



Believe in Better: a journey to embedding Cultural Insight at Sky

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What is cultural insight?



Signals

Forces

Implications

Signals

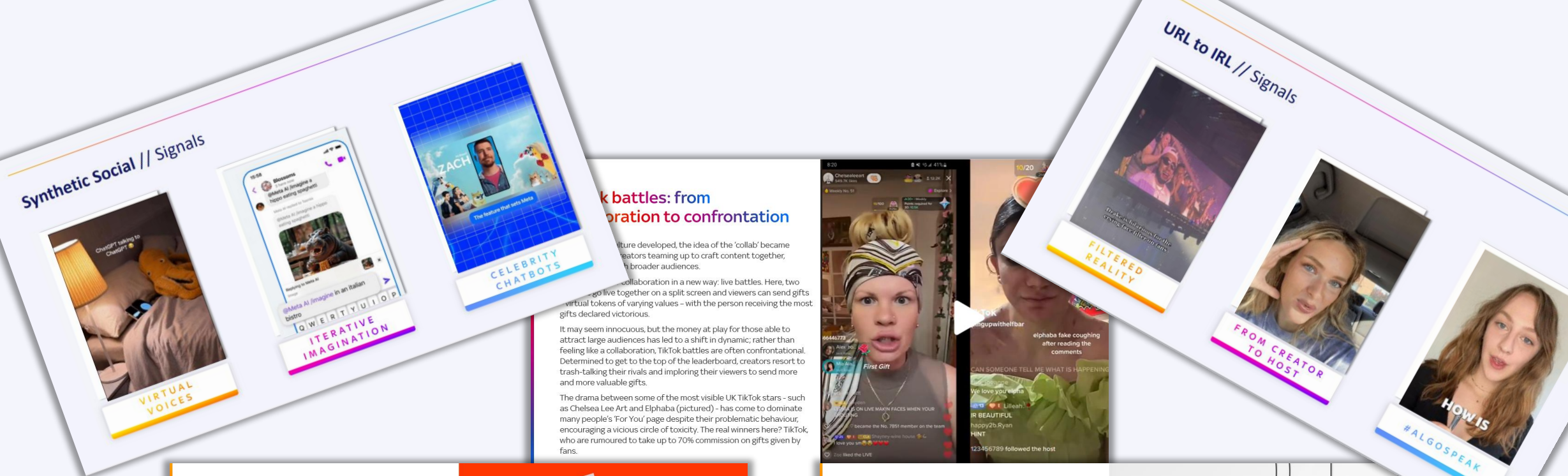
Forces

Implications



A person wearing bright orange sneakers is walking on a set of blue stairs. The stairs have a textured, diamond-plate surface. The person's legs and feet are visible, and they are moving upwards. The background is a blurred blue metal railing and a grid pattern.

Forward-looking & Restless



TikTok battles: from collaboration to confrontation

Culture developed, the idea of the 'collab' became creators teaming up to craft content together, with broader audiences.

collaboration in a new way: live battles. Here, two creators go live together on a split screen and viewers can send gifts of virtual tokens of varying values – with the person receiving the most gifts declared victorious.

It may seem innocuous, but the money at play for those able to attract large audiences has led to a shift in dynamic; rather than feeling like a collaboration, TikTok battles are often confrontational. Determined to get to the top of the leaderboard, creators resort to trash-talking their rivals and imploring their viewers to send more and more valuable gifts.

The drama between some of the most visible UK TikTok stars – such as Chelsea Lee Art and Elphaba (pictured) – has come to dominate many people's 'For You' page despite their problematic behaviour, encouraging a vicious circle of toxicity. The real winners here? TikTok, who are rumoured to take up to 70% commission on gifts given by fans.

Redditors revolt!

Reddit is one of the most popular social platforms, ranking as the 10th most visited website in the world. Users submit content to user-created boards (known as subreddits), primarily moderated by users themselves. Earlier this year, Reddit announced a raft of changes to make their model more profitable, charging for access to the API that had allowed developers to integrate Reddit with third-party apps; this prohibitive cost left many of these apps facing closure.

User-moderators were not happy and protested the company's actions by wielding their moderator power – making communities private (going 'dark') or categorising them as NSFW and sharing pornography to curb Reddit's ability to gain ad revenue.

Reddit's headline response was to threaten protesting moderators with stripping them of their moderation powers. But this decision highlights exactly what helped the platform become so popular; unpaid moderators worked hard to create the communities that made Reddit what it is today.

Ultimately, this has brought into stark relief the uneasy balance between the priorities of Reddit the business and those of the users who shape the platform – and raising the question, who really holds the power?

