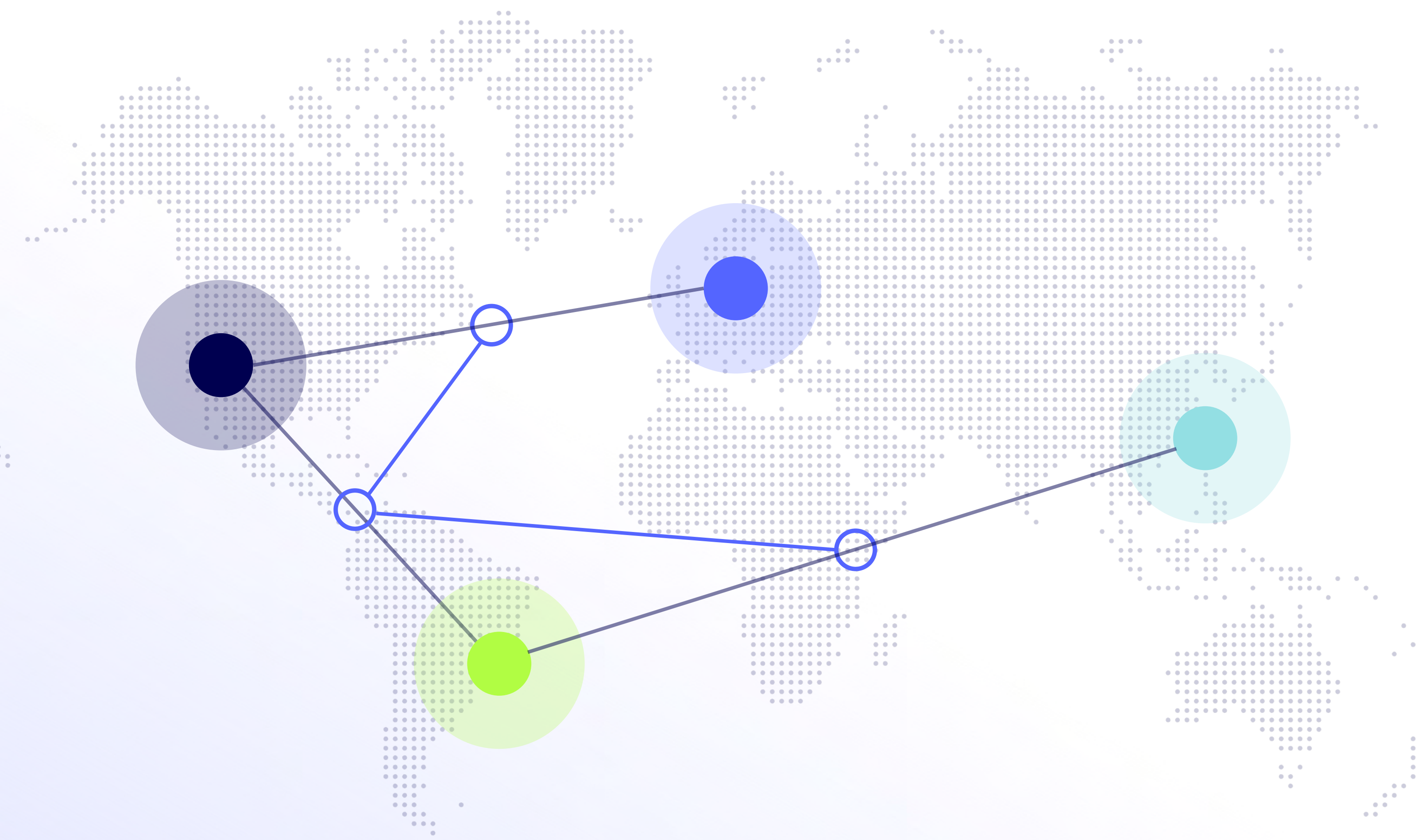
WPP Media

THIS YEAR NEXT YEAR

2025 Global Midyear Forecast



June 2025

WPP Media

THIS YEAR NEXT YEAR

Introduction

Forecasting is never a simple job. There are, maybe not infinite, but seemingly innumerable data sources one can assess and combine to hopefully arrive at an abstract model of reality that depicts a direction of travel for the industry.

We can't know in advance the exact values at every future date, and modeling the day-to-day swings would also be less helpful for companies planning investments, partnerships, and business strategy on yearly rather than daily timelines. For these reasons, we develop our *This Year Next Year* (*TYNY*) forecast on an annual basis, with growth portrayed as a curve.

The shape of that curve is determined by drivers of advertising growth such as global economic productivity, political and regulatory activity, and technological advancement, all inputs to the market-level forecasts that are aggregated to form our global outlook. Thinking about these drivers as determining the low, mid, and high points for a growth forecast is a little like the creation of quadratic Bézier curves. For those not versed in the nuances of computer graphics and animation, a Bézier curve is formula-driven smooth curve determined by set "control points" often used to approximate a real-world shape that is difficult to represent mathematically due to its complexity or unknown nature. Think of a road in a video game that twists and turns in a way that feels natural but is not modeled on any existing road in the real world.

As we hurtle into the next decade, on a path facing massive disruption from a shifting global economic order and an AI-led future that we are hastening to define before it exceeds the limits of our understanding, the concept of Bézier curves felt like an apropos motif for this June's forecast.

Math can be quite beautiful.

There are three key themes that arose out of our work developing this forecast and that tie our past *TYNY* analyses to the current political and economic climate.

01 Globalization, Interrupted

After a broadly consistent trend of increasing economic openness and the expanding role of trade in economic growth over the last two centuries, the current disruption of global trade and economic deglobalization — shifting trading activity into aligned blocs — is a significant break. Previous periods of deglobalization have been primarily associated with major world wars as well as the global COVID-19 pandemic. If the current trajectory continues, we do expect this to have a chilling effect on global advertising growth over the next five years. Our ad revenue forecast now projects a global compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 5.4% between 2025 and 2030, compared to the 6.4% five-year CAGR (2024-2029) from last December's forecast (excluding U.S. political revenue). This is primarily due to less robust expectations for U.S. and China ad revenue growth, the two largest ad markets by far. Ad revenue in 2025 is forecast to reach $1.08 trillion, up 6.0% from 2024, with 2026 set to expand a further 6.1% to $1.14 trillion.

02 Future Perfect: AI, Agentic AI, and Autonomy

In language, the future perfect tense refers to an action that will be done before a specific time in the future. For example, "By 2030, digital agents will have completed $1 trillion of purchases." We wrote in previous reports about how rapidly advertising as an industry incorporated AI tools such as machine learning and natural language processing. Now AI is transforming content, commerce, communication, transportation, and all the other fields related to advertising and media. Whether you believe "superintelligence" is around the corner, or current models remain just "bags of heuristics," the impact of their integration into business processes and customer journeys will be substantial. But – alongside opportunities – there are massive potential pitfalls here. If we don't design the incentives and reward mechanisms for AI conscientiously, we risk making the same mistakes we did with earlier social and technological innovations like social media, where using engagement and time spent as KPIs has led to polarization of content, the infinite scroll, and notification overload. Planning how we will design beneficial goals for AI before we reach a future point where their incentives are ingrained is an existential necessity.

03 A Change Would Do You Good

We ultimately believe that change — especially change leading to increased competition within industries — is positive for growth and resilience. (Note, this is why deglobalization is seen as a potential negative for growth as companies that no longer compete with the best globally scaled competitors may experience slower innovation and/or fewer productivity gains and knowledge transfer). While it is likely impossible to point to any year of the last century as lacking change, some of the most rapid and revolutionary changes have happened recently (the COVID-19 pandemic) or are beginning to take shape now (AI). Human adaptability and firm adaptability — that is the ability for companies and their workers to embrace change and innovate — are crucial to our expectations for the future of the advertising industry. While the scale of AI-driven job losses across industries is unknown, we do believe that the need for advertisers to communicate with current and potential customers (and their digital agents) will continue, and that people will be involved throughout that process in new and old ways for at least the next five years.

Economic Backdrop

As we noted in the introduction, rapid deglobalization would have a significant impact on future advertising growth. Previous periods of deglobalization have primarily been associated with global wars (see page 6) and while the growth in global exports of goods and services as a percentage of GDP has leveled off in more recent years (growing more in line with GDP), a sustained drop, extending the impacts of the sanctions on Russia following its invasion of Ukraine, would be significant. At the time of writing, our forecast assumes that some of the economic activity currently involving the U.S. (such as advertising by Asia-based retailers targeting U.S. consumers) will be redirected toward other markets like Europe, Southeast Asia, and Latin America. And our forecast has included downgraded growth expectations for the U.S. in each of the years from 2025 through 2030. The forecast does not, however, assume a global recession-type scenario or a complete trade embargo between the U.S. and other major markets (beyond the sanctions that already exist with Russia). That scenario would result in further downgrades to our estimates.

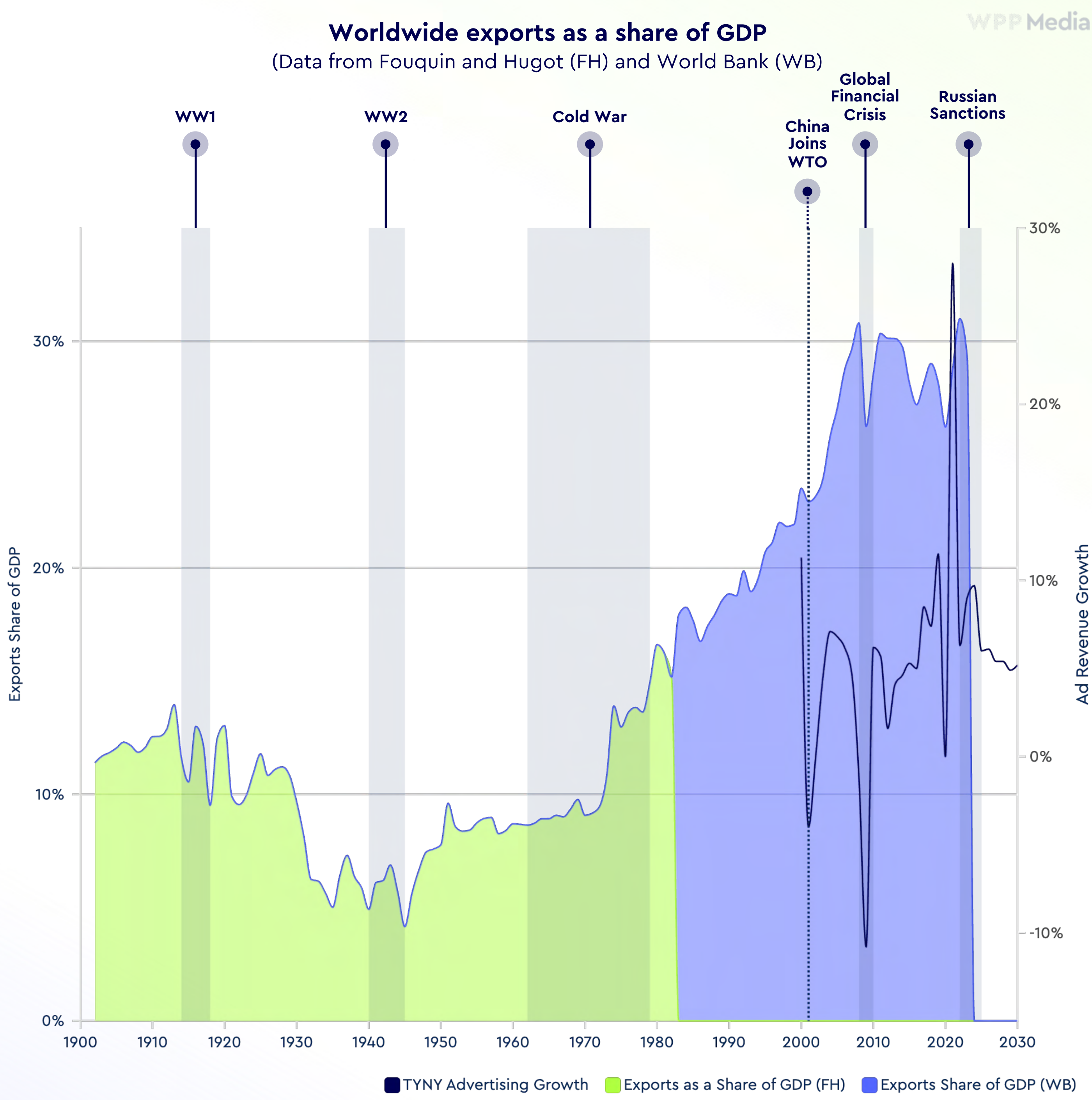
Ad revenue growth in 2025 is now forecast to be

6.0%

a downgrade from the 7.7% we predicted in December of 2024

Worldwide exports as a share of GDP

(Data from Fouquin and Hugot (FH) and World Bank (WB)



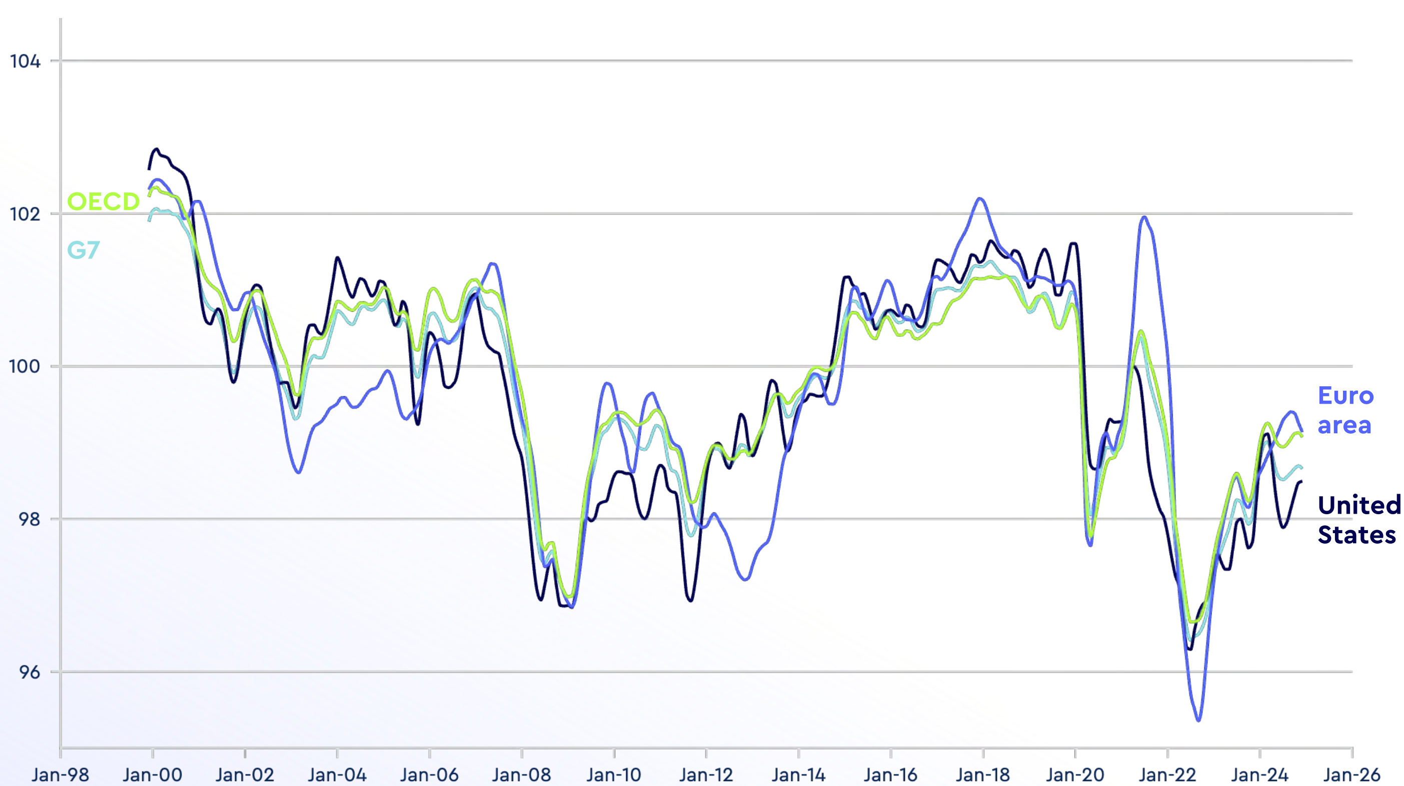
Source: WPP Media, World Bank, Fouquin and Hugot; CEPII 2016; National data

It has been incredibly difficult during the development of this forecast to parse the impacts of various political and economic drivers, particularly U.S. imposed tariffs and retaliatory tariffs imposed by U.S. trading partners. Our December forecast assumed a primarily pro-business Trump administration. While "Liberation Day" seemed to call that assumption into question, more recent tariff pauses and de-escalations, with China in particular, suggest that our previous assumptions missed the mark on just how much uncertainty would ensue (though we still may be directionally correct). That said, many of the non-tariff related actions undertaken by the U.S. administration are unprecedented and are likely to have long-term repercussions on global migration, research and innovation, and the environment. As uncertainty is, in our view, a drag on both business and consumer investment, we have moderated our expectations for global ad revenue growth in this June forecast.

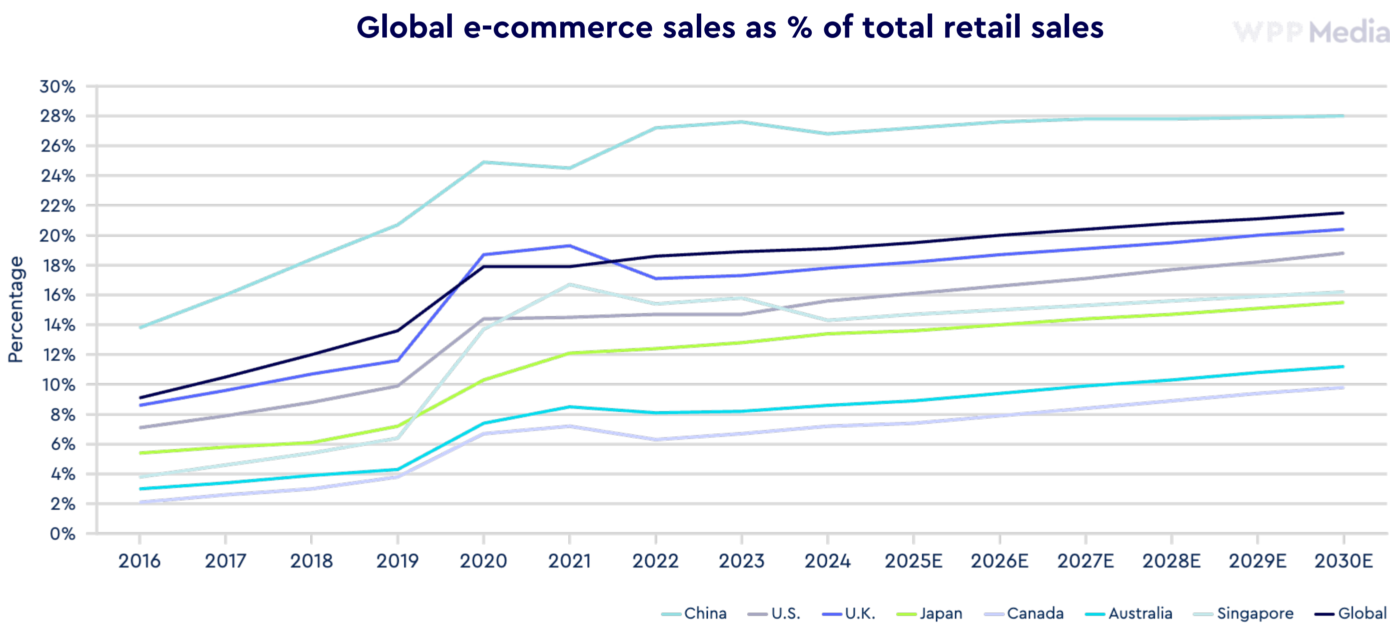
Consumer sentiment, reflecting consumers' current economic feelings and future outlook, has indeed exhibited significant volatility in recent months. While U.S. consumer confidence showed signs of recovery in 2024, the latest OECD data (through December 2024) indicates it remained lower than that of OECD, Euro Area, and G7 markets. Historically, consumer confidence has proven highly sensitive to economic instability, with sharper declines observed during periods such as the dotcom bubble, the 2007-2009 global financial crisis, and the high-inflation period following the onset of the Ukraine-Russia war. Consumer sentiment data from the University of Michigan in the U.S. showed it hit a three-year low in early May of 2025 as consumer expectations of tariff-related inflation took hold. Data from another source, the Conference Board, showed a rebound in optimism later in May following the de-escalation of tariffs with China.

So far, global retail sales have been fairly resilient. We estimate that global retail sales grew 3.2% in 2024 compared to 2023 and will increase 3.2% in 2025 to $39.5 trillion, including food services sales. Within that, e-commerce sales in the U.S., China, the U.K., Canada, and Australia continued steady growth, after corrections from their rapid ascent during the pandemic. Globally, we estimate e-commerce will account for 19.5% of total retail sales in 2025 and will grow by 5.6% to $7.7 trillion. China and the U.S. are expected to account for 44.7% of global e-commerce sales. We could potentially see moderating growth this year driven by cautious consumer sentiment and trade tariffs potentially increasing costs globally, as retailers distribute these costs across multiple markets and are likely to pass them on to consumers in some instances. Over the next five years, global retail and e-commerce sales are expected to grow by a five-year CAGR of 5.0% and 7.0%, respectively. By 2030, e-commerce penetration is expected to reach 21.5%.

Consumer Confidence Index



Source: OECD



Source: WPP Media, IMF, Government Data

We will continue to evaluate the global economic picture and make further adjustments in our December forecast.

01

Potential drivers of a downgraded December 2025 forecast include:

- Major supply-chain disruption, full trade embargoes (or functional embargoes), and ensuing inflation
- Slowed business investment, especially in new factories or geographic expansion
- Escalation of geopolitical conflict, including armed conflict

02

Upgrades to the December forecast could come as a result of:

- Technological innovation, investment, and revenue that maintains or exceeds its current velocity (e.g., a reduction in chip restrictions on China, reinstated and net new research funding in the U.S. and other markets)
- A reversal by the U.S. government of its current trade policies and assurances of reduced volatility in setting international trade and regulatory policy

In this increasingly opaque economic environment, many marketers have appeared to take a wait-and-see approach, maintaining planned investment, but pushing hard for increased flexibility. We have also observed a tendency to go to the pandemic playbook (the most recent period of upheaval) and apply lessons learned from either maintaining brand investment or pulling it. The advertiser commentary we've heard primarily points to the benefits brands saw from investing in brand communication and innovation through the post-pandemic inflationary period. Brands also have new tools at their disposal, and we expect economic uncertainty is speeding up some AI experimentation with advertisers looking to apply AI-derived production cost savings into more working media. And beyond technology, we anticipate that there will be opportunities for advertisers globally, or within their individual markets and regions, that can come in times of upheaval and change for those who mobilize to capture them.

WPP Media's *This Year Next Year* analysis is a demanding, year-long endeavor, with our forecasting models continuously monitored and updated. To accurately size the advertising industry, we focus on media-owner revenue rather than advertiser spend. While the world's top 350 advertisers represent about a quarter of total industry revenue, a concentrated group of the top 25 media sellers accounts for over 70% (see chart on page 10). This focus on sellers offers a more reliable measure than the diffuse advertiser base.

