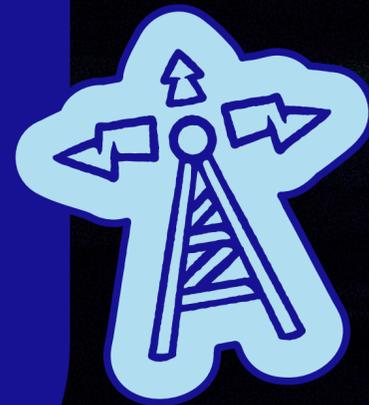


WEEKLY TRENDS REPORT



Monday 23 February 2026

THIS WEEK'S FORECAST



Micro trend



Macro trend

Icon Glossary

Difficult to action

Easy to action



Winter Olympic pins



Dirty fashion



Cool guys have boy bangs



Boy kibble



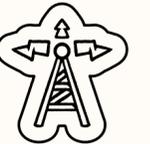
AI friction



Under the new influence



Trending



News you should know



On the up



Cancelled



It's gonna be big



That's the tea



Sustainability



Consumer habit



TikTok trend



Be quick

FOR YOUR INFO



This week's dates & microtrends

TikTok trends

Transforming into a [historically accurate Bebot](#).
[Winter Olympics pin trading](#). Can we please get one?! We'll give you a Forecast pin.

ICYMI

Pikawhat? Logan Paul [sold his Pikachu card for \\$16.49 million](#).

Barack Obama [almost confirmed aliens are real](#). We're pretty sure *Mars Attacks* was a documentary?

Phrase of the week

["Cool guys have boy bangs now"](#). Fades fade away as bangs are the hot new style. Think unkempt Beatles 'do.

Digi updates

Meta-glasses are creating anxiety [for students](#) and [restaurants](#) while earbuds are [indistinguishable for fashion pieces](#).

A pop-up for [speed dating AI companions](#).
[Romance isn't dead yet...](#)

Tea of the week

"The whole spirit of curling is dead". The [Canada-Sweden curling beef](#).

What we're loving

80-year-old Labi Siffre's beautiful rendition of his hits at the [BBC Radio 2 Piano Room](#) and announces [a new album after 28 years!](#)

Hackers are turning [dead vapes into musical instruments](#). Now that's good for your lungs!

Established trends

Gen Z are using [side hustles as a creative outlet](#), but [competition is tough](#).

[Public breakups are good for business](#). We prefer getting dumped at a park, it's cheaper.

Insights of the week

An investigation into the [toxic side of run clubs](#).

[AI insiders and outsiders are feeling helpless](#). Skynet is inevitable.

On our radar



Scream 7 – 27 February



Scrubs: Season 10 – 25 February
Monarch: Legacy of Monsters – 27 February



BlackPink: Deadline – 27 February
Bruno Mars: The Romantic – 27 February
Gorillaz: The Mountain – 27 February
Mitski: Nothing's about to happen to me – 27 February

Weekly doses of cute

[Pints and ponytails](#), [cute baking](#), [I love you 26 times](#) and [Labubu puffers](#).

Rising trend

The intense popularity of fragrances [led to perfume clubs](#). Now we can really smell like Nirvana.

The future

The [viral AI stunt fight videos all over X](#). We prefer our fight scenes to have visible stunt doubles.

Stat of the week

[One in four people have Achoo syndrome](#), sneezing from intense sunlight. Good thing we're in Glasgow! There's never any sun!

Ones to watch

The [Hannah Montana 20th anniversary](#) has been announced. Screaming, crying, throwing up.

Pitbull's Hyde Park concert will attempt to have the [world record of largest gathering](#) of people in bald caps. Dale!