Cultural Insight Pulse – Q3 2023



'Play-I' for gaming accessibility

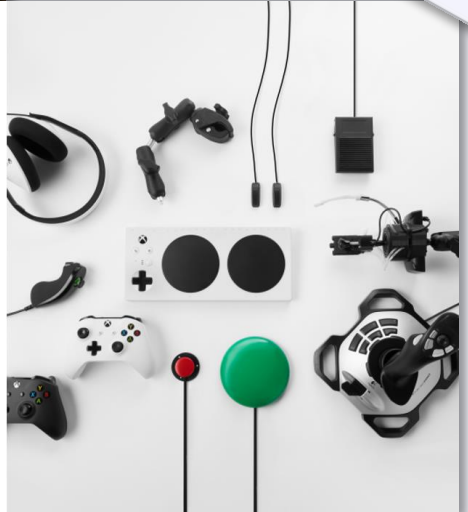
Google recently revealed *Project Gameface*: a hands-free, AI-powered gaming mouse that enables people to control a computer's cursor using their head movement and facial gestures. This project was inspired by Lance Carr, a quadriplegic gamer and streamer who uses a head-tracking mouse as part of his set-up. When this was destroyed in a fire, Google stepped in to create an open source, low-cost alternative to expensive hardware, powered by AI.

This specific example has inspired debate as to how else AI can be used to make gaming overall more accessible – not just impacting accessibility for players, but also how developers create accessibility solutions.

Recent gains have included real-time text-to-speech and speech-to-text generation, but experts believe it can go further. The goal, according to Artem Koblov, creative director of game developer Perelesoq, would be creating an adaptable accessibility framework that could be injected into games, so even smaller studios would be able to provide accessible games without the need for expensive research to develop unique solutions.

In short, an easy way to create games for all, supported by AI.

Cultural Insight Pulse – Q3 2023





POWER

OF

PLAY

Power of Play // Signals



BIG LITTLE
KIDS



NEW NOSTALGIA



COLLECTIBLE
CULTURE

Power of Play // Forces

EVERYDAY
ESCAPISM

SEEKING
SECURITY

CREATING
COMMUNITY

Power of Play // Implications

**How might
we...**

Lean into the desire for escapism not only in our content but in how we bring our brand to life in the real world?

**What if
we...**

Tap into the renewed interest in what's come before to revive popular ideas from the past, across content and communication?

**How can
we...**

Support our customers to find and foster communities that help them feel supported and fulfilled?

A crowd of people at a concert with their hands raised in the air, overlaid with the text "NOUVEAU". The background is a warm, golden light, suggesting a sunset or stage lighting. The text is in a bold, sans-serif font, with a gradient from dark brown to light gold.

NOUVEAU

NICHE

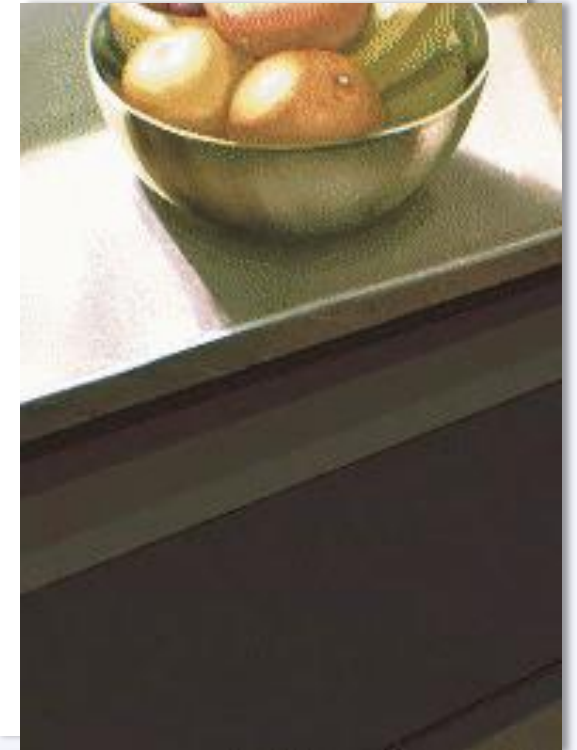
Nouveau Niche // Signals



INSERTING
INCLUSIVITY



MEMEIFIED
POLITICS



ANIME
ADVERTISING

Nouveau Niche // Forces

POST
REPRESENTATIO
N

PEER-TO-
PEER
EXPRESSION

EMBRACING
ECCENTRICITY

Nouveau Niche // Implications

**How might
we...**

Harness more realistic representation across our content and advertising to empower all audiences?

**What if
we...**

Authentically embrace new modes of communication in the relevant spaces to appeal to younger, more connected audiences?

**How can
we...**

Facilitate fandom in a way that makes it easier for our customers to express themselves while driving fame for our content and brand?

Change

“Max presented his 2024 cultural insights to my team of UI Copywriters at Sky in February. This session was incredibly useful as it allowed my team to really engage with current social media trends and gain a more holistic understanding of the subjects that are important to our U35 customers.

Since this talk, my team have made active efforts to use some of the key language appearing in these online discourses – adopting terms like “nostalgia”, “escapism” and “inner child” – allowing us to really speak like a fan when talking about our younger-skewing content.”

- UI Copywriter & Editorial Manager

WHAT

NOW?

Thank You!

Any questions?

sky