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CIM - The Pitch 2026 - Postgraduate - Mintel Insights

Insight pack composed of Mintel Trends, Reports and Consumer Data

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Client Success Team

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MINTEL REPORTS AND CONSUMER DATA

Mintel Reports and Consumer Data give you a complete 360-degree view. They're rooted in robust data and written by expert analysts – so you can have confidence in the decisions you make.

Each one combines consumer research, market information, product innovation and competitive analysis

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Consumers and AI – UK – 2025

"Brands must focus on highlighting AI's real world benefits rather than the underlying technology. Addressing concerns over reliability and fostering trust will be vital for AI to reach its potential."

Joe Birch, Senior Technology and Leisure Analyst

AI in sustainability and accessibility

The environmental cost of AI could see increased regulation on use and green alternatives

The training process for a single AI model can consume thousands of megawatt hours of electricity. It also emits hundreds of tons of carbon, is water intensive for the cooling of data centres, and generates significant eWaste.

Microsoft highlights sustainability as a key focus in AI development for 2025. They are advancing "green AI" by building data centres that use zero water for cooling and operate on carbon-free energy sources like wind, geothermal, nuclear, and solar power. Their goal is to become carbon-negative, water-positive, and zero-waste by 2030.

Nvidia has developed a new "superchip" that reportedly delivers 30 times better performance while using 25 times less energy for generative AI services.

It could also see smaller, task-specific AI models and small language models (SLMs) for applications that don't require massive computational power become more commonplace.

Nearly three in five worried about the potential for AI to replace humans

AI has increasingly been integrated to enhance customer service, yet there remains significant scepticism towards the technology.
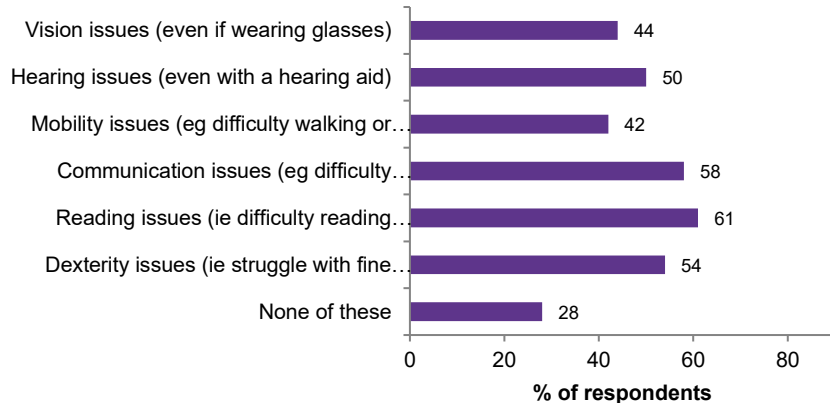
The potential for AI to replace humans stands out as a barrier to the use of AI-powered customer service, with this being a universal concern seen across all demographics.

There remains a gap in knowledge regarding AI, with nearly all consumers having heard of it but almost a third not knowing anything about it and 54% knowing a little about it. Unfamiliarity with the technology and its use cases has undoubtedly caused scepticism and hindered adoption, pointing to the need for companies to highlight responsible AI measures alongside training on usage. For example, in rolling out Billie, its AI bot to handle customer queries, IKEA has upskilled its call centre workers to become interior design advisers. It also established an AI Task Force to ensure that every AI initiative aligns with ethical guidelines, with key commitments including transparency on the impact of AI and AI education for its staff.

Fair treatment of workers is the defining factor for 44% of consumers to consider a retailer ethical, meaning responsible AI practices can not only drive adoption of AI-powered tools but also enhance brand image.

Dispel fears that AI will marginalise people further

UK: think artificial intelligence (AI) will marginalise disabled people further (eg will not account for accessibility needs, lack of representation for disabilities), by physical/cognitive issue, 2024

Category	%
Vision issues (even if wearing glasses)	44
Hearing issues (even with a hearing aid)	50
Mobility issues (eg difficulty walking or…	42
Communication issues (eg difficulty…	58
Reading issues (ie difficulty reading…	61
Dexterity issues (ie struggle with fine…	54
None of these	28

% of respondents

Consumers with physical or cognitive issue are far more likely to agree that AI will further marginalise disabled people.

