



Carat Trends 2021

The Year of Emotionally Intelligent Marketing

CARAT
a dentsu company

Trends for 2021

Fifty years ago, futurist Alvin Toffler wrote the book **Future Shock**.

He defined 'future shock' as a psychological state brought about by a personal perception of "too much change in too short a period of time". The start of the 2020s has definitely delivered that!

For brands, the volatile times mean a greater need for emotional intelligence; listening and understanding how their consumers feel and helping people navigate the new world through their products, services and actions.

To help with that, we have split our annual trends report into **three** sections.

Section **one** looks at five long term societal trends that are changing how we live our lives.

Section **two** looks at shorter-term patterns and innovations that we will see in the media landscape in 2021.

Section **three** looks at the intersections between the trends. It provides a starting point for you to think about ways that you can build smart, emotionally intelligent experiences for people in 2021.

Here's to a year of innovative, emotionally intelligent brand building!

2021 TRENDS

Section 1 – Societal trends shaping the 2020s

1. From FOMO to FOGO
2. The Donut Problem
3. Connected Lives
4. Respecting Privacy
5. The Great Divide



Section 2 – Hottest media trends of 2021

6. The Camera's New Life
7. Screen-free Media
8. The Decade of Paid
9. Responsible Media
10. The Metaverse
11. Social screening
12. Connecting the Dots





Societal trends shaping the 2020s





Section one

We have split this presentation into two parts – the long-term societal trends changing the world, and the smaller, possibly more temporary trends in media and technology.

In this first section, we look at the trends in society that are changing how we live, work and shop.



Photo by Gabriel Benois on Unsplash

01. FROM FOMO TO FOGO

Fear of Missing Out has been replaced for many by Fear of Going Out. Older consumers particularly are cautious of going out because of the virus.

Instead, people are living much more remote lives, working and socialising virtually.

Brands have reacted by creating more ways to experience and buy the brand without leaving home. Examples range from the explosion of meal kits and online demonstrations to augmented reality tools letting people enjoy time with their friends remotely.



FROM FOMO TO FOGO

01.

Our more remote lives are being caused by fear, but also by restrictions.

In many cases, people aren't allowed to go out. Or when they do, the experience is much less enjoyable than before.

Governments are trying to strike a perceived balance between keeping society safe and letting people spend money in the economy.





01. FROM FOMO TO FOGO

As the pandemic continues into the 2020s, we will see some of these effects remain, even with the use of vaccines.

There will be greater polarity based on age with younger people being more willing to return to pre-pandemic life. Another source of polarisation is access to technology; households with multiple connected devices are better able to cope with isolation.

People with 'screen jobs' will continue to work at home for at least part of the week. Some people, particularly the more introverted, will find that they prefer to spend more time at home.

As a result, there will be many more consumer segments for brands to understand!

IMPLICATIONS

Create a contactless path to purchase. Make it just as easy to buy or experience the brand from home or away from stores.

Develop new products and services designed to be 'remote-first', and maybe even new direct to consumer brands.

Improve the experience of buying online – including unboxing the package.

As the world transition back to 'normal', try to work out which parts of your business will return most quickly, and which parts may never fully recover.



THE DONUT PROBLEM

02.

People are living more locally, and shopping more locally as a result of the pandemic.

Figures from the Javelin Group and Huq show that, while city centres are still seeing significantly fewer people, the outer areas have recovered better. People working from home are shopping and socialising near to where they live.

Google reports that global searches for phrases like 'available near me' have doubled.

There have been movements to get people to use local retailers and service providers for several years, and the pandemic is making this happen.

We call this shift to more local living, with less footfall in town centres The Donut Problem.





hoto by ch Claudio Schwarz | @purzbaum

02. THE DONUT PROBLEM

Working from home means much less movement around the city and around whole countries.

Use of cars has returned more than use of public transport. In New York, for example, public transportation is at 25% of previous levels as more office workers stay at home.

This has an impact on media use. Many media channels are at least partly based on commuting – morning and evening newspapers, and ‘drive time’ radio.

THE DONUT PROBLEM

02.

The Donut Problem is likely to continue as office workers continue to spend at least part of their working week at home, and people get used to living more locally, re-discovering their neighbourhoods.

We expect to see creative use of local spaces, particularly outdoor markets, and more actions to help local areas, for example, more local sharing of skills and equipment.

There will also be more use of local online tools, like Nextdoor and Google Maps, which is adding more social elements, and greater use of digital Out Of Home media.



IMPLICATIONS

There is now a greater role for location-based marketing, with more segmentation, and more need to understand consumers' motivations.

Develop a more localised strategy, including community initiatives, philanthropy, and promote authentic connections to places.

Explore opportunities in digital Out Of Home and its ability to target creatively and change messages according to circumstances.

Re-think the concept of flagship stores in city centres – it may be better to have more, smaller outlets in more places.





Photo by Klim Musalimov on Unsplash

03.

CONNECTED LIVES

For several years people have been living increasingly connected lives, with more devices in their homes and on their bodies.

Research by Deloitte claims that people in the UK now own an average of six connected devices, including phones, laptops, connected TVs and activity trackers, up from just 3.5 per head five years ago.

The pandemic has accelerated this trend, with many people buying more connected devices (21m were sold in the UK including TVs, games consoles and laptops, as they adjusted to spending more time - and working - at home).



CONNECTED LIVES

03.

Our ideas of the smart home often revolve around the kitchen. In fact, the breakthrough devices are for entertainment (TVs, smart speakers) and for health and fitness, where people can see a real benefit for a new device that is comparatively easy to install.

Peloton has had a very strong year, hitting 1m paying subscribers for the first time, and seeing average use rise from 12 times per month last year to 25 times per month. Peloton has just signed a partnership with Beyonce; a sign that its exercise bike is entering the mainstream.

Zwift is an app-only competitor to Peloton, where people buy exercise equipment from partners, use their own screens, and exercise as part of immersive games with their friends, for example cycling as part of a road race.

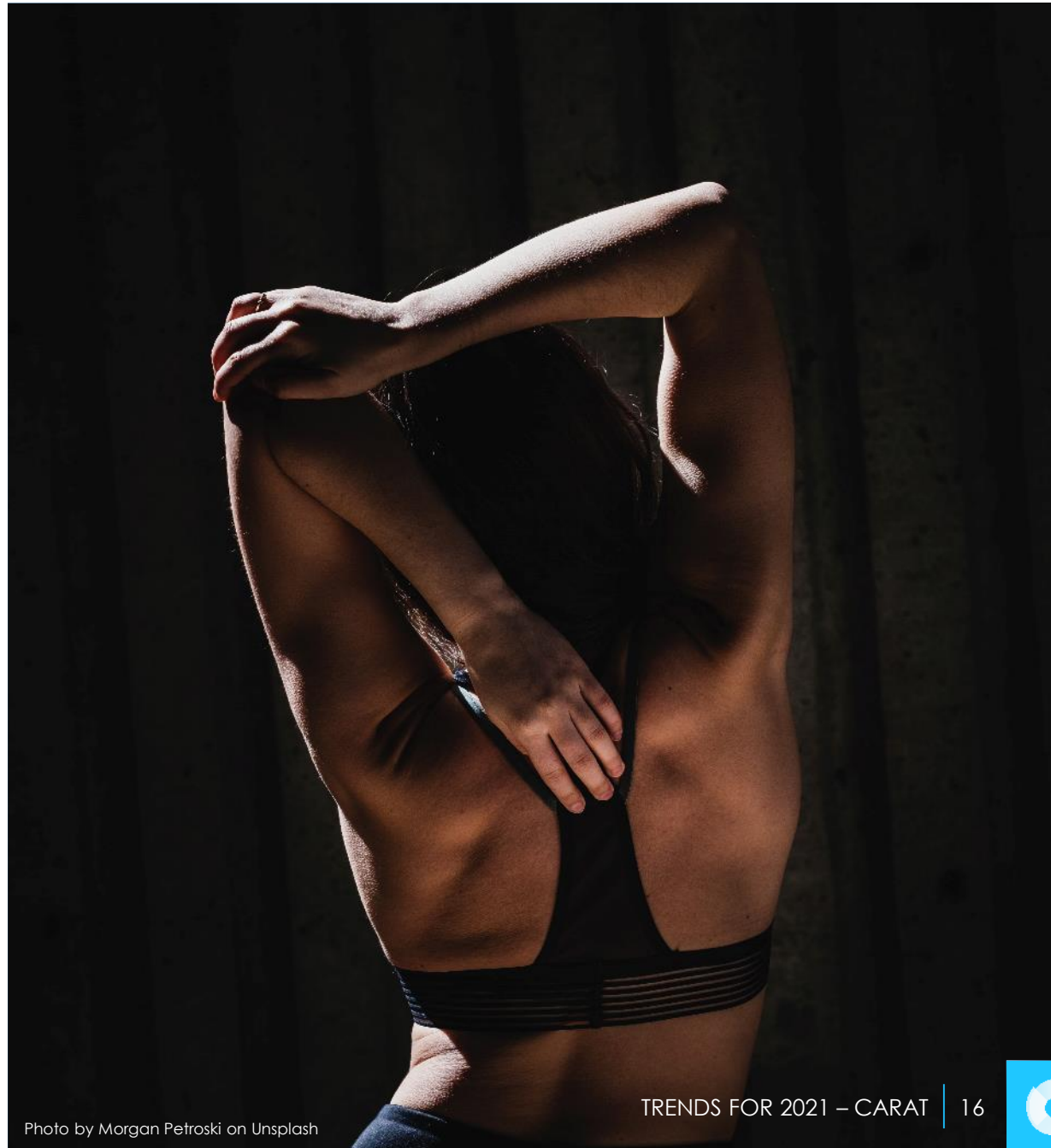




Photo by Christian Wiediger on Unsplash

03.

CONNECTED LIVES

As we move through the 2020s, we will see greater levels of connection, with the rapid uptake of 5G, and new uses of connected technology, particularly around fitness and health monitoring.

There will be many new brand and product launches coming, including wearables like Apple Glasses (expected in 2023), competitors to Peloton and new activity trackers.

We will also see many more subscription-based services. Just as it feels normal to have a subscription to services that keep people entertained, it will soon feel normal to have subscriptions that keep people healthy.

IMPLICATIONS

Try to work out how brands could fit onto the different devices, in addition to phones and laptops. What use cases are there, and what services can you develop?

Assess any scope for partnerships with any of these devices and services as they become more popular.

Identify which current devices and activities the new technologies may replace. What will people spend less time and money on?



