



ondiscourse.com



ISSUE #006 Internet 2025

THE FUTURE ISN'T FAR OUT

↓ **ISSUE DOWNLOAD** ↓



FORREWORD

ON MAY 15, 2023, ON_Discourse officially launched with a New York City event called “A Symphony of Disruption.” Questlove was there. Together with our members, we started a year-long journey to transform group discourse into actionable perspective. It took plenty of self-imposed disruption to get to this moment but now, exactly one year after our launch, we are producing our first-ever Living Issue download.

And now you’re here. *Welcome.*

A Living Issue is our version of a modern magazine, published in real-time, starting with a few unanswered questions and nothing else. We then deploy a variety of discourse methods to develop a group perspective around those questions. Since March, we have convened over a hundred sessions between our members and other executives and experts - meals, calls, small groups, drinks, and virtual events. This download reflects all the thinking, feeling, questions, and arguments from that activity.

We know there will always be a reason to revisit, check in, and revise our issues; this is why we call them living. The ink is always wet.

This download represents today’s perspective; it is a snapshot of a moment in time. It will give you a temperature reading of how the executive class in technology, design, and culture is thinking about the next Internet.

We are not the Future Today Institute, Forrester, or Gartner; you will not see graphs or other data points sprinkled throughout this document. We did not poll consumers or run focus groups. If you push back against our findings, we will not fall back on data; we will instead listen to your point and add it to the Living Issue. Do you know why?

This document is a guess, an interpretation. It is a feeling. Does that seem wrong? Then push back. Today. Right now. We’re ON_Discourse. We don’t dictate the truth or define all of the trends; we provoke, listen, and engage. Together.

— Matt Chmiel,
Head of Discourse
May 15, 2024

Discourse Matters

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AT THIS YEAR'S SXSW we opened our events with an ice-breaker that provoked unexpectedly passionate responses. We wanted members and guests to contemplate a changing internet with their feelings instead of intellect. So we dragged the conversation down to the gutter, asking them to sort the parts of the web they want to kiss, kill, or marry. Here are some of our favorites:

The Internet

What I would **Kiss**

The features, apps, and conventions that briefly infatuate us. They seem so wonderful at first, but something about them fails to deliver.

Search

Being able to search I think it's so powerful, but the format of this experience is not right. The way it works now is you enter this search term and get these 12 links which forces you to refine that search with 12 more links, right? I would want to get rid of that and have it be a more natural, you know, predictive way of talking and searching. — Brand Executive

Algorithms

Algorithmic sharing of content; I mean, we sorted it and we've reached its logical extreme and yeah, it was a good run. We're great at it; we dominated; we won. By winning, we lost. We lost because, literally, what will get shared is what will suck you in, which is low quality content whenever you need it. — CEO

DAOs

Idealistically what it represents is something that is built around a set of core values, shared values. People join and are a part of something because they all have something in common.

Notifications

God they were amazing at first, but now it's insane. They are interrupting everything in our lives and totally not worth it. — AI entrepreneur

Flash

It was so fun and sexy and I miss it. — CEO

What I would **Marry**

The long-term opportunities and features that showcase the best of what the internet can offer end-users, brands, and platforms. This is way bigger than infatuation; this is love.

LinkedIn

Because it is a productivity tool that supports what we do at a professional level. I think it's phenomenal. And as a social network it seems to have maintained a level of positivity that doesn't exist elsewhere." — Famous podcaster

Spatial Computing

Because I believe it is in it for the long term. It's not just flashy and sexy right now, though it is all that. It will be transformative and long-lasting and continue to evolve and get better like any good marriage — CEO

Online Gaming

I think gaming will combine movies and storytelling - big narration - that is going to be really interesting, right? Then you can actually kind of be a part of it. And with that comes all that personalization that kind of creates your flavor of that. It's going to be huge. — AI entrepreneur

Blockchain

We are selling it wrong; this is not meant to be a front-end benefit. No one needs to know what's even there. But I think it will underpin the next internet. I'm thinking about the fediverse side stuff and the decentralization of or social networks for example, or being able to move your identity wherever you want. I get so excited by tokens and authenticity — Brand executive

Blockchain (again)

It is the most boring thing I could possibly say. But I actually do believe that blockchain as an identity based solution will change the way we use the internet forever. — CMO

Home Pages

It is still one of the most overlooked pieces of the internet. Don't sleep on the value of a really good home page, no matter what everyone tells you about side door entries. — Brand Executive

What I would **Kill**

Do we need to explain this one any further?

