



PARADIGM SHIFT

FUTURE OF  
STORYTELLING  
& ENGAGEMENT



# Foreword

**Stories matter.** They connect us to each other. They offer insight and perspective into other experiences. They challenge our preconceptions, open doors to escape our day to day, and access to lost histories.


In a world where people scroll past your comms, walk past your adverts or blank your collection buckets, how do you get people to pause and consider? How do you connect with them and motivate them to join your mission and support your cause? How do you look past the sledgehammer of demographics to understand and speak to the individual?

The most powerful asset you hold are your stories. By putting storytelling at the heart of everything you create you can increase visibility, stand out from the crowd and speak to those who connect with your voice. Real stories, sometimes filmed on a phone, sometimes told in a tweet, that communicate the change possible or impact created by supporting a charity.

Real stories matter. Your stories matter. Your stories have the power to connect communities, to motivate people and to drive change. Your stories can change the world.

Welcome to the future of storytelling.

**Daisy O'Reilly-Weinstock**  
Director of Big Bets



“Stories have been used to dispossess and to malign. But stories can also be used to empower, and to humanise. Stories can break the dignity of a people. But stories can also repair that broken dignity.”

**Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie**  
*Author*



Welcome to

# PARADIGM SHIFT

The Paradigm Shift is an opportunity to travel deeper down the rabbit hole to focus on a **single macro trend**.

In each report we take a look back to look forward to see how the paradigm *might* change and **what that means for you and your organisation, and your supporters**. All framed within the lens of income and impact.

# The **Paradigm Shift** Methodology

Combining rigorous analysis of a wealth of secondary data, deep client sector insight and imaginative thinking, we unpack the **macro trend** in detail, and develop a series of potential, plausible future scenarios. We then outline what these might mean for the third sector.

## **Evidence based**

Built on evidence-based secondary research and available case studies.

## **Multiple lenses**

Using a range of lenses to consider each piece of research and understand the potential implications, including STEEPLE (Societal, Technological, Economic, Environmental, Political, Legal, and Ethical).

## **Imaginative but level-headed**

Drawing on trend and foresight expertise to develop a series of hypotheses around future societal shifts and scenarios. We're imaginative but also pragmatic.

## **Bespoke for the sector**

Developed for the sector, not from the sector - uniting an expert view on the world outside, and a firm grasp of the challenges faced within. Our team combines foresight and trends experts with charity sector specialists.

## **Gets to the 'so what'**

Considers the implications and opportunities from each shift for the sector articulating a clear '**so what**' to get your thinking started.

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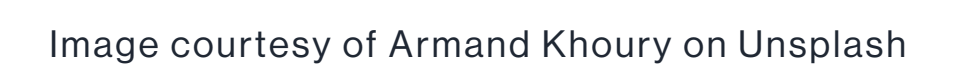
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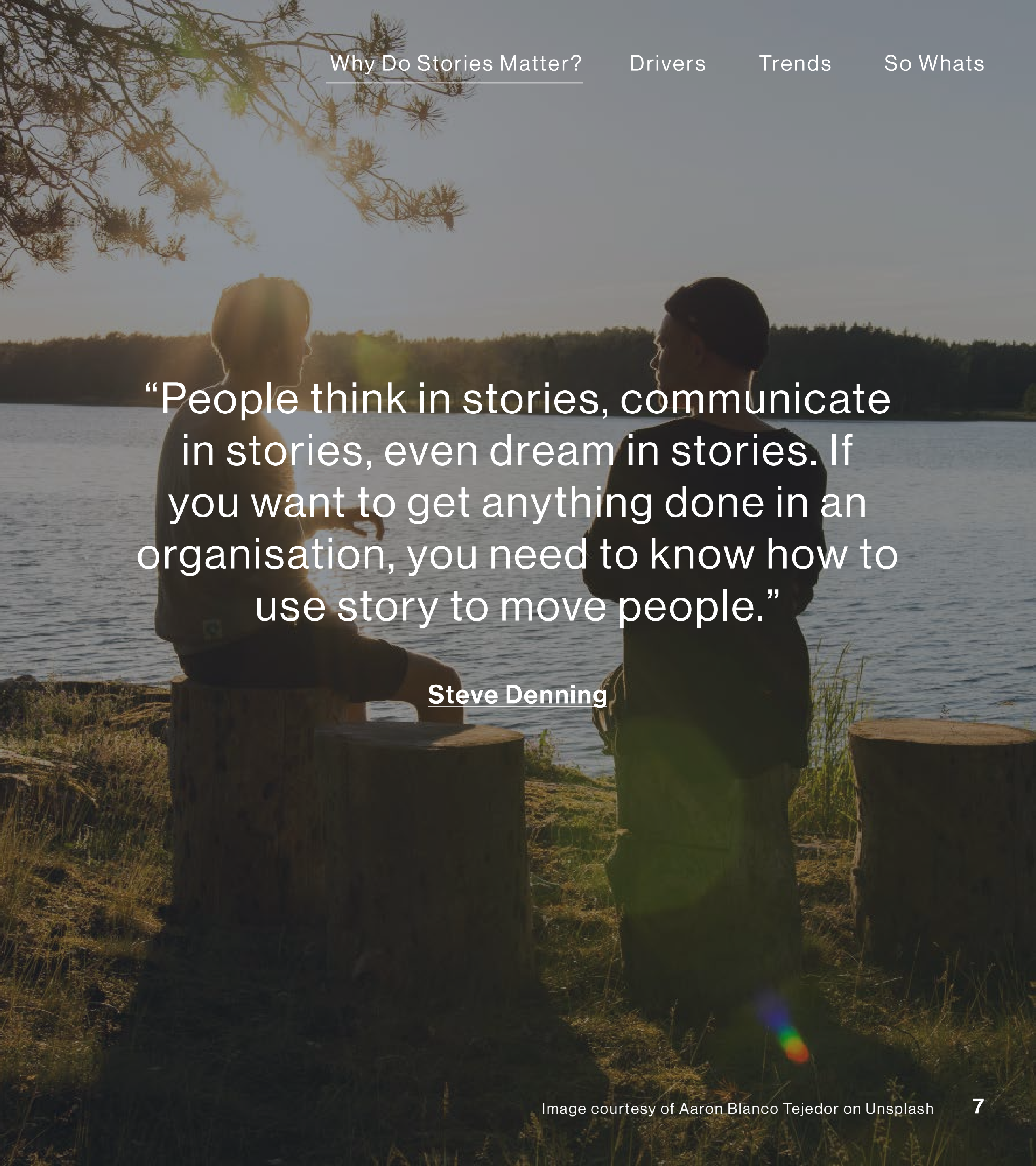
# Why Do *Stories Matter?*

From the Lascaux cave drawings to sofa binging Netflix sagas, storytelling is universal to the human experience. All cultures have told stories. Stories told through voice and gesture. Stories told through [poems](#), and songs, and proverbs and prayer. Stories hidden in [palimpsests](#), [woven](#) into fabrics or saved for the last moment at the [end of the credits](#).

Stories can [save lives](#), [win wars](#), and [change the world](#). Stories can make us [more empathetic](#) as people. They can help us build connections through shared history, memories and experience. By telling a story rather than merely reciting dry facts, we remember the details more clearly.

How we tell those stories is constantly evolving. From inscriptions in stone, to the printed word, to digital ink, technology is creating new tools and approaches to leverage the power of storytelling.

But who tells those stories is also changing. The narrator is evolving. Could the rise of AI and algorithms signal the death of the creative? Once upon a time, poets asked the Muses to inspire them as they recited the epics. What happens when those [Muses are programmable](#)?



“People think in stories, communicate in stories, even dream in stories. If you want to get anything done in an organisation, you need to know how to use story to move people.”

**Steve Denning**



# Types of Storytelling

# 1



Image courtesy of Emily Hoehenrieder on Unsplash

## Oral Storytelling

One of the oldest storytelling forms is the spoken word. Oral traditions passed down through generations. Sharing our history, knowledge and culture. With the advent of new forms of technology like radio and podcasts, the art form of oral storytelling now has the ability to reach millions of people all at once.

# 2



Image courtesy of Eric McLean on Unsplash

## Visual Storytelling

Images offer a powerful way to convey stories. From basic depictions on the walls of caves, through complex pictographic symbols and hieroglyphs, to the modern art of film and television.



## Types of Storytelling

# 3



Image courtesy of Brandon Lopez on Unsplash

### Written Storytelling

As long as there have been written words, there have been written stories. As societies developed alphabets, oral and visual forms of storytelling were transcribed into written short stories and epics. New technology has created new forms of expression: from folklore to newspapers to novels to ebooks.

# 4



Image courtesy of Drew Dizzy Graham on Unsplash

### Digital Storytelling

Technology has transformed the way that we tell stories. The rise of television, film, and radio has led to new and innovative storytelling techniques. The internet offers an endless library of compelling stories from throughout human history with a simple click of a button. Millions of Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook users tell their own personal stories with their own points of view every day. Social media has made us all storytellers.



# How are **Stories** *Changing*?

## Stories can now be told in 15 seconds

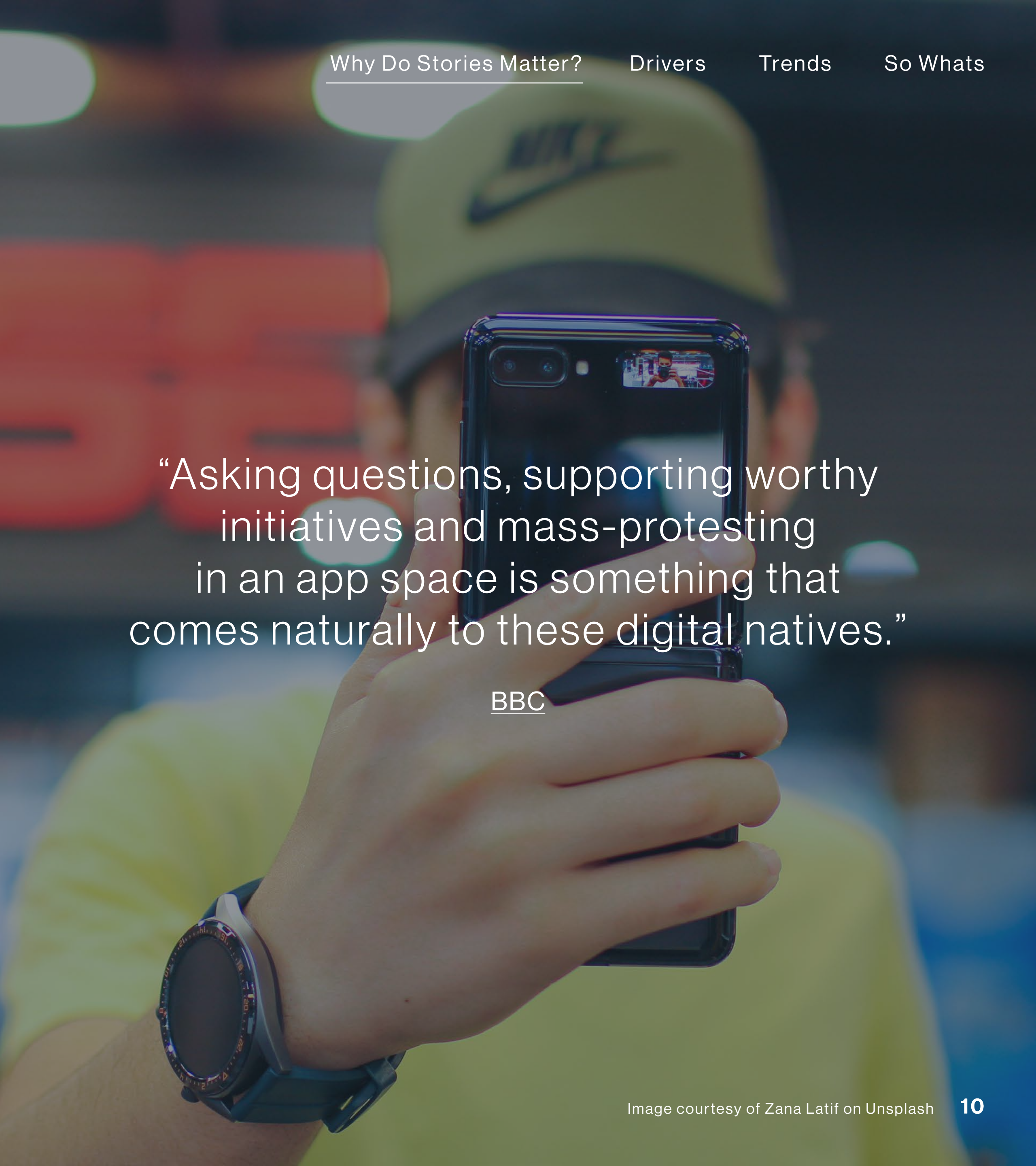
With over 1 billion active users, TikTok is changing how we tell stories. It's core audience of 13-24 year olds aren't just sharing videos of viral dances. They've leveraged the platform as a new space for activism, and to communicate powerful messages.

TikTok's users played a prominent role in Black Lives Matter, with the hashtag gaining more than 23 billion views. One example is Kareem Rahma's post which shows scenes in Minneapolis to a remix of This Is America.

## Stories are becoming more accessible

You might have an incredible story to tell, but if it's not accessible you'll miss out on connecting with a huge audience. Thankfully, tech is changing the game. Literally. Gaming sagas like Halo form powerful narratives. The most recent version now comes with a host of new accessibility features, from improved navigation and subtitles, to visual and colour blindness accommodations.

Last year, The Guardian, Google and RNIB launched Auditorial, a new project to make journalism more accessible to low-vision and blind users. The platform uses accessibility features and tools to tell the story, including multimodal films with video and audio speed control, high contrast, text-only mode, and scale and focus controls.



“Asking questions, supporting worthy initiatives and mass-protesting in an app space is something that comes naturally to these digital natives.”

BBC



# How are **Stories** *Changing*?

## Stories are crossing previous barriers

This [2019 global malaria awareness campaign](#) featured David Beckham breaking down language barriers through an educational ad that used visual and voice-altering technology to make him appear to speak 9 different languages.