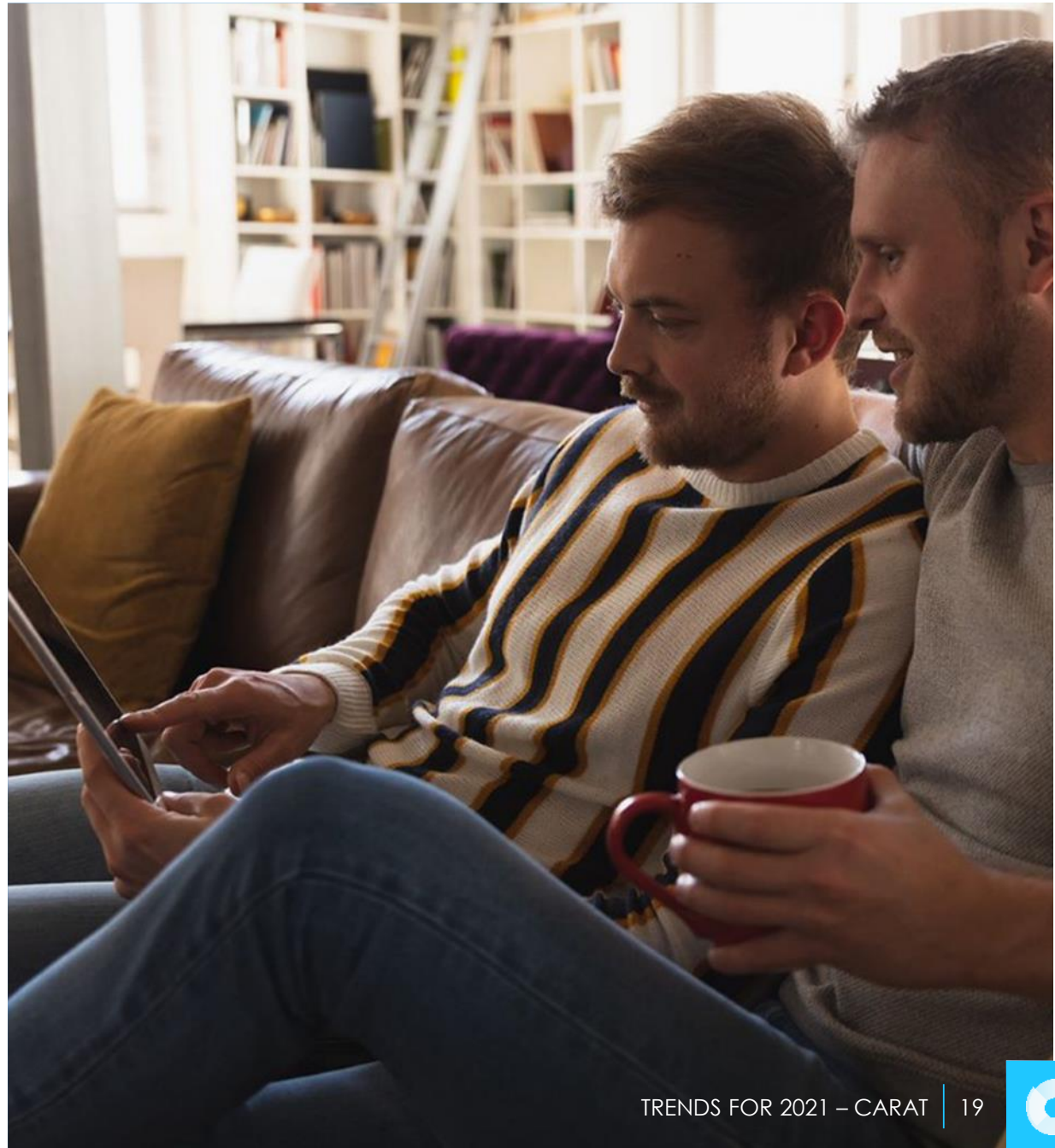
RESPECTING PRIVACY

04.

The more we use digital devices, the more data we create.

Consumers are becoming increasingly concerned about what is happening to their data, driven by high profile hacks of user data, news stories like Cambridge Analytica, accounts from friends who have been victims of identity theft, and even the phenomenon of ads seeming to follow you around the web.

Data from Consumer Reports shows that in the US, 74% are at least 'moderately concerned' about their use of data, and that 30% of Americans say they have experienced a data breach. Parks Associates claim that 5.5m in the US experience identity theft every year.



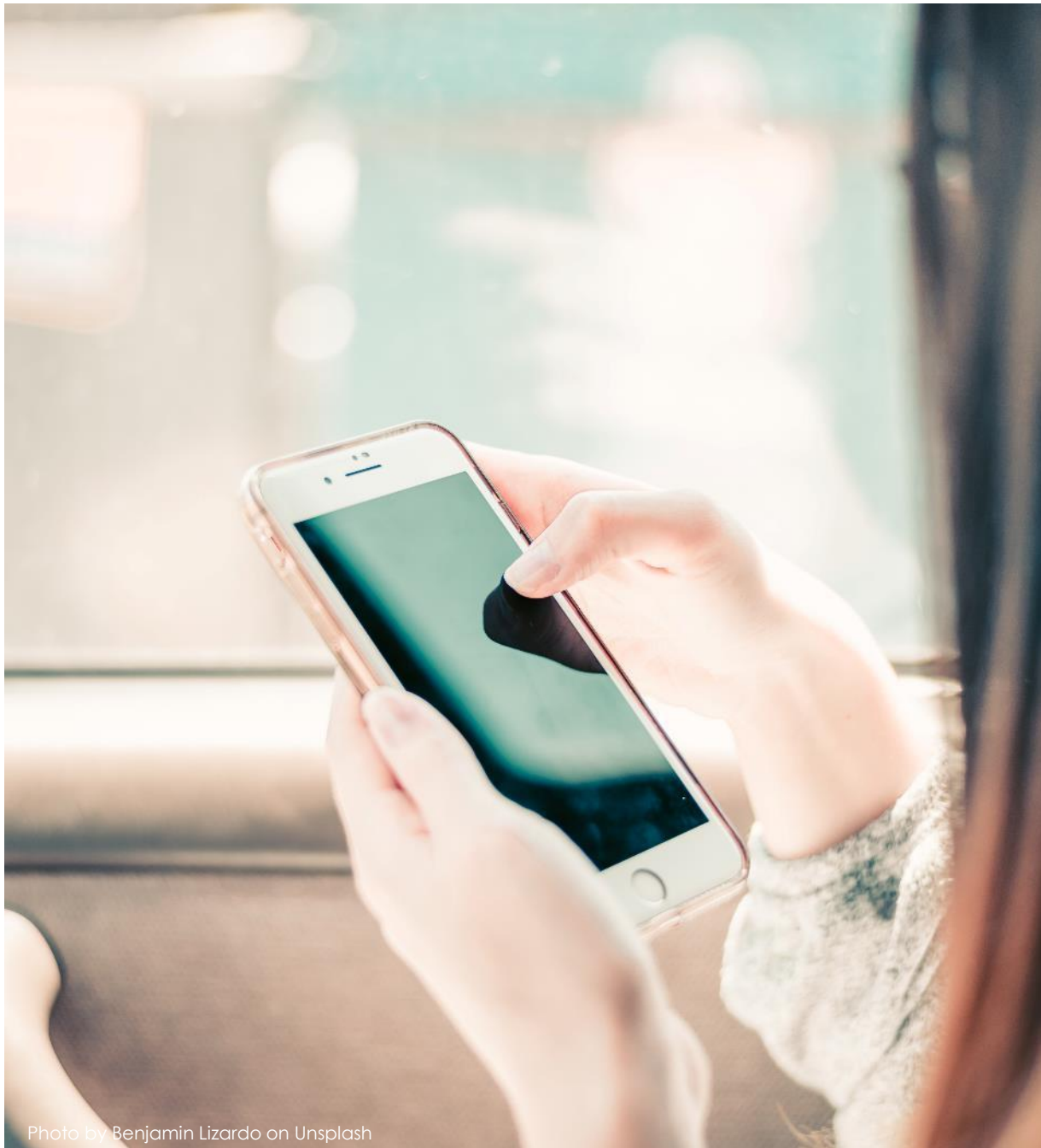


Photo by Benjamin Lizardo on Unsplash

04. RESPECTING PRIVACY

These concerns have been rising over time, leading to new legislation, including GDPR in Europe, and CCPA in the US, but also prompting companies like Apple, Mozilla and Brave Browser choosing to actively position themselves as privacy first, with slogans like 'What happens on the iPhone stays on the iPhone'.

Tim Berners-Lee's Inrupt technology is now being tested by companies and bodies like the BBC and the NHS in the UK to give individuals more control over their data.

One proxy for the interest in privacy is the use of services like DuckDuckGo, the search engine that does not leverage its users' personal data for advertising.

Usage of DuckDuckGo has risen by nearly 50% in 2020 so far, and while the number of searches is currently only 1% of Google's it is growing much more quickly.

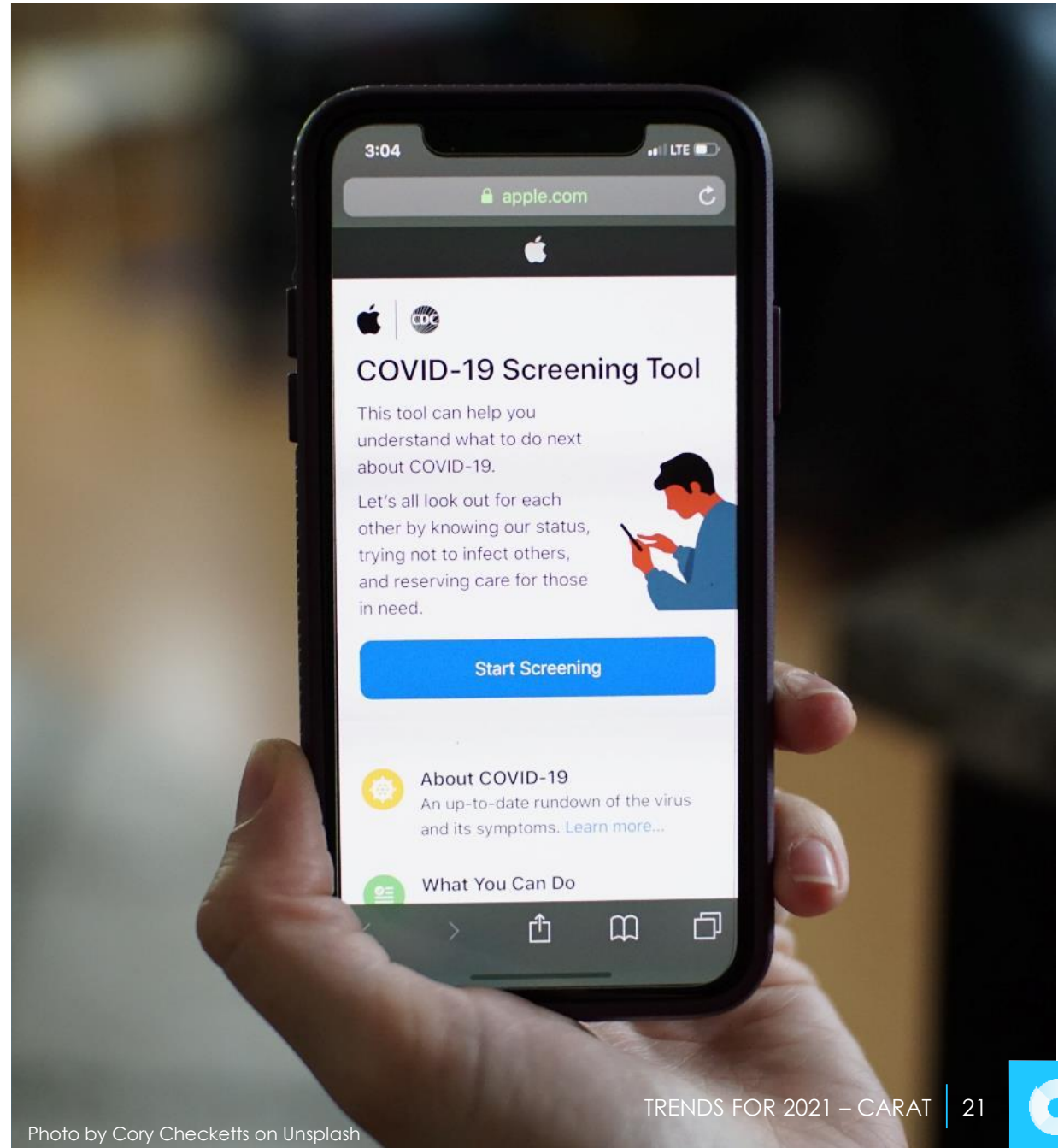
RESPECTING PRIVACY

04.

