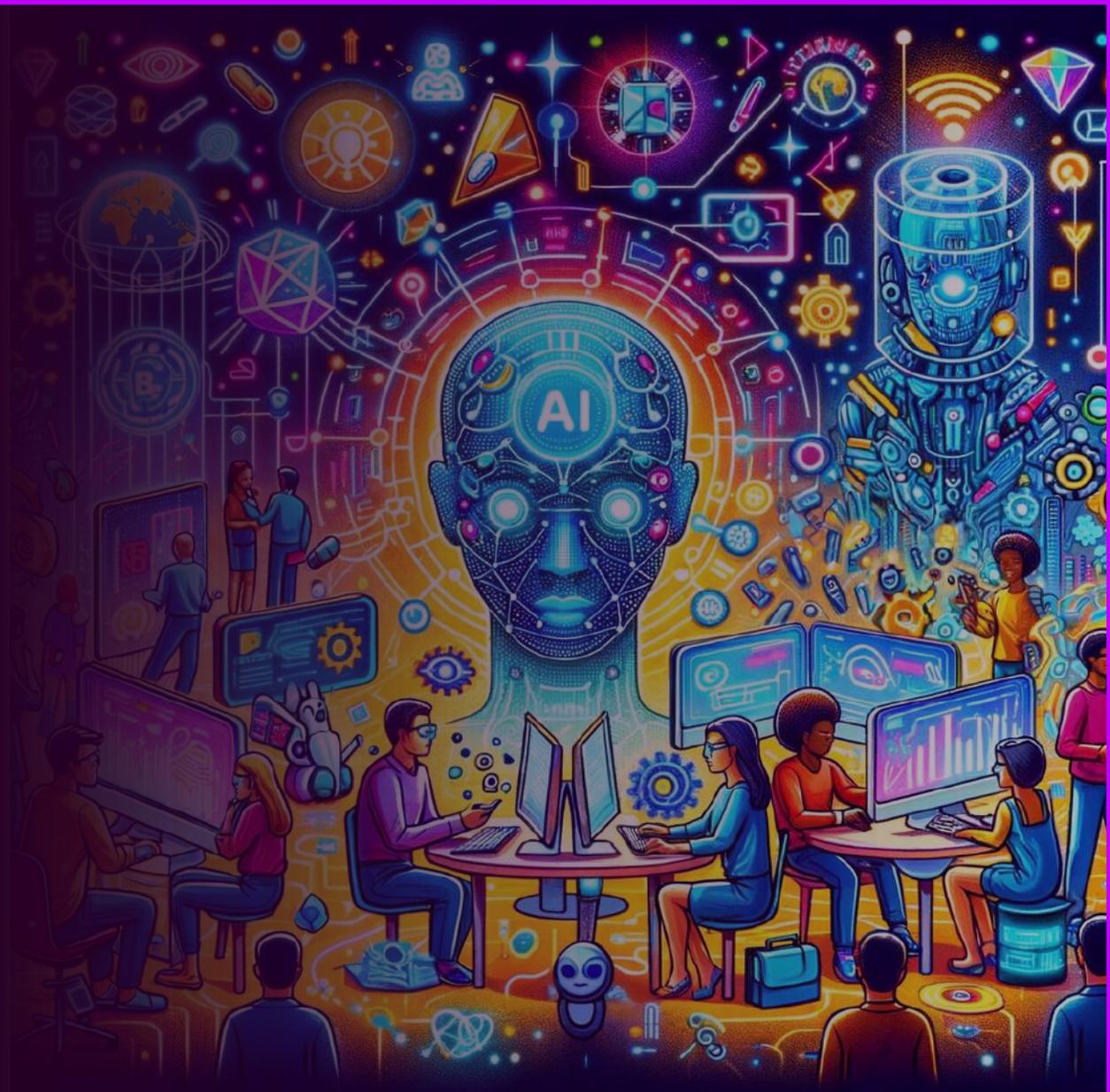


2024 Predictions

How emerging technologies will impact marketing, commerce and consumer behavior in the year ahead



2024 will continue to deliver technology advances at lightning speeds. That said, the market will mature beyond the seeming “magic” AI powered demo’s that were become commonplace in 2023 and conversations will increasingly focus on real world applications.