Despite the potential benefits of AI in improving accessibility, such as auto-generated captions and personalised voice generation, negative media attention overshadows these positive advancements. Examples include AI recruitment tools and other automated decision systems that perpetuate bias or discount candidates unfairly.

To mitigate these concerns and foster inclusivity, brands must actively engage underrepresented groups in the development and programming of AI algorithms. Ensuring diverse representation in the underlying data and emphasising unbiased AI training practices will help promote fairness and equity in AI-driven decision-making processes.

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Market Dynamics

Market outlook for consumers and AI

Now (2025): AI becomes leaner

New AI models and technologies developed to reduce energy intensity, addressing the growing environmental impact of AI.

Brands will increasingly leverage on-device AI to develop contextual solutions tailored to consumer data.

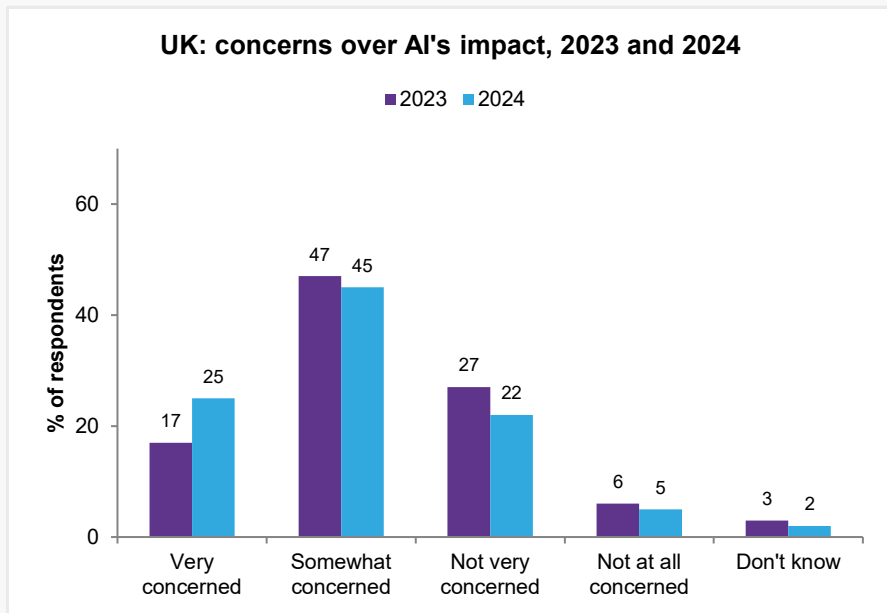## Next (2026-27): AI integrates further into daily life

AI integrations into areas such as the smart home and health and wellness will become more commonplace.

Brands will incorporate new AI search and discovery features to help promote new ways of finding products.

Future (2028-29) era of personalised shopping

AI will become more accurate and personalised, and integrated into everyday technology products, such as phones, laptops and TVs. Agentic AI will be embedded in customer service capacities, solving consumer queries 24/7.

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7 in ten consumers exhibit concern over AI's impact

UK: concerns over AI's impact, 2023 and 2024

■ 2023 ■ 2024

% of respondents

	Very concerned	Somewhat concerned	Not very concerned	Not at all concerned	Don't know
2023	17	47	27	6	3
2024	25	45	22	5	2

Overall consumer levels of concern over AI have been fairly static in the last two years. However, there has been a jump of 8 percentage points in those who are very concerned about the increasing prominence of AI, whilst 92% express any concern about AI.

And Mintel notes that those with greater knowledge of AI come with greater concern over its influence. Of those who know a lot about AI, 49% are very concerned about its increasing prominence.

Brands incorporating AI into their products or services must prioritise safeguards and transparency about how their AI solutions deliver ethical and beneficial outcomes for individuals and society.

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Brands must double down on transparency and accuracy to address consumer scepticism

AI has the potential to bring significant time saving benefits to consumers' lives. However, there is a great deal of uncertainty and mixed opinions of AI among consumers, that reveal a complex, sometimes contradictory relationship with the technology.

While they find it exciting, accessible and convenient, they are also concerned about AI's impact on job displacement. Many consumers consider AI unethical, overhyped and even dangerous. This is compounded by the reservations consumers harbour about the intentions technology companies play in 'having consumers' best interests at heart'. These misgivings and scepticism can hamper AI's broader acceptance and ability to monetise from consumers.

