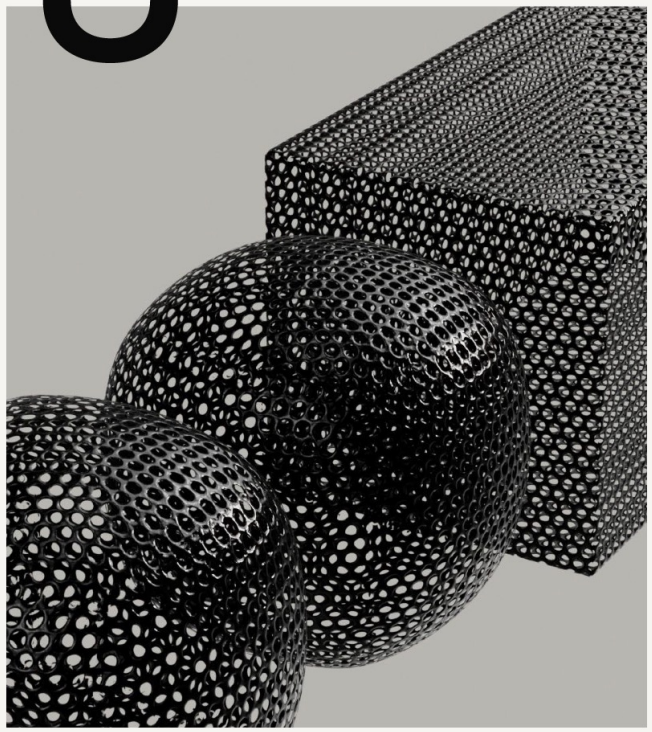

Dispatch:
Eight Shifts
from
CES 2026
What the world's largest stage for innovation can tell us about the future of how brands and consumers engage

We are a global experience

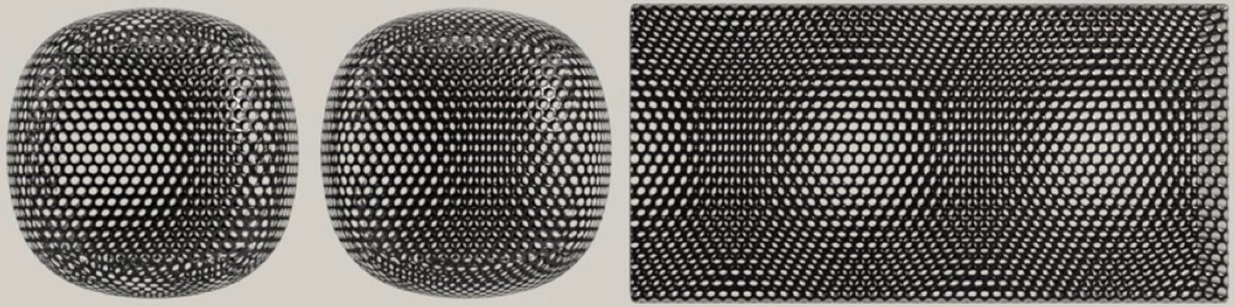
innovation agency

U

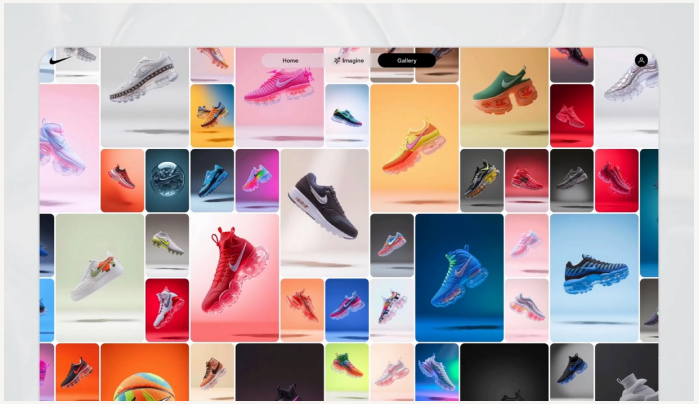


dotdotdash takes its name from Morse Code, specifically the pattern for the letter U.

It's a nod to our belief in putting people at the center of what we create and like Morse code in its time, our work reimagines how brands communicate today.



Multisensory experiences



built for impact

We craft distinct, connected and impactful experiences across the entire brand ecosystem.

Thinking + Making

Turning signals into systems

We decode signals

We decode cultural insights, emerging tech, and human behavior and turn those signals into an informed experience strategy.

We design for the senses

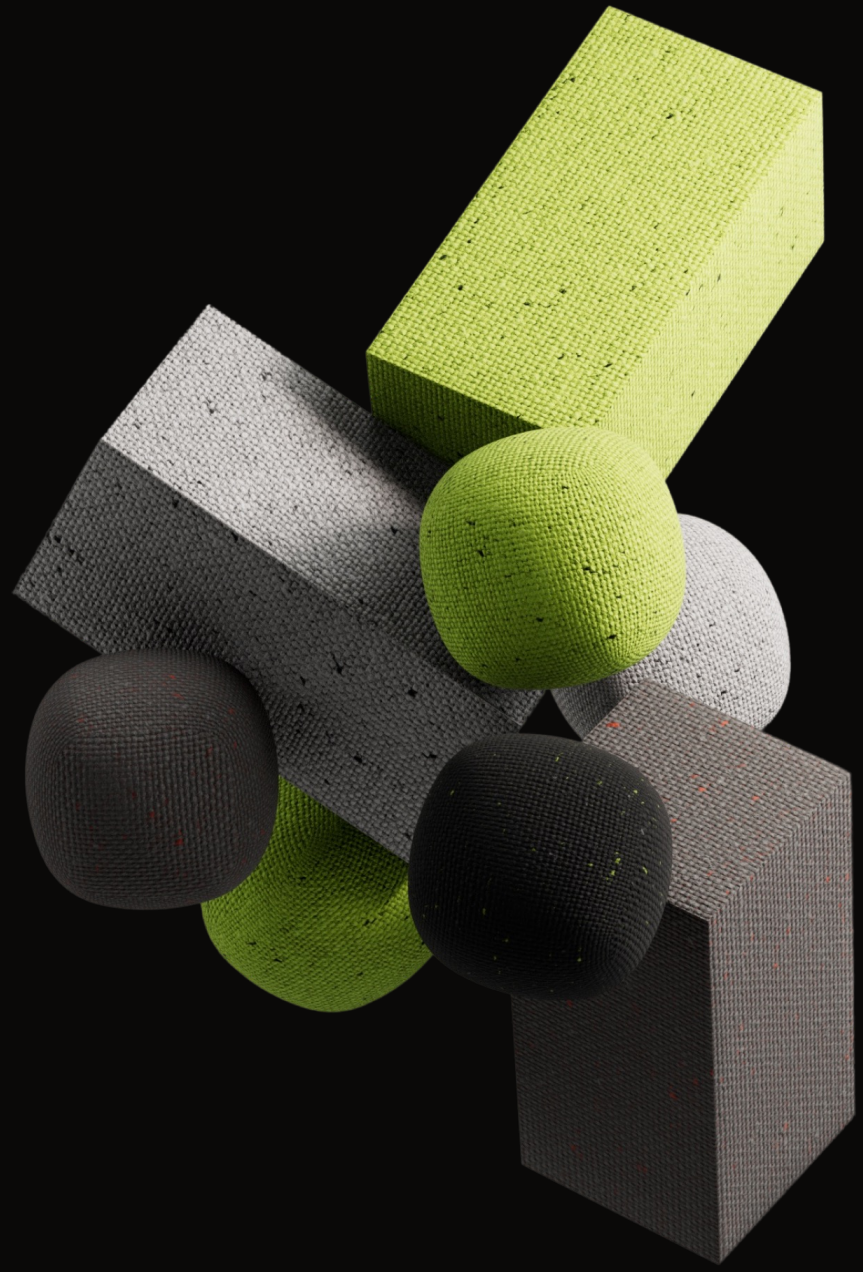
With a clear strategy as our foundation, we develop ideas, interactions and experiences that establish new paradigms and unlock new growth.

We develop systems

We codify these senses in connected ecosystems, where digital content, products and platforms work together to create connected ecosystems.

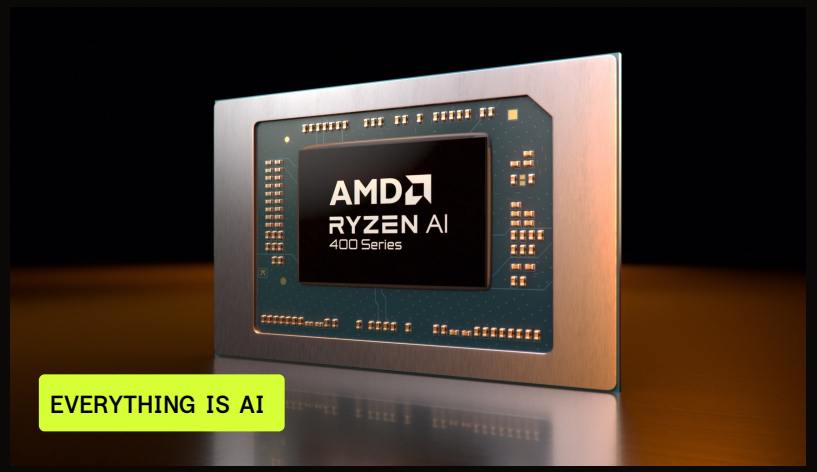
CES gives us a glimpse into the future of tech

As the world's largest stage for innovation, CES is an eclectic mix of conceptual dreams and consumer-ready tech that shows us where the world might be heading.



CES 2026

It can feel impossible to navigate the overwhelming number of new releases, updates and headlines

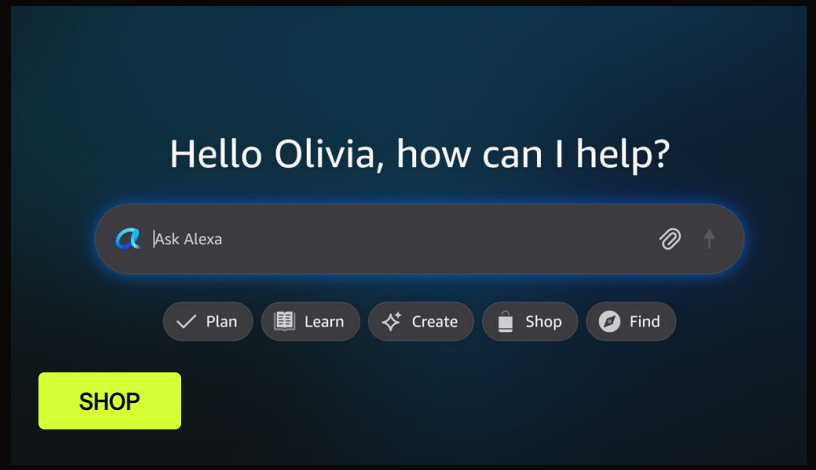


Signals → Shifts → Behaviors

It’s why we cover every square foot of CES and read every announcement, scanning and decoding signals that represent larger shifts that will change behavior.

