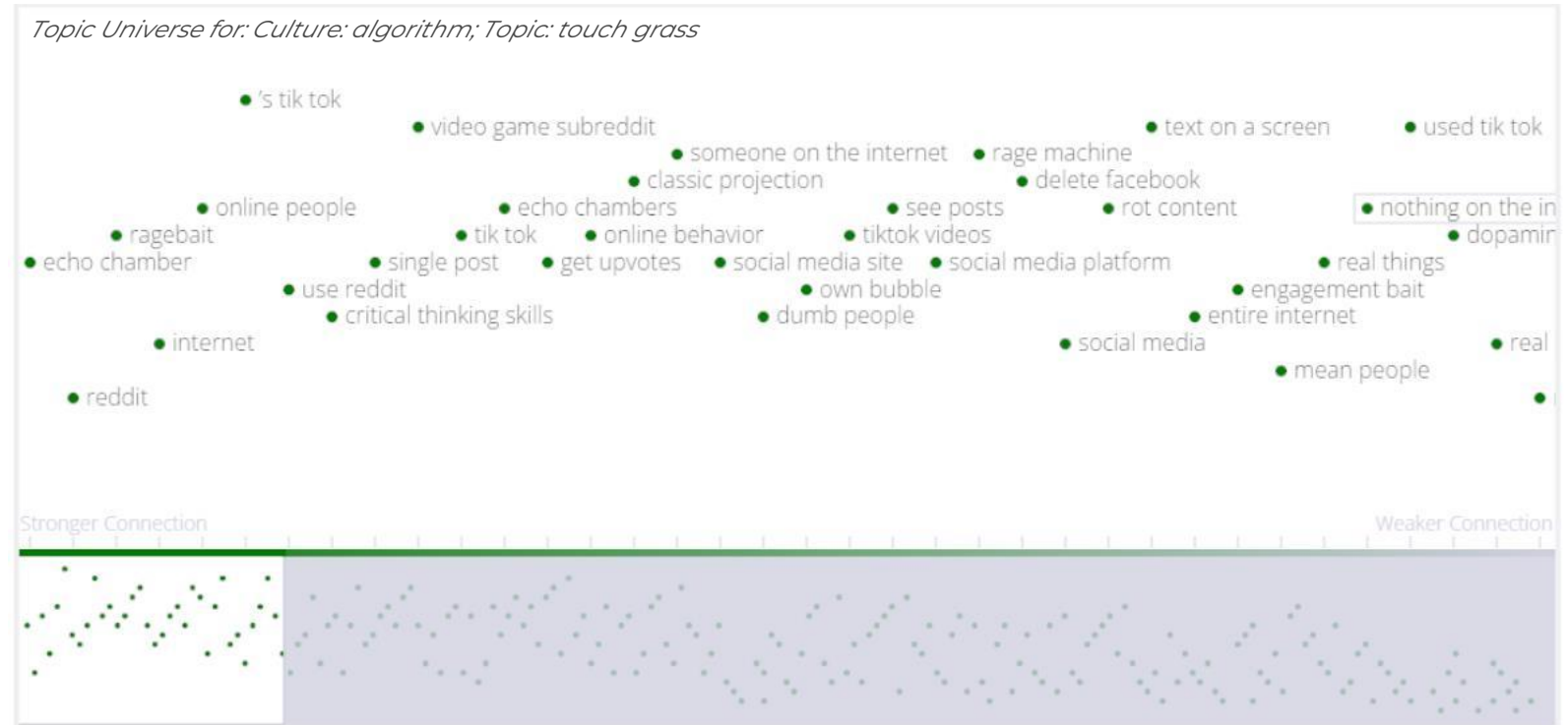
- **Consumers say retaining humanity in the face of algorithms means embracing the imperfections of human decision-making rather than seeking constant optimization.** E.g. They are reading that 'learning by getting lost' reignites the human delight of discovery and are learning they should start a garden or try new recipes without internet research to enjoy trial and error.

- **Consumers say they are fearful that they are losing the human ability to cultivate original thought and opinions due to daily algorithmic influence.** E.g. They are reading that algorithms can take over human decision-making and say they can retain the idiosyncrasies of human choice by opting for books and movies based on in-person recommendations to avoid omnipresent algorithmic influence.
- **These consumers are wary of parasocial attachments taking over real-life connections in the age of all-access influencers and generative AI.** E.g. They read content creators manufacture intimacy to draw viewers in to make them emotionally invested in online parasocial relationship that can lead to emotional grief and even financial exploitation.

Algorithms and AI = Attempting to become invisible to the algorithm to retain a sense of their humanity.