For brands in the space, they will need to double down on transparency around how data is used, its accuracy, and privacy protections. Major technology players will need to show how AI products they are creating will benefit humanity in practical, relatable ways. This will be crucial in addressing consumer hesitations about AI providing services that require access to data on devices, for example. With AI still a relatively nebulous concept, it will be important to focus on the actual benefits, not the AI technology itself, to break down barriers, especially with older, more wary consumers.

Cheaper, leaner models, hybrid AI and Quantum breakthroughs to push AI capabilities
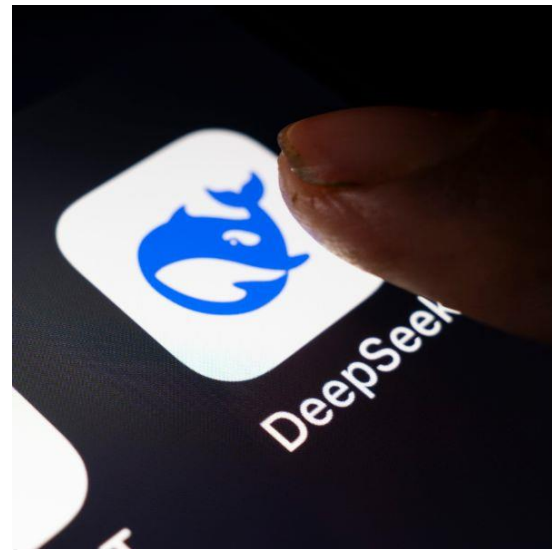
Chinese startup DeepSeek launched its open-source LLM, DeepSeek-R1, focusing on reasoning and cost efficiency with performance comparable to OpenAI's models. It quickly gained popularity, becoming the most-downloaded iOS app in the U.S., surpassing ChatGPT.

Hybrid models – that combine different AI techniques to create more versatile and effective systems – are also being launched by Amazon using Anthropic's model.
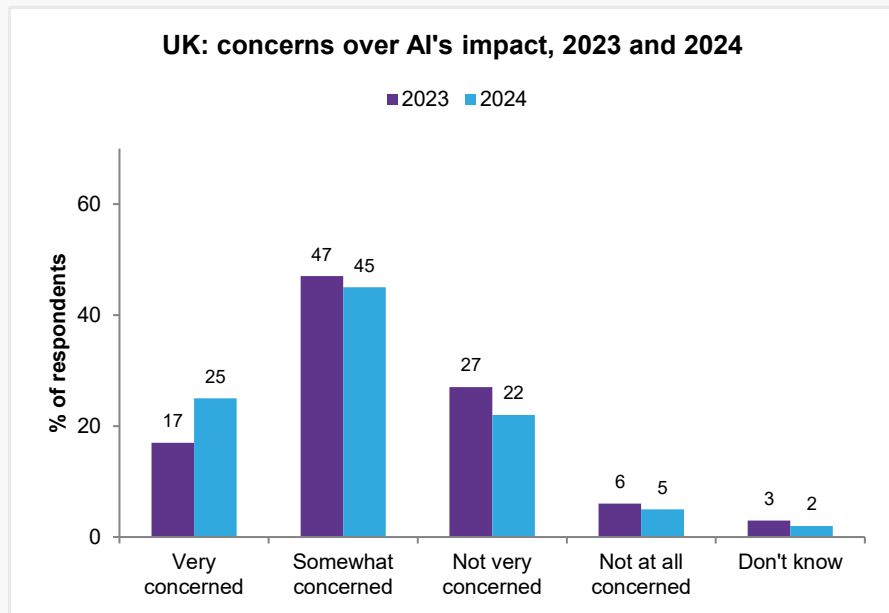
Lenovo showcased a range of hybrid AI innovations at MWC 2025, including AI PCs. They also introduced Lenovo AI Now, an intelligent, personal AI agent.

Quantum computing advancements, meanwhile, look set to make generative AI faster and more accurate.

According to a non-profit AI research organisation, Epoch AI, AI training compute is growing rapidly, quadrupling annually. If this trend continues, AI models by 2030 could use 10,000 times more computing power, significantly advancing AI capabilities.