CES 2026

These shifts are creating new behaviors in how people will...



Shifts in culture & technology

up spaces

for new ideas, new

experiences & new growth

But major shifts don’t just move in one direction

Every year we see major technology shifts grow and die in the hype cycle, so we try to take an optimistic but realistic approach.

Source: Adapted, Marshall McLuhan 1988

ENHANCE		OBSOLESCENCE
Embedding AI into everything	⟷	New disruptive leaps are limited
Software improves	⟷	Hardware is slowly stagnating
Robotics are normalized	⟷	Human ingenuity fades away
Lenses become functional	⟷	Immersion is overlooked
Healthcare is democratized	⟷	Hypochondria fear rises
Everything is accessible now	⟷	We lose sight of what's next

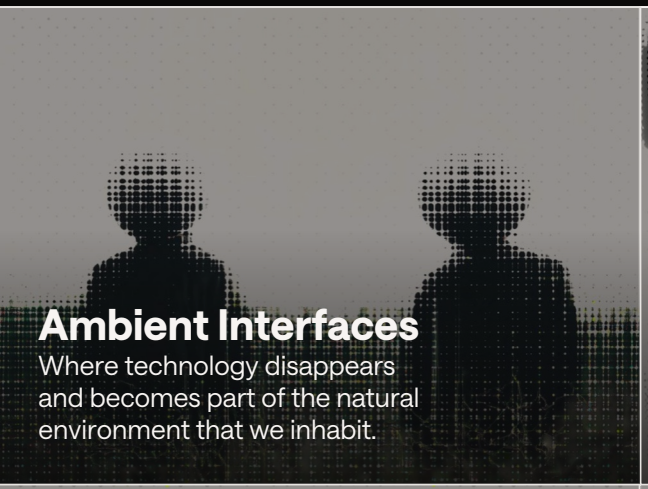
How can I relate these shifts back to my brand?

We get it, it's hard to relate faster chips and AI-Tamagotchis to selling insurance, but bear with us as we curate the best from CES and translate it back to your brand. Start by asking...

+ How will this emerging technology shape future behaviors that will impact or open up new growth opportunities for my brand?
+ How could I apply these emerging technologies into my brand and product experience?
+ How could I collaborate with any of these pioneers who are already looking for use cases and partners to bring their innovations to life?

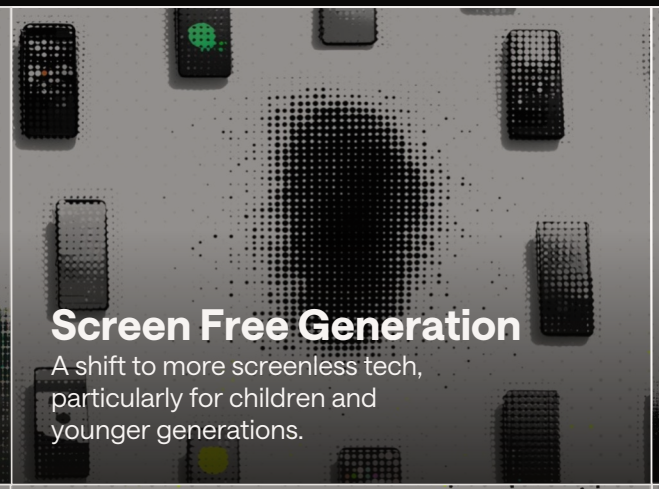
CES 2026

Let's Explore **Eight Emerging Shifts**



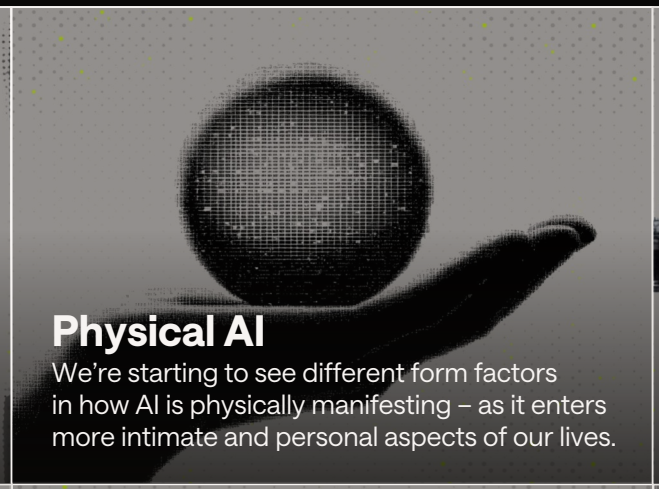
Ambient Interfaces

Where technology disappears and becomes part of the natural environment that we inhabit.



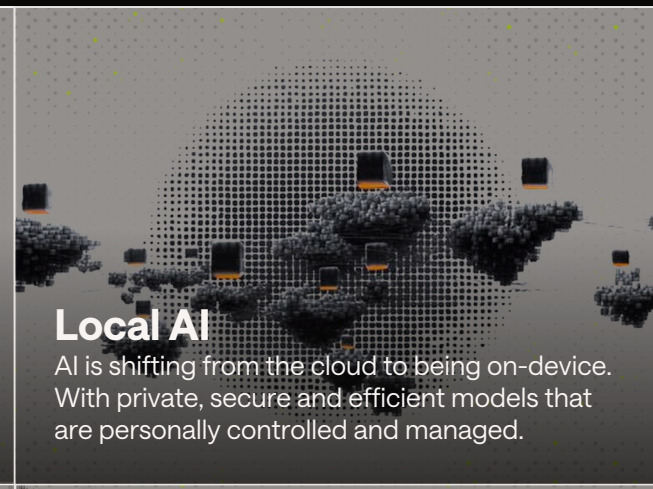
Screen Free Generation

A shift to more screenless tech, particularly for children and younger generations.



Physical AI

We're starting to see different form factors in how AI is physically manifesting – as it enters more intimate and personal aspects of our lives.



Local AI

AI is shifting from the cloud to being on-device. With private, secure and efficient models that are personally controlled and managed.

Zero Labor Companions

We're seeing the democratization of consumer robotics with a focus on minimizing our physical and mental load at home.

Optimized Anatomy

Healthcare has shifted from micro-optimization to democratic care. We can now test everything that goes in, goes on, or comes out of our bodies.

Spatial Lenses

We can now choose the lens we see our world through. Lightweight lenses have become a socially acceptable extension of daily life.

Playful Tchotchkes

A welcome shift towards more playful, fun, and nonsensical design. People are craving new form factors that are filled with energy and joy.

001

Ambient Interfaces

The interface is blending into ambient environments.

Through the integration of sensors, AI and IoT, technology is now ambient, creating smart environments that can anticipate and respond to user needs invisibly, performing tasks and providing seamless personalized experiences without constant input through traditional interfaces.

Can your brand own a unique voice, gesture, or interaction?

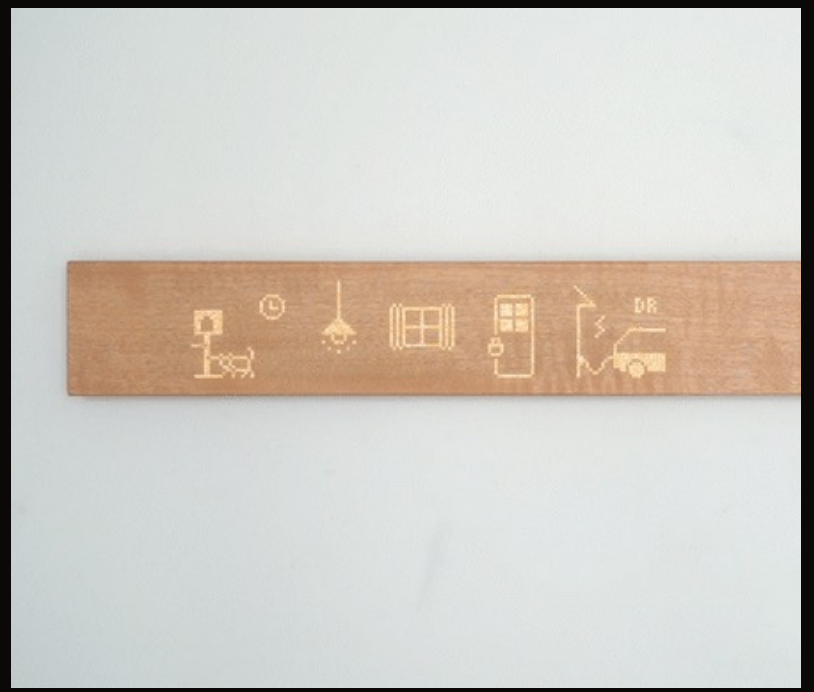
Ambient Interfaces
Examples

BMW - ALEXA+ Integration

BMW is expanding its BMW Intelligent Personal Assistant by integrating Amazon's AI Alexa+ into models starting with the BMW iX3. AI Assistants are one of the biggest enablers of ambient technology, creating smart environments that can anticipate and react to user needs with contextual awareness.