The Illinois Holocaust Museum and Education Centre had a showcase where the [holographic images](#) of 15 Holocaust survivors were shown on rotation. Visitors had the chance to ask their questions to the holograms of survivors.

## Stories are being given new life through objects

The [Red Dress Project](#), provides an artistic platform for women around the world to tell their stories through embroidery. Pieces of the Red Dress have travelled the globe, being worked on by 239 women and 5 men, from 28 countries, with 136 commissioned artisans paid for their work.

[Suffrage in Stitches](#) is a 300-metre textile work created during the 125th anniversary year of women's suffrage in New Zealand. Together, the panels tell the stories of those who signed the petition and the subsequent generations. It is made with more than 27,000 individual stitches – one stitch for each signature on the petition that still exists.

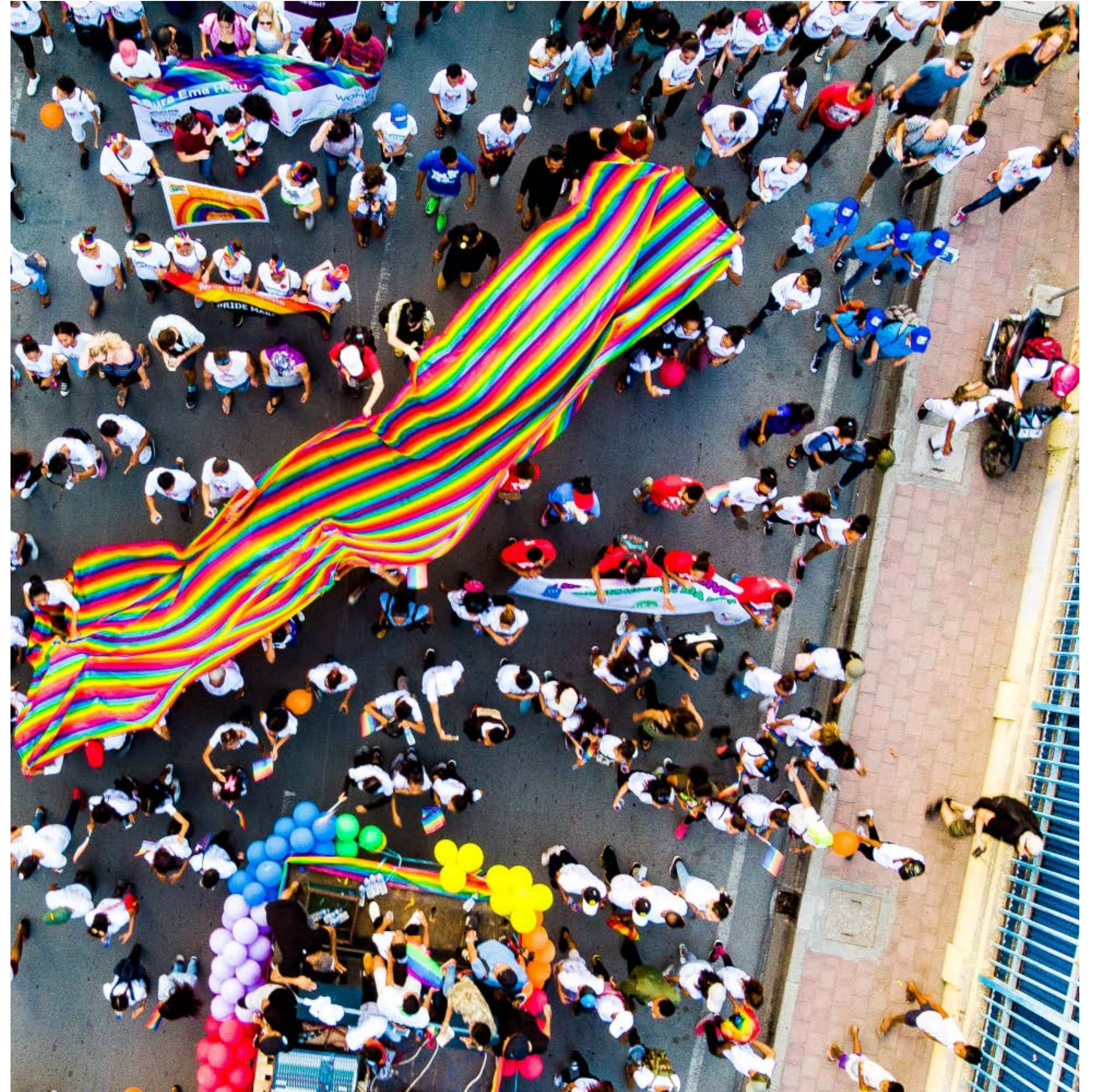


“The best way to promote a new or different belief is not with facts, but with a story.”

[Dave Gray](#)



# Drivers





# 1

## Post-Truth Society

In the wake of Trump's legacy of misinformation, distrust and fake news, widespread disbelief in conventional politics and scientific evidence is now the norm. It's becoming increasingly difficult to declare what is "true", and what isn't. Fake news has affected elections, referendums, and our response to the pandemic. It continues to polarise people around the world.

The rise of "influencers" combined with algorithmic funnelling has meant that opinions shared online can potentially carry potent and real influence - no matter how ill-informed, bizarre or incorrect.

# 2

## Covid Fatigue

We've spent the last 21 months in continual fight-or-flight response mode. Our brains have been bombarded with crisis after crisis: COVID-19, political instability in global superpowers, lockdowns 1, 2, 3, ... 27, food and petrol shortages, and now the looming debt tsunami and rising interest rates.

Our bodies have been flooded with the stress hormone cortisol. In short bursts cortisol is great! It makes you super alert, able to detect and evade threats. But long term, high cortisol can wreak havoc on the body, resulting in anxiety, depression, insomnia, weight gain, high blood pressure and heart disease. We're battling crisis fatigue.

If you can make it  
**trend**  
you can make it **true**

**Tristan Harris**

Former Design Ethicist, *Google*



## 3

**Bandwidth and Latency are No Longer the Limits**

5G is delivering exponentially more data over the air for faster speeds, reduced congestion and lower latency. It's introduction is the next step into the 4th Industrial Revolution - the blurring of boundaries between the physical, digital, and biological worlds.

## 4

**Lives Lived Online**

We're living in a time when some of our deepest interactions are enabled and played out online, from relationships with friends and family, to work, dating, shopping and banking. Now we have digital tattoos: records of our online actions, and the digital identities we create to present ourselves to others, standing in for the way we size each other up IRL.

The digital world has also provided an unprecedented resource for creation and money-making, giving rise to the creator economy, and with the coming rise of the metaverse the boundary between meatspace and metaverse is going to become increasingly blurred.



# 5

## Giving is Stagnating

Fewer people are giving: The percentage of the population in England who gave to charity in 2013/14 to 2020/21 has declined from 83% to 63%. Those who give are proportionally giving less: Between 2013 and 2019 the average donation given to charity grew by 10% but the UK's disposable income grew by 25%.

The need to give is declining: Between 2008 and 2020 the percentage of the public who describe charities as 'essential' or 'very important' has decreased from 72% to 55%.

# 6

## People are Looking for Hope

Despite movements like Black Lives Matter going mainstream, vulnerable communities around the world are still suffering. You only need to look at the disproportionate impact of COVID-19 on ethnic minorities to see the devastating impact of social inequality in the UK.

People have been left disillusioned with conventional politics, especially when they see politicians behaving in ways that seem detached from their struggles. At the same time, we've watched governments losing control to big tech companies that are now so influential they're in a position to act as a kind of global police force. Disturbingly, they are also rife with entrenched biases. They're looking to charities to deliver hope and direction in uncertain times.





## 7

**Empathy Crisis**

Mental health issues and loneliness are on the rise. Deep fractures are surfacing between communities and individuals, divided by politics, race, gender, finances and belief systems. From climate doubt to vaccine fears, we find it increasingly hard to show empathy, especially for those whose beliefs, experiences or identity is 'other'.

These are not new problems, but our online echo chambers have only affirmed our own world views and deepened existing societal divides. In the most extreme circumstances, some will be left without the will, need or ability to understand anything outside of what, or who, they already know and care about. Garnering support in this new and isolated world is going to be an uphill battle. We need empathy now, more than ever.

## 8

**Cancel Culture**

At its best, cancel culture has been about rectifying power imbalances and redistributing power to those who have little of it. At its worst it's become a weapon for people (in power) to use against those it was intended to help. From JK Rowling to Dr Seuss, no one is immune from being publicly called-out and, subsequently, cancelled.

Reputational damage, mental health implications, loss of income - these are all impacts of cancel culture on both individuals and organisations. The implications are driving fear. Fear to speak out, fear to challenge and fear to tell stories.



# Trends





# Short-Form Storytelling

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# What *is* Short-Form Storytelling?

There was a time (not so long ago) that some at Good Futures HQ dismissed TikTok as just a load of random dances and pointless makeup videos. As TikTok reaches a billion daily users, it's about time we started thinking a little more deeply about what it means, and what needs the platform is answering for younger content creators and consumers.

TikTok isn't just relevant as a ***channel*** for communication (though with an audience that large, your social teams should certainly be exploring the best ways to use it). It's a perfect example of a new ***form*** of communication. One that is redefining how people create, consume and respond to information: **short-form content**.

Short-form content is anything that can be consumed in a short period of time, typically on a mobile phone. It aims to get across a single message or idea quickly and clearly. It's easily digestible and simple to create. Whereas long-form content is 'evergreen' - meaning that it should remain relevant to audiences long after it is published - short-form is not designed to stand the test of time. It's spontaneous, takes little effort to understand, and isn't designed to be pondered or returned to. (*Don't try making sense of Baby Yoda GIFs. Trust us. We've tried*).

But we're not just talking about 15-second TikTok videos. Short-form also encompasses infographics, tweet threads, quizzes, Reels, Instagram posts, surveys, and even - shortest of all - GIFs.





## Why should I **care**?

Short-form content is how many people—especially younger audiences—stay informed, seek entertainment, share their experiences, and express their identities. What started as a peculiarity of social media has become **a permanent fixture in how people engage with the world.**

Short-form is valuable not only as a way to reach these audiences, but also a means to *mobilise* them. It's not just passive distraction and trivial meme-sharing. It can be a powerful tool to *galvanise* communities and ***inspire them to action.***

Short-form can deepen relationships with your existing supporters. Short-form is deliberately fast, fun and casual. It lends itself to more creative ways of communicating that can excite and inspire. **Short-form's spontaneous and throwaway nature is part of the potency.** Shorter formats can make your brand feel more fresh, friendly and modern and your work feel more enjoyable and human.

Short-form can help build and grow communities. It can be consumed by a huge number of people, while creating condensed, personal engagements with each individual. **Shorter formats lend themselves to generating focused, inclusive conversations** around a single theme or creating simple participatory activities - like ALS's ice bucket challenge - that quickly build communities around a shared cause and mission.





## 1

## A Platform for New Voices

The inclusive and accessible nature of short-form content makes it well-suited to bringing together audiences who don't typically engage with each other. The "[Retirement House](#)" TikTok group, made up of four retirees recording funny videos from their care home in Los Angeles, became a sensation amongst TikTok's predominantly Gen Z user base. The retirees went from zero to 1 million followers in the space of 2 weeks and sparked a range of new groups among younger demographics being made to respond and interact with the retirees.

As a low labour and inclusive format, short-form content can also provide a powerful platform for new types of creators who are less prominent elsewhere. TikTok has a large community of disabled creators, who share their experiences and create conversations online.

[Paige Hennekam](#), who posts about living with autism, has over 2 million followers. Wheelchair user [Mya](#) combines informal videos, such as chair-based dance routines, with more serious content, like her 'how to interact with disabled people' series. [Danny White](#), who lives with Tourettes, has over 700k likes for videos such as this rap in which he urges his followers to tag someone they know with Tourettes - "[Just want to let you guys know you're not alone](#)".

In 2020 Macmillan Cancer Support partnered with cancer survivor and amputee [Bernadette Hagans](#) to create funny but informative clips on what it's like to live with a disability.

## 2

## Creating Social Change

Short-form can be a potent and creative tool for raising awareness of specific social issues. [Under Lucky Stars](#) created an infographic that showed the impact of light pollution on the night-time skyline of major cities. The infographic placed real photos of the night sky side-by-side with mock-ups that "reimagined what cities across the globe could look like if they were free from light pollution".

Alzheimer's Research UK created a virtual reality app which allows users to experience what it's like to live with dementia. [A Walk Through Dementia](#) is designed to be used by full-time carers, healthcare professionals and members of the public. Users can download the app on a smartphone and recreate the VR experience by placing the phone in a cardboard VR glasses holder.

The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies has been using TikTok to get the word out about COVID-19. Their social media team partnered with TikTok to learn the ins and outs of the platform, before creating content tailored specifically for the platform and audience. The videos feature a mix of [expert testimonials](#), graphics and [IFRC team members dancing](#) to popular songs.



# 3

## Informal Moments

During lockdown, the Donkey Sanctuary gave their supporters the opportunity to get closer to the inner workings of the charity through their award-winning '[Sanctuary From Your Sofa](#)' campaign. The Sanctuary offered 30-minute live stream tours of their sites, allowing supporters to catch up with the donkeys and see how the charity was adapting to the pandemic. The videos were watched by hundreds of thousands of supporters.

During the COP conference, Greenpeace provided a model for how long-form and short-form content can complement each other. To raise awareness and engagement with their longer-form reports, conferences and coverage, Greenpeace pushed teasers, videos and infographics through their social channels and newsletters. One we particularly liked featured a "[leaked text exchange](#)" between Boris and Carrie Johnson, with Carrie giving feedback on the Prime Minister's COP speech.

A person's hands are holding a smartphone, recording a video. In the background, a woman is walking towards the camera, smiling. The scene is set indoors with a light-colored wall and a patterned rug. The image is slightly blurred, emphasizing the act of recording.

62% of TikTok users are between the ages of 10-28. While YouTube reaches more 18-49 year-olds than any cable network in the US.

People share short-form videos at twice the rate of any other form of content.