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There is widespread consumer concern over AI's impact

UK: concerns over AI's impact, 2023 and 2024

■ 2023 ■ 2024

% of respondents

Category	2023	2024
Very concerned	17	25
Somewhat concerned	47	45
Not very concerned	27	22
Not at all concerned	6	5
Don't know	3	2

Concern about AI is growing, with 92% of consumers expressing worry in 2024. This includes an 8% increase in those who are very concerned, compared with 2023. Those with greater knowledge of AI tend to be more worried, with 49% of those highly familiar with AI expressing significant concern. Brands using AI must focus on transparency and ethical safeguards to ensure positive outcomes for individuals and society.

AI is transforming customer service, but consumer scepticism remains due to fears of job loss and limited understanding. With 54% of consumers knowing little about AI, education and transparency are key. Companies like IKEA are tackling this with staff training and ethical AI practices, boosting adoption and brand reputation, as 44% of consumers value fair worker treatment in retailer ethics.

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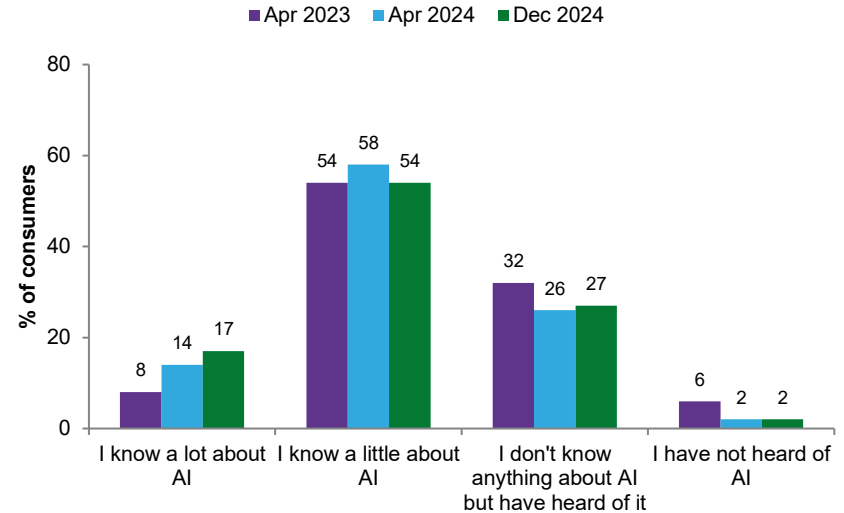# Consumer knowledge and understanding of AI is growing

While overall knowledge of AI is static since April 2024, those who say they know a lot about AI increased by 9 pp. However, with greater knowledge about AI, comes greater concerns about its impact on consumer lives.

Brands looking to leverage AI through services will need to focus on transparency in the use of it to help consumers overcome concerns.

There is evidence of a knowledge gap between older and younger consumers with regard to AI.

Older adults may miss potential benefits of AI, such as learning experiences and health monitoring tools which could be of most use to them. Brands using AI must help these older generations with clear and concise information regarding how AI is used. Creating AI-powered products and services with user-friendly interfaces will help.

UK: knowledge of AI, 2023 and 2024

■ Apr 2023 ■ Apr 2024 ■ Dec 2024

Response	Apr 2023	Apr 2024	Dec 2024
I know a lot about AI	8	14	17
I know a little about AI	54	58	54
I don't know anything about AI but have heard of it	32	26	27
I have not heard of AI	6	2	2

% of consumers

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Consumers prefer the expert human touch

UK: attitudes towards AI, 2024

■ Yes ■ No ■ Don't know

I would prefer to speak to a human customer service representative than use an AI chatbot	Yes 82, No 11, Don't know 6
AI makes me value things created by humans more (eg books, art)	Yes 63, No 23, Don't know 14
I worry that AI will make my job obsolete [1]	Yes 40, No 50, Don't know 9
I think advice from AI is as valuable as advice from humans	Yes 31, No 50, Don't know 19
I would trust an on-device AI (eg Apple Intelligence) to have access to data on my smartphone [2]	Yes 29, No 56, Don't know 14

% of respondents (0% 20% 40% 60% 80% 100%)

48% of the under 35s worry AI will make their job obsolete. The potential impact of AI on employment prospects can feed into underlying concerns among consumers, making them reluctant to fully embrace AI's upside.

Consumers' cautious views on AI extend beyond work. In creative industries, AI's growing role raises concerns about reshaping content production and diminishing human artistry.