Conversation Topics Decoded

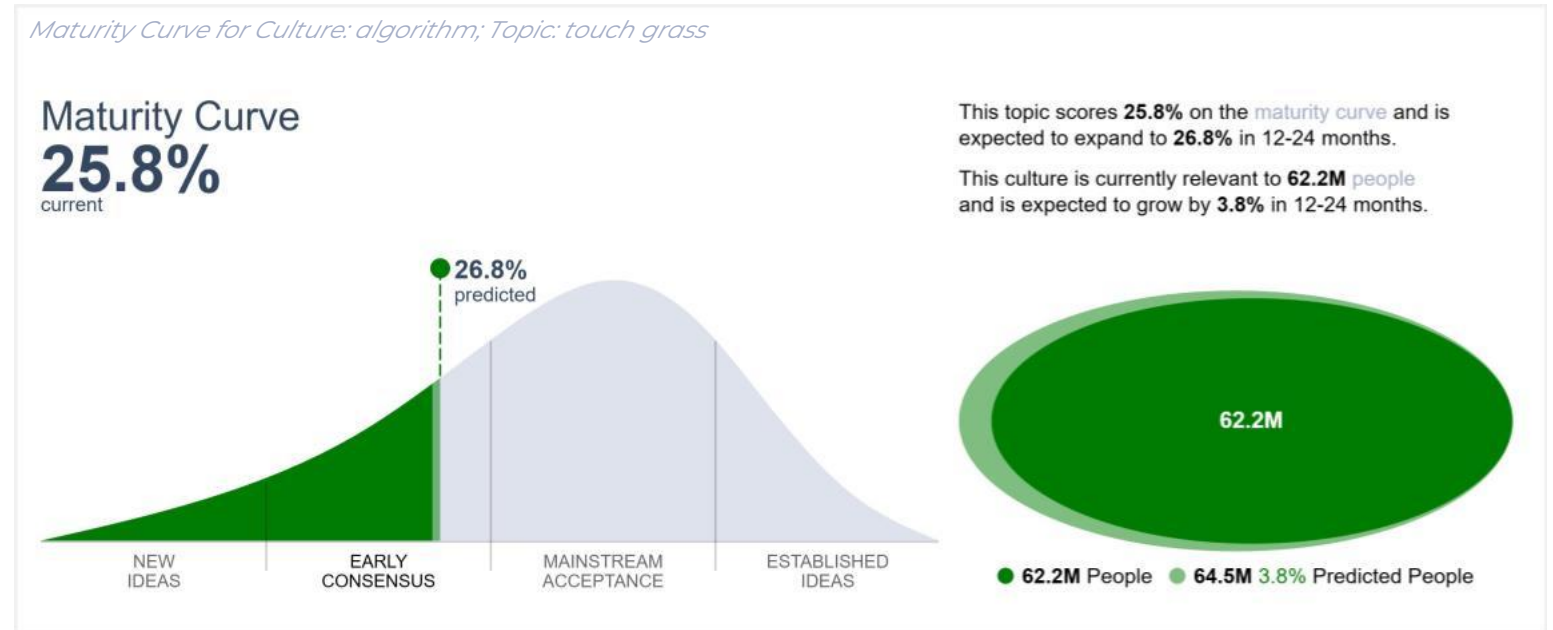
nothing on the internet, original thought, mindless entertainment, validation seeking, parasocial relationships, normie society, own thoughts, mass psychosis, clickbait articles, social media algorithm, reward systems, ai garbage, people on instagram, leave instagram



The theme of Becoming Unquantifiable sits in the Early Consensus stage of development and is expected to show modest growth of 3.8% in the next 1-2 years.

The theme of Becoming Unquantifiable is best represented by the topic "touch grass". When consumers use the topic "touch grass" they refer to leaning into offline ways of being that restore the joy of discovery and trial and error.

Becoming Unquantifiable in the context of Algorithms and AI is currently relevant to **62.2M** consumers and is anticipated to **grow by 3.8% in the next 12-24 months**.



Outsourcing Quotidian Tasks

Algorithms and AI = Balancing efficiency and human connection in an automated world.



Algorithms and AI = Balancing efficiency and human connection in an automated world.

CORE BELIEF

- **Consumers believe that** enhanced personalization through algorithms and AI offer them optimized, tailored experiences without the fatigue of sifting through endless options when it comes to homecare, fitness, and daily tasks. In a world where AI and algorithms constantly monitor their behavior in attempts to influence it, these consumers want tangible benefits for trading their privacy. They say harnessing algorithms to make their life easier is the least they deserve.

