THE WEBER FORECAST

WEEKLY TRENDS REPORT

RISING UP

Friday 02 October 2026



Pictured: Pexels

THIS WEEK'S FORECAST

THE WEBER FORECAST

Micro trend — Macro trend

Difficult to action

Easy to action

- The Valorant C-drama
- GrandmAI
- The negative stigma around cat dads
- Post-digital pigeons
- Tiny aspirations
- Catch-Up Culture

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

The easily replicated format, the **age and reaction trend**.

The **last weekend of September** edits, **don't be dumb** edits, **getting called out by A** from *Pretty Little Liars* and **sorry Chile**, you're a target for memes.

ICYMI

Ludwig Kaiser captures **Mexico's hearts** with his Luchador character.

Manchester City F.C, you have been found GUILTY.

Phrases of the week

"**Are we still scared of women's armpit hair in 2026?**" & "**Pubic enemy: the controversial history of the bush**". Dazed asks what's the big deal with hair.

Digi updates

Apple **opens a 600-person capacity music venue** in Battersea PowerStation. Getting a ticket for a gig here is probably luckier than a lottery ticket.

Bonnie Blue just got $1.2 Million for naming her baby, BetBolt, after a name bidding war. This is in the running for worst news of the year.

Tea of the week

The drama behind the **lesbian bar in rural western Massachusetts** has way too many layers.

What we're loving

Valorant made a **C-mini-drama**. We need every video game to do this.

We are obsessed with **playing *Dressmaker***.

Established trends

Japan's young people are **signing up for marriage agencies** in droves and **young Americans are using Costco** as a place to find love.

The **social cost for convenience**. Ordering takeout = no potential meet-cute.

Insights of the week

There's still a **negative stigma about male cat owners**. You've got to be kitten me right meow!

How **mainstream are Beta blockers** going to get?

Weekly doses of cute

Ceramic tiles in NYC, **Busan Shark**, **Bald meet cute**, **Dad's POV**, **Office dog**, **Mom's 5k**, **Fat bear week champ**, **Professor visit** and **Florentina** loves horses.

On our radar

Other Mommy – 09 October
The Social Reckoning – 09 October

Abott Elementary S6 – 07 October

Domnic Fike: How To Quit Smoking – 09 October
Troye Sivan: She's The Best – 09 October

Gears of War: E-Day – 06 October
Star Wars: Galactic Rider – 06 October

Rising trend

Hairdos de moment: **Crimped hair is back** and **the heartthrob fringe**.

The future

OpenAI scraps newest agent release over safety concerns and **Anthropic's IPO has a warning** around existential risk to humanity. FUN!

Stats of the week

Is slow burn romance back? 49% fell for someone they didn't find attractive at first and **other various dating stats**.

The VMAs attracted 8.4 million viewers, the most watched since 2015. Thank **Yung Lean**.

Ones to watch

Kinktober is about to start, **Jeopardy test**, **Robot v Human**, **Wired BOSE headphones**, **Fred Astaire biopic**, **the Bartender** from *Obsession*, **and $60 Rye**.



Image: **@valorant**

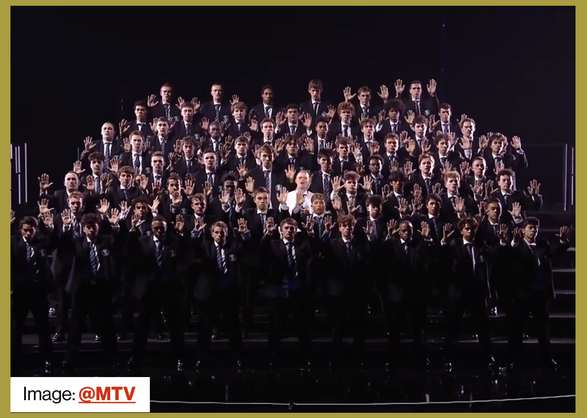
Image: **@MTV**


Image: **@luchalibreaaa**

TREND TRACKING

THE WEBER FORECAST

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

GrandmAI



Image: @coatedincoffee

Instead of uploading Minion memes and sharing unfiltered thoughts on Facebook, older generations on social media are **churning out AI slop**. As AI companies sound the horn on AI safety and privacy, your grandma is happily posting AI-generated images of her grandchildren hanging out with Santa Clause and the Grinch. Meanwhile, anti-AI sentiment among Gen Alphas is growing, with the phrase "**That's so AI!**" used as a playground insult for something inauthentic or cheap, similar to the other new insults like **Polyster or Temu**. We're looking forward to this winter holiday season when the family breaks apart because of AI slop and not the undercooked turkey.

