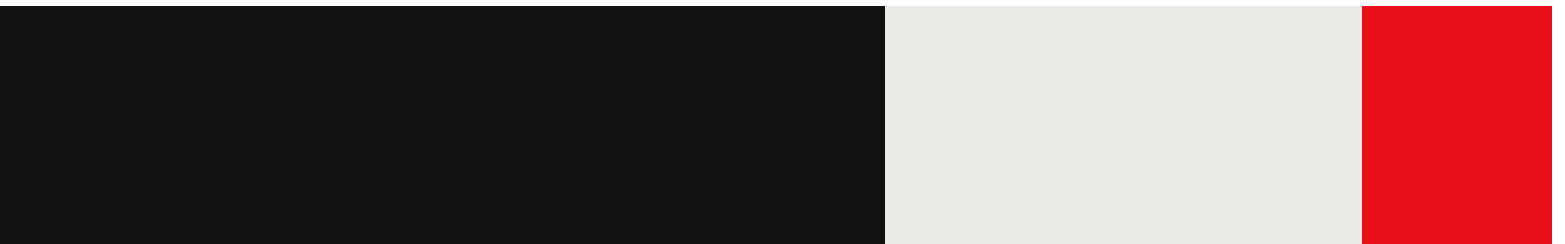


# The Weekly Listen: To AI or not to AI, social media warning labels, and how people want ads to make them feel

Audio



On today's podcast episode, we discuss the potential of an anti-AI movement, what the future of social media warning labels looks like, where folks will be searching for things in a few years, the feelings people want ads to conjure up, the US cities with the highest rents, and more. Tune into the discussion with analysts Evelyn Mitchell-Wolf and Max Willens, and vice president of Briefings Stephanie Taglianetti.

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Episode Transcript:

Marcus Johnson:

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Hello, everyone, and thanks for hanging out with us for the Behind the Numbers Weekly Listen, an eMarketer podcast Made possible by Roundel. This is the Friday show that is back in New York, baby.

Stephanie Taglianetti:

I can't believe you didn't tell anyone that you were coming to the office.

Marcus Johnson:

I did return in secret. For many reasons.

Stephanie Taglianetti:

This is ridiculous.

Marcus Johnson:

Yeah, I have to leave tomorrow. I have to leave as soon as possible. I don't know why I came back.

Stephanie Taglianetti:

Unreal.

Marcus Johnson:

I'm your host, Marcus Johnson. In today's show, to AI or not to AI, warning labels on social media platforms, can you replace Google with Reddit, how do people want ads to make them feel, and what are the US cities with the highest rents? You know the answer. No one will be surprised.

Joining me for this episode, we have three people. Let's meet them. Let's start with two of our senior analysts. They cover digital advertising and media for us. Based in different places, one of them is in Virginia. It's Evelyn Mitchell-Wolf.

Evelyn Mitchell-Wolf:

Howdy, everyone.

Marcus Johnson:

Hello there. The other is in Philly, and his name's Max Willens.

Max Willens:

Yo.

Marcus Johnson:

Hey, chap. And we also have our vice president of everything briefings. Now, she's based in New Jersey, and we call her Stephanie Taglianetti.

Stephanie Taglianetti:

Cheers, mate.

Marcus Johnson:

Hello there. That's why I didn't come into the office, because I didn't want to hear that in person. What we have in store for you, we have story of the week, we move to a game in the middle, and we end with some random trivia. Let's get on with it. We start, of course, with the story of the week. To AI or not to AI. Clever Hamlet reference.

Stephanie Taglianetti:

Was it?

Marcus Johnson:

Not my best work. In an Atlantic piece, Brian Merchant writes that as soon as Apple announced its plans to inject gen AI into the iPhone, it was as good as official. The tech is now all but unavoidable. He explains that AI will soon lurk on most of the world's smartphones. AI has already colonized web search, appearing in Google and Bing, and an \$80 billion startup called OpenAI has ChatGPT, which feels like it's already everywhere. However, for a growing number of consumers, that's a problem, and businesses and creators see a new opportunity in the anti-AI movement.

One of the examples he points to is personal care company, Dove, in April saying one of the biggest threats to the representation of real beauty is AI. They're celebrating their 20th anniversary of its Campaign for Real Beauty, a marketing effort to showcase all women with

no digital retouching, marking the occasion by committing to never use AI to represent real women. Evelyn, I'll come to you first. How much of an anti-AI movement do you expect to see?

Evelyn Mitchell-Wolf:

Well, I think there will certainly be one. Obviously, there already is one. And if I lean into the conspiracy theorist in me, I could see the master plan being something along the lines of trying to create an anti-AI movement, so foisting AI onto consumers so that there is a shift in quality expectations. So if there continue to be AI-powered products that disappoint or, even worse, are straight up disastrous, talking to you AI Overviews, then consumers will come to expect that AI-powered tools and services will be inferior. And in that scenario, consumers with the financial means to do so will pay for AI-free or AI-transparent tools or services. And were that to be the case, I would expect something similar to the organic movement, that people that can afford it and feel compelled to buy organic produce and organic whatever else will do that. And it's a meaningful market, but many people can't afford to buy organic or exclusively organic even if they would prefer to do that.