## So what?

Sometimes, less is more. Done effectively, short-form content is accessible, digestible and inspiring. It can be a powerful tool to reach new audiences, deepen relationships, and build communities around a cause. So, what can you do to become a short-form champion?

# 1 Consider

### *Polymodal Marketing Strategy*

Do you need to adapt your marketing strategy? Are you currently implementing a one-size-fits-all model (i.e. create a campaign, roll-out programmatically across channels)?

Could you adopt a hybrid approach in which long-form and short-form play separate, but complementary roles? One conversation, told across multiple platforms and formats, with a single consumer.

# 2 Experiment

### *New Formats for Different Audiences*

There are lots of different ways to leverage and deliver short-form content. Experiment with different formats, tones and content styles.

Like IFRC mixing serious health messaging with the latest viral dance. Experiment with using formats like gifs and infographics to bring your work to life.

# 3 Challenge

### *Embrace Creativity*

Challenge your marketing, communications and product teams to embrace the creativity that short-form content allows.

What radical and disruptive ideas could drive awareness and increase participation in your work? What could create cut-through?

If you're looking for inspiration, follow Rise at Seven's founder [Carrie Rose](#) who constantly challenges brands to think differently about their marketing and PR.



# Future of Audio

**What is it and why should I care?**

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## What *is* the Future of Audio?

Oral storytelling and the spoken word is one of the oldest forms of narrative. Oral traditions and history passed down through generations. But the future of audio is so much more than just the evolution of stories told around the fire. Technology has driven innovation, changing what and how we consume and create.

Driven partly by the pandemic, a new golden age of audio is upon us. At home most, if not all of the day, consumption habits changed, with audio content and listenership numbers rising rapidly. People turned to podcasts and music to create a soundtrack for the day to day. Connected devices (like Alexa) helped that soundscape travel from device to device and room to room, creating a virtually hands-free experience. Listening served anytime, anywhere.\*

Audio delivers the ability to reach millions of people all at once, connecting with consumers at the right time, in the right moment.

\*38% of UK adults own a smart speaker, and, according to Nielsen data, in a typical week 90% use it for music, and 37% have listened to a podcast in the last month.

## Why should I **care**?

Neurological studies have shown the power of audio. Listening engages a storm of neural networks in the brain, including those that control motor actions, emotions, and creativity. Audio has the power to connect you with your audience in a deeply emotional and sensory way. With audio you can evoke a mood, an emotion or a memory. (There's even research being done into the potential health benefits of ASMR, and Slovenians have used the sound of bees to alleviate anxiety and stress since the 18th Century).

From dynamic ad insertions in podcasts, to immersive binaural sound experiences, and everything in between. 2022 is set to be the year of Audio.

“Audio is storytelling. It’s one human speaking to another.”

Vanessa Goh  
Spotify



## 1

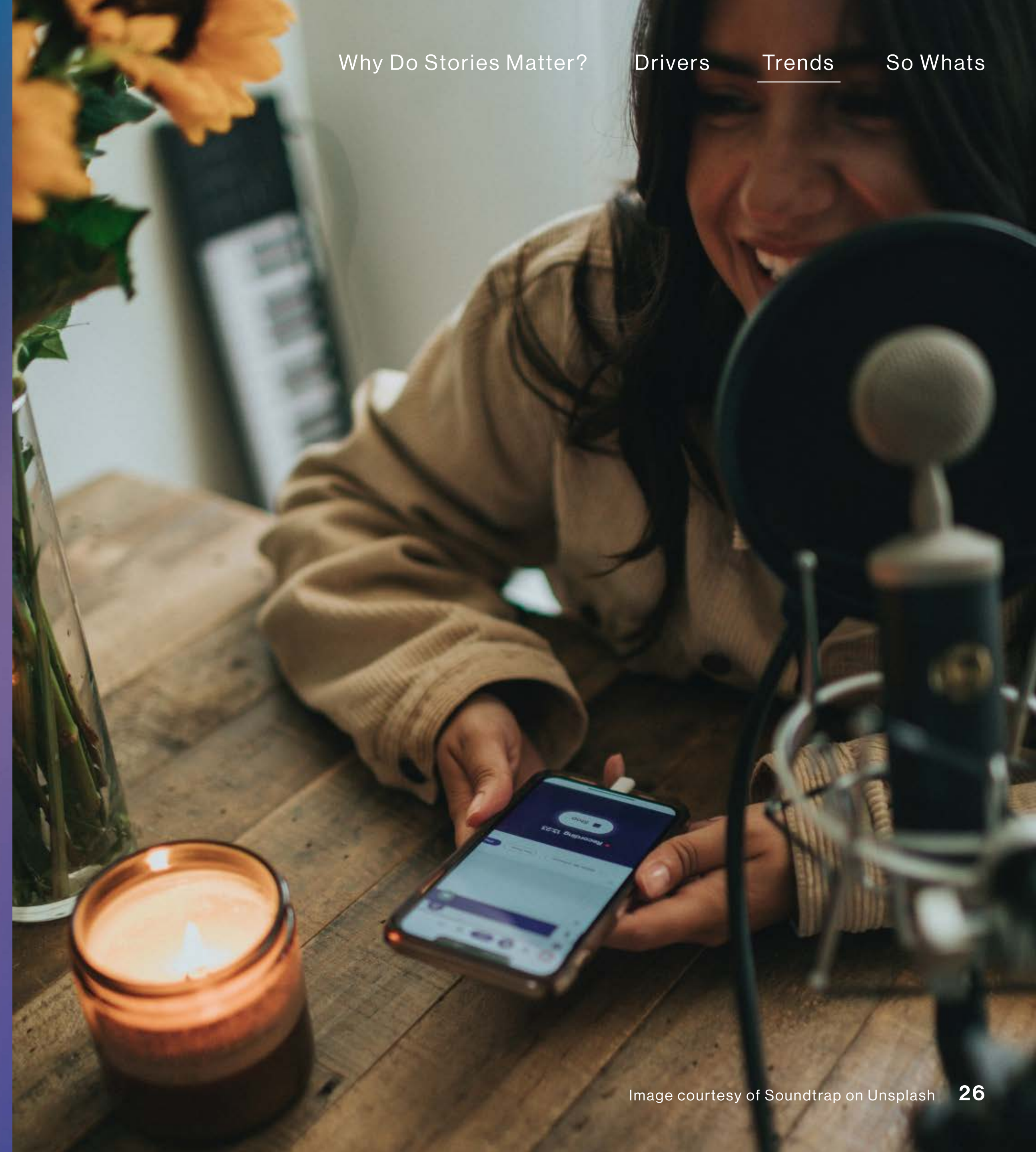
## Social Audio

**Big Tech are betting big on audio being a key part of future revenue growth.** During 2020 social audio platforms fought to recreate in-person conversations for the locked-down digital age. Invite-only apps like [Clubhouse](#) saw a massive rise to prominence, and an equally sharp decline as the initial hype started to fade. By August Clubhouse was struggling. Reports of [misogyny, mansplaining and trolling](#) were rife, and competitor platforms from the likes of Discord, Twitter and Facebook were starting to take market share.

Facebook launched a direct competitor to Clubhouse in June 2021. [Live Audio Rooms](#) enables public figures to host discussions in their messenger app. Anyone can be invited up as a speaker with up to 50 people able to speak at once, and there's no cap on the number of listeners allowed in. Also getting in on the action are: Spotify's [Greenroom](#), [Stages](#) from Discord, Reddit [Talk](#) and Twitter [Spaces](#).

Slack has introduced [Huddle](#), an audio room which allows people to move in and out fluidly as if to replicate a real working environment.

Apple is implementing [a more mindful and meaningful use of technology](#). Their strategy aims to consider inclusiveness, health, wellbeing and ecosystem integration. [FaceTime has already received an update](#) with the use of [Spatial Audio](#), the option to isolate your voice which helps those who are slightly hard of hearing, auto translation capacities and a new feature called SharePlay which allows users to watch videos or listen to music together.





# 2

## Sonic Branding and Advertising

Sonic branding isn't new, but some brands are embracing the full potential of multi-platform audio. Leaders in the space are Mastercard who've developed a sonic brand architecture, including: a [sonic logo](#) and [music single](#) recorded with Nadine Randle. Mastercard's own research claims that 77% of customers believe the sound makes transactions and retail environments "more trustworthy".

Coca-Cola's sonic toolkit is legendary. From the sound of the bottle opening, the fizz, the aah to five-note [sonic logo](#) at the end. And if I said to you the iconic advertising phrase "holidays are coming", I'll bet you've now got the opening bars of a Coca-Cola Christmas advert running like an ear worm through your brain. ([You're welcome](#)).

Nurofen has a new take on sonic branding, releasing a non-pharmacological treatment to help people better tolerate pain relief. '[Tune out Pain](#)' invites sufferers to head over to Spotify rather than the pharmacy and listen to a custom track designed to distract the brain from sending pain signals.

# 3

## Creator Driven Content

While podcasts have been around since 2004, they've generated a lot more interest in recent years. 18% of us listened to podcasts each week in 2020, which is double the number who listened two years previous and up from just 1% in 2015.

Estée Lauder have partnered with the New York Times podcast [Modern Love](#) to create a "story-first" advertising campaign for their new fragrance, Magnolia. They've taken an audio-first approach on the basis that it seemed apt to appeal to listeners with a product which is [concerned with memory and mood in the same way as audio storytelling](#).

The Mandarin Oriental hotel group have tapped into the desire for lockdown escapism with a [podcast series](#). A love story to some of the amazing Mandarin Oriental locations, this series of short story podcasts is led by some famous names, like novelist William Boyd and former British Vogue editor Alexandra Shulman.

DIY radio stations across the UK such as [Foundation FM](#), [NTS](#), [Rinse FM](#) and [Reprezent](#) are on the rise, providing a counter-cultural alternative and [giving women and BIPOC creators the space to flourish](#) in a heavily white male-dominated environment.

Artist-run radio station [RTM FM](#) operates as a [communal hub](#), offering the opportunity for those in the community to learn new skills in broadcasting, production and presenting.



## 4

## Power of Music

Musicians, artists and radio stations in Palestine have been using [audio as a means to resist the occupation](#). Their protest is borne out through freestyle rap, sonic art, sampling the sound of bullets in their music and even radio silence. For many, it has also become a means to work through the trauma induced by living under siege.

Brian Eno has launched a new radio station, [The Lighthouse](#), which will serve as a living discography of Eno's work. An entirely new station format, it is both an archive and a platform for new releases and gives listeners exclusive access to his music in high-definition audio.

[The Lost Tapes of the 27 Club](#) used AI to create music lost to humanity through music's mental health crisis. *"As long as there's been popular music, musicians and crews have struggled with mental health at a rate far exceeding the general adult population. And this issue hasn't just been ignored. It's been romanticized, by things like the 27 Club—a group of musicians whose lives were all lost at just 27 years old. To draw attention to this issue, we used AI to imagine what these artists might have created, were they still with us."*

Listen to the tapes [here](#).





## 5

## Immersive Sound Experiences

[Audio Up](#) is a media company who create podcasts with a narrative and original scores featuring artists like Machine Gun Kelly, described by its CEO-founder Jared Gutstadt as “[movies for your ears](#)”.

Radiohead have teamed up with Epic Games to create a virtual exhibition that is part gaming experience and part weird trip into a fantastical soundscape. [Kid A Mnesia](#) has been designed to replace a real-world event and is curated based on their expansive new three-volume release. The fantastical 3D art gallery blends music from Kid A and Amnesiac (including new sound design from Nigel Godrich) with the unsettling artwork of Thom Yorke and Stanley Donwood.

[Sonic Boom](#) is a colourful installation designed to explore how people communicate through the interaction of sound. Conceived by Japanese artist Yuri Suzuki, the sculpture consists of a central tube of red, yellow, and blue horns that amplify street noises. Sonic Boom can pick up general urban sounds; passers-by, leaves rustling, or birdsong, but the ultimate aim is to use this interactive installation to generate community focussed discussion and pave the way for social connectivity during social distancing.

## 6

## Listener in Control

To coincide with the launch of his album Donda in August 2021, [Kanye West](#) created an interactive audio player which splits songs into their component parts and allows users to create highly personalised remixes of their favourite tracks. Users can adjust the speed and create audio loops in real time, before saving and sharing their custom mixes with friends.

Dating app Hinge has added a new [Voice Prompts](#) feature that allows users to exchange voice notes and add audio-based Prompts to their profiles. Voice Prompts have received a mixed reaction so far, with some shared prompts going viral for their [cringe factor](#).

[Dishtory](#) is a recipe app that aims to use the power of storytelling in combination with the nostalgic and emotional appeal of family memories by allowing people to record, save and share kitchen memories and recipes. They refer to these sound files as ‘audio heirlooms’ and promise to keep them safe ‘forever’.



# So what?

(This isn't a definitive list, but some starters for thinking)

## 1 Explore

### *Sonic Branding*

What would a sonic brand sound like for your organisation?

How and where could you leverage this asset to get brand recognition and cut through?

## 2 Innovate

### *Sound Experiences*

You've pivoted your IRL events into a digital space. Now make the transition into audio.

How can you make your digital mass participation more immersive?

## 3 Consider

### *Social Audio*

In Future Communities we talked a lot about going to where your audience is convening. What does this look like within the social audio space?

Where do you need to go to connect with and listen to your audience? What's the right platform(s) for you?

## 4 Challenge

### *Podcasts*

Does your organisation already have a podcast? Does it really need a podcast? Does this podcast have something new and interesting to say?

Look again at your content and business strategy for audio, and challenge how you're using it. Podcasting can be a powerful medium to build empathy but think hard about the audience you're trying to connect with your expertise?



# Rise of the Creator

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## What *is* the **Rise of the Creator**?

If I asked you to put your hands on your smartphone or device right now, I doubt you'd had to reach much further than stretch out your arm? And on that device I would bet you've probably got at least one of the following apps: Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, TikTok, LinkedIn or Pinterest?

If the answers to the above are yes and yes then you could, and I'm sure have, produced user generated content (UGC). UGC is any form of content, such as images, videos, text, and audio, that has been posted by users on online platforms such as social media and wikis.