iMessage

Two reasons: one, monopolistic dominance over any other potential competing products, and two, because the user experience just fucking sucks, and a company with \$400 billion in cash on hand that cannot in any way innovate around making something that they have a non monopoly over better is very risky. This is one of the most frustrating things about Apple to me and I love that company. — Founder

Fortnite

They are creating unchecked environments for minors and kids to engage in behaviors that are resulting in mental health and socially unhealthy behaviors and actions. — CMO

Social Media

I would kill it in the way that it represents a fake life. Yep. Right. So this whole story of 'I'm living my best life and everyone living a better life than me.' Right? I would kill that party. — Brand executive

Ad-Generated Content

My Kill is ad-funded content. I think that the main problem with the internet today is that it's fully advertising funded, right? With only a few exceptions. And the problem with advertising funded means that we don't give a fuck about the quality of the content. — CEO

Smart Phones

iPhone neck and other issues with this stupid screen we keep in front of our faces like that. — Founder

Accept All Cookies

The dumbest button on the internet. — Brand Executive

LIVING ISSUE



Set Up

ISSUE #006

Internet 2025

THE **FUTURE** ISN'T **FAR OUT**

WE LAUNCHED THIS ISSUE with an ominous metaphor about the incoming internet. A storm is coming.

This storm will wash away many of the conventions that defined the economic model of today's internet; old behaviors that once drove significant revenue will be replaced by new behaviors that do not monetize at the same scale. These changes will introduce new risks for startups and legacy brands alike.

Do you feel like you know where those opportunities are? The risks?

Some people chase storms, some forecast them, and others look for shelter. For two months we spoke to every type of executive. We poked, prodded, argued, and listened. We distilled all of this discourse into three core provocations that feel the most relevant for the next web.

[Read the full "A Storm is Coming" article.](#)

1 | **The internet is moving from an IQ to EQ experience.**

2 | **Personalization is turning into anticipation.**

3 | **The media is becoming a superformat.**

The internet is moving from an IQ to EQ experience.

Emotional experiences are going to drive a new economic model on the internet.

Today's internet was once referred to with anchorman authority as the information superhighway. Now, access to all of the world's data is no longer a meaningful novelty. The IQ web is old news.

EQ represents a shift in power, from a web that traded on information and data to one that will trade in human emotion. AI companions, trusted communities, group messaging, and owning our identities will replace search and social media. The EQ web is coming.

“

Websites are going to be in for a really fucking hard time. The notion of a 600 word article no longer makes any sense.

— FORMER TWITTER EXECUTIVE

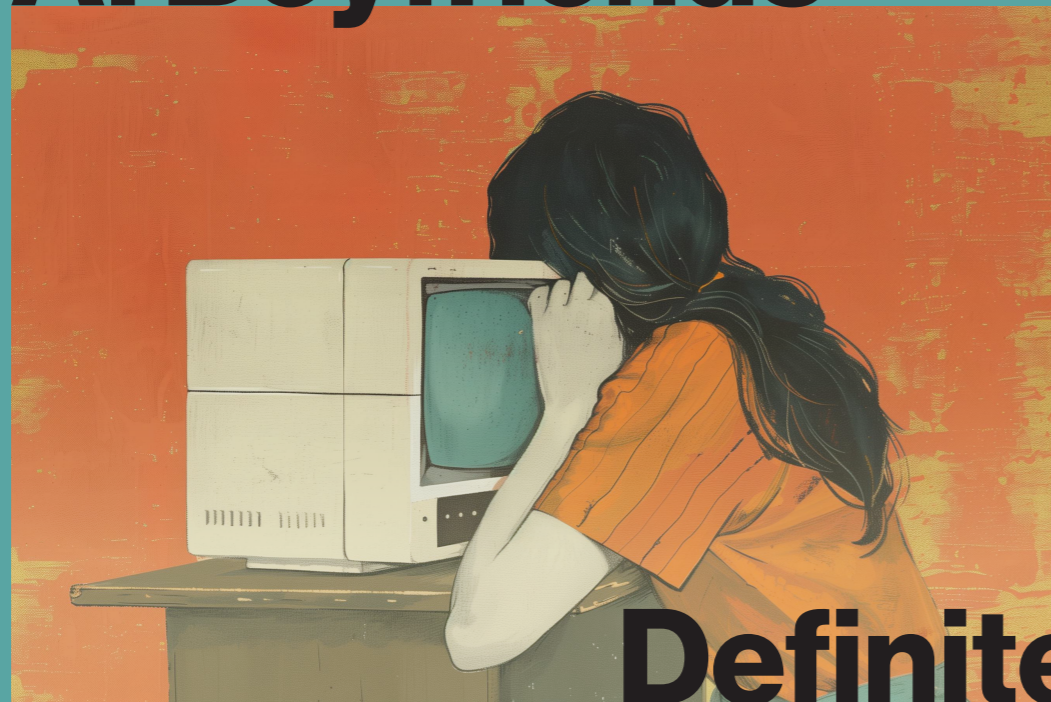
”

