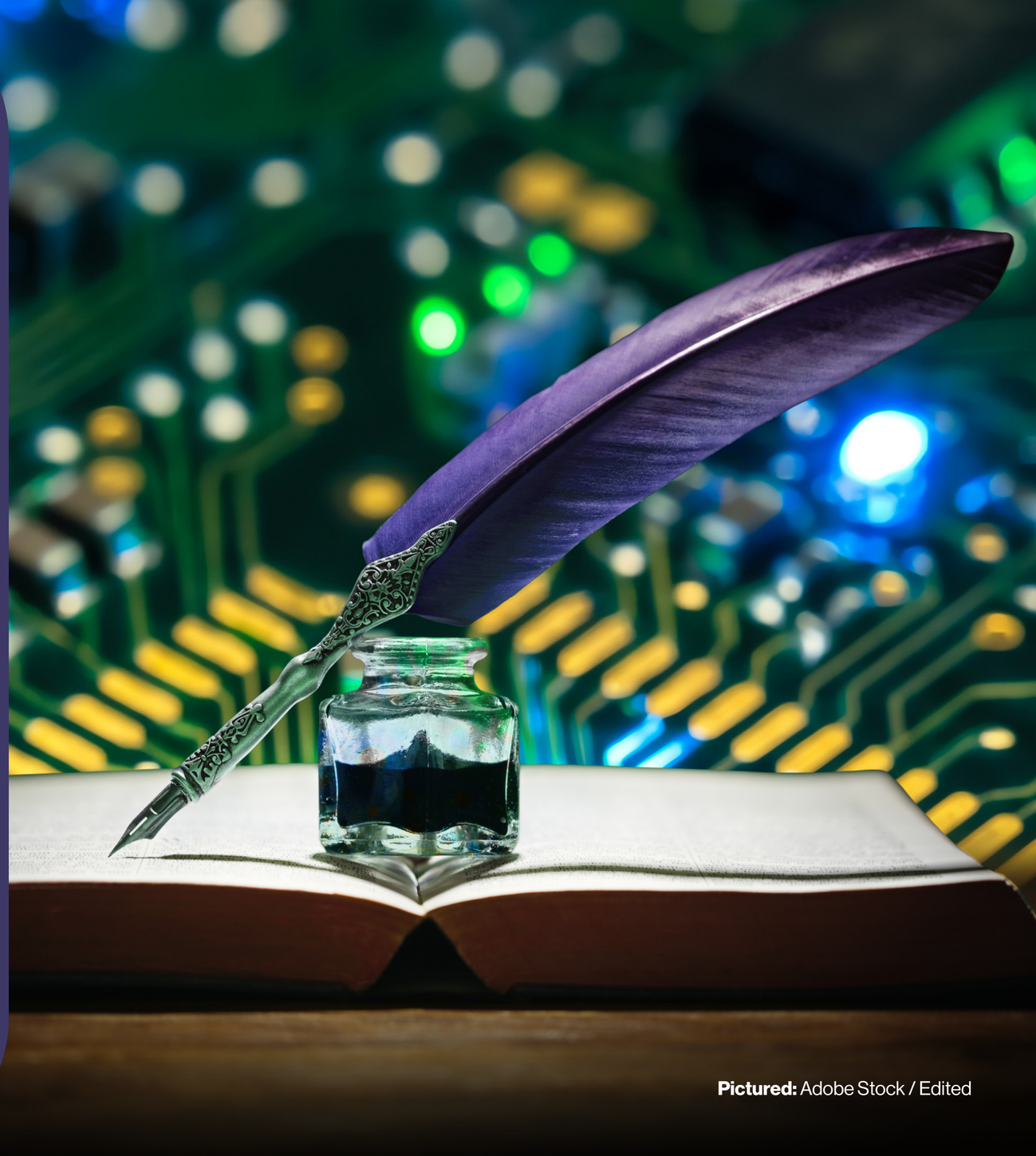
THE WEBER FORECAST

WEEKLY TRENDS REPORT

Friday 21 Aug 2026



Pictured: Adobe Stock / Edited

THIS WEEK'S FORECAST

THE WEBER FORECAST

TOADALLY RAD!

Micro trend — Macro trend

Difficult to action

Easy to action

- Niu Lai: the animated cow
- Microchip mani
- A Wink, A Nod, A Screenshot
- Hobbyamory
- Analog working
- Holiday inspo

Icon Glossary

- Trending
- News you should know
- On the up
- Cancelled
- It's gonna be big
- That's the tea
- Sustainability
- Consumer habit
- TikTok trend
- Be quick

FOR YOUR INFO

THE WEBER FORECAST

This week's dates & microtrends

TikTok trends

Life of the party. Pranking a trusting parent/partner with **3 glasses of vodka**.