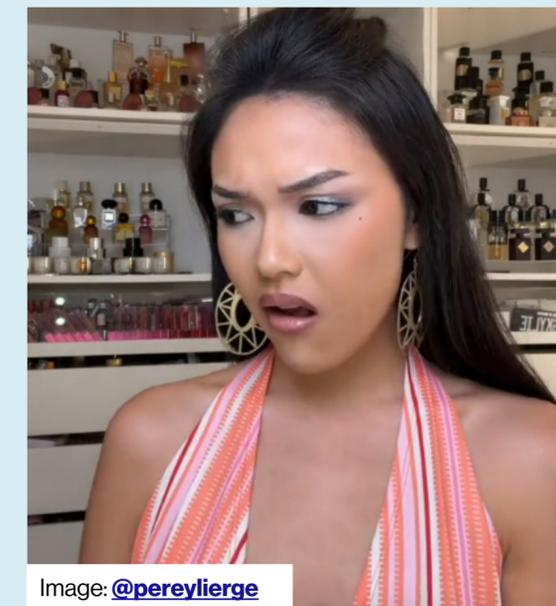


Image: [@pereylierge](#)

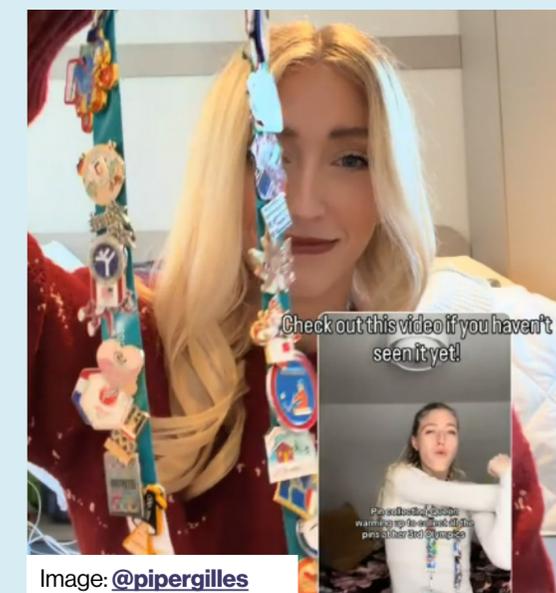


Image: [@pipergilles](#)



Image: [BBC Music](#)

TREND TRACKING



How some of the trends we've identified have evolved in recent months

Boy kibble



The male version of girl dinner has arrived – dubbed **boy kibble** – with all the joy removed from it. Tapping into self-optimisation and lock-in culture, boy kibble has emerged as the fuel for high performers, rebranding diet culture once primarily aimed at women as a “masculine, desirable behaviour”. Creators share their high-protein boy kibble bro meals, usually comprising some kind of ground meat, rice and veg mixed together and served in a bowl. Semiotics is important here, with one **expert noting** that; “The use of the word “boy” helps “soften what could be perceived as toxically masculine consumptive behaviours”, bringing a layer of **irony and play**. For some, boy kibble is just another hack in an increasingly frictionless life, removing the slow pleasure and making eating yet another system to be streamlined.