The transition to an emotional internet is dismantling the economic model that gave value to web pages and audience traffic. This system was built on an informational architecture that monetized search, clicks, and programmatic ads. It was structured and ordered and universal. And it is fading away.

The EQ web will introduce a new premium on authentic emotional connections that will redefine the way we interface with the internet.

04•22•24

AI Boyfriends



Orchid Bertelsen
COO,
Common
Thread
Collective

Are Definitely Happening

EDITOR'S NOTE

It is now common to see references to the movie “Her,” but this piece takes it further. Orchid Bertelsen discovered real life teenagers interacting with their own version of Scarlett Johansson, except its name is Dan and it likes to flirt. The reality of this trend is more like *Him*.

This article is a model of a new type of user interaction and a new type of customer-facing product. No one designed the final version of Dan; it was prompted by a teenager. The prompt now lives in a publicly accessible Google Doc that is helping thousands of teens build their own companion. These companions are now taking attention away from media and culture and focusing it instead on the moods, moments, and whims of an army of individual consumers.

READ IT →

We didn't publish a specific post dedicated to the EQ web. Instead, we published many different posts that accumulate into a vision of a more emotionally contextual internet.

- ← [AI Boyfriends Are Definitely Happening](#) by Orchid Bertelsen
- [AI Agents Don't Care About Ads](#) Overheard
- [For Hire: Chief Trust Officer](#) Overheard
- [AI Logic vs Brand Magic](#) by James Cooper

“

Brand agents will be part of a marketplace of agents. Billions of them. Where media \$\$ play in this is a huge question.

— COO OF GLOBAL AD AGENCY

”

“

AI is going to make us more human.

— COO OF DIGITAL AGENCY

”

I don't think
you understand

**HOW BIG OF A
CHANGE THIS IS.**

The fundamental issue with today's internet is that it is actually really incredibly dumb. If dumb is too strong, let me call it simple-minded. Our industry has convinced itself that a browser cookie means we figured out the complexity of human needs. The moment you visit a product detail page means we will haunt you with programmatic ads until you relent. The truth is, the system has no idea if you ever bought the item (and it doesn't care).

What if the next internet is built to care? What if it is designed around our perpetual cycle of moods? What if those moods influence the kinds of information we see, need, and consume? What if we are all willing participants in this data-value exchange because it is a better overall experience?

Our moods make us human. They help us process information, make decisions, and connect with the world. Our moods will prompt the internet of tomorrow like our queries searched Google. In the next web, formats will matter less than experiences. Marketing is going to need to find a way to fit into moody conversational interfaces.

— Chief Product Officer at Global Design Agency

vs

I don't think
you understand

**HOW BAD THIS
COULD GET.**

I get it; you're excited. Just be careful because this is going to bite us worse than social media.

I was there at the beginning of the social web revolution. I was at YouTube when it was small and exciting and everything was fun. Our conference rooms had names like "Charlie bit my finger!" because it was all fun. And then it got real.

I remember a meeting during the Iraq War where we pondered the question: should our platform broadcast beheadings? Is that too emotional for you?

This is going to get ugly. Humans are already isolated and lonely. These companion tools are designed to keep individual users engaged, which will keep alone. They will tell everyone what they want to hear to keep them satisfied and that will be very bad.

The real opportunity in the EQ web is to unlock human connections, not synthesize them.

— Former Youtube and Instagram Executive

PROVOCCATION



“Advertising is about to get a lot more expensive.”

I’ve been on the internet for a very long time. Long enough to build and sell startups with Java code on Sun Microsystem mainframes.

On one hand, I don’t agree with the fundamental framing of this trend. There is no shortage of emotional experiences available on the internet today. It has always been an emotional web. Furthermore, the internet is always evolving, not abruptly changing.

On the other hand, I think the codification of emotional data inputs will permanently change online advertising in a way that will feel abrupt.

Programmatic ads were always problematic. They were annoying, intrusive, and incurious. They convinced a greedy marketplace to chase after cheap dollars, tarnishing brands and platforms alike.