MANIFESTATIONS

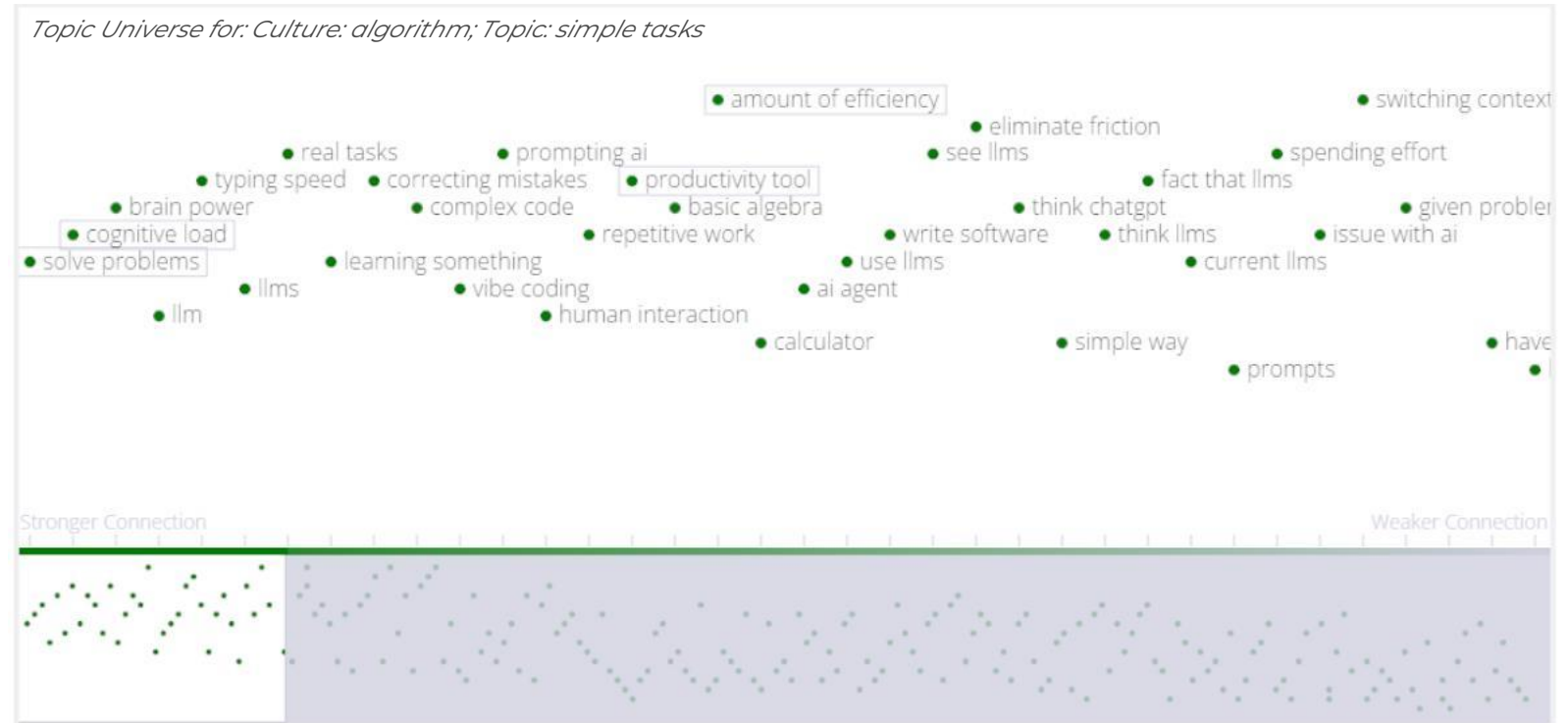
- **Consumers discuss how AI-empowered wellness offers them customized, tailored feedback to give them what they truly need.** E.g. They note that wearable tech like Apple Watches use AI to track health states (e.g., sleep, heart rate) to give personalized suggestions on sleep hygiene and adaptive fitness routines for all physical needs and skill levels.

- **They say it is on them to learn how to use AI strategically and get efficient personalization with minimal input.** E.g. They discuss how to use AI to triage the importance of individual tasks then delegating them to AI assistants through well-crafted prompts and look to automation apps like IFTTT to synch devices to automate tasks like turning on smart lights.
- **They mention using AI to gather facts and make decisions efficiently for shopping on a budget but worry about losing personal touches when shopping.** E.g. They read that AI-enabled Google Shopping helps them compare prices, sort through reviews, and set alerts for sales and price drops, which cuts down on the mental burden of sifting through endless shopping information manually.

Algorithms and AI = Balancing efficiency and human connection in an automated world.

Conversation Topics Decoded

productivity tool, automated process, single prompt, solves problems, overreliance on ai, tech literacy, amount of efficiency, structured approach, prompt, cognitive load, solve problems, amount of effort, painful jobs, repetitive stuff, right prompts



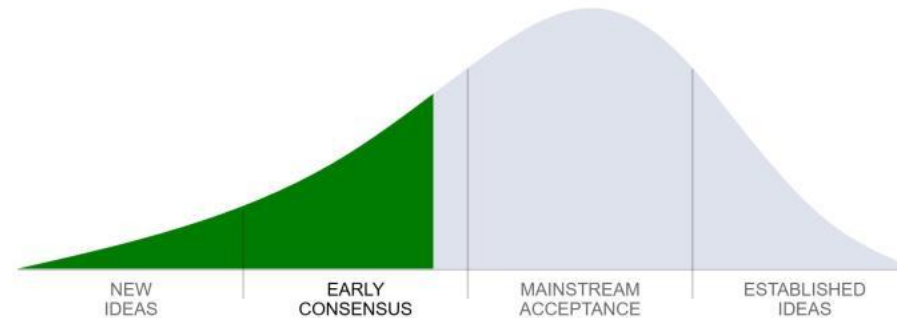
The theme of Outsourcing Quotidian Tasks exhibits high volatility as consumers worry whether outsourcing every task to the machine results in losing human contact.