The pandemic is leading to a privacy trade-off, where people are agreeing to use their devices and details to 'check into' places when they go out to benefit from being able to live a more normal life. This may soon include a 'health passport' to prove that people have been vaccinated.

We will also see more people try to actively control and monetise their own data, for example, through companies like Tim Berners Lee's Inrupt, which gives people more choice over what gets shared.

The key here is to create a value exchange for respecting privacy, with specific benefits in exchange to access to data.



IMPLICATIONS

Be fully compliant with the latest regulations, and totally respect customers' need for privacy.

Find new ways to target in a way that will still understand their needs enough to be able to provide the best messages, products and services.

Collect and manage first party data, and find the best partners to work with who have access to their own data.

Make the best use of the new contextual targeting tools, that do not use any personal data.



THE GREAT DIVIDE

05.

Society has never felt more polarised and divided. Disputes rage in the media, and particularly on social media, between different sides arguing seemingly irreconcilable differences on a broad range of topics including race and gender issues, religion, and the environment.

Data from the think tank CSIS claims that the number of public protests around the world has risen by over 10% a year since 2009.

This has come to a head in 2020 with big movements and protests developing around issues like Black Lives Matter, Transgender rights, and Extinction Rebellion.

Brands are also facing pressure to become involved. Dentsu's Digital Society Index found that 72% believe that brands should actively benefit society through their actions.

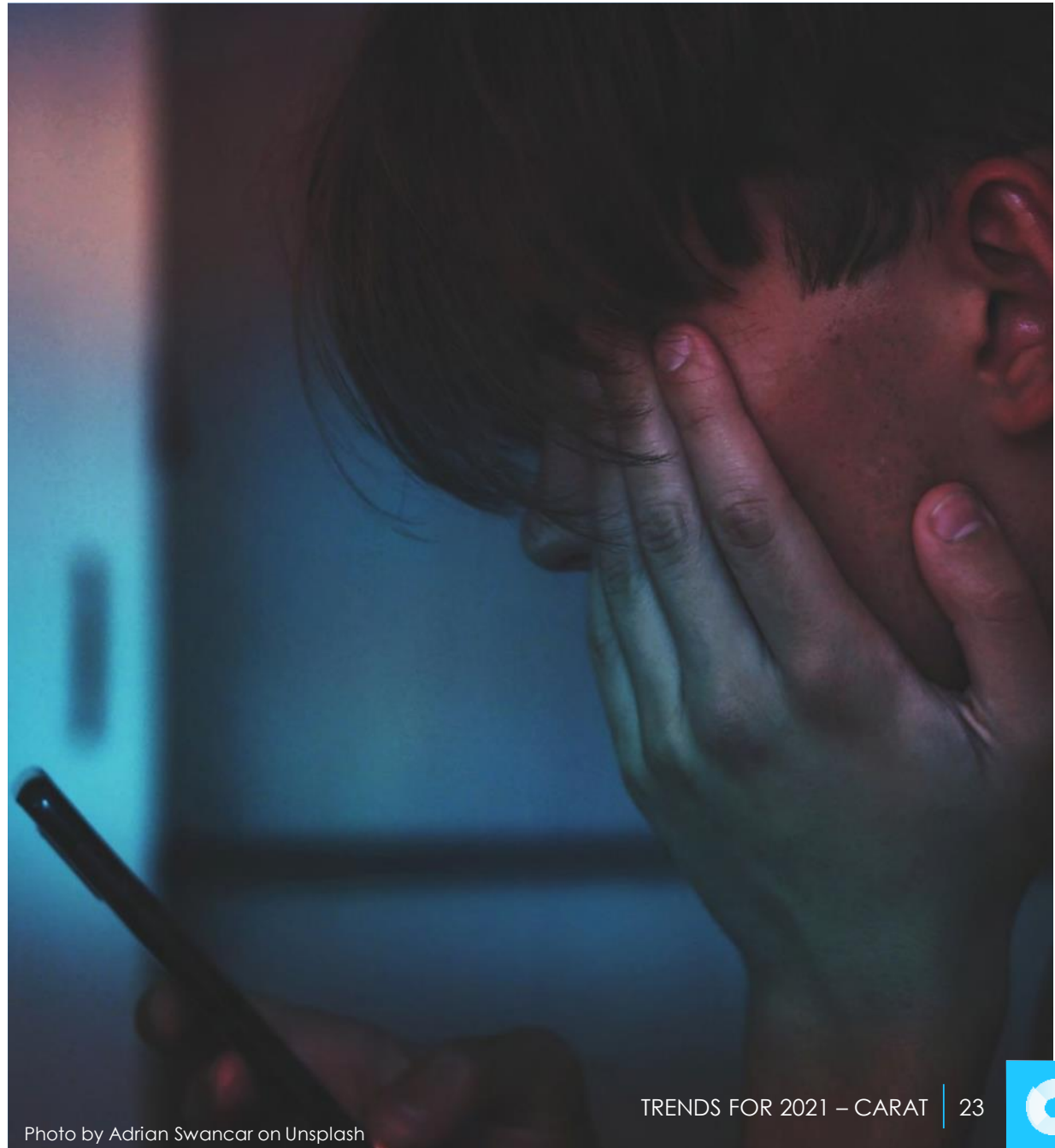




Photo by Nadine Shaabana on Unsplash

05.

THE GREAT DIVIDE

There are two main theories for the rise in polarisation.

The fall of communism in the late 1980s meant that the forces of tradition and the forces of change have become less well defined, and new, more complex battlegrounds are emerging.

The increase in numbers going into further education around the world has led to a new, bigger part of the population with more diverse views and experiences, which clash with the views held by many older people.

Social media and easier free expression have amplified the issues and disagreements.

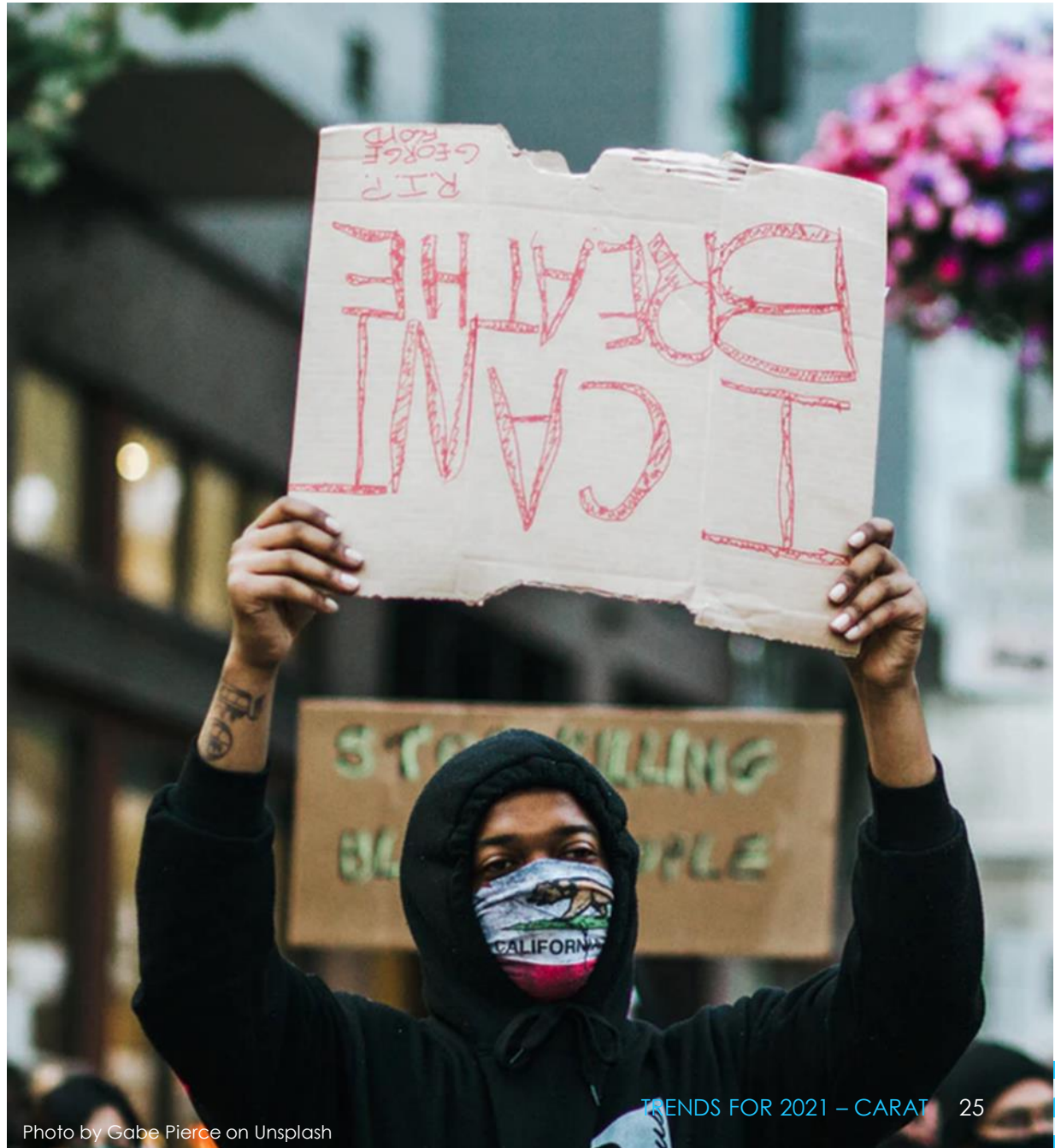
THE GREAT DIVIDE

05.

Over the next decade, we expect to see greater levels of compromise and harmony.

We can already see this through greater governmental consensus and cooperation over response to the pandemic and vaccinations, but inevitably divisions will remain for many.

Brands can play a role in building this consensus, by backing causes, and explaining why they have decided to take a stand.



IMPLICATIONS

Know where you stand. Be on the right side of history, without necessarily taking a public position on every issue.

Transparency is more important than ever. If you take a stand you may have to defend previous leaders, statements, and campaigns.

Work out which groups you are more comfortable offending or being boycotted by.





Hottest media trends of 2021



Section two

In this section we look at the shorter-term technology & media trends that we have spotted, some of which have been accelerated by the pandemic and the lockdowns.

These are less fundamental themes than in the first section, and may be short-lived, but they are still likely to have a big impact in 2021.

THE CAMERA'S NEW LIFE

06.

The time is right for augmented reality and QR codes – camera-based technologies built into our phones that help us to live more remotely.

Millions of people already use AR for fun activities, like enhancing photos. Now it is also emerging as a way of shopping virtually, for example 'trying on' shoes or sunglasses, or seeing how new furniture would look in your home.

QR codes are becoming ubiquitous as ways to check in to places for track and trace programmes.