Trend: Evolving masculinity

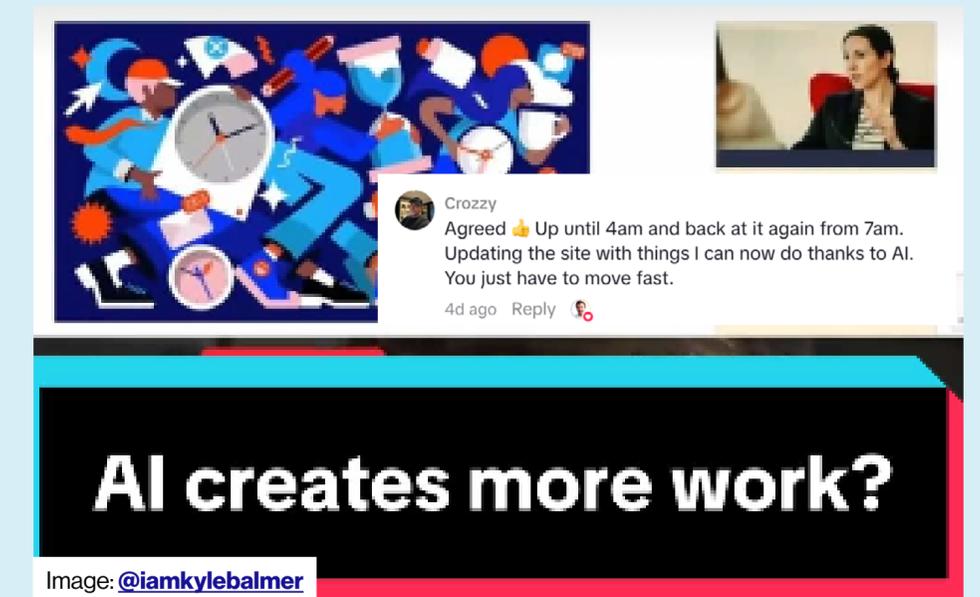
Dirty fashion



The recent menswear fashion month showed a move towards more lived-in fabrics and designs. Analysis from **Edited** found a rise in crushed cottons, unironed fabrics and crinkled textures. Designers like Prada are trying to **make stains desirable** with dirty-looking cuffs and Nike released a **dirtied shoe**. With growing pushback against ‘clean girl’ looks and a call for 2026 to be the **‘year of the party’**, grungier styles signal a life well lived, not enjoyed through a screen. It chimes with a wider trend that’s been called the **‘anti-algorithm aesthetic’**, where handmade embellishment, like needlepoint, is gaining prominence as a hallmark of items that exist “outside the cloud, untouched by algorithms or filters.”

Trend: At your inconvenience

AI friction



New research from **UC Berkeley** has found that workplaces which adopted advanced AI technology haven’t liberated employees from tasks, they’ve actually added more intensity instead. Workers are now expected to perform tasks outside their remits, in turn expanding time spent working, increasing multi-tasking and bleeding into personal time – all contributing to fatigue and burnout longer term. The researchers said; “The productivity surge enjoyed at the beginning can give way to lower quality work, turnover, and other problems.” Essentially, AI is making it easier to do more, but harder to stop.

Trend: Gen Z @ Work

UNDER THE NEW INFLUENCE

The soft power of cultural exports

Bad Bunny's halftime show struck a chord - requests for Spanish lessons spiked on Duolingo



Image: [independent](#) Bad Bunny's performance will be the most-watched Super Bowl halftime show in history



My take on the trend of being "Chinese"

Image: [@angelashanhu](#)



Image: [@itsjackg](#)

From 'guochao' to 'zixin': A new era of cultural confidence emerges

'Guochao' made Chinese brands fashionable; 'zixin' makes them foundational. Today's consumers buy culture, heritage, and identity —

Image: [jingdaily](#)

Weber Forecast Insight

The strongest examples come from brands who leverage cultural signals but do it with respect and deep understanding. Surface-level appropriation is obvious but genuine engagement with local practices, language and narratives resonates.

Monoculture is dead but multiculture is thriving. Non-English cultures are ushering in a new era of trends, influencing everything we're consuming from music to fashion to habits to language. The English-speaking side of social media has been long dominated by Americans but with recent "turbulences", the rest of the world is looking elsewhere. Where else but the most spoken languages in the world: Spanish and Mandarin.

All things Chinese are in high demand. The recent trend of "I'm at a very Chinese time of my life" became a wholesome sharing of wellness tips. These mundane habits are a part of the [perception change of China](#), [Labubus were of course the biggest export](#) but we're seeing more demand for [hyperlocal exports](#). The [Adidas Tang jacket was everywhere](#) on our FYPs, with demand being so high that the jacket was [released in western markets](#). The animated film [Ne Zha 2 made \\$2.2 billion in box office](#) and became the fifth highest

grossing film of all time. iShowSpeed showed his young viewers [new potential holiday destinations](#). 'Made in China' has become a source of pride rather than a slight in quality.

On the other side of the world, in the lead up to Bad Bunny's Super Bowl half-time Show, social media users took the opportunity to [learn Spanish alongside his music](#) so to understand the fully Spanish half-time show. Rosalia's multilingual album Lux, Kneecap's fully Gaelic rap, and of course K-Pop are evidence that [language is no longer a limiting factor](#), and consumers are hungry for cultural authenticity.

However, the line between cultural appropriation and cultural appreciation is narrow for non-local consumers – there's numerous examples of culture being [appropriated by ill-informed influencers and ignorant commentators](#). Don't be like them, flex your own cultural pride!

WANT TO KNOW WHAT ELSE IS ON THE HORIZON?

Talk to us for:

Reports

Our **'Signals'** reports provide deep dive insights and implications for your brand, audience or category.

Workshops

Our own **'Culture Collider'** workshop methodology approaches briefs through the lens of cultural trends to help teams create culture first ideas.



Picture: Pexels

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