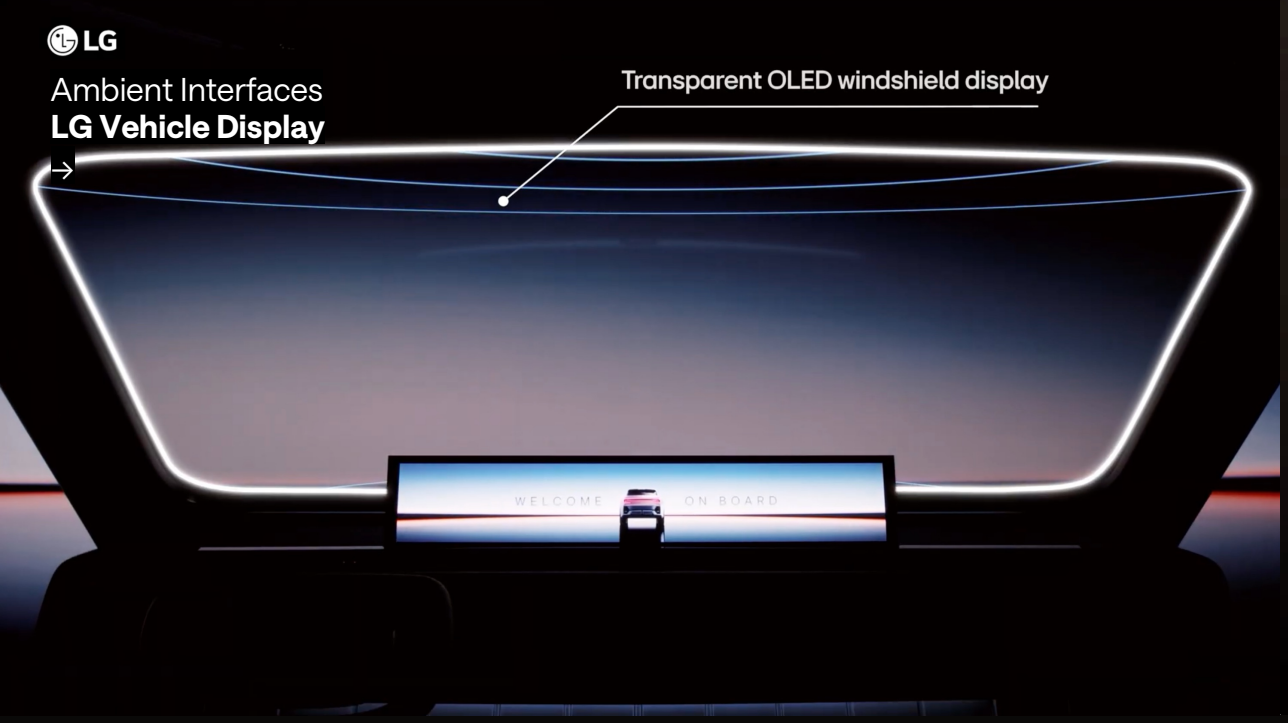
LG - Transparent Signature OLED TV

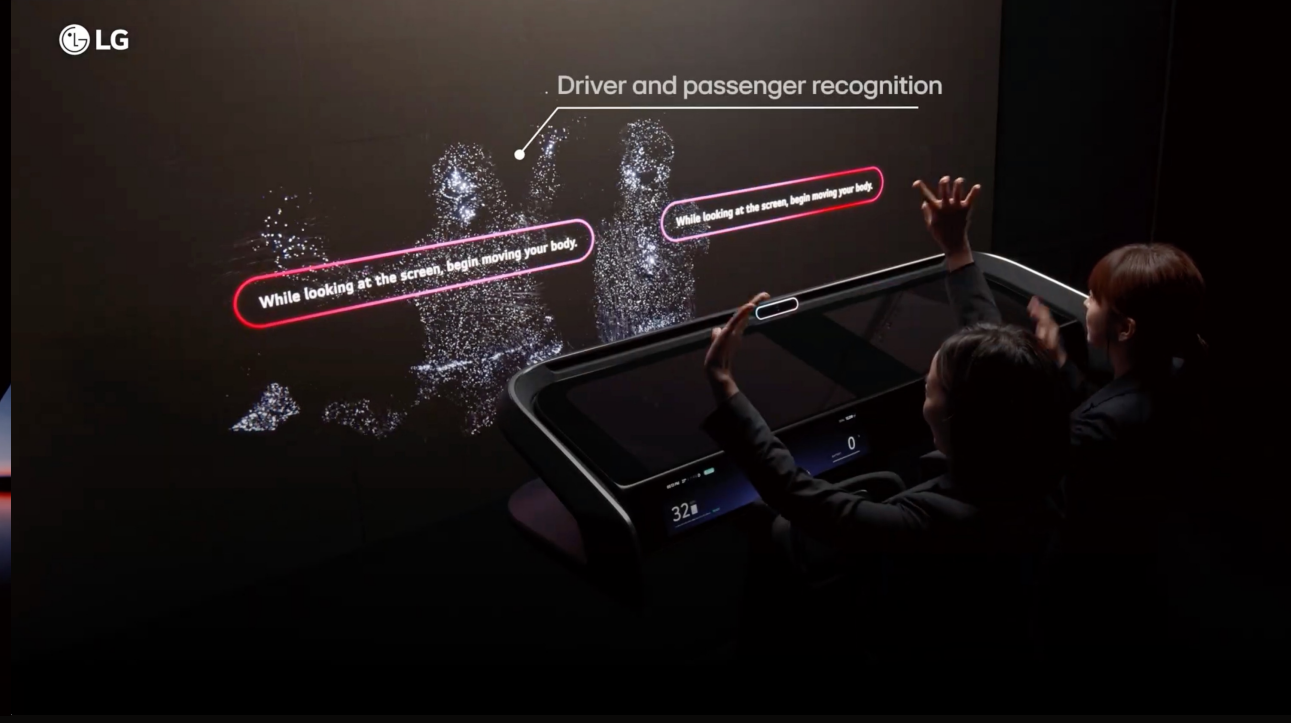
With its transparent OLED display and wireless connections, the Signature is designed to disappear seamlessly into any space. Signaling a shift towards more ambient interfaces that blend into our life and disappear when not in use. This was a concept we saw in previous years now becoming a reality with pre-orders now avail.



Mui Lab – Mui Board

A wooden smart home controller designed to foster healthy family living while acting as a thoughtful alternative to screens. The Mui board works with many smart home companies and protocols like Matter, Sonos, Hue, and others. Signaling a shift to technology and interfaces that integrate into our life naturally.


LG
Ambient Interfaces
LG Vehicle Display
Transparent OLED windshield display
WELCOME ON BOARD


LG
Driver and passenger recognition
While looking at the screen, begin moving your body.
While looking at the screen, begin moving your body.


LG
Chef. Thomas
Hello!
Here is your meal.
Translating
Voice and gesture-based two-way communication
Link


LG
09:23 AM
18
Real-time driving information
MANUAL DRIVING

Ambient Interfaces
AFEELA Prototype
→

Link

Ambient Interfaces
What Does This Mean For Your Brand?
→

As tech permeates every aspect of our lives, albeit invisibly, brands need to consider how this impacts their experiences.

Brands should consider how they can make their tech invisible whilst still delivering value to users. As interactions continue to go screenless, brands should start to own a unique voice, gesture, or entirely new modes of engagement.

When done right, it makes tech feel like life-improving magic rather than a life-sucking distraction.

Ambient Interfaces
What If?
→

- What if we built experiences that integrate and blend into life, rather than distract and disrupt?
- What if you could create an ambient mode for your existing digital experiences or apps?
- What if your brand owned a distinct phrase or mnemonic to trigger product orders? Like Wassuuuup?

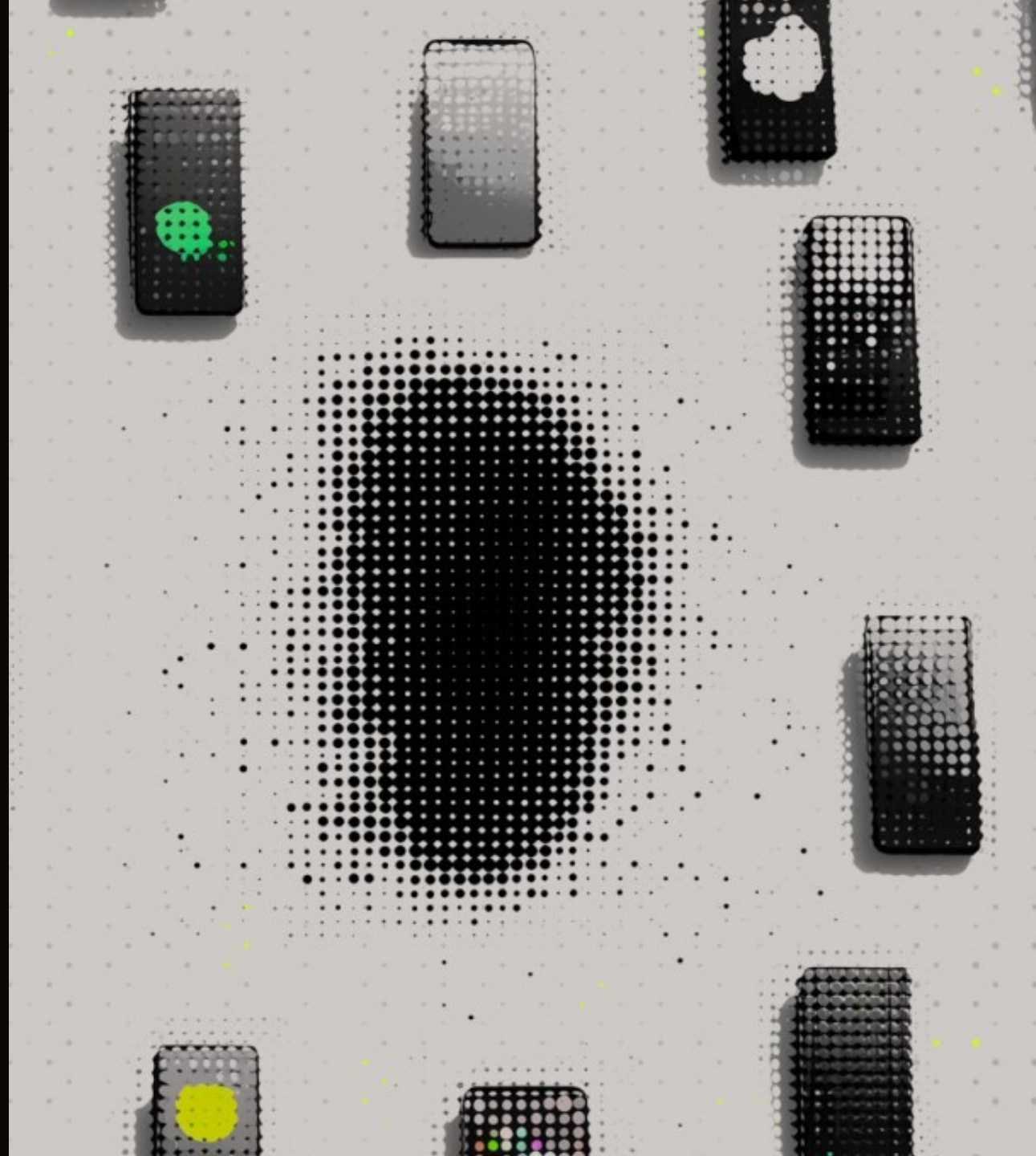
002

Screen Free Generation

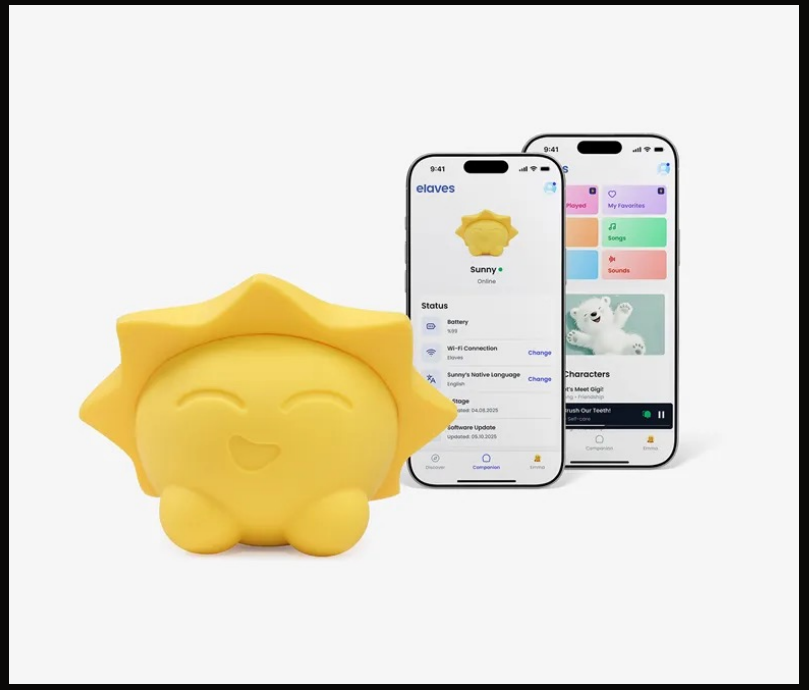
Screen time has become public enemy #1.