The difference with this movement, I think, would be that more of that latter group will know that AI-powered tools and services are inferior because it's not like a long-term trade-off the way organic is. The idea behind the organic movement is that it's healthier in the long-term for individuals for the environment. We have all experienced the sheer misery of interacting with a really bad automated customer support system. And so because people can immediately understand the inferior outcome, I would imagine the AI-free movement might be bigger than the organic movement, but similar in a lot of ways.

Marcus Johnson:

You're saying the same way that we pay to avoid ads, people would pay to avoid AI.

Evelyn Mitchell-Wolf:

Yeah. I mean, I can see that happening. For certain use cases, I think there's a threshold at which that would make sense.

Marcus Johnson:

Because in the piece, they talk about human-made labels popping up everywhere. And there's a bunch of companies, brands, and creatives explicitly advertising their products and services

as human-made. So that says think organic food labels that rose to prominence years ago but for digital labor, and you'd have something that said certified a hundred percent AI-free.

Max Willens:

I could see that absolutely taking off, and it's response to a very clear market signal. In preparing for this episode, I was looking at a KPMG survey that they did at the beginning of 2024 which said that over 80% of the respondents said that they expected that anything that was made with gen AI to be very clearly unambiguously labeled, and I just think that we're absolutely heading in that direction. And I think that expectation is a major reason why companies like OpenAI are racing to build ubiquity as fast as humanly possible. Because if it seems like something that is completely inescapable, it seems like a harder thing to fight or protest against.

And I think a lot of people struggle in the face of ubiquity and convenience, frankly. I mean, I think a lot of people are opposed to child slavery and prison labor and deforestation and stealing water from native communities, but a lot of the people that are opposed to those things buy things from Nestle, buy things from Mondelez, buy things from Trader Joe's, and it's just because the prospect of removing all that stuff from your life is very difficult.

But you can also see just in terms of anti-gen AI... I was really struck by a headline I saw in the Guardian about a week ago, two weeks ago about a movie called The Last Screenwriter, which is supposed to have its London premiere at an art house cinema there. But the novelty of that movie is that the script was written entirely by ChatGPT. And when people got wind of that, the theater was so deluged with people protesting and complaining about it that they said, "Sorry, just kidding. We're not going to premiere the movie here."

Marcus Johnson:

Wow.

Evelyn Mitchell-Wolf:

Whoa.

Marcus Johnson:

Huh. So let me throw this at you guys. I mean, is there a world where... Because I wonder if the answer is going to be letting people choose how much AI they want to consume, where you

have ingredients and calorie counts and it's like, "Here it is. Here's what's in it. You can choose to consume it or not." And driverless cars, they have the six levels of vehicle autonomy. It goes from zero, which is no driverless capabilities, to five, which is fully autonomous. And I wonder if there could be a similar scale for AI so folks could decide whether to interact with it or not.

So you could have zero to five, same as autonomous driving. But level zero could be none. Level one could be gen AI, which sounds like a person. Level three... You have number two, which is something. And then level three, AGI, or artificial general intelligence, will reason like a person. That's expected in the next couple of years according to a lot of folks. That could be level three. And then level five would be sentient AI. That thinks like a person. And so the title of Mr. Merchant's Atlantic article was titled, Excuse Me, Is There AI in That? And I wonder if people will be asking that, and then they can choose for themselves.

Stephanie Taglianetti:

Yeah, I think not being transparent about how much AI is in that is actually the problem. I don't know how large the not made by AI movement will be. I think that people will generally feel comfortable knowing there's a degree, but it's a matter of how big is that degree of touched by AI.

It's something we have to think about in our own content as well, right, because the human-made element is something that our clients are relying on us for with our own research. And we have to be transparent about how much AI we're using, if any, and exactly what we're letting ChatGPT touch. And it's usually some low magnitude parts of our work process because of how important that human touch is in the work that we do. So that's going to be key for companies.

Marcus Johnson:

Is this episode really us? You'll never know. It is, because I asked for ChatGPT to do it and Stuart told me no.

There are a few other examples here. So Dove is one with their promise to never use AI to represent real women. Discover is another, which is mentioned in the piece. They have a commercial with a clear anti-AI slant, Jennifer Coolidge telling a call center employee, "You robots are sounding more human every day," to which the human worker replies, "At Discover, everyone can talk to a human representative."



And then there was another example here. Cara, a new social media and portfolio app for artists, prohibiting users showcasing AI-generated artwork in its terms of use. Users are up since Meta said it's inhaling all public posts into its AI training data. Cara, for a moment, was fifth in the iOS social network charts, going from 40,000 users to close to 1 million in a few days. So maybe other services will pop up as they offer or position themselves as more anti-AI.