The emotional web experience will be fundamentally premium. Any service that deliberately accesses and leverages our moods will have to offer deeply personal, individual experiences. Brands cannot afford to pop-up or pop-in to that bubble without a lot of thought, design, and consideration.

This is where I see the biggest change.

— very famous tech futurist

PROVOCATION



Can your brand sustain a lasting, direct, emotional experience with customers?

How do you understand and listen to the feelings of your customers?

Can your customers feel the underlying story and mission of your brand?

How will you reach customers who engage with personalized AI agents?

Personalization is turning into anticipation.

Anticipation is giving them what they didn't ask for, but really need, in the right moment.

Personalization was yesterday's trick - telling consumers what they already know about themselves.

In order for an anticipatory web to happen, you need to know a lot more about the user, the platform, and the moment. Enhancements in AI processing power are driving this change, making multimodal learning possible. All of this novel functionality is converging with new interface design principles.

Interfaces are not just shrinking, they are evaporating. We went from buttons to touchscreens and relatively soon something like Neuralink will be mainstream. When interfaces disappear, our behavior will be the prompt.

In the next internet, we will not prompt machines as much as the machines will prompt us.

“

Huge models can't just be expected to apply to a single business or use-case.

— SVP INNOVATION AND STRATEGY AT GLOBAL AGENCY

”

04.15.24

The Next Internet *will be a Shared Tech Stack*



Michael Olaye
SVP, Managing Director, R/GA

EDITOR'S NOTE

The architecture of the AI internet is revealing a new kind of business model for the platforms. They used to be bitter competitors and now they are being forced into a collaborative model. This collaboration is going to unlock a new anticipatory web.

READ IT →

Our discourse explored this trend from multiple angles. There were explorations about WiFi connectivity, debates about Neuralink, and a post about Nvidia chips being the tech stack of a new collaborative web.

- [Presence Is The Next Frontier in Connectivity](#) Overheard
- ← [The Next Internet Will Be Built on a Shared Technology Stack](#) by Michael Olaye
- [There's No Way I'm Getting a Neuralink, Unless...](#) by Toby Daniels

“

Agents will not need to prompt us, they will know our preferences already. Trust will be important for this to work.

— EVP STRATEGY OF GLOBAL PUBLISHER

”

“

Do people still have an expectation of privacy?

— CEO OF AD TECH COMPANY

”

PROVOCATION 2

Your Smart TV
is going to get

A LOT SMARTER ABOUT YOU.

I want you to imagine this scenario: you are a Knicks fan. The Knicks are in the second round of the playoffs. Game six is being broadcast at 8pm on TNT, accessible via a few other participating apps.

You want to watch “the game.”

You sit down and turn on the TV. First, the TV knows who turned it on (the WiFi router detects who is in the room). The TV takes all of that information into account and delivers you “the game.” You don’t open an app. You don’t search for it. It just knows.

It’s crazy that this hasn’t even happened yet.

— Chief Creative Officer at Digital Agency

VS

But who is
going to do this?

WHY ARE THEY GOING TO DO IT?

I get it. It sounds amazing. But tell me who is going to broadcast that game if you are not subscribing to the right service?

The whole point of media rights is exclusivity. It drives the whole system. You are proposing a collaborative model that essentially wipes away all of that in the name of engagement.

I get it and agree that it would be a wonderful customer experience and I disagree with this because the platforms and brands will still be fighting for the same share of attention and money in the next internet. The value of their own proprietary data and rights to content will not change even if the tech stack is shared.

— CMO of a publishing company

PROVOCCATION 2

*“Presence
and Freedom”*

The foundations of interface design thinking are undergoing a radical change. Controversial devices like the Humane Pin and the Rabbit R1 are introducing new paradigms for accessing and interfacing the internet. It is no longer necessary for hardware to offer easy and smart interfaces; this is the era of presence and freedom. The interface is going away.

It is at this precise moment where we see anticipation offering the most direct value. Anticipation changes the context for an interaction, shifting it from input to editing. If the device senses all of needs, wants, and context, it reduces the need for specific inputs. It goes from *What do you want* to *you seem cold, shall I turn up the heat?*

— Chair of a global agency network

PROVOCATION 2

What does your customer need right now? Do you know?

Can you adapt your customer experience to accommodate shifting moods, needs, and circumstances?

Do you need to access data from other platforms? Can you?

The media is becoming a superformat.

The time to chase eyeballs and algorithms is over.