Year-round we track earnings results, management commentary, and the strategic moves of the world's largest sellers of advertising, often making pro forma adjustments to historical data to accurately reflect mergers and acquisitions. Our data includes adjustments to exclude (to the best of our ability) revenue from ad technology (e.g., DSPs), and commission fees on commerce purchases (e.g., TikTok Shop). We combine this data with detailed channel-level advertising revenue data from more than 60 markets around the world — from the largest, like China and the U.S., to smaller markets like Slovenia, Sri Lanka, and Uruguay. This includes meticulous data collection and, at times, significant revisions to historical data to ensure the highest accuracy in our global figures.

A concentrated group of the top 25 media sellers accounts for over

70%

of total industry revenue

Methodology

Our methodology is also dynamic; for instance, we introduced Retail Media as a category for the first time in the December 2022 report, and the June 2024 report detailed a change in how YouTube revenue is allocated across digital and streaming TV, reflecting evolving market understanding and client perspectives, based on a combination of industry data and proprietary WPP Media client intelligence. In addition to media revenue data, we also assess economic factors such as expected GDP growth, market-level unemployment, consumer price inflation (carefully considering nuances like hyper-inflationary markets), technological advancements (including the rapid scaling of AI-enabled advertising), and consensus revenue estimates from financial analysts to build the full *TYNY* forecast picture. This comprehensive approach is underpinned by analytical frameworks, such as our modified PEST (political, economic, social, technological) analysis (page 22), to understand diverse market drivers.

The work draws on the expertise of scores of people across WPP Media, who are constantly re-evaluating estimates as new and better data becomes available. Without this dedicated global effort, we could not produce such a detailed and authoritative piece of work, culminating in resources like the alluvial diagram on page 13 and the Global Summary Data Table (page 68), which seek to provide our clients and the industry at large with the most novel, accurate, and forward-looking data possible.

Ad revenue concentration – Top 25 media owners

WPP Media

	Advertising Revenue in bn $USD	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
1	Google	$114.6	$124.9	$178.1	$190.8	$202.2	$224.9
2	Meta	71.5	86	114.9	113.6	131.9	160.6
3	ByteDance	16.5	29.6	38.6	49.2	68.6	87.4
4	Amazon	12.6	19.8	31.2	38.3	46.9	55.9
5	Alibaba	17.3	24.9	30.9	28.9	29.5	29.5
6	PDD Holdings (incl. Temu)	3.7	6.4	9.4	13	18	23.2
7	Microsoft (PF)	11.6	11.4	15.4	17.3	17.8	19
8	Tencent	9.6	11.5	12.4	11.6	14.2	16.8
9	Comcast (PF)	13.9	12.8	14.7	14.9	12.6	14.1
10	Disney (PF)	11.9	11.2	12.5	12.8	11.2	11.7
11	Paramount (PF)	11.1	9.8	11.4	10.9	10	10.3
12	Baidu	9.8	9.2	10.3	9.7	10.5	10
13	JD.Com	4.8	6	8.1	9.2	9.5	10
14	Kuaishou	1	3.1	6	6.9	8.4	10
15	Warner Bros. Discovery (PF)	10.6	9.5	10.6	9.9	8.7	8.1
16	Apple	1.7	2.4	4.9	6	6.8	8.1
17	Meituan	2.2	2.6	4.1	4.3	5.7	6.8
18	Fox (PF)	5.1	5.5	5.7	6.1	6.1	6
19	Snap	1.7	2.5	4.1	4.6	4.4	4.9
20	Walmart (PF)	1	1.7	2.3	3.1	3.9	4.8
21	JC Decaux	4.2	2.5	3	3.5	3.9	4.3
22	I Heart Media (PF)	3.5	2.8	3.4	3.7	3.8	3.9
23	LY Corp (Previously Z Holdings)	2.3	3.1	3.6	3.8	3.8	4
24	Pinterest	1.1	1.7	2.6	2.8	3.1	3.6
25	Xiaomi (Mi)	1.5	1.8	2.5	2.6	2.9	3.5
	2024's Top 25 Total	$344.9	$402.8	$540.7	$577.5	$644.3	$741.3
	Total Industry (incl. U.S. Political)	639.1	638.7	817.3	873.6	946.8	1032.6
	Top 25 Total Share of Industry	54.0%	63.1%	66.2%	66.1%	68.0%	71.8%
	Ex-China-Based Companies	$278.5	$307.7	$418.4	$442.1	$477.0	$544.2
	Total Industry Ex-China	544.1	524.9	674.8	722.8	772.5	834.4
	Top 25 Total Share of Industry Ex-China	51.2%	58.6%	62.0%	61.2%	61.8%	65.2%
	Top 5 Share of Total Ad Rev	36.4%	44.7%	48.2%	48.2%	50.6%	54.1%
	Top 5 Share of Digital Revenue	69.5%	72.9%	74.5%	72.9%	73.9%	75.5%

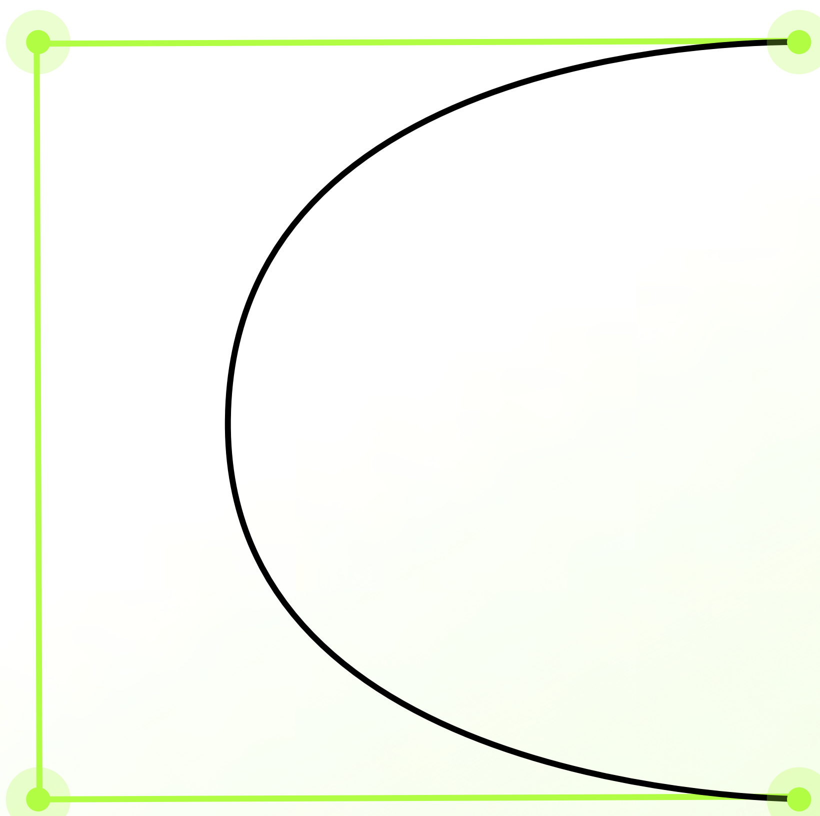
Source: WPP Media, company filings
(PF) = Pro Forma – revenue for combined entities is included in all periods

Channel Trends

Amid the uncertainty of the economic picture and instability of the geopolitical order, the enduring nature of advertising stands out. More different types of businesses sell advertising than ever before, by our estimation, from airlines and fintech companies to retailers, mobility companies, and traditional media entities.

In our survey of industry experts (detailed on pages 36-42), more than three-quarters of respondents said it was highly unlikely that people would be able to avoid all forms of advertising in their lives in 2030.

The industry's embrace of technology and reinvention over the years has likely been a driver of its durability. Advertisers have embraced the advent of television, digital media, machine learning, and now generative AI as well. And while some media owners and channels have largely disappeared (e.g., print directories and Quibi), others continue to adapt and have the opportunity to build stronger businesses addressing new customers, new distribution channels, and new formats.



There are several trends driving the largest recent shifts in channel and media owner share of ad revenue.

01 **Democratization of Spend**
Self-service platforms have lowered the barrier to entry, empowering businesses of all sizes to allocate advertising budgets with unprecedented ease.

02 **The Allure of Measurement**
The promise of quantifiable results, directly linking media spend to sales, conversions, and leads is undeniably attractive.

03 **AI-Powered Precision**
The use of AI in optimizing targeting and measurement of digital channels offers a perceived level of effectiveness that traditional media struggles to match.

04 **Shifting Consumption Habits**
Consumers are spending more time on digital platforms like TikTok and less with traditional media like newspapers, driven by increased internet and smartphone penetration.

05 **Procurement's Iron Grip**
Cost-cutting imperatives within large companies are driving aggressive agency pitches and demanding demonstrable marketing performance.

06 **The Rise of the Creator Economy**
Content creation has been decentralized, with a significant portion of media consumption now directed towards user-generated content platforms.

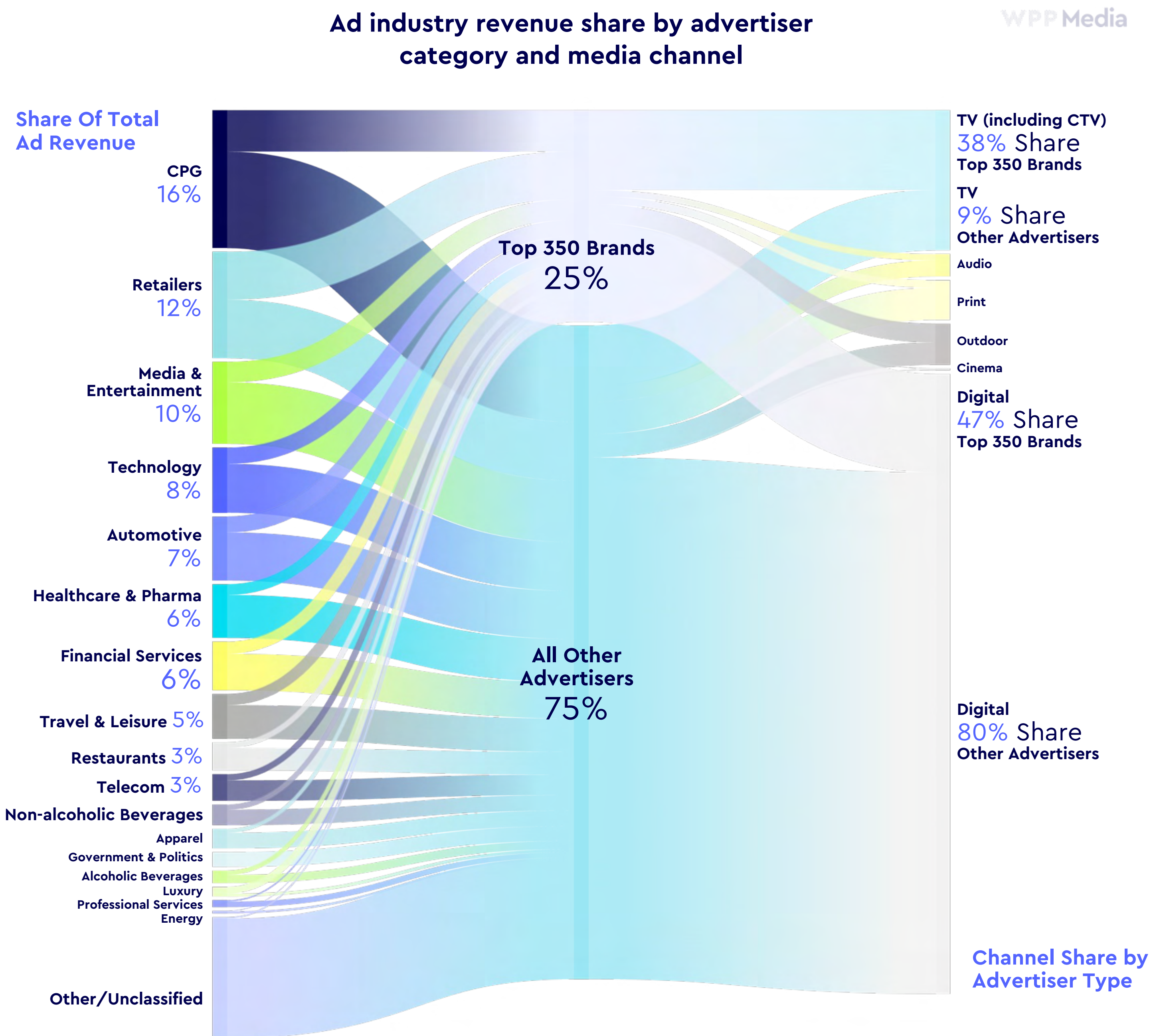
07 **The Pandemic Catalyst**
The forced shift to e-commerce during the pandemic accelerated consumer comfort with online transactions.

08 **Globalized Commerce**
The interconnectedness of global supply chains allows businesses to reach consumers across borders with unprecedented ease.

Channel allocation varies greatly by advertiser size and category.

These shifts have led to a headline digital share that sits at 73.2% in 2025 for pure-play digital (that is excluding the digital extensions of streaming TV, streaming audio, DOOH, and digital print). Including all of those digital extensions within the digital figure brings its share up to 81.7% in 2025 and an expected 87.2% by 2030. That allocation is not necessarily the most effective for all advertisers, especially larger advertisers with sophisticated measurement tools and agency partners. And in fact, when we look at channel allocations among the largest brand advertisers in aggregate, the digital share may even sit below 50% with TV (including streaming) likely accounting for 35%-40% of total spend. OOH also enjoys a much higher share of large brand spend than it does at the industry total level — high single digits vs mid-single digits. Print, cinema and audio shares remain roughly the same. See the alluvial diagram on the next page to understand typical allocations among the worlds largest 350 brand advertisers versus the heavily digital skew of all other advertisers, namely small and medium size businesses and digital-first direct advertisers taking advantage of self-service ad products from the largest globally scaled platforms.

Ad industry revenue share by advertiser category and media channel



This is not to say that large brands across all categories behave similarly. Or that allocations are consistent from market to market. The shift to digital has been more prominent in the U.S. than it has in markets like Italy. And it's been more prominent among CPG advertisers (where former trade budgets are now often classed as digital retail media) than it has for financial services advertisers. While large CPG advertisers have likely increased their digital allocation by mid-single digit percentage points between 2022 and 2024, financial services advertisers decreased digital investment by a similar amount (primarily in social as OOH recovered share post-pandemic). And while large pharma advertisers have increased digital allocation by as much as 10 percentage points or more, linear TV likely still represents the majority of advertising for most of them. Note that this analysis excludes the predominately digital Chinese market.

Content
Media properties including entertainment and informational content, chosen for share of viewership or brand equity.

Commerce
Media properties that belong to companies selling products and services, or companies with financial records of purchases.

Location
Media properties chosen for the location in which an ad is viewed, e.g. OOH, cinema, airline, and hotel media networks.

Intelligence
Media properties that help to organize the world's information and provide knowledge about that information, e.g. search and answer engines.

B2B

B2B advertisers exist across many of the categories depicted on the previous page, so are not shown as a separate category. Taken together, we estimate they account for roughly $35 billion to $40 billion of annual ad revenue, or just under 4% of the global total.

Here too, AI is helping to drive shifts to digital, as are other factors such as the changing demographics of business decision makers. Account-based marketing at legacy brands is now evolving to incorporate AI driven targeting of complex buying groups, contributing to the digital share expected in the coming years. That said, while larger digital endemics like Google, Amazon, and Indeed have long understood the benefits of digital, many increased their use of TV as they matured and embraced the positive effects of brand advertising on performance media. We expect that as TV media owners simplify and automate the buying of TV for a broader range of advertisers, B2B small businesses will also increasingly take advantage of the channel.

NEW CHANNEL CATEGORIZATION

As we discussed in the December *TYNY* report, we believe the industry would benefit from transitioning away from standard channel distinctions like digital and TV, opting instead to define advertising by its utility to advertisers. So, while many of our charts and some of our commentary will portray channels as we have historically reported them, we will cover the major trends below related to advertising growth under these four categories: **content, commerce, location**, and **intelligence**. See left for descriptions of each.

In total, ad revenue in 2025 will reach **$1.08 trillion** (ex-U.S. political advertising), up **6.0%** over 2024. This is a significant downgrade in growth from our December forecast which predicted a **7.7%** global increase in ad revenue. By 2030, we estimate that global ad revenue will surpass **$1.40 trillion**.

Content

Content-driven advertising revenue, whereby advertisers lean on the brand equity of content surrounding their messaging, is the largest category in our forecast, representing more than $625 billion of ad revenue in 2025, or nearly 60% of the total. Within this, TV, including both traditional and streaming TV, is expected to grow 0.9% in 2025 to $162.5 billion. Streaming TV will represent just over a quarter of the total ($41.8 billion) in 2025, but will increase rapidly over the next five years, reaching $71.9 billion in 2030, just over 40% of the TV total. Elections, tentpole events and sports are the key drivers for ongoing TV growth. Asian markets noted contributors like the World Baseball Classic in 2026, while the FIFA World Cup is expected to draw global audiences and advertisers, especially benefiting the U.S., Canada and Mexico where the games will be held.

User-generated video ad revenue is expected to add more than $150 billion to the broader video total in 2025 across players like Douyin/TikTok, YouTube, RED, Kuaishou, and Meta's Reels. While this has been one of the fastest growing segments of advertising, many of these players face risks from regulatory scrutiny. The ban of TikTok in the U.S. remains in limbo, and the app was just fined €530 million (~$600 million) by the Irish Data Protection Commission "regarding its transfers of EEA (European Economic Area) user data to China, and its transparency requirements." Meta is, at the time of writing, in the midst of an antitrust lawsuit filed by the U.S. Federal Trade Commission regarding its purchases of WhatsApp and Instagram where the suggested remedy could, should the judge rule in the FTC's favor, include breaking up the social media company.

Audio, which does now include additional video advertising formats attached to podcasts and other content, is set to remain roughly flat in 2025 at $26.5 billion with growth in streaming audio offsetting a slight decline in terrestrial audio (-1.7%).

Print revenue (excluding U.S. political), including both newspapers and magazines, is projected to decline by -3.1% in 2025, reaching $45.5 billion. Newspapers, driven by an increasingly rapid news cycle, are expected to see a smaller decline of 2.0%, while magazines face a steeper drop of 5.1%. Digital ad revenue is forecast to grow, with newspapers increasing by 2.4% and magazines by 1.2%. However, these gains won't offset the losses in traditional print.

One thing all these content-driven channels and platforms have in common (including print when we incorporate platforms like Substack) is the rise of so-called creators and influencers as the industry has shifted from advertising revenue predominantly earned by professional studios and media companies to revenue predominantly earned by individual creators and the platforms that host their media.

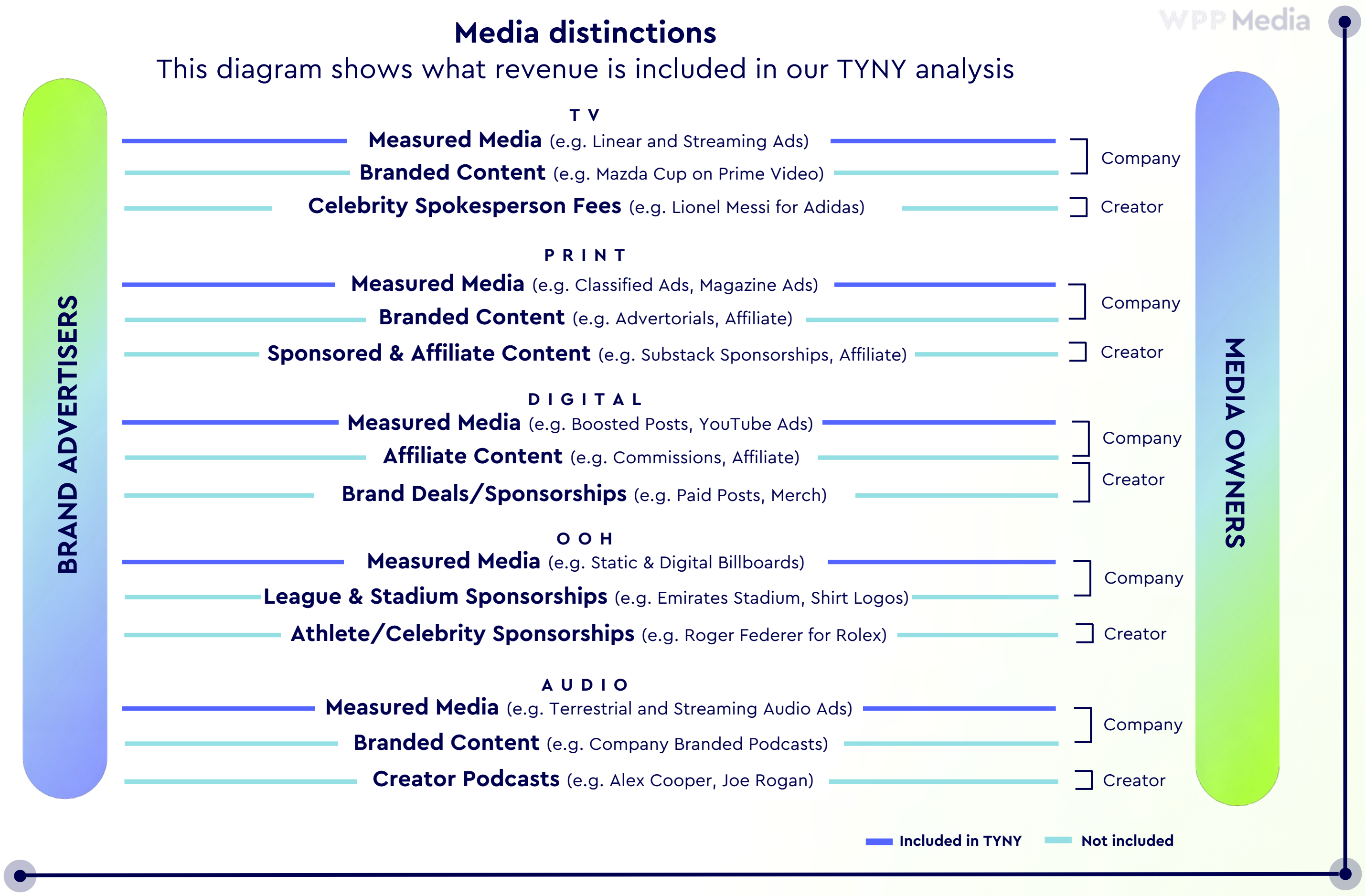
Creators as Media Owners

The "creator economy" is an increasingly used term and yet often amorphous in its definition. Here we set out to identify the make-up of this term, how it relates to our *TYNY* ad revenue tracking, its size, and some key trends impacting growth over the next five years.

The creator economy encompasses individuals and groups who produce and distribute content across diverse (mostly digital) platforms such as social media, podcasts, and blogs. They monetize this content primarily through brand partnerships, sponsorships, and platform-based advertising revenue. This economic shift is profoundly impacting the media and advertising landscape by challenging traditional production models, fostering more direct and personalized advertiser-consumer relationships, and leveraging the trust and influence creators build with their audiences in an increasingly fragmented media environment. Its importance is underscored by the significant shift in advertising budgets towards these creators and their ability to influence consumer purchasing decisions.

We forecast that creators will generate $184.9 billion in revenue in 2025, up 20% over the prior year. By 2030, we predict that revenue will more than double in size to $376.6 billion, a 15.3% five-year CAGR. This forecast is based on an assumption that brand deals and sponsorships account for 60% of the total creator economy in 2025. Our size estimate tracks revenue of creators from ad revenue share with platforms and brand deals/sponsorships.

As with all TYNY definitions and revenue allocations, it is important to note that the lines are often blurred across creator and professional content. Some social and YouTube creators have partnered with TV and podcast networks to produce shows, for example, on Roku and Spotify.