Outsourcing Quotidian Tasks is best represented by the topic "simple tasks" – that is, using AI and algorithms to speed up daily mundane tasks.

Outsourcing Quotidian Tasks in the context of Algorithms and AI is currently relevant to **69.3M** consumers. Volatility in this culture likely stems from consumer concern that algorithms can remove the human element of personalization that comes from impromptu human interactions. They worry that algorithmic personalization cannot fully capture their interests and want to ensure they still talk with friends and store representatives about making the best choice when shopping.

Maturity Curve for Culture: algorithm; Topic: simple tasks

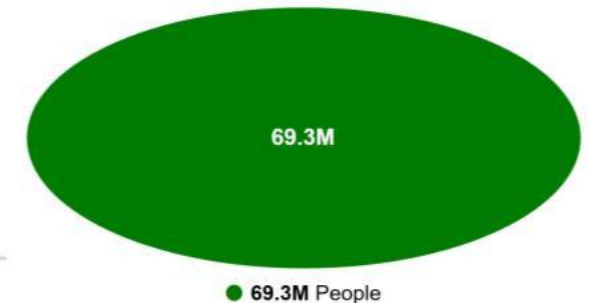
Maturity Curve
28.8%
current



This topic scores **28.8%** on the maturity curve.

This culture is currently relevant to **69.3M** people.

This topic is exhibiting high volatility and therefore cannot be predicted.



● 69.3M People

Seeking Authentic Perspectives

Algorithms and AI = Attempting to stay grounded in reality despite algorithmic influence.



Algorithms and AI = Attempting to stay grounded in reality despite algorithmic influence.

CORE BELIEF

- **Consumers believe that** there is a dark side to the personalization offered by algorithms and AI because they worry digital tools reinforce their biases and perceptions of the world, causing them to question their reality. They also think that their algorithms can become an uncomfortable mirror that shows them who they truly are and what they believe, despite the story they are telling themselves.

MANIFESTATIONS

- **Consumers mention that algorithms reinforce narrow perspectives and repetitively show polarizing content that foster extreme views.** E.g. They are reading that YouTube's algorithm keeps viewers hooked by showing them more and more extreme content that reinforces biases, often through misinformation or opinions masquerading as facts.

- **Consumers mention how AI images and videos make them question reality and if what they are seeing online is true.** E.g. They are reading that AI deepfakes show false images of experts of famous individuals (e.g., doctors, politicians) that targets unwitting social media users based on their algorithm's knowledge of their interests and political views.
- **They worry about a lack of diverse viewpoints on their algorithms and explore ways to bring different viewpoints into their feed organically.** E.g. They are reading that they can hack their algorithms by liking diverse content, resetting suggested content on Instagram, prioritizing content outside their usual interests, and unfollowing accounts that feel repetitive.
- **Consumers worry that the price for constant scrolling and viewpoint reinforcement is an erosion of their mental health, leaving them feeling empty and angry.** E.g. They are reading that online ragebait leaves them feeling irritable and can damage offline relationships due to algorithm-fostered misperceptions (e.g., political arguments with family).



Algorithms and AI = Attempting to stay grounded in reality despite algorithmic influence.

