REPORT

Trendfeed

The ones to watch

Welcome!

For the past couple of years, we have helped numerous brands and companies to **design and implement their digital strategy**. Goals? **Preparing for the future, reconnecting with clients and finding smarter ways of doing business**. A lot of these projects were placed in a roadmap with the symbolic title, '2020'. And here we are. On the threshold of a new decade, we are **ready to celebrate success,**

we're also starting to set up new plans. With today's world in constant evolution, new roadmaps are always necessary – now for 2025, 2030 and 2035. Considering the growing pace of new developments, we need to remain nimble enough to cope with a constant stream of tech innovations and changing consumer behavior.

That's why we are publishing this Trend Report for the 14th time. In this year's edition 'Trendfeed: the ones to watch' we want to give everyone a glimpse into all the new things that are on their way in the coming year, and beyond.

We opted out of desk research to avoid repeating what everyone else has been saying. Instead, we sat and talked to 6 experts in the areas of Experience, Data, Integration, Voice and Design, and asked them which trends, projects or people stand out to them and continue to inspire them. It resulted in a map of incredibly interesting references, cases and examples worth following.

As always, we hope to inspire you to become the marketeer of tomorrow: one who combines strategy, technology and creativity.

Happy exploring,
Team Duke & Grace

Unlock the Duke & Grace Trend Report Thanks for submitting the form.

Thanks for filling out the form.
We hope you enjoy it. Happy reading!

Experience

er 1—5 Olav

Speak van Dam

Senior Marketing Manager Benelux at Netflix

Olav is the perfect creative chameleon. Having started his career as a copywriter in a creative agency, he progressively added strategy to his skillset, and even operated as a Social Media Manager for the love brand bol.com. Speaking of love brands: as a Marketing Manager at Netflix, Olav is now responsible for launching creative campaigns which promote Netflix shows in the Benelux market. With his versatile background, he had more than one insight for Trendfeed up his sleeve.

"If there's one thing I truly believe in when it comes to brand communication, it's the fan-first approach."

This means that as a brand, you start behaving like your fans. There's no need to shout your message across to your audience. You have to walk in your customer's shoes in order to understand them properly, and foster engagement amongst them and their network. At Netflix, for instance, we communicate from the point of view of someone watching Netflix. We try to behave like Netflix viewers, and we communicate as if it were them talking. We talk to them like peers, not like a distant company.

That approach is the only way forward, if you ask me. Here are some examples of brand tactics that are worthy of attention, and that I would definitely recommend looking out for in 2020.

Speaking your customer's language

If we are talking about customer centricity, I think of **bol.com** right off the bat, as I used to work there. It's great to see that what we started in the social media department still lives on. That is, showing that the brand thoroughly understands internet culture. By making their **own memes or GIFs**, bol.com can fully immerse itself into fans' worlds; and thus delivers on-point, relatable communication across social channels. In general, I believe that brands are really starting to realize the importance of behaving like their customers in order to reach them. That's how they can get their audience engaged in their story.

Ajax also embraces a very fan-centric approach. They went from doing all their marketing with a leading agency to taking care of most of it in-house. From 1-minute videos published after each game, to a wrapped-up bus in Barcelona when Frenkie de Jong was transferred to FC Barcelona. This low-cost 'DIY approach' gained them a lot of earned media, as well as word of mouth.

Society's impact on brands

Strong brands don't shy away from addressing the profound changes undergoing in society. The last brand I saw doing that amazingly well was Calvé. In 2018, they portrayed a young Lieke Martens – the world's best female football player – in their peanut butter commercial. The story challenges the stereotype that football is only for men. I love the fact that they fueled this campaign with trends centered around emancipation, diversity and empowerment. And I see more and more brands adopting this in their communication.

We behave like Netflix viewers and speak with the same voice. There's no need to shout your message.

Brands' impact on society

Just as society shapes the way brands communicate, society can also benefit from brands. A while ago, the beer brand **Bavaria** came up with the [#carnavalvrij](#) campaign to push towards making Carnival an official holiday. It went viral and the case ended up on the Dutch House of Representatives' agenda. By tapping into social discourse, Bavaria got as close as possible to their customers and managed to generate organic word of mouth. I believe in impact rather than reach and frequency – this is why I find it an amazing example.