In the marketing world, this will demonstrate itself most notably by a further move away from passive media towards immersive and interactive experiences. Consumers can no longer be thought of as your audience, they are the protagonists of their own story. In 2024, succeeding with them will require the creation of experiences they want to opt into.

Three technologies will be core to this process:

Generative AI (and broader AI)

As conversation mature beyond demos to focus on real world use cases, AI will prove itself to be a connecting force that cuts across traditional silos. It's ability to consolidate data of all sorts will enable unprecedented collaboration and growth.

Blockchain

Crypto winter is over. The greedy players have been punished. The technology is set to retake the stage, but this time, instead of focusing purely on increasing prices, it will demonstrate value through identity verification, content authenticity, etc.

Immersive Experiences

Metaverse is likely to remain a dirty word. That said AR, XR, immersive experiences, and digital twins will take center state as more brands look to foster participation as a driver for loyalty and preference.



**A few predictions for
how these technologies
will be activated in the
year ahead**

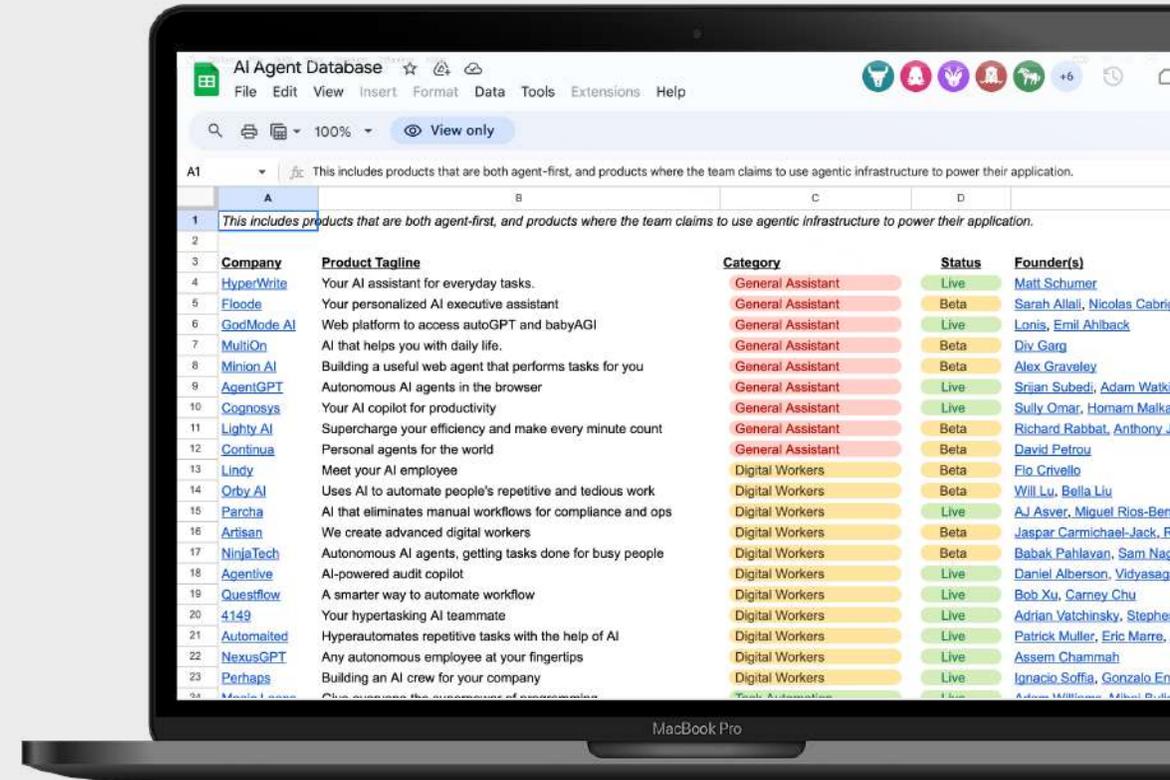
"There's a GPT / Copilot / AI agent for that"

AI agents will become ubiquitous for specialized tasks, mirroring the app boom in the early 2010s.

