

WEEKLY TRENDS REPORT

Friday 27 February 2026



THIS WEEK'S FORECAST



Micro trend



Macro trend

Icon Glossary

Difficult to action

Easy to action

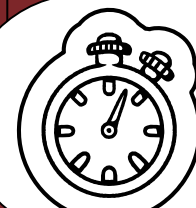
 The AI thought exercise

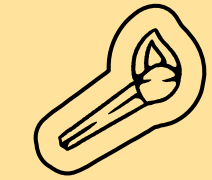
 It ain't that deep

 Content to be bored

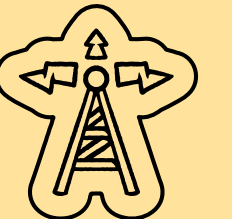
 Monster appeal

 The Toolbelt Generation

 Punch, the Monkey



Trending



News you should know



On the up



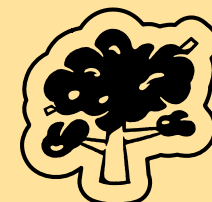
Cancelled



It's gonna be big



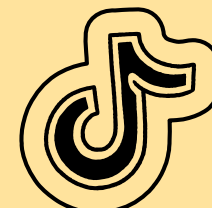
That's the tea



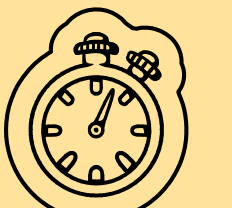
Sustainability



Consumer habit



TikTok trend



Be quick

FOR YOUR INFO



This week's dates & microtrends

TikTok trends

We think we speak for everyone when we say we would die for [Punch, the Monkey](#).

Are you lucky enough to not know anything about [Clavicular](#)?

ICYMI

The boys are fighting. Sam Altman and Dario Amodei (AI rivals) [refused to clasp hands](#).

[Ex-CIA whistleblower's insane stories](#) propel him to internet fame.

Phrase of the week

["Girls Who Love Boys Who Love Boys"](#) A deep dive into the history of 'fujoshi' and the impact of fan fiction on modern society.

Digi updates

Countries around the world are weighing the decision to [ban teens from social media](#).

What goes into [being #1 on the App store](#)?

Tea of the week

[K-POP FOREVER](#). The party's over as parents discover that K-pop is a genre of music.

What we're loving

A storybook ending, [Alysa Liu wins](#) the figure skating gold medal. That's our GOAT!

New queen of pop. We've been [bumping Minnie Mouse's Galentine anthem](#) nonstop.

Scotland fans have been [approved](#) to wear sporrans to the World Cup!

Established trends

Show off your grapple technique and your charm with [wrestling speed dating](#).

The kids are alright. Photographed portraits of what [Gen Alphas are obsessed with](#).

Insights of the week

Retiring farmers have [no one to inherit the farm to](#). The end of the generational dream.

The Girl Boss era is gone, enter ["Burnout Feminism"](#).

On our radar



The Bride! – 06 March
Hoppers – 06 March



Daredevil: Born Again S2 – 04 March
Outlander S8 – 06 March



Harry Styles: KATTD0 – 06 March



Resident Evil: Requiem – 27 February
Marathon – 05 March

Weekly doses of cute

The [sweetest voice mail](#), [Nazgul the dog goes for a run](#), [Woody is balding](#) and [Paddington at the BAFTAs](#).

Rising trends

The next frontier of travel, [sleepcations](#) and [hotel bakeries](#).

With the release of *Love Story*, everyone's once again obsessed with [the style of the iconic couple](#). Are [JFK Jr. edits](#) bringing back biking everywhere?

The future

An [AI thought exercise](#) crashed [the stock market](#).

Stat of the week

From 2020 to 2025, [254 new K-pop girl groups debuted](#), outpacing the 186 new boy groups. We are a stan of approximately all of them.

One to watch

The [stop motion Lego YouTube chat show](#) starring the voices of the next generation of musicians.