As our attention fragments and screen time reaches an all-time high, we're seeing a shift towards more ambient and screen-free solutions, particularly for children and teens, opening up new modes of interaction.

Are you ready to embrace new forms of engagement built on voice, tactile play and gestural interactions?



Screen Free Generation
Examples



Elaves - Sunny

A screen-free, AI-powered companion that nurtures cognitive development from prenatal stages to age five. Grounded in cognitive and developmental psychology, Sunny delivers audio stories, songs, and rituals that strengthen phonological awareness, vocabulary growth, attention, and working memory.

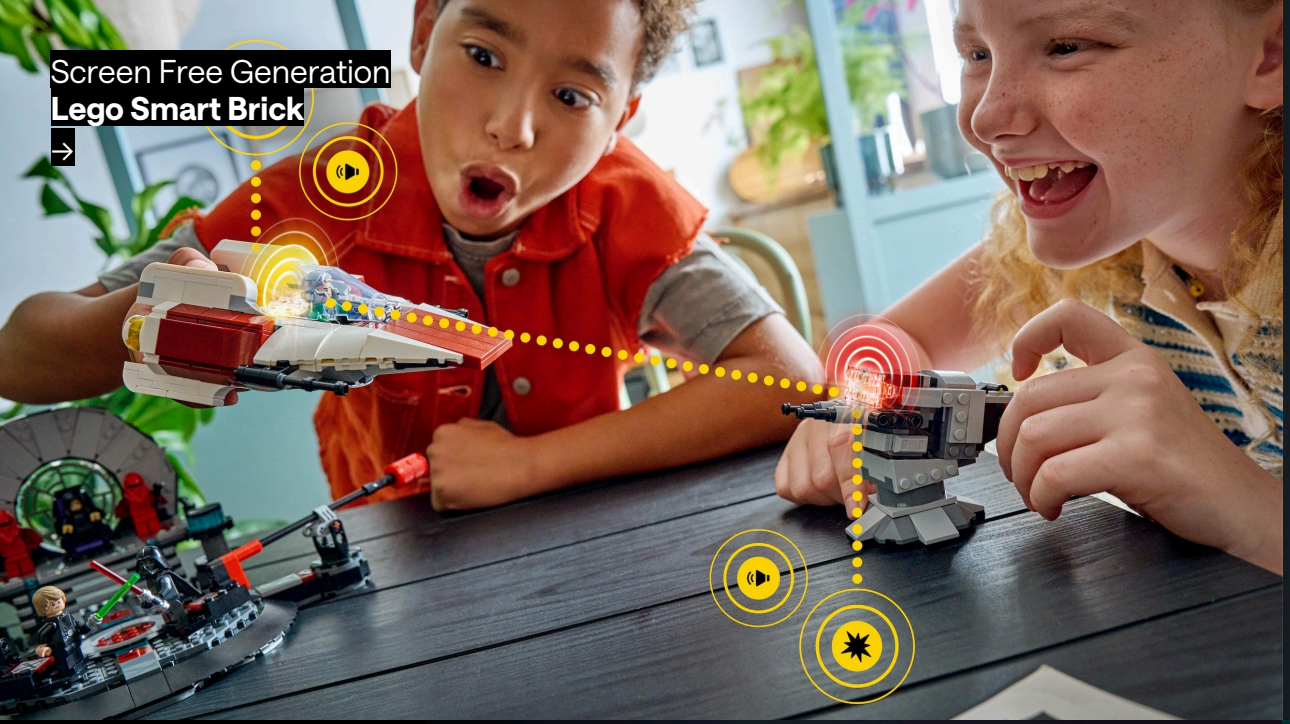
Tonies - TonieBox Two

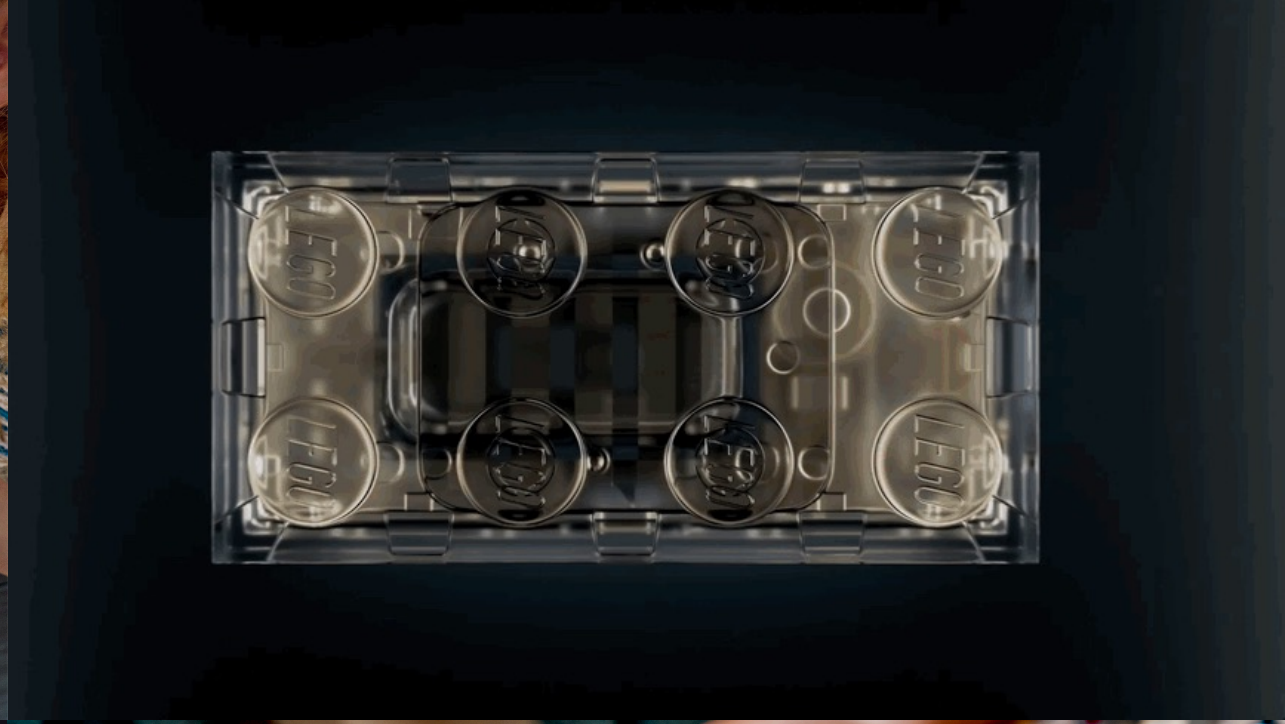
A screen-free interactive storyteller, singer, games player and educational tool. Built for kids 1+, this system is voice and motion activated with limitless content able to be bought through small IoT enabled toys.

Littlebird – Wearable Safety Tracker

The first intelligence-powered, screen-free wearable built exclusively for children. Using next-generation IoT technologies and patented Precision+ location, Littlebird delivers real-time insights into a child's whereabouts, activity, and routines—without cellular, or screens. Signaling an emerging shift to screen free tech.

Screen Free Generation
Lego Smart Brick





Link

Screen Free Generation
What Does This Mean For Your Brand?
→

Screens aren't dying anytime soon, but modes of interaction and engagement are clearly shifting and changing, so brands must prepare for these new modes.

We must consider how we can build distinctive and memorable experiences that cut through via other sensory factors like sound, texture, haptics and smell. Creating more immersive and multisensory experiences.

As this shift continues to gain momentum, we will see it expand across all generations and audience cohorts, so let's get ready.

Screen Free Generation
What If?
→

- What if we built immersive storytelling formats that rely on other sensory factors like, sound, smell, haptics etc?
- What if our brands could help people curb their screen time and improve connections IRL?
- What if we expanded this shift for older generations who need a reprieve from the attention wars?

003

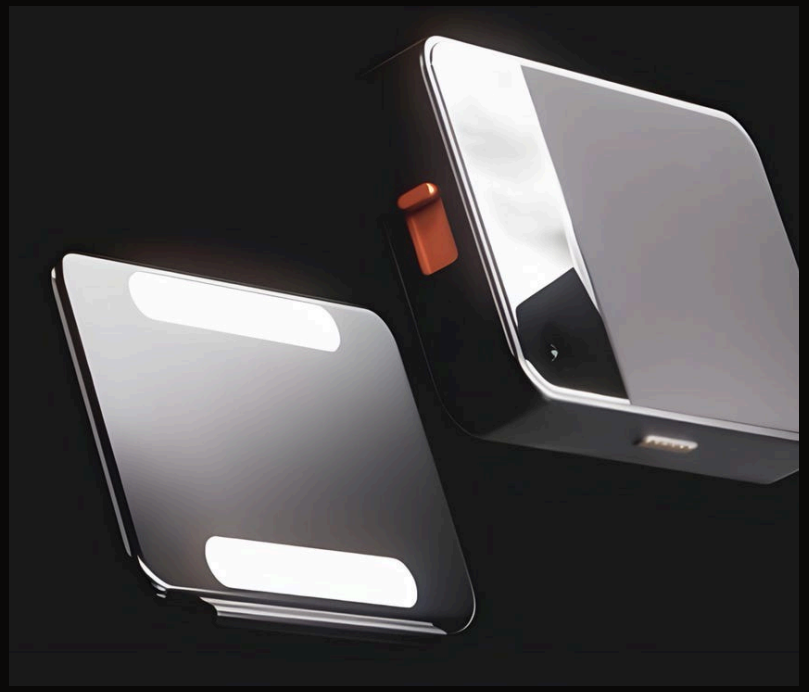
Physical AI

We’re continuing to see the progression of AI’s hardware era.

The first wave of AI hardware may have stumbled, but the ambition has only grown sharper since last year. Instead of pulling us into apps, these devices aim to quietly notice, record, and support us in the flow of our day through AI-enabled experiences.

In a world where intelligence lives in the objects we wear and carry, how could your brand show up as in motion?

Physical AI
Examples



Memories.AI – Project LUCI

An AI platform built around a lightweight camera pin that continuously captures video and turns it into a structured visual memory layer for fast search and recall. It is aimed at developers, offering on-device contextual understanding and tools to tune things like battery use, latency, privacy, and UX, so they can build AI wearables that feel more personally aware and genuinely useful.

Stream – Sandbar

A beautifully designed AI-powered smart ring built to be an extension of you. It can take notes, help you interact with an AI assistant, and control music. It explores new forms of interaction that blend in more intuitively into your life so you can capture thoughts and build ideas wherever you are. **Signaling** a shift to more covert and thoughtful form factors.