Driving the change

It's cool to be fun again. Remember Elon Musk's presentation of [Tesla's Cybertruck](#) at the end of 2019? Everybody had an opinion on it. From petrolheads to people who normally aren't even remotely interested in cars. Everybody was talking about the company's downfall, but in the end they received more than 180,000 orders the next day. It shows that there is a real need for change among customers. It's great to see a lot of brands breaking out of the clean, polished design trends we've been seeing for the last few years. Bold design gets people talking and triggers different emotions. That also makes me think of the American outdoor retailer, REI. With their [#OptOutside](#) action, they decided to close all their shops on Black Friday, enabling their employees to go and enjoy the outdoors. It really takes guts to do that. In the end, it illustrates how a brand can also generate buzz and impact, while completely going off trend compared to other brands.
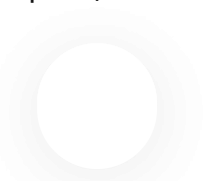
Integrated

Speaker 2 — 5

Bas Gezelle

Digital Creative & Strategist
Head of Digital Content at NOSUCH

Bas is a creative mind with more than 10 years' experience in digital and branding. He has helped brands such as Center Parcs, Allianz, T-Mobile, Securitas and Velux shape their identities through campaigns, as well as with audio, video and AR/VR content. At the core of his work: digital media's capability to distill a brand's uniqueness, and showcase it to customers. Based on concrete examples, Bas gave us insights on how brands can benefit from technology to build meaningful relationships with their customers.

"If you combine audio and space, you can establish a connection with the world again."

New technologies offer tremendous possibilities for brands. I believe that technologies should no longer restrain people within the boundaries of their devices. Instead, they should help transform the physical world into an interface. Since I'm constantly monitoring what's happening in the field, here's what recently caught my eye and how I see this evolving in 2020 and beyond.

Audio-enhanced storytelling

Audio has truly become ubiquitous in communication in recent years. In my opinion, the future of audio lies in the use of AR. An important hurdle I see with our screen-first lifestyles and platforms such as YouTube or Netflix is the isolation from the physical world they create. People staring at their phones has become commonplace in public transport, even in playgrounds. But if you combine audio and space, you can establish that connection with the world again. Bose Frames are a good example of that. They are glasses with built-in speakers that, when linked with AR-enhanced apps, bring spatialization to an audible experience. On top of creating the right software, building adequate hardware must play an equal role in that shift.

Web AR for advertising

The social media and marketing potential of AR is no longer up for debate. Instagram and Snapchat are true believers in AR on their platforms, and it seems that Web AR is gaining ground, too. People don't want to download apps just for a simple gimmick, so we need to make the AR experience available on any mobile device. Look at the company 8th Wall, for instance. They're partnering up with brands such as Lego, Adidas and Heineken to build web-based AR experiences. For entertainment but also e-commerce. 'Try before you buy' with virtual good a physical world.

Want to elevate your brand?
Connect emotionally with your audience using tech innovation, that'll do the trick!
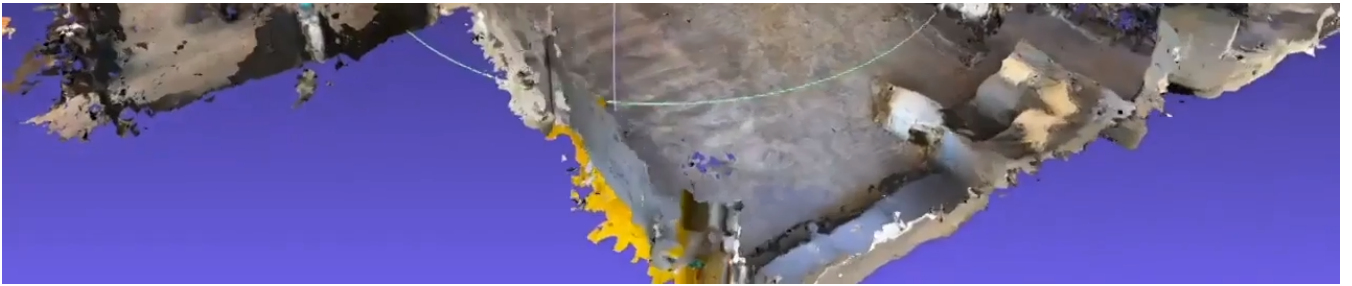
Seizing reality with 3D content