Conversation Topics Decoded

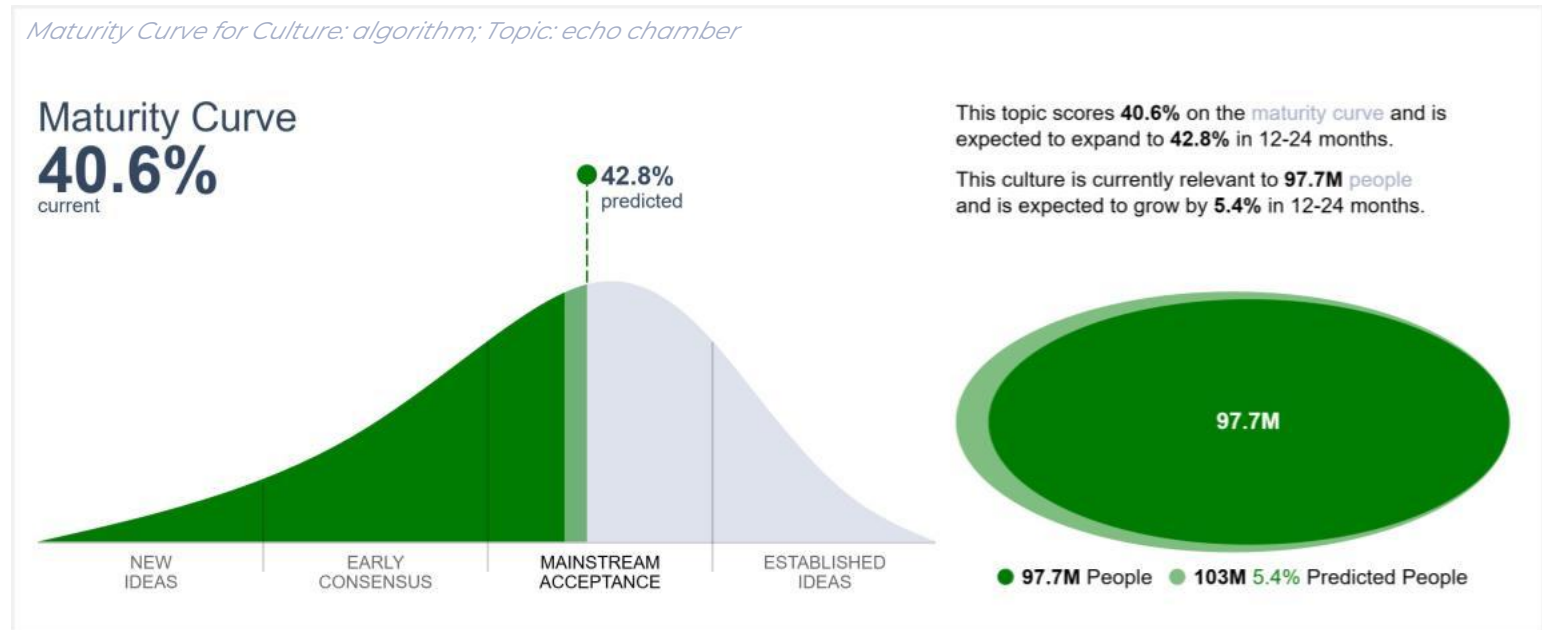
ragebait, misinformation, kind of discourse, push narratives, represent reality, fanning flames, own echo chambers, marketplace of ideas, extreme views, engagement bait, curated algorithms, manipulated information, impressionable people, conspiratorial thinking, create hatred, unrepresentative sample, disinformation, radicalizes people



The theme of Seeking Authentic Perspectives sits in the Zone of Innovation and is expected to grow by 5.4% in the next 1-2 years.

The theme of Seeking Authentic Perspectives is best represented by the topic "echo chamber". When consumers use the topic "echo chamber" they refer to the untethered feeling they get from algorithms that show them a narrow perspective of the world.

Seeking Authentic Perspectives in the context of Algorithms and AI is currently relevant to **97.7M** consumers and is anticipated to **grow by 5.4% in the next 12-24 months**.



Fighting for Attention

Algorithms and AI = Guarding their minds against algorithm-induced cognitive erosion.



Algorithms and AI = Guarding their minds against algorithm-induced cognitive erosion.

CORE BELIEF

- **Consumers believe that** their attention and cognitive ability is a finite resource that needs to be fiercely guarded because they think algorithms are designed to capture and drain their mental capacity. They think the attention economy attempts to draw them into constant algorithmic engagement and feel they need to preserve their brain from the dopamine addiction of infinite scroll.

MANIFESTATIONS

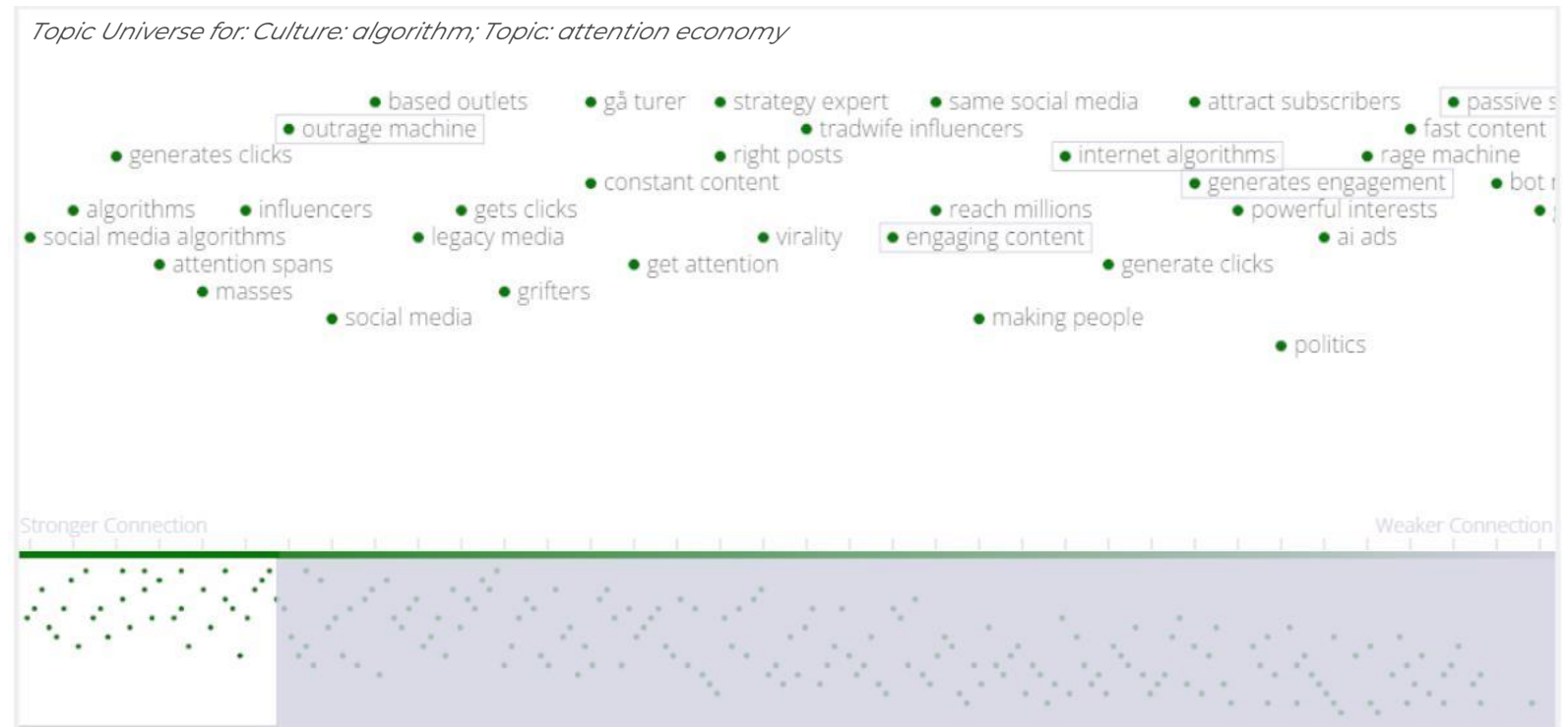
- **Consumers mention their frustration that social media is purposely designed to colonize the brain's attention.** E.g. They are reading that Facebook is turning all videos into an easily scrollable reel-style feed that seduces users into spending more time on short-form video that can impact attention span and brain function.