Image: [@mstockers1](#)



Image: [@BAFTA](#)



Image: [@kim_reuters_photojournalist](#)

TREND TRACKING



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

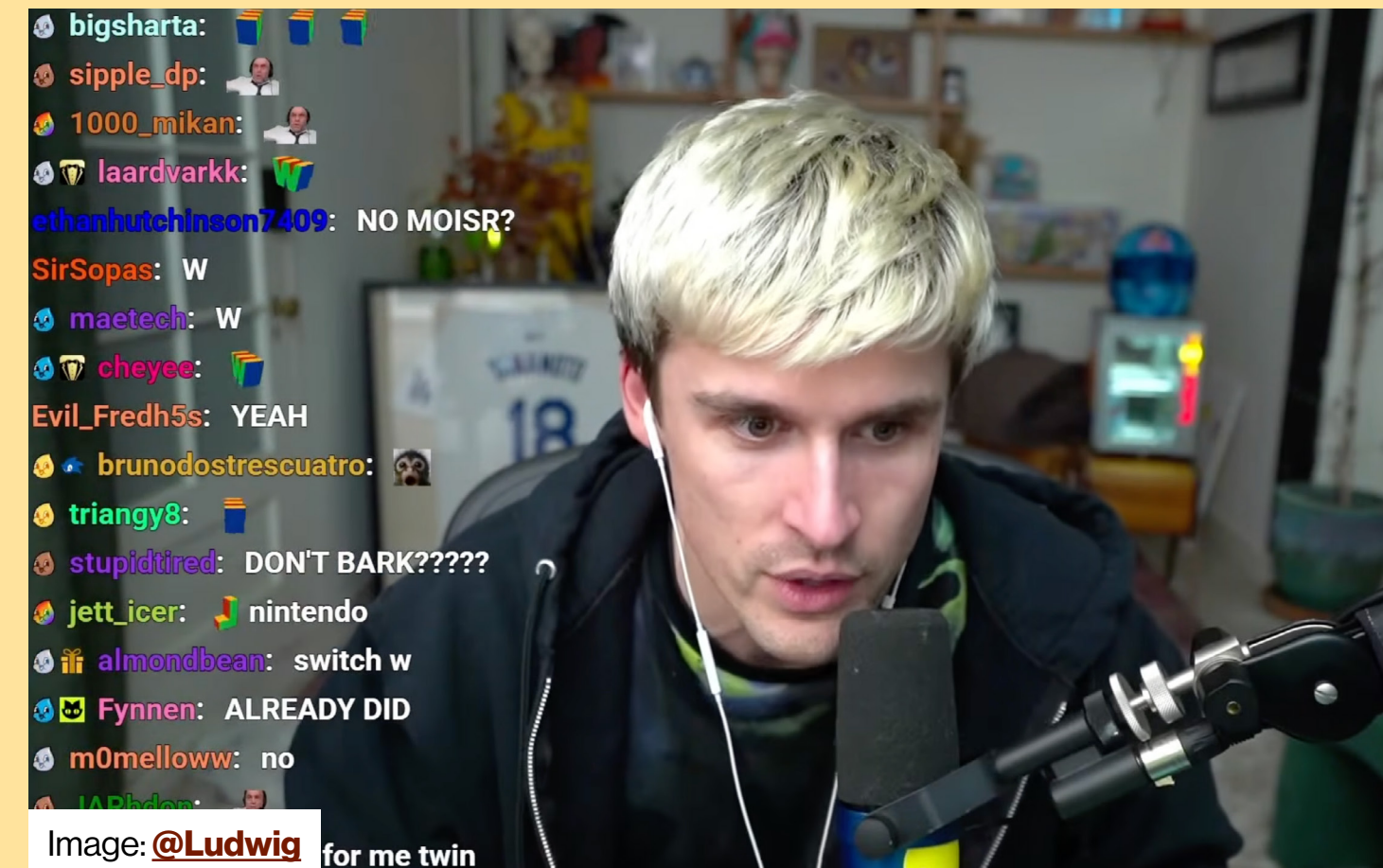
It ain't that deep



Welcome to the **Annoyance Economy**, a new term that describes “the steady grind of small hassles that eat away at our time, patience, and wallets,” turning simple interactions into “fraught ordeals, leaving people feeling overwhelmed, ignored, or jerked around.” We’re all feeling overwhelmed with small hassles and one small infraction can spell D O O M. A **viral TikTok account** posts reminders to give people grace and that small setbacks don't have to ruin our day. The only thing more powerful than hate is love.