Trend: 2026: The Year Of the Reset

Tiny aspirations



Image: @carolynbergen1

Miniatures – are they the latest recession indicator? We've been tracking this trend since lockdown days, and it shows no signs of slowing down as younger generations go crazy for this analog hobby on social media. At this year's International Guild of Miniature Artisans gathering in Maine, 82 of the 232 students were first-timers, and preregistration for 2027 filled in just four hours. The global dollhouse market is expected to more than double in the coming years, from $1.2 billion in 2025 to **$2.5 billion by 2034**, as people seek to own a home of some kind, no matter the size. Even media like Homeworthy, which publishes tours of incredible homes, are tapping into the trend with a **series** that explores the world's best *doll's* houses. According to one **maker**, "We're building something that is designed to be treasured for generations, and think in a world of AI slop that's a very compelling and romantic notion."

Trend: Cult of cute

Post-digital pigeons



Image: @numanuk

Pigeons have been enjoying some great PR recently, becoming social media stars and attracting younger generations to pigeon keeping. Now, they're being hailed as a '**post-digital icon**', representing slower means of communication (next we'll be replacing our phones with carrier pigeons!) and a forgotten connection with nature. UK digital artist Numan Khan found his AI images of pigeons (the irony is not lost on us) doing everything from enjoying matcha to wearing Timberland boots, generated more engagement than other animals he tried. As said in **Dazed**, "there's an increasing number of pigeon posts: **pigeon memes**, **ethereal pigeon photography**, **pigeon wedding cakes**, **emo pigeon poems**, **pigeon ASMR videos** and even a new app, **Carrier Pidge**, where you can send a message to friends at pigeon speed (110 mph)." Consider us pigeon fanciers.

Trend: The slow life



Image: @itsnotjustyoupodcast

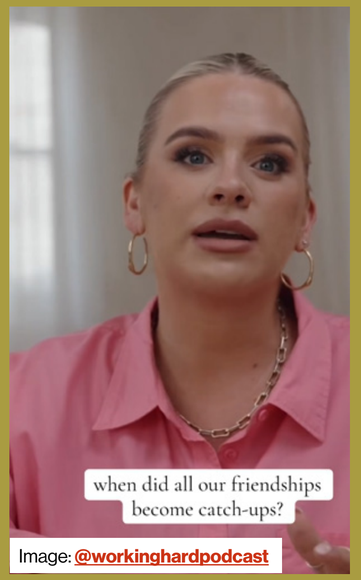

Image: @workinghardpodcast



Image: @buchanangalleries

Is Catch-Up Culture Ruining Your Friendships?

Image: Roar

'Friends convinced me this is what adult friendships would be like - I was so wrong'

Image: Tyla

Weber Forecast Insight

Catch-up culture creates an opportunity to champion the ordinary moments that keep friendships ticking, rather than focusing solely on big social occasions. Fitness, food or entertainment brands can give people a reason to establish recurring plans. There's a world of untapped creative territory in helping consumers "do life together" again.

This week's long read

CATCH-UP CULTURE

The infamous "*we absolutely need to catch-up*"

Friendships have developed a slight **admin problem**. Somewhere between work, exercise, relationships, rising living costs and the ever-elusive "free weekend", seeing our friends has become another calendar invite.

Welcome to catch-up culture where friendships are increasingly maintained **through pre-planned coffees and dinners**. You spend **three hours downloading** the last three months of your life, promise the unofficial slogan of adult friendship "we can't leave it this long next time", then inevitably do exactly that.