- **They think they can train their algorithm to boost their brain's performance, rather than diminish it.** E.g. They say they can train algorithms to prioritize long-form content on YouTube by liking longer videos so it signals to their algorithms to show them more thoughtful, slower media that helps their brains retain focus.
- **Consumers say they try to turn the volume down on outrage and emotional grievance to avoid getting addicted to anger.** E.g. They are reading that prioritizing light, uplifting content can rewire their brains and algorithms to seek easy, fun content with jokes, pets, or lighthearted longform content like Amy Poehler's podcast Good Hang.

Algorithms and AI = Guarding their minds against algorithm-induced cognitive erosion.

Conversation Topics Decoded

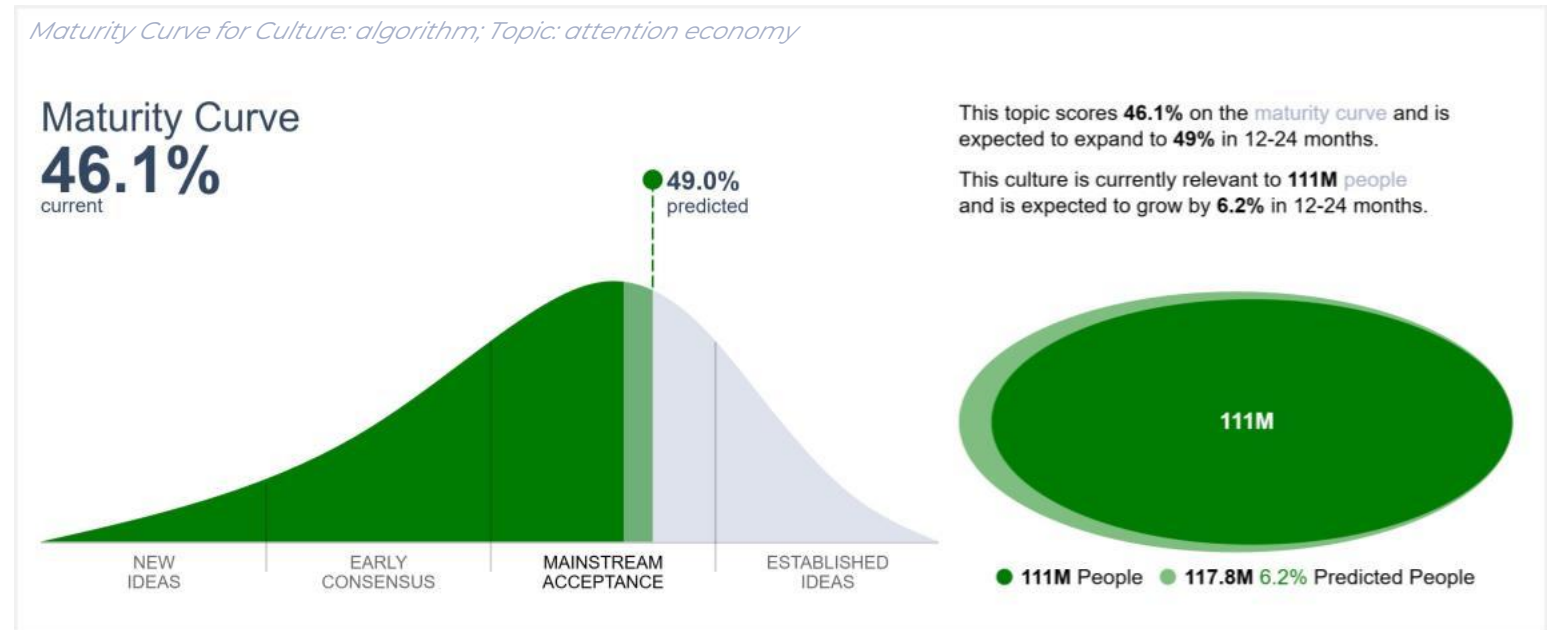
engaging content, passive scrolling, dopamine hits, short form media, gets views, divisive content, intellectual value, internet algorithms, instant gratification, outrage cycles, outrage machine, generates engagement, political content, news cycles, negative engagement