Trend: An Air of Chalance

Boring content



Audiences are being drawn to “Just Chatting”, the most popular live-streaming format on **Twitch, Kick** and YouTube, where the streamer would sit in front of a camera and chat to their audiences for hours. The familiar format evolved from call-in-shows from the 70s to the 24-hour reality shows from the 2000's. There is a constant desire to fill the silent gaps in our lives with background TV or music to avoid feeling lonely. The presence of a community and routine around a “Just Chatting” stream is an advantage over other ambient content. The appeal lies in watching someone else go through the mundane of life, a rejection of the over-edited curated lives on social media. **“The nothing is what makes the something feel real”**. This change in consumption ties into the huge popularity of video podcasts, **we're all this vintage meme**.

Trend: Appointment TV is back

The Toolbelt Generation



To combat the blue-collar workforce crisis, **Ford has partnered with Carhartt** to offer free Carhartt workwear and lending services for tools. This comes as AI's looming shadow pushes the next generation to **opt for trade-school and AI-proof jobs**, causing workwear clothing brands to **benefit from this boom**. The status of being a trade blue-collar worker has flipped, driven by high demand and the undeniable 'swag factor' of wearing a Detroit jacket. Thank the guy with a moustache you always see wearing full Carhartt.

Trend: Gen Z want security

So you're attracted to Frankenstein's monster. Now what?

"I'm not sexualising him, I just find him very attractive."

Image: [Glamour](#)



Image: [@pisskel](#)



Image: [@clarkes_capers](#)



Image: [@kfrbsart](#)



MONSTER APPEAL

No, it's not just a phase!!!



People are growing cynical of real-world romance and embracing their darker, fantastical desires instead.

Enter the horror movie hottie. There's been no shortage of hulking monster to choose from recently. Count Orlok, Jacob Elordi's creature from Frankenstein, Vecna from Stranger Things, the Ghoul from Fallout - which Walton Goggins himself agreed was "kinda sexy". Even cartoon monsters are being thirsted over (Megamind? Turns out it's **not just us**).

If the thought of the above has left you with butterflies, you could be a teratophilic. According to [GQ](#), it's on the up. Once niche Reddit forums like r/teratophiliacs (43,000 members) are growing, buoyed by recent horror films, fantasy TV series and BookTok genres like paranormal romance and vampire smut. Private desires are going mainstream - leading fantasy adult toy producer Bad Dragon is **reportedly shipping** up to 2,000 packages daily.

Experts say the appeal of monsters is because they're seen as outsiders. They've been cast off and rejected, forming a dark mysteriousness that human nature draws us toward. Some monster-lovers identify themselves with this sense of otherness. Others turn to monsters as a reminder that we're all capable of humanity at a time when inhumane acts are happening all around us. If a monster can exhibit non-awful qualities, humans can too.

There's also, as put by [Glamour](#); "the heteropessimism of it all. Because, ultimately, if you're going to commit the embarrassing act of having a boyfriend, at least make sure he's really, really interesting and not like the other boys."

However, there are limits. **The Harkness Test** determines which creatures are appropriate to swoon over.

Weber Forecast Insight

Brands that position themselves as outsiders or challengers (misfits, rule-breakers, offbeat) can tap into this emotional alignment. Audiences are bored of normality and craving intensity, so lean into the fantastical, OTT performance of it all.

BRANDWATCH



Inspiring creative from around the world

Dove



Image: @dove

Dove just said forget the glossy beauty ads and went direct to the internet's most brutal judges: the **people of Reddit**. Taking both the good, the bad, and the ugly comments, Dove **plastered them** across NYC for everyone to see keeping true to their mission of honest beauty advertising. By amplifying real voices, this is community-led storytelling at its finest.

Zara



Image: Zara

Forget 2016. Zara is going all the way back to 2006. With Hannah Montana's 20th Anniversary in March, the high-street fashion brand is serving **bedazzled tees** to get us ready for the best of both worlds. Creating a **social media frenzy** with older Gen Z and millennials alike, Zara is taking advantage of this cultural nostalgic moment ahead of the pack driving in-store footfall for people dropping by 'just to check' if it's in stock. Now this is the life... hold on tight (iykyk).