Consumers, especially younger ones, increasingly value human creations and want to assert their personal taste in areas like music or art. Brands can embrace the human-made, artisanal element to stand out and foster a sense of connection.

While AI can improve efficiency, it shouldn't replace human creativity. Supporting human artists is key to maintaining authenticity and originality.

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Brands need to double down on consumer protection

UK: attitudes towards AI and society, 2024

■ Agree ■ Neither agree nor disagree ■ Disagree

Statement	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree
Governments need to protect businesses from AI (eg protecting copyright, intellectual property)	71	25	4
AI has a negative impact on the environment	33	51	16
Big tech companies developing AI (eg Meta, OpenAI) have the best interests of people at heart	24	38	38

% of respondents

Tech brands in the AI space must clearly communicate their commitment to creating safe, inclusive products and services that empower users. This effort is essential to counteract the negative perceptions currently surrounding the industry.

Brands will need to promote tangible utility of products that can fit seamlessly into consumers' lives, for instance in the smart home or as personal assistants on a wellness journey.

Ethical considerations will also play a factor. Promoting fairness, accountability, and social responsibility will enhance consumers' perceptions of AI and its gatekeepers. This is reflected in the strong consumer support for government legislation aimed at protecting businesses' intellectual property and copyright.

Additionally, ensuring that AI systems are inclusive, unbiased, and designed to benefit society will be key to fostering long-term acceptance and support.
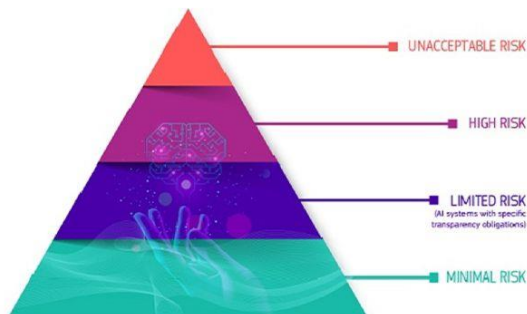
Regulatory landscape

EU introduces AI act

A risk-based approach

The AI Act defines 4 levels of risk for AI systems:

- UNACCEPTABLE RISK
- HIGH RISK
- LIMITED RISK (AI systems with specific transparency obligations)
- MINIMAL RISK

The EU AI Act, the world's first comprehensive AI legislation, aims to foster trustworthy and human-centric AI across Europe. It prohibits harmful practices, such as social scoring and manipulative AI while imposing stringent regulations on high-risk AI systems in key sectors like healthcare and employment. The Act mandates clear labelling for AI-generated content, including deepfakes, to enhance transparency.

For consumers, the AI Act offers significant protections. It safeguards fundamental rights by banning exploitative practices and requiring human oversight for high-risk AI systems The Act also mandates transparency in AI interactions, such as chatbots, and establishes a right for individuals to request explanations for decisions made by high-risk AI systems. These measures aim to build public trust, promote ethical AI innovation, and ensure safety, fairness, and accountability in AI applications across the EU.

The UK seeks shared solutions on governance

The UK is not adopting the EU AI Act domestically, as it is no longer bound by EU regulations following Brexit. Instead, the UK has chosen a "pro-innovation" approach, focusing on sector-specific principles, rather than a single overarching AI law. This approach emphasises flexibility, allowing regulators such as the ICO and FCA to oversee AI within their respective domains. However, UK companies that operate in the EU or whose AI systems impact EU citizens must comply with the EU AI Act due to its extraterritorial scope.

While the UK's approach diverges from the EU's risk-based framework, there are ongoing discussions about collaboration on AI governance to address shared challenges and maintain competitiveness in international markets.

Competitive strategies

AI innovations appeal to those in higher income households

AI will enhance digital lifestyles and offer convenience and customisation in various aspects of life. These appeal especially to those in higher income households.