Max Willens:

And they're going to have to do it aggressively, too, because a lot of... Once people get stuck on the idea that something is produced by gen AI or is using human creativity and harvesting it for general purposes, it's very hard to dislodge that idea. So Adobe has issued multiple press releases this month about their terms of service for Photoshop because they have basically had to say over and over again as loud as they possibly can, "We're not stealing the stuff you make in Photoshop and using it to train Firefly. We swear we are not doing that." But there are enough people within the creative community that are livid at this possibility. And so I think that it behooves brands to be very vocal and very proactive in terms of explaining how what they offer intersects with the technology.

Marcus Johnson:

Their position. Yeah, that's a great point. All right, folks. That's all we've got time for the story of the week. Let's move to our game for the week. Today's game, the super duper game.

Evelyn Mitchell-Wolf:

Wow.

Stephanie Taglianetti:

Wow. Has Suzy been on this one yet?

Marcus Johnson:

Don't do that after I say it, because then it doesn't... It's already hard enough to sell this.

Stephanie Taglianetti:

Woo-hoo. Is that better?

Marcus Johnson:

No, it's too late. Suzy has been on this one, yeah, unfortunately. How does it work? We have three rounds, the random scale, then it's slice of pie, and we end with fill in the blank. The better the answers, the more points you get. That's how we play.

Evelyn Mitchell-Wolf:

Oh, boy.

Marcus Johnson:

So round one, Evelyn will kick things off for us for the random scale. Folks have to tell me about the chances of something happening using the random scale. One of America's most senior health officials, Surgeon General Vivek Murthy, has called on Congress to impose smoking-style warning labels on social media platforms, writes it's Tom Gerken of BBC. So when people visit these apps, there's a warning message saying they're associated with mental health harms for adolescents so they regularly remind parents and adolescents that social media has not been proved safe, Dr. Murthy says. This is coming after he published a public health advisory in 2023 which found a link between teenage social media use and poor mental health. However, he does accept that there is no academic consensus on the impact of these platforms, calling for more research.

The random scale today. So the question is, what does the future of social media warning labels look like? Your possible choices are from, lowest to highest, no way this happens, then you've got maybe this happens in five years' time, then you've got this will get implemented within five years but won't affect behavior an ounce, and then you have this will happen within five years and will affect people's behavior. So you have no chance, later, will but won't be a big deal, and will but will be a big deal. Evelyn.

Evelyn Mitchell-Wolf:

So I think this will happen probably within five years, but maybe longer because the platforms will fight any legal mandate tooth and nail, and the courts are slow. But when it does happen, I do think it will affect people's behavior somewhat. There's a lot we don't know for sure about how social media use affects young people's mental health and socialization. Like you mentioned, the scientific evidence is not ironclad. I do think, though, that it will be easier to pass legislation around warning labels because they simply bring attention to an issue and don't compel any sort of action on any parent or child's part unlike laws that ban social media outright for kids under a certain age.

I also think as more millennial parents and Gen Zers become parents, there will be more people who intentionally raise their kids in social media-free or social media-light environments with or without warning labels. So in summary, I think there will be a behavior shift, and warning labels will contribute in some way.

Marcus Johnson:

Very good. Stephanie?

Stephanie Taglianetti:

I was also in the maybe will happen in the next five years camp, but I would say I don't see it being a major deterrent actually if it were to be impacted. I think of it the same way that studies have shown warnings on e-cigarettes have had negligible impact on deterring behavior from usage. And it's interesting because these sorts of warning labels are seen as credible in some scenarios and then not in others. And so I would think people would hold the same stance as this not being very credible in the case of social media and that actually not having an impact on their behavior.

Marcus Johnson:

The pushback here... So Mr. Gerken of the BBC noting the warning labels were first added to cigarette packaging. I mean, you said e-cigarettes, but this in 1966 after the surgeon general at the time published a report linking tobacco to lung cancer. David Hammond, professor in the School of Public Health Sciences at Canada's University of Waterloo says there is strong evidence that tobacco warnings, tobacco not the e-cigarettes you're talking about, tobacco warnings work since labels reduce tobacco use by reaching the right audience at the right moment, the moment of consumption.

However, Caroline Mimbs Nyce of the Atlantic was questioning, what's a warning label going to look like? I think it's a really interesting question. Is it something that shows up only once in the footer when you create an account? Is it something that's a persistent pop-up that users have to click off every time they open the app? Is it a banner that never goes away? And Ms. Nyce thinks it's likely they land on a hedged language since there is no proven causation, only correlation. An example would be this app may have a negative effect on teens' mental health depending on how it's used. Max, what do you think?

Max Willens:

I love... So for all the stuff that you guys have laid out, I am in the maybe this happens in five years camp, but largely because I think that the conversation around this will largely get subsumed by the momentum gathering behind efforts to essentially ban young people from having smartphones or having them in schools. So it's very hard to enjoy or get addicted to or overuse TikTok, Snapchat, Instagram, or anything if you can't look at them while you're in school and have to do it while you're at home. And the momentum behind this stuff has picked up considerably.