IKEA



Image: @ikeaswitzerland

No, because what do you mean this isn't the cutest piece of reactive marketing?! With the internet falling in love with baby monkey Punch, IKEA jumped straight into the moment by **recreating the viral scene**. With Punch and his **orangutan friend** going viral, IKEA's playful response not only tapped into a cultural trend but also sent the featured toy **flying off the shelves** - a win-win for brand love and sales.

Spotify x Liquid Death

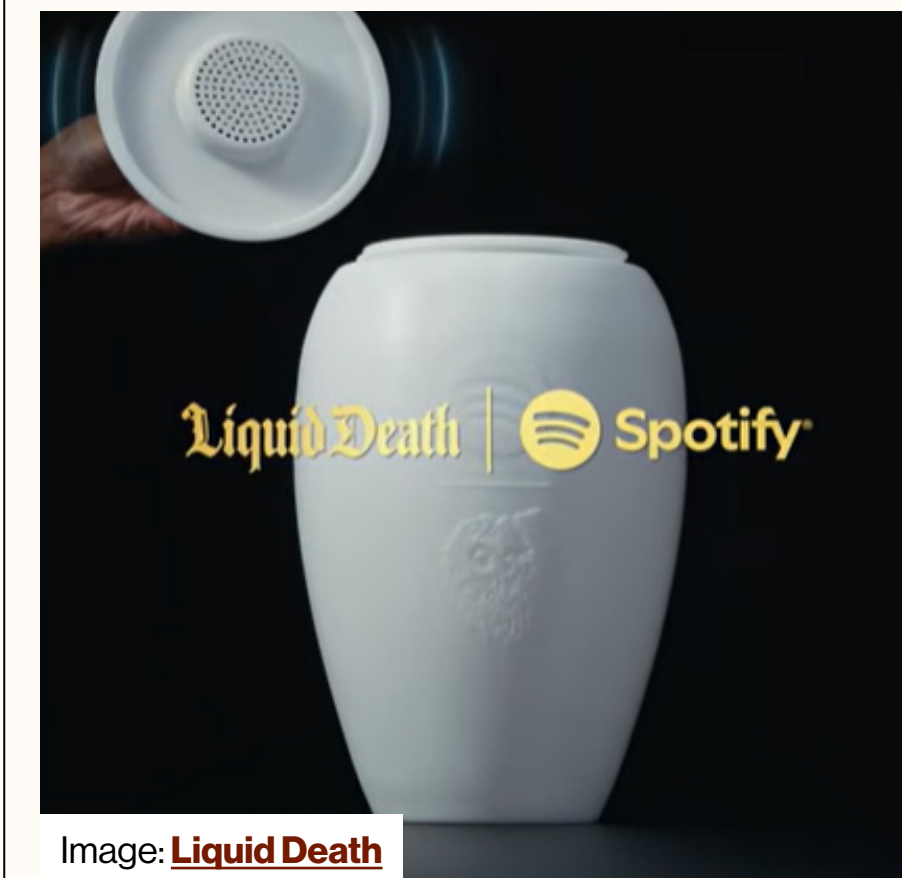


Image: Liquid Death

So, I think we have found the strangest collab of 2026 and it's not even March! Spotify and beverage company Liquid Death have joined forces to give us the **Eternal Playlist Urn**... Yep, you read that right. This fully functioning urn doubles as a wireless speaker. Avid listeners can also create their own customised **playlist for the afterlife** on Spotify. This completely absurd concept is social media gold with its instant shareability. Rest in beats.

MAAP x P.A.M



Image: @maap.cc

MAAP and Perks and Mini are back at it, blasting off into their fourth cosmic collab with "**Outer Terrestrial Space Travel**". This capsule fuses MAAP's ultra-technical performance engineering with Perks and Mini's wonderfully weird, "psy-activated" graphics. Think pro-grade jerseys, bibs, and wind jackets that look out of this world. Nailing the "serious performance meets playful chaos" sweet spot, this collab extends beyond the bike, keeping it lifestyle-drive rather than niche. That's pretty cosmic if you ask us.

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.

Get in touch at weberforecast@webershandwick.com



Pictured: Unsplash