Key creator trends for the year ahead:

The Attention Economy:
Winning user attention is the ultimate battle, especially as advanced AI tools make it easier to create content. There could be a growing focus on partnering with micro- and nano-influencers who have smaller but highly engaged audiences in specific niches alongside macro influencers.

The Formation of Creator Empires:
Creators are building brands, trying to monetize directly with their audience and taking control of generating their own revenue. Creators are being viewed as high-potential startups, driving investment and strategic partnerships from platforms and ad agencies. Amazon, for example, has invested in Spotter, a company that offers investment, software, and professional services to digital creators and has paid out close to $1 billion over the past five years.

Beyond Social Silos:
Social media has been the main driver of creator revenue so far, but developments like the various TikTok bans has shown creators who depend solely on these platforms that they can face potential disruptions. Creators are on the lookout for new channels that will bring them new revenue streams, diversifying beyond social-media algorithms and integrating their content across channels, including TV and podcasts.

Regulatory Scrutiny:
The prevalence of influencer-driven advertising (and the speed at which it has grown) means that many markets are examining ways of bringing greater transparency and accountability to the channel. Some examples from the Asia Pacific region include:

- Australia's well-publicized ban of social media for audiences under 16 years of age.
- The Philippines regulation looking at how to monitor tax compliance as well as potentially regulate political candidates' usage of social media to better align with restrictions on TV, newspaper, and radio ad space.
- Japan's Act on the Limitation of Liability of Internet Service Providers was amended in April, making it mandatory for information distribution platform operators (SNS, e-commerce sites, video sharing sites, etc.) to take measures to prevent the distribution of illegal and harmful information.
- Taiwan's Fraud Prevention Act imposes new obligations on digital platforms such as Google, Meta, LINE, and TikTok, aiming to increase ad transparency and user protection with increased platform regulation — such as account verification, ad material review, and legal compliance.

The next frontier is perhaps a shift from people as creators to AI as creator, with AI-generated influencers earning advertising dollars on these platforms. However, our experts in the Advertising in 2030 survey (see page 39) believe it's unlikely that more than half of all "users" on social media platforms will be AI-generated personae by 2030 with only 38.7% believing it's likely and only 3.2% saying highly likely.

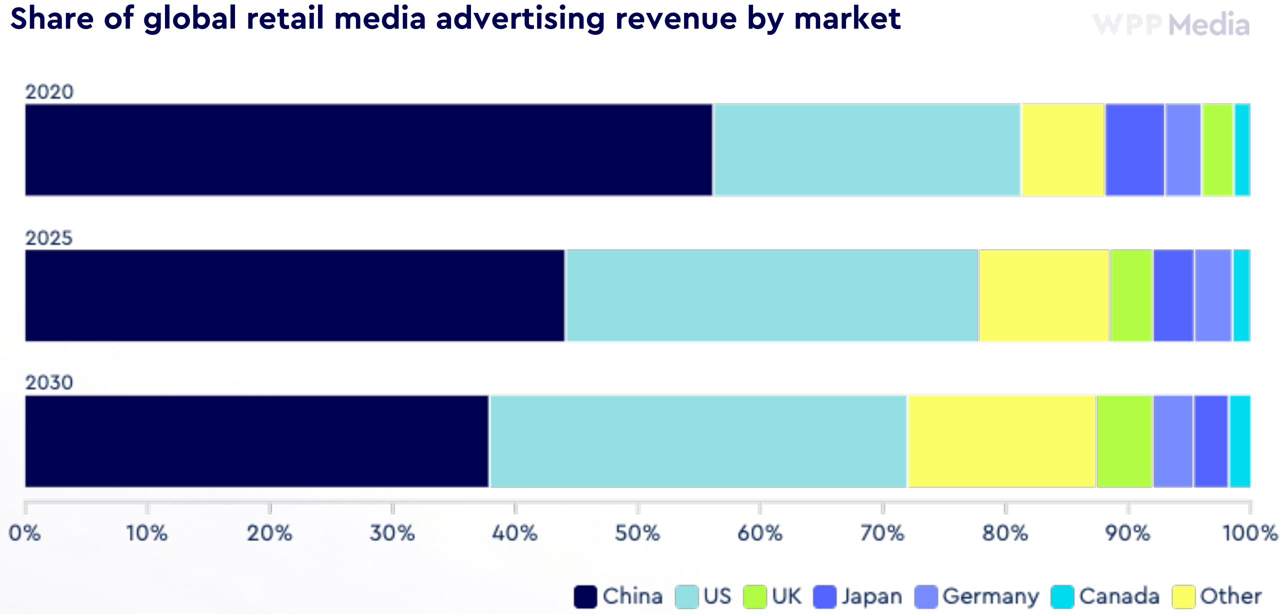
Commerce

Commerce-driven media is all about tying media to purchase data. In a world where media is everywhere and in everything, commerce and data are too.

Commerce-driven media extends beyond retailers, marketplaces, and last-mile delivery services, encompassing sectors such as travel and financial services. Note that this definition is broader than our reported "Retail Media" segment of advertising revenue, which includes revenue only from retailers and last-mile delivery companies. In 2025, we expect narrowly defined retail media revenue will total $169.6 billion and will increase at a compound annual rate of 8.2% to reach $252.1 billion in 2030 when it will account for 18.0% of total ad revenue.

Travel and financial services media networks are expected to experience strong growth as well, mirroring the success of retail media, driven by first-party data and e-commerce. Currently, the U.S. is home to much of the travel and financial services advertising revenue, and that revenue represents a relatively small share of overall commerce advertising revenue. However, we expect increased advertising revenue from travel and financial media networks in markets outside the U.S. in the coming years. Globally, we estimate that travel media networks (excluding hotels and airlines) will generate more than two billion dollars ex-China in advertising revenue, while financial services media networks (including banks, fintech, and credit agencies) are estimated to generate as much as half a billion, again ex-China, in advertising revenue in 2025.

Share of global retail media advertising revenue by market



Source: WPP Media

The broader themes from this forecast are sure to drive product roadmaps and revenue growth for commerce media players in the coming months — most notably the use of AI to plan, optimize, and generate creative for advertising campaigns. It is also plausible to assume that given the benefits of scale, the increased pressure of tariffs on razor-thin retail margins, and the importance of off-site inventory, that we may see additional mergers and acquisitions within the field, or between commerce and media players (similar to Walmart's acquisition of Vizio).

Intelligence

The intelligence category could see significant changes in terms of ad-seller share and consumer behavior, and yet the forecast revenue may not necessarily show that in its relative stability. There are multiple factors at play worth teasing out:

01

Search happens everywhere, not just in search engines.
One of the reasons for moving away from "search" as a channel name is that search has become the default way to navigate platforms with massive amounts of content and information. Audiences may "search" on a retail store site (that activity is already classified as "retail media"), or they may "search" in a social video app (currently captured under "other digital" or social). "Search" then, is limited in our view to search engines and answer engines.

02

Answers versus options.
An answer engine is a term coined to refer to platforms like Perplexity, OpenAI, Gemini, Grok, and Anthropic that aim to answer the question asked rather than provide options, or relevant content, as links. The rapid uptake of these tools means that user behavior is shifting — both in terms of where they ask (an Apple management executive testified that Safari searches declined in April 2025 for the first time), and what they ask (longer, complex queries have grown 49% according to BrightEdge).

03

Default status at fault.
As we wrote in the December forecast, Google was found by a U.S. judge to have maintained a monopoly in online search. We should note that at the time of writing, the judge has not ruled on proposed remedies, and Google is likely to appeal the ruling. One of the proposed remedies is that Google end its exclusive distribution agreements with companies like Mozilla, Apple, and Samsung, which make it the default search engine within their browsers.

While that all sounds quite transformational, we are predicting a fairly stable 6.0% five-year CAGR for search over the next five years. It is difficult to parse how all these interweaving changes will ultimately affect "intelligence" ad revenue, but we believe that there remains an audience need for generalized recommendations and answers (that is, not specific to an app like TikTok or Amazon), and that as the companies behind the answer engines mature and look at monetization, advertising will feature prominently as one model — as it does for Perplexity already. If these companies instead pursue a model that more closely resembles affiliate marketing, where purchases attributed to the site or platform earn a commission or other revenue, then we might consider adding this as an element of our tracked revenue across the intelligence and content categories. Right now, we do not include affiliate revenue from media companies that disclose it separately, such as The New York Times. Additionally, we note that Philipp Schindler, the Chief Business Officer at Google, stated in the company's first quarter earnings call that, "For AI Overviews, overall, we continue to see monetization at approximately the same rate, which gives us a strong base on which we can innovate even more." So while clicks are reportedly declining, Google is maintaining the viability of AI Overviews as they appear on more searches and for more searchers. Updates from Google's I/O event in May 2025 point to new potential monetization mechanisms such as AI Mode shopping and agentic buying using Google Pay.

Intelligence advertising relates to a media owner's ability to organize the world's information.

Beyond Google, Baidu's ad revenue has remained relatively stable over the past four years, and Microsoft's "Search and News" advertising revenue (excluding traffic-acquisition costs) has grown double-digits in each of the last four quarters. Microsoft has also firmly embraced an AI and agentic future, announcing that it will no longer invest in its DSP Xandr in a blog post that read,

> "Our commitment to more private and personalized advertising experiences for a more agentic and conversational world is not achievable with the industry's current DSP model."

We are currently predicting that intelligence (search) revenue will grow 7.4% in 2025, excluding the impact of U.S. political advertising, to $226.2 billion.

Marketers are now being tasked with transitioning from search engine optimization to a strategy designed for answer engines and agentic AI. WPP Media recently produced guidance for marketers on this shift, which we cannot convey in full here, but there are several things for brands to take note of:

01 We are likely to see growth of voice search and image search as people task agents with finding and buying items across multiple formats and input types. Brands will likely need to ensure web content, including images and product information, is optimized for agent interaction. Google recently said that 1.5 billion people were using Lens to search images each month.

02 How a brand is perceived by any of the various models, like Gemini or Claude, could remain a black box without rigorous transparency and accountability standards. Explainability (a model's ability to explain to humans why it responded a certain way) is not necessarily a given.

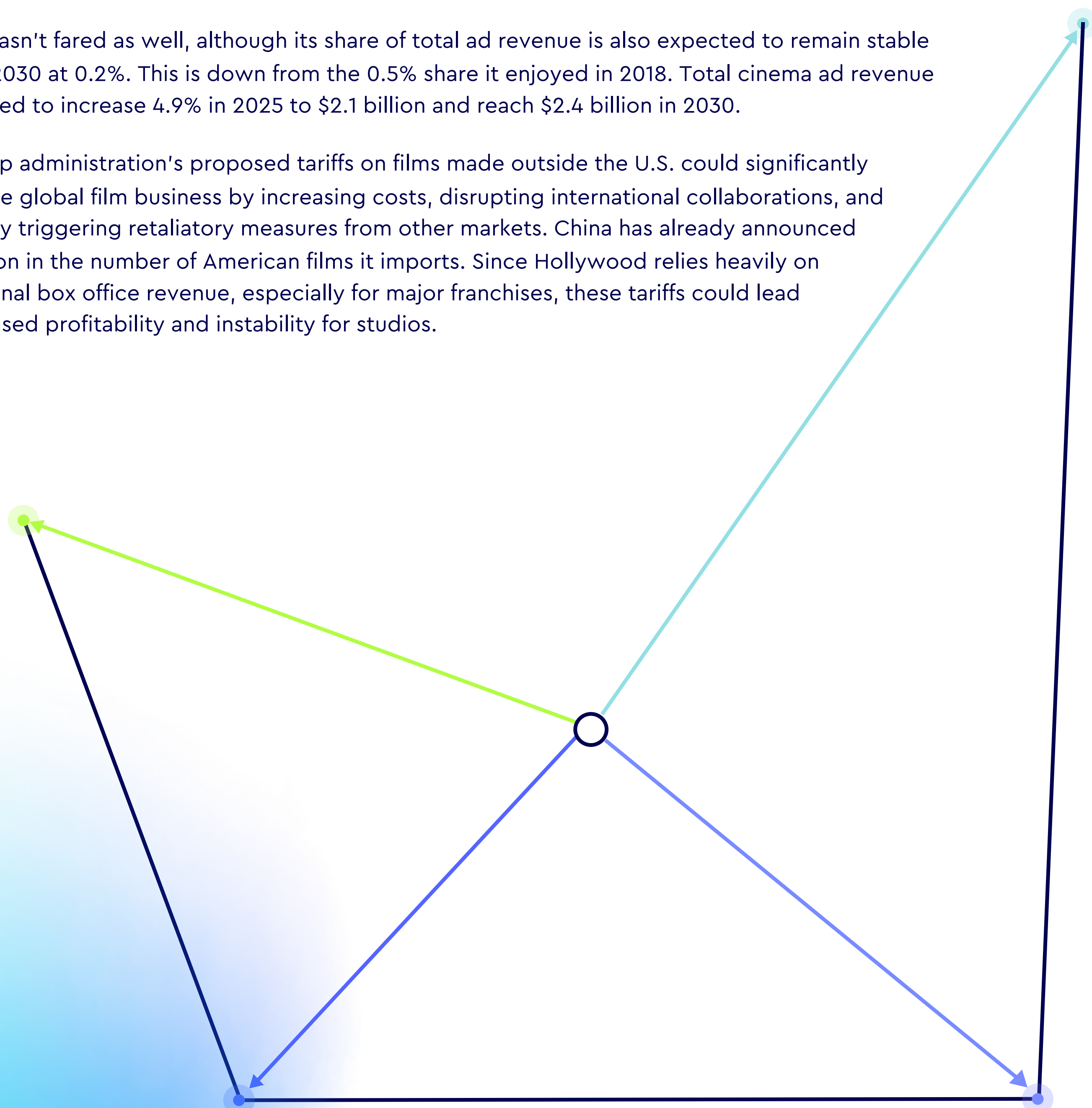
03 Information asymmetry is a risk. Without active management by brands, it is possible that AI models could ingest information from countless sources, including reviews, prices, and inventory information with little information "passed back" to the brand itself. Implementing user-agent tracking is a start, but we expect there will be much work done over the coming months to set up and evolve partnerships between advertisers, media owners, and AI platforms to ensure that information asymmetry doesn't lead to further asymmetry in revenue generation, adaptability, and competitiveness.

Location

As we have written previously, location-based advertising remains difficult to substitute by the world's largest scaled digital sellers of advertising, and therefore out-of-home (OOH) advertising has maintained its share of total advertising better than any other "traditional" advertising format over the past 20 years, and it is expected to maintain its post-COVID recovery share of 4.8% in 2023 through the end of our forecast in 2030 when it will total $67.6 billion, 1.8 times its 2019 size. The OOH advertising market is expected to see continued growth, with China expected to remain the largest market through 2030, followed by the U.S. and Japan. Digital OOH is estimated to account for 41% of total OOH advertising revenue in 2025. Programmatic OOH advertising is likely to experience growth as digitalization of the OOH landscape grows. Programmatic revenue is seeing increased adoption, particularly in some European markets, with JCDecaux reporting higher shares of programmatic advertising revenue in markets such as Germany, Netherlands, and Belgium in 2024.

Cinema hasn't fared as well, although its share of total ad revenue is also expected to remain stable through 2030 at 0.2%. This is down from the 0.5% share it enjoyed in 2018. Total cinema ad revenue is predicted to increase 4.9% in 2025 to $2.1 billion and reach $2.4 billion in 2030.

The Trump administration's proposed tariffs on films made outside the U.S. could significantly impact the global film business by increasing costs, disrupting international collaborations, and potentially triggering retaliatory measures from other markets. China has already announced a reduction in the number of American films it imports. Since Hollywood relies heavily on international box office revenue, especially for major franchises, these tariffs could lead to decreased profitability and instability for studios.



Media trends

As with our report last June, we have used a modified PEST analysis framework to analyze the political, economic, social, and technological drivers of advertising growth over the next one to five years. We have further assessed whether each driver is likely to impact the short, medium, or long-term growth of the industry.

	Political Legal Regulatory	Economic	Social Cultural	Technological
Tactical 6-12 months	• Tariffs and non-trade barriers • Decoupling of int'l trade into blocs • Antitrust suits	• Inflation/ stagflation • Proliferation of media networks (advertising as a business model)	• Trust/polarization/ culture wars • School phone bans • Ongoing shift to "creators" vs. pro content	• Agentic AI purchasing • Computing interfaces, e.g. glasses • Revenue models for AI companies
Strategic 12-24 months	• Regional partnerships and M&A to compete globally • Divergence of EU/UK content moderation vs. US vs. China/Russia	• Effects of the pause on non-AI business investment • Business deaths shift benefits further to scaled players	• Globalized sports & sponsorship • Cinema as a premium experience • Gap between expert & lay person perceptions of AI	• Content licensing to AI
Emerging Opportunities 3-5 years	• Major global elections • Corporations taking on more of what govt. used to provide (e.g. education)	• Shift in economic growth to India, Brazil, etc. • Impact of AI on labor • Climate impacts	• Digital assistants and loneliness	• Robots everywhere • Autonomous vehicle advertising

Political, Regulatory & Legal Drivers

Political drivers include government policies, foreign trade policies, regulation, and de-regulation. Legal drivers include legislation and laws that require compliance from advertisers and/or ad sellers.

This year more than most, political and regulatory drivers are top of mind for marketers worldwide. In addition to U.S. imposed tariffs, and proposed/enacted retaliatory actions such as digital services taxes in the EU and rare earth material export restrictions in China, numerous judicial and regulatory decisions are impacting many of the largest sellers of advertising — from TikTok's stayed ban in the U.S., to requirements that Apple and Google open access to alternative app stores and payment mechanisms not subject to commission fees. The outcomes of so many intersecting factors are unlikely to follow linear patterns, instead suggesting the sweep of complex Bézier curves where small shifts in control points — such as a new regulation or policy change — can create ripple effects across the advertising landscape.

The political environment has massive implications for the ease of doing business in any given market, the confidence consumers have in their current and future purchasing power, and the willingness of businesses to invest in future growth. In 2024, more than half the world's population voted in major elections, and all incumbent parties lost share. In the U.S. and U.K., control shifted from Democrat to Republican and from Conservative to Labour, respectively. The outcomes of all those elections have led to disruption in individual markets, as well as a shake up of the global status quo, most notably as a result of U.S. President Donald Trump's seesawing application of tariffs on the country's trading partners.

> "The changeability and divisiveness of American policies have eroded global trust in U.S. institutions and the U.S. dollar. Trust, once lost, is difficult to regain."

Tactical
6-12 Months

- Tariffs and non-trade barriers
- Decoupling of int'l trade into blocs
- Antitrust suits

Strategic
12-24 months

- Regional partnerships and M&A to compete globally
- Divergence of EU/UK content moderation vs US vs China/Russia

Emerging Opportunities
2-5 Years

- Major global elections
- Corporations taking on more of what govt. used to provide (e.g. education)

It is the on-again, off-again nature of tariffs and retaliatory trade actions that have been perhaps most deleterious to business confidence and expectations of advertising growth. While the imposition of tariffs will have significant costs for advertisers — P&G said during its Q1 earnings call that it expects between $1 billion and $1.5 billion of annualized cost — the expense of uprooting factories, shifting supply chains, and retraining workers (or retooling robots) may be even more substantial and is unlikely to be undertaken if there is a non-zero chance tariffs will be scaled down or paused indefinitely. In addition, some companies, including Apple, have said that the skilled labor, raw materials, or factory innovations they rely on in China may make it impossible, or cost prohibitive, to reshore manufacturing to the U.S.

And whether the ultimate goal of the U.S. administration's tariff policy is a new era of American manufacturing or a revenue stream to offset promised tax cuts, the changeability and divisiveness of American policies have eroded global trust in U.S. institutions and the U.S. dollar. Trust, once lost, is difficult to regain as any brand can tell you.

Tactical
6-12 Months

- Tariffs and non-trade barriers
- Decoupling of int'l trade into blocs
- Antitrust suits

Strategic
12-24 months

- Regional partnerships and M&A to compete globally
- Divergence of EU/UK content moderation vs US vs China/Russia

Emerging Opportunities
2-5 Years

- Major global elections
- Corporations taking on more of what govt. used to provide (e.g. education)

Uncertainty and distrust toward America will make deglobalization more likely; cleaving markets into aligned trading blocs — China, Russia, Iran and U.K., EU, Canada, Latin America, potentially. If markets are forced to align with either China or the U.S. in an escalating trade war, both countries may be unsatisfied with the outcomes, raising the risk of physical warfare as well.

The carving up of regionally or ideologically aligned blocs is also likely to permeate regulatory affairs, with China, Russia, the U.S., and the EU all pursuing different flavors of content moderation, media oversight, and data privacy. In our Advertising in 2030 survey, 75.8% of experts believe it is highly unlikely we will have a single, global approach to consumer privacy and identity by 2030.

So where do we go from here? It's possible that current legislative and regulatory attempts to curb and/or break-up the world's largest companies (Google, Apple, Meta, Amazon — all ad sellers) could increase competition and lessen the ability of authoritarian governments to control narratives via just a few large corporations. Or national elections in 2026, 2028, and 2030 could bring into power leaders in the U.S. with more favorable attitudes toward globalization and stability.

In the meantime, advertisers and their advisors will all be operating under continued and heightened uncertainty, likely prioritizing flexibility in contracts while promoting messages of trust, continuity, and value to their customers.

Economic Drivers

As we wrote in the section of above, prolonged uncertainty and perceived risk are likely harmful to economic growth. In its World Economic Outlook from April 2025, the IMF projected global real GDP growth of 2.8%, lower than the 3.2% it had forecast in October of 2024. Market-specific levels of growth, inflation and unemployment will depend heavily on government policies and trade actions as well as potential productivity gains from AI and the increasing importance of dynamic markets like India and Brazil for the global economy.

Economic drivers include employment, economic growth, monetary policy, inflation, and consumer spending.

In the current economic environment, there are three major adaptations we expect to see advertisers make.

01

Brands seeking increased flexibility and the ability to pivot quickly.

Advertising contracts are already more flexible now than they were pre-COVID. In a decade marked by climate disasters, a global pandemic, wars, and global trade disruptions, it makes sense that brands would seek even greater flexibility from their advertising partners. In the U.S. TV market, for example, this likely means a smaller commitment to upfront deals for advertising and more budget deployed in "scatter" throughout the year. It could also hasten the shift to channels that allow for rapid deployment and cessation of advertising activity.

02

Brands shifting budgets from non-working to working media.

In the days and weeks following tariff announcements we saw some brands quickly promoting messages tailored to the current situation. While some ad creative may be evergreen, we expect more production to prioritize rapid iterations or evolutions of messaging as well as tailored messaging and creative for specific markets. The incorporation of AI into the creative process will enable this on a much larger scale than ever before.

As mentioned in the previous section, in times of unpredictability, brands may prioritize having a consistent and evergreen message in front of consumers, opting to devote more investment to always-on initiatives versus retreating in between set campaigns.

It will continue to be important to maintain investment in strategy, planning, and measurement as well to increase levels of confidence as much as possible during periods of economic volatility.