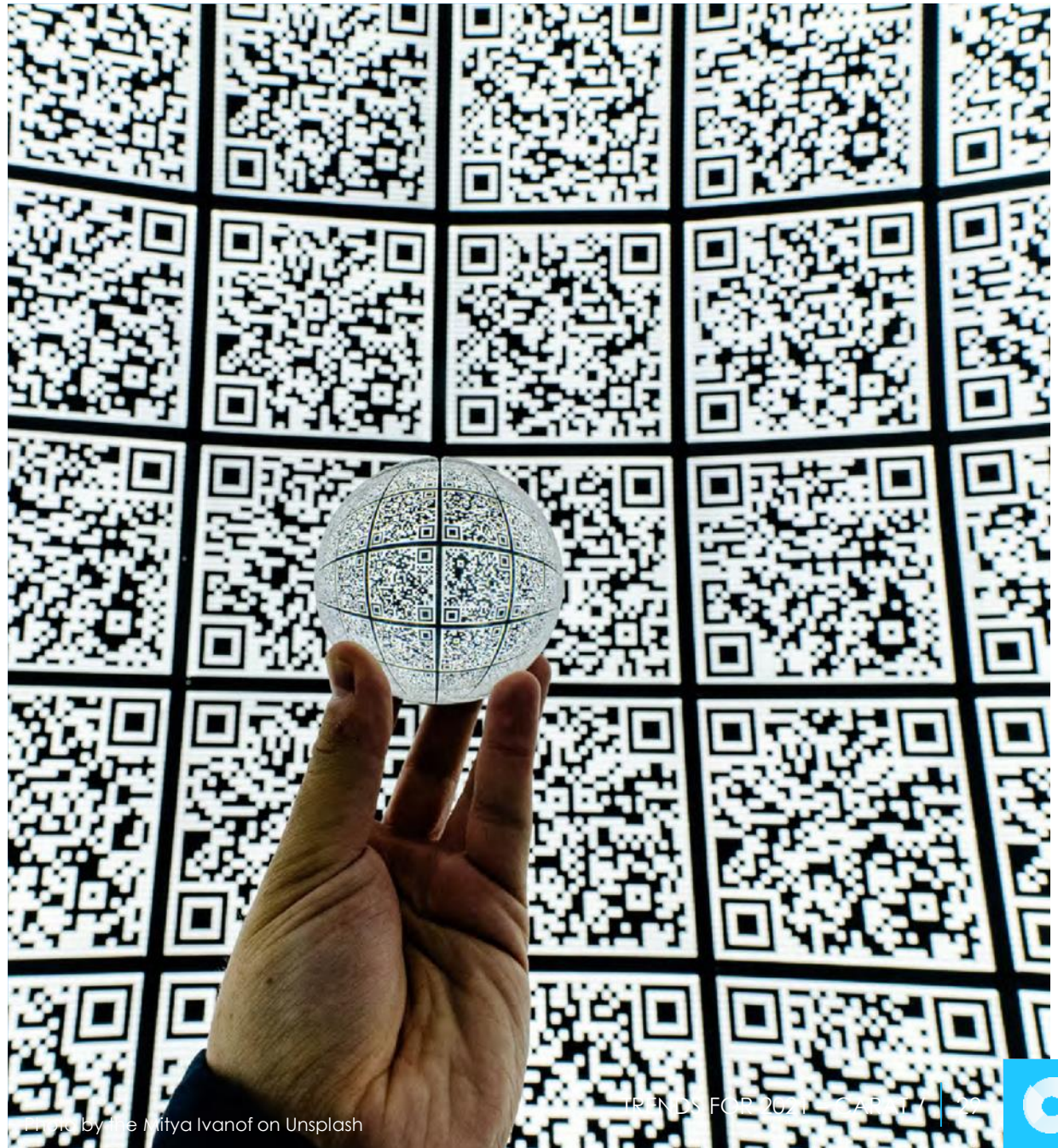




Photo by uniboa.fr on Unsplash

06. THE CAMERA'S NEW LIFE

This power has lived untapped in our phones for years. Only now we are discovering the benefits – just as most of us did not often use the cameras on our laptops until recently.

The technologies aren't new, but their time is now. They are useful and reliable technologies that allow people to live more distanced, contact-free lives.

One example of the increased popularity of AR is that Pokemon Go has had a record year in 2020, partly as a result of adding an 'at home' mode to the game for people who could not leave their homes.




THE CAMERA'S NEW LIFE

06.

We are likely to see greater adoption of these technologies among broader audiences, which means that marketers will be able to use them in more mainstream campaigns.

QR codes have had low adoption in the West for years, but now millions of us use them every week for track & trace, Research by MobileIron claims that over 35% of consumers in US and EU scanned one in the past week.

As we get more wearable devices like smart glasses, the use of these technologies will become even more intuitive and automatic.



**ORDER &
COLLECT
OR DELIVERY**

**SCAN THE
QR CODE
OR CALL
02076294493**

IMPLICATIONS

These technologies are now mainstream and millions more people know how to use them. What could you use them for?

Both are very flexible technologies, and can be used to either trigger experiences, or generate quick responses to campaigns in other media, particularly in press and out of home, but also on TV.

Think of current activities and publications – could AR and QR do the job better?



SCREEN-FREE MEDIA

07.

Technology without screens also allows people to interact without touching.

Companies like Spotify are experimenting with voice response to audio ads, using voice to make payments.

Brands like Mastercard and Netflix are also creating sonic branding, small arrangements of notes that they can use in adverts and product features.





Photo by Soundtrap on Unsplash

07. SCREEN-FREE MEDIA

Use of audio assistants, through phones and smart speakers, has been rising steadily, for example, to nearly 40% of Americans, and voice recognition is getting even more accurate.

Listening is also going up, and is increasingly digital, with the data collection and targeting that this brings. Podcasts are becoming big business as consumption grows.

In the summer Spotify paid a reported \$100m to exclusively carry US comedian Joe Rogan's podcast. In November it spent nearly \$250m on another podcast provider to get access to more ad inventory.

SCREEN-FREE MEDIA

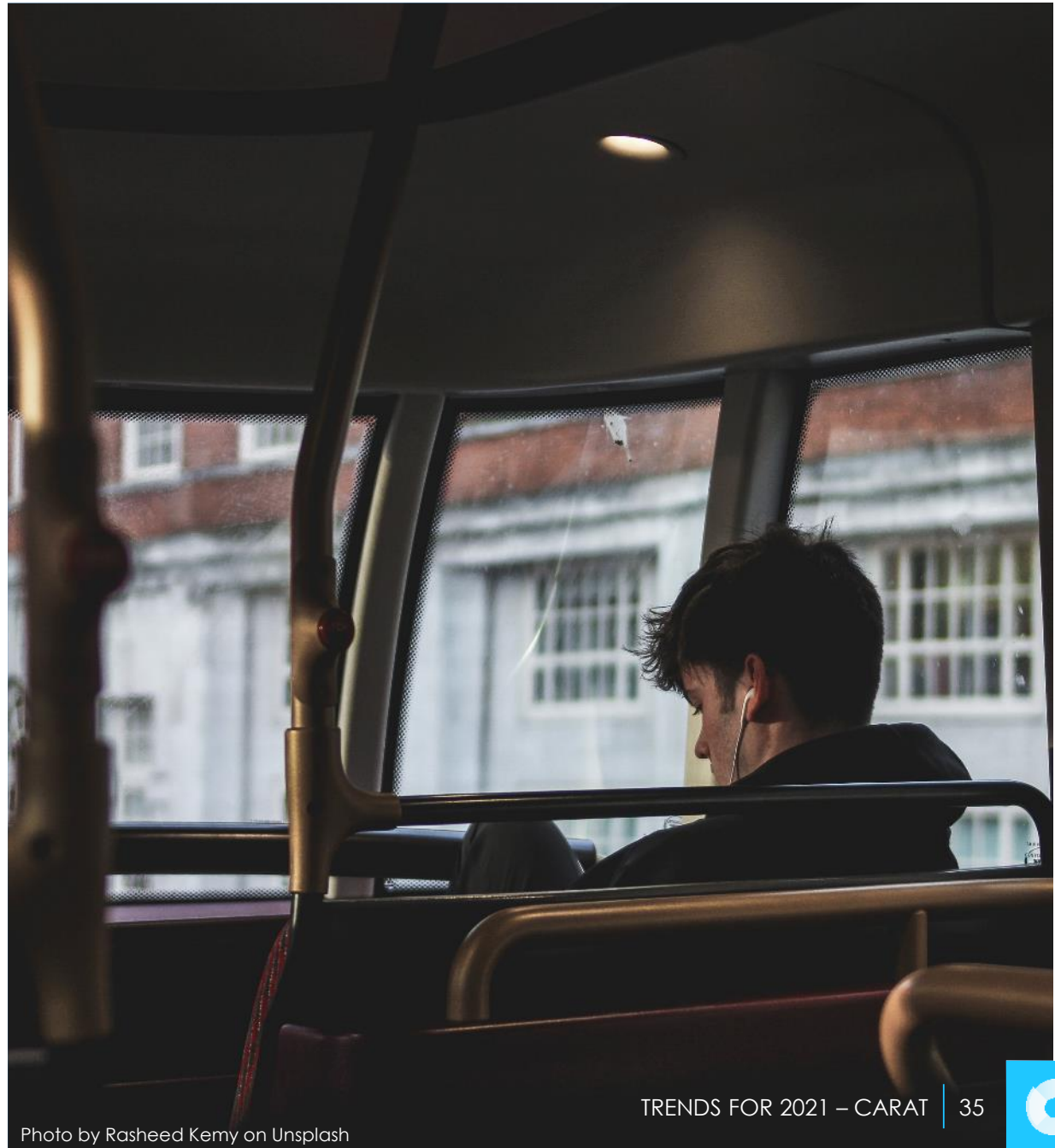
07.

Audio will become a very significant digital advertising medium; it offers a similar level of targeting as other online formats but can be considerably cheaper.

There will be lots more inventory too; for example, YouTube has just started to offer audio-only advertising.

Voice-based interaction will become more common and more creative.

Use of voice will become more common in more devices, including TVs, in-car navigation and fitness equipment, as Amazon and others push for greater levels of integration with their technologies.



IMPLICATIONS

Develop an audio strategy to cover voice (including voice search), music, podcasting, advertising, and identity.

Use the full creativity on offer, including dynamic ads, targeting and response mechanisms.

What new moments can people use to speak to, or hear from your brand?





Photo by Madison Kaminski on Unsplash

08.

THE DECADE OF PAID

More and more services are becoming paid or partially paid.

More video content is becoming paid for, with services like Netflix, Disney+ and others, recording significant increases in subscriber numbers, making them able to put much more into their programming than national broadcasters.

Newspapers like the New York Times have switched to subscription-first businesses. The NYT now has 7m paying subscribers, and 'paid' accounts for over 70% of its revenues, vs 25% 20 years ago.

Independent writers and artists are increasingly funding their content through platforms like Patreon.

THE DECADE OF PAID

08.

Ad blocking, iOS 14 and other factors are hitting ad revenues. Smaller publishers are having to charge directly for their content rather than using an advertising model.

Facebook estimates that the changes that iOS 14 will bring will reduce ad revenue for its Audience Network partners by 50%.

At the same time, many people are getting used to paying for content, and as payment is built into phones, it is now very easy.