The theme Fighting for Attention sits in the stage of Mainstream Acceptance and is expected to grow 6.2% in the next 1-2 years.

The theme of Fighting for Attention is best represented by the topic "attention economy". When consumers use the topic "attention economy" they refer to defending their brains against cognitive decline caused by their algorithm's constant bid for attention.

Fighting for Attention in the context of Algorithms and AI is currently relevant to **111M** consumers and is anticipated to **grow by 6.2% in the next 12-24 months**.





Zone of Innovation



Current & Future State: Where consumer conversations are heading



Legend: Volatile Growing

HOW TO INTERPRET

Through more than 200 benchmarking experiments, Lux Research has learned that the key time to launch a solution into market is when a demand space falls between 33% - 55% on the maturity curve. That is, it ideally falls in the mainstream acceptance stage of maturity.

When we look at demand spaces and their predictions through Lux Research, we recommend focusing on those opportunities that will fall into the zone of innovation in the future (through the prediction capability). This ensures that we prioritize those opportunities that will not only fall within the zone of innovation but also provide us the runway needed (time) to bring something powerful into market in a timely manner.





Lead Consumers in this Culture



Methodology



Using this Report

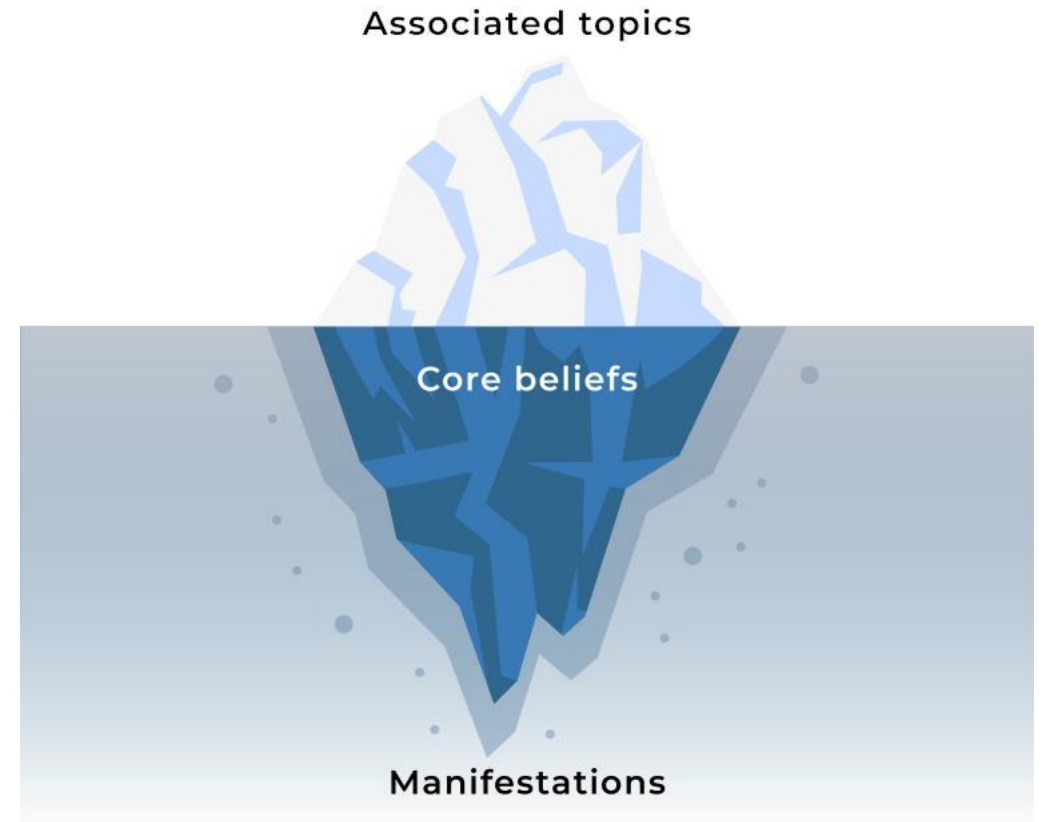
The question we examine in this report concerns the culture being established in consumer conversations. Our work is to decode meaning from the topics consumers associate to determine how they truly understand your subject.