Test out your **voice acting skills with the hit game, *Choicer Voicer***.

ICYMI

"To me my *X-men*." The **casting for the next era of Marvel**.

We fainted three times watching this. The **world record blob launch**, 28.2m metres high!

Phrase of the week

"😭 or 😂: **Do Your Emojis Make You Look Old?**". End the debate and just use text emojis, ʕ•ᴥ•ʔ.

Digi updates

Instagram or Instagzam now has a **new brand identity**. Will it make people post again or is **the grid dead**?

YouTube changes **how it counts views**, Reddit begins **testing audio and video**, and **big tech fights against the AI slop it let in.**

Tea of the week

WNBA coverage isn't about the sport anymore and the **Lakers being sold for $12.5 billion** have made them 200% more unlikeable. #FreeCaitlin&Luka

What we're loving

The **annual Dogue Vogue issue** is here, and **we love every single pup**!

The **Disney Princess: The Ultimate Concert Celebration** made us feel like a princess again.

Established trends

Need some holiday inspo? Go on **a mystery vacation** or **a theme park holiday** or **a cruise for theatre** or even **Blackpool**!

The debate around **letting kids play outside unsupervised**. While in the UK, the **cost of private education rises to £216,000**.

On our radar

One Night Only - 28 Aug
The Dog Stars - 28 Aug
Colony - 28 Aug

Star Wars Zero Company - 27 Aug

Denzel Curry and Kenny Beats: Unlocked - 21 Aug
Mike D 5D: Thank you - 28 Aug

Insights of the week

只管去做. How **Nike lost its foothold** to copycats and local brands in China.

May you go in peace. The demand for **death doulas supporting death**.

Weekly doses of cute

Twins' festival, **bird call kid**, the **Rocks biggest fan**, the **Dream Phone search**, **hamster homes**, **ILLIT performs with fans** and **Post Malone's $2M card**.

Rising trends

The end of sponcon? **Live shopping is so hot right now**.

The future

ChatGPT and Gemini **both passed 1 billion users**.

An interview with the future of cinema, the **people in charge of 4DX**. They decide the smells of your favourite characters.

Stat of the week

Delivery drivers in Australia will be paid **a minimum of £16.35 an hour** and gain insurance.

Ones to watch

We **love *Niu Lai***, **monument of failure**, **$100 passport photos**, ***C,XOXO* is back**, ***Spider-Man* hits $2B**, ***ACOTAR 6-7***, and ***Power Rangers* is dead**.



Image: @voguemagazine



Image: @luna_7373



Image: @chinaminutes

TREND TRACKING

THE WEBER FORECAST

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

SEE THE FUTURE

Microchip mani



Image: @petalpopnails

The ubiquity of surveillance tech in our lives has led to people taking back control (see our recent take on the rise of CCTV content). The latest manifestation of this is the **microchip mani** - bringing a whole new meaning to chipped nails. Tiny chips **embedded** into nail designs reveal social profiles, contact details and other personal information at the tap of nail - the tech almost invisible, seamlessly integrated into the everyday, while the information itself is literally at our fingertips. As said in **Dazed**, "For creators, freelancers and digitally connected professionals, **networking** is becoming something you wear rather than something you carry". But while this sits within the broader rise of wearable technology - from Meta glasses and Oura Rings to smart shoes - the microchip mani signals something slightly different. Less about being monitored by technology, and more about choosing how technology represents you in increasingly creative ways. It gives a new meaning to "pull my finger".