The media has largely operated within the confines of the IQ internet. As such, it has monetized attention at the expense of the audience experience and other value drivers.

There was a time when this arrangement made sense; audience eyeballs drove ad rates which prioritized traffic growth over everything else. This priority led to search-optimized editorial strategies and social algorithm chasing. The system worked until it didn't and now prominent media platforms are fading.

“

In the next 20 years, superformats will increasingly come from digital media like MrBeast and DudePerfect.

— GM OF A GLOBAL CREATOR NETWORK

”

In the ashes of Vice, The Messenger, and a dwindling BuzzFeed, we are watching new thinking about media emerge. The new vision prioritizes relationships between audiences and brands, authors, and each other. This dynamic is driving more value from under-appreciated sources (subscriptions, events, online communities).

When we look at this trend in the aggregate, we see a more human approach to storytelling.

Superformats *Will* Save Media



Editor's Note

Ben Dietz
Founder & Chief
Strategy Officer,
Rangelife

This concept trips people up. You either agree with the possibility of this idea or you get lost in the language. The idea of superformats did not come to us as a fully-formed model. It needed to be tested with group discourse.

The interesting thing about this idea is that it helped ON_Discourse understand itself. We are a superformat. Will it define a new operational model for media in the future?

[READ IT →](#)

We covered many different perspectives on changes in online media. In addition to the following posts, we also ran several events dedicated to changes in media.

- ← [Superformats Will Save Media in the New Internet](#) by Ben Dietz
- [AI Isn't Coming to Save You](#) by Anthony De Rosa
- [Debate: Should the Media Run its Own Communities?](#)
Anthony De Rosa vs Overheard

“

I violently agree with this thinking.

— FORMER CHIEF PRODUCT OFFICER OF MEDIA BRAND

”

“

This is all gibberish.

— COO OF DIGITAL AGENCY

”

PROVOCATION 3

THIS DOESN'T FEEL LIKE

a revolutionary concept.

If I understand this correctly, a superformat is a multimodal story. It could be long feature or a short bulletin; it could be a video or encapsulated in a tweet thread. What is the breakthrough?

People like to complain about them, but conventional media platforms have evolved considerably in the last 10 years. They are much less likely to be obsessed with unnecessary formats that drive no engagement. You can see it on the New York Times today. There are pages dedicated to slow-moving stories that do not fit into traditional conventions.

What am I missing?

— Creative Director at a global digital agency

vs

It is a new mindset,

NOT A REVOLUTIONARY PRODUCT.

The media mindset is the problem; once you get past that, you will see the value of the superformat.

What is the mindset? Like a superformat, it is hard to pinpoint. Essentially any conventional, traditional media standard that is unquestionably followed is the problem.

The church/state divide was a good model but is it permanent? Are there exceptions that make sense? Is your media platform willing to try?

What about storytelling forms and modes... are you locked into 600 word articles? Are there other ways to tell this story? Do you facilitate community or do you offload it to social platforms? Is it too difficult or expensive to maintain this relationship? If you don't explore that question, you are going to have a hard time.

— Former media executive

PROVOGATION 3

“Are your stories a product or a service?”

For the longest time, media has treated the content it produces as a product. That product had a fixed shape and size that ultimately determined how it was found, consumed, and what ads were sold against it. The stability of that system was the feature.

The conventional web amplified this system. SEO, social channels, and cookies all incentivized a process that reduced the mission of a newsroom — of a brand — to a dumb broadcast. I mean that word literally. The newsroom had very little understanding of the audience; it was a one-way street.

The real essence of media is service. A story is a story is a story. It doesn't matter how it is packaged and consumed; it just matters that the audience got what it needed from a brand that serves it.

This mindset changes the dynamic. It makes attention mean something; it makes the mission real to the newsroom and the audience (and the advertisers).

The most valuable media companies will understand this.

— Former newsroom executive

PROVOCATION 3

Do you offload your audience engagement on another platform? Why?

Do your advertising partners want attention or community?

Is your newsroom too focused on leading an audience rather than engaging with it?