At the top of the iceberg are those associated topics. They are helpful and provide guidance, but they reveal only about 30% of consumers' understanding.

The middle of the iceberg contains the dominant core beliefs that shape how consumers interpret the culture. The bottom of the iceberg houses the manifestations of those beliefs—the behaviors, opinions, and solutions consumers adopt.

Because manifestations shift frequently while core beliefs remain steady, strategies built on manifestations alone chase fleeting trends. Strategies grounded in core beliefs achieve consistency and clarity—both in execution and in how consumers perceive the brand. Yet core beliefs also require careful navigation; misalignment can collide with a belief system and damage a brand.

This is why Lux employs a deep anthropological model to study meaning within culture.



How does it work?

Contextual Intelligence: The key to Lux's approach to Consumer Insights

"We need to go beyond mentions to understand what people mean when they say things, because human-centric insight is at the root of all successful innovation." - Marisa Kopec, Lux Research President

Lux's predictive anthropology—our proprietary method combining structural anthropology and big data—reveals and predicts how consumer beliefs evolve.

Unlike social listening, which tracks mentions, structural anthropology shows that meaning emerges from how people use language in context. Lux analyzes the relationships between words, ideas, and trends over time, mapping how meanings shift.

This deeper approach uncovers consumers' core beliefs around any topic or trend—going beyond surface-level analytics to deliver real foresight.

THIS IS A BIG DATA ETHNOGRAPHIC ANALYSIS

This analysis is the result of Lux's algorithm studying consumer conversations and product reviews online.

100,000+

TOPIC INSIGHTS

Our predictive anthropology architecture and trained anthropologists have examined thousands of meanings consumers create around your topic to deliver deep ethnographic insights.

20,000+

UNIQUE INDIVIDUALS

Our predictive anthropology architecture has conducted an ethnographic analysis of thousands of individuals to quantify your search terms.



US Market examined

December 2024 - November 2025

[Click here for more information and videos](#)



Where our data comes from

Lux’s predictive anthropology decodes what topics truly mean to consumers—their symbolic and cultural significance, not just mentions. For example, chocolate cake isn’t only “cake”; it represents irresistibility, celebration, aesthetic expression, and being a crowd-pleaser.

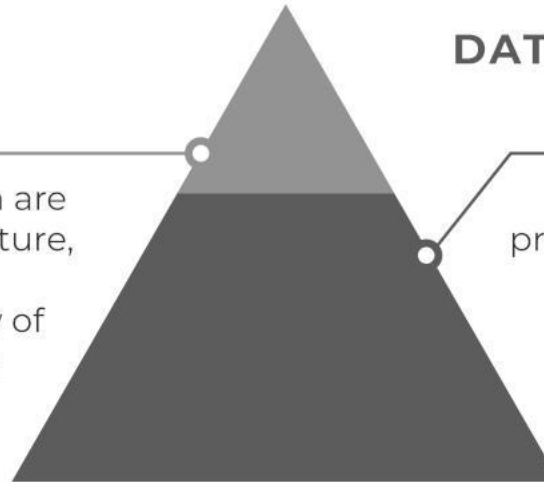
This decoding identifies the shared meanings that form themes, helping businesses understand how consumers relate to a topic—critical for innovation, messaging, and strategy.

DATA FROM FACEBOOK, INSTAGRAM, TWITTER

Platforms like Facebook or Instagram are not only a tiny piece of the overall picture, they also enable short/low quality interactions and give a distorted view of culture. Which is why it doesn’t meet our quality criteria for big data ethnographic analysis.

DATA FROM PRODUCT REVIEWS, NEWS, FORUMS, YOUTUBE, BLOGS, ETC.

In order to enable real ethnographic analysis, our predictive anthropology architecture scrapes consumer interactions on platforms that enable pseudonymity and long-form conversation. Platforms like forums, blogs, comments under YouTube videos, news sites etc. make up our data sources. They also account for 95% of the activity on the internet.



ABOUT LUX

Our mission is to advise leaders about commercially viable science and technology to enable sustainable innovation. We deliver research and advisory services to inspire, illuminate, and ignite innovative thinking that reshapes and grows businesses. Using quality data derived from primary research, fact-based analysis, and opinions that challenge traditional thinking, our experts focus on finding truly disruptive innovations that are also realistic and make good business sense.

The “Lux Take” is trusted by innovation leaders around the world, many of whom seek our advice directly before placing a bet on a startup or partner — our clients rely on Lux insights to make decisions that generate fantastic business outcomes. We pride ourselves on taking a rigorous, scientific approach to avoid the hype and generate unique perspectives and insights that innovation leaders can’t live without.



READ

<http://www.luxresearchinc.com/blog/>



VISIT

<http://www.luxresearchinc.com/blog/>



FOLLOW

[Lux Research on X](#)



CONNECT

[Lux Research on LinkedIn](#)



LISTEN

[Innovation Matters Podcast - Spotify](#)



EMAIL

questions@luxresearchinc.com