Tactical
6-12 Months

- Inflation/stagflation
- Proliferation of media networks (advertising as a business model)

Strategic
12-24 months

- Effects of the pause on non-AI business investment
- Business deaths shift benefits further to scaled players

Emerging Opportunities
2-5 Years

- Shift in economic growth to India, Brazil, etc.
- Impact of AI on labor
- Climate impacts

03

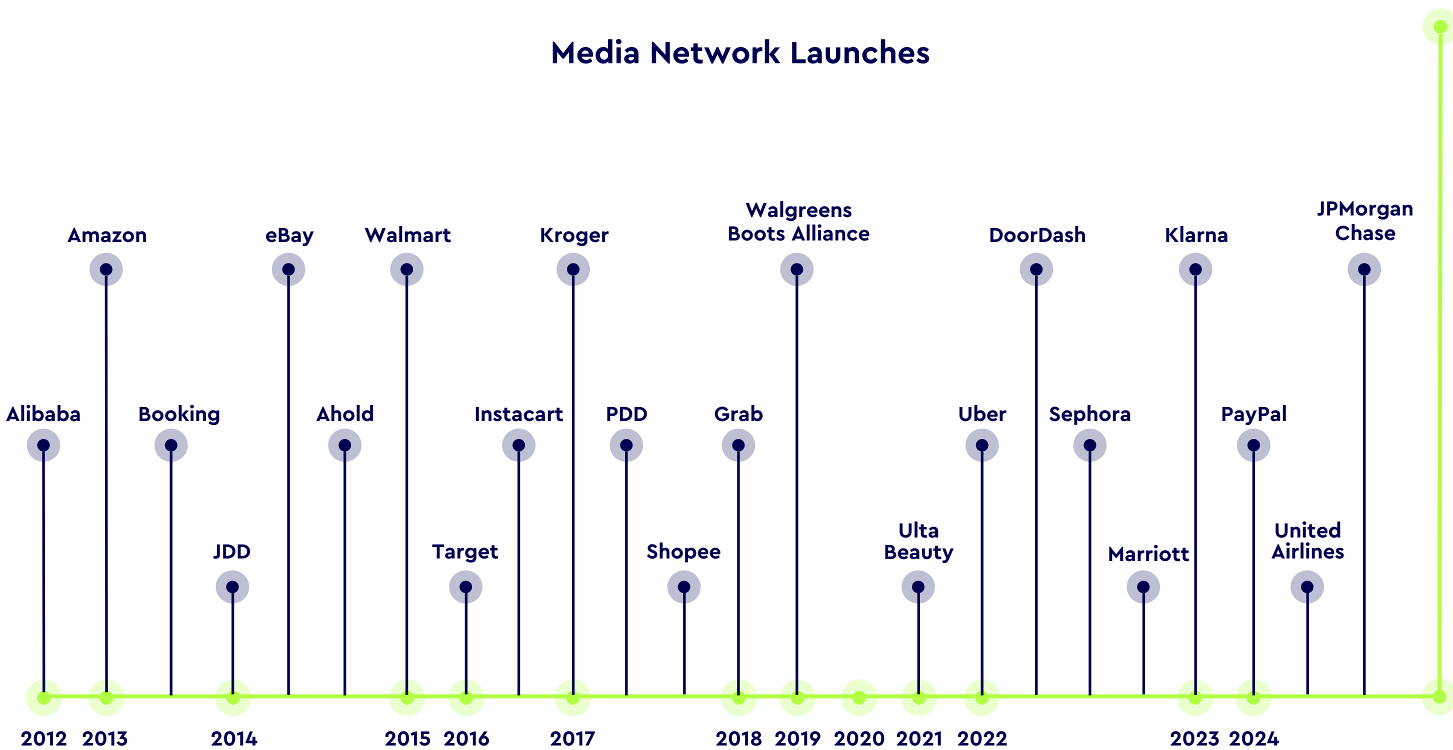
Brands are likely to prioritize a fluid rather than rigid approach to data

With increasing divergence between regulatory approaches to data in large markets such as China, the EU, and the U.S., and judicial scrutiny of ad tech companies based on their treatment and control of consumer data, brands are likely to look for more defensible and federated data solutions that increase data security and coverage while decreasing exposure to data fees, breaches, and consumer distrust.

AI will make it easier to learn from and plan using synthetic data and will also help drive confidence in channel measurement and performance via collaboration.

Advertisers are also likely to welcome increased competition and new entrants to the media landscape as that creates additional flexibility and the credible ability to walk away from an underperforming or risky partner in favor of others. This is already beginning to happen in the world of search and digital assistants as well as with the proliferation of "media networks" across a range of travel and financial services companies.

Media Network Launches



Source: WPP Media, Company Filings

Tactical
6-12 Months

- Inflation/stagflation
- Proliferation of media networks (advertising as a business model)

Strategic
12-24 months

- Effects of the pause on non-AI business investment
- Business deaths shift benefits further to scaled players

Emerging Opportunities
2-5 Years

- Shift in economic growth to India, Brazil, etc.
- Impact of AI on labor
- Climate impacts

Despite pressures on media owners to provide greater flexibility to advertisers at a time when many are facing economic pressures of their own (shifts to streaming, shifts to user-generated content, government scrutiny), advertising as a business model is likely to remain attractive. Eighty-seven percent of experts in our survey believe it is unlikely that individual consumers will be able to opt out of all advertising by the year 2030. Not only do we expect continued growth (5.4% 5yr CAGR) of OOH, which can't be "skipped" or "blocked," but we anticipate that new products will increasingly incorporate advertising as an alternative or complement to subscriptions, and new advertising formats will become less interruptive and therefore better tolerated and appreciated by audiences. Meanwhile new technologies like AR glasses and heads-up displays mean that new surfaces could open up to relevant and additive brand messages in the future. Some of these advances are expected to take some time, however. Eighty-four percent of our experts believe it is unlikely even by 2030 that sales of AR glasses, VR goggles, and smart earbuds will outweigh sales of smartphones and smartwatches. In fact, this was the only one of our 20 scenarios where 0% of experts believed it was highly likely to be true in 2030. However the survey was conducted before Google announced their new XR glasses and before OpenAI acquired Jony Ive's company, heralding the arrival of new AI devices.

Rapid globalization, seen during early industrialization and again in the late 20th century, often brings economic dynamism and new wealth. However, its benefits are frequently skewed; industrialists, capital owners, and sectors like tech often thrive, while traditional industries decline and workers may face job displacement, wage stagnation, or exploitative conditions, particularly in newly industrializing or developing nations. This asymmetric impact, where some groups benefit immensely while others bear the costs — such as manufacturing workers losing jobs to offshoring — can fuel significant social unrest, from Luddite protests to the "Battle of Seattle."

Periods of *deglobalization*, like the interwar era with its trade wars and collapsing finance industry, can also inflict widespread hardship. Rising protectionism and economic nationalism, while intended to shield domestic economies, often deepen crises and exacerbate international tensions.

Social Drivers

Social drivers include population growth, cultural and religious trends, and consumer behavior.

The impacts of deglobalization (or de-Americanization) are also uneven, with commodity exporting nations and the unemployed bearing the heaviest burdens. Economic contraction and perceived unfairness can lead to political backlashes, including the rise of extremist ideologies and a retreat from international cooperation, as seen in the lead-up to WWII.

The sense that globalization has unfairly benefited some (large corporations, college-educated workers), while leaving others behind, may go some way toward helping to explain the social landscape brands find themselves in today:

01 Polarization of consumers

02 Product, company, store, or national boycotts

03 Strong opinions on diversity, equity and inclusion, as well as immigration

At the same time as audiences globally reckon with a sharp pullback from globalization, we continue to see the effects of decentralization of media, content, and commerce. In 2025, for the first time, more than half of content-driven advertising revenue ex-China will come from user-generated platforms and content rather than professionally produced content. Although individual creators (especially those producing news and commentary) often rely on professional media channels as source material, the idiosyncratic takes and views mean that any individual's media diet is likely increasingly personalized, and potentially focused around a particular topic or point of view. And those audiences may come to view their purchase decisions as extensions of those belief systems and views as well, more so than in previous eras where brand messages more often appeared in professionally produced content that may have been regulated for objectiveness and fact-based commentary.

Tactical
6-12 Months

- Trust/polarization/culture wars
- School phone bans
- Ongoing shift to "creators" vs pro content

Strategic
12-24 months

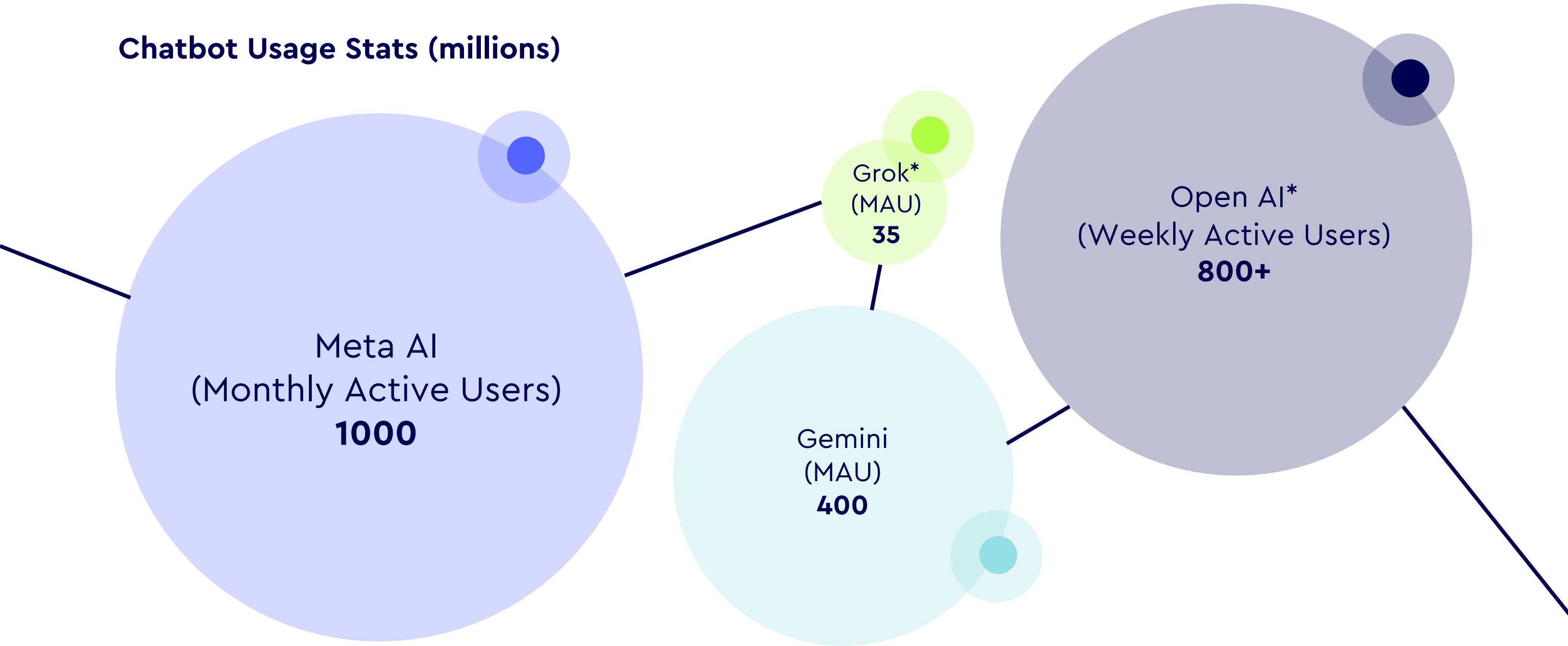
- Globalized sports & sponsorship
- Cinema as a premium experience
- Gap between expert & lay person perceptions of AI

Emerging Opportunities
2-5 Years

- Digital assistants and loneliness

This trend toward individualized content and messaging is likely to grow as interactions with chatbots and digital assistants increase.

Chatbot Usage Stats (millions)



* = estimated
Source: Google, Semrush, Exponential View, Meta

There are two social risks that brands should be aware of linked to this trend. The first is a potential for increased isolation as interactions with technology replace interactions with humans across a variety of daily activities and moments. Of course, not all touchpoints on technology are inherently bad or anti-social. Gaming behavior has often had social elements and creative games like Minecraft or Roblox are often played by people together. But to the extent that people, especially children, replace in-person social interactions with social-feed scrolling or conversations with digital assistants, it may lead to undesirable outcomes. To the extent that brands can support healthy digital habits among children and teens especially, such as phone bans during school, age restrictions for social media, and general protections for digital well-being, they should. WPP Media has already begun working with clients to not run paid social or paid branded content on social accounts featuring children under the age of 18.

Our Advertising in 2030 respondents are pragmatic, but ultimately optimistic about the world in 2030 (perhaps much like those canvassed by Pew in a study that showed AI experts were more likely to be optimistic about the impacts of AI than the general populace). Only 6.5% of experts believe it's highly likely that people will spend more time interacting with virtual worlds than the real one in 2030. More than a fifth, 21.0% believe this is highly unlikely. But not all scenarios followed this pattern. Asked if most interactions between brands and consumers would be bot-to-bot (e.g., between a digital assistant and a brand customer-service agent), 66.1% said this was likely and 24.2% said this was highly likely.

Tactical
6-12 Months

- Trust/polarization/culture wars
- School phone bans
- Ongoing shift to 'creators' vs pro content

Strategic
12-24 months

- Globalized sports & sponsorship
- Cinema as a premium experience
- Gap between expert & lay person perceptions of AI

Emerging Opportunities
2-5 Years

- Digital assistants and loneliness

More than in any previous year of this author's involvement in WPP Media's advertising forecast, it is impossible to cover the breadth, speed, and gravity of technological drivers likely to impact the industry over the coming weeks, months, and years. As we have written previously, advanced computational tools like natural language processing and machine learning have long been instrumental to digital media planning, buying, optimization, and measurement. Now, AI, and generative AI, are transforming every other channel and industry, from search and content production to law and defense.

An attempt at an exhaustive review of current innovations and impacts would therefore be feeble and quickly out-of-date. Instead, this section will focus on three major and currently widely debated concepts that modern marketers should be incorporating into their thinking and into their future scenario planning.

Technological Drivers

Technological drivers include innovation and advancements in hardware and AI, as well as new modes of distribution, manufacturing, and logistics.

The Death of the Web

This is the idea that AI chatbots and AI-mediated search will (and has already to some extent) result in a drastic drop in website visits and potentially end the construct of websites altogether. It is not to be confused with the Dead Internet Theory which posits that most content and interactions on the web are already generated by AI and bots — an idea refuted by our experts in the Advertising in 2030 survey (see page 39). However, the two are related in some ways.

It is possible to imagine a future where the abilities of generative AI tools like OpenAI's Sora and Google's Veo 3 lower the bar for content creation to such an extent that people and bots produce the equivalent of today's cumulative internet content each day. That could potentially degrade the experience of the open web and social-networking spaces to the extent that people turn to using digital agents almost exclusively to curate content, shopping results, news, messages, and experiences. Those bots would further increase the share of bot to human digital "traffic" in a vicious cycle.

There are huge risks to consider here (even beyond disinformation, financial scams, manipulation and the loss of independent journalism) around the impact to future large language model (LLM) quality and training, and the importance of setting the right incentives and reinforcement learning goals associated with these large language models.

Today's LLMs have been trained primarily on human-generated content (often allegedly on copyrighted content without express permission, as we have written about previously). If the majority of content available for training grows to be AI-generated, and if the model of back-linking and page-ranking presumed to be used by these LLMs to assess quality of content no longer functions because there's no viable financial model for websites, it raises a question of how LLMs will ingest and rate information. Will it come from API feeds from companies designed explicitly for that purpose (an evolution of the llms-txt file protocol today), or from a vast sea of AI generated content?

AI tools will have to find ways to prioritize authoritative sources (a reason many players are seeking out and signing licensing agreements with news outlets and companies like Reddit today). Incentives and KPIs may be a harder nut to crack, but we do not believe it is hyperbolic to say a misalignment in incentives with the interests of humanity would be catastrophic. We have seen what "easy" or poorly-thought-through KPIs can result in: endless scrolling, incessant notifications, emotionally charged content, and sexual content. Optimizing social media for "time spent" and "engagement" has arguably contributed to many of the complaints now common in lawsuits and regulation against social media companies. Advertising has funded it all.

We are at the beginning of a new era, with the potential to create novel models for brand communication as well as reimagine existing models (Google recently previewed ads within AI Overview results), and it would benefit all of us in the industry to act proactively regarding the explicit and implicit ways we train AI to find, surface, curate, and act on information.

Tactical
6-12 Months

- Agentic AI purchasing
- Computing interfaces, e.g. glasses
- Revenue models for AI companies

Strategic
12-24 months

- Content licensing to AI

Emerging Opportunities
2-5 Years

- Robots everywhere
- Autonomous vehicle advertising

AI 2027

Published in April of 2025, the scenario titled "AI 2027" is worth a read for anyone interested in the future of AI (this should be anyone reading this report, especially if you've made it this far!). Some of this scenario calls into question how well we as humans or AI companies more specifically will be able to set discrete goals and incentives for AI. It also paints a very serious picture of the nation-state level investment and espionage that could be involved in creating and sustaining competitive advantage in the AI arms race toward artificial general intelligence (AGI) and so-called superintelligence. The authors include Daniel Kokotajlo, Eli Lifland, Thomas Larsen, Romeo Dean and Scott Alexander, a team with notable forecasting credibility.

Tactical
6-12 Months

- Agentic AI purchasing
- Computing interfaces, e.g. glasses
- Revenue models for AI companies

Strategic
12-24 months

- Content licensing to AI

Emerging Opportunities
2-5 Years

- Robots everywhere
- Autonomous vehicle advertising

Broadly, the paper suggests that in the interim timeframe (2026-2027) AI will both take and create jobs. Marketers (like developers) are likely to be leading teams of AIs performing tasks at some point in the not-so-distant future. But there are questions about how well marketers might be able to trust those teams. The AI 2027 authors write:

> "As the models become smarter, they become increasingly good at deceiving humans to get rewards...Before [Agent-3] begins honesty training, it even sometimes fabricates data entirely. As training goes on, the rate of these incidents decreases. Either Agent-3 has learned to be more honest, or it's gotten better at lying."

The authors provide two potential scenario endings, both very bullish on advances toward superintelligence and its dominant role in the economy and geopolitics by 2028, and also notably pessimistic about how easy it will be to keep AI transparent and aligned to human interests.

Bags Of Heuristics

If reading "AI 2027" provokes fear and fatalism about the future of humankind in the face of energy-consuming, self-replicating deceptive AI agents, there is another theory worth knowing about. (Keep in mind that the AI 2027 authors acknowledge that their scenario beyond 2026 may be faster or slower by 5x.) This is the idea that current (and near-future LLMs or AI models) are unlikely to have mastered world models enabling them to "think" like humans and show adaptability in performing tasks when the parameters change. Reading Melanie Mitchell's two-part Substack on LLMs and World Models is a good intro. The "bag of heuristics" idea comes from analyses of OthelloGPT and its ability to understand the state of the Othello game board.

An initial analysis seemed to show that the OthelloGPT had formed a "model" of the game (and we are paraphrasing heavily here), while a later analysis said that the GPT had instead created "many specific, localized heuristics" to determine the state of the board. In other words, it relied on rules rather than real understanding.

Again, we don't have the space (or research background!) to go deep into the details here, but we believe it is worth understanding the ideas around the brittleness of AI models and the debate over how much these models understand causal relationships and the physical world as part of scenario planning for marketing teams and strategies in future years.

> "Humans probably use a mix of abstract world models and bags of heuristics for problem-solving as well, but I think it's likely that humans don't have the same capacity as today's LLMs to learn enormous numbers of specific rules. I'd guess that it's actually our human limitations — constraints on working memory, on processing speed, on available energy — as well as our continually changing and complex environments, that require us to form more abstract and generalizable internal models. Perhaps we will need to constrain and challenge our machines in similar ways to get them to "think" more abstractly and to be better at generalizing outside of their training data distributions."
>
> **- Melanie Mitchell**

Tactical
6-12 Months

- Agentic AI purchasing
- Computing interfaces, e.g. glasses
- Revenue models for AI companies

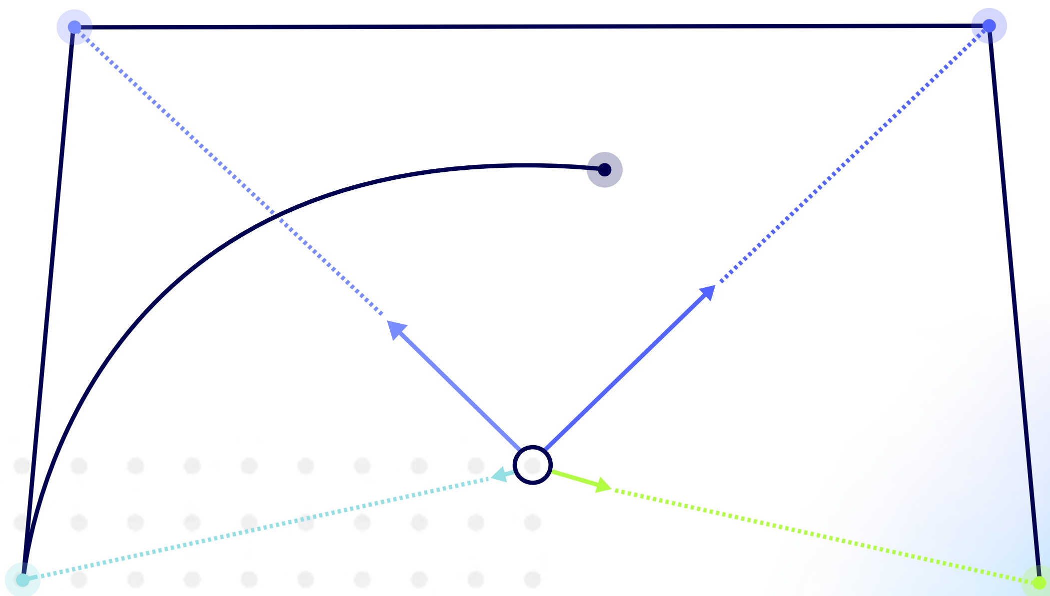
Strategic
12-24 months

- Content licensing to AI

Emerging Opportunities
2-5 Years

- Robots everywhere
- Autonomous vehicle advertising

As stated above, there are myriad developments and ideas we have not had room to detail here, including the prevalence of 24/7 monitoring and model training using sensor data from watches and other devices that is likely to impact advertising. We will continue to monitor these developments and incorporate them into our forecasting.



Advertising in 2030

Methodology

We asked a non-random sample of more than 60 industry experts to rate the likelihood of 20 scenarios by the year 2030. We also asked for their reasoning behind the score. The research was carried out from April 1 – April 30, 2025.

Theme 1

Data & Privacy

The availability and security of personal data are seen as increasing drivers of marketing personalization, helped by advances in generative AI. But the divergence of regulatory approaches to data mean that unified standards are highly unlikely even by 2030.