Remember when smartphones just came out. Apple released there now iconic ad "[There's an App for that](#)". In 2024 we will see the same thing happen but with GPT's and AI agents.

Whatever specialized task you have from planning a holiday, to ordering groceries, to optimizing your web content, there will be GPT or AI agent specifically designed to help.

New businesses, and new business models will be developed on the back of these services allowing for a new round of growth – in much the same way that we saw in the early 2010's through the "appification" of services. That said, the cycle will be fast, and we will see consolidation happen almost as fast as we see innovation.



A list of AI agents currently in development was recently shared on X by Olivia Moore from A16Z / [@omooortweets](#). You can see the full list she shared [here](#).

Generative AI will unify streaming entertainment and commerce

Integrations will use generative AI for interactive product placement and offers.

I first predicted that streaming services and ecommerce would come together in 2018 after Netflix released the Baldersnatch episode of Black Mirror which allowed for greater viewer interaction through a “choose your own adventure” mechanic.

I was too early, but 2024 will be the year of streaming commerce. After all, with streaming services struggling for growth and seeing churn rates of up to 47% and most people expecting to see consolidation in the industry, we will also see people chase revenue in other ways.

The inclusion of more advertising is already a given, but where I expect we will see the most innovation in 2024 is through the integration of new ecommerce models that leverage generative AI capabilities in order to deliver new functionality and product availability.

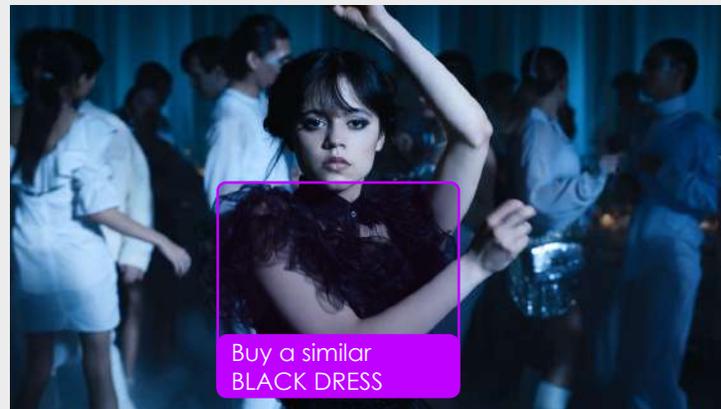
Three ways this could work:

Hero product offers



Walmart took the first shot at this with their Christmas release of +Add to Heart. A feature RomCom that spotlights products for sale. Expect to see Amazon step into the frame by connecting Prime Video with their retail commerce service.

Buy something like this



Scanning films with computer vision will allow brands to offer similar products to those worn or used by their favorite characters. The above scene show an illustration of how this could work by using a picture from the show Wednesday.

Programmatic product placement



Technologies like Adobe's generative fill will be applied to entertainment allowing for bidding on programmatic product placements. This means you might see someone wearing different clothes or drinking a different soda from what is shown to others.

Marketers will target gamers by linking real-world purchases with in-game benefits.