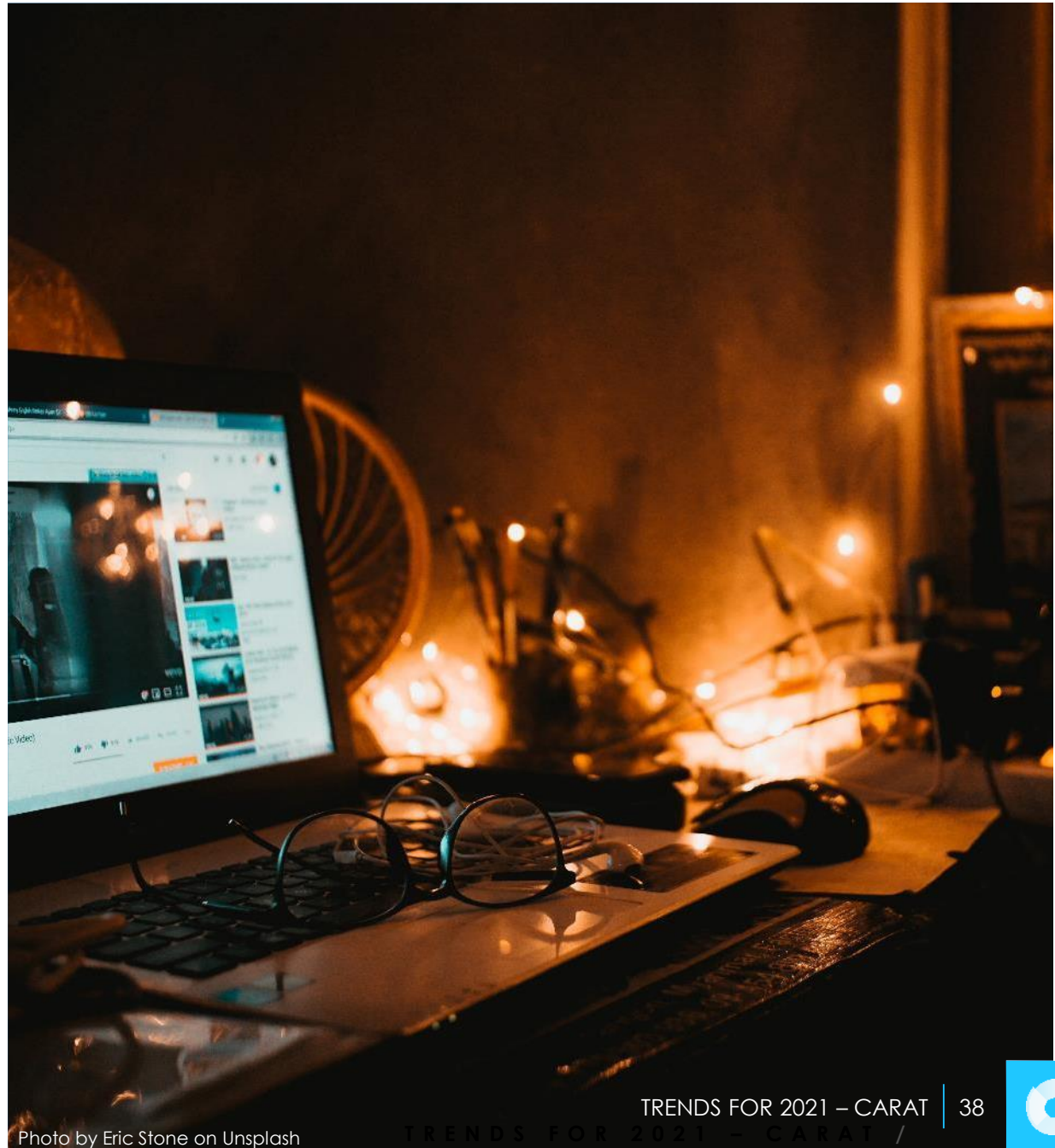




Photo by John Schnobrich on Unsplash

08.

THE DECADE OF PAID

In the next months and years, we will see the failure of publishers and services that cannot successfully balance the mix of subscription and advertising.

There will be more consolidation towards the already successful businesses leaving late-movers in trouble. Quibi is one recent example that shows that the paid model will not work for everyone.

We are also likely to see subscription fatigue – how many services will people be willing to pay for in the long term when you can swap with friends and colleagues. To offset this, we expect to see the emergence of new bundles of content from publishers.



IMPLICATIONS

The move to paid content means that the amount of high quality ad inventory will fall, and brands will need to find other ways to reach customers.

Look for sponsorships, partnerships and ways to integrate messages into content. Find ways to support the good, small, independent publishers who are struggling.

If ad revenues are going to fall for publishers as a result of iOS14, brands will need to actively help the ones that are the best fit with their values to ensure that they stay in business.



RESPONSIBLE MEDIA

09.

There is a greater emphasis on brand safety in advertising, including ensuring messages avoid appearing next to some political views, hate speech and more.

In addition, advertisers also care about societal safety; not just what content their ads is seen near to, but what content, and which points of views their ads are helping to fund.

The rise of video within user-generated content sites and social media has made it harder for content to be moderated using simple tools like keywords. Therefore, brands need to take extra care to understand where their ads are appearing on these platforms.

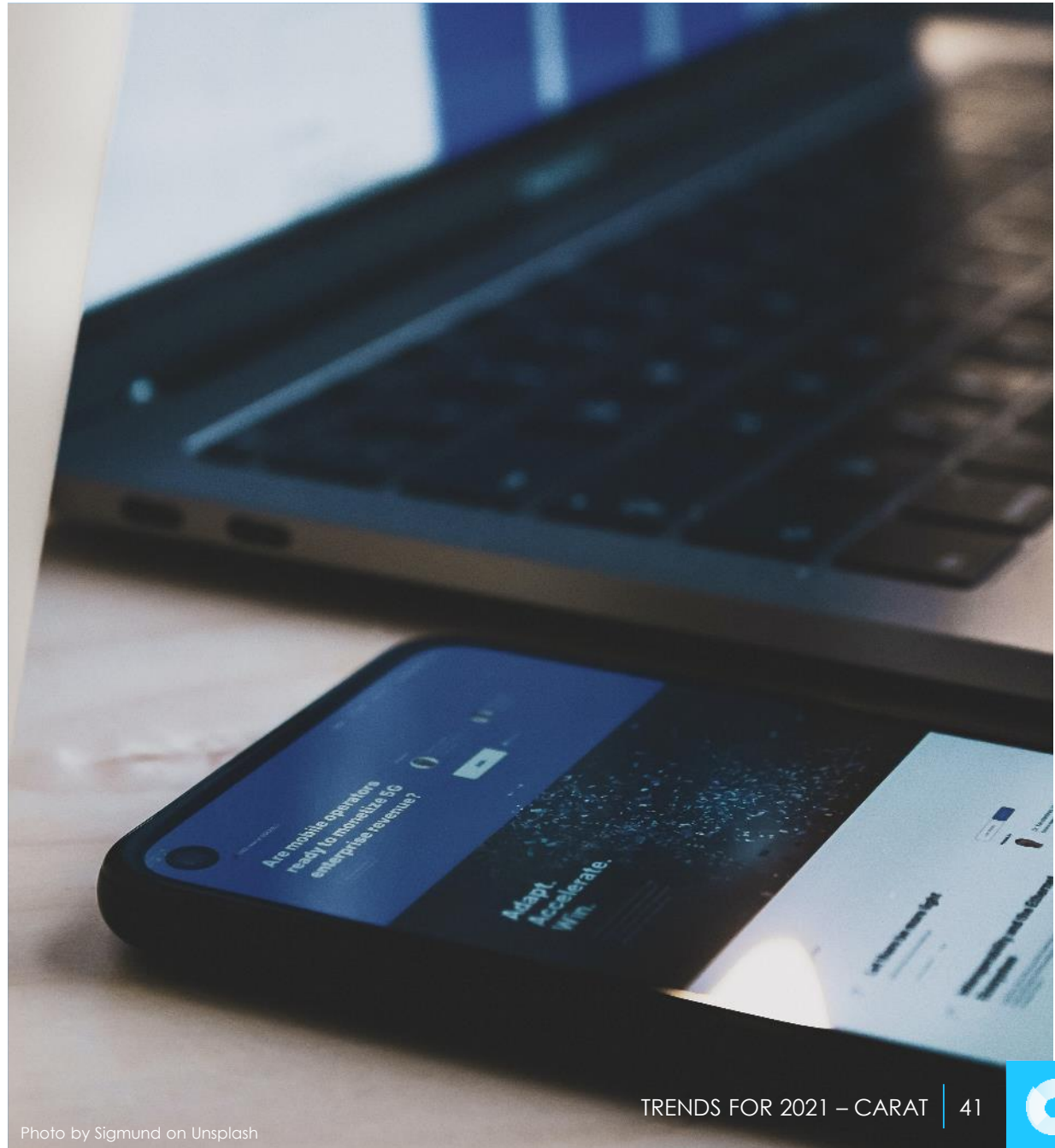




Photo by Andrew Neel on Unsplash

09.

RESPONSIBLE MEDIA

Programmatic advertising and real-time bidding have separated advertising from the media that it appears in, leading to brands having less control over where their ads are appearing and what they are funding.

High profile campaigns from lobby groups like Sleeping Giants have made marketers aware of this and forced them to address these issues.

The industry's response has become more organised with initiatives like GARM (Global Alliance for Responsible Media) from the World Federation of Advertisers.

They have managed to get firm commitments from Facebook and YouTube over monetisation and moderation of content.

RESPONSIBLE MEDIA

09.

Technology companies are likely to have to take much more responsibility for the content on their platforms in the coming years. We are also likely to see a change in the business model from 'it's free, but we will monetise your data', to 'it's free, but you are responsible for what you post, and can share in the monetisation'.

The response to the pandemic has shown that these technology companies can act like media owners and take more control over dangerous content to stop its spread.

Artificial intelligence will help to spot malicious and harmful content, but AI will also make it easier for 'bad actors' to create more of this content, including 'deep fake' videos.

Finally, we hope that the greater responsibility for content does not simply lead to more 'bland' content that no one could find contentious.



IMPLICATIONS

Make sure you know where your ads are appearing, what they are funding and to have a view on what is and is not acceptable to your values.

Take the responsibility to fund a wide range of publishers and media owners, to ensure a wide range of views in the media is viable.

Try to better understand the role of advertising within smaller, more niche content sites, as well as the mass reach channels.



THE METAVERSE

10.

Gaming is evolving to become a much more immersive experience, taking place in never-ending worlds, where players express themselves in a more social way.

The development is taking us closer to the virtual worlds that feature in sci-fi books and films like Ready Player One, where people's characters 'live' in believable alternate worlds.

As gaming becomes more mainstream, games should be seen more as places and spaces where people choose to spend time with friends. This helps explain why gaming grew so much under lockdown, when people could not meet up in real life.