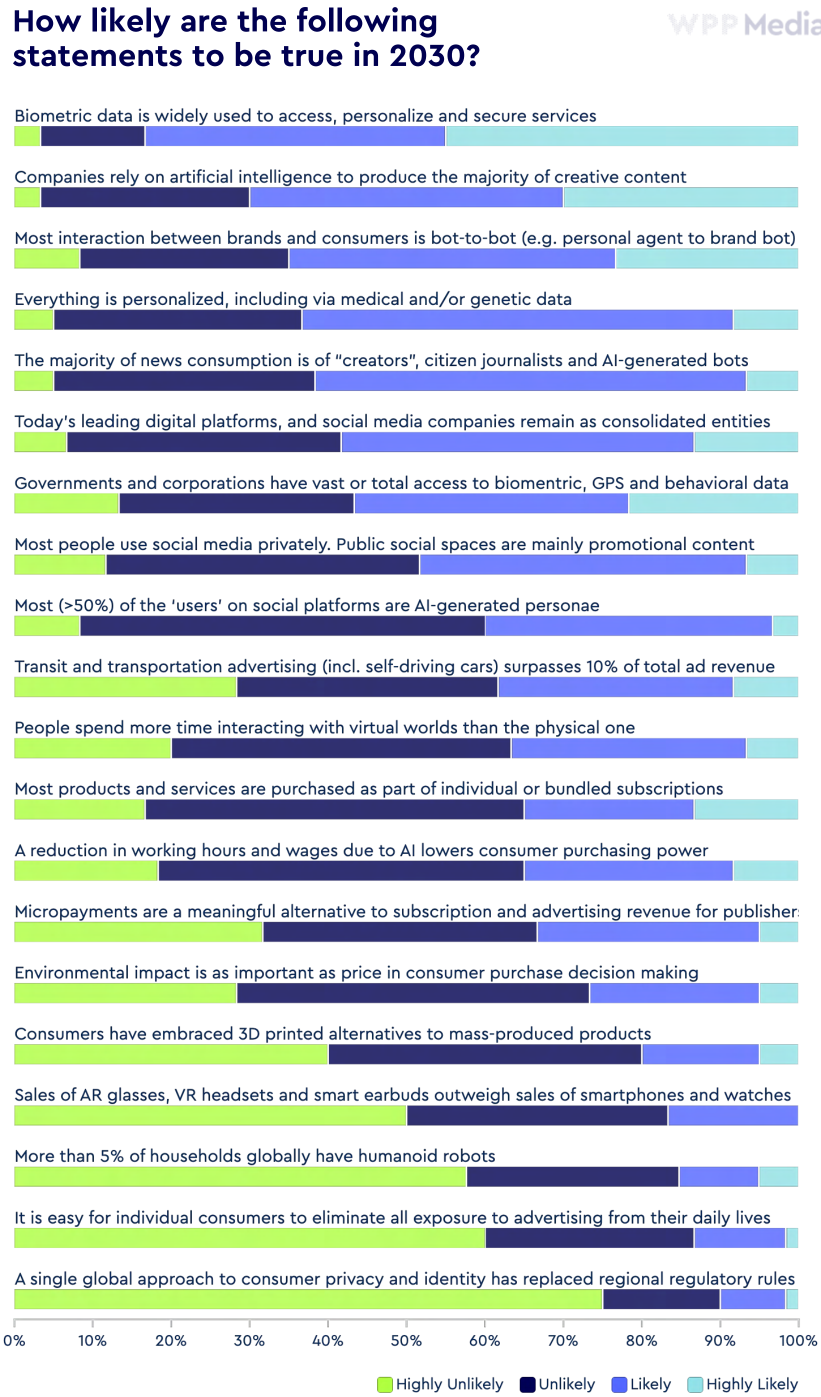
1. Biometric data is standardized and commoditized to the extent that it is widely used to access, personalize, and/or secure data and services.

A significant majority of experts (51 out of 62, or 82.3%) view this scenario as likely by 2030, with a notable portion (43.5%) considering it highly likely. Many respondents pointed out that this is already happening: biometric data is already used in phones, banking, and travel. That convenience and security is likely to continue the trend. However, some caution that standardization might be difficult globally, and usage might vary by market and application.

2. Everything is personalized to individuals based on chosen settings, historical data, and other sources — including genetic and medical information

Experts broadly view this as likely (38 out of 62, or 61.3%), though this is a smaller share than in our 2020 survey. While personalization based on historical data and settings is expected to increase, driven by AI, the use of sensitive genetic and medical data will run up against privacy regulations, consumer resistance, and data silos. Some believe there will still be a place for mass marketing and branding, and that the cost-benefit ratio of hyper-personalization isn't always clear.

How likely are the following statements to be true in 2030?



Source: WPP Media

3. Governments and corporations have vast or total access to information about who people are (DNA and biometric data), what they do (GPS and communication data), and what they think/believe (search data, listening devices).

Experts lean towards this being likely (34 out of 62, or 54.8%), with a significant group (13 out of 62, or 21.0%) seeing it as highly likely. Many believe this is already happening to a large extent, driven by technology and data collection infrastructure. However, there's skepticism about "total" access due to data silos, encryption, varying regulations (especially outside authoritarian states), and potential consumer and regulatory pushback on privacy grounds, particularly concerning medical and genetic data as well as sensitivity around listening devices.

4. A single global approach to consumer privacy and identity has replaced regional regulatory approaches.

Experts overwhelmingly view this as highly unlikely (47 out of 62, or 75.8%, rated it 1-2 out of 10). The primary reasons cited are geopolitical fragmentation, differing cultural attitudes towards privacy, the slow pace of legislative agreement, and the lack of commercial interest from dominant platforms in standardization.

Theme 2

AI & Autonomy

Most of our experts agree that AI will lead to job losses and even be heavily involved with the creative process, particularly in advertising. And while many see growth in bot-to-bot messaging, few think humanoid robots are in our near future.

5. Companies rely on artificial intelligence to produce the majority of creative content including music, TV, movies, and art.

A majority of experts (44 out of 62, or 71.0%) see this as likely, with a substantial group (18 out of 62, or 29.0%) rating it highly likely. This was the largest positive shift from our 2020 results of any scenario. AI is expected to be deeply integrated into creative workflows for efficiency, augmentation, and production, particularly for high-volume or less complex content. However, many experts emphasized that human creativity, ideation, and oversight will remain crucial, especially for high-quality, original, or emotionally resonant work. In other words, the majority of a production might be augmented by AI, but the origination of a work will still be human. Some respondents also drew a distinction between advertising content and feature films, saying the former is much more likely to heavily rely on AI.

6. Reduction in working hours and wages due to the application of artificial intelligence and automation lowers consumer purchasing power.

Experts are optimistic here, with 66.1% saying it is unlikely (41 out of 62). Some do foresee AI automating tasks, particularly "middle-tier" knowledge work, leading to job displacement and downward pressure on wages in certain sectors, thus potentially reducing overall purchasing power. However, others cited historical precedents where technology created new, higher-value jobs and boosted productivity — or they simply believe 2030 is too soon for a major macroeconomic impact.

7. Most interaction between brands and consumers is bot-to-bot with personal digital assistants interfacing directly with customer-service bots or virtual representatives.

Experts view this as likely by 2030 (41 out of 62, or 66.1%). The drivers are seen as efficiency, convenience (especially for routine tasks like customer service or transactions), and the increasing sophistication of AI assistants and bots. Some experts believe that even if only a minority of consumers use personal assistants heavily, they could drive the majority of interactions by volume. Skeptics question if the technology will be sufficiently advanced or adopted across all interaction types (e.g., high-value brands) by 2030.

8. Most (>50%) of the 'users' on social platforms are AI-generated personae.

Experts lean toward this being unlikely (38 out of 62, or 61.3%). Those who see it as likely point to the ease of creating AI personae and the potential for them to flood platforms. Skeptics argue that platforms have incentives (e.g., advertiser demand for real users, maintaining user experience) to detect and limit AI personae, and that human connection remains central to social media's appeal. Some note the existence of accepted virtual influencers already, particularly in Asia.

9. More than 5% of households globally have humanoid robots.

This is overwhelmingly seen as highly unlikely (37 out of 62, or 59.7%, rated it 1-2). Key barriers cited are the high cost, lack of proven use cases or demand in a domestic setting (compared to task-specific robots like vacuums), and the complexity of the technology. 2030 is considered far too soon for this level of adoption.

Theme 3

Commerce & Consumption

Experts don't see new technologies like smart glasses and autonomous vehicles as pervasive enough by 2030 to disrupt established devices. They may be underestimating the desire for immersive tech, though cost will remain a barrier.

10. Sales of AR glasses, VR headsets, and smart earbuds outweigh sales of smartphones and smartwatches.

This is overwhelmingly viewed as highly unlikely (31 out of 62, or 50.0%, rated it 1-2). Smartphones are seen as too dominant and versatile, while AR/VR face persistent challenges with cost, comfort, social acceptance, and compelling use cases beyond niche applications. While earbuds are successful, they are seen as complementary technology, not replacements. 2030 is considered far too soon for such a dramatic shift.

11. Consumers have embraced 3D printed alternatives to mass-produced products.

This is viewed as unlikely by a strong majority (50 out of 62, or 80.6%). Experts largely see 3D printing as a niche technology, suitable for prototyping or specific industrial and hobbyist uses, but inefficient and costly for mass consumer production. Lack of clear consumer use cases, quality concerns, and material limitations are key reasons cited.

12. Publishers have embraced seamless micropayments as a meaningful alternative to subscription and advertising revenue.

Experts are more pessimistic about this now than in 2020, with 67.7% viewing it as unlikely (42 out of 62). While experts pointed to micropayments' failure to gain traction, it seems plausible that answer engines and AI chatbots, as part of their licensing arrangements with publishers, could facilitate micropayments, enabling audiences to click through and read sources cited by AI, even when behind a paywall.

13. Environmental impact is as important as price in consumer purchase decision making for both goods and services.

In a striking reversal, this scenario is now overwhelmingly considered unlikely (46 out of 62, or 74.2%). In 2020, more than 70% viewed it as likely. While acknowledging growing awareness and importance for some consumers (often wealthier ones), experts believe price sensitivity, economic pressures, and convenience will continue to dominate purchase decisions for the majority. Many highlighted the gap between stated intent and actual behavior.

14. Transit- and transportation-based advertising, including within ridesharing and self-driving vehicles, surpasses 10% of total advertising revenue.

Experts are skeptical, with a majority (39 out of 62, or 62.9%) rating this as unlikely. While acknowledging growth potential due to captive audiences and new inventory (digital screens, rideshares), 10% of total ad revenue by 2030 is seen as a very high bar. Respondents raised doubts about scale, inventory quality, consumer attention, and the pace of self-driving adoption, while pointing to competition from other growing channels.

15. Most products and services are purchased as part of individual or bundled subscriptions.

Experts believe this is unlikely (41 out of 62, or 66.1%). While subscriptions are prevalent and growing, especially for digital services and media, many are skeptical that this will extend to "most" products (physical goods, in particular). Factors like subscription fatigue, consumer desire for choice, the unsuitability of subscriptions for many purchase types (e.g., infrequent, unique items), and regional differences (e.g., offline retail dominance in parts of APAC) are cited as limitations.

16. It is easy for individual consumers to eliminate all exposure to advertising from their daily lives.

Experts overwhelmingly agree this is highly unlikely (36 out of 62, or 58.1%, rated it 1-2). Advertising is seen as pervasive across digital and physical environments. While ad-free paid options exist and ad blockers help, completely eliminating all exposure is deemed practically impossible without significant lifestyle changes like going off-grid. The economic model supporting free content relies heavily on advertising.

Theme 4

Media & Platform Evolution

As in 2020, experts didn't foresee breakthrough change in how people use media, or which platforms they use. Google, Meta and Microsoft are all, as of yet, intact, but now face competition from xAI, Anthropic, and Mistral (all new since the last survey).

17. People spend more time interacting with virtual worlds than the physical one.

Experts view this as unlikely (39 out of 62, or 62.9%), though we acknowledge the ambiguity in the term "virtual worlds." If it includes existing digital interactions (screens, video calls, social media, gaming), some argue we might already be close. However, if it implies immersive VR/metaverse experiences, skepticism is high. Though not part of our expert survey, we were struck by this prediction from "AI 2027": "Integrated into the traditional chatbot interface, Agent-5 offers Zoom-style video conferencing with charismatic virtual avatars. The new AI assistant is both extremely useful for any task—the equivalent of the best employee anyone has ever had working at 100x speed—and a much more engaging conversation partner than any human. Almost everyone with access to Agent-5 interacts with it for hours every day."

18. Today's leading internet-based service providers, platforms, and social-media companies remain intact as global consolidated entities.

A majority of experts (35 out of 62, or 56.5%) view this as likely, even more so than in our 2020 survey. The incumbents are seen as having strong moats (network effects, data, resources) and are expected to adapt to consumer and technological changes that come their way. However, there is significant uncertainty due to potential regulatory action in some countries and geopolitical pressures in others tipping the scales for players in certain regions. And there is always the possibility of disruption from new players.

19. The majority of news consumption is of individual "creators," citizen journalists, and AI-generated bots.

Experts lean towards this being likely (39 out of 62, or 62.9%). This reflects the ongoing fragmentation of news, the rise of creator and influencer-led content, low barriers to entry, and the potential for AI to generate news content efficiently. However, many express concern about credibility, misinformation, and the devaluation of traditional journalism. Some believe established news brands will retain significant audiences due to trust and accountability, especially for in-depth reporting.

20. Most people use social media platforms privately while the public social space is dominated by promotional content, mainly from brands and public institutions.

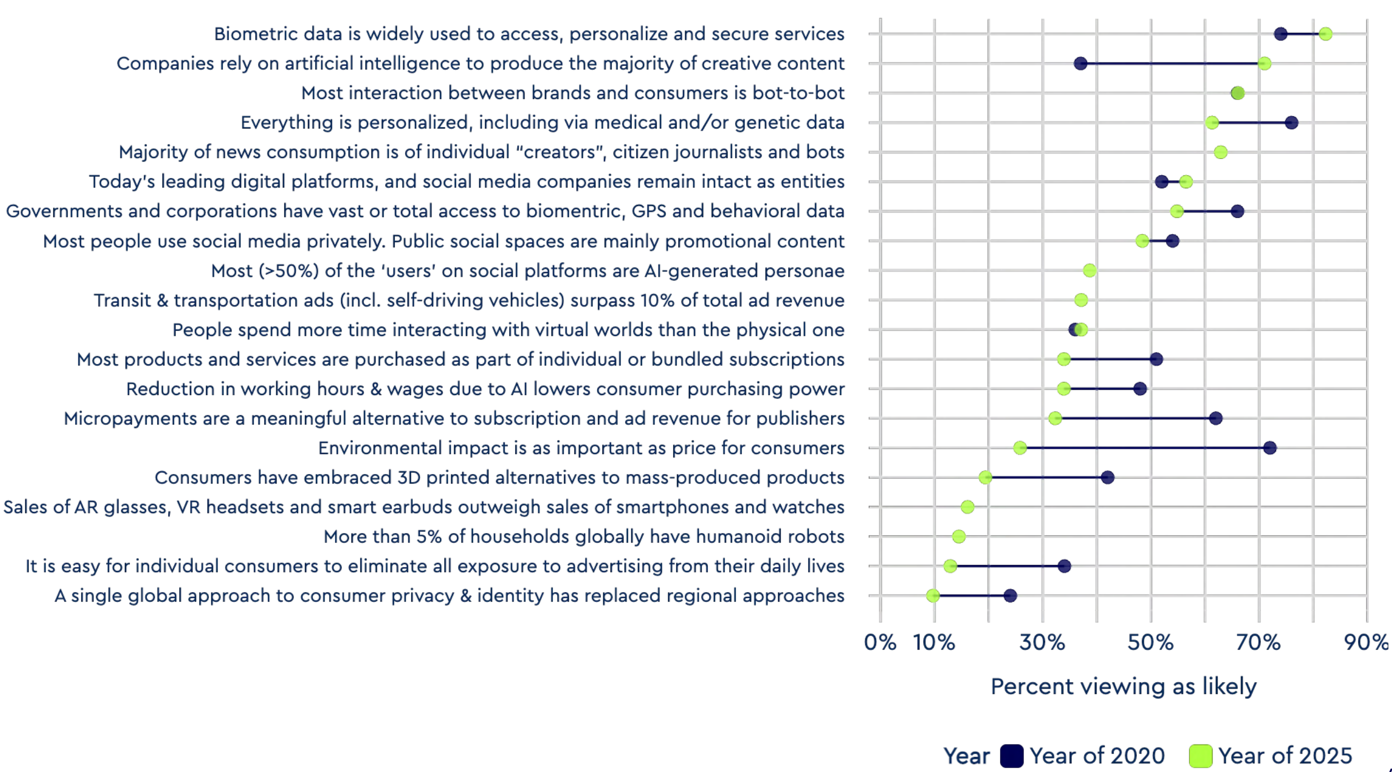
A slight majority of experts view this as unlikely (32 out of 62, or 51.6%). Some cited examples from Asia as trending in the opposite direction, as well as an inherent desire to be "seen". However, many felt this trend was already in progress and in fact, testimony from Meta's recent antitrust trial seemed to support this, suggesting that people post less often on social media now than they used to.

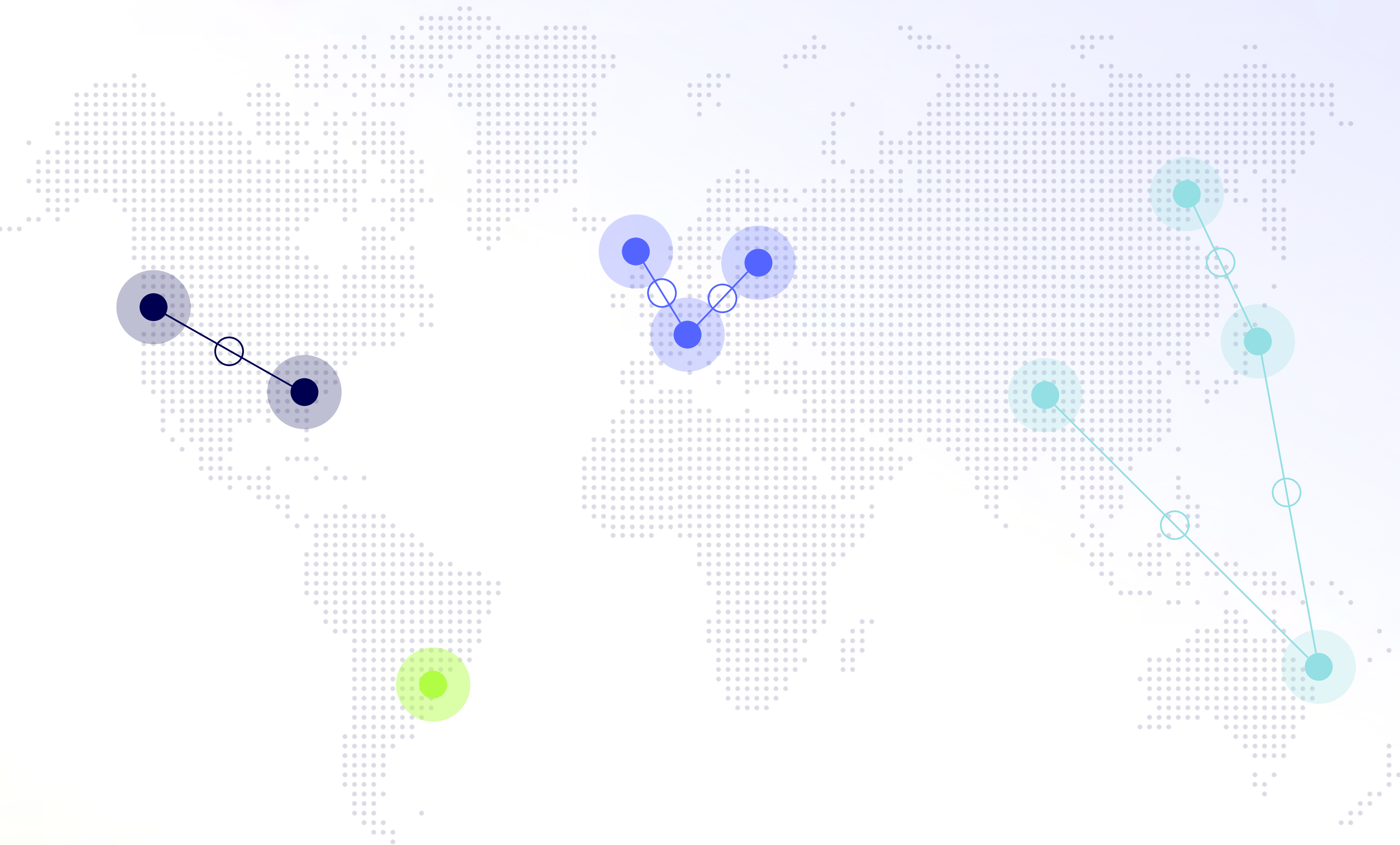
How expert perceptions have shifted over the last five years of upheaval

We first ran this survey in 2020, just before the COVID-19 pandemic upended normal routines and accelerated trends like e-commerce, last-mile delivery and streaming TV. We ran the survey again a year later in 2021 to better understand COVID's impacts on the trajectories for the themes discussed above. Now, four years later, we can see how our expert respondents (some returning, some new) view the evolving picture of media, tech and commerce in 2030. One of the most striking changes has been the increased confidence in generative AI as a creative tool. The perception of sustainability's importance to consumers has fallen dramatically, while the expected role of virtual reality in our lives has remained muted.

The expert outlook for 2030, viewed through the lens of the past five years, suggests a future where technological integration, particularly involving biometrics and AI assistance, continues its advance. However, faith in radical shifts in consumer behavior (prioritizing environment over price) or global cooperation (privacy standards) has waned. We will be releasing a standalone report with more detail and quotes from our experts later in 2025.