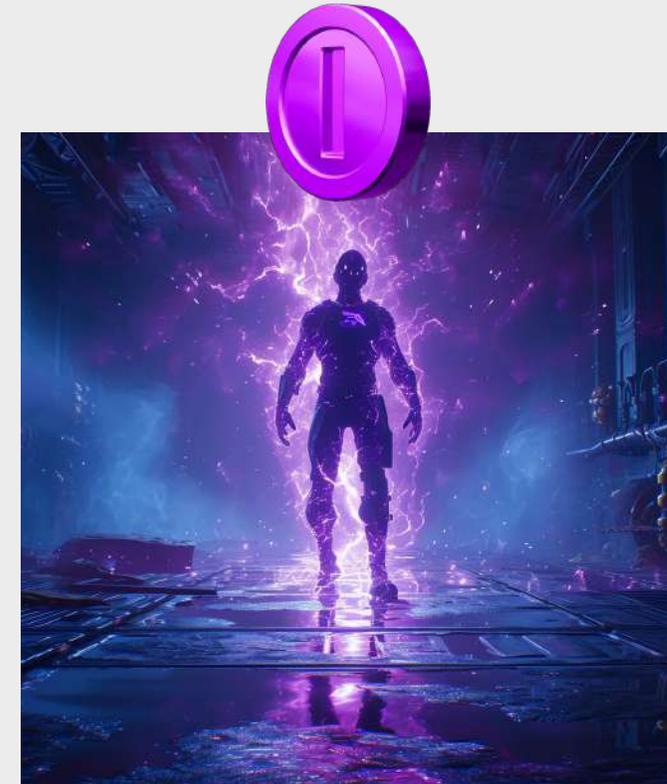
This will work by tokenizing both gaming attributes and real-world purchases.

There are over 3 billion people in the world that can be considered gamers. It a high growth market with revenues forecasted to be nearly \$300 billion USD in 2024. For marketers this represents a highly attractive and lucrative audience but one which has not always been easy to reach.

In 2024 we will see brands push beyond the in-game ads they have used so far to connect with this audience and instead focus on **delivering participatory in-game benefits that are only available through real world purchase.**

That might sound like a lot of buzz words, so lets make it simple. Imagine you buy a meal at a fast-food restaurant and with the meal you get an NFT that can be used in game. Connecting the NFT to your Fortnite or FIFA profile might give your character extra speed for a limited time.

As the tokenization of gaming continues to gain traction, these are the types of use cases that will emerge this year.



Tokenized gaming enables power-ups based on real-world purchases

Blockchain based content authentication will make headlines as politically motivated deepfakes create real election worries

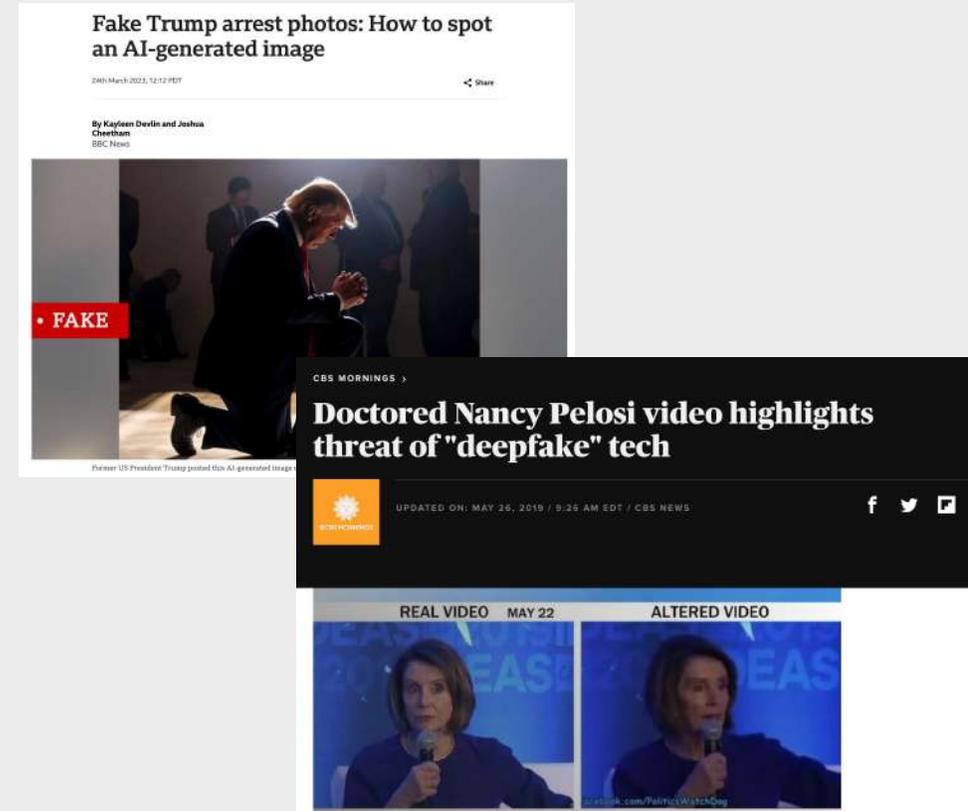
Expect to see a major publisher experiment with this technology for authentication and provenance.