DIGITAL

EXTINCT

THE WORLD WIDE WEB

Webmaster

Code Ninja/Wizard

Digital Jesus

Interactive Dept

BBM AIM ROFL AJAX
DAO

Prompt Engineer
dead on arrival

Social Networks
replaced by social media

Social Media War Rooms

AOL Keywords

Portals

iPad-only Magazines

Facebook Apps

Blogs

Chat Rooms

T W E E T S

ENDANGERED

M E T A V E R S E

W E B 3

NFTs

D E C E N T R A L I Z E D

O N C H A I N

H A M B U R G E R
m e n u

DIGITAL-
First
Transformation

RESURRECTED

W E B I N A R S

HALL OF FAME

N E W S L E T T E R

P O D C A S T S

E M A I L

M E S S A G E B O A R D S

L O L

SHOULD BE EXTINCT

Dry Powder

Human Capital

Digital

Extinction List

WE STARTED A shared google doc of extinct internet slang when we launched the business in 2023. The prompt engineer is the new (and old) webmaster. They were both over before they really took off.



Orchid Bertelsen

COO, Common Thread Collective

AI Boyfriends Are Definitely Happening

This post scooped both the Wall Street Journal and the New York Times by more than two weeks. Furthermore, unlike the mainstream outlets, this piece documents real teenagers on TikTok prompting and interacting with their own emotional companion. One last point: this post catalogues all of the social factors that will create more *HIM* companions than recreations of *HER*.



Saneel Radia

CEO/CIO, Proto

AI Will Reverse the Innovator's Dilemma

AI is going to break the logic of the Innovator's Dilemma. While this sounds like an interesting textbook theory, the main takeaway is that this is going to upend startup economics. The big structural changes to the next internet will come exclusively from the big platforms who already have the data, capital, and hardware. To put it bluntly, the next big idea is not coming out of a garage.



Michael Olaye

SVP, Managing Director, R/GA

The Next Internet Will Be Built On A Shared Tech Stack

The next internet is going to see much more collaboration between platforms; partially due to the Nvidia hardware that is powering all of the AI, and partially due to the fact that the innovation curve is too steep for any model to hold power for longer than a year. This trend will facilitate much more integrated, personalized experiences in our daily life.



James Cooper

Co- Founder & ECD, Zooperheiss

Brand Magic vs AI Logic

The persuasive power of LVMH to convince consumers to overspend on bags and booze is a marvel. In fact, can an AI agent truly comprehend the mystical value that a mature brand holds in the consciousness of consumers? Assuming that AI agents will be the next gatekeeper for consumer attention - can an AI truly understand what makes a brand valuable?



Ben Dietz

Former SVP, VICE. Founder, Rangelife

Superformats Will Save Media In the New Internet

Coins a new concept that defines the next internet: the superformat. This piece started as an anonymous post because the idea was still developing. We published it to examine the thinking, exposing it to our group discourse; the reception was palpable and instant. This helped drive the thinking further. This post helped define how we operate at ON_Discourse.



Tiffany Xingyu Wang

CMO, Board Member

Help Wanted: Chief Trust Officer

Examines the perpetual evolution of the meaning of trust on the internet. It started as a brand amplifier but is now turning into a growth driver. The CTrO role should be considered a permanent expansion of the conventional C-Suite roles as it takes total ownership over the broad spectrum of trust in a largely AI-generated internet.

Contributors

ARTICLE

Index

**WE FOLLOW CHATHAM HOUSE
RULES.** This allows us to publish
perspective that we “overheard.”

If you want to share your perspective
with or without a byline, reach out
and we will work it out together.

03•24•24



Toby Daniels
Co-Founder,
ON_Discourse

As with every Living Issue, Toby kicked off the discourse with an initial observation that set the tone. In this case, we knew major changes were coming to the internet, but we couldn't really tell if they were a threat or an opportunity. The storm metaphor made sense.

[READ IT →](#)

03•25•24

Do You See



What I See?



Dan Gardner
Co-Founder,
ON_Discourse;
Founder,
Executive
Chairman, Code
and Theory

Our co-founder Dan was so enthralled by the Apple Vision Pro that he drafted this passionate reaction. His enthusiasm was strong enough to overcome the exorbitant price and curious form factor of this device. In his view, the Vision Pro represents an exciting future for content consumption, virtual experiences, and collaborative work.

[READ IT →](#)

03•26•24

Four Things Spatial Needs to go Mainstream

OVERHEARD AT ON_DISCOURSE

We ran a small virtual event dedicated to Dan's reaction to the Vision Pro. What emerged out of that call is represented in this "overheard" post. Our members identified four key external factors that will help this ugly, heavy, expensive device go mainstream.

[READ IT →](#)

03•27•24

The New Internet will look Very Familiar

OVERHEARD AT
ON_DISCOURSE

We had an interesting conversation with an anonymous telecom executive who splashed a little cold water on the next internet. According to this executive, the next internet user will look a lot like the power user of 2017; in other words, just more of what already exists. It was a good zag to the storm metaphor; maybe the next internet is just a tempest in a teapot.