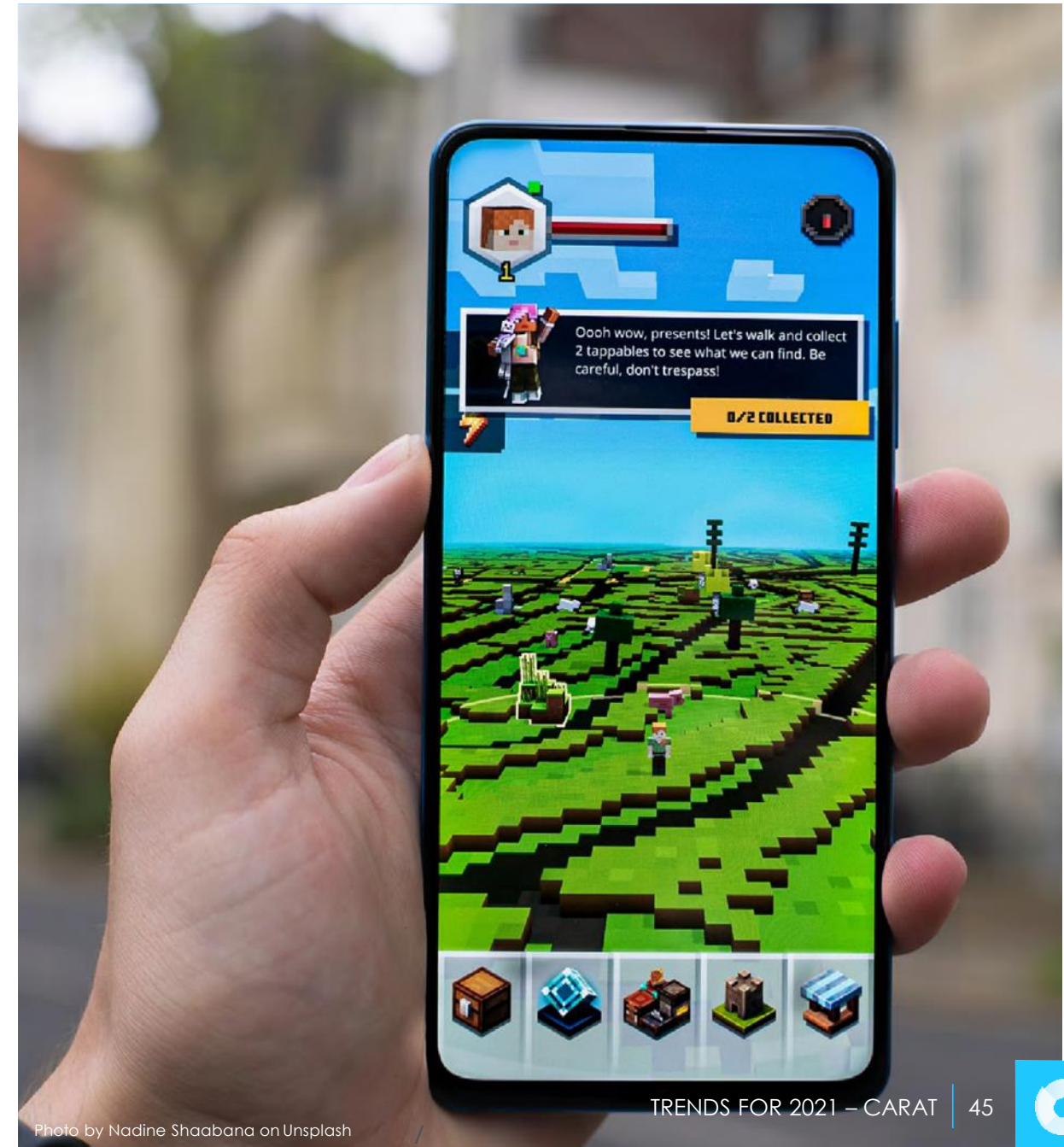




Photo by Clem Onojeghuo on Unsplash

10.

THE METAVERSE

Gaming and social media have been converging for years.

Just as apps like Instagram increased their traction by adding 'gamified' elements like competing with friends on the number of likes and follows that you could get, games like Fortnite have been getting increasingly social through features like messaging.

For example, Fortnite now hosts regular events outside the game for its members, like gigs and films, and recently added a 'no combat' mode where people could just hang out with friends rather than playing the battle royale games.



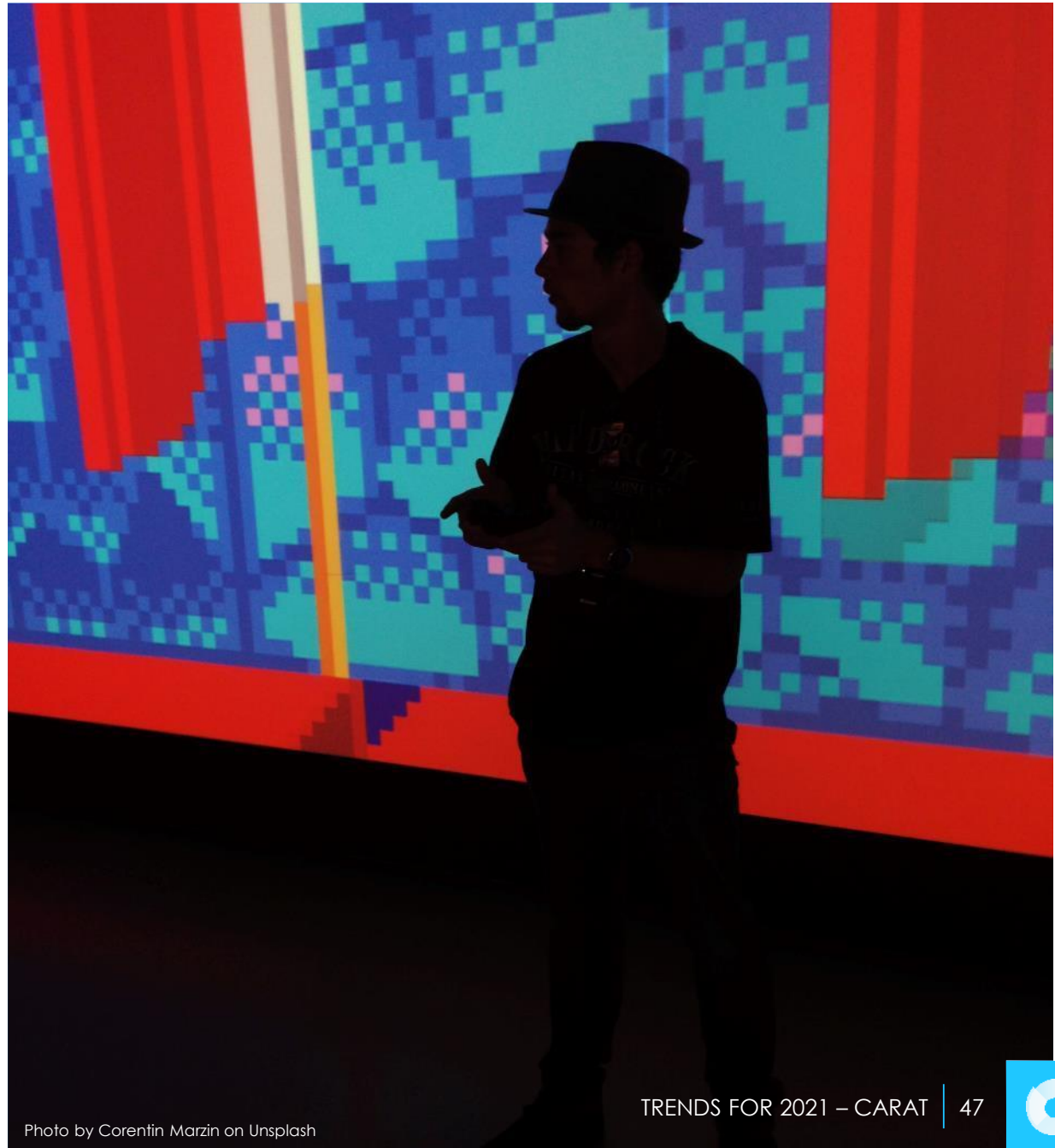
THE METAVERSE

10.

As games become more like social spaces, we expect there to be far more opportunities for brands to get involved.

We are starting to see more in-game advertising, particularly in the free, streamed online games, through companies like Bidstack, where advertisers can target audiences through the same programmatic exchanges that they use with other campaigns.

We also expect commerce to become integrated into the experience. Gamers already have payment set up to buy things within games like 'skins' and equipment, so why not purchase physical goods too?



IMPLICATIONS

Embrace games and eSports as an opportunity to reach audiences – and potentially to sell.

Gaming is now a mainstream medium for many, with usership likely to rise further as people spend more time at home.

Develop a greater understanding of gaming culture and how your brand could fit in.

Examine the increasing parallels with social media; could gaming play a part in social strategies?





Photo by JESHOOOTS.COM on Unsplash

11. SOCIAL SCREENING

Virtual watch parties are events where people watch content together in different locations as if they were all in the same cinema or front room, but watching on their own screens, with built-in channels of communication like voice or text.

Of course, people have unofficially done this for years - ringing friends during sports matches (or tweeting along to reality TV shows) - but we now see the emergence of dedicated services for VOD.

Data from Maru/Matchbox reports that 19% of US internet users have tried a watch party, rising to 33% among 18-34s.



SOCIAL SCREENING

11.

Facebook introduced integrated video watch parties in 2018. Now the feature has recently been added to the video offerings of major players like YouTube and Amazon Prime.

There are many similarities to what Twitch has done to make gaming a collective viewing experience - one person shares his screen, while others click on the link to watch, seeing all the action as it happens live.

Intel reports that 4m people in the UK now watch eSports regularly. It is no surprise that Amazon is combining Twitch with Prime to offer watch parties as a service so that people can also watch movies and TV shows together on the platform.

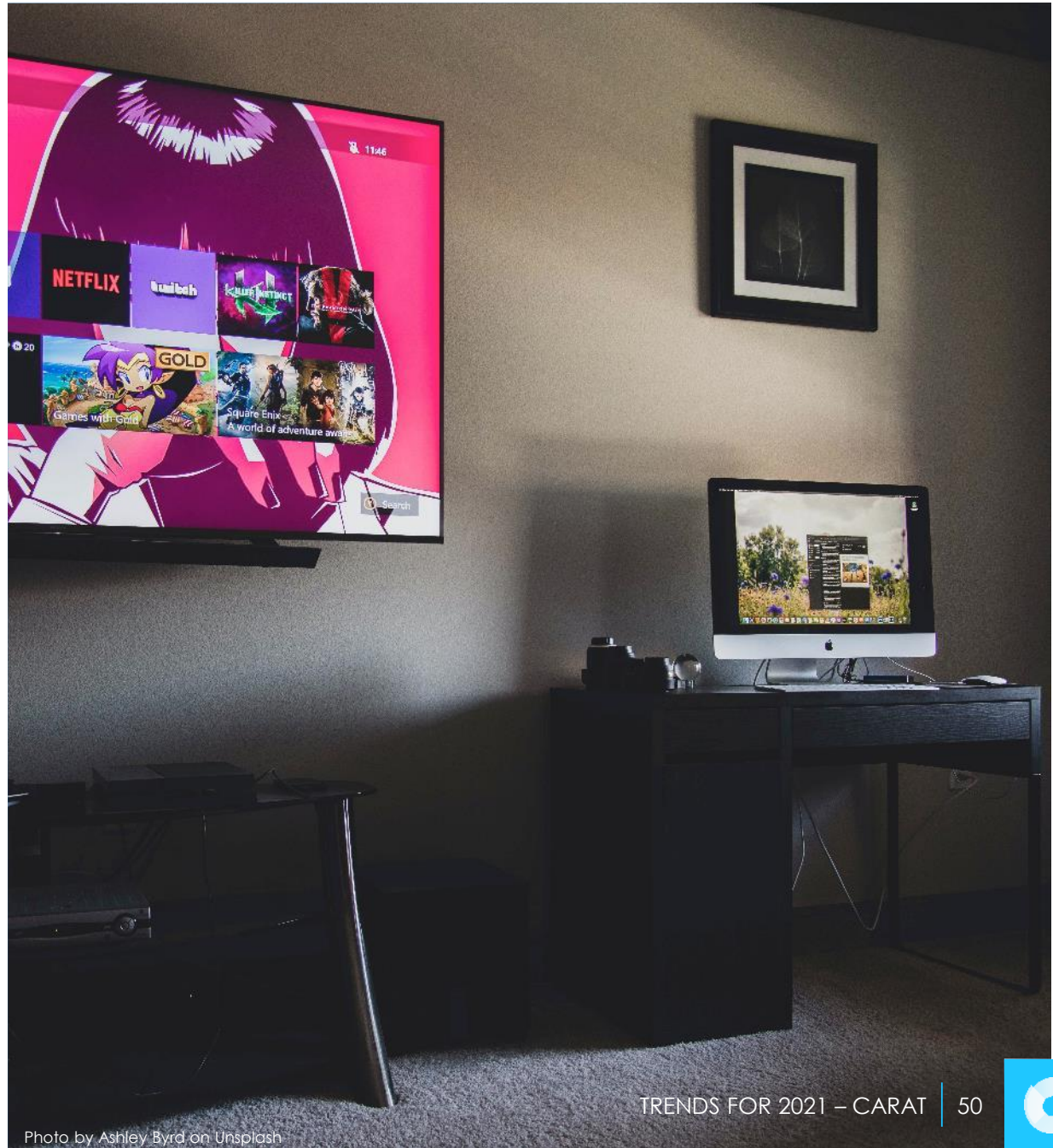




Photo by Dylan Ferreira on Unsplash

11. SOCIAL SCREENING

As people continue to live more remote lives, in more connected homes, we expect these watch parties to grow in popularity.