This is two predictions in one and the first is a real no brainer. We've already seen fake news influence elections. And now that it's become relatively easy for everyday people to create believable deepfakes, we should expect to see even more of it.

You can read more about how this will work in my earlier newsletters from 2023 if you want, but it's a common enough topic at this point that you can find many references the risk of that deepfakes and present to the upcoming elections.

Make no mistake, AI companies will do what they can to prevent this. From [watermarking AI generated content](#) to [scanning for biometric signatures like blood flow in human to validate film authenticity](#), many strategies are being developed to combat this problem, but I would still expect to see significant problems in this space.

One strategy that isn't talk about a lot, but which wouldn't be a surprise would be a large media network exploring the use of Blockchain as a vehicle for content authentication and provenance.



AI devices will emerge as the next hardware battleground, and privacy will come further into focus

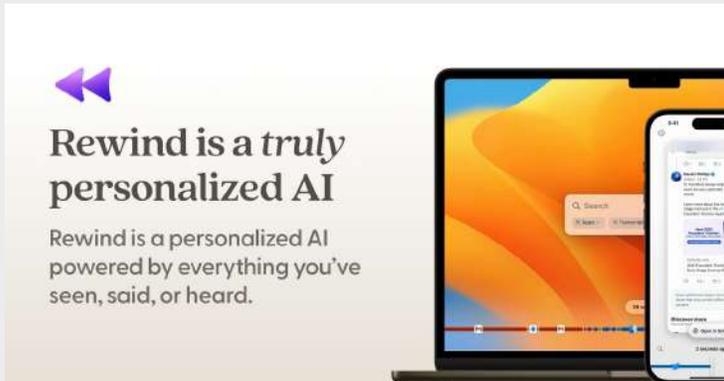
In 2023 we saw the release of a few early AI hardware products and AI wearables such as Rewind, the update Meta / Rayban glasses, and the Humane Pin. In 2024 you can expect to see a lot more focus in this area as [OpenAI readies an AI device they have been working on with Johnny Ives](#), [and Apple appears ready to deploy thin model AI services on iPhone](#) and other hardware devices.

Given AI's hunger for data, one thing we should expect is that all of these devices will be accelerants for data capture, and with that we should expect privacy to become a center stage concern. We saw the early stages of this in 2023, but as more personal data is collected, ethics and privacy will dominate the conversation.

Brands looking to build in this area should be thinking about this as a primary consideration.

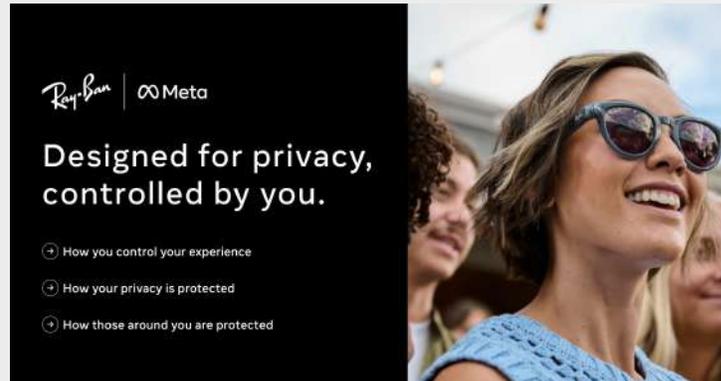
AI hardware devices and wearables from 2023

The Rewind Pendant



Recording everything that is said, the release of the Rewind Pendant raised questions about privacy and consent.