Trend: Surveillance chic

Hobbyamory

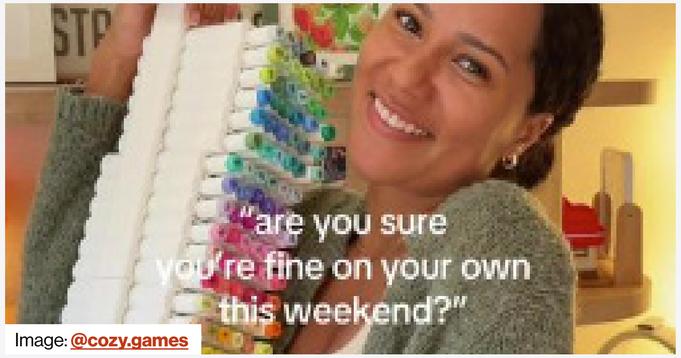


Image: @cozy.games

Singles are collecting hobbies instead of dating - a practice dubbed 'hobbyamory', opting to enrich their lives with special interests that widen social circles and connect them with their sense of self at the same time. As put by **the NYT** "Young people are prioritising their well-being and happiness in a way that other generations have not, said Alexandra Solomon, a clinical psychologist and adjunct professor at Northwestern University. According to TikTok, #hobbies has seen an almost 15 percent increase in posts in the U.S. so far in 2026 compared with last year, and #grandmahobbies has grown by more than 400 percent." The Cut **noted** that teenagers are "coming of age into this terrain where norms are being renegotiated". Being coupled up no longer carries the same cultural cachet it did for previous generations.

Trend: Seeking meaning

Analog working

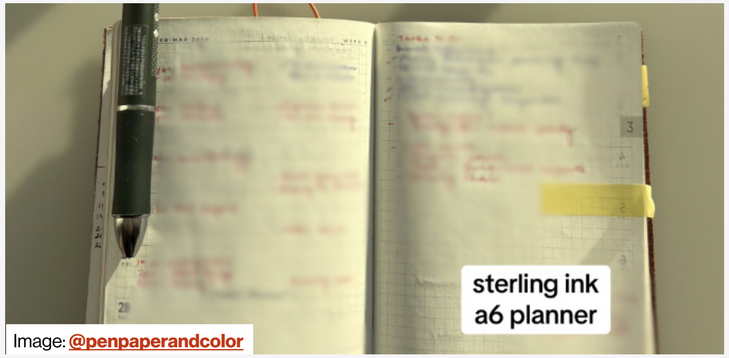


Image: @penpaperandcolor

In a trend that feels at odds with the microchip mani, the latest office desktop accessory is the decidedly offline pen and paper. Post-it Notes, signature pens (the MUJI Gel Ink is our GOAT) and premium notepads are being used as a form of self-expression in standardised offices - a trend showing up in **back-to-school wishlists**, too. As said in **Business Insider**; "A July survey from office supplier Quill, a Staples subsidiary, found that 94% of Gen Z and millennial office workers say physically crossing an item off a paper to-do list feels more satisfying than checking a digital box. About one-third said the constant stream of Slack messages, emails, and Teams notifications makes them long for more **analog ways of working**." Although we don't think the trend will extend to fax machines, scanners or phones.

Trend: At your inconvenience

A WINK, A NOD, A SCREENSHOT

Brands, get in on the inside joke.

We were just getting to grips with **Alexander Skarsgård** playing a man made of wicker, when Ikea dropped a campaign that sent the internet into frenzy. No celebs, no big media budgets, no context, just a photo of a rattan bench with the caption 'made from husband material'. IYKYK.

This isn't a stunt. This is strategy. When FYP becomes a big blurry scroll, the goal is to make it to the group chat. And group chat doesn't want the brand spiel; it wants the knowing winks, the lore, the inside drama that gives us the license to participate. It triggers a psychological dopamine hit because "getting it" proves we belong. It signals that we are chronically online in the exact same way, down in the same rabbit hole.

Brands that get it, get it. Right before Ikea went viral with romantacy fans, it was TRESemmé' dropping '**Hot Curl Summer**' for the Off Campus girlies. And before that it was Fanatics Sportsbook bringing in Kendell Jenner to clap back at the infamous '**Kardashian curse**' or Poppi turning the 'Amaya-papaya' meme into a **new drink flavor**. SKIMS went even further and created the **ultimate inside joke** with the 'Ultimate Bush' thong that was sold out within minutes. Did it make sense to everyone? No. But did it work? Yes. And that's kinda the point.

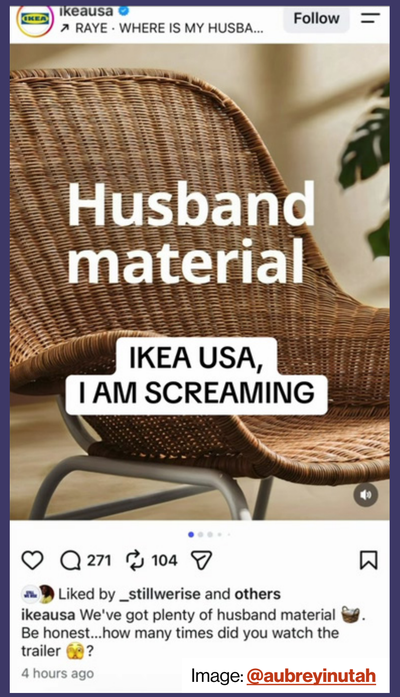


Image: @aubreyinutah

IKEA Heard Your 'Wicker' Jokes and Turned Alexander Skarsgård's Internet Thirst Into a Clever Ad

The actor stars opposite Olivia Coleman in the adaptation of 'The Wicker Husband' by Ursula Wills-Jones.