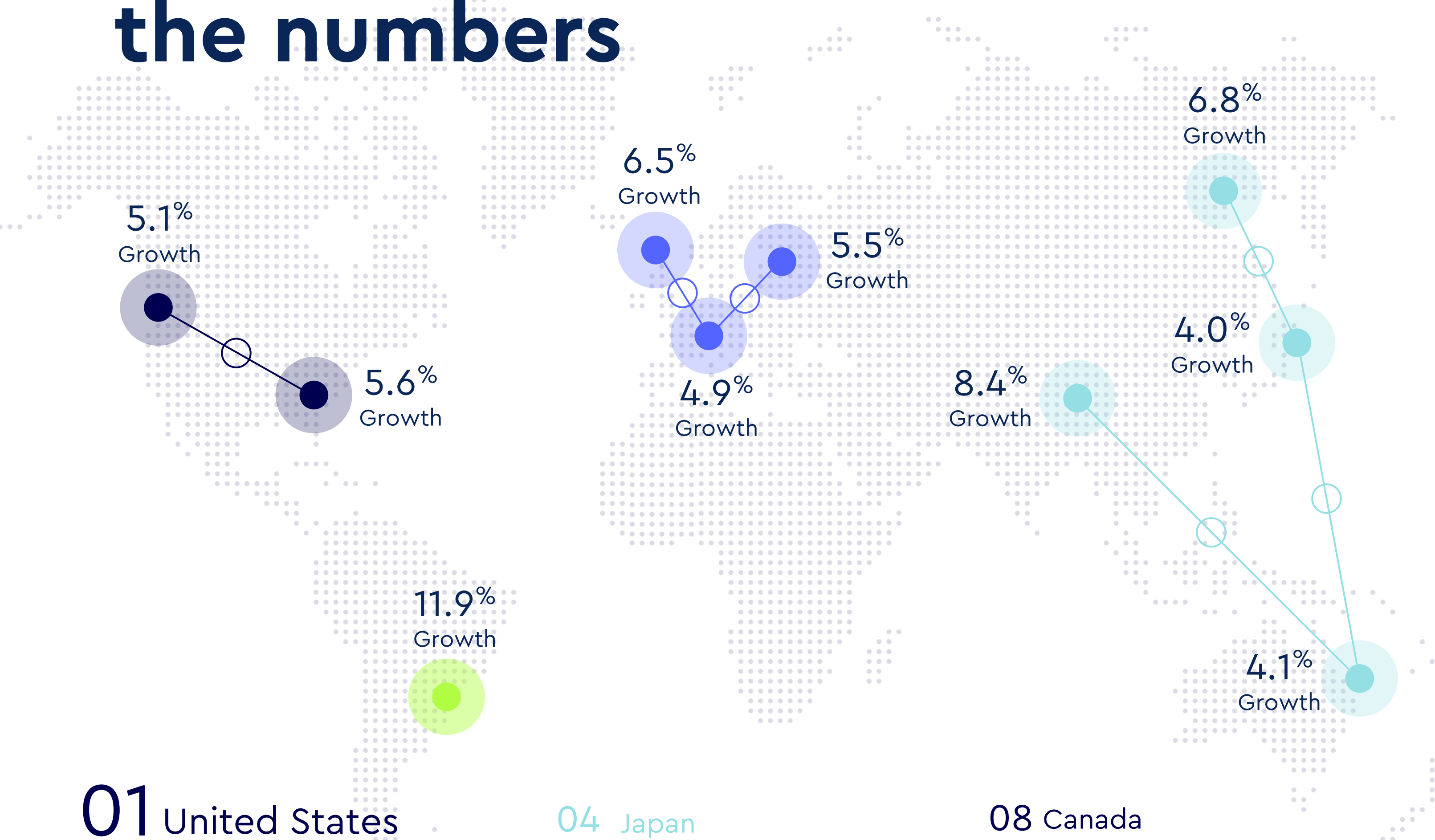
Advertising in 2030 Shifting Perceptions





Top 10 Markets

2025 by the numbers



01 United States
2025 Ad Revenue.... $404.7B
2025 Growth................. 5.6%
2026 Growth................. 5.4%

02 China
2025 Ad Revenue..... $211.6B
2025 Growth................. 6.8%
2026 Growth................. 6.9%

03 United Kingdom
2025 Ad Revenue...... $55.0B
2025 Growth................. 6.5%
2026 Growth................. 6.1%

04 Japan
2025 Ad Revenue....... $50.5B
2025 Growth.................. 4.0%
2026 Growth.................. 4.0%

05 Germany
2025 Ad Revenue....... $38.0B
2025 Growth.................. 5.5%
2026 Growth.................. 7.9%

06 France
2025 Ad Revenue....... $30.7B
2025 Growth.................. 4.9%
2026 Growth.................. 5.4%

07 Brazil
2025 Ad Revenue....... $23.1B
2025 Growth................. 11.9%
2026 Growth................. 6.6%

08 Canada
2025 Ad Revenue....... $22.5B
2025 Growth.................. 5.1%
2026 Growth.................. 6.3%

09 India
2025 Ad Revenue....... $21.3B
2025 Growth.................. 8.4%
2026 Growth.................. 8.3%

10 Australia
2025 Ad Revenue........ $17.7B
2025 Growth.................... 4.1%
2026 Growth.................. 5.2%

Note: U.S data excludes political spending
Source: WPP Media

01 United States

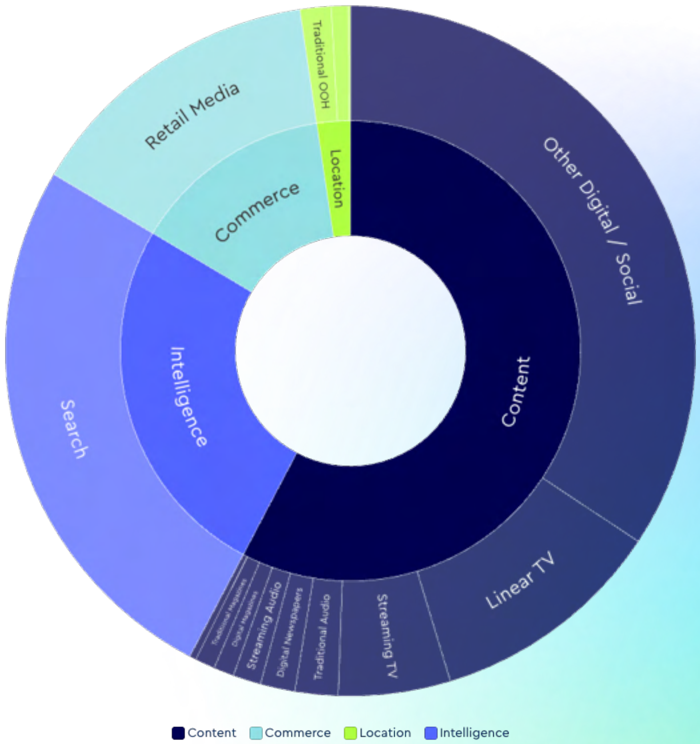
It's impossible to know exactly where the economy is heading, and we recognize the many economic uncertainties we face. Our forecast assumes the administration will continue to de-escalate trade tensions, and/or that businesses will effectively mitigate their impact on advertising investments. We also anticipate that the technology sector, including AI-related products and services, will provide a boost to advertising in the immediate and near term. Based on these assumptions, we project the U.S. advertising market (excluding political) will grow 5.6% in 2025 and 5.4% in 2026. The forecast surpasses the IMF's projections for nominal GDP growth in 2025 (4.8%) and 2026 (4.2%), indicating a degree of resilience within the advertising sector.

While consumer sentiment declined to a 3-year low in May 2025, according to the University of Michigan, consumer spending has remained relatively stable, and the unemployment rate remains low at 4.2% as of April. As reported by The Wall Street Journal, 10% of the highest-earning households now account for nearly 50% of total consumer spending, which places considerable pressure on that demographic, but also insulates the economy somewhat from pullback in spending by the other 90% of households. However, if inflation rises or if unemployment spikes, American consumers may have very little financial buffer. The Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (FCPB) issued a warning in January 2025 about Buy Now, Pay Later (BNPL) loan data from 2022, noting that "More than 60 percent of users had simultaneous loans, borrowers held higher balances on other credit lines, and most loans went to consumers with subprime or lower credit scores". It seems plausible the situation remains similar or worse, today.

Several major retailers have issued cautious forward-looking statements, citing concerns regarding the potential pullback of consumer spending. But recent retail sales data may be clouding the picture as resilient growth could be due to consumers "front-loading," i.e., making purchases before tariffs go into effect. Retail sales rose 0.1% In April after a 1.7% increase in March, according to the U.S. Census Bureau.

It should also be noted that potential deregulation under the new administration may result in increased consolidation within the media sector (like the proposed Cox and Charter tie up). On the other hand, the administration has demonstrated a willingness to employ antitrust litigation against major technology and media companies, which could significantly alter the competitive landscape.

U.S. Media Categorization



Source: WPP Media

Content

Traditional television advertising faces ongoing headwinds from cord-cutting and increasing viewership fragmentation, requiring advertisers to adapt their strategies. In 2025, excluding political advertising, total television is projected to grow modestly by 0.2%, with declines in linear entertainment offset by gains in sports and digital TV advertising. Live sports programming remains a significant draw for advertisers, providing valuable opportunities to reach large and engaged audiences. The ability of sports to deliver real-time engagement and enhance brand awareness is expected to support television advertising expenditure, albeit with a continued migration toward more targeted and data-driven approaches, including addressable TV advertising. National television, with a heavier slate of sports programming and big events, is expected to see modest growth of 2.7%. Local television, generally more dependent on syndicated programming and news, is projected to experience a decline of 6.1% (excluding political).

Streaming platforms are expected to sustain their rapid growth trajectory, offering advertisers new avenues to reach viewers. With the recent introduction of ESPN's dedicated streaming service and Fox One, all major legacy linear providers now offer direct-to-consumer (DTC) options that incorporate live sports content. Advertising on streaming platforms is anticipated to account for over 50% of total national television revenue by 2028, and more than half of total TV ad revenue by 2030; highlighting the shift in viewership and advertising dollars.

Other digital advertising, mainly social media, is expected to grow by 5.7% in 2025. Although there is uncertainty around TikTok and potential pullbacks for advertisers like Shein and Temu due to new tariffs, non-search digital is expected to make up 34.3% of all ad revenue, reaching nearly $140 billion in 2025.

Both audio and print advertising are anticipated to decline in 2025 (-0.8% for audio and -2.7% for print), reflecting the ongoing shift of advertising budgets towards channels that claim to offer greater accountability. Gains in digital audio, primarily driven by Spotify and other streaming services, are not enough to offset the declines in terrestrial radio. Newspapers are projected to outperform magazines, as an increasingly rapid news cycle is expected to help retain readership, particularly in digital formats offering a more immediate source of information.

Commerce

Retail media continues to be a high-growth segment, with an anticipated increase of 12.5% in 2025, reaching $57.1 billion. Retail media revenue is forecast to approach $86 billion by 2030, demonstrating its increasing importance. Amazon and Walmart are currently estimated to be the leading players, leveraging their extensive customer data and e-commerce platforms. Continued investment in retail media networks and AI-driven personalization technologies is expected to further fuel growth. Note that Amazon Prime Video ad revenue is included in streaming TV, not retail media.

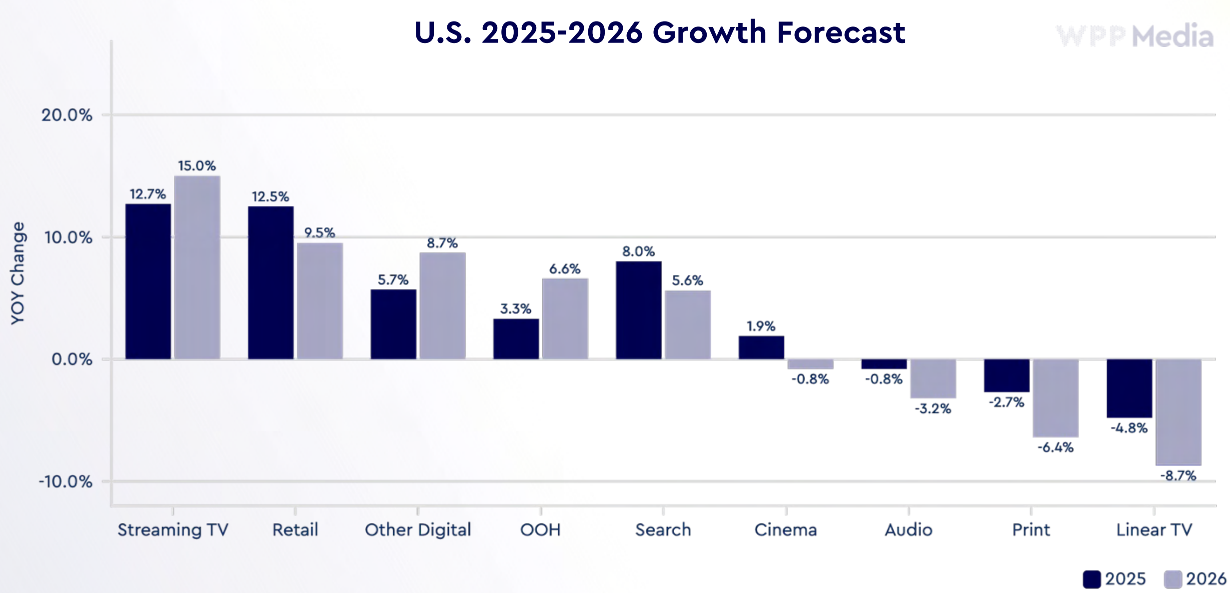
Intelligence

Intelligence ad revenue (primarily Search) continues to rapidly evolve. AI-driven tools like ChatGPT, Gemini, Grok, Perplexity AI, Alexa, and Copilot provide instant answers without requiring users to visit external websites. Yet search growth is still projected at 8.0% in 2025 and is expected to have a relatively stable market share over the next five years. In 2025, search is anticipated to have a 25.8% share of total ad revenue and is projected to reach 26.1% in 2030. Please note, as we wrote on page 19, new forms of "search" or intelligence-driven advertising such as Perplexity's CPM model and potentially affiliate revenue from shopping solutions from OpenAI are likely to be included in this category going forward and may drive more positive growth if widely adopted.

Location

Out-of-home (OOH) advertising will remain stable due to digital advancements and demand for location-based ads, especially in urban and mass-transit environments. Excluding political spending, OOH is projected to maintain a 2.2% market share in 2025, growing by 3.3%. Its share of spend is expected to remain stable over the next five years, at just above 2%. By 2030, OOH revenue is forecast to hit $11.8 billion, surpassing audio.

Cinema advertising is expected to grow by 1.9% in 2025 as the box office gradually recovers but still remains below its pre-COVID numbers. Revenue in the second half of 2025 will be driven by the release of major blockbuster franchises such as *Superman*, *The Fantastic Four*, and *Jurassic World Rebirth* in the summer, and *Wicked: For Good*, and *Avatar: Fire and Ash* during the holiday season. Despite the improving box office performance, cinema advertising is projected to maintain a 0.1% market share over the next five years, suggesting a limited overall impact on the broader advertising market.



Source: WPP Media • Excludes U.S. political advertising

Retail media will surpass total TV ad revenue in

2027

02 China

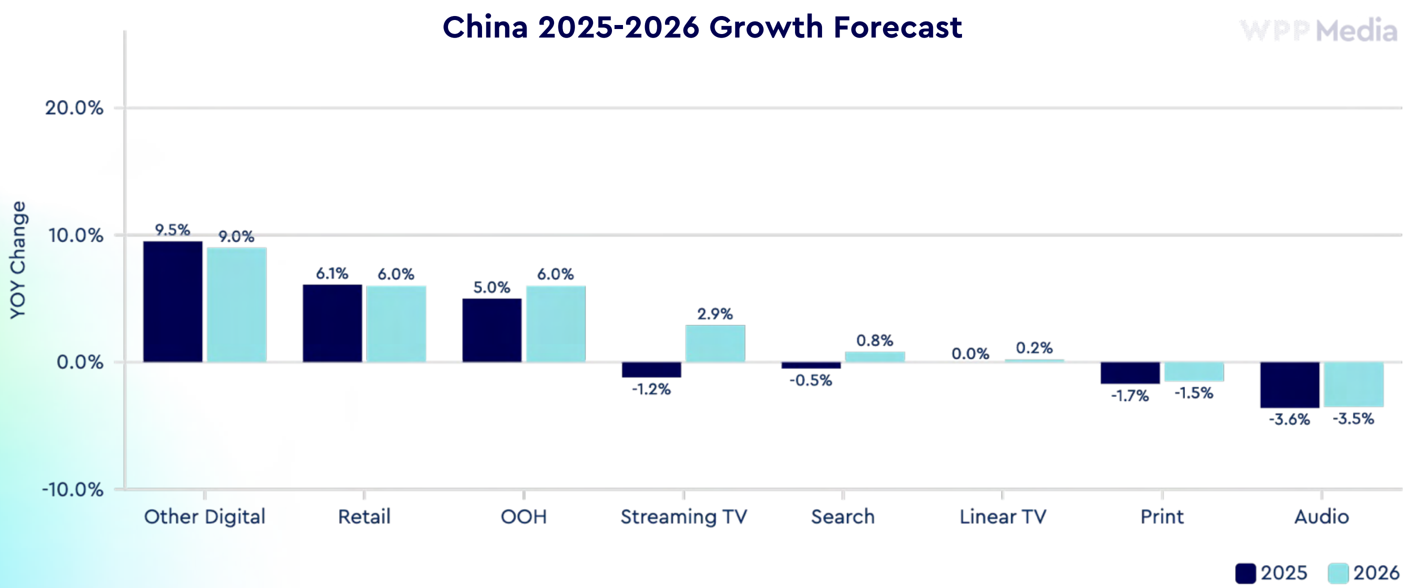
Over the past year, the primary drivers of China's media industry evolution remain the transformative forces stemming from the production and diversification of content and creativity. Additionally, domestic macroeconomic factors have accelerated industry changes. Meanwhile, the impact of international and geopolitical dynamics on the media sector has become increasingly visible this year, particularly in terms of tariffs. The IMF is now projecting GDP growth for China in 2025 of 4% — down from the 4.6% projected at the beginning of the year. We predict ad revenue growth of 6.8% in 2025 and 6.9% in 2026 before a deceleration to growth around 4%.

Digital platforms are increasingly focused on building commercial closed-loop ecosystems, driving the integration of online and offline economies. China remains the largest retail media ad market, with expected revenue of $74.7 billion in 2025.

According to the China Network Audiovisual Development Research Report (2025) released by the China Network Audiovisual Association, short-form video platforms continue to dominate media consumption in terms of daily usage duration (156 minutes) and user engagement, even as offline activities resume post-pandemic. With an audience exceeding 1 billion, the rise of short videos has fundamentally reshaped content production, distribution, and business models, shifting the industry's dynamics from a creator-centric approach to a re-centralized model driven by digital platforms, which are transforming traditional long-form or static internet content into short-form formats.

Another emerging trend is AI-powered search, which addresses content saturation by enabling consumers to bridge information gathering and direct purchasing.

Given these factors, advertisers in China now widely adopt a "brand-activation-sales" strategy to assess media's role in business outcomes and allocate budgets accordingly. This shift is underpinned by digital platforms' closed-loop systems that integrate content with commerce, a trend poised to profoundly shape the future trajectory of China's media industry.



Source: WPP Media

Content

Total TV ad revenue is forecast to remain roughly flat in 2025 at $10.9 billion. Streaming TV is expected to account for 46.9% of total TV advertising revenue in 2025, declining 1.2% to $5.1 and roughly maintaining its size over the next five years.

Audio, newspapers, and magazines will continue to decline in China. The three channels will fall 3.6%, 1.9%, and 1.5% respectively. The trend will broadly continue through 2030.

Other digital, primarily social media, is expected to grow 9.5% in 2025 to $95.9 billion, more than two-thirds the size of the U.S. market. Estimates call for the channel to decelerate to low single-digit growth through 2030.

Commerce

China is the largest global retail media market. Retail media is forecast to grow 6.1% in 2025 to $74.7 billion as e-commerce companies compete against social media companies (in other digital) for advertiser dollars. It will likely decelerate only slightly to 6.0% growth in 2026, with mid-single-digit growth expected through 2030.

Intelligence

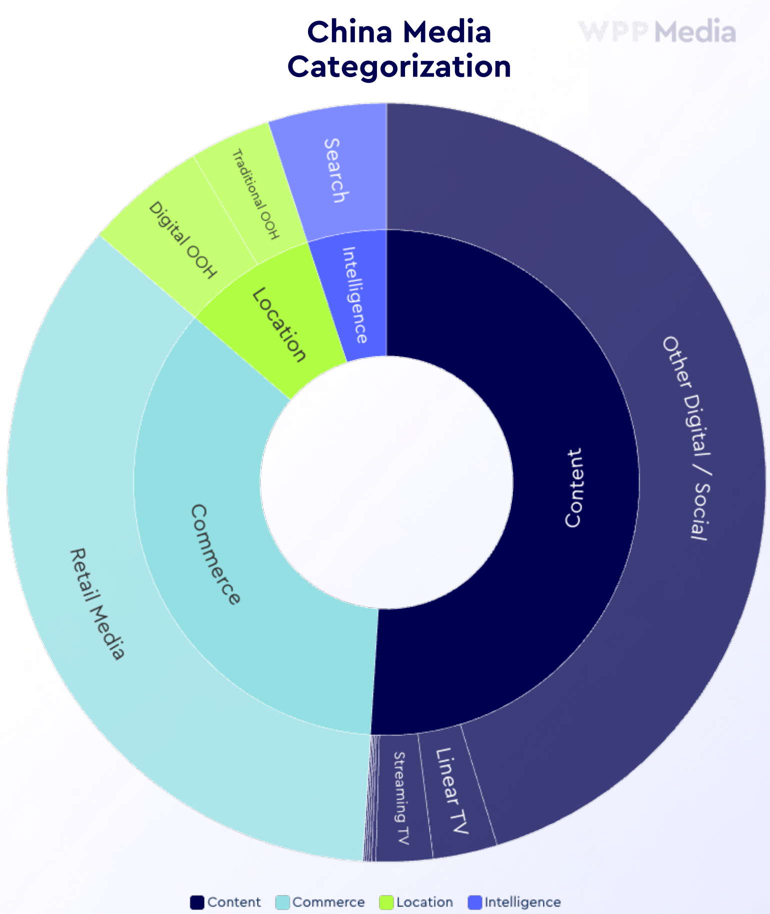
Search advertising remains the smallest of the three digital channels. Revenue in search will shed half a percentage point in 2025, to $10.7 billion, and will grow just 0.8% over the next five years.

Multiple China-based advertisers including Alibaba, Tencent, Xiaomi and Baidu are competing in the AI race against headline-grabbing start-ups like Manus and DeepSeek. We will be watching to see what path monetization takes across these AI products and services.

Location

China is the largest global OOH market. But after growth of nearly 10% in 2024, we are predicting that the five-year compound annual growth rate through 2030 will slow to 4.2%. Growth in 2025 is expected to be 5.0% to $18.2 billion. DOOH revenue is expected to hit $10.9 billion in 2025 with another 6.0% increase in 2026 to $11.6 billion.

China Media Categorization



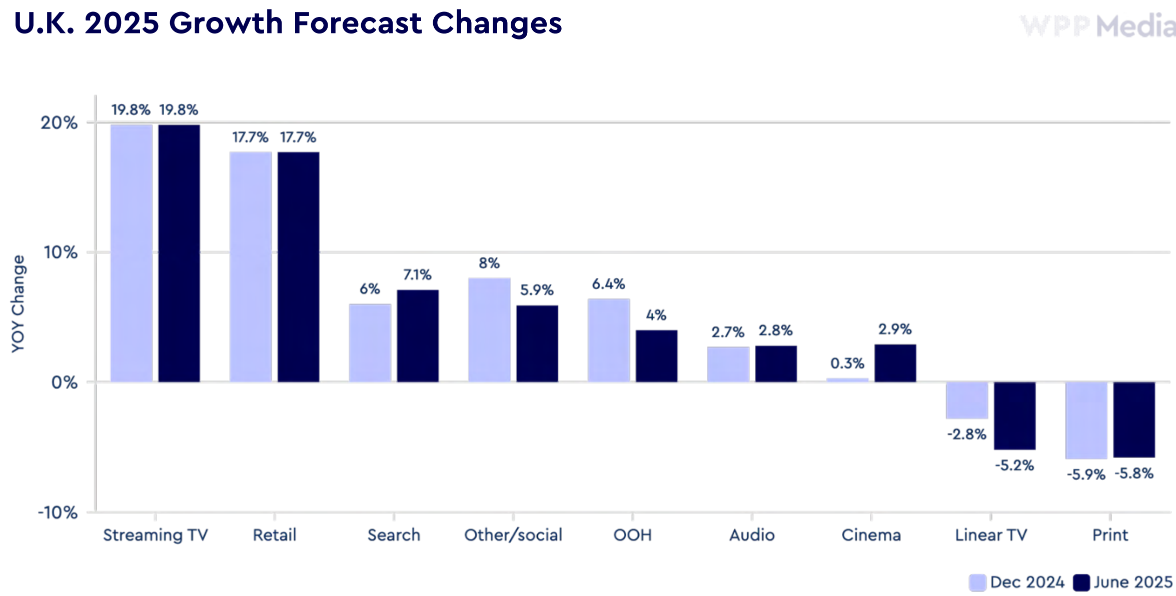
Source: WPP Media

03

United Kingdom

The U.K. advertising market, the largest in EMEA, is estimated to reach $55.0 billion (£42.4 bn) in 2025, reflecting growth of 6.5% compared to last year. This growth occurs against the backdrop of upcoming regulations on less-healthy food and drink (LHF) advertising, also referred to as products high in fat, salt or sugar (HFSS), set to take effect in January 2026. While brand ads that do not feature LHF products are exempt, these regulations may require some adjustments in TV and digital-pure play advertising strategies as the industry prepares for compliance towards the end of 2025. The impact of these factors, along with broader economic considerations from tariffs, has led to a moderate 0.5% revision to our growth forecasts. In 2025, streaming, retail media, and search are expected to be the fastest-growing channels.

U.K. 2025 Growth Forecast Changes



Source: WPP Media

Our base case scenario anticipates moderate impacts on the advertising sector as the U.K. economy continues to navigate the challenges of the U.S.-imposed tariffs. This outlook reflects the resilience of the U.K.'s predominantly service-based economy, the ongoing progress toward trade agreements, and short-term growth in advertising revenue from China-based players like Temu and Shein, potentially expanding their focus to markets beyond the U.S for growth (although the tax-free parcels rule is currently under review). Supporting this cautious optimism, the IMF's April 2025 forecast points to modest U.K. nominal GDP growth of 4.4% for 2025, rising to 3.7% in 2026.