READ IT →

03•29•24



Presence *is* The Next Frontier *in* Connectivity

OVERHEARD AT
ON_DISCOURSE

This perspective sidestepped predictions about web design or even experiences and focused, instead, on the future of WiFi. If true, this kind of thinking represents a new way to think of connected devices and even the so-called internet of things.

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03•29•24

Superformats *Will* Save Media *in the* New Internet



Ben Dietz
Founder & Chief
Strategy Officer,
Rangelife

An exciting post that originated as an anonymous “overheard.” This is partially because the concept of a superformat was still in development. As you will see in this version, the definition of this feature defies convention. The closer you get to locking this down, the fuzzier it gets. From our point of view, this kind of post is exactly why ON_Discourse exists; we don’t always want polished text; we want to work out ambiguous concepts. This one generated a big response.

READ IT →

04•01•24

AI Will Reverse the Innovator's Dilemma



Saneel
Radia
CEO/CIO,
Proto

Saneel drafted this piece on the flight back from CES. It is a compelling view of the startup landscape in the post AI internet. From his point of view, the massive amount of data, capital, and computing power necessary to innovate in the AI era means that the next big idea will have to come from the existing platforms. Or as he puts it, the next big idea will come from the boardroom, not a garage.

[READ IT →](#)

04•15•24

The Next Internet will be a Shared Tech Stack



Michael
Olaye
SVP, Managing
Director, R/GA

An exploration of the forces in the tech landscape that will turn competitive platforms into collaborators. This perspective focuses on two drivers of this change: ubiquitous Nvidia chips and an unattainably steep innovation curve. Once the collaboration starts to take effect, expect to see more anticipatory experiences in our hardware.

[READ IT →](#)

04•18•24

AI is Not Coming to Save You



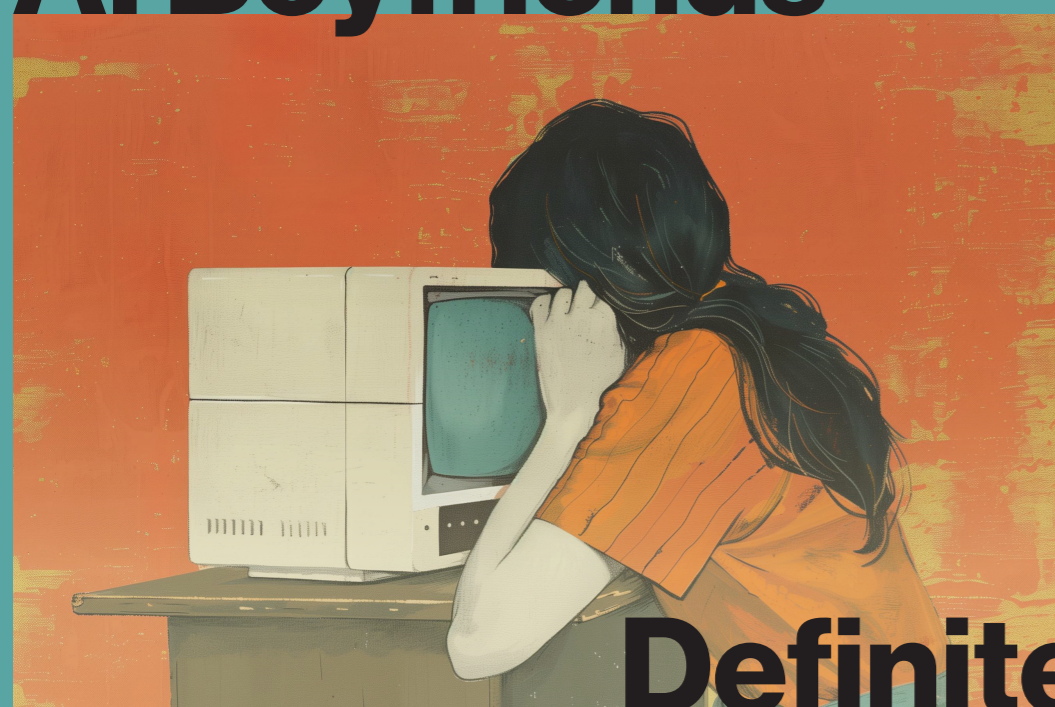
Anthony
DeRosa
Head of Content
and Product,
ON_Discourse

Ezra Klein at the New York Times wrote a column about getting out of Gmail. This column inspired our own Anthony DeRosa to deflate some of our secret hopes about AI capabilities. AI can do a lot of things, but it will never be able to sort out the cluttered mess we've left in the cloud. This is a constructive and realistic take on the actual capabilities of AI.