Sharing pictures, videos, and stories online is no longer exclusively the job of professional photographers, creative advertising agencies or tv channel. Smart devices have put the power of content in our hands.

The rise of social media and the ever improving camera function on our smartphones have fundamentally challenged and democratised who creates content and who tells stories.

**You are part of the user generated content revolution.**





## Why should I **care**?

Because this is about more than just the 'influencer'.

Let's address and move past the (now mostly negative) connotations associated with the term 'influencer' - content that is highly edited, staged and filled with (un)acknowledged brand sponsorships. The mum-fluencer making life look easy, promoting a new kids brand and making others feel bad via her polished and curated life. The travel-vlogger getting a free jolly to some far flung location most of us can only dream of visiting. Anyone associated with a '[hype house](#)'.

User generated content is much more than that. The platforms and people involved are embracing a new title to reflect the distinction - the creator. TikTok users are 'TikTok creators', OnlyFans users are 'adult-content creators' and members of invite only voice chat app Clubhouse are 'audio creators'.

Creator is currently the fourth most-sought-after career among British children aged 7-11. Brands, traditional media organisations and lots of others are paying attention to the potential and opportunities these creators offer.

By partnering with creators you have the power to tell untold stories, to connect on a personal level and access untapped audiences. We are all creators. Whether we acknowledge it or not. We all have the power to tell stories. **So our challenge to you is, how can you leverage this asset?**





# 1

## Power to the Creator

Last year [Chipotle](#) announced that it was partnering with 14 TikTok creators to develop new content and brand strategies. In doing so they are aiming to redefine 'the traditionally transactional relationship by taking a true creator-first approach that promotes collaboration and career growth'.

[Channel 4](#) in partnership with Instagram launched the world's first reality series told through social media in November 2021. The series, called 'You do You', follows the lives of a group of young creatives based in Manchester and is part of Channel 4's new global platform 'Yours to Make'.

Creators aren't just channels to reach new audiences, they are being put at the heart of and are guiding brand's strategies and creative development.

# 2

## Citizen Journalism

Capturing, sharing and reporting on current events hasn't escaped the user generated revolution.

Participatory reporting allows new voices to be heard. Organisations like [On Our Radar](#) work to 'tackle voicelessness and surface stories from unheard groups' and are using citizen journalism to tell previously unheard stories.

While there are concerns about accountability and credibility (a debate that could fill a whole article) traditional media outlets have dipped their toes in the user generated water - the [BBC](#), [ITV](#) and [CNN](#) have all trialled projects to explore citizen participation in news reporting.



## 3

## The Creator Economy

Creators are becoming their own businesses, and start ups are rushing to making tools and services to help grow these enterprises. The 'creator economy', as it's become known, received £1.3 billion in investment funding in 2021.

Many of these services offer new ways for creators to monetise their content, instead of selling ads based on their overall engagement (the traditional model).

[Patreon](#) allows its 200,000 creators a way to offer a monthly paid membership to their fans. [Buy Me a Coffee](#), whose tagline is 'a supporter is worth a thousand followers' gives creator's fans an easy way to say thanks by buying them a coffee, or making a small donation. You can also buy direct access to their creativity - 'products' range from a Tarot Card reading for \$5 to a \$15 flower painting class.

While ad driven platforms like Facebook and Twitter profit from creators engagement and attention these new services allow the creator community to be 'fairly' financially rewarded.





# So what?

(This isn't a definitive list, but some starters for thinking)

## 1 Engage

### *Who Are Your Creators?*

Who can, or maybe already is telling the story of your organisation and the work you do? Where is that happening organically and how could you help support those people to tell your story in an authentic way?

If it's not happening already what bits of your story could you democratise, and who could your creators be?

## 2 Explore

### *What Can You Learn?*

What could you learn from the best creators and community builders? Could you take time to immerse yourself in creators who have built genuine and loyal communities around themselves.

What could you learn from them about how to interact with supporters in new and different ways to build engagement? How might that challenge or influence your approach to communication or marketing?

## 3 Innovate

### *New Platforms*

What could support look like via new platforms? Could you explore Buy Me a Coffee, Patreon or one of the many other 'creator economy' platforms to offer new ways to financially support your organisation? What could trialling that on a small scale look like?

Which of these early stage startups might want to partner to trial a 'add donation to charity' option to allow their creators to ask for donations to causes they care about from supporters?



# AI & The Death of the Creative

**What is it and why should I care?**

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# What *is* AI & The Death of the Creative?

Before things get complicated, let's start by defining what we mean by AI and, in particular, the difference between Artificial General Intelligence and Artificial Narrow Intelligence.

Artificial General Intelligence is the stereotypical sci-fi interpretation of AI - the all-knowing AI. Think Terminator's Skynet or HAL 9000 from 2001: A Space Odyssey.

Artificial Narrow Intelligence is an AI built for specific tasks with a high degree of depth and precision. Their goal is to fulfil a narrow task better than humans could. They're already ubiquitous in our general day to day lives.

## ***Now consider copywriting.***

Copywriting is a task that lends itself well to AI augmentation. It's a task that can be broken down into specific steps, and each of those steps can be automated with varying degrees of success.

Sentence construction, for example, can be handled by a machine learning algorithm. That algorithm will study a large body of text and it'll then use those patterns to help you construct better sentences. Research into how humans interact with copy can also be used to improve the way we craft our copy.

Simple tasks like gathering statistics and data sets, and organising them in an easily readable manner can be performed by computers with greater speed and accuracy than humans. This means we can focus on more complex tasks like identifying interesting data, and drawing conclusions from it.

The copywriting side of things will also improve through AI research in Natural Language Generation. This area is still very much in its infancy - computers are bad at generating coherent text from scratch, so instead they use what's called Markov Chains. Essentially this just means taking chunks of existing text and using them as a template for new text, which allows a computer to create a wide variety of text, without having an understanding of what it's writing about.

There are still some issues here, but as the technology progresses towards Artificial General Intelligence those problems will diminish quickly. Ultimately AI should just become another tool in our box - albeit one with vastly increased speed and efficiency over more traditional methods.

There's plenty of opportunity here for segmenting content to better serve particular audiences - tailoring copy to specific age groups, genders, background information; factoring in cultural differences (and similarities) between countries; making adjustments based on existing patterns of customer behaviour. And it's worth considering whether AI will end up writing all of our marketing material or whether it'll just handle the "dirty" parts while we focus on the more creative aspects.



## Why should I **care**?

Everything in the box above was written by **Jarvis.ai**. Our take? It's not terrible! There's a flow to the structure, there's additional content we hadn't researched around Markov Chains, there are pros and cons and there's a wrap up. And it generated 500 words in under 30 seconds.

But have we chosen an easy topic? Surely an AI focused on writing should be able to nail writing an article based on AI writing articles? What about something more complex? Something that involves nuanced knowledge of a sector, an audience or a careful management of tone and sentiment?

That's why we tried a few more examples to test things out. We tasked Jarvis to write an article discussing Oxfam's fair tax report, and that went well. Same with an article around tips for looking after your cat - the AI generated ten useful, different, sensible tips.

When you consider that readers **only consume 20%** of what's on the page, there's a clear role for AI to quickly churn out copy that's 'good enough'. Blogs for SEO, newsletter content to update supporters, press releases - we think all have a clear opportunity for AI to support.

This market is growing rapidly. Clear benefit coupled with low cost - means it's forecast to be growing 30% year on year in the next four years, reaching \$40bn by 2025. **Anyword** launched in March 2021, has been growing 30% month on month and has just raised \$21m in investment. Not bad for a 7 month old company!

“The reality [of the advertising industry is] that so much of the work is grinding out new assets, so if we can free up people's time with a more automated solution, they can get back to being more creative.”

**Will Hanschell**  
Co-Founder of Pencil



# 1

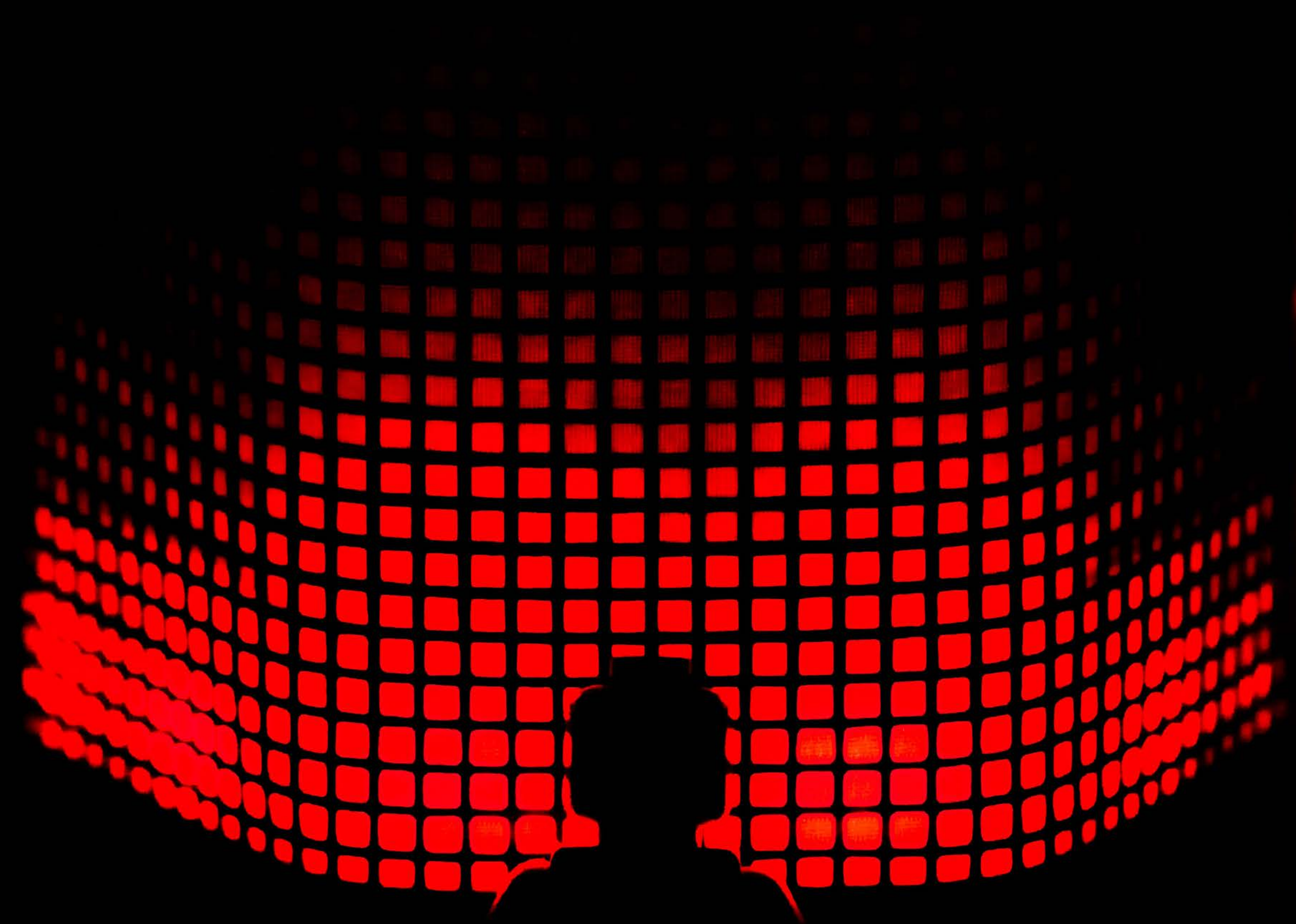
## Digital Marketing

We think that perhaps the biggest opportunity - at the moment at least - is when AI copywriting gets linked to digital marketing.

When eBay's ex-CMO goes [on record](#) and describes an [Phrasee](#) as "[making] you money so you're more likely to get your bonus" you get the sense that there's something in this.

In May this year, [Walgreens used AI to optimise their email campaign](#) around Covid vaccinations. They optimised the subject line and saw email open rates increase by 30%. Dixons Carphone did the same and got an immediate uplift of 10% in open rate, 25% in click-through rate, and 21% in conversion rate.

And then you get platforms like [Pencil](#) that promise to take it even further. Upload your brand assets and it will automate the creation of copy, images and videos, and then automate the process of putting them live, reviewing results and then generating more based on what it learns. They reported that in a test of 14 brands over five months, on average brands doubled their ROAS brand baselines. It's essentially replacing your digital marketing team or agency for \$750 a month. (Again, they're only a year old).





## 2

## AI and Creativity

But will AI ever inspire? In a sector where we often deal with emotions, can AI produce copy that stir emotions? Can AI inspire people enough to take action?

Take one of the [most famous advertising headlines](#) - “At 60 miles an hour the loudest noise in the new Rolls-Royce comes from the electric clock”. The current crop of AI copywriters can’t come anywhere close. Putting in “A car that’s really quiet when it goes fast” as the product feature into Jarvis.ai’s ‘Perfect Headline’ generator, and you get the cliched “Get ready for something better than you ever imagined”, the functional “The world’s best car” and the weird “One of a kind experience for the adventurous soul”.

And that’s a big point. The AI is essentially replicating patterns of copy it’s seen before, so AI copy is a kind of copy of a copy. It can’t link copy to user insights, as it doesn’t get human needs.

**And that could be where the danger lies.** Given the sector in which we all work, we can’t yet fully embrace AI without human oversight.

The AI copywriting companies are all built using OpenAI’s GPT-3 AI model which was developed through scraping 10% of the internet. Launched in June 2020 it’s been the springboard for a lot of the innovation in this AI market.

But using what’s written on the internet as a proxy for ‘how to write’ causes issues. It means that GPT-3 struggles to know the purpose and the direction of the story it’s writing. When faced with ideas that the Internet’s existing copy hasn’t prepared for it, it is at a loss.