Meta / Rayban glasses



Meta is designed their 2nd generation glasses with Privacy as a primary consideration.

Embracing our humanity and stepping away from the screen. But for now, the screen will still win.

Building on the trend towards AI devices and wearables, we will increasingly see products that move us away from the screen. It's not going to be fully embraced in 2024 but we will see more experiments as people look to voice and sound as ways to break people away from their mobile screens.

Let's face facts, most of us look at those devices too much. You only have to go to dinner to see couples out together but not speaking as they each interact with their screens instead of with each other. It's a problem, but with mobile phones being so central to our lives and our work, it's not one that will change quickly or easily. After all, a move away from a screen can only happen if we can do it without losing anything.

The Humane AI pin was the first attempt at this, and while it isn't perfect, it is like that we will see a lot more focus on on devices that allow people to break away from the screen and maintain eye contact.

At first, it is likely that will see hybrid innovations in this space with a lot of focus on AR devices similar to the Meta Rayban partnership or the Apple Vision Pro.



The Humane AI pin works is a wearable that is controlled by voice. Where needed, it allows for easy engagement through laser projection.

GenZ (and others) will turn to AI girlfriends and companions as the crisis of loneliness gets even worse

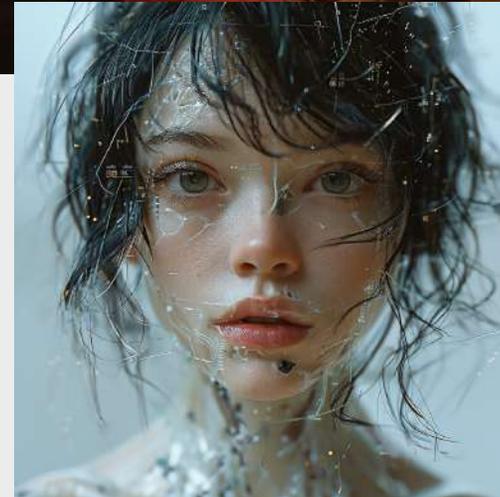
AI girlfriends and relationships have been a topic of conversation for a longtime. The movie HER which addresses the subject directly was made in 2013. But it's in 2024, with [73% of GenZ saying they feel lonely sometimes or always according to Psychology Today](#) that this subject is going to reach mainstream consciousness.

What's ironic is that while this loneliness has been partially attributed to social media usage, social media and digital services are also the solution that most of GenZ turn to for loneliness. It is both the cause and the perceived cure.

Making this problem worse, [research says that over 60% of men under 30 years old report themselves as single](#).

One result of this is the rise, and expected further growth of AI girlfriends and while this can provide the feeling of companionship, it is unlikely to be a good substitute for real human interactions.

As technology increasingly intermediated human interaction, and starts to intermediate intimacy, expect further focus on mental health challenges as the crisis of loneliness to come further into focus.



Top image is from HER

Bottom image was created in MidJourney. I considered adding images from real AI girlfriend websites but I don't want to promote those services. If you are interested, you can Google it yourself.

Brand specific AI based persona's will be used for rapid “consumer” and creative testing

For a long time, brands have relied on Persona's as part of their product development and marketing. In 2024, Personas will take on an even larger role as they become central to consumer and creative testing as well.

Instead of testing with panels groups of real people, brands will build synthetic persona's based on research data and past media and digital data signals. By aggregating all the data they have about their customers past behaviors they will create AI versions with whom they can test products, messaging, and even experience design in order to better estimate effectiveness and optimize in advance.