Arguably, friendships traditionally thrived on the much less glamorous notion of routine. From school and university to shared workplaces, routine **created that effortless proximity**. However, the shift from 'doing life together' to **periodically reporting back** on it has taken a toll on friendship groups. Potentially even **contributing to the loneliness epidemic**.

No need to panic as there's a counter-trend on the horizon. Culture is calling to make friendship mundane again. By '**committing to a village**', friends accept that their community requires consistency, repetition and sometimes inconvenience. Think grocery shopping dates and midweek workouts over *another* £50 dinner. Psychologist Dr Tracy King says, it's often these ordinary, repeated moments that **create the feeling of safety and closeness** we associate with tight-knit friendship groups.

I spy with my little eye, the perfect opportunity for brands to get involved. We've spent years celebrating big friendship moments (girls' trips to **birthday dinners**), but consumers are **craving low-stakes togetherness** instead. From supermarkets making the weekly shop a social ritual to sporting brands like Nike **hosting running clubs**, brands can help friendship groups as they crave the mundane, but cherished, life.

BRANDWATCH

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Inspiring creative from around the world

Kraft x Solly's



Image: @kraftdinnerca

Kraft is taking its iconic cheesiness somewhere unexpected: the drinks aisle. Teaming up with Solly's Craft Soda, the brand has launched a limited-edition soda, **KD Cream Soda**, mixing nostalgic sweetness with a hint of KD's signature cheesiness. The unlikely flavour mash-up is **pure curiosity bait**, built to spark "would you actually try it?" (jury's still out here). The deliberately divisive flavour is a masterclass: unexpected enough **to earn headlines**, weird enough to **fuel taste tests** and social reactions, and limited enough to create FOMO.

Xbox x Prince St. Pizza



Image: Prince St Pizza

Prince St. Pizza is levelling up with a Gears of War **Prototype Lancer pizza cutter**, modelled on the game's iconic weapon - complete with an exclusive in-game pizza emblem. And what better to slice with it? The limited-edition '**Emergence Pie**', created to celebrate the launch of ***Gears of War: E-Day***. It's a brilliantly bonkers collision of gaming, food and fandom, with just the right amount of ridiculousness to fuel fan chatter, headlines and social sharing. From console to crust, Xbox is giving fans a slice of the action.

Apothic



Image: Apothic

Apothic is sinking its teeth into Halloween with the ultimate spooky-season partner: Heidi Klum, aka the **undisputed queen of Halloween**. Together, they've created limited-edition **Type 'A' Blood Bags**, designed to be filled with Apothic Red. It's celebrity casting at its finest, tapping Klum's **decades-long Halloween credentials** for instant cultural relevance, while the chance to **win tickets to her legendary Halloween party** takes the partnership from product drop to money-can't-buy experience. Now that's what we call bloody good PR.

I Can't Believe It's not Butter



Image: @icantbelieveitsnotbutter

I Can't Believe It's Not Butter! is giving mascot TUBZ a glow-up from forgotten fridge resident to self-help guru, launching a real 70+ page book, ***Lifting the Lid: The T.U.B.Z. Method For Unlocking Your Full Potential***, complete with a foreword from **reunited endorser Fabio** (aka the hunk of all hunks). It's wonderfully absurd with a clever product story underneath, using TUBZ's "reinvention" to mirror the brand's own reformulation. Turning a product refresh into a story worth spreading.

Wendy's



Image: Wendy's

Wendy's is officially in its emo era, dropping a six-track album, ***Songs to Listen to in a Wendy's Parking Lot***, featuring actual emo and pop-punk talent and tracks including "It's Not a Phase, It's a 10PC" and "My Frosty's Funeral". It's a smart culture play, tapping into the emo revival while staying true to **Wendy's famously unserious personality**. Crucially, using **actual true-to-genre artists** elevates it from brand gimmick to shareable (and actually pretty good) music. Trust Wendy's to serve burgers, Frostys and a side of existential dread.

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: Pexels

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