Even worse, the underlying model incorporates all the biases that are found on the internet. [This article](#) sums the issue up:

*“Because there is so much content on the web sexualizing women, researchers note that GPT-3 will be much more likely to place words like “naughty” or “sucked” near female pronouns, where male pronouns receive stereotypical adjectives like “lazy” or “jolly” at the worst. When it comes to religion, “Islam” is more commonly placed near words like “terrorism” while a prompt of the word “Atheism” will be more likely to produce text containing words like “cool” or “correct.” And, perhaps most dangerously, when exposed to a text seed that involves racial content involving Blackness, the output GPT-3 gives tends to be more negative than corresponding white- or Asian-sounding prompts.”*

The successor to GPT-3 will apparently be based on twice as many data points; Amazon, Meta, and Google are all developing their own versions. Deep Mind have recently promised a version with 25x the number of data points, and crucially will be quicker to train - and update. If these future models can remove the biases then perhaps we can take even more of a step back from copywriting.



# So what?

(This isn't a definitive list, but some starters for thinking)

## 1 Explore

### *Where AI Copywriting Can Fit Into Your Digital Strategy*

Where does it fit with your content needs? What could this enable you to do that you couldn't? What can you do internally that you've had to outsource? What are the implications for your future team structures and resourcing?

## 2 Explore

### *Writing Copy*

Work out where you can integrate AI into your workflow. Experiment with writing blogs or articles, experiment with ads. Experiment with using AI to help you get over writer's block. Get an account and have a play.

## 3 Experiment

### *With Integrating Ai Copy Into Your Digital Marketing*

It's probably a quote from Pencil that sums up the opportunity: "the reality [of the advertising industry is] that so much of the work is grinding out new assets, so if we can free up people's time with a more automated solution, they can get back to being more creative". Experiment and run a test of AI against your current digital marketing. And let us know who wins....



# Interactive Storytelling

**What is it and why should I care?**

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## What *is* Interactive Storytelling?

It's time to tear up the rulebook on how we tell our stories. Narrative no longer flows one way - from writer to reader, artist to viewer, creator to consumer. It's time for **interactive storytelling**.

From Volkswagen's [Piano Staircase](#) to the growing [interactive film library](#) on Netflix, brands are using the idea of "interaction" to draw people into their stories, delivering deeper connections in the process.

Take the massive success of [role playing games \(RPGs\)](#) as precedent. They attract millions of players worldwide (in physical or digital forms). You define who you are, where the story takes you and who you work with along the way, making each experience personal and unique, but deeply connected. (As Simon Barratt said at the [Storytelling safari](#), "People are the multiplier to any experience".)

"When we play as a character, we experience their emotions and dilemmas from their point of view. But the choices we make for them remain very personal. By stepping into someone else's shoes, we understand them better, and we learn about our true nature in the process. We grow, thanks to empathy."

**[Caroline Marchal](#)**

*Founder and Creative Director at INTERIOR/NIGHT*



## Why should I **care**?

The movement from one-way communication towards a more interactive style of engagement opens up a new realm of possibilities to create connections and build bonds with supporters. Empowering them to explore and curate stories that answer their interests and motivations. These connections are more genuine, personal and fundamentally more likely to stand the test of time.

Technology has now developed to the point where creating and curating interactive storytelling is no longer cost-prohibitive for charities. Open source and no-code apps make designing these types of experiences easier and easier.

But the benefit of interactive isn't just for the participant. Interactive storytelling is a channel to collect data and insight on your users in a truly reciprocal way. Empowering you to craft even more personalised narratives, and the user to experience a more engaging journey. Win, win.





## 1

## Empathy Through Storytelling

[The Human Library](#) is, in truth, a library of people. Readers can 'borrow' human beings as open books, to have conversations they wouldn't normally have access to, in safe spaces where open discussion is encouraged. Every human book represents a group in our society that's often subjected to prejudice, stigmatisation or discrimination because of their lifestyle, diagnosis, belief, disability, social status, ethnic origin etc.

[Pollinator Park](#) is a VR experience that imagines what our future would look like if bees and other insects stopped pollinating Earth. The experience is based on actual scientific research about the global decline of pollinator species. It's designed to be educational as well as emotionally engaging.

[Life in Darkness](#) provides an immersive experience for people to explore and learn about the holocaust in a way that lets them unpack its history in their own time, in their own way. Its creator hopes that by playing the game and experiencing the story, the user will become attached to the characters and be more keen to learn about the Holocaust and discrimination against Jews.

### So what?

Crossing the divide of distance through storytelling is the holy grail of marketing. Unless you're proximate or invested, some charity missions can be challenging to communicate or connect with. Enabling non-linear storytelling to let users explore at their own pace and to their preferences can create space and choice to approach difficult topics.





## 2

## The Power of Simplicity

[The Boat](#) is a visually haunting scroll-based story experience. As you scroll down the page, the story combines text, audio, visuals and interactive elements to deliver an immersive experience. The interactive component of this story makes it feel like you're actually on a boat, in a large storm.

Movember's '[Unmute – Ask Him](#)' campaign was designed to highlight the fact that many men still feel the need to hide their feelings and are therefore not accessing the mental health support that they need. The videos are disguised as a series of "how to" tutorials, such as "how to make a soda can fishing rod". While the subtitles mirror the men's actions, when you unmute the video, you'll hear a completely different story – about men who are beginning to show signs they are struggling.

Interactive stories aren't just about words or pictures. Data visualisation can convey powerful narratives and empower supporters to dive deeper into the impact of their choices and journeys. [Information is Beautiful](#), founded by David McCandless, is dedicated to helping people make clearer, more informed decisions about the world through visualisations based on facts and data.

### *So what?*

Interactive doesn't have to automatically equate to complicated. Focus on the elements of the narrative that are most compelling, or add a simple layer of animation to add depth and capture engagement.

## 3

## No-Code Revolution

[Varwin](#) and [EngageVR](#), two VR software companies that allow you to create educational programmes using no-code platforms- this means you can build out your world or experience, using visual tools instead of needing to be able to develop code.

[Dorian](#) is a platform empowering fiction writers and other storytellers to create their own games, through the power of no-code. Without coding, a writer can essentially design characters and backgrounds by choosing from a variety of visual assets, while using a flowchart-style interface to allow the writer to connect different scenes in the story and create player choices. Plus, collaborate on a story in real-time with other writers and contributors.

### *So what?*

The barriers to creating these types of experiences have been lifted, making it a reality for all of us, no matter how untechy we are! Much like the swathes of website builders out in the market, the tools that you need are very much ready and out there for you to start taking advantage of.



# So what?

(This isn't a definitive list, but some starters for thinking)

## 1 Explore

### *Non-Linear Storytelling*

What does your non-linear story look like? How can you let the reader unpack things in the way that works best for them? And what do you need to do to guide them on this journey?

## 2 Refine

### *Focus and Clarity*

Think about what is appropriate, and what really builds on the story you are telling in a genuine way. People crave interaction now more than ever, but is there one way that will work best for all of your audiences? Does your story lend itself to being user-defined, repositioned or rethought? Power comes in building relevance and association - what will really do this best for your message?

## 3 Experiment

### *With Simplicity*

What are the small things we can do to begin building more two way, discovery-inspired interactions? Are there simple actions we can start to build into our communications that make sense for your organisation, and how can you test this quickly in the mark.



# Visual Storytelling

**What is it and why should I care?**

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## What *is* Visual Storytelling?

Visual storytelling is the process of telling a story through visual media – graphics, images, pictures and videos. It spans everything from street art and photo journalism to TikTok videos, Instagram Stories, Netflix series and feature-length documentaries. It's where video and audio cross over with narrative and, when it's done well, it's extremely powerful, memorable and emotive.

If our lives were moving online pre-pandemic, with more time than ever spent on our TVs, laptops and smartphones, in the past two years our screens have become a lifeline. As we keep scrolling, our attention spans are shortening, and we expect content to be quick and easy to digest. It's not just younger generations demanding photo and video content – while 81% of Gen Z say Instagram and YouTube are their preferred social networks, Ofcom found adults spend a third of their day watching TV and online video content.

## Why should I **care**?

Video can have an immediate, emotional, persuasive impact that gets people feeling and acting, which is why it's so effective in raising awareness, campaigning and fundraising. People retain 95% of a message when they watch it in a video compared to 10% when reading it in text, and social video generates 1200% more shares than text and image content combined.

Right now, you need to build your visual muscle in order to reach and engage new audiences. That means not only creating new visual content, but understanding that supporters and beneficiaries are using your assets to create. Smart organisations are exploring new ways to connect and engage with people, particularly younger generations of digital natives – the supporters of the future.

Social video generates **1200%**  
**more** shares than text and image  
content combined



## 1

## User-Generated Video

Remember the brilliance of the [TikTok handwashing dance routines from British Red Cross](#)? Not only did the campaign cheer people up at a tough time, it also raised £90K through the TikTok donation sticker. [TikTok for Good](#) actively seeks to help organisations “grow their audience, activate supporters, and raise awareness around specific causes”.

[Mind](#) encourages all their supporters to pick up their phones, record and [share their stories](#). Powerful, first-hand accounts of experiences like living with OCD and suffering from depression are driving the charity’s work to [raise awareness of mental health struggles](#). Mind’s campaign for changes to the Mental Health Act has been bolstered by eye-opening video accounts of [personal experiences of being sectioned](#).

[RNLI made headline news](#) with its gut-wrenching raw bodycam footage of a migrant rescue on the English Channel. The emotive power of the video at a time when immigration is such an urgent issue prompted more than £200K in RNLI donations.

And it’s not just short-form video content that’s reaching consumers – the meteoric [rise of Netflix](#) in recent years is proof of the power of long-form content. Last year saw shows like [Maid](#) exploring domestic abuse, [Crip Camp](#) offering a new perspective on disability, and a whole genre of content curated to support [Black Lives Matter](#).

## 2

## Citizen Journalism

Footage shared online by the general public defined major world events like the [2010 Haiti earthquake](#), the [Arab Spring](#), [Occupy Wall Street](#) and [Black Lives Matter](#). Disillusioned with mainstream media, people are already using their own initiative and resources to report the news. While [citizen journalism has the power to be both positive and destructive](#), it’s not going anywhere. And as [5G rolls out](#) across the UK, people will be able to share and stream on-the-ground content in near real-time.

Sites like [WikiNews](#) provide a dedicated platform for citizen journalists, while collectives like [Bellingcat](#) use social media to investigate everything from “*drug lords and crimes against humanity to tracking the use of chemical weapons and conflicts worldwide*”. UK-based magazine [NowThen](#) is “*an independent platform for free, high-quality citizen journalism*”, with the call to action “*don’t hate the media – become the media.*” Even The Guardian invites readers to contribute to its [Community](#) page.

Photos taken by citizen journalists of the India COVID crisis became important evidence of ongoing state violence, ensuring that “[the truth of the crisis was committed to history and to public memory](#)”. When Facebook [removed evidence of atrocities in Syria and Myanmar](#), the United Nations Human Rights Council set up [the IIIM](#) and [the IIMM](#) “*to collect, consolidate, preserve and analyse evidence related to serious international crimes*”. Last year, activists and citizens of the Dalit community in Delhi took to social media to express [outrage at the rape of one of their children](#). Voices that will not be silenced are using all the resources at their disposal, including social media, to amplify their messages and [stand up to power](#).



“Storytelling makes your content engaging regardless of the project. Consumers can build connections between images, empathise with the heroes and associate themselves with a character.”

The Drum



# 3

## Protest Art

The pandemic saw an explosion of kids' creativity put to good use, with [rainbow pictures displayed in windows across the UK](#) in support of the NHS, spreading hope and solidarity to other families in lockdown. Meanwhile, 12-year-old Noah, aka '[Background Bob](#)', raised £18k for Colchester and Ipswich Hospitals Charity by painting backgrounds and inviting artists to collaborate by painting on top.

While [street art tributes to the NHS](#) sprang up around the UK, around the world [street murals expressed protest and resistance](#) in response to the murder of George Floyd by a police officer. Victims of police brutality and supporters of [Black Lives Matter](#) used art as a way to tell their stories of celebration and resistance.

2021 was a huge year for [artistic activism](#), from the expression of voices demanding climate action [during the COP26 climate conference](#) to the political fashion statement made by [Alexandra Ocasio-Cortez at the Met Gala](#), which prompted a [surge in Google searches of 'Tax The Rich'](#).

# 4

## Audio Visual

We can't explore visual storytelling without mentioning the [huge developments happening in audio](#). Music and sound are integral to most of the video content we consume, and play a large part in activating memory and emotion. You only need to think of the ubiquitous Just Eat jingle and the instantly-recognisable Netflix logo animation to know that [sonic branding](#) is a growing force to be reckoned with.

By now we're all familiar with the huge [growth in popularity of podcasts](#). [Audiobooks are set to continue the growth](#) they've seen over the past two years. But when audio and video combine in clever, creative ways, [the results can be transcendent](#). And [groundbreaking](#).

Pop music and video have been inseparable for decades, and now they're becoming interactive. Last month, [Doja Cat's codable video](#) in collaboration with [Girls Who Code](#) became "the world's first ever codable music video experience". Now we can [donate to charity through our smart speakers](#) and [artists can raise money through Spotify](#), younger generations are interacting with good causes through a vast range of media.

As ever, it's all about [being smart](#) and standing out from the crowd. As Creative Director of Creature, Megan Egan says, *"we're all used to hearing loud, busy adverts that try to demand our attention, but sometimes it's the quieter ones that cut through, such as the [recent National Trust work](#) that offered a moment of calm to transport viewers to the countryside, among the barrage of other ads."*



## So what?

Considering over [82% of internet traffic will be online videos](#) this year, if you're not already on board, it's time to get visual. The use of video and visual storytelling is going to be crucial in 2022 and beyond, with photo and video sharing platforms the [fastest growing social media networks](#). With [Gen Z spending their time on Snapchat, TikTok and Instagram](#), it's clear that the generations of supporters coming up are engaging mostly with visual content online.

# 1 Consider

## *Current and Future Supporters*

Get to know the people you want to reach. Where are they spending time? How are they interacting? What's capturing their attention at the moment and what's important to them?

Build understanding of your current and future audiences to better connect with them. Move out of your comfort zone to engage with people where they already are, listening and learning.

# 2 Experiment

## *With Channel and Format*

Be brave and try things out. Experiment with different formats, approaches, channels and voices.

How does your brand story change?  
How can you tell the same story in multiple different ways?