There are a number of different products and approaches to this that are already appearing. A few of them include:



Delve.ai uses the approach described above to aggregate data about a single audience in order to build a persona which will in react in similar ways to the target audience allowing for better prediction models and performance estimates.



Another strategy that increasingly come into focus will be the use of computer vision. In this case, real people are exposed to creative work, or new digital services and their facial expressions are recorded with AI analyzing the micro-expressions to understand where there is emotional resonance, and where there is confusion.

In this way both product and communication development can be quickly optimized with data you can trust.

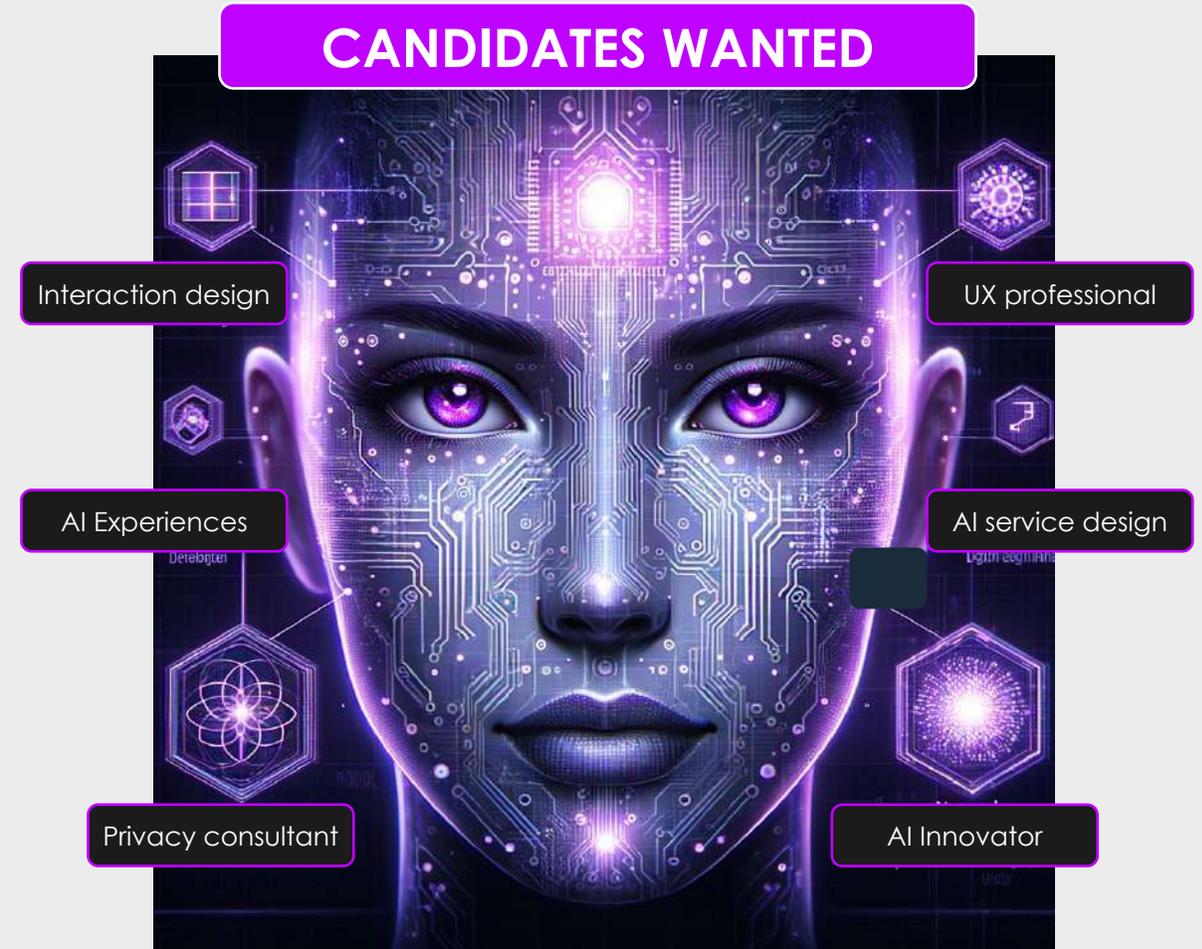
UX and experience design will be the killer app for emerging tech.