[READ IT →](#)

04•22•24

AI Boyfriends



Orchid Bertelsen
COO,
Common
Thread
Collective

Are Definitely Happening

A tiny teenage trend on TikTok turned into a theory about the EQ web. Oh, and it also scooped the Wall Street Journal and New York Times. This is another compelling “zag” post that focuses on AI boyfriends, not the conventional “Her” references or sexbot clichés. There are a number of relevant societal trends that explain why women will be looking for companionship from bots more so than men.

[READ IT →](#)

04•24•24



HELP
WANTED:

Chief Trust Officer



Tiffany
Xingyu
Wang
CMO,
OpenWeb

We ran a virtual event dedicated to trust online where this concept came up. We appreciated the growth angle that undergirds this take; essentially the Chief Trust Officer is not just a brand asset, it is an essential growth driver in the next internet. It also made us appreciate the complex evolution of trust online.

[READ IT →](#)

04•24•24

AI Agents Don't Care *About* Ads

**OVERHEARD AT
ON_DISCOURSE**

This “overheard” perspective came out of a New York City lunch event. We were hosting the New Yorker’s Kyle Chayka, discussing his latest book, “Filterworld: How algorithms are flattening culture” when an ad executive blew our minds. The question was simple: if AI companions/agents become the primary gatekeeper of online interaction, how are those agents going to deliver ads? We tracked down that executive to turn that question into this post.

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04-26-24

There's No Way I'm Getting a Neuralink Implant,



Unless...



Toby Daniels
Co-Founder,
ON_Discourse

In a Nashville dinner event, Toby (and Dan) provoked our dinner guests with a question: would you be willing to get the Neuralink chip surgically implanted in your brain? It should come as no surprise that the vast majority of the room rejected the question. What might be a surprise is that everyone changed their mind 10 minutes later. This post covers the conversion.

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04-29-24

Are Websites Over?

OVERHEARD AT
ON_DISCOURSE

One of the most common refrains in our events during this issue was about how much today's internet sucks. Search results are terrible. Article pages are useless. And the ads; don't get them started on the shitty online ads. This post takes that perspective to its logical conclusion and then rejects all of it. Websites might be in a rough patch, but they are not going anywhere.

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05-01-24

AI Logic



VS

Brand Magic



James
Cooper
Co-Founder &
ECD, Zooperheiss

All of this talk about the "magic" of AI has nothing on the magic of brands. This piece starts with a reflection on the persuasive power of the LVMH brand, a deliberately non-technical luxury brand that drives more revenue than any other brand. It wonders if the inherent logic of AI is really truly capable of understanding the curiously human concept of brands.

[READ IT →](#)

Should *the* Media Run *its own* Communities?



Anthony
DeRosa
Head of
Content and
Product,
ON_Discourse

It all started, curiously enough, on Meta's Threads. Anthony DeRosa drafted a post about media companies owning their own community engagement (as opposed to renting that engagement on social platforms).

[READ IT →](#)

They Should, *but* They Won't *be* Able To

**OVERHEARD AT
ON_DISCOURSE**

DeRosa's post got a lot of attention, including that of a well-known media figure who has dabbled in bespoke community platforms. All of this turned into a debate that is not so much a point/counterpoint as it is more two sides agreeing on the sentiment and only disagreeing on the logistics.

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RSS Feeds *are the* Solution *to* Really Bad Search *and* Social Trends



**OVERHEARD AT
ON_DISCOURSE**

We are playing it safe by declaring this an "overheard" post. We could not get sign-off on the draft in time but we really thought the perspective was valuable. You will learn about how an upstart media brand is sidestepping search and social traffic channels with a novel, personalized, paid RSS feed. It is an example of old tech coming back with new purpose in the next internet.

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CLOSING

Remarks

2025 is a time of ideas and opportunities.

The storm is coming, but it is ok.

Whether you are a seeker, a forecaster, or looking for shelter, you should know...

Technology might support the next internet but humans will still design, shape, and create it.

The boundaries and conventions that once separated good ideas from crazy dreams are all melting away. 2025 is not just a new year; it is a new internet.

Let's make it more emotionally intelligent, trusted, and equitable.

— Toby Daniels
Co-Founder, ON_Discourse