ENTERTAINMENT AI APPEALS

23%

with a household income of over £75,000 are interested in an entertainment AI compared to 17% overall

OPPORTUNITES FOR AI DRIVEN ROBO-ADVICE

24%

with a household income of over £75,000 are interested in a finance AI compared to 14% overall

HOME MANAGEMENT SOLUTIONS

23%

with a household income of over £75,000 are interested in a home management AI

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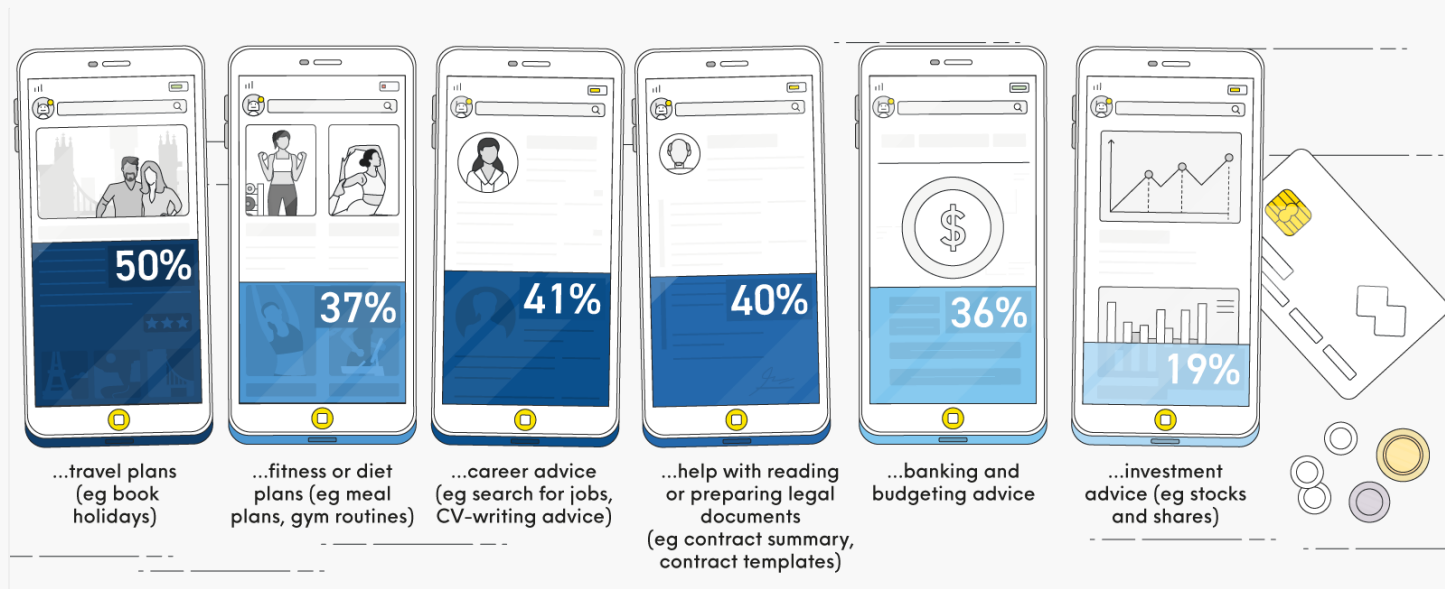# The financially resilient are more likely than overall to trust AI in everyday lives

UK: trust in AI services amongst consumers in households with £75,000+, % of respondents, 2024

50%	37%	41%	40%	36%	19%
...travel plans (eg book holidays)	...fitness or diet plans (eg meal plans, gym routines)	...career advice (eg search for jobs, CV-writing advice)	...help with reading or preparing legal documents (eg contract summary, contract templates)	...banking and budgeting advice	...investment advice (eg stocks and shares)

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Big tech doubles down on AI innovations

Amazon aims to enhance retail experience

Amazon is investing heavily in AI, providing the tools and support for developers. This includes its Trainium 2 chips and a partnership with Anthropic. These advancements aim to improve AI-powered features, enhance insights for sellers, and optimise operations to better reach customers.

For consumers, Amazon is focusing on more personalised shopping experiences, like voice-activated purchases and AI-generated content, such as Prime Video's X-Ray Recaps, boosting convenience and engagement.

In February 2025, Amazon also launched its Gen AI upgrade Alexa+ for US users.

Google boosts an array of AI tools

Google is advancing multimodal AI, AI agents, customer experiences, and security to boost usability, productivity, and safety.

In late 2024, Google launched AI shopping in the US with features like product briefs, AR, and virtual try-ons. It's also rolling out AI business tools.