# 3 Explore

## *Diversity of Narrative*

How can you put the story in the hands of your supporters and beneficiaries, to tell a diversity of narrative and offer a different perspective on your cause and mission?

You have a treasure trove at your fingertips. Be brave.



# Long-Form Storytelling

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## What *is* Long-Form Storytelling?

If you're under the impression that short-form content is completely taking over the world, think again. Long-form content is far from dead. Right now we're seeing a resurgence of content in a longer format, from well-loved TV shows releasing episodes weekly, to the continuing rise of podcasts, and resurgence of book sales.

Long-form content covers everything from in-depth articles, case studies and white papers to books, plays, podcasts, films and TV shows. It's an umbrella term for those longer formats that give us the kind of deep dive into subjects that a TikTok video just can't.

Long-form has a long and distinguished history, taking in great works of literature, theatre, film and journalism. For centuries, longer epic works have been serialised, published in volumes over time, or performed in instalments.

Notable highlights include: the serialisation of Dickens' Pickwick Papers, Wagner's epic opera the Ring Cycle, Proust's work of literary genius A la Recherche du Temps Perdu, and Stoppard's theatrical trilogy The Coast of Utopia. More recently, Hilary Mantel's Wolf Hall trilogy included a Booker Prize-winning novel and a sell-out stage adaptation.

“TikTok has expanded to 3 minutes in length. Reels went to 60 seconds... Clubhouse spawned the dawn of long-form live audio. Twitter introduced Spaces. Facebook came out with Live Audio Rooms and fully supported podcasting. YouTube is also embracing podcasting.”

**Michael Stelzner**

*CEO and Founder of Social Media Examiner*



# Why should I care?

People are making time to listen to, read and watch longer stories. [Podcast listener numbers](#) are set to keep rising over the coming years, and although book sales dipped over the past decade, [they're starting to recover](#).

Netflix has pulled in huge numbers of UK users over the past few years. Around 80% of people aged 18-34 now have access to the streaming giant, closely followed by 70% of 35-44-year-olds. [Netflix is now targeting the remaining 50% of 55-64-year-olds](#) who are not yet subscribers.

[Long-form blog posts](#) are giving short-form pieces a run for their money, generating [more shares and links](#) than short-form media, while also [performing better on search engines](#). Social journalism platform [Medium](#), developed to encourage people to publish posts longer than the character limit of Twitter, now has over 100 million monthly unique visitors.

Where short-form excels at attention grabbing, long-form gives issues the space to explore subjects more broadly, deepen audience engagement and strengthen relationships over time. **Long-form content is an investment** – it builds authority and demonstrates expertise, retaining value long after it's published.

As we face burnout and a large-scale mental health crisis following the pandemic, **we're all seeking out purpose, meaning, depth and value in the things we consume**. People are making the time in their lives to consume long-form content. Now is the time to invest.





## 1

## User-Generated Video

As we lean towards more enriching activities in our recovery from the pandemic, reading and book clubs have become a way to invest in our health and deliver social connection at the same time. From big celebrities recommending book picks to small communities hosting meetups on Zoom, we're embracing book clubs like never before.

Reese Witherspoon's hugely popular book club has more than 2 million Instagram followers and 38 of its picks have made the New York Times bestsellers list. The Tonight Show's Jimmy Fallon promotes a list of summer reads and Barack Obama shares an annual list of his favourite books, music and movies with millions across the globe.

Online community Goodreads has around 90 million users and views of TikTok's BookTok are in the billions. Last year, a TikTok account called Betty's Book List gained hundreds of thousands of followers for its ingenious, short book recommendations expressed as the dilemma of the main character.

Amnesty International recently launched Reading Rebels, a subscription book club for children. Each month, it shares stories and activities exploring values like kindness, fairness, and equality, with a guide for grown-ups. Meanwhile, charities including Maggie's, Mind and Stormzy's Merky Foundation have benefited from book collaborations. Publishing startup Storyhouse promises that *"every future Storyhouse title sold in the UK will have a charity partner"*, following the release of The Last Seaweed Pie, which donated 3% of the cover price to the Marine Conservation Society.

## 2

## The Return of 'Serial'isation

The publishing format pioneered by Charles Dickens is making a comeback. In the wake of the binge-watch-inducing, all-episodes-at-once release model established by Netflix, lots of popular shows are returning to the weekly release model. Beloved shows like Snowpiercer on Netflix, This Is Us on Prime Video and Succession on HBO are delivered in instalments that make up a story so good viewers are willing to wait. As a result, we're seeing a revival of appointment-to-view TV, except now we can watch each week's new episode at our own convenience, and chat about it on social media afterwards.

Described as "the podcast to end all podcasts", Serial reminded us that the weekly release format can work exceptionally well for audio stories. Back in 2014, Serial's first season marked the cultural breakthrough for podcasts – a medium that champions episodic release and is now well established in the mainstream.

The Beatles: Get Back, Peter Jackson's 2021 documentary, took long form to the extreme. With a total runtime of almost eight hours, each of its three episodes was between two and three hours long and premiered on three consecutive days. It's length didn't seem to deter fans. The docuseries prompted the re-entry of the album 'Let It Be' into the top 40 album chart and as the NME reported, *"According to Nielsen, 503 million minutes were streamed across the three episodes over the first four days... The Beatles: Get Back placed seventh on the most viewed original streaming programmes that week."*



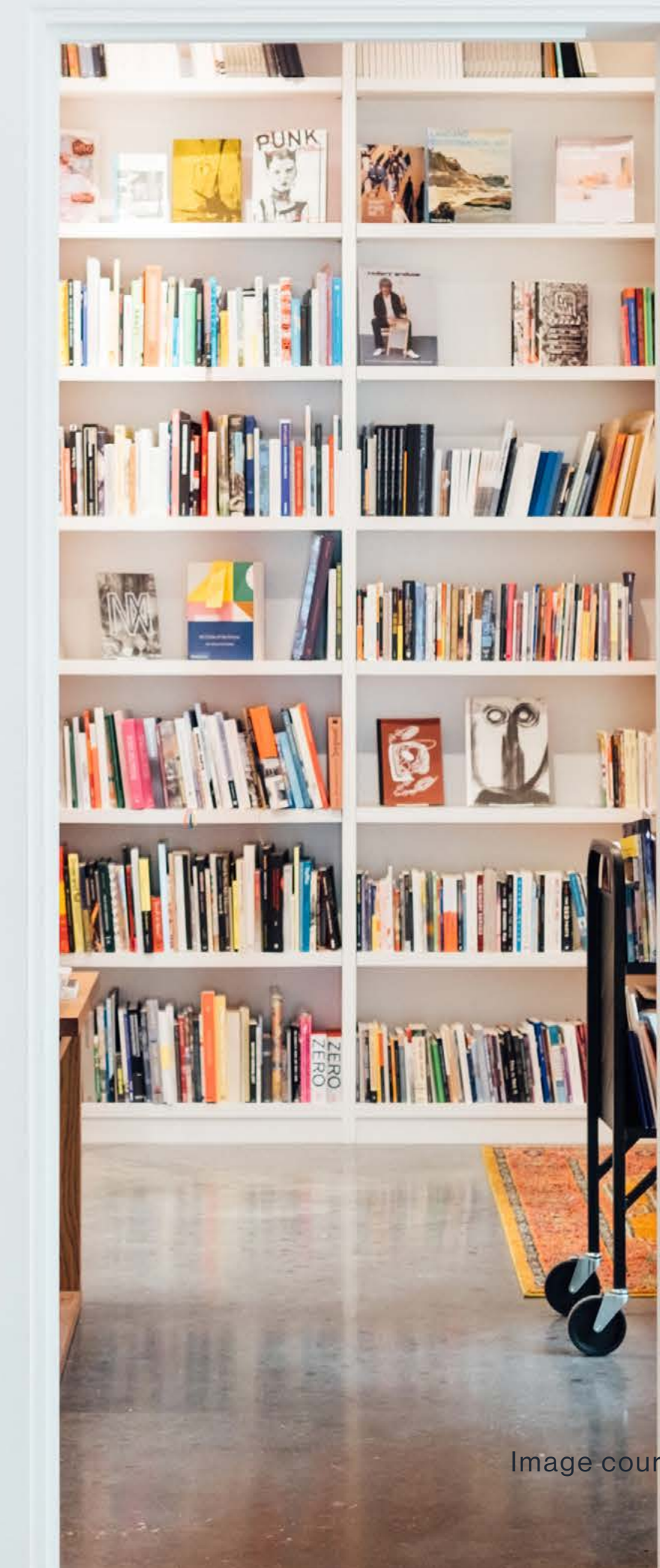
# 3

## Literature Trends

What was once given the derogatory label ‘chick lit’, has been reframed as positive female-written content, supported by [Hello Sunshine](#), the media company behind Reese’s Book Club, which “*puts women at the centre of every story we create, celebrate and discover... shining a light on where women are now and helping them chart a new path forward.*”

The self-help genre is booming and, alongside it, we’re seeing a trend in authors telling their own stories of personal struggle so that readers can learn and grow. Books like [Glennon Doyle’s Untamed](#), [Greenlights by Matthew McConaughey](#), [Will by Will Smith](#) and [Educated by Tara Westover](#) have all topped bestseller lists. We’re also seeing a growing number of [books from underrepresented voices](#), and books supporting the urgent movement towards [diversity, equality and inclusion](#).

How we consume books is changing too. [Audiobooks](#) have been around since the 1930s, but have become increasingly popular through apps like [Audible](#). Last year saw an even steeper [rise in audiobook sales](#). While the audiobook market may be growing, it’s still nowhere near the size of the print market, suggesting audio will work alongside print as an alternative option. The same can be said for [e-books, a growing market that’s still outstripped by print](#). People still want to buy physical books and, thanks to online sellers like Amazon, they can now do it without leaving home.





## So what?

**Sometimes short form just doesn't cut it.** Especially when the world is coping with the continuing bombardment of the pandemic, political disillusionment, information overload and burnout. Some subjects, some discussions, some issues need a longer format to do them justice. People are craving meaning and something that matters. As the [New York Times](#) put it, we need *“an interesting project, a worthwhile goal, a meaningful conversation. Sometimes it's a small step toward rediscovering some of the energy and enthusiasm that you've missed during all these months.”*

# 1 Innovate

## Cross-Platform Partnerships

How could you take the lead in creating, collaborating or commenting on new long-form content? Are there opportunities to raise funds or awareness alongside content that speaks to your cause? See the [CALM](#) (Campaign Against Living Miserably) [collaboration with Netflix](#) around the final season of [After Life](#), encouraging people to talk about grief.

# 2 Explore

## What Content Do Your Audiences Want and When?

What are your supporters and beneficiaries reading, watching or listening to? What gives them meaning and purpose? Where could you ask important questions, start conversations, or provide much-needed support?

# 3 Collaborate

## Messaging Frameworks

Take a leaf from our [safari takeaways](#) - how can you get the whole organisation aligned on messaging? How can long-form and short-form interact in your strategy? You don't need to get stuck in the either/or debate of long form vs short form. Each is useful for different purposes, and they can complement and enhance each other. Consider the power polymedic conversations (takeaway 11).



# Data Storytelling

**What is it and why should I care?**

[Page 62](#)

**Case Studies**

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**So what?**

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## What *is* Data Storytelling?

We've all been there - stuck in the meeting where slide after slide of data is presented as anaemic bar charts, graphs and 'animated numbers'. No narrative. No story. No impact.

**But data doesn't have to be boring!** Used in the right way, data can tell a compelling and captivating narrative. From interactive interfaces to videos and animations, a data story will often combine things like maps, images, graphs, statistics, text, video and audio. The aim is to bring data to life in a meaningful way for your audience, making it engaging, persuasive and memorable.

This is more than just dashboards and infographics. This is the evolution of data storytelling.

“Over the last five years, we've seen an explosion in excellent data storytelling. A big part of this story has been the rise of data journalism... But we've also seen data storytelling from content teams across brands, NGOs, universities, and more.”

Shorthand



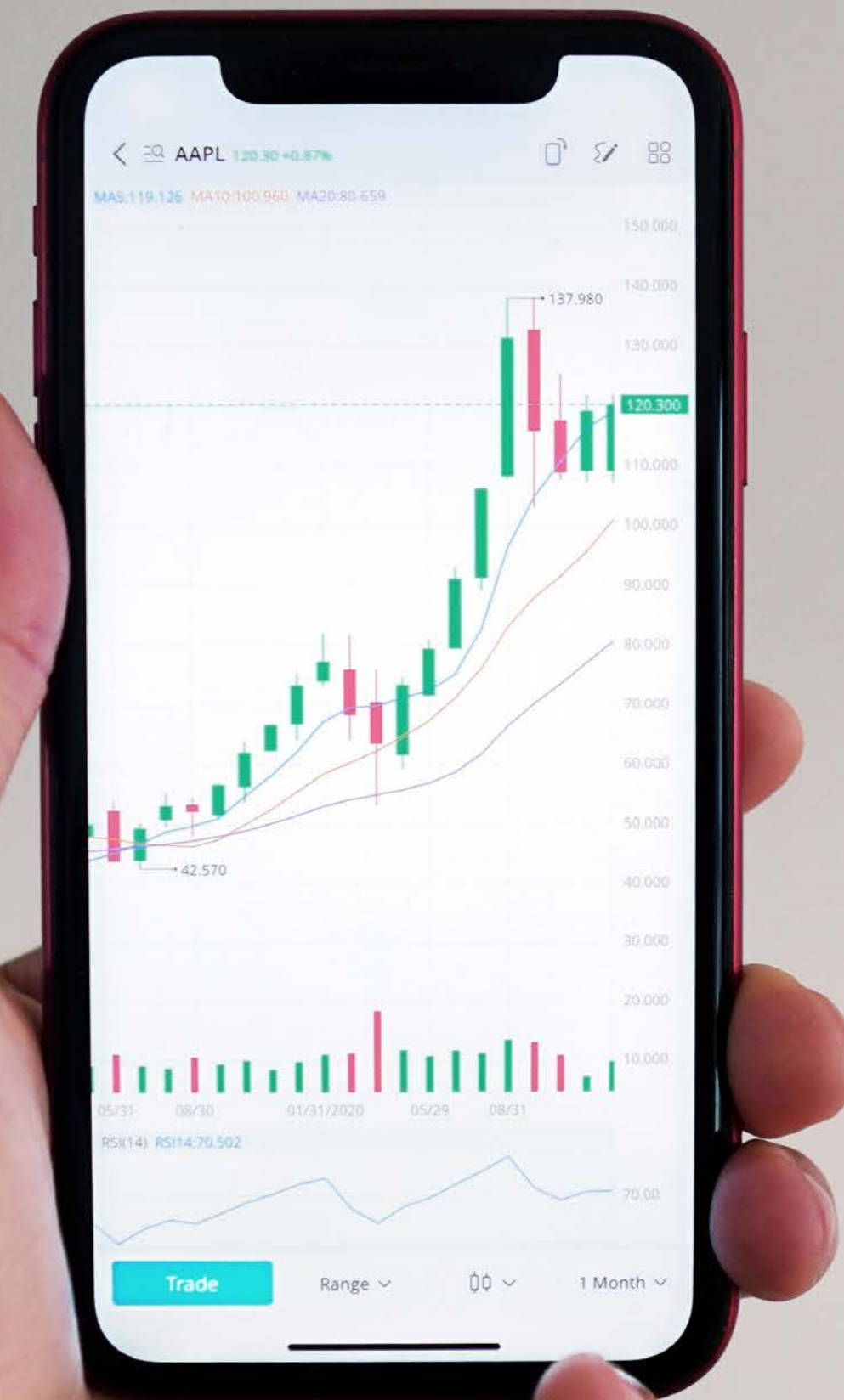
## Why should I **care**?