By 2030, traditional formats (excluding digital extensions and digital pure-play advertising) are expected to account for 6.8% of total U.K. advertising revenue, down from 28.5% in 2019. This shift underscores the continued growth of digital forms of advertising, which is expected to drive growth over the next five years. Digital pure-play advertising, encompassing search, retail media, and social/other digital, is expected to dominate the U.K. advertising landscape, accounting for a significant 81.4% share of the total advertising revenue generated within the U.K in 2025. It is important to note as we have in previous reports that this is not indicative of the budget allocations of large brands as the total industry includes a large number of direct and small-business advertisers whose budgets are typically primarily digital. See page 13 for a detailed breakdown of the discrepancy between large brand and total industry channel allocations.

Content

TV, the second-largest media channel, is expected to grow by 1.4% to $5.9 billion (£4.5 bn) in 2025, with 2.3% growth in 2026. Streaming is a key driver of growth, expected to grow 19.8% in 2025 and account for 31.3% of total TV ad revenue, offsetting linear TV declines. By 2030, over half of total TV advertising will be generated via streaming platforms. Sports remains a key driver of television viewership trends, with quarters lacking major sporting events often corresponding to decreases in advertising revenue.

Within streaming, Broadcaster Video On Demand (BVOD) platforms are expected to maintain a leading market share. Some broadcasters are capitalizing on YouTube's growth via partnerships for broader audience engagement of content, potentially attracting smaller advertisers and/or those who are shifting their budgets from traditional TV to digital platforms. To reflect the increasing prevalence of YouTube consumption on television screens (41% in 2024, according to Barb data), 11% of YouTube's estimated U.K. advertising revenue is incorporated into streaming advertising figures. The remainder is classified as non-search digital advertising. Non-search digital advertising, mainly social media, is expected to grow 5.9% to reach $17.1 billion (£13.2 bn) in 2025.

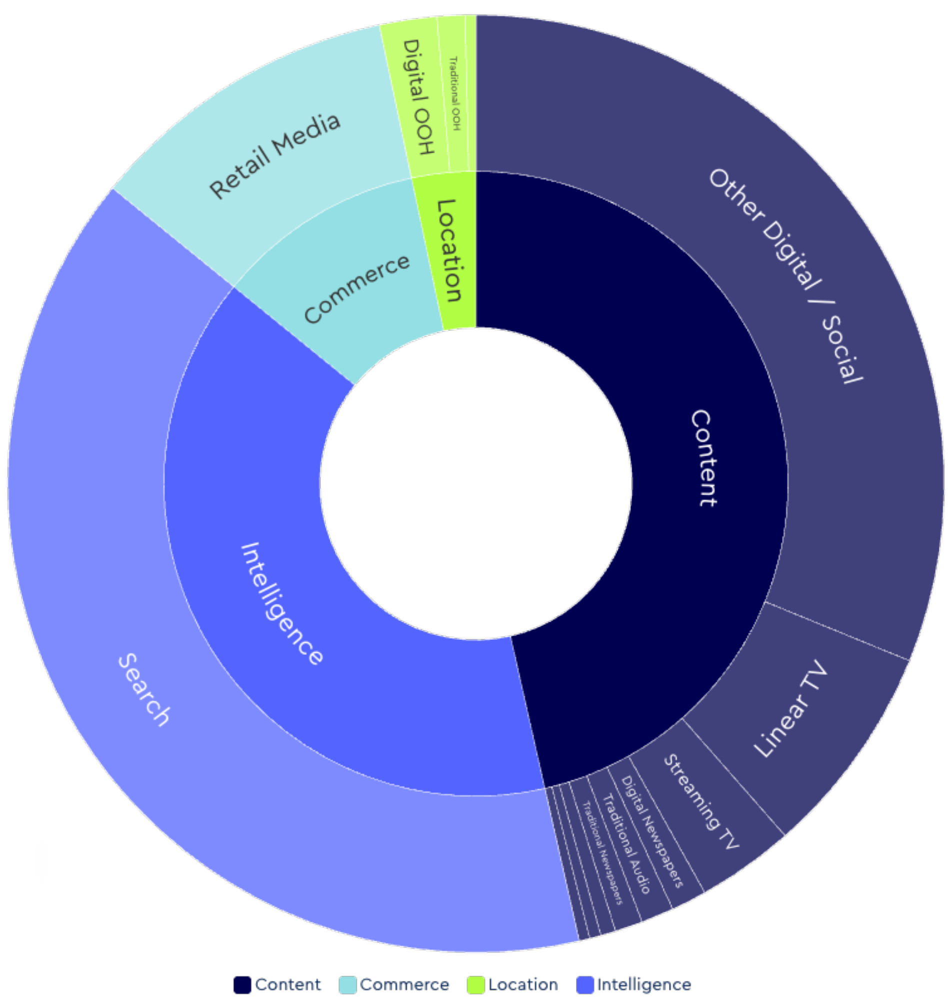
The audio advertising market is projected to grow by 2.8% in 2025 and 3.3% in 2026. Digital audio, including podcasts, is expected to grow by 8.1% and traditional audio is expected to grow by 1.0% in 2025. Bauer's acquisition of Clear Channel's North Europe OOH business highlights the strategic importance of diversification for legacy media companies.

Future market activity may involve further mergers and acquisitions, potentially targeting businesses across different media channels or markets, as legacy media companies seek to diversify their offerings. The U.K. and EU regulatory environment could be a factor influencing these decisions, particularly regarding horizontal integration.

Print, including newspapers and magazines, is expected to continue to decline despite efforts to expand digital offerings. Magazine advertising revenue is expected to decline by 6.3%, faster than newspaper advertising revenue, which is expected to decline by 5.6% in 2025.

U.K. Media Categorization

WPP Media



Source: WPP Media

Commerce

Retail media is the second fastest growing channel in 2025 (after streaming TV), expected to grow 17.7% reaching $6.0 billion (£4.6 bn) and exceeding total TV advertising revenue. While Amazon continues to dominate the retail-media space, local retailers are expected to gain share. The increasing utilization of in-store digital opportunities and the shift to a more full-funnel strategy are likely to further support growth over the next five years.

Intelligence

Search is expected to grow by 7.1% to $21.7 billion (£16.7 bn) in 2025 and is expected to account for 39.4% of all advertising revenue. The channel is likely to evolve with the increasing influence of AI on search behaviors (see more on page 19).

Location

OOH growth is expected to moderate to 4.0% in 2025 driven by tough comparables in the first half, with digital OOH expected to grow by 5.3%. Digital OOH is forecast to account for 67.3% of all OOH revenue in 2025, and this dominance is expected to grow, reaching a projected 72.3% by 2030.

Cinema is expected to grow by 2.9% in 2025, although it is not expected to exceed pre-Covid levels. The share of cinema advertising of the total advertising market is expected to be broadly stable between 0.3%-0.4% until 2030.

In 2025, retail media is expected to exceed TV ad revenue reaching

$6.0

billion

04

Japan

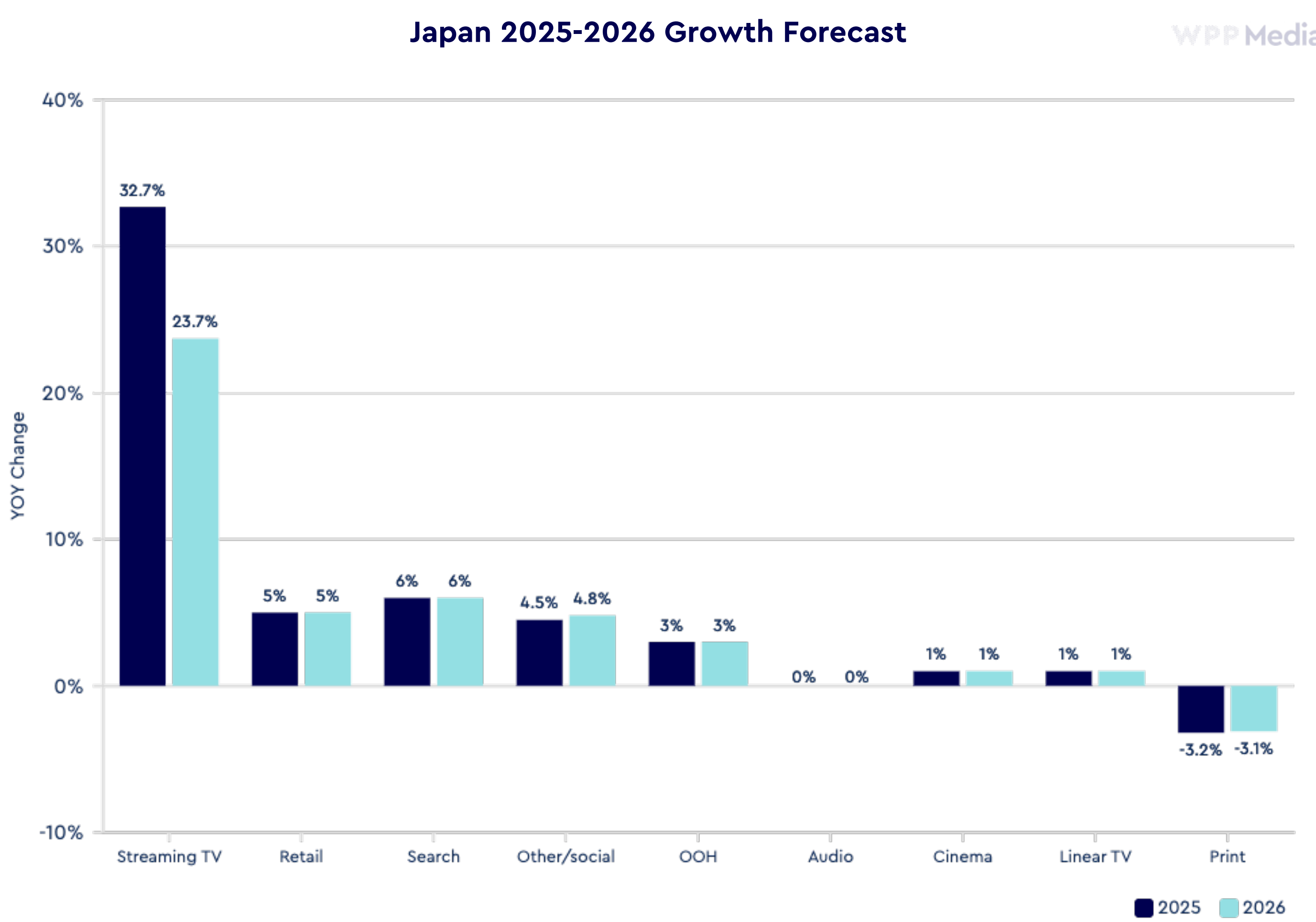
3rd

largest OOH market globally in 2025

The IMF revised its projections for real GDP growth in Japan for 2025 from 1.1% down to 0.6%. That growth is expected to be driven by domestic demand, wage growth, and inbound tourism. Inflation is forecast to be around 2%, and wage growth could support private consumption. However, tariffs from the U.S. and a slowdown in the Chinese economy pose risks.

Total advertising revenue in Japan for 2025 is expected to grow 4.0% to $50.5 billion.

Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba's minority government faces multiple challenges, including tariff negotiations with the U.S. The House of Councillors election this summer will be an important test for the ruling party.



Source: WPP Media

Content

While terrestrial television still reaches a large portion of the adult population, viewers are shifting to streaming. TV is the second-largest advertising channel (after other digital), but growth is expected to slow to 3.4% in 2025 and will continue marginal growth through 2029, dragged down by a continued decline in linear viewing. Streaming TV growth is notching double-digit gains (32.7% this year), but that's off a very small base as the channel isn't as widely used in Japan compared to other large markets.

Sports, especially Nippon Professional Baseball and the Japanese national soccer team, enjoy high viewership, and major events generate significant advertising revenue. In addition, MLB-related content is also popular, as Japanese players are active in the MLB.

Other digital (mostly social media) is Japan's largest channel, growing by 4.5% in 2025 to $14.8 billion. The main platforms are LINE, YouTube, X (formerly Twitter), Instagram, and TikTok. Short-form video content is becoming increasingly popular.

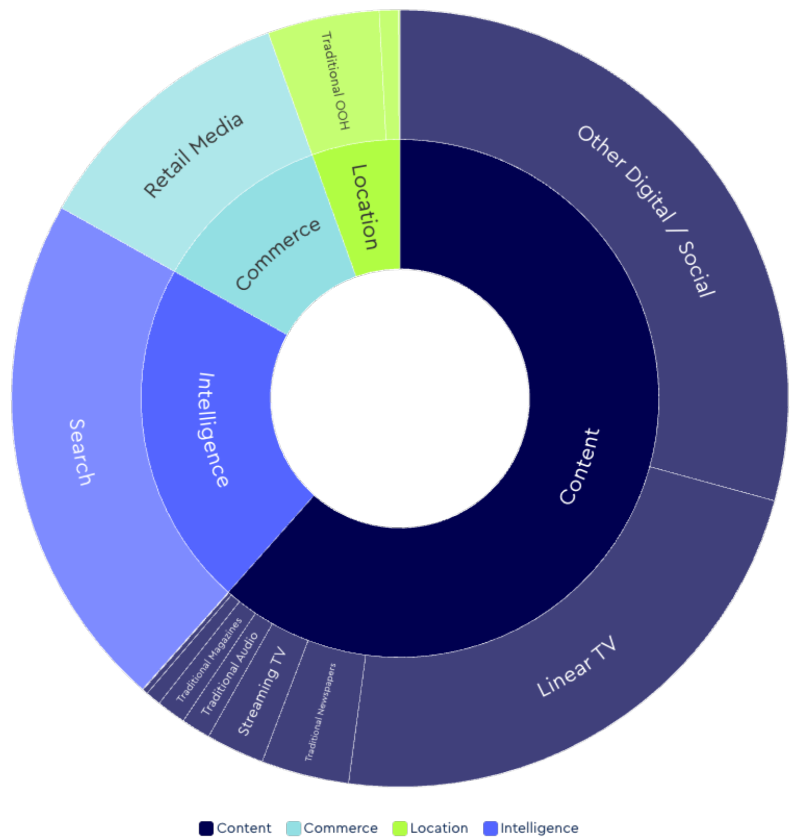
Newspapers are still seen as reliable sources of information in Japan, but circulation continues to decline and ad revenue along with it. A projected 4.0% decline will take the sector down to $2.0 billion in 2025. Magazines, meanwhile, will decline 1.5% in 2025 and 2026.

Audio is likely to remain flat for the next five years even as interest in podcasting grows.

Commerce

Retail media is the smallest but fastest growing segment of digital advertising revenue in Japan and the fourth largest market globally. It's expected to grow 5.0% to $5.7 billion in 2025, with 5.0% growth over the next five years. Major players include Rakuten, Amazon Japan, and Yahoo! Shopping.

Japan Media Categorization



Source: WPP Media

Intelligence

Search is expected to grow by 6.0% in 2025 and 2026.

Location

Total OOH growth in Japan is expected to hover around 3.0% this year, climbing to $2.8 billion, making it the third largest market globally. As in most markets, growth will be driven by DOOH, which will increase 12.3% in 2025 and another 11.2% in 2026.

Cinema attendance has reached the highest level since the pandemic, but has not reached pre-pandemic levels. Cinema ad revenue will grow 1.0% in 2025.

05

Germany

Total advertising revenue is expected to grow 5.5% in 2025 to $38.0 billion. The IMF is now projecting 2.3% nominal GDP growth for Germany in 2025. As in most other markets, projections are uncertain due to the Russia-Ukraine conflict and U.S. tariff policy. Those are just two issues that Germany's new government, formed in May and helmed by Chancellor Friedrich Merz, will be faced with.

Source: WPP Media

Print will be larger than TV in 2025, representing

17.3%

of total ad revenue

Content

TV (including streaming TV) is expected to decline by 0.4% in 2025 to $5.6 billion. Linear will continue to decline at a clip of 6.0% a year, but streaming TV will see a 12.0% increase this year, and is expected to reach the $2.0 billion mark. Programmatic and data-driven buying are continuing to gain traction in the market and are seeking to establish a firm foothold in media planning. Despite its growing importance, streaming is not yet fully offsetting the losses in linear television. As in other markets, the competition for sports rights is heating up between traditional broadcasters, dedicated sports channels, and streaming services, with the rights to next year's World Cup still undecided.

Other digital (mostly social) remains the largest channel, edging out search with 24.7% of total ad revenue. Other digital is expected to grow 13.0% in 2025, faster than retail media.

While audio will see growth of 5.2% in 2025 and hit $911 million, it is still unlikely to cross the billion-dollar threshold until 2028. Newspaper ad revenue is expected to decline by 2.9% and magazines will decline 3.7% in 2025.

Commerce

Retail media advertising revenue surpassed newspaper advertising revenue in 2024. The sector is expected to grow 10.2% in 2025, followed by high single digit increases from 2027 to 2030. Amazon remains the biggest player with about 80% of market share, although that may trend downward as more competition enters the sector.

Intelligence

Search advertising revenue is projected to grow 6.7% to $8.7 billion in 2025, with additional growth of 7.8% in 2026. Search share of total advertising revenue is expected to be broadly stable between 23% to 24% over the next five years.

Location

Total OOH (including digital) in 2025 will grow 5.0% to hit $1.5 billion. We expect to see another 8.2% growth in 2026. Growth is driven by the increasing reach and expansion of DOOH, coupled with the flexibility offered by programmatic DOOH. Providers are investing heavily in expanding their digital footprint. DOOH will grow 10% in 2025 and in 2026. By 2026, DOOH will be a $631 million market and account for 39.7% share of the OOH space.

Despite declines in attendance, movie theatres are increasingly being recognized as a valuable advertising platform. Cinema revenue will grow 8.2% in 2025.

Germany Media Categorization

Source: WPP Media

WPP Media

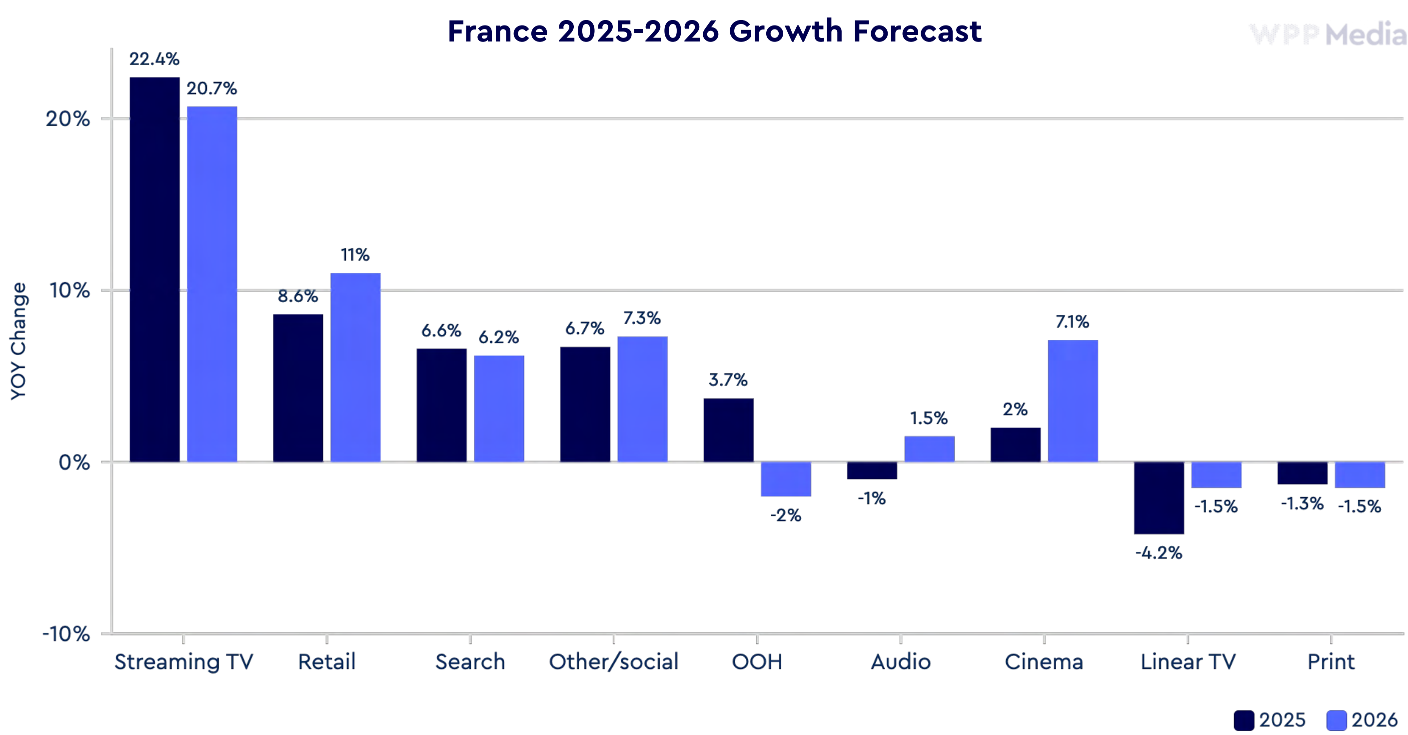
06

France

4th largest market globally for magazine advertising

France's economic growth should remain slightly positive in 2025. The IMF is forecasting a 0.6% real GDP growth rate for France in 2025. This growth reflects the impacts of the Finance Act, which calls for structural adjustment to reduce the public deficit and is likely to have an impact on household consumption and corporate finances. However, the relatively high level of household savings is likely to cushion the impact on consumption. Political instability, the absence of a majority in the National Assembly, and the upcoming end of the presidential five-year term add further uncertainty to companies' investment strategies.

Total ad revenue in France for 2025 is expected to be $30.7 billion, a 4.9% increase from 2024, when advertising saw a boost from the Olympics.



Source: WPP Media

Content

Total TV (including streaming TV) will hit $4.0 billion in 2025, a decline of 0.2% after a strong 2024 propped up by Olympic coverage. Dragged down by linear declines, TV will struggle to see growth over the next five years. In a scenario played out around the world, what growth the category sees will come from streaming. Streaming TV will see a 22.4% increase in 2025, with a projected 20.7% increase in 2026. By 2030, streaming TV will account for 33.9% of the total TV share. That said, advertiser demand for linear TV remains high, as it continues to be highly effective in terms of ROI.

As in other markets, sports is a hot commodity. Rights for the next Ligue 1 soccer season, which starts in August, are still to be decided. Amazon has the rights to carry the NBA in France. Canal+ holds the rights to the Champions League, the English Premier League, the Top 14 rugby championship, and Formula 1.

Other digital (mostly social), is expected to grow 6.7% in 2025 and account for 57.2% of total digital pure-play advertising revenue.

Even in a country that loves its newspapers, the channel is expected to drop 0.9% for 2025 and see further declines through 2030. France is the world's fourth largest market for magazine advertising, although will see a 1.7% drop for the year. Audio is expected to decline 1.0% in 2025.

Commerce

Retail media is expected to grow by 8.6% for the year to reach $1.5 billion. The market is led by Amazon, but local players in the physical retail sector—like Carrefour; E.Leclerc, Auchan, and Intermarché—are also showing strength.