Google's multimodal AI search allows searches using images, audio, video, and conversational prompts. In December 2024, it launched Gemini 2.0 for complex tasks in the "agentic era." The Gemini app targets 500 million monthly users, competing with ChatGPT.

Amazon focuses on building infrastructure for AI development

Amazon is heavily investing in AI advancements, supplying the infrastructure and support that generative AI developers need. This includes investments in its Trainium 2 chips, a partnership with Anthropic. These developments aim to enhance generative AI-powered features, and drive proactive capabilities to AI-driven insights for sellers. They also aim to optimise operations and reach customers more effectively.

For its consumer facing AI services, Amazon aims to deliver more personalised and seamless shopping experiences, such as voice-activated purchases and AI-generated content like Prime Video's X-Ray Recaps. These innovations promise to improve convenience and engagement for users.

Google aims to increase penetration of AI across its services

Google has identified key areas of focus for its AI ambitions: multimodal AI, AI agents, AI-powered customer experience, and AI-enhanced security. Google's aim is to enhance user experiences, improve productivity, and strengthen digital security.

Google introduced an AI-powered shopping experience for US consumers in late 2024, featuring AI-generated product briefs and AR and virtual try-ons. It continues to develop AI tools for businesses with a focus on AI shopping experiences, and is likely to roll out these products globally in the future.

Google's multi-modal AI-powered assistive search capabilities, allow users to search using images, audio, video, and conversational prompts. It has also released Gemini 2.0 experimental series in December 2024, designed for the "agentic era", such as Deep Research, an agentic feature in Gemini Advanced for complex research tasks. whereas it aims to reach half a billion monthly users worldwide with its Gemini app as it aims to catch up with ChatGPT.

> In 2025, we need to be relentlessly focused on unlocking the benefits of this technology and solving real user problems.
>
> Sundar Pichai, Google CEO

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MINTEL TRENDS

Mintel Trends observes the cool, the contrary and the innovative from around the world, but takes it one step further, validating the findings with our consumer data and grounding them for practical use.

Trends identifies the biggest trends worth paying attention to and dives deep into how your brand can benefit.

Each trend is backed by observations, statistics and consumer data, examples of how leading brands are already responding and context to understand your market across different demographics and sectors.

Buzz shows how "loud" a trend is to media, businesses and consumers.

Lifecycle shows how we observe a trend based on Mintel's content.

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Body-Tech

Wearable and biometric technologies are enhancing how the human body allows us to seamlessly navigate the world and take control of our lives.

Buzz = 3/5

Lifecycle = Mainstreaming (Gaining wider traction)

Trend Overview

Consumer convenience

Wearable tech is no longer just for the tech-obsessed and biometrics is no longer confined to personal devices.

Digital payments via smartphones and smartwatches are mainstream payment methods, offering wallet-free convenience to consumers while biometric technology has been incorporated into sectors including travel, retail etc.

Health and sustainability benefits

The health tech space continues to grow, providing innovative solutions such as personalised fitness coaching and health advice directly from AI-enabled wearables.

Innovation to support a more sustainable future is seeing wearables being self-charged from human sweat and energy creation.

Striking the right balance

Wearables and biometrics are allowing consumers to carry out their daily lives more seamlessly, and safely.

However, with data breaches and security hacks continuing to hit the headlines, this technology is not always helping to address people's privacy fears.

Key Action Items

Anticipate consumer's changing needs and proactively, rather than reactively, offer wearable tech and biometrics solutions. Think beyond just offering instant contactless payments but how biometrics can aid convenience such as a simple face scan that removes the need to stop while shopping.

Help reduce the pressure on health professionals and the planet by exploring how devices can invisibly manage conditions and wearables can use human energy as power. Use biometrics and contactless devices to protect consumers from wide scale health issues such as the spread of viruses.

Address people's privacy concerns and highlight the security benefits of new technologies such as biometrics. Be clear that personal data will be securely stored and only used in a way that people agree with.

Observations

Example of Mintel Trends in action around the world. Observations are the building blocks of our trends.

Smart Helmet
A new smart helmet could help firefighters save victims faster.

26 October 2022 - UK

Face On
By the end of 2021, the UAE is planning to roll out facial recognition with easy identification of citizens in just three seconds.

04 November 2021 - United Arab Emirates

Don't Feel The Burn
Northwestern University's Center on Bio-Integrated Electronics has developed a sensor the size of your fingernail to curb dangerous sun exposure.