In 2021 the world created [2.5 quintillion bytes](#) of data every day. (There are 18 zeros in a quintillion. Just FYI.) With so much data we need tools to help us produce data stories - breaking down the data barriers to storytelling. No-code is one of those solutions. Platforms like [Shorthand](#) and [Juicebox](#) are designed to be easy to use without specialist technical skills.

Now, here's the note of caution (that anyone who attended our session on disinformation with the [BBC editor of disinformation, Rebecca Skippage](#), and/or who listens to the [More or Less podcast](#) will be all too familiar with) - you can cut data to tell just about ANY story you want. Correlation is NOT causation.

In the post-truth era you have a vital role to play in using data to tell powerful, engaging and accurate narratives. Combine that with the findings that "[emotion has overtaken reason in driving brand choice](#)" and it becomes even more urgent to find skilful ways to bring to life the stories that data reveals. Data stories can translate numbers into impact and apathy into action.

**You are sitting on a goldmine. Now, let's explore how to use it.**





## 1

## Rise of Data Journalism

Evolving over the past decade, data journalism is a contemporary form of journalism, described by the [Bureau of Investigative Journalism](#) as, “Journalism that uses technology to access, analyse and find stories in data and then tell the stories of the people the data represents.” [The Guardian](#) describes it as “Numbers you can tell stories with.”

News sources are telling data stories in all kinds of ways, covering topics from elections to the climate crisis. Sky News originally created [Brexit By Numbers](#) to address the confusion resulting from claims made during the Brexit debate. Now it continues to analyse how the UK has changed since voting for Brexit. [Labour Day](#), created by New Zealand news site Stuff, shows a vote-by-vote analysis of New Zealand’s historic shift to the political left.

The BBC’s [When your capital is sinking](#) draws on a range of data sources to show the impact of plans to move Indonesia’s capital away from the sinking city of Jakarta. In [What Africa Will Look Like In 100 Years](#), The Telegraph envisions the consequences of rapid population growth across Africa over the next century.

Data stories don’t always have to be visual. [More or Less](#) with Tim Harford on Radio 4 “explains - and sometimes debunks - the numbers and statistics used in political debate, the news and everyday life”. Episodes explore everything from ‘Life under lockdown in numbers’ to ‘Are natural disasters on the rise?’.

## 2

## Processing the Pandemic

Data stories are playing an important role in our understanding and processing of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. National Geographic’s [Visualising 500,000 deaths from COVID-19 in the U.S.](#) combines drawings with numbers to help us conceptualise the scale of these deaths, where a succession of raw statistics alone can become meaningless.

Imperial College’s [COVID-19: six months on the frontline](#) tells the story of the defining moments of the first six months of the pandemic, through a timeline supported by text, photos, audio, quotes and statistics. The results are emotive and powerful. Radio NZ mixes a timeline format with video, graphs, maps and photos to show how the coronavirus started, spread and stalled life in New Zealand, in its [COVID-19 pandemic timeline](#).



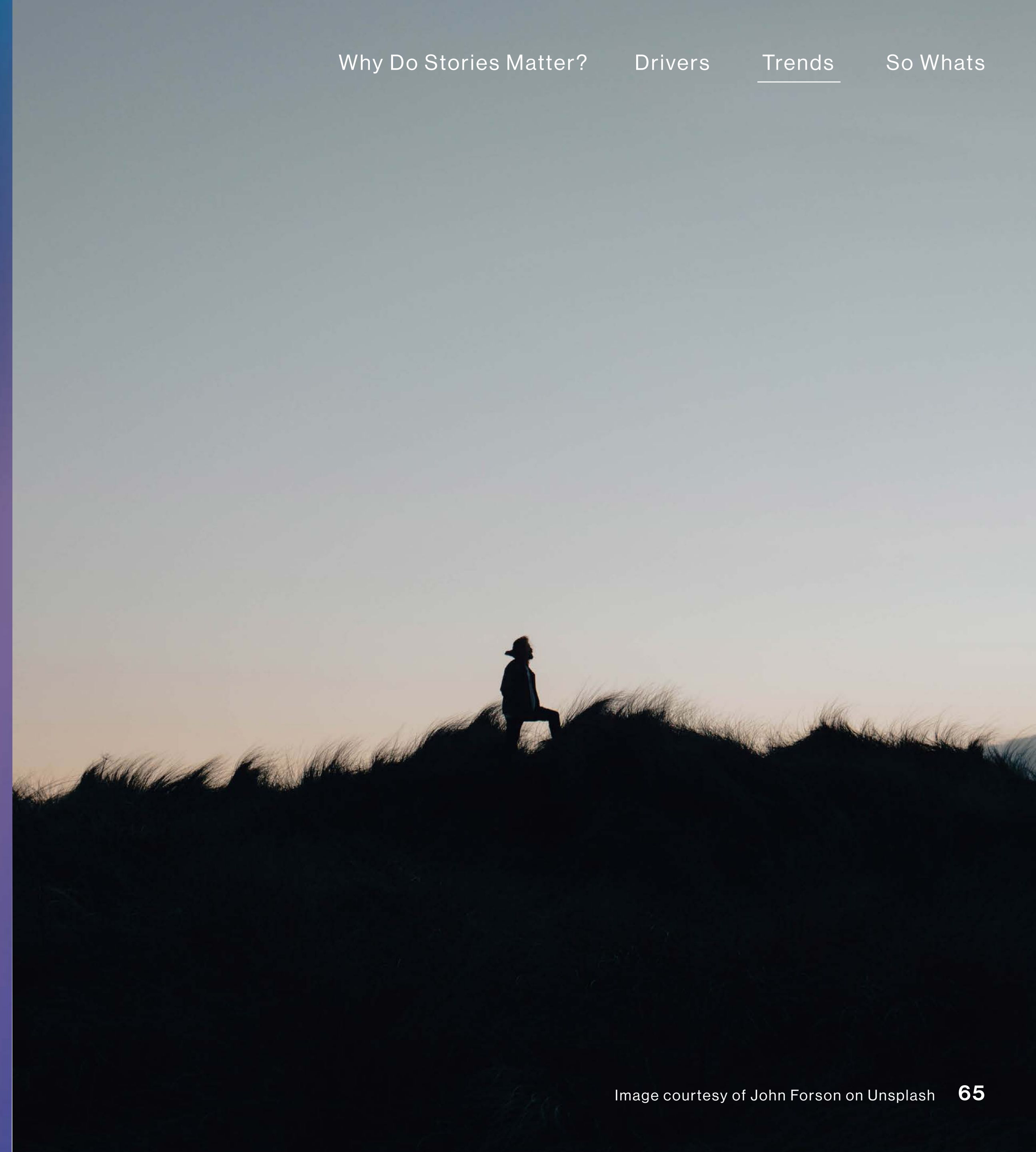
## 3

## Impact Stories Brought to Life

Charities are making great use of data stories to demonstrate their case for support with real power. In the Marine Stewardship Council's [How my dad fishes for the future](#), we hear a personal narrative in the voice of a fisherman's daughter that explores how we can end overfishing and make oceans more sustainable.

We're also seeing charities using data storytelling to communicate their impact to supporters. [Oxfam Ireland's impact report](#) uses data, maps, infographics and photos to tell the story of the charity's mission, work and results during a year. [Examining Inequality](#) by The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation uses interactive UI to zoom in on parts of the map, moving between the big picture and the stories of individuals and communities, to bring the data to life.

Data stories can give voice to social issues with stark simplicity. Periscope's [US gun deaths](#) synthesises data visualisation with emotive copy to drive home the devastation caused by gun crime in the States. In contrast, data storytelling can be used to forge relationships and promote good feelings too. [Harry Specter's chocolates](#) sends an email after each purchase with 'Your personal social impact report', using data and photos to show the direct correlation between your contribution and its results. A data story in micro form.





# So what?

(This isn't a definitive list, but some starters for thinking)

## 1 Challenge

### *Bias & Correlation*

Data doesn't speak for itself, or the data journalist would not be needed. Instead it must be interpreted. This is the process of selecting and obtaining the relevant data, finding the interesting facts or patterns, putting them in context, and explaining what they mean. Think carefully about the data sets you're using and conclusions you're drawing. Challenge internal bias. And remember... correlation doesn't mean causation.

## 2 Experiment

### *With Humour & Hope*

Data stories don't have to be heavy or serious. Why do cats and dogs? offers a humorous visual exploration to help us better understand cats and dogs, while Happy Data gives "hopeful views of the world through data and drawings."

## 3 Consider

### *Learning New Data Skills*

How could you develop your data storytelling skills? It doesn't necessarily have to involve paying for training or a workshop. Harvard Business School explores data narrative here and Shorthand offers a free webinar, and a helpful guide.



# 4

## So Whats





# But really, so what?

## FORGET INTERNAL STORYTELLING AT YOUR PERIL

It's easy to focus our efforts on the most immediate (financial) return, but forget the internal audience at your peril. Inspiring and engaging internal stakeholders to be your biggest supporters can make or break innovation.



Image courtesy of Redd on Unsplash



Image courtesy of Javier Allegue Barros on Unsplash

## WHICH LEVER TO PULL - EMOTIONAL VS RATIONAL VS FACTUAL

Our go-to, when telling stories in the third sector, has been to use emotion to drive connection with supporters. But what about exploring head vs heart ([as Daryl Fielding said in her safari talk](#)). How and where can you experiment with the different levers to drive connection - emotional vs rational vs factual? *(A GF subscriber is currently running an A/B test on a new product so we'll share back headlines when they're available).*

## RISK OF SILENCE

Your voice has power. Though sometimes the biggest impact comes from not speaking. Are you risking silence by not speaking out on topics that are important to your supporters and beneficiaries? Even if they aren't part of your core mission? Is your silence being noticed on DEI and climate change? What impact is this having on your brand perception - both internally and externally?

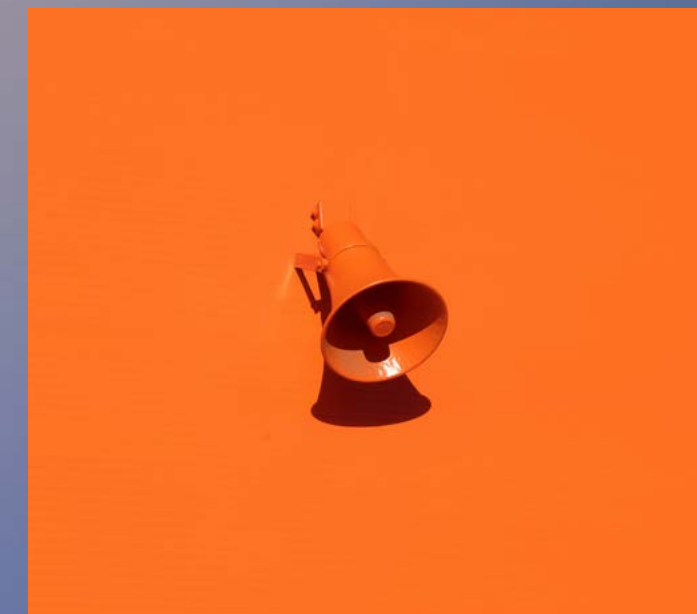


Image courtesy of Oleg Laptev on Unsplash

## PIVOTING FROM YOUR CORE MISSION

If you do speak out on topics that aren't core, how do you speak authentically to your supporters? How do you engage audiences with new propositions in new areas of focus?

Take inspiration from Care International's [Gen Zero](#) product. It isn't until you scroll to the very bottom of the landing page that Care's brand or logo first appears. Launching products that are "powered by" or "supporting" gives you a safe distance to explore and experiment with new propositions, markets or audiences that might not be core to your current mission.



# But really, so what?

## YOU CAN'T PLEASE EVERYONE

On that note, you can't please everyone all of the time. Know who your audience is. And who it isn't. Be single minded and focused. You can't speak to everyone in a single story. Own your subjectivity.



Image courtesy of Etienne Girardet on Unsplash



Image courtesy of Romeo A on Unsplash

## EXPERIMENTATION

How and where can you experiment with storytelling? In the Reunion session we heard from a number of organisations who are planning on experimenting with telling stories different internally and externally. Using video to give voice to the first person account. Using data to convey impact in new visual formats. Using VR to explore the lived experience. Handing over control the messaging to your supporters to tell their story and communicate your mission.

## SUPPLY, DEMAND & CONSENT

Do you have a content pipeline (and is it working)? Are those on the frontline supported to discover and share content in a range of formats? Are you doing proactive content generation, or just reacting to problem solving? How do you ensure you're getting the right consent to use content, and supporting storytellers when their narratives go live?