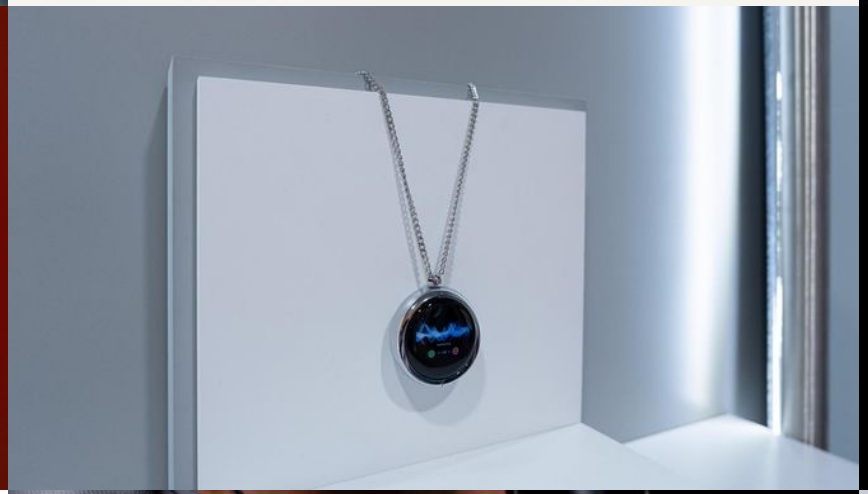
Razer – Project AVA

A desktop AI companion with a holographic avatar that can see and hear your environment to organize your day, curate your wellness routines, and support work and gaming in real time.
It is turning an abstract AI assistant into a persistent, emotionally expressive desk presence that feels more like a companion than an app or smart speaker.

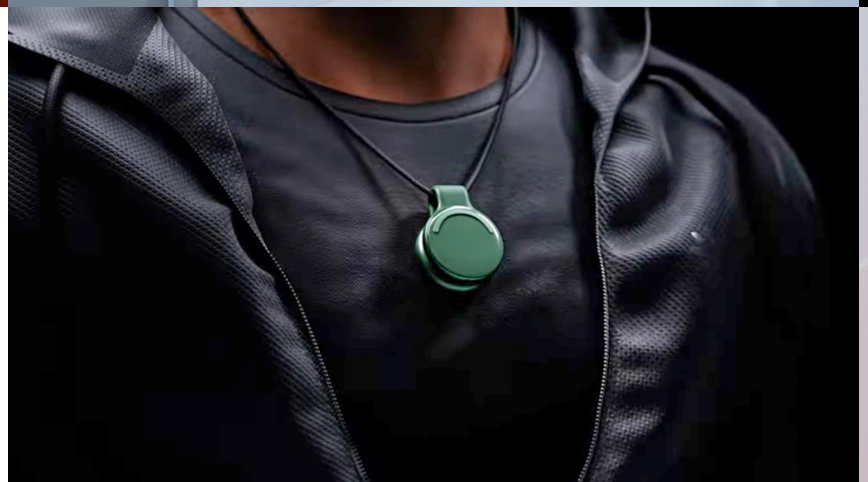

Physical AI
Switchbot AI Mindclip
→
Link


Physical AI
AI Pins & Pendants





Lenovo




Physical AI
What Does This Mean For Your Brand?
→

In the era of Physical AI, brands now need to design for intelligence that lives in motion, and not just on screens and apps anymore.

The opportunity is to turn features into trustworthy companions that anticipate needs, capture context and provide clarity without demanding attention.

Explore how your brand could operate in these new environments where always-on intelligence becomes the new normal.

Physical AI
What If?
→

- What if Physical AI was the first way that consumers encountered your brand?
- What if onboarding was just living with a Physical AI device, that quietly configures itself from how it's used?
- What if your brand's distinctive assets or packaging could be reimagined as a physical AI object?

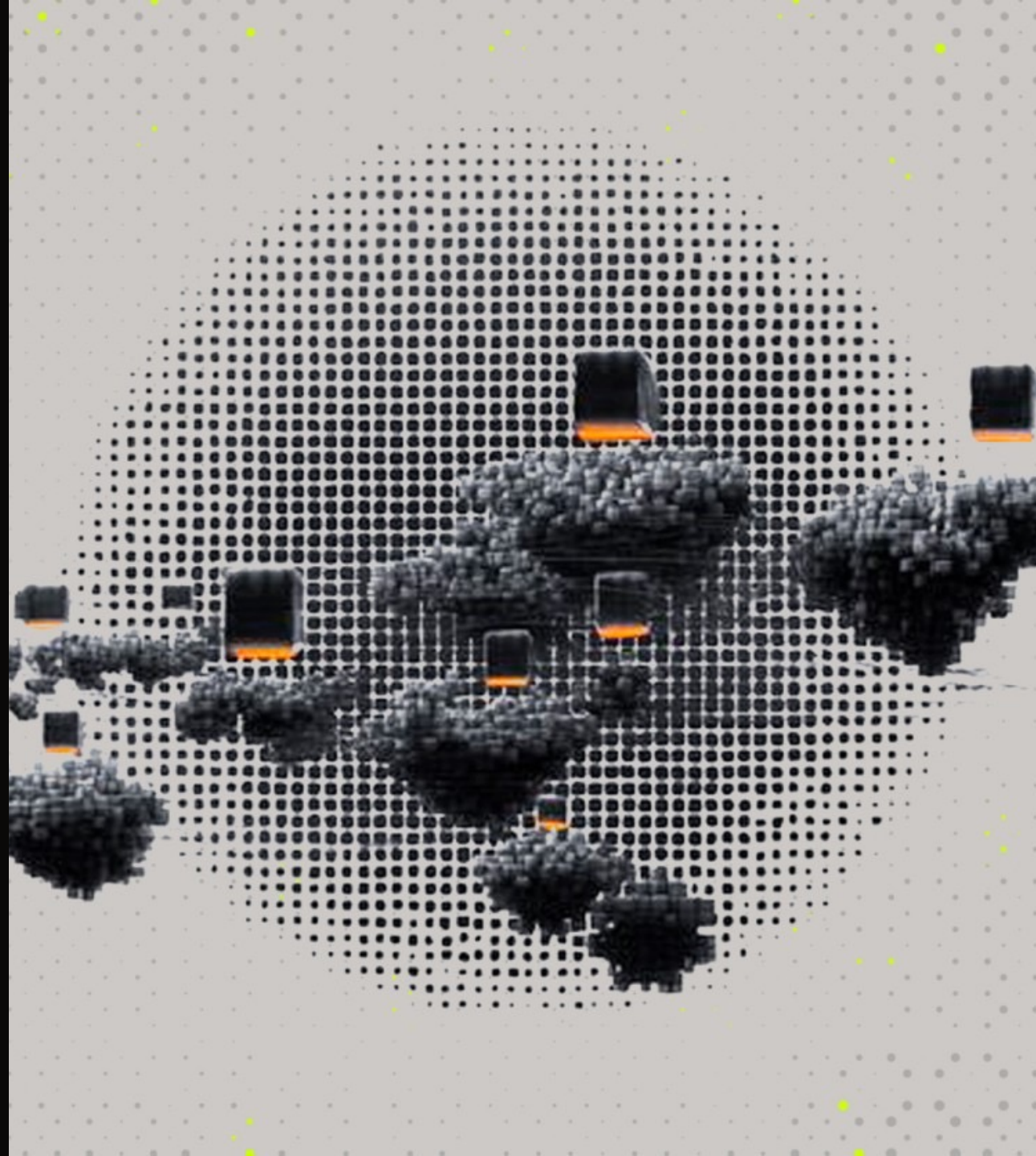
004

Local AI

AI is shifting from the cloud to being on-device.

Brands are shifting their focus towards performance around low-latency, on-device AI models that feel instant and context-aware. Instead of being cloud-dependent, time-consuming, and less secure, the next era of AI will be private, efficient and personally controlled.

How do you fit into a world of experience once everything has on-device AI?



Local AI
Examples

NVIDIA - RTX AI PCs

NVIDIA RTX AI PCs are enabling users to run open models and AI workloads privately on-device, accelerated and free of charge, from 4K video generation to local assistants. Many of these features run directly on the device enabling maximum control for users.

AMD – “AI Everywhere, for Everyone”

AMD’s new Ryzen AI platforms are built so more AI applications can run directly on your PC or device, not just in the cloud, making everyday tools feel faster, more helpful, and more personal. By putting this on-device intelligence into laptops, small desktops, cars, and other embedded systems, AMD is trying to make advanced AI features something anyone can use at scale.

Tiiny – AI Pocket Lab

Tiiny AI Pocket Lab is a pocket-sized mini PC that can run very large language models entirely on the device, without needing cloud servers or GPUs. It’s designed as a low-power, portable “personal AI box” so developers and professionals can do advanced reasoning on the go. This signals a deeper commitment from the industry to make Local AI much more accessible.

Local AI

Intel Core Ultra Series 3 Processors

→

Link

Local AI
What Does This Mean For Your Brand?
→

Every year there are bleeding-edge developments that promise to change how we use our devices forever, and Local AI seems to be the latest in promising a grand future of faster, more personal, and far more private AI use.

However ambitious now, this will raise the bar on what “good feels like: instant responses, context-aware help, and experiences that adapt to one person, not just the average user.

Brands will need to design experiences that can run locally on-device and prove they can be useful without relying solely on data and the cloud. So get ready to hand over your AI experiences to consumers to use at their own will.

Local AI
What If?
→

- What if you let every customer train their own AI agent, tuned to their quirks and rituals on their own device?
- What if Local AI made your product feel instant and telepathic, acting on micro cues before people have to tap, type, or ask?
- What if Local AI turned every device into a tiny innovation lab, constantly experimenting and improving, but only in service of that one user?