So Spain recently banned smartphone use in schools until high school. France has a law in the books that bans smartphones for anyone under the age of 15. Gavin Newsom, who has the ability to sway lots of national policy as governor of California, recently floated the idea of banning smartphones inside of schools. And I think it's possible that rather than discuss the merits of social media and deterring young people from using it, we just skip right to the devices that empower the consumption in the first place.

Marcus Johnson:

Interesting. Yeah, legislation does often start with the kids. The problem is it doesn't really go much further a lot of the time. Aaron Mackey of the Electronic Frontier Foundation was saying it is odd that we use children as a wedge to address the problem. He's citing COPPA, Children's Online Privacy Protection Act in 1998, regulating how sites collect data on under 13-year-olds. However, the US still doesn't have comprehensive federal data privacy law. So it's a good place to start, but hopefully that's not the finishing line as well as the starting blocks.

Final point from me. So research does suggest that social media is good and bad. It depends what study you read, depending on whether you find a link or not. The good, research from Cardiff University said some children benefit from spending time speaking to friends they already know offline. Sorry, online.

Evelyn Mitchell-Wolf:

Which I think is different fundamentally, as using it as a conversation conduit like talking on the phone used to be.

Marcus Johnson:

Yes. Exactly. Yeah.

Evelyn Mitchell-Wolf:

It's different than doom scrolling, which I think we're probably all guilty of at some point.

Marcus Johnson:

Yeah, it's saying, yeah, if you have these friends, then basically your interactions with them is through social media as opposed to text messaging what used to be. The bad, research from Education Policy Institute and The Prince's Trust suggesting teenagers mental health is being damaged by heavy social media use, but they also say it's not just that. It's lack of exercise exacerbated by the pandemic. It's a lot of different things.

But there is some research suggesting that there is a, whatever camp you fall into, there is consensus about the impacts here. So we've got some numbers from CivicScience showing adults who think social media is harmful for kids and teens, 89% of all people think it's somewhat to extremely harmful. That rises to 95% when you're looking at over 55-year-olds and 82% when you're looking at the 18 to 24-year-olds, the younger people. Most of them think it's bad for kids. So most do.

Evelyn Mitchell-Wolf:

I mean, I think that's important also because the scientific evidence of harm is important when you're trying to legally mandate something like a warning label. But also, public perception of something is really important for passing legislation. So just the fact that so many people think that it's harmful to kids, to me, speaks volumes to whether or not there will be a law passed in the next five years. So.

Marcus Johnson:

Yeah, yeah. It's like what we're looking at with TikTok getting banned.

Evelyn Mitchell-Wolf:

Yeah.

Marcus Johnson:

The public conscience definitely matters. All right, let's move to round two. We're playing slice of pie. Folks can choose up to three reasons why something is happening, attributing shares to each. We're talking about replacing Google with Reddit, maybe. Ann-Marie Alcántara of the

Journal tried to do that this week, tried to replace Google with Reddit. Not this week. She tried to do it for a week. She might've done it this week. I'd. She tried to do it for a week.

Evelyn Mitchell-Wolf:

Probably not.

Stephanie Taglianetti:

Probably not this week. Yeah.

Evelyn Mitchell-Wolf:

No.

Marcus Johnson:

I don't know exactly when she did it. Yeah. Maybe it finished [inaudible 00:20:34]. I don't really know the details, but she wrote an article about it. She was writing, "The decision to Reddit is happening because many people are unhappy with their Google results, because ranking high on Google has led companies to game the system, clogging results with unhelpful links, misleading ads, a barrage of sponsored shopping links, and dicey websites claiming to be experts when they are not." And so, Ms. Alcántara explains, some folks are turning to ChatGPT for answers. Others are now adding Reddit to the end of any Google search string to surface comments by real people.

We're playing slice of pie. We'll start with Stephanie. So where do you think, Stephanie, folks are going to be searching for things in two years' time? If they don't go maybe straight from Google or go to Reddit, what's the search landscape going to look like in terms of where people are looking for things in two years' time?

Stephanie Taglianetti:

Well, we know that younger people are more likely to keep going to social channels for search, but Google is and still will be the most dominant search platform, especially when you start to think of the scenarios where it does or does not make sense to go to a social channel for search. Social is really more prevalent for things like beauty products, recipes, looking up brands and their products, but you're not going to go there for something like financial information or medical advice. You might, but it's not going to be your go-to for that. So I did

a 55% on Google, 20% into TikTok and 20% into YouTube, and the remaining five can go to things like Instagram, Reddit, and Amazon.

Marcus Johnson:

Okay. Very nice. Max, what does your pie chart look like of where folks would be searching for things in a couple of years?