Creating 3D content is rather time-consuming. But recently, I managed to make a 3D scan of my daughter's bedroom quite easily. I used 6D.ai, a world-mapping computer vision app. This type of initiative makes technology a lot more accessible. Ultimately it also allows to visually capture memories and freeze them in time. You can then relive them in AR and VR, and not just on the flat surface of your screen.

Creating virtual identities with AI

With deepfake technologies, the line between real and fake identities is getting very blurry. Not so long ago, I saw the Malaria Must Die campaign, which illustrates just that. For the campaign, the company Synthesia used deepfake to make David Beckham read a text in 9 different languages he normally doesn't speak. Another example is one from the Netherlands. What ING did with the Rembrandt Tutorials is a great illustration of the use of AI in a cultural context. For this project, expert knowledge on Rembrandt's physiognomy was coupled with AI systems to help recreate what must have been the painter's voice, so that Rembrandt can give you a painting tutorial 'in person'.

a painting tutorial 'in person'.
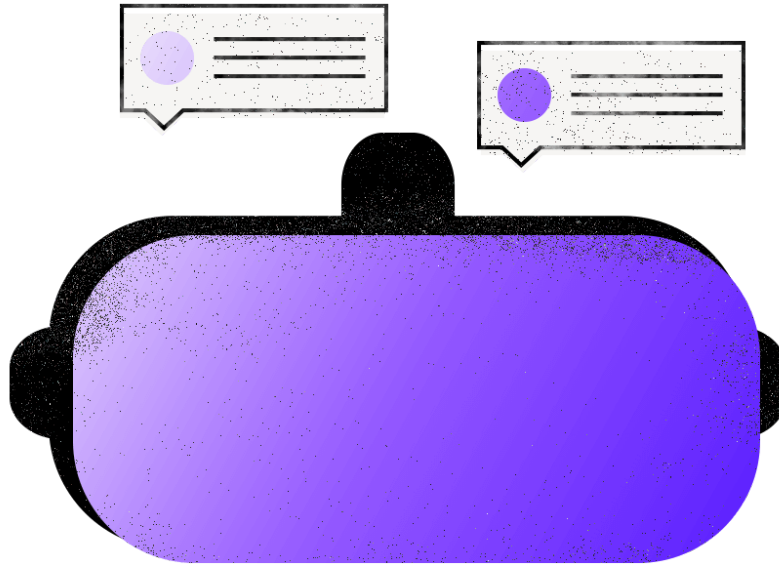
VR enhancing social interactions

Contrary to popular belief, virtual reality is no longer just an add-on device for gamers. Last May, I bought the Oculus Quest, a stand-alone VR headset. This technology is now bringing the experience of wireless VR to your home at a very affordable price. In my opinion, this can undoubtedly transcend the limits of social experiences. AltspaceVR and Facebook Horizon are good examples of companies that explore the possibilities of taking social interactions to the next level using VR. Although there is potential, brands are not that keen on investing in those technologies. I get it, though. Development costs are unfortunately still ridiculously high…

Brand experiences with value

Technology can be used to give something back to your customers as a brand, for example, an extra service or experience that can help them in their daily lives. **Volkswagen** created location-based children stories (Snelweg Sprookjes or "Highway Tales") that incorporate elements of a car ride's landscape into the narrative. Thanks to that, kids are not looking at the screen, but at their surroundings and staying busy (and quiet) during the ride. I know that it might be a long shot for a brand to allocate budget for something that doesn't immediately impact sales. But, again, investing in innovation that nurtures relations with customers is something your brand image and identity can benefit from. Even if it's only in the long run.
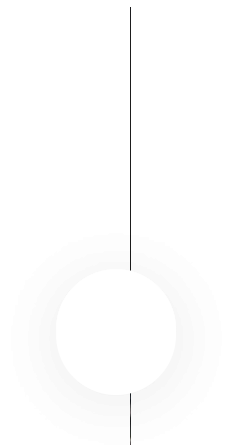
Voice