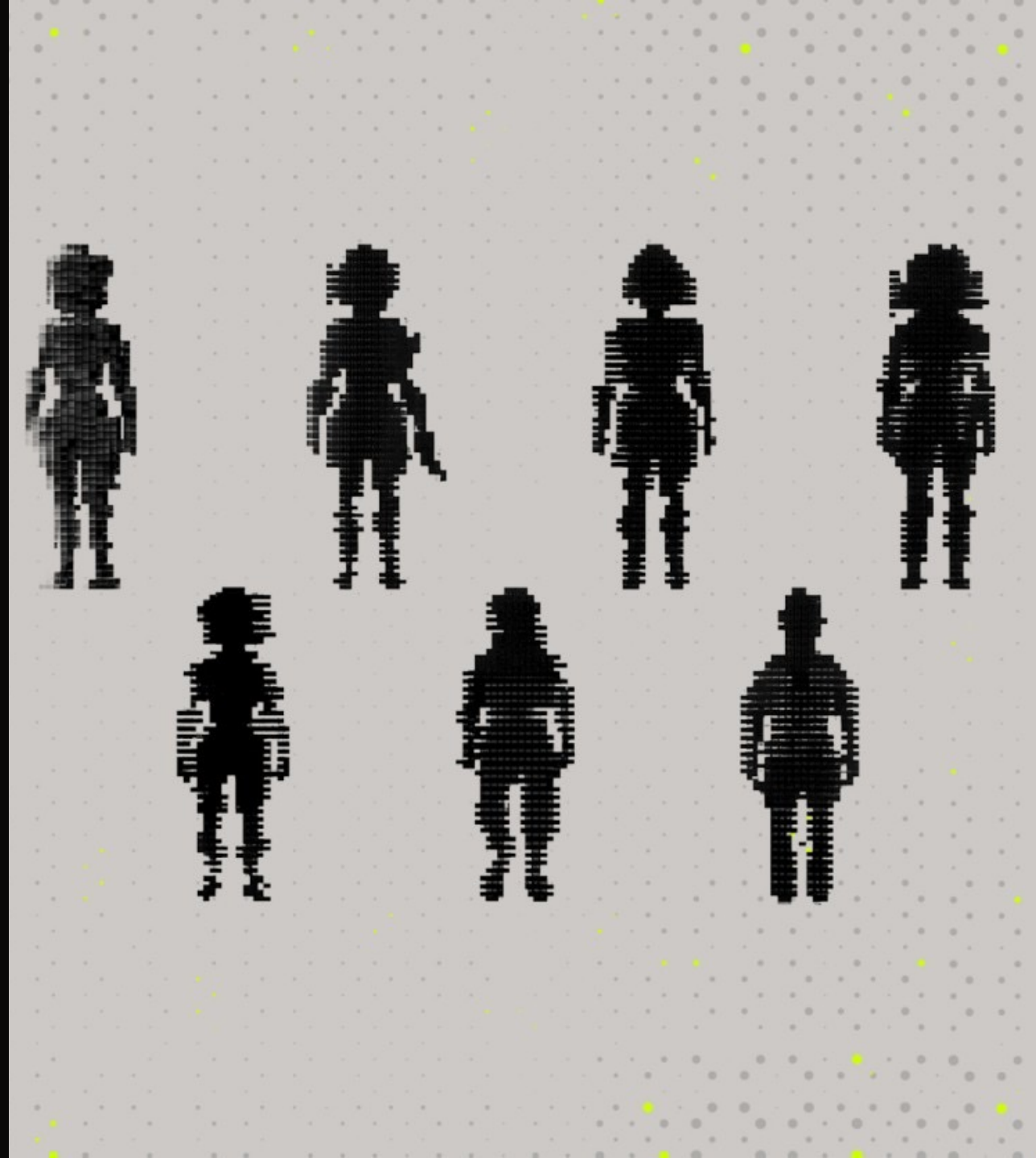
005

Zero Labor Companions

Consumer robots are here to save us, from all our physical and mental labor.

CES is no stranger to robots, and this year the emphasis is on how these robots are helping us outsource our physical chores and mental stresses so that we can spend energy doing all the other things we love.

How can you demonstrate that your brand's presence automates and lessens consumer's mental and physical loads?



Zero Labor Companions
Examples

Switchbot – Onero H1

Onero H1 is a wheeled humanoid robot that uses cameras, arms, and on-device AI to handle chores like making coffee, loading laundry, cleaning, and folding clothes. It's promising an all-in-one solution where housework will never be the same.

Samsung – AI OLED Bot

The AI OLED Bot is a small mobile robot with an OLED "face" that uses AI to guide people around spaces and share information visually. This is another example of a long line of "concepts" without a promised release date. But at least it's cute!

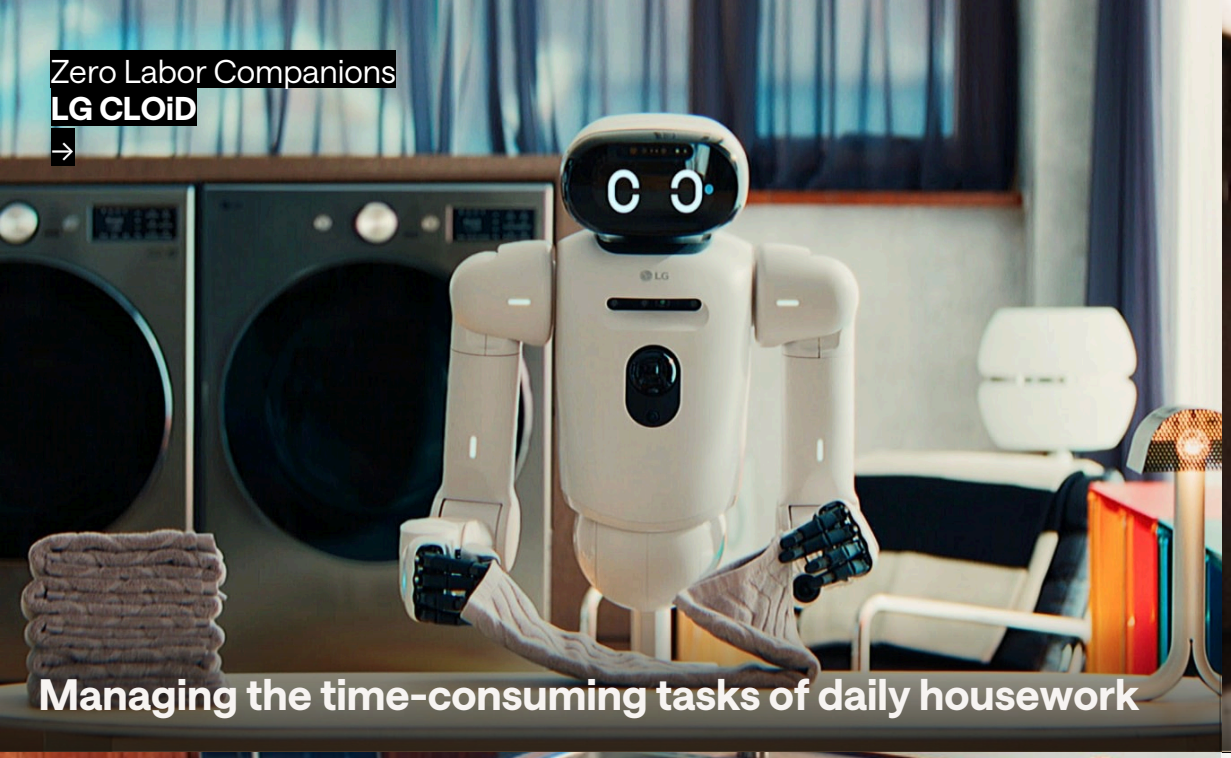
Roborock – Saros Rover

A robotic vacuum that uses a wheel-leg design and AI-powered navigation to climb stairs, handle slopes, and move across complex, uneven floors while it cleans. It is expanding where a robot vacuum can actually work in traditionally no-go zones.

Zero Labor Companions

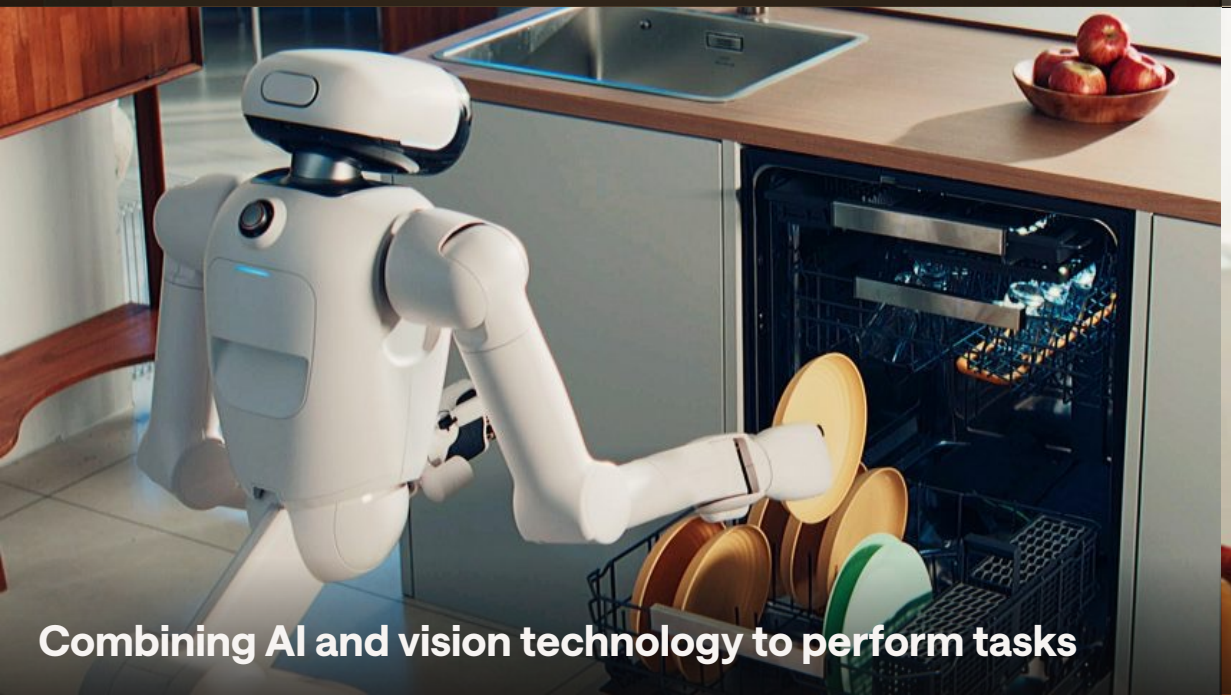
LG CLOiD

→



Managing the time-consuming tasks of daily housework

Connecting seamlessly with LG's ThinQ ecosystem



Combining AI and vision technology to perform tasks

Applying new actuator technology

Zero Labor Companions
What Does This Mean For Your Brand?
→

While not every brand needs to immediately go develop its own robots, it's important to think about what role brands play in this new era of automated help.

As robots become more accessible and put a focus on reducing physical and mental load at home and in our lives, your brand's value shifts from what you sell to how much energy and attention you give back. We should think about how our products, services, and ecosystems plug into this new layer of automated care: What can be delegated, preempted, or done invisibly on a consumer's behalf?

As people start to outsource the ordinary, it will free up time to be spent on more meaningful and important tasks, opening up new opportunities for brands to play an elevated role.

Zero Labor Companions
What If?
→

- What if you provide opensource instructions on how robots can perform tasks related to your product i.e. laundry?
- What if you partnered with a robotics company to co-brand a robot designed to support your product experience?
- What if we found new ways to remove physical and mental labor for customers beyond using robotics?