Max Willens:

I was originally going to say that it's going to depend on what a person's interests are. I currently use about eight things for search depending on what it is that I'm hunting for. But I realized that I would get in trouble for saying that, so I'll say 50% Google, 20% YouTube, 20% Instagram, and 10% other in which you can squeeze a ton of different things, whether that's Perplexity, whether that's Reddit, whether that's Tumblr, whether that's publisher-specific apps. I just default when I'm trying to remember how to make something, I just pull up either the Food Network or the New York Times' cooking app. And that, to me, is a kind of search. So yeah, that's my breakdown.

Marcus Johnson:

That's a fascinating point. I mean, will all the number of places that people look shrink? Will that get consolidated? That's a really interesting thought too. Yeah. Evelyn, how about you? What's your pie chart of where people are going to be searching for things by 2026?

Evelyn Mitchell-Wolf:

Okay, so assuming that the DOJ does not win its antitrust case against Google search and TikTok is not banned, my pie is Google 60%, other 20%, YouTube 12%, and Amazon 8%.

Marcus Johnson:

Interesting.

Evelyn Mitchell-Wolf:

And in defense of my very large allocation to other, I mean Stephanie and Max, you both said similar things where search is more diverse now than it has ever been. And yet, Google's status as the default search engine across major browsers and devices gives it a edge over everyone else. There's friction. And if you're going to go anywhere else other than Google, because it is

the default search engine across major browsers and devices, that's the front line of defense, and going anywhere else adds a layer of additional time and effort on the user's part. So as long as it maintains that default status, Google's going to stay on top. But everywhere else is going to eat away at those small bits, and that's what I think it'll look like.

Marcus Johnson:

That's a great pie. I mean, I am curious to know if it's going to be a slow but steady or all at once as well in terms of the shift, because there are some numbers from this piece. Reddit, they were saying small, but visits are growing. Worldwide, desktop and mobile visits to Reddit in May, in one month, grew 40, four zero, percent year on year to over 2 billion according to Similarweb whilst Google's visits fell two points. So Google fell two, Reddit grew 40. Now, Google does have 36 times the number of visits as Reddit, but that's incredible growth. And something like ChatGPT, we didn't know it was a thing until 18 months ago, and so I wonder how quickly this shift will happen if it does. Maybe Google is on top still in a couple of years.

All right, folks. Real close heading into the final round. Today's final round, round three, we kick off with Max's. It's fill in the blank, where folks have to do just that. People want ads that make them laugh, according to new research from marketing consultancy, Spikes and YouGov. Humor is a more prominent factor than purpose, surprise, or novelty when looking at the most popular commercials in modern history, writes Paul Hiebert of Adweek. And so the 2024 Cannes Lions International Festival of Creativity that just happened, they just added humor as a new category, which I was shocked to learn didn't already exist, to be perfectly honest.

Stephanie Taglianetti:

Yeah. Seriously.

Marcus Johnson:

Max, fill in the blank. The biggest takeaway from this article about people wanting ads to make them laugh, what is it?

Max Willens:

So it did remind me. It's not specifically in the article, but it reminded me of this Marilyn Monroe quote which is fun when you imagine her saying it, but is unbearably creepy if someone like me says it.



Marcus Johnson:

Oh, good. I'm glad this is a video podcast.

Stephanie Taglianetti:

Which is about to happen.

Marcus Johnson:

And action.

Max Willens:

Yeah. Start your cameras. If you can make a girl laugh, you can make her do anything. And I think about all the time, because when I think back on the ads that I remember and that are closest to the front of my brain, they're all funny.

One thing that struck me about that article, which I thought was curious, is the idea that advertisers have moved away from humor as kind of a lever that they pull because I feel like that's not really true. I mean, I guess what I would argue is that instead of going for jokes, what they have done instead is tilt into this absurdist lane where they're trying to, I guess, juice their recall scores by making ads that are really more bizarre than funny. But I think that you could argue that the germ of the idea is that they're meant to be funny.

Stephanie Taglianetti:

Right.

Max Willens:

But yeah, just imagine the Marilyn Monroe quote, but imagine her saying it.

Marcus Johnson:

Yeah, you were right. Great quote, definitely the wrong messenger. Let's go with Evelyn.

Evelyn Mitchell-Wolf:

I have another takeaway that's not explicitly stated in the article. But for me, the biggest takeaway was that humor is hard. I don't think it should be news to any brand that funny ads are memorable. I mean, it's always good to have data to back up commonly held beliefs, but

we all see our fair share of ads, and identifying a good ad is a gut reaction. An ad doesn't have to be memorable to do its job, but the memorable ones aren't really hard to spot, and humor is a big part of that. We know truly funny ads are memorable. They're also really hard to get right because authenticity is at play, and large groups of people don't always share a sense of humor. And so I don't think we're emerging from a dark age where advertisers thought humor was less effective so they used it less. I think that maybe they're just more confident that they can get it right.

Marcus Johnson:

Yeah, good points. Stephanie.

Stephanie Taglianetti:

Yeah, very similar to Evelyn. Humor is hard. It's not going to work for everyone. Think about a pharmaceutical company. You might have a hard time making a comedic ad about medications, but I guess there's ways to make light of things like psoriasis or ED. But just saying be funny is not the most eye-opening or prescriptive takeaway, I think.