Image: parade.com

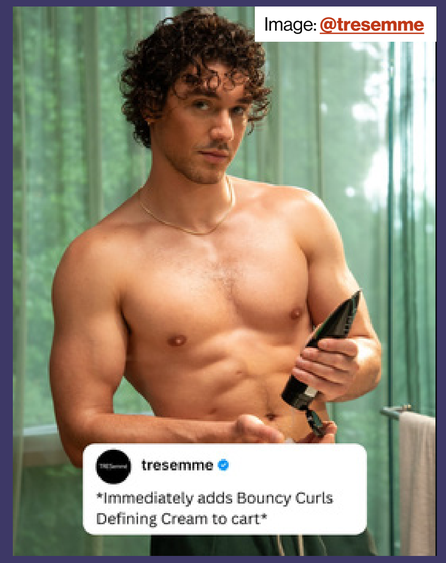


Image: @tresemme



Image: @thecharleswinters

KENDALL JENNER MOCKS 'KARDASHIAN CURSE' & TROLLS NBA EXES IN FANATICS SUPER BOWL AD

Image: maxim.com

Weber Forecast Insight

In the attention economy, being universally understood is boring—but being in on a shared secret is gold. So instead of chasing the popular trend, find the inside joke, the niche lore that communities are already whispering about. If your creative isn't getting screenshotted, you haven't made it to the group chat.

BRANDWATCH

THE WEBER FORECAST

Inspiring creative from around the world

KFC x La Vielle Ferme



Image: @kfc_uki

KFC and La Vieille Ferme's **"Coq au Vin" pop-up** is proving that the recipe for buzz isn't always complicated: take a viral nickname ("**chicken wine**"), pair it with an iconic fast-food brand, and serve it up IRL. Even better, the Shoreditch **wine bar experience sold out** before doors have even opened on the 28th August. This masterclass in cultural relevance, perfect brand partnerships and experiential marketing shows how humour, accessibility and a strong social narrative can drive serious engagement. The only thing hotter than the chicken? The demand.

Abercrombie


Image: @abercrombie

Wait, are these real? Tailor-made for fashion (and foodie) fanatics, Abercrombie has teamed up with food illusionist Min Kyung-jin (**@sibatable**) to create hyper-detailed jeans made entirely from pasta that look straight off the shop floor. The organically shareable contents that's rooted in craftsmanship is sparking curiosity and conversation about **hiring real artists** in the world of AI and we are so here for it.

Heinz



Image: @heinz_uk

Heinz has turned a humble ketchup cap into a conversation starter with the launch of its limited-edition "**Love Lid**" featuring three flow settings: **Like, Love and Crazy Love**. Designed to celebrate fan favourite everyday behaviours around sauce application, the playful innovation gives users control over exactly how much ketchup lands on their plate. It's an instant hit: product-led storytelling, culture-friendly and humour. It's a Crazy Love from us.

M&S x Aries



Image: M&S

Roll up, roll up! We officially have the elevated answer to the Trader Joes' tote bag. M&S and cult streetwear label Aries have reimagined the retailer's iconic green carrier bag as a **£90 soft leather tote** as part of a **capsule collection**. By transforming an everyday item into a fashion must-have, M&S has tapped into the sweet spot between nostalgia and desirability gaining the attention of big **fashion reporters**. Yesterday's carrier bag is today's It-bag.

Reebok x IDEA


Image: @reebok

Reebok's latest collaboration with cult London publisher **IDEA** proves that sometimes the smartest ideas are the most subtle. The duo has reimagined the classic **Club C 85** with premium materials and hidden glow-in-the-dark details, cheekily dubbed "**They Go In The Dark**." Rather than reinventing an icon, the partnership celebrates nostalgia, collectability and cultural references rooted in books, design and '90s sports culture. Like all great things from the '90s, it somehow feels cooler the second time around.

WANT TO KNOW WHAT ELSE IS ON THE HORIZON?

Talk to us for:

Reports

Our '**Signals**' reports provide deep dive insights and implications for your brand, audience or category.

Workshops

Our own '**Culture Collider**' workshop methodology approaches briefs through the lens of cultural trends to help teams create culture first ideas.



Pictured: Adobe Stock

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