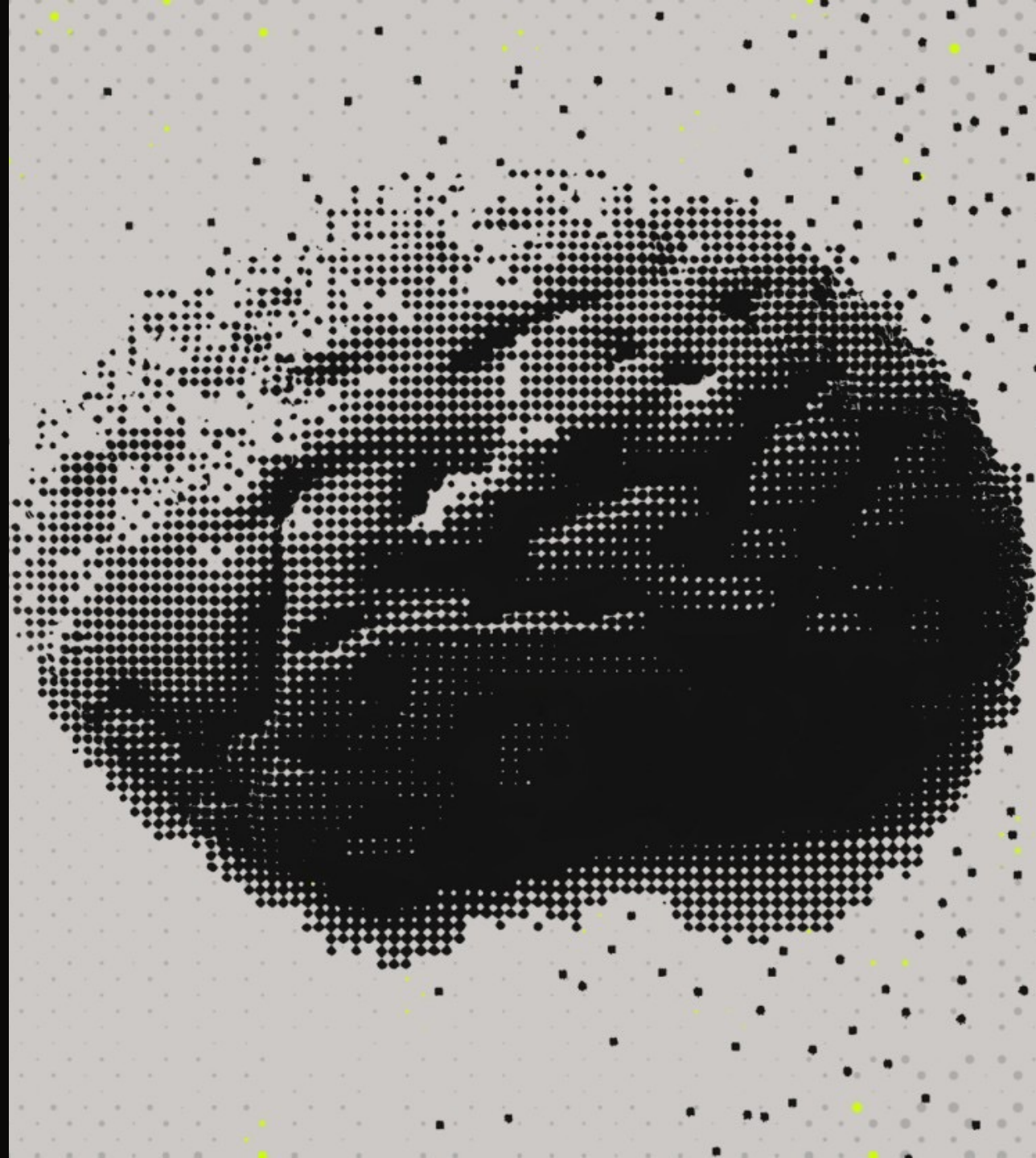
006

Optimized Anatomy

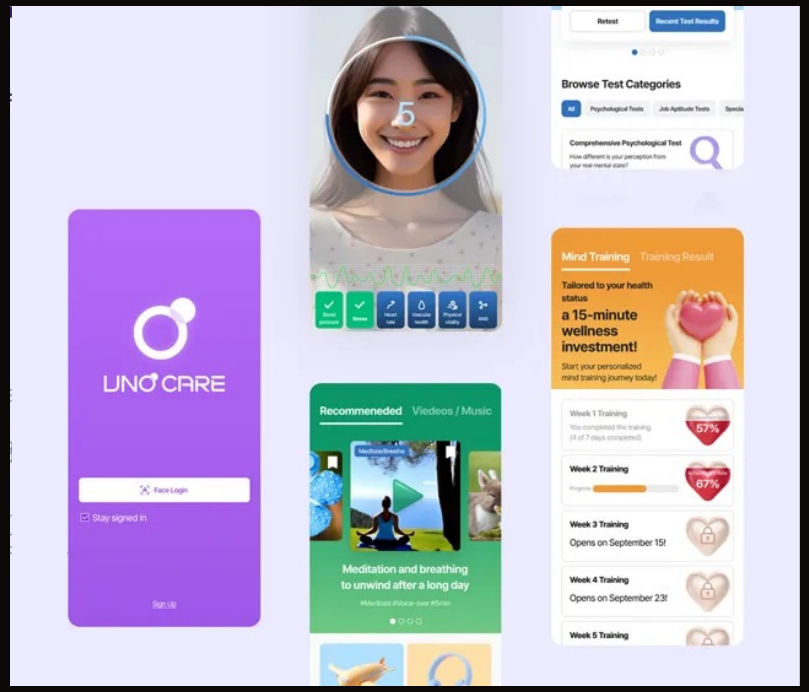
DIY healthcare has shifted from micro-optimization to democratic diagnosis.

Each year we see a variety of democratized, on-demand, and self-administered health solutions at CES. But this year it has exploded in influence and expanded across the body and mind, shifting from simple monitoring to deeper diagnosis. We can now test everything that goes in, goes on inside, or comes out of our bodies.

How can you give consumers more control and access?



Optimized Anatomy
Examples



UNO Care

An AI-powered wellness platform designed to transform mobile health measurement using images and facial scanning. By analyzing facial blood flow signals, it identifies key wellness states such as stress, burnout, fatigue, and anxiety, and then guides users with personalized recovery pathways.

Stress Solution - Healing Beats

A watch and phone companion app that develops customized sounds based on your heart rate (BPM) and electrocardiogram (Waveform). Based on safe and high-quality sound and spatial sound application technology, it can guide users through recovery of health issues with tailored sounds and mediations.

Eli - Health Hormometer

Back again this year is the Hormometer, a real-time cortisol and hormone tester that uses a saliva analyzer. Connected to the user's smartphone, the Hormometer offers health insights ordinarily uncovered through specialist testing. This is just one of many devices that have shifted to include cortisol and stress-related tests.

Optimized Anatomy
Mentoring2 by MENTAGRAPH
→

Link

Optimized Anatomy
What Does This Mean For Your Brand?
→

Self-administered health tests pose both incredible benefits and a concerning dark side. When it comes to the good, they offer people with chronic conditions or particular health risks easier, cheaper and faster access to diagnosis tools for issues before they turn into life-threatening problems. But they also threaten to overwhelm us with data overload and risk people falling into WebMD-induced hypochondria.

Either way, our desire to use technology to peer ever more deeply into our bodies–and change them in the process–cannot be denied. Brands should consider how they can deliver more transparency and control, especially when it comes to their consumers' health, or explore what aspects of their brand can be opened up to prosumers.

Optimized Anatomy
What If?
→

- What if customer experiences could adapt to consumers' stress levels or unique needs in the moment?
- What if your brand took a stand against self-optimization anxiety, opting for a more human and expert led approach?
- What if you democratised access to a previously inaccessible part of your brand or industry?

007

Spatial Lenses

No more escapism, we now choose the lens that we see our world through.

Beyond the glasses form factor, we're now able to create new experiences across a wider range of devices. These lightweight, glasses-like devices replace bulky headsets with socially acceptable, always-ready lenses that make immersion feel like a natural extension of daily life. As spatial content shifts from stepping into a device to just adding layers and lenses you can choose from, mixed reality is slowly becoming a normal state rather than a special event.

In a world where simply looking becomes the interface,
how do you augment your presence?

Spatial Lenses
Examples

MemoMind – Memo Smart Glasses

MemoMind's glasses push a privacy-first, lightweight take on spatial eyewear, stripping out cameras in favor of focused displays, microphones, and comfort. They frame "no cameras" as a feature that makes smartglasses feel safer and more socially acceptable.

Looking Glass - Hololuminescent

Looking glass innovates its lenticular lens array to offer a razor-thin 3D display for retail, signage, and public spaces, with no additional technology or 3D pipelines needed. This begins to signal a shift towards immersive screens and displays that don't need to sit on your face or distract you from reality.

ROG - XReal R1 AR Gaming Glasses

XReal R1 turns AR glasses into a high-definition, low-latency gaming monitor you wear on your face. By packing a 240Hz micro-OLED display, plug-and-play support across devices, and Bose-tuned audio into a lightweight frame, it makes Spatial Lenses the most powerful screen in the room without needing to sit on a desk.

Spatial Lenses

Meta Ray-Ban Display

→

Link

Spatial Lenses
What Does This Mean For Your Brand?
→

Spatial content is evolving beyond the headset. Glasses and other immersive lenses are turning the world itself into the canvas, where people choose the world they see instead of escaping it.

As our vision becomes an interface, presence is no longer just about screens and feeds, but how your brand appears in line of sight, in motion, and in various contexts.

Brands should think about how to design for layered reality: subtle overlays, useful hints, ambient storytelling and utilities that sit on top of the everyday without overwhelming it. The competitive edge will come from knowing when to show up in someone's field of view and when to gracefully disappear.

Spatial Lenses
What If?
→

- What if your brand wasn't experienced via screens, but through the tiny annotations that sit beside real life objects in someone's field of view?
- What if Spatial Lenses helped your brand show up only when needed, instead of being pushed onto them?
- What if store visits unlocked an optional spatial layer that was filled with immersive storytelling?