Marcus Johnson:

Mm-hmm. Yeah. Great points, folks. Very good points indeed. That is all we have time for, for the game of the week. Count the scores/pretend to make them up. This week's winner. Evelyn is this week's winner of the game of the week. Eight points.

Evelyn Mitchell-Wolf:

Thank you, thank you.

Marcus Johnson:

Max, seven. Stephanie, six.

Evelyn Mitchell-Wolf:

That was really great selecting, Marcus. I feel like that was a really good conversation.

Marcus Johnson:

Thank you. I was thinking that. I nailed it this week.

Max Willens:

[Inaudible 00:29:00].

Evelyn Mitchell-Wolf:

It's a good one. Yeah.

Stephanie Taglianetti:

I was like, "I was thinking I nailed it."

Marcus Johnson:

I did, didn't I? I crushed this week. No, it's been a-

Stephanie Taglianetti:

We haven't gotten through Dinner Party Data yet.

Marcus Johnson:

That's true. Yeah, it could go sideways.

Stephanie Taglianetti:

It could go all the way down from here.

Marcus Johnson:

Thanks for that. You get the-

Stephanie Taglianetti:

Mm-hmm. Just keeping it honest.

Marcus Johnson:

What was that?

Stephanie Taglianetti:

Just keeping it honest.

Marcus Johnson:

Perfect. But you get the championship belt, Evelyn, and you of course get the last word.

Evelyn Mitchell-Wolf:

Oh, oh. I haven't done one of these in a long time. I forgot about it. Can I just take the time that would be the last word and put it onto my Dinner Party Data?

Marcus Johnson:

No.

Evelyn Mitchell-Wolf:

Ah, dang.

Marcus Johnson:

No, you can. Yeah, no, you can. We'll save the seconds. You get 20 extra seconds.

Evelyn Mitchell-Wolf:

Heck yes. Okay.

Marcus Johnson:

Okay.

Evelyn Mitchell-Wolf:

It's a good one too. So.

Marcus Johnson:

Too generous.

Evelyn Mitchell-Wolf:

Just let me know when I can start.

Marcus Johnson:

Okay. [inaudible 00:29:48]. I'll introduce Dinner Party Data. Let's go.

Evelyn Mitchell-Wolf:

It's...

Marcus Johnson:

This is the part of the show where we tell you about the most interesting thing we've learned this week. Evelyn's first because she won. She gets 20 bonus seconds. Go.

Evelyn Mitchell-Wolf:

Okay, so this is the last-

Marcus Johnson:

This better be amazing. You talked this up a lot.

Evelyn Mitchell-Wolf:

Well, okay. Here you go, Marcus.

Max Willens:

You guys are just talking right through for 20 seconds.

Evelyn Mitchell-Wolf:

[inaudible 00:30:14].

Marcus Johnson:

Sorry. [inaudible 00:30:15].

Evelyn Mitchell-Wolf:

No, it starts now.

Marcus Johnson:

You have five seconds left.

Evelyn Mitchell-Wolf:

Okay, so this is the last Weekly Listen of pride month. So first, happy pride to all our listeners that celebrate this month and all year round. And I have some data here. It's actually not something I learned this week. I've been hanging on to it until I got to share it.

Luminate shared this earlier this month. It's on queer representation in the music industry. So year over year, we see queer representation in the music industry increasing. So insert fun confetti here in the video. In 2021, there were 35 solo artists ranked in the top 1,000 who self-identified as LGBTQ+. And so far in 2024, that number has increased to 39. And consumption of these artists similarly increased from 17.9 million album equivalents to 20.8 million units. That's from 2021 to 2023.

Luminate also called out a few artists in particular who are making waves in the music industry, including your favorite artist's favorite artist, Chappell Roan, who has had an explosive summer. In February, she was the 126th most streamed female pop artist in the US. And as of June 4th, 2024, she was number seven, which is absolutely bonkers and so well-deserved. So PSA for all listeners. Go listen to Chappell Roan. If you are struggling to gather the willpower to exercise in this heat, I recommend Super Graphic Ultra Modern Girl because it'll get you hype. There you go.

Marcus Johnson:

Victoria, who-

Max Willens:

Don't play it for your parents.

Evelyn Mitchell-Wolf:

No, don't. Well, that song, I think, is okay. But.

Max Willens:

That one, yes.

Evelyn Mitchell-Wolf:

Yes, some of them are, you know.

Max Willens:

Other ones, no.

Stephanie Taglianetti:

Some of them, yeah. Questionable.

Max Willens:

I heard you like magic.

Marcus Johnson:

I was-

Max Willens:

I got a wand and a rabbit. Fans are like, "What is that?" I'm like, "Oh look, a bird out of the car window there." Isn't that great?

Marcus Johnson:

All right, fine. You nailed it. I doubted you and you crushed it. Well played. All right. Stephanie, you're up.