Speaker 3 — 5

Cedric Engels

Sound Director, DJ, Producer
CEO and Founder of Sonhouse

Cedric is a sonic wizard on all levels. He's a music producer, DJ with Hermanos Inglesos and last but not least, CEO at his sonic branding

studio, **Sonhouse**, where they design sound for brands like Playmobil, Samsonite and Brussels Airport. In his book, **"De Kracht van Geluid"**, he writes about the underestimated impact of sound and the ways it influences our daily lives. We invited him to share his vision on how sound and voice are going to develop in the near future when it comes to technology and branding. And — no surprises here — it all sounded very, very intriguing.

"I expect more brands to start developing their own unique voice that will function next to the 'general' voice assistants like Siri, Alexa or Cortana."

The idea that voice assistance

should be about the voice only,
limits the possibilities of
interaction.

Data

Speaker 4 — 5

Nicolas Deruytter

Managing Director at ML6

Nicolas Deruytter is the Managing Director and Founder of **ML6**, a Belgian scale-up specialized in AI, or more specifically, in the design and implementation of self-learning systems for business. He chose this direction right after obtaining a Master's degree in Operations Research and Electromechanics in 2013. Today, ML6 operates in 4

countries and AI itself has become a common topic, with no need for a lengthy introduction. We sat together with Nicolas to go beyond the basics and find out about the latest developments in his field.

"AI develops fast. As a company, you need to anticipate and decide how to deal with these developments."

Think of startups that will be able to generate complex legal texts (such as contracts, NDAs...) at the touch of a button.

Design

Speaker 5 — 5

Simon Pertz

Design Director at Duke & Grace

Simon Pertz is a Design Director at **Duke & Grace**. With a background in web design (Devine graduate, 2012), he expanded his expertise into art direction and branding. If there's one word that describes Simon on the work floor, it's 'multidisciplinary'. For Trendfeed, he took us through his design inspirations of the past year, as well as trends to follow in 2020 and beyond.
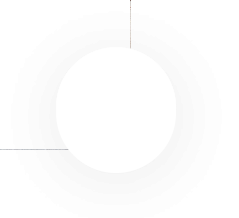
"If a new interaction pattern needs to be introduced, make sure it truly makes an impact."