This is where we will see the next war for talent.

For emerging technologies to move beyond seemingly “magic” demo’s and deliver real business value, the most important thing is adoption. Adoption by your customers, adoption by your people. Adoption drives usage and usage drive value.

But adoption is harder than it sounds. We like to believe that if “we build it they will come”, but in most cases this isn’t true. People need onboarding. People need guardrails. People need to trust they tools they are using.

The chat interface is good for AI because it allows for natural language interaction. That said, it can be clumsy for task specific actions. As industries look to commercialize task specific use cases, UX and experience design for AI interactions will be the killer app and the designers of AI interactions will be the hot hires of the year. We will see this play out in Health, we will see this play out in Finance. We will see AI experience design as a big differentiator between the services that scale rapidly and those that struggle for adoption.



A few more thoughts

- Where 2023 saw a lot of start-ups in the emerging tech space, 2024 will see a lot of M&A activity. This will include start-ups with complementary services coming together as well as established businesses buying AI and emerging tech services and integrating them.
- There will be continued debated between the need for specialized models and the ability of general models to cater for all requirements.
- We all however see a lot of focus on smaller models that can run locally on our devices. Reports have already come out about Apple being able to optimize speeds through memory management on iPhone, but I expect this will be put into consumer hands this year.
- Apple will formally enter the AI race through a connected LMM / AI agent that builds on your personal data to make lifestyle recommendations. Recent announcements around their health tracking by their watch, the new journal app, and their Ferrett LMM set the foundation for this.
- Regulation around AI, privacy and data compliance will remain a top table agenda item. This will be a priority agenda item in political and electoral debates.
- The Vision Pro will reset expectations for VR and XR benefiting both Apple and Meta in the process
- Decentralization will be back in focus with some large-scale announcements around decentralized identity being used for fraud prevention. But it won't be limited to this. We will see AI companies look at decentralized strategies for both data management and compute.
- A large brand experiment will launch a personalized loyalty program built on blockchain. This will go beyond NFT and stamp collecting, but instead offer personalized benefits based on individual actions and brand partnerships.



Summary

In 2024, we will see emerging tech bring the digital and the real world closer together and continue the drive to make marketing participatory. This will be led by AI powered micro-service agents that capture data from interactions, behaviors and natural language and photographic requests.

These AI services will creep into everything we do from entertainment to commerce and will open up new interaction models that include extended reality services.

But as the AI agents thirst for more of your personal data, privacy will come further into focus. In this area, blockchain will make headlines for its ability to support data verification, content authentication, and decentralized compute.

For brands and business looking to tap into these trends, you should:



About Brand Next

Brand next is an ideas platform and consultancy designed to support and guide business in the exploration of emerging technologies and in creating better outcomes through human-centric and technology powered transformations.

With the rapid advancement of technology, many companies are demonstrating new capabilities that appear to almost be magic. And yet, in many cases they lack grounding in everyday business and real-world application. Our focus is not just on helping brands understand what the technology is capable of doing, but helping to identify the use cases and opportunities where it can drive the most impact and deliver the most value both to the business, and to their customers and stakeholders.

The value of technology is not in what it can do, but in what you do with it.



Justin Peyton is the author of Brand Next and the view expressed are his own. He has worked across a broad range of industries and is trusted by many of worlds leading & largest brands.

If you have questions or want to discuss how emerging technologies and digital transformation can be applied to solve your business challenges, contact Justin directly at:
justin.peyton@brandnext.io

BRAND NEXT

The logo consists of the words "BRAND" and "NEXT" in a bold, white, sans-serif font. A thick, purple arrow points from left to right, passing through the middle of the letters "A", "N", and "E". The arrow's shaft is a solid purple line, and its head is a stylized arrowhead pointing towards the right.