Stephanie Taglianetti:

I mean, I also prepared some pride month data.

Evelyn Mitchell-Wolf:

Heck yes. That is so good.

Marcus Johnson:

Hello.

Stephanie Taglianetti:

It's different. Because pride month is coming to a close, so I have some relevant stats from a May survey of about 4,000 LGBTQIA+ and ally communities on corporate support during Pride month. 64% of those said that company's efforts are perceived as performative gestures rather than meaningful. 29% believe that rainbow washing is the worst mistake a company can make in celebrating pride. And 34% think that companies aren't actually listening to LGBTQIA perspectives when planning for pride. But they're not all ineffective. Some folks, 30%, said they have seen campaigns they found informative, and 29% even witnessed and empowering ad.

But I wanted to highlight the impact of poor participation during pride month, which can be absolutely detrimental. 32% of LGBTQIA+ individuals said that they've boycotted or stopped supporting a company due to its lack of acknowledgement or celebration in pride. And we saw this happen notoriously with Bud Light last year, how it handled communicating around backlash when a transgender public figure received after she shared a custom beer can sent by Bud Light and their failure to communicate effectively around that controversy. And I did it, I think, in all of my time.

Marcus Johnson:

You ran over. It's good.

Stephanie Taglianetti:

Dang it.

Marcus Johnson:

Everyone does.

Evelyn Mitchell-Wolf:

It's important.

Marcus Johnson:

It is important. That was a good one. I mean-

Stephanie Taglianetti:

I tried to be efficient.

Marcus Johnson:

I am waiting for the campaign that come October says it's pride month, and then someone goes, "Wait, no, isn't that June?" And then someone goes, "Oh, February. It's Pride month." And then someone's like, "Wait, isn't that June?" And then the campaign's basically it's every month.

Evelyn Mitchell-Wolf:

It's every month.



Stephanie Taglianetti:

Yeah, well-

Marcus Johnson:

What are we doing?

Evelyn Mitchell-Wolf:

Well, and there are different pride months based on... in different locations. I figured out apparently my local pride month is in April, and I was like, "That is no." Because then it's like you don't know when you're supposed to look out for the events, and it makes it hard. But yeah, I think it should be pride all year round, for sure.

Marcus Johnson:

Yeah, yeah. All right. Very good. Max, same?

Max Willens:

No, I got a [inaudible 00:34:43].

Marcus Johnson:

Thank goodness, because I don't either and I can't talk about rent if everyone's doing pride. It just looks weird. All right. Go on, Max.

Max Willens:

I have a very food-enthusiastic and food-adventurous child in my house, and they've lately gotten really interested in the idea of eating the stinkiest cheese in the world. And so I thought, "Oh, this is good Dinner Party Data. I'll go and figure out what the stinkiest cheese in the world is." Because it seemed like the kind of thing that... The spiciest thing in the world is measured with capsaicin. It's something that you can literally point to. A chemist can isolate it. And I just figured, "Got to be the same thing for stinkiest cheese."

It turns out you cannot do that. There is no kind of empirical way to measure stinkiness. And so there are a bunch of brands of cheese that would lay claim to it. There's a Scottish cheese called the Minger whose creator would like you to know that theirs the stinkiest. There's a couple French contenders. Époisses and Reblochon are up there. There's Limburger, the

classic. In 2004, a bunch of scientists created an electronic nose, which sounds made up to me, but the electronic nose determined that Vieux Boulogne is the stinkiest. So-

Marcus Johnson:

That's like the Smell Master from Richie Rich.

Max Willens:

There you go. So anyway, I have data that's not data, but go eat some stinky cheese and argue about it with your friends.

Stephanie Taglianetti:

Is raclette-

Evelyn Mitchell-Wolf:

Or your toddler, your small child.

Stephanie Taglianetti:

Is raclette in there? Because have you ever walked past the raclette booth in Bryant Park in Christmastime? Whoop.

Max Willens:

It's-

Stephanie Taglianetti:

Smells like a gymnasium.

Max Willens:

Yeah, it'll knock you back.

Stephanie Taglianetti:

Yep.

Marcus Johnson:

Very good. All right. I got one for you real quick. The US cities with the highest rent according to the Zumper National Rent Index. So what city? There's no prizes for this, okay? It's too painfully obvious. Which city in America?

Max Willens:

It's San Francisco.

Evelyn Mitchell-Wolf:

San Francisco.

Stephanie Taglianetti:

It's San Francisco or-

Marcus Johnson:

Oh, you guys are the worst.

Stephanie Taglianetti:

And then it's New York.

Evelyn Mitchell-Wolf:

And then-

Marcus Johnson:

I lob up a softball and you just swing and a miss.

Evelyn Mitchell-Wolf:

It's LA?

Stephanie Taglianetti:

It's New York or LA.

Marcus Johnson:

Oh my... LA? LA barely made the top 10.

Evelyn Mitchell-Wolf:

Really?