As designers, we tend to focus on large, impactful copy, a product's size, etc., while it's the nature of the creation itself that makes people stop and interact with the medium.
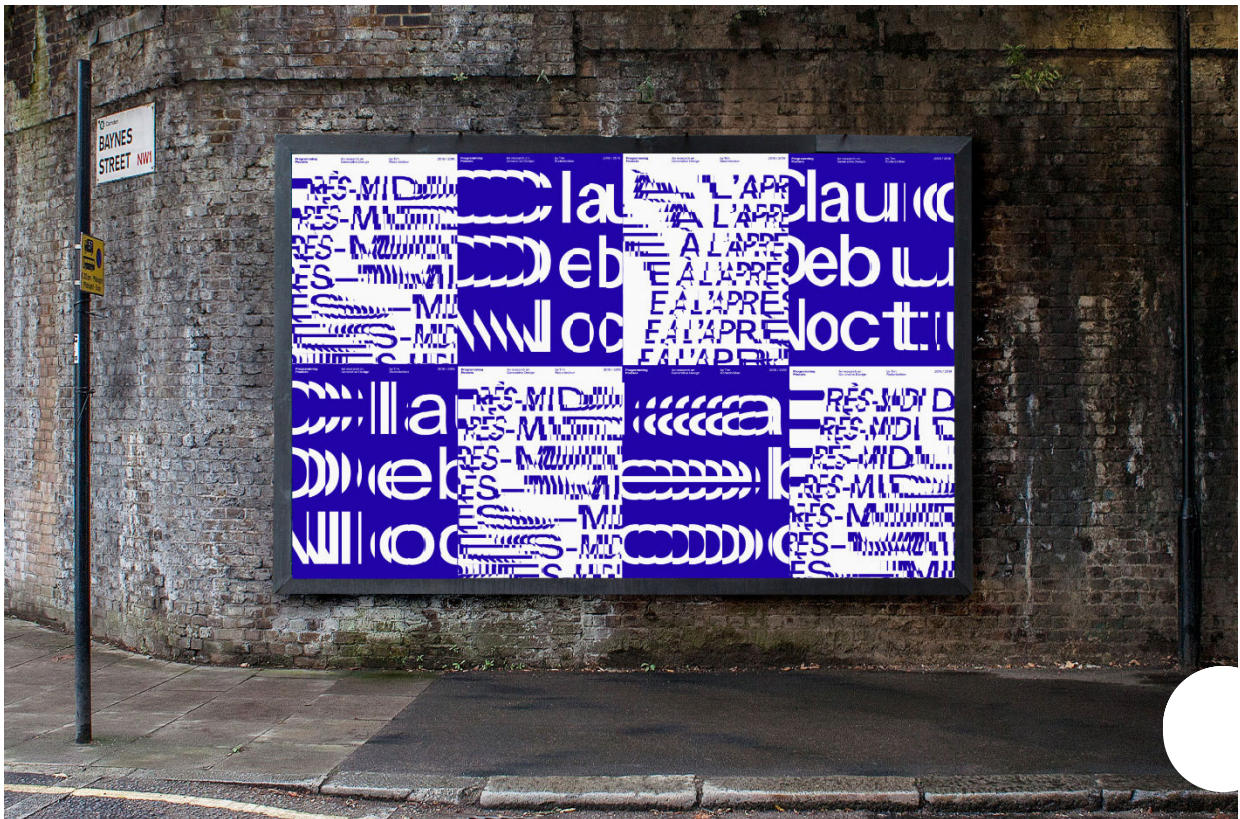
Vera van de Seyp

One of Demo's most captivating presentations was **Vera van de Seyp's**. She is an **up-and-comer in generative design and creative coding**. With a truly hybrid profile, she explores the blurry borders between design, typography and machine learning. We reached out to <u>Vera</u> to ask her about the most impactful trend(s) from the intersections of design and ML.

Creative coding as a service

Currently, it's not an obvious move for brands to approach profiles such as mine. Probably because we don't work in one specific design niche. I'm sure, however, that generative design and creative coding are soon going to make it to a purely commercial field. This will transform the way we perceive the work of creatives and developers. The tendency is surely heading towards the integration of these fields of expertise. Tim Rodenbröker is a great example, he successfully links design and experimental software development. Together, we started the Generative Design Research Network on Facebook.
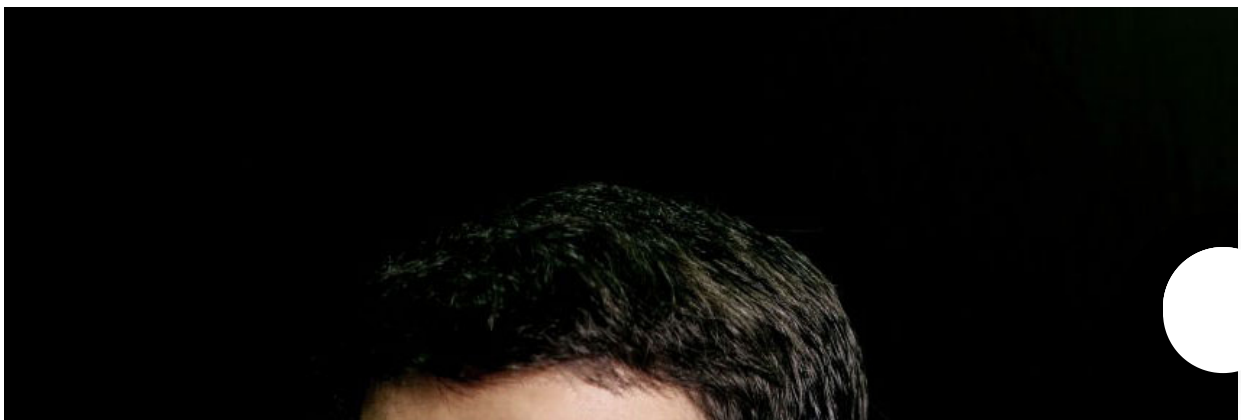
MIT Media Lab

MIT Media Lab is the leading light among interdisciplinary knowledge hubs and labs. Many people in my field that I follow and admire are associated with this school in some way. They embody the essence of integrated work, combining technology with science, art, design, psychology, media, etc. That's one of the places where the future is being defined. One of their projects, AlterEgo, really redefines the human-computer interaction: with a computer literally reading your mind.