These could well become alternative activities for separated families and groups of friends. Why have a long weekly call or a Zoom quiz when you could watch a new episode of *The Simpsons* together?

To avoid piracy, content must be legally shareable. Everyone watching must have access; for example, any households watching Amazon Prime content via Twitch need to have a Prime account.

SVOD companies could offer the ability to host watch parties as a (paid) extra feature to members.

IMPLICATIONS

Find out if social screening is something your customers are already doing, and if they would let you join in.

If so, investigate ways to enable events by helping with licences, making special content available, or bringing celebrities and influencers to be part of the party.



CONNECTING THE DOTS

12.

As the big technology companies consolidate their power, they are each building more synergies between their different services.

Google is putting payment into Maps, e.g. for petrol.

Amazon has added Twitch's live streaming to Amazon Music and has used the Twitch technology to create new services like Amazon Explore.

Facebook is increasingly linking all of its services to offer unified tools for eCommerce.

Facebook is sharing features between platforms, like commerce and stories, and is now branding both Instagram and WhatsApp as more obviously from Facebook.

Apple is tying its different services together into bundles.



Photo by Hugh Han on Unsplash

12. CONNECTING THE DOTS

In last year's report, we showed how these companies were increasingly competing with each other in areas like streaming video and gaming.

Connecting the Dots is the next step: each is building on their strengths by linking more of their services together, rather than introducing new, stand-alone products.

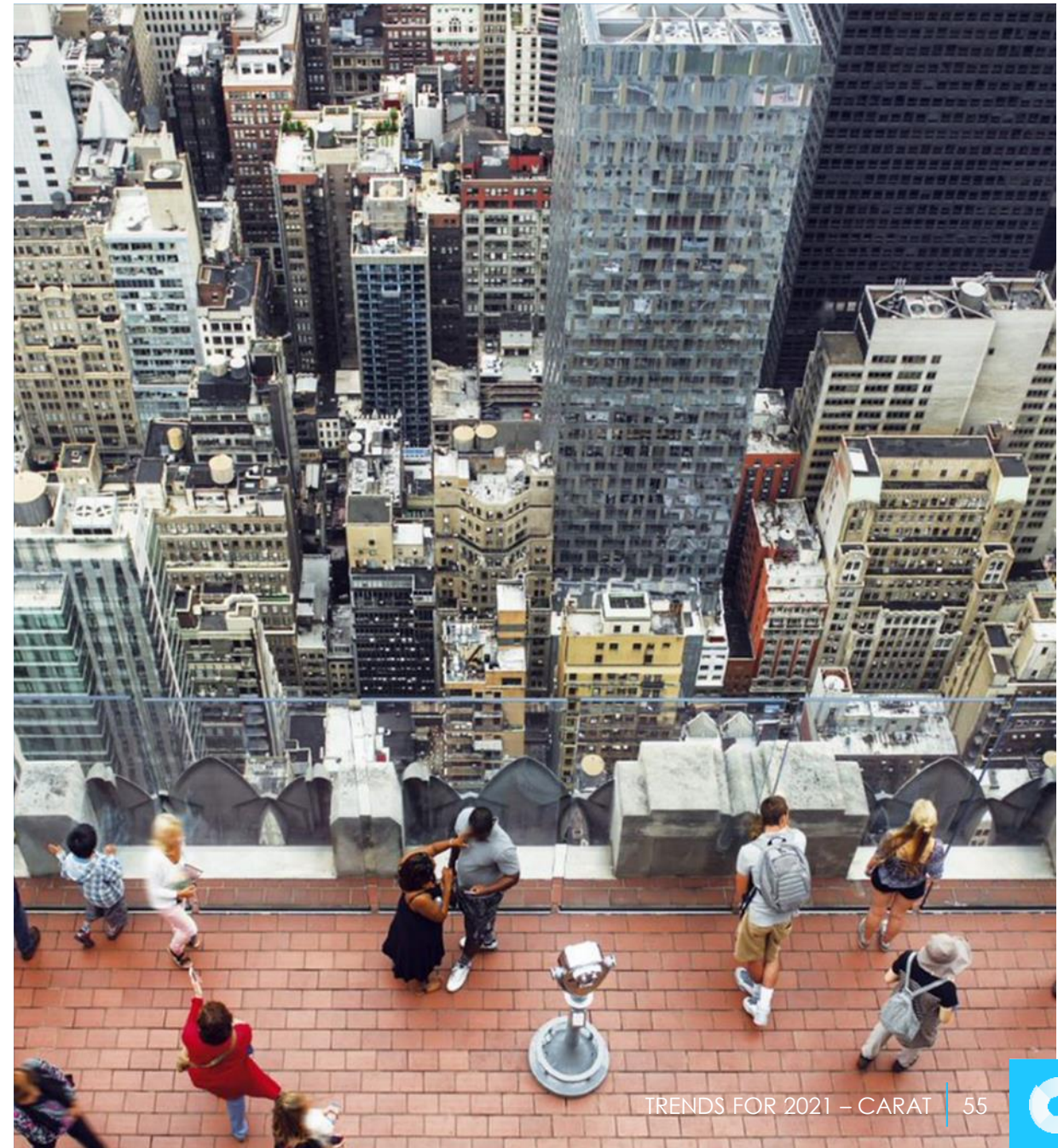
Integrating the services means that the ecosystems become more like 'one-stop shops' for all your needs, rather than a disparate group of apps and sites.

CONNECTING THE DOTS

12.

We expect these companies to continue to connect the dots in increasingly creative ways throughout the next decade. Google will build payment into more of its assets like Chrome, for example, and you will be able to talk to every part of Amazon.

However, there are major stumbling blocks ahead in the shape of regulation and the possibility that these companies will be forced to sell or separate their different divisions.



IMPLICATIONS

Growing synergy will increase the strength of the big technology companies, potentially at the cost of independent third parties like Spotify.

This could mean very integrated ad solutions for brands, with multiple services seamlessly linking together.

But it will also make the technology companies even more like 'frenemies', with control of many of the most valuable tools, and access to the most valuable data.





Imagine the future





SECTION THREE

Now that we have outlined the main trends and patterns that we have noticed, we want to bring inspiration and help you to imagine the future by looking at some of the intersections between the two types of trends.

Many of the trends this year are connected. By examining some of the connections, we should help create new opportunities in our clients' markets and for their audiences.

For example, what happens when you look at the 'Donut Problem' trend in conjunction with the rise of paid content, or the 'Great Divide' with the rise of immersive gaming?



	From FOMO to FOGO	The Donut Problem	Connected Lives	Respecting Privacy	The Great Divide
Camera's New Life	Contactless Media	AR app Hipster Bait combines music discovery and a Pokémon GO style location-based AR experience	Why print installation instructions for products if you can access online tutorials with a QR code?	Cyber security experts warn about QR codes' data privacy hazards. Is your QR experience safe for users?	AR can be a great tool for illustrating issues like diversity. Google used AR to replace the faces on dollar bills with notable women
Screen-free Media	Google is testing voice biometrics for payment. How does voice shopping affect brand names?		Talk to the Ad	Google assistant has introduced guest mode so that your questions aren't saved. What is your brand's version of the incognito mode?	
The Decade of Paid	Disney reached 70 million subscribers in less than a year. Can even a vaccine stop the streaming boom spreading?	Lucrative Local Niches	Several new devices now work on a paid service model. What could you learn from Peloton?	With paid content, there is less need to have ads, so less incentive to sell customers' data. The secret behind the rise of Netflix?	Is it true that paid content is predominantly left/centre leaning?
Responsible Media	Quashing Conspiracies	How can your brand support local communities?	More devices can now carry programmatic advertising. How do your brand's ads fit smartwatches or games consoles?		Is Spotify responsible for what Joe Rogan's guests say on his podcast, as the pod is hosted on Spotify's platform?
The Metaverse	Nintendo's profits tripled in 2020. Which games best align with your brand?		Smart Sweat	While people have identities in games, they generally don't use their real names	Political Battlegrounds
Social Screening	Amazon introduced the virtual watch party feature to game streaming platform Twitch, letting people watch movies from Prime	Virtual Gigs	Watch parties rely on people being able to watch on multiple devices, like phones, laptops, consoles and connected TV's	By taking part in virtual watch parties, you are creating a data footprint, including linking you with interests and friends	
Connecting the Dots	Big Tech's domination of business reaches new heights in the pandemic. What does your brand have that they cannot copy?	Facebook talks about helping small local businesses in its introduction of shopping services	Google, Facebook and Apple will soon launch their smart glasses. How could they enhance the user experience with your brand?	Contextual Identity	Google and Facebook have had to take proactive steps to stop content spreading on their platforms



'FOGO' x 'AR' = CONTACTLESS MEDIA

This is one of the most obvious intersections – the idea of augmented reality as a technology that allows contactless experiences and shopping.

Amazon used AR to bring Halloween to life for US customers by printing pumpkin shapes on their packaging in late October.

Shoppers could scan the pumpkin to see it come to life. It also gave them a great reason to download Amazon's AR app, and then (hopefully) use it for other things.





Photo by ch Claudio Schwarz on Unsplash

‘FOGO’ x ‘RESPONSIBLE MEDIA’ = QUASHING CONSPIRACIES

There is a less obvious link between FOGO and the Responsible Media trend. Still, one example we see is the action that services like Facebook and YouTube have taken to remove false stories around the pandemic.

For example, all social platforms have removed or stopped the spread of the ‘Plandemic’ video and its sequel, which gave dangerous and false information about the virus.