Image courtesy of Paul Teyson on Unsplash



Image courtesy of Julian Myles on Unsplash

## IS IT REALLY OVER-EXPOSED?

One thing that occurred to us during the Reunion was, who is actually bored with your story? Is it your supporters or is it your social team? Your team may feel that a story or case study has been used too many times, but consider how many times your supporters will have actually paused and considered the narrative.



# But really, so what?

## SAME STORY, TOLD DIFFERENT WAYS

It's not just what you tell, it's how you tell it. To avoid over-exposure consider the different ways to tell the same story. Take a leaf from [Katy Jon Went's](#) safari session. Sometimes the most interesting parts come from the middle. Try cutting the story up into different sections, or focusing in from a new angle. Move past your immediate first impressions and assumptions to see new avenues in old narratives.



Image courtesy of Sigmund on Unsplash



Image courtesy of Sam Pak on Unsplash

## EMPOWERING THE READER

How can you empower the reader to explore the story how they want? [Simon Barratt](#) shared his views on the opportunity VR and gaming gives to enabling people to explore new worlds and new narratives.

## POLYMEDIC CONVERSATIONS

A story or conversation may start on Facebook or in email but that doesn't mean it ends there. One story can be told through multiple chapters across a range of channels, with the same supporter. These are called polymedic conversations. The tone, style and focus of the narrative shifts to reflect the channel or medium but in reality its one continuous conversation.



Image courtesy of Milena Trifonova on Unsplash



Image courtesy of Antenna on Unsplash

## THE PERILS OF CUT & PASTE

We've all seen it (and probably been guilty of doing it). The two-page content brief cut down to fit an email newsletter, cut again to fit a facebook post. Good content goes out the window when you just cut and paste. Think about your channel and your audience to re-craft stories.



# But really, so what?

## IMPACT NARRATIVES

One of the biggest opportunities stories give are new ways to communicate and land impact. Impact told through data. Impact told through audio. Impact told through a tweet, a TikTok or Reel. Impact brought to life through video or VR. Impact landed, made real and powerful.



Image courtesy of Edward Howell on Unsplash



Image courtesy of Zachary Keimig on Unsplash

## SINGULAR FOCUS

One way to communicate impact is to have a singular focus. But that can be hard when your mission is broad and diverse. When you do lots, how do you showcase it all. Answer: you don't. Be brave and focus on one angle of impact at a time.

## BRAVERY

Having singular focus or experimenting and trying new things takes bravery. Bravery to break the mould. Bravery to confront old ways of working. Bravery to challenge old stereotypes of colonialism and racism. Bravery to stand up and shout.



Image courtesy of Ehimetalor Akhere Unuabona on Unsplash

## POWER OF PARTNERSHIPS

You aren't alone. There's power in joining force with others. Power in partnerships to develop and create. To add your voice to the choir and be heard. [We The Helpers](#) is a new campaign from UK aid charities to change the perception of aid with the message 'Aid is helping. We can't stop now.' Partners include: WaterAid, British Red Cross, UNICEF, Save the Children, ActionAid, Oxfam, International Rescue Committee, Care International, Bond and One.



# But really, so what?

## WHO'S IN THE WRITER'S ROOM?

[Georgia Arnold](#) challenged us to consider who we have in the writer's room? To truly speak to an audience you need to include them in the creative process. Who's in your writer's room?



Image courtesy of Jason Goodman on Unsplash



Image courtesy of Gabriella Clare Marino on Unsplash

## ROBUSTLY CHALLENGING THE CYNICS

The backlash against the metaverse and web3 has already begun. In order to equip ourselves to take on the cynics we need to stay informed. How can you stay ahead of the conversation so that you're armed with information to give a balanced assessment of the risk of new opportunities? (We hope that Good Futures is answering some of that challenge for you.)

## SUPPORTER JOURNEYS ARE QUEEN

We've said it before and we'll keep saying it - **Supporter journeys are queen.** Without a good view of where your supporters are, where they could go and what they need, want and (possibly) hate, you're missing a massive opportunity. How can you use data and insight to better understand your segments? How and where could you empower supporters to design their own journeys? What are the touch points to co-create the now and next?



Image courtesy of Youssef Naddam on Unsplash

## SINGING FROM THE SAME SONGBOOK

Finally, none of the above will work if you're not all singing from the same songbook. How do you coordinate across the organisation to align on storytelling and coordinate your efforts to give singular focus on impact narratives?

Getting there isn't easy. When what works for fundraising isn't what works for strategy, or services or delivery, or trusts. That's where engagement frameworks come in. A method to coordinate, align and deliver storytelling across the whole organisation.



# What

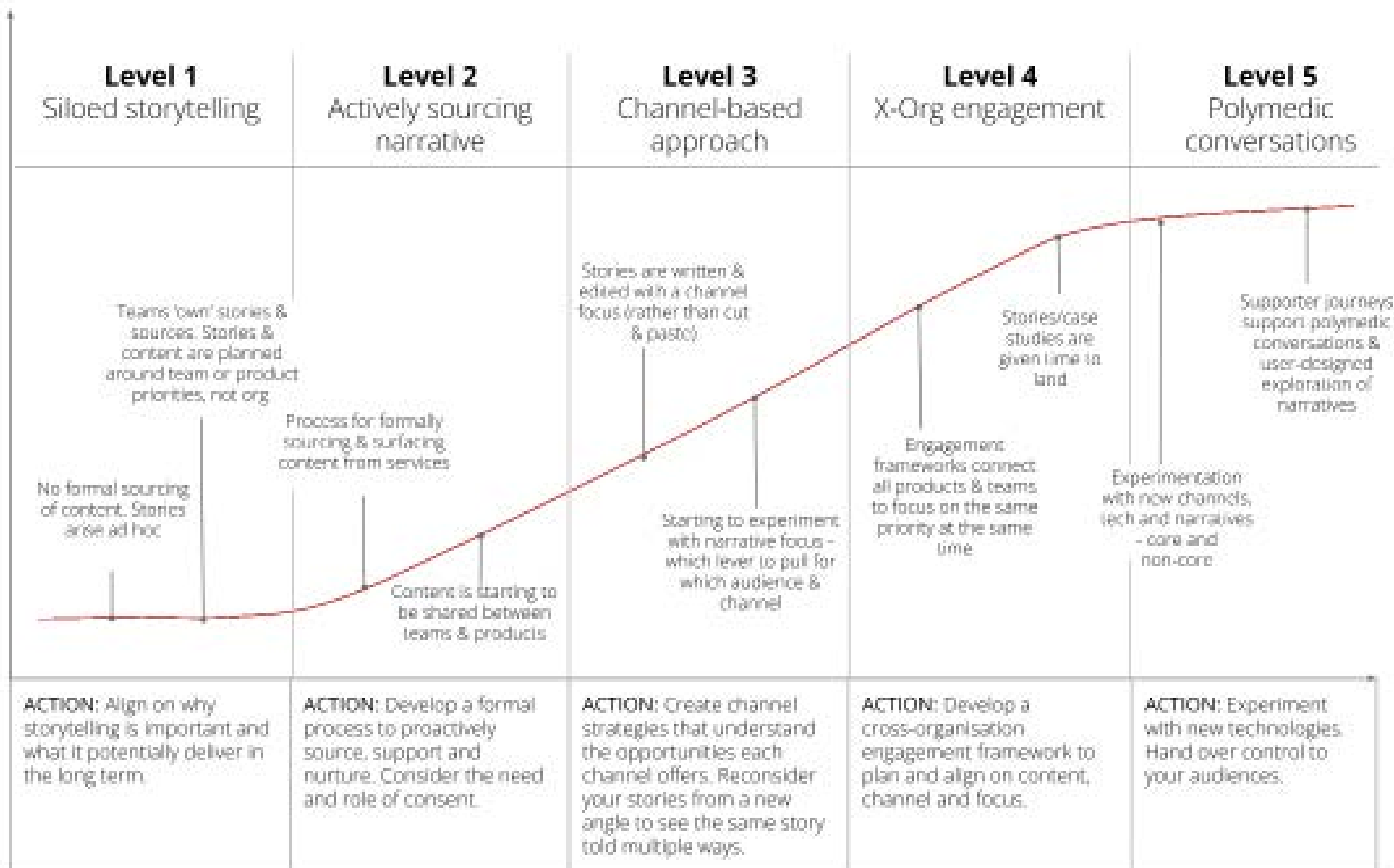
# NEXT?

Understanding storytelling is core to future proofing your organisation and connecting with audiences. Connect your teams to amplify your voice and message will give cut through and engagement.

We've created a storytelling maturity curve to help you map where you are as an organisation now, and where you want to get to, along with a Future of Storytelling Canvas to help you align and agree on a the role of storytelling, why it's important and where you want to get in the next 5 years.



# Storytelling Maturity Curve





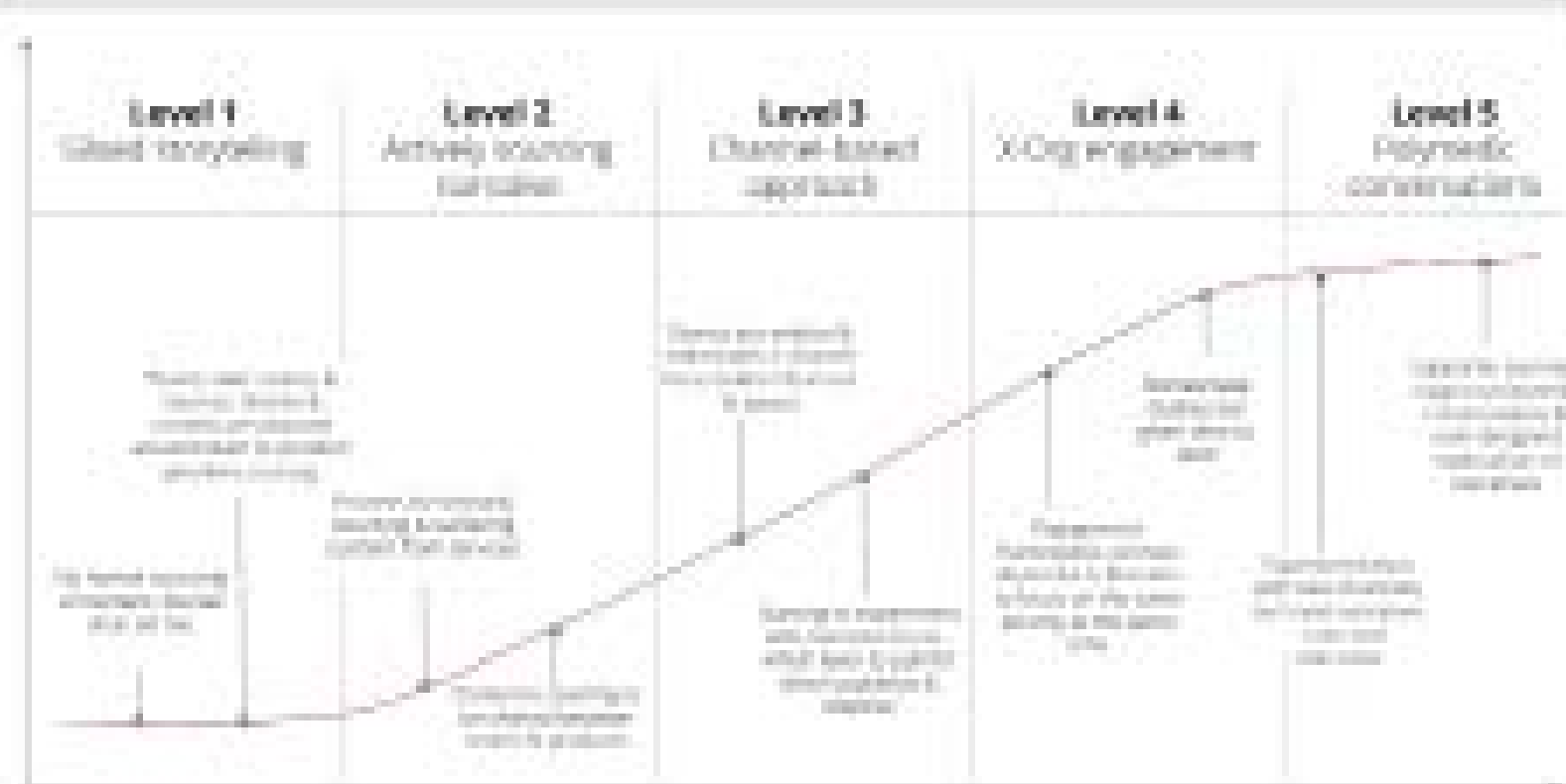
# Future of Storytelling Canvas

## 1. WHY IS STORYTELLING IMPORTANT TO YOUR MISSION?

What role does storytelling currently play in your organisation?  
Why is important? How would you define storytelling?

## 2. SHARED DEFINITION

Find the intersections between your definitions. Discuss the differences.  
Create a shared definition of what storytelling means to your organisation.



4. Where are you now and where do you want to be in 3 years?

## 3. IMPACT OF NOT TAKING ACTIONS

What does the future look like if you don't invest in storytelling?  
How will it impact your impact and your income?  
How will it impact your services?

## 6. BARRIERS

What might stop you reaching your desired outcomes?  
What challenges are you facing, and why?  
What can you do to overcome those barriers?

## 5. ASSETS, SKILLS & START POINTS

Where are the pockets of skills?  
Who are the audiences you want to target, and where are they gathering?  
What are you already experimenting with?

## 7. SHORT TERM VISION (6 months)

What do you commit to do in the next 6 months?  
How will your organisation be different?

## 8. IMMEDIATE NEXT STEPS

Based on your short-term vision, what are the tangible first steps?  
Who will be responsible for which action? Who is accountable for storytelling at Board level?



Want to discuss the implications of the shift and  
how you can use it as an opportunity to innovate?

*Need some help exploring the potential?*

**We're here to help.**

Get in touch.

**[GoodFutures@goodinnovation.co.uk](mailto:GoodFutures@goodinnovation.co.uk)**