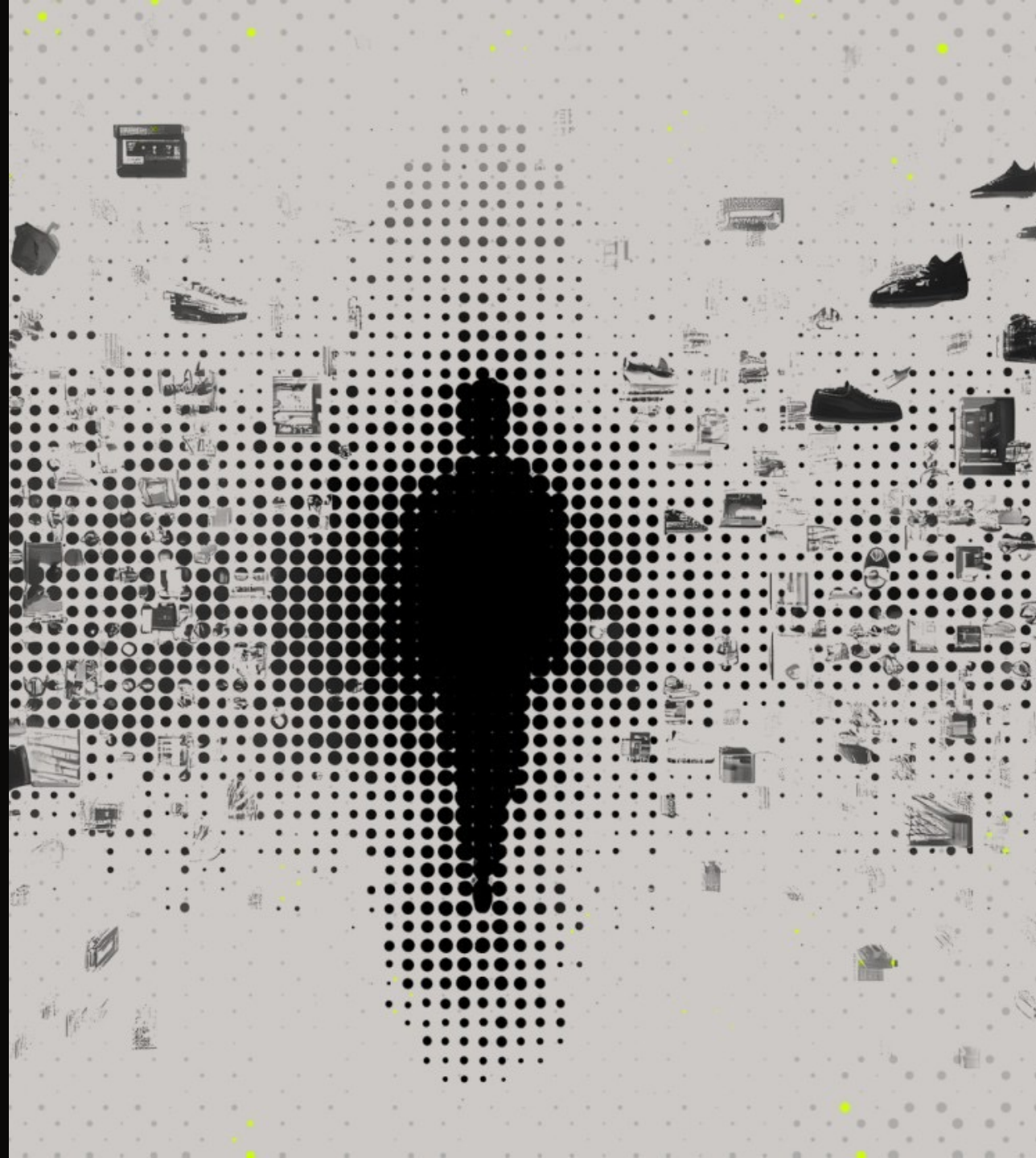
008

Playful Tchotchkes

Minimalist design sucked the joy out of products and experiences.

After a decade of minimalist design rounding the corners of every product and shaving the friction from every corner of the internet, we've seen a push back to more playful, fun, and nonsensical design. Consumers are craving new form factors that are filled with energy and joy.

Are you ready to embrace good friction and distinctive design to cut through?



Playful Tchotchkes
Examples

Yukai Engineering - Baby Fufu

Every year at CES, we wait with bated breath to see what Yukai Engineering is up to, and they never disappoint with wholesome and nonsensical gadgets built to solve ultra-specific problems. This year, they dropped a cuddly toy designed to cool kids safely.

Mind with Heart Robotics - An'An

An'An is a baby panda robot that helps seniors with medical and emotional support by combining advanced robotics with a heartwarming design. Powered by an intelligent "AI Brain," the panda can understand and respond to user interactions, adapting its personality to suit the owner's preferences.

Lollipop Star

Have you ever wanted a lollipop that vibrates your skull to play your favorite tracks? Me too. Lollipop Star plays music while it's in your mouth by using bone conduction (sound vibrations that go through your skull's bones to your inner ear). Each flavor is paired to match an artist's vibe, creating a truly multisensory experience.

Immersive Pet Raising

Experience the joy of growth.

Feed, care, and watch your pet evolve alongside you in real-time.

Limitless Customization

Your style, your rules.

Mix and match interchangeable shells and outfits to reflect your unique aesthetic.

Independent Adventures

Your pet has a life of its own.

It travels virtually and brings back stories while you're busy.

Link

MBTI Personality & AI Memory

An AI that learns from you.

It builds a unique personality profile and recalls your history together.

Playful Tchotchkes
What Does This Mean For Your Brand?
→

It’s easy to laugh at these examples and dismiss them as silly little dongles, but they reveal a deeper learning. People want more joyful moments in their lives, even if they're fleeting.

Our #1 job is make people feel something and create meaningful distinction in the minds and hearts of consumers. So, we must look for moments of heightened joy and memorability (think McDonald’s Happy Meal) to truly cut through in a saturated media and homogenized experience landscape.

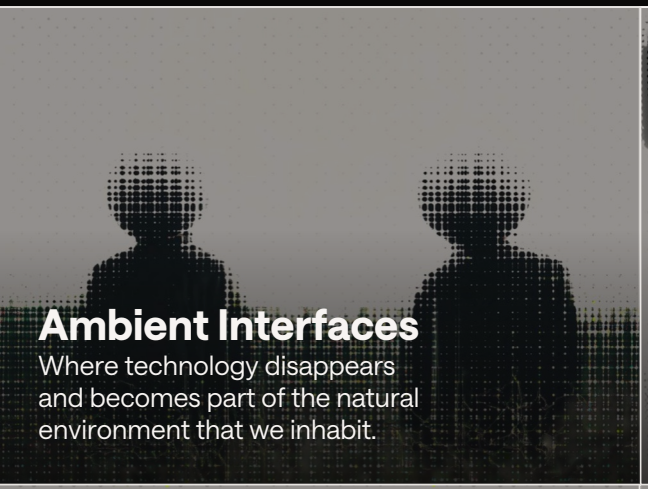
While the examples lean towards the physical, we can deploy these tactics across digital experiences too. This shift serves as a good reminder to have more fun and make experiences great again.

Playful Tchotchkes
What If?
→

- What if your brand character could come to life in new dimensions and play a bigger role in delivering brand messages?
- What if your next product became a status symbol worthy of lining up for?
- What if you experimented with new form factors for your product? How can you distill its essence into a new medium?

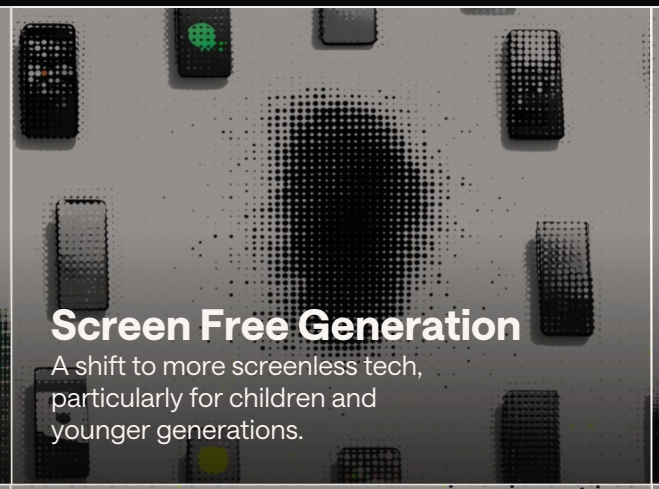
CES 2026

Summary: Eight Emerging Shifts



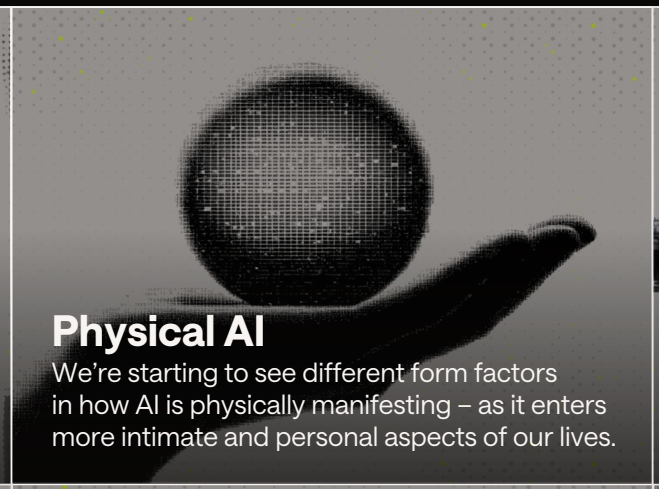
Ambient Interfaces

Where technology disappears and becomes part of the natural environment that we inhabit.



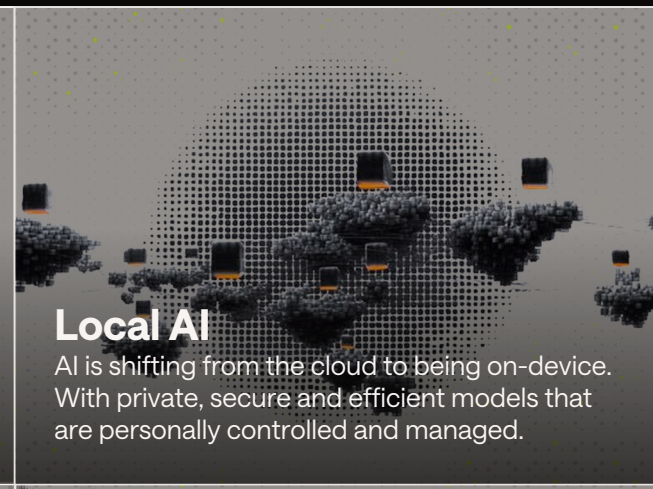
Screen Free Generation

A shift to more screenless tech, particularly for children and younger generations.



Physical AI

We're starting to see different form factors in how AI is physically manifesting – as it enters more intimate and personal aspects of our lives.



Local AI

AI is shifting from the cloud to being on-device. With private, secure and efficient models that are personally controlled and managed.

Zero Labor Companions

We're seeing the democratization of consumer robotics with a focus on minimizing our physical and mental load at home.

Optimized Anatomy

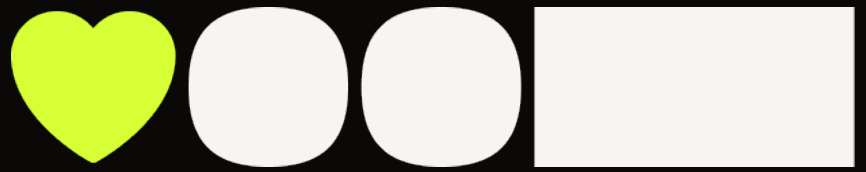
Healthcare has shifted from micro-optimization to democratic care. We can now test everything that goes in, goes on, or comes out of our bodies.

Spatial Lenses

We can now choose the lens we see our world through. Lightweight lenses have become a socially acceptable extension of daily life.

Playful Tchotchkes

A welcome shift towards more playful, fun, and nonsensical design. People are craving new form factors that are filled with energy and joy.



LET'S CONNECT →

US

US@DOTDOTDASH.COM

EU

EU@DOTDOTDASH.COM

New Business

BUSINESS@DOTDOTDASH.COM

Public Relations

PRESS@DOTDOTDASH.COM

Talent

CREATE@DOTDOTDASH.COM