"The tendency is heading towards the integration of creatives and developers."
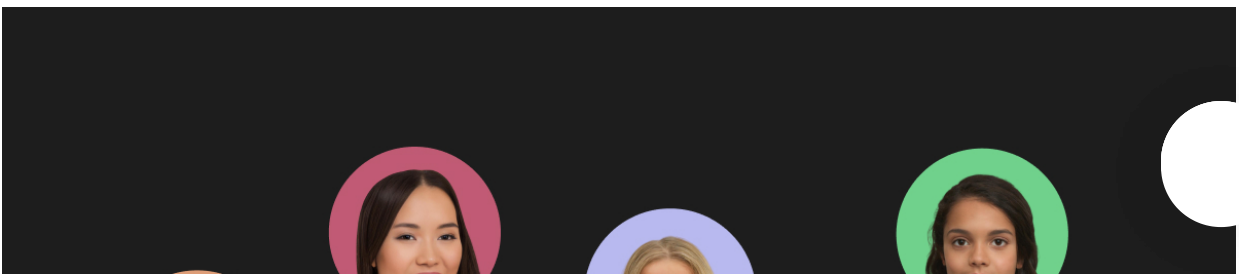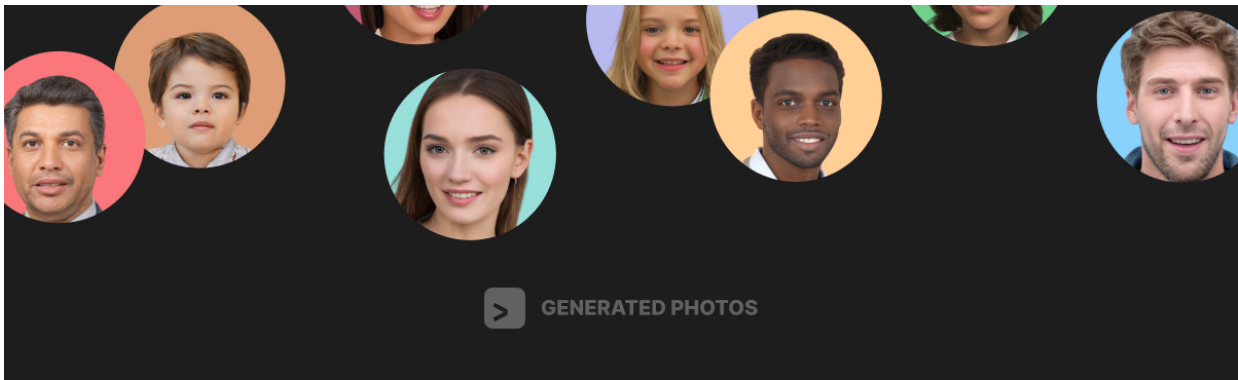
ML generated imagery

"This person does not exist" is a project (by Karras et al. and Nvidia) that shows images of human faces created in a fully automated way. It was a great inspiration for my thesis research project. And while faces still can be difficult to generate without avoiding strange results, the tool itself is very powerful.

That's all Folks!

We hope you enjoyed reading Trendfeed, our latest Trend Report. You now know what GPT2 means and why creating a unique voice for your brand can be valuable. For every example and trend illustrated here, we have a hundred more ideas and cases to show. If this long read got you fired up and ready to make 2020 a memorable year for your organization, just reach out to our team to set up a brainstorm or workshop. We're happy to bring all relevant insights for your business and market with us.

Contact us

This report has been made possible thanks to the whole Duke & Grace team.