Marcus Johnson:

2024, \$2,300 for DC and Ia. They're both joint ninth. And then I'll just go up. It goes San Diego, Arlington, San Jose. Miami is fifth, Boston fourth. San Francisco is third.

Stephanie Taglianetti:

Ah.

Evelyn Mitchell-Wolf:

Okay.

Max Willens:

Oh.

Marcus Johnson:

That's when you get to \$3,000 a month. Jersey City in Jersey is \$3,300. And 1,000 more dollars than that is, of course, New York with \$4,200 being the most expensive city to live in if you were trying to rent a one-bedroom apartment.

Evelyn Mitchell-Wolf:

4,000?

Stephanie Taglianetti:

Those are the averages.

Evelyn Mitchell-Wolf:

That's the average rent for-

Marcus Johnson:

Average monthly cost.

Stephanie Taglianetti:

Holy.

Marcus Johnson:

Yep. It's also the fastest growing. You'll be happy to not know if you live in New York.

Stephanie Taglianetti:

Yeah, that's-

Marcus Johnson:

It's up 11% from 2023. Year on year, it's up 11%. That's more than double-

Stephanie Taglianetti:

Dang. Y'all wonder why I left

Marcus Johnson:

... more than double the second fastest-growing Boston and Jersey City at 5%.

Stephanie Taglianetti:

Mm-hmm. Wow.

Marcus Johnson:

A lot of that growth did happen... So it was over a 12 month stretch year-on-year. A lot of that growth was May to September of last year. It's since calmed down. But overall, when you take that full year on year, it's up 11%.

Two more for you. California is expensive to rent in, but prices are falling. So four of the top 10 that I just read out, it's four of the top 10 most expensive cities to rent in are California. They're in California. So they would be... We've got San Francisco, San Jose, San Diego, and LA. But seven of the 11 Californian cities have rents falling. So Oakland's falling the most, 9%. Sacramento, 8%. LA is down 5%. San Jose, two. San Francisco is down two. San Diego down one and a half. So yeah, all those rents are actually coming down, interestingly enough, or most of them in California.

And then finally, how much do people spend on rent? Half of all renters in the US spend over 30% of their income on rent. According to Harvard's Joint Center for Housing Studies, residents in New York can spend more than 40% of their income renting a place. Anyone who lives in New York feels like they're spending 112% of-

Stephanie Taglianetti:

All of it.

Evelyn Mitchell-Wolf:

Yeah. Mm-hmm.

Marcus Johnson:

... of their income on rent. And yeah, it may or may it be the reason why I also don't live there. Who does live there? Oh, none of us. Okay.

Stephanie Taglianetti:

No.

Marcus Johnson:

But you're in Jersey though.

Stephanie Taglianetti:

I'm close to Jersey City.

Marcus Johnson:

Mm-hmm. Yeah. Very close. All right.

Stephanie Taglianetti:

I'm in between Jersey City and Manhattan.

Marcus Johnson:

Isn't that the Hudson River?

Max Willens:

You took the words right out of [inaudible 00:39:47].

Marcus Johnson:

Just on a barge.

Stephanie Taglianetti:

Very nice.

Marcus Johnson:

That's all we've got time for, for this episode. Thank you so much to my guests. Thank you to Max.

Max Willens:

Always a pleasure, Marcus.

Marcus Johnson:

Thank you-

Evelyn Mitchell-Wolf:

Did you forget his name?

Stephanie Taglianetti:

Thank you to our Max.

Marcus Johnson:

Thank you to Stephanie, who lives on a riverboat.

Stephanie Taglianetti:

Thank... I live in the river.

Marcus Johnson:

Thank you to Evelyn.

Evelyn Mitchell-Wolf:

Thank you, everybody.

Marcus Johnson:

The winner of the game of the week. Thank you to Victoria who edits the show, Stuart who runs the team, Sophie who does our social media, Lars who does our video podcast, although

I think I heard John's voice earlier. Is John around? Did I make that up?

Stephanie Taglianetti:

You did.

Marcus Johnson:

Thank you to John. Is [inaudible 00:40:30]... Oh, John wasn't here. The whole time?

Evelyn Mitchell-Wolf:

The whole time.

Marcus Johnson:

No John. Okay. Never mind. Then forget John. Whatever, John. You're not even here to help. No thank you to John. Thanks to everyone for listening in.

Stephanie Taglianetti:

Thank you, John.

Marcus Johnson:

No, forget John.

Stephanie Taglianetti:

I say thank you John.

Marcus Johnson:

I'm sick of John.

Stephanie Taglianetti:

Oh my goodness.

Marcus Johnson:

Too much, Marcus.

Stephanie Taglianetti:



Says the person who was not here for about 25 minutes.

Marcus Johnson:

I love you, John. That's true.

Stephanie Taglianetti:

Today.

Marcus Johnson:

We hope to see you on Monday for the Behind the Numbers Daily, an eMarketer podcast with a ton of passion made possible by Roundel. Happy weekends.