11 December 2018 - US

Read on mintel.com

Life Hacking

Consumers are seeking tools to help them perfect their productivity.

Buzz = 5/5

Lifecycle = Established (Hitting a Plateau)

Trend Overview

Who has time?

Consumers are busier than ever and eager to save time. Personal technology, especially smartphones, is driving the push for greater efficiency through shortcuts and digital tools.

Data Driven

In today's data-driven world, personal tracking tools empower us to manage our health, finances, and time more effectively, often without expert intervention.

This self-monitoring revolution is boosting decision-making and giving individuals greater control over daily life.

Productivity everywhere

Everything from health maintenance to workplace productivity and financial management.

At its core, however, it involves tricks to maximize our time and manage our information, with the ultimate aim of bettering ourselves.

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Key Action Items

Consumers are looking for ways to maximize their personal productivity.

Consumers are also seeking to better use wait time—or avoid it altogether.

Consumers are suffering from information overload. Simplifying data into meaningful slices helps consumers get straight to the point.
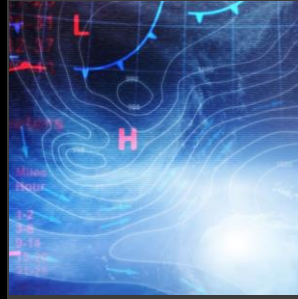
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Observations

Example of Mintel Trends in action around the world. Observations are the building blocks of our trends.

Carbon Calculator
BBVA Mexico customers can now use the bank's app to calculate their carbon footprint.

21 April 2023 - Mexico

AI Weather Forecasts
Google's DeepMind AI project has announced its results of its weather-predicting models.

15 December 2023 - US

Smart Sustainability
Chilean start-up Justwe! creates an IoT-based solution to help consumers and companies to optimize energy and water consumption.

16 October 2020 - Chile

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Hungry Planet

Waste not, want not. Our throwaway culture is becoming a contentious issue and consumers are looking for ways to conserve the planet's resources.

Buzz = 5/5

Lifecycle = Mainstreaming (Gaining Wider Traction)

Trend Overview

Guardians of planet earth

Consumers now expect brands to take real action on climate change. As global markets pivot to greener solutions, these efforts face growing scrutiny for true sustainability and ethical value.

With mounting environmental urgency, protecting the planet has become a conscious priority.

Reducing waste

With growing environmental awareness, sectors like food suppliers and retailers aim to cut food waste by 50% by 2030. Brands are stepping up with creative solutions to help eco-conscious consumers reduce waste and protect the planet

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Trend Overview

There's a limit!

With global population projected to hit 9.7 billion by 2050 and freshwater resources shrinking, sustainable practices across food production are crucial.

Collaboration and innovation are key to making every step, from sourcing to consumption, more resource-efficient.

Alternative energy resources

As fossil fuel bans rise, innovation is making renewable energy more accessible.

Though biofuels offer cleaner alternatives, they're costly and impact biodiversity.

The future lies in solar, wind, wave, and emerging energy sources to meet global demand sustainably.

Changes in consumption

Climate change and the cost of living crisis are reshaping consumer habits. Extreme weather affects crop yields, while global demand strains resources.

As prices rise and portions shrink, shoppers downtrade and seek budget-friendly, healthy alternatives, pressuring retailers to deliver transparency and value.

Key Action Items

Collaborate with other brands to promote zero waste, setting an examples for others to follow suit

Educate consumers through creative campaigns and community projects

Give spending power back to the consumer by incentivising them to purchase 'waste' items through cost-effective deals

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Observations

Example of Mintel Trends in action around the world. Observations are the building blocks of our trends.

AI Recycling Game
PepsiCo is gamifying recycling with an AI-powered program called Oscar Sort.

15 November 2024 - US

AI for Food Waste
Discount South African supermarket chain Shoprite has integrated artificial intelligence and machine learning into its stores to streamline logistics and reduce food waste.

17 May 2022 - South Africa

AI Checks for Cows
CattleEye is an AI-powered system that can automatically detect signs of lameness in cows as well as human checks.

18 February 2022 - UK; US

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Meet the Expert

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The world's leading market intelligence agency

Our expert analysis of the highest quality data and market research will help you grow your business.

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Experts in what consumers want and why