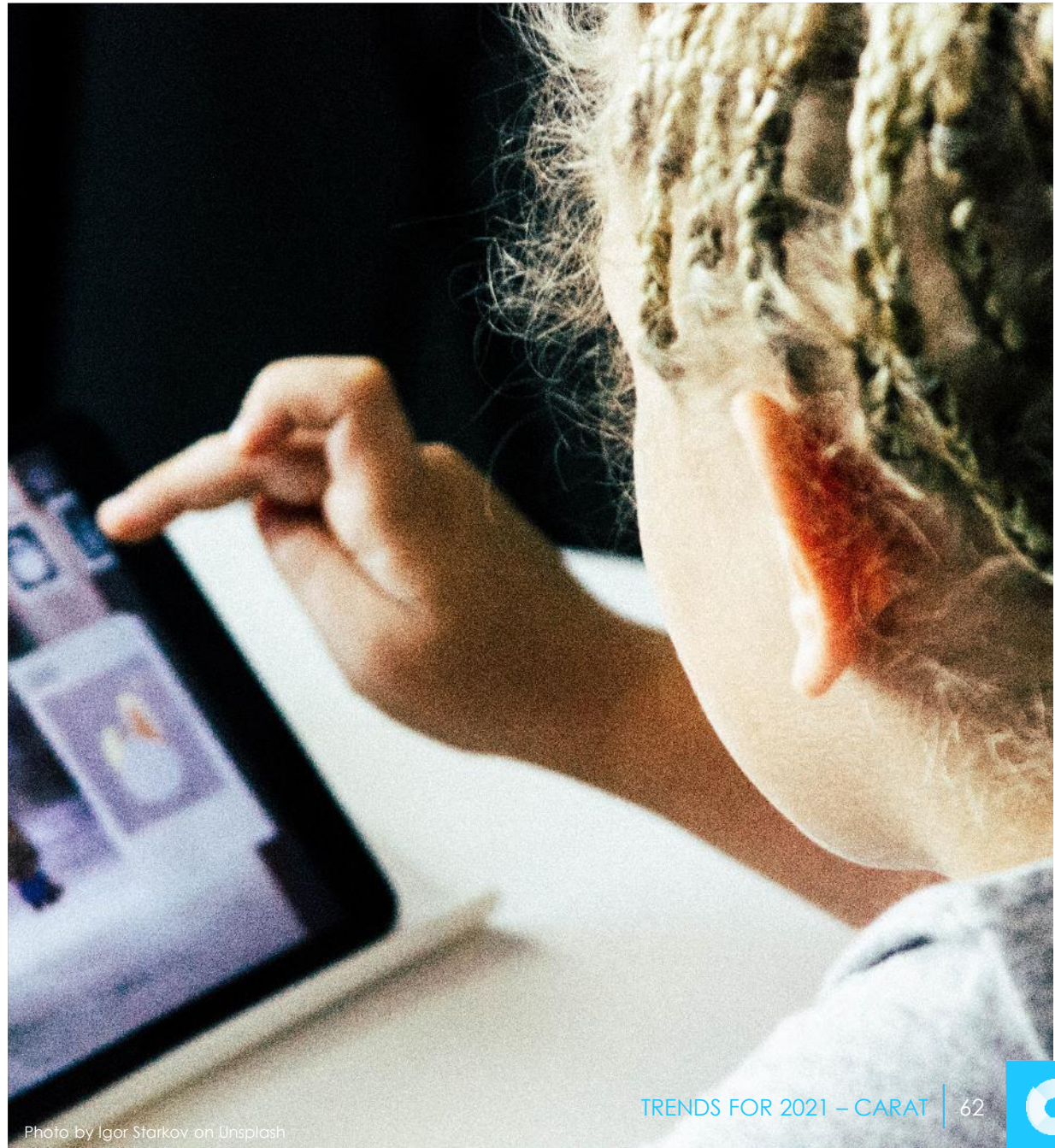


‘DONUT PROBLEM’ x ‘PAID CONTENT’ = LUCRATIVE LOCAL NICHES

Paid content works well for specific niches, including local networks.

One example of this is KidPass, the subscription-based service giving parents access to a curated list of events to help entertain and educate their kids.

It operates in 10 US cities and areas (although the events it promotes are mainly online at the moment).



'RESPECTING PRIVACY' x 'SCREEN FREE MEDIA' = INCOGNITO VOICE SEARCH

The Respecting Privacy trend has many interesting intersections and examples relating to the other trends.

Sometimes these trends contradict. For example, the rise of QR code usage is worrying for some as codes can lead to unsafe links (you can't see in advance where your phone is being directed to).

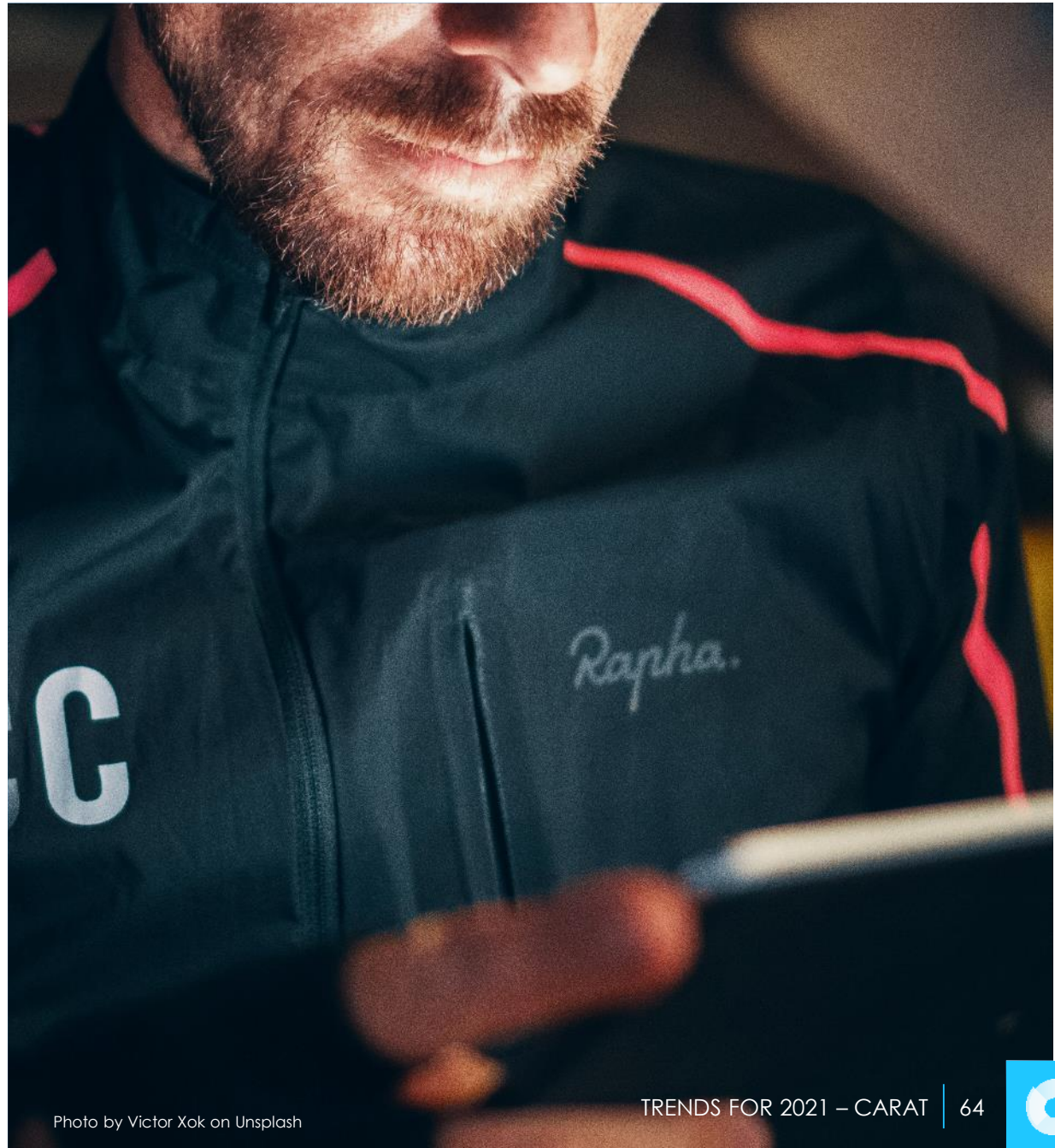
Another, more positive example is how Google has created a 'guest mode' for its voice assistant, where queries you ask are treated as separate to your other searches, protecting your privacy.

'CONNECTED LIVES' x 'THE METaverse' = SMART SWEAT

The Connected Lives trend intersects with many others, as it is all about the rise of multiple devices in our homes.

Its connection with The Metaverse may seem quite obvious – most multiplayer games are accessible from many different devices, with gameplay optimising accordingly.

What is also interesting is the home fitness element. Peloton and Zwift both benefit from aspects of gamification, including leader boards and points. Zwift even presents its workouts as game situations (riding your bike in different terrain, for example), letting users invite their friends to take part in the race.



'THE GREAT DIVIDE' x 'THE METaverse' = POLITICAL BATTLEFIELDS

We can even connect The Great Divide trend with the rise of immersive gaming.

In October, two US politicians, Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez and Ilhan Omar live-streamed a game of Among Us on Twitch, attracting a live audience of over 400,000, and reaching over 5m over the course of the whole game.

Gaming worlds will likely become a significant 'battlefield' for politicians to reach critical demographics with their messages.



BUILD OUT YOUR OWN TRENDS SPRINT

	From FOMO to FOGO	The Donut Problem	Connected Lives	Respecting Privacy	The Great Divide
Camera's New Life	Contactless Media	AR app Hipster Bait combines music discovery and a Pokémon GO style location-based AR experience	Why print installation instructions for products if you can access online tutorials with a QR code?	Cyber security experts warn about QR codes' data privacy hazards. Is your QR experience safe for users?	AR can be a great tool for illustrating issues like diversity. Google used AR to replace the faces on dollar bills with notable women
Screen-free Media	Google is testing voice biometrics for payment. How does voice shopping affect brand names?		Talk to the Ad	Google assistant has introduced guest mode so that your questions aren't saved. What is your brand's version of the incognito mode?	
The Decade of Paid	Disney reached 70 million subscribers in less than a year. Can even a vaccine stop the streaming boom spreading?	Lucrative Local Niches	Several new devices now work on a paid service model. What could you learn from Pelaton?	With paid content, there is less need to have ads, so less incentive to sell customers' data. The secret behind the rise of Netflix?	Is it true that paid content is predominantly left/centre leaning?
Responsible Media	Quashing Conspiracies	How can your brand support local communities?	More devices can now carry programmatic advertising. How do your brand's ads fit smartwatches or games consoles?		Is Spotify responsible for what Joe Rogan's guests say on his podcast, as the pod is hosted on Spotify's platform?
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We now want to inspire you to think about how you can use these trends in your own planning. The matrix we have built out can form the perfect tool for a 2021 Trends Sprint or workshop for you to prototype ideas to test in Q1.

The background reading in this document will give your team the overall background to prepare for a session. Then the structure we are working with will help your facilitators get the most from everyone's creativity.





STEP 1

Download from the team on which individual trends feel most relevant to your consumers, category, and brand. Rank the trends in priority order.

First, which of the long-term trends are likely to have the most impact in the future, creating both challenges and opportunities? Then, which of the shorter-term media and technology trends could be used to bring advantage or create innovative work? Please note you also need to think about geography.

You will need to take into account an understanding of the audience and the local market conditions to ensure that the ranking is based upon where the trends are likely to be applied.



STEP 2

	From FOMO to FOGO	The Donut Problem	Connected Lives	Respecting Privacy	The Great Divide
Camera's New Life					
Screen-free Media					
The Decade of Paid					
Responsible Media					
The Metaverse					
Social Screening					
Connecting the Dots					

Build out your matrix and plot summaries of what you find exciting about each trend in the matrix we have built out for you. Highlight your priority hotspots based on your scoring.





STEP 3

Break the team into Creative Pairs or Trios to generate five quick applications/use cases of the trends in combination. Then bring the whole team back to share their ideas and vote on those to be taken forward to prototyping and building out ideas to test.

Each team should present their use cases via a common format. For example:

The name:

The specific application of the trends:

Scalability:

Our right to play





STEP 4

Final vote on the most exciting ideas and assignment of ownership of next steps.

ABOUT CARAT

Most recently named a leader amongst global media agencies by Forrester, Carat is consistently ranked the #1 media agency in the world with over 12,000 experts, operating across 190+ offices in 135+ countries. Carat delivers an unparalleled capability to unlock real human understanding to connect people and brands by designing powerful and engaging media experiences. Carat is a dentsu company and privileged to work with some of the most storied and innovative brands in the world.

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