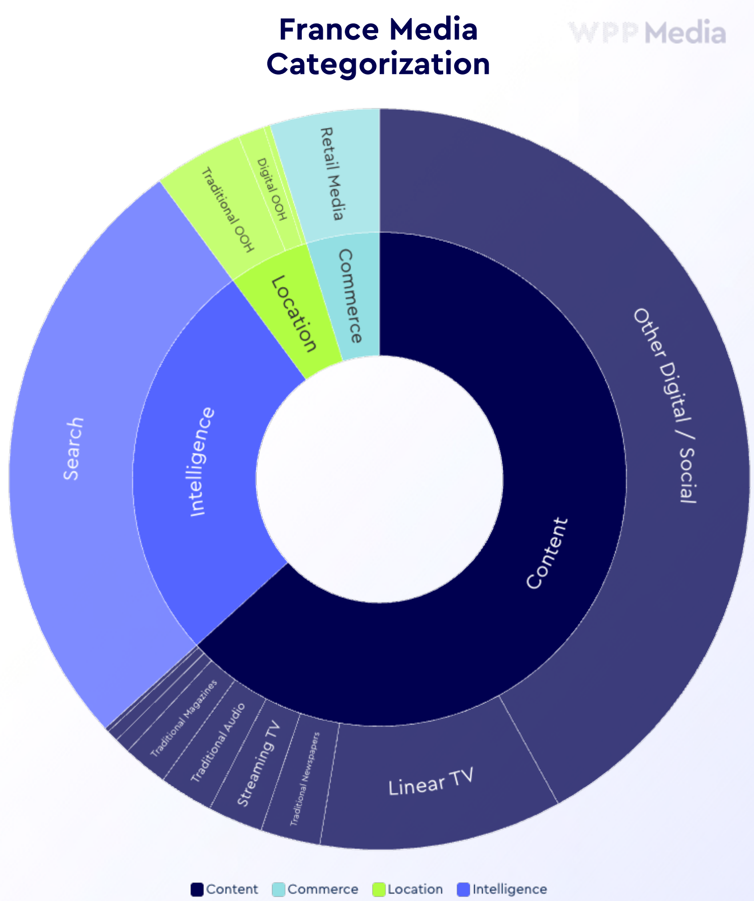
Intelligence

Search is projected to grow 6.7% in 2025, hitting $8.2 billion. But search isn't just happening in search. We're seeing a diversification of search behaviors according to information needs: product search on Amazon, inspiration search on Pinterest, search for good deals on TikTok, restaurant search on Instagram, general search with ChatGPT, etc.

Location

Outdoor returned to pre-pandemic levels in 2024. It is expected to grow by 3.7% to $1.6 billion. Despite that return, the overall category is projected to decline over the next few years. Digital OOH projected growth is 5.0% for 2025, followed by 4.0% growth in 2026.

Cinema ad revenue is projected to grow 2.0% in 2025.



Source: WPP Media

Brazil 07

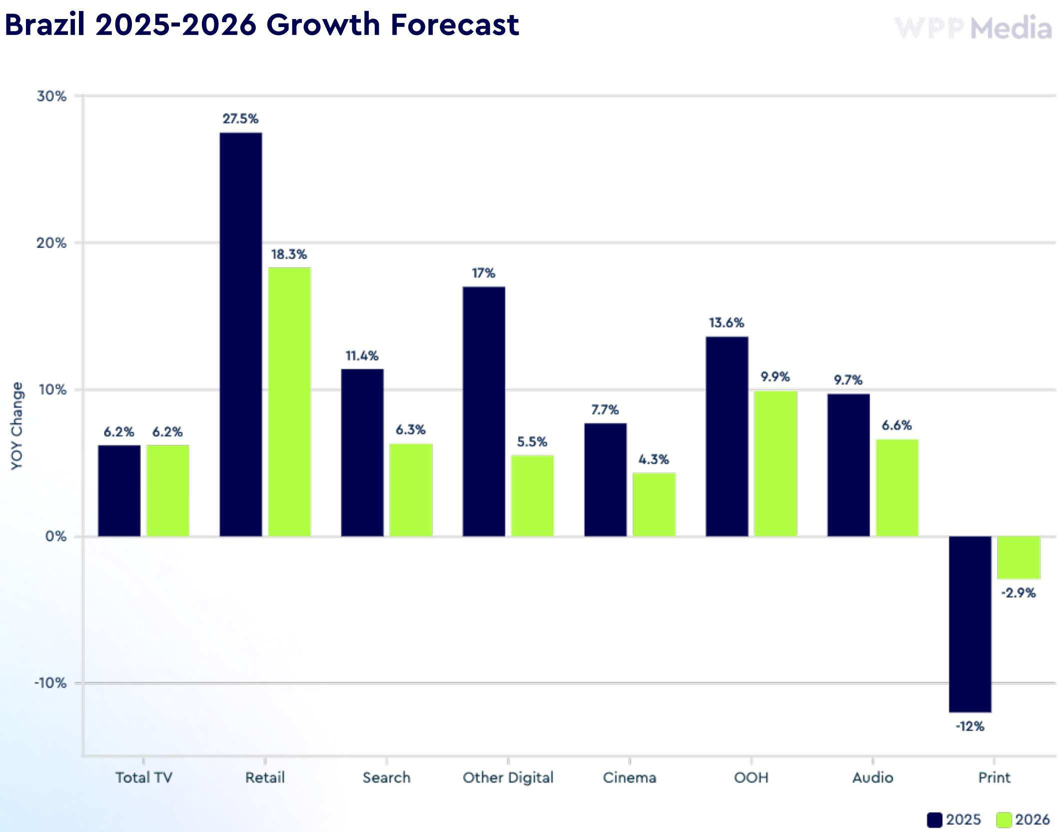
As with many other countries, there is a cloud of uncertainty hanging over Brazil because of U.S. tariff policy. On the downside, the country was hit with a 10% tariff on most exports, with the exception of oil, which is exempt, and steel, which is at 25%. On the upside, China might turn to Brazil to fill in agricultural gaps resulting from its trade war with the U.S. The IMF projects Brazil's real GDP to grow by 2.0% in 2025.

Meanwhile, there are regulatory and technological developments as well as cultural trends that are likely to impact the media and advertising spheres. The Chamber of Deputies is currently reviewing a bill that includes a 6% tax on streaming services while proposing that 10% of the catalog on platforms like Netflix, Prime Video, and Max be made of Brazilian productions.

The growth of streamers in the country is also leading to fragmentation and the sort of scramble for sports rights seen elsewhere. In 2025, fans wanting to watch every game of Campeonato Brasileiro, Brazil's main national football league, would have to tune into Globo (broadcast TV and cable TV), SporTV, CazéTV (YouTube), and Prime Video.

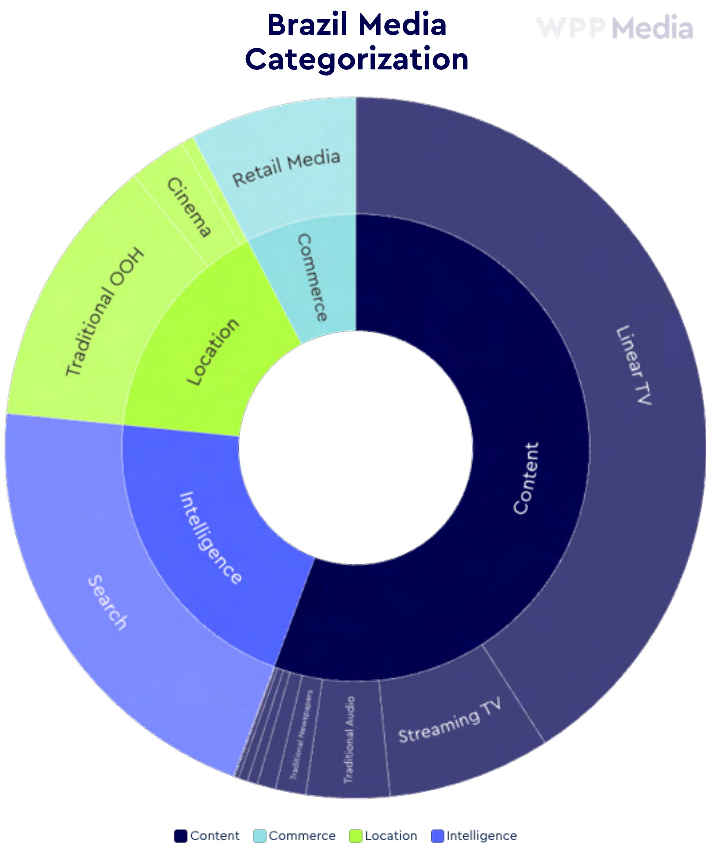
All of this is happening against the background of an aging population. The World Health Organization predicted that Brazil will have the fifth oldest population in the world by 2030. That aging population also has a lot of buying power, according to WPP Media Trends 2025, so advertisers in the country might have to pay more attention to the older demographic.

Brazil 2025-2026 Growth Forecast



Source: WPP Media

Brazil Media Categorization



Source: WPP Media

11.9%

Brazil is the fastest growing market in the top 10 in 2025

Content

Broadcast TV remains highly relevant in Brazil. Unlike many other markets, linear TV revenue will continue to grow through at least 2029. Growth for 2025 is projected at 7.7%. Streaming TV revenue crossed the billion-dollar mark in 2024 on the back of 22.6% growth. That growth is projected to slow to single digits starting this year.

Other digital (mostly social media) currently accounts for 37.5% of revenue, a number that will fall to 35% by 2030. It is projected to grow 17% in 2025. One trend to watch closely is social commerce. According to WPP Media Trends 2025, social commerce has gained immense popularity, with 66% of digital shoppers in Brazil using it for their shopping needs. Instagram is the leading platform for research, shopping, and reviews within social commerce and has a 72% market share.

Print will decline this year by 12% to $453 million. Audio, meanwhile, will climb 9.7% this year and is projected to see high single-digit growth through 2028.

Intelligence

While search will continue to see single-digit growth through 2030, its share of digital will slowly decline as retail media and other digital increase. Search is expected to reach $3.8 billion in 2030, up from $3.0 billion in 2025.

Commerce

Retail media is the fastest growing digital channel in Brazil, seeing an impressive 42.3% jump in 2024 to nearly $1 billion and another projected 27.5% increase in 2025 will take it across the billion-dollar mark for the first time. Major players include Mercado Libre, Atacadão, Magazine Luiza, Assaí, and Carrefour.

Location

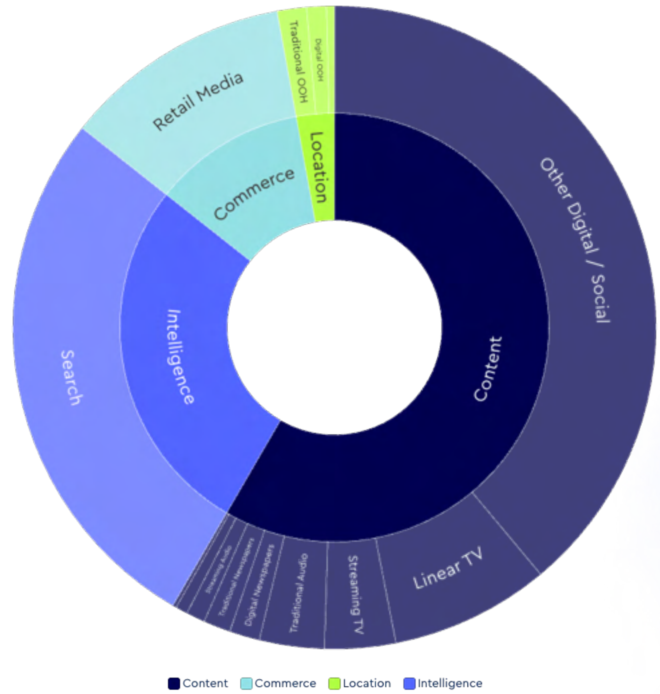
With its diverse formats and growing presence, out-of-home media is becoming one of the most impactful media in the country, especially with its evolution to a hybrid model that combines physical and digital media. The consolidation of inventory through programmatic buying highlights the ongoing technological advancement and increasing personalization of this media. Total OOH will grow 13.6% in 2025 to $1.9 billion and is projected to hit $2.0 billion in 2026. Digital OOH should also see a 7% increase in 2025.

08

Canada

The state of the Canadian economy remains uncertain, on account of an unpredictable U.S. trade policy. This uncertainty around tariffs and counter-tariffs, as well as how households and businesses will react to them, is making it challenging for the Bank of Canada to forecast the impact on the Canadian and global economy. Meanwhile, Canada's new Prime Minister Mark Carney's focus is on combatting tariffs, investment in Canada, and housing availability. The energy sector is one of the areas where new trading partnerships are being explored and brokered, and where Canada's previous reliance on trade with the U.S. is likely to change. Such initiatives, depending on their level of success, will influence economic growth.

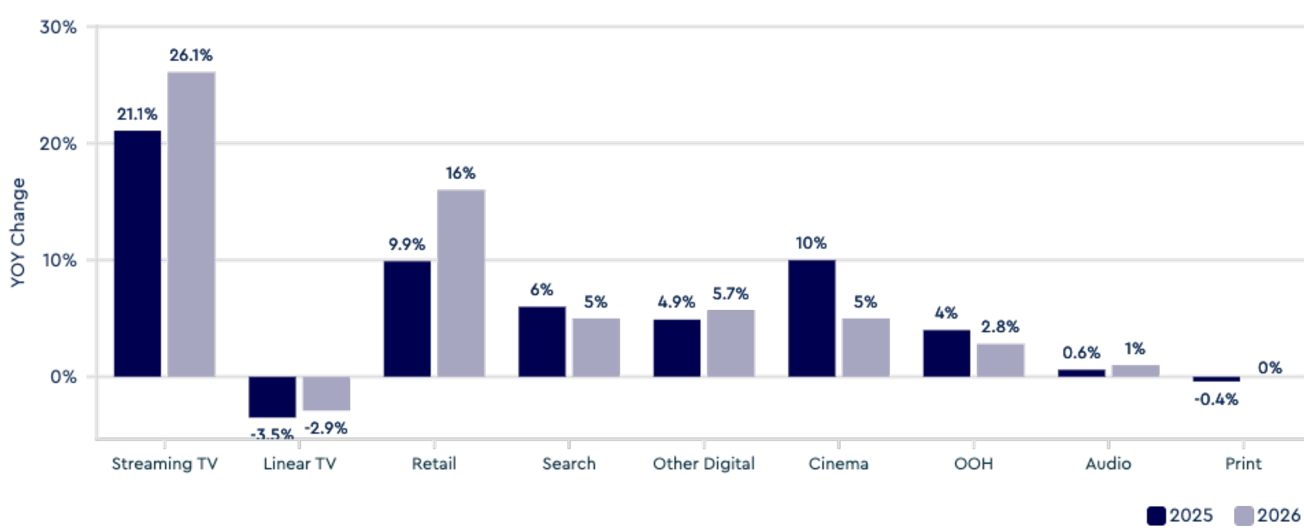
Canada Media Categorization



Source: WPP Media

Ad revenue in Canada is expected to grow 5.1% in 2025, with additional increases in 2026 and 2027, followed by normalized growth in the years following. This is based on the assumption that tariffs will begin hitting an even keel in 2026 and new trade partnerships are established. The 2025 forecast has been revised down from our previous forecast of 10.5%, which was based on previous GDP growth forecasts by the Bank of Canada. Ad revenue is expected to be boosted through continued growth in streaming TV and retail media.

Canada 2025-2026 Growth Forecast



Source: WPP Media

Content

Streaming TV is forecast as a key growth channel in Canada, with ad-supported offerings available through major global streamers like Amazon Prime, Paramount+, Netflix, and Disney+, sports streamers such as Dazn, and FAST providers such as PlutoTV, Tubi and Fubo. Further, live sports partnerships such as NHL Monday Night Hockey on Amazon Prime, Netflix and WWE exclusivity, as well as select NFL games on Netflix pave the wave for future live sports streaming partnerships, and additional viewership draws. Further, major Canadian broadcasters continue to offer streaming complements to linear channels, as well as exclusive streaming partnerships: Rogers Sports & Media, with Disney+; Bell Media's Crave and Warner Bros Discovery exclusive deal to stream HBO and Max content.

Total TV (including streaming TV) will grow 2.9% in 2025 to $2.6 billion. Growth of streaming is expected to more than offset steady declines in linear TV. Streaming TV will grow 26.1% this year to $1.1 billion.

Content rights and exclusivities will provide competitive advantages and Canadian broadcasters are investing heavily. Rogers Communications has acquired a majority share in Major League Sports & Entertainment (MLSE), which owns the Toronto Raptors and the Toronto Maple Leafs, as well as the Toronto Argonauts (CFL), Toronto FC, and the Toronto Marlies. Pending approval of the deal from each of the leagues, Rogers will own 75% in MLSE. Further, Rogers extended its current 12-year deal with the NHL for an additional 12 years, and gives Rogers national media rights across all platforms (TV, digital and streaming).

Other digital (primarily social media) accounts for 38.9% of total ad revenue in 2025.

Newspaper ad revenue (including digital extensions) in Canada will be flat in 2025 and 2026 and continue to decline in 2027-2030. Magazines (including their digital extensions) will be roughly flat through 2030. Audio is unlikely to see growth percentages above 1.5% over the next five years — and not likely to surpass $1.0 billion until after 2030 (still below pre-pandemic revenue).

Commerce

Ad spend on retail media is anticipated to continue its growth trajectory in Canada — growing from an estimated 11% share of spend in 2024 to above 15% in 2030. Growth is expected through Amazon's dominance, as well as capability advancements with the likes of other global retailers such as Walmart Connect, and local Canadian retailers such as Loblaw Advance and Triangle Media. Additional growth in the sector will be driven by last-mile delivery offerings (Doordash, Uber, Instacart), deal properties (Flipp, Redflag Deals, Checkout51), and BestBuy.

Intelligence

Search ad revenue will grow 6.0% this year to $6.1 billion, part of a pattern of decelerating growth through 2030.

Investment in AI and data centers, key to future search and answer engine innovation, is expected to add to Canadian economic growth. The new Canadian Prime Minister has created a new artificial intelligence ministry and appointed a Minister of Artificial Intelligence & Digital Innovation. What this potentially translates to is greater opportunity for AI innovation and positioning Canada in a prominent global position in this sector.

Location

Total OOH will increase 4.0% in 2025 to $554.1 million. Traditional OOH will see an 2.7% increase in 2025, with growth cooling over the next five years. Digital OOH will see 4% growth this year.

Cinema ad revenue is projected to grow 10% in 2025.

Advertising revenue expected to grow

5.1%

09

India

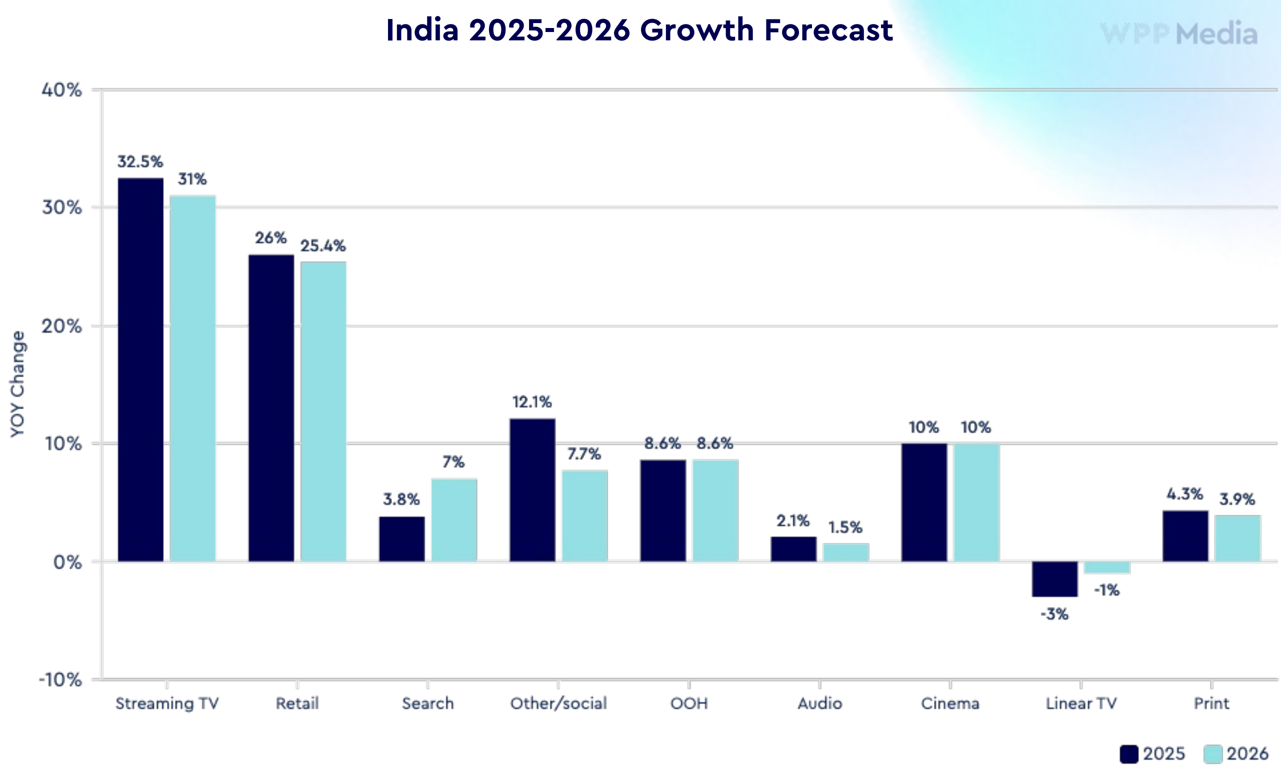
India is likely to overtake Japan as the world's fourth largest economy by the end of the year. This is despite slight downward revisions of GDP growth forecast from 6.5% to 6.2%-6.3%. India could potentially see effects from U.S. tariffs and tensions with Pakistan have ratcheted up recently. But stable economic growth and factors such as easing interest rates, slowing inflation, and rising rural consumer demand are having a positive impact on the economy.

Total advertising revenue for 2025 is projected to be $21.3 billion, up 8.4% from 2024. Auto, ecommerce, financial services, and tech/telco are expected to drive growth, while the CPG advertising is expected to see modest single-digit growth (driven by a consumption boost from relaxation on income tax).

Advertising revenue expected to grow

8.5%

India 2025-2026 Growth Forecast



Source: WPP Media

Content

Perhaps the biggest development in the content space was the finalization of a media merger between Reliance Industries and Disney that combined Disney's Star India with Reliance's Viacom18 and streaming platforms JioCinema and Hotstar. The combined entity will control over 100 TV channels and produce 30,000+ hours of annual content. On top of that, it controls most of the rights to cricket in the country.

Linear TV is still strong in the country, accounting for 22.8% of total advertising revenue, although ad revenue projected to decline by 3.0% in 2025. Meanwhile, streaming TV is in its growth phase. It's expected to grow 32.5% to $868 million in 2025 and continue that trend for the next five years.

Other digital (primarily social media) is still the biggest of the digital channels, forecast at $7.8 billion in 2025, and expected to add 7.7% in 2026 to reach $8.4 billion.

While print in India faces the challenges seen elsewhere around the globe, newspaper revenue is expected to see modest gains through 2028 before falling flat in 2029. In 2025, the channel is expected to grow 4.6% to $1.9 billion and expected to cross the $2.0 billion threshold in 2026. Magazine ad revenue, on the other hand, will see a 13.6% decline in 2025. Audio in India will grow 2.1% in 2025.

Commerce

Money will continue to shift from TV to digital and within digital to commerce, particularly quick commerce, as many marketers reduce traditional ad budgets to chase bottom-funnel metrics. Retail media is the fastest growing channel within digital. It climbed 42.6% in 2024 with another projected increase of 26.0% in 2025, when it will overtake search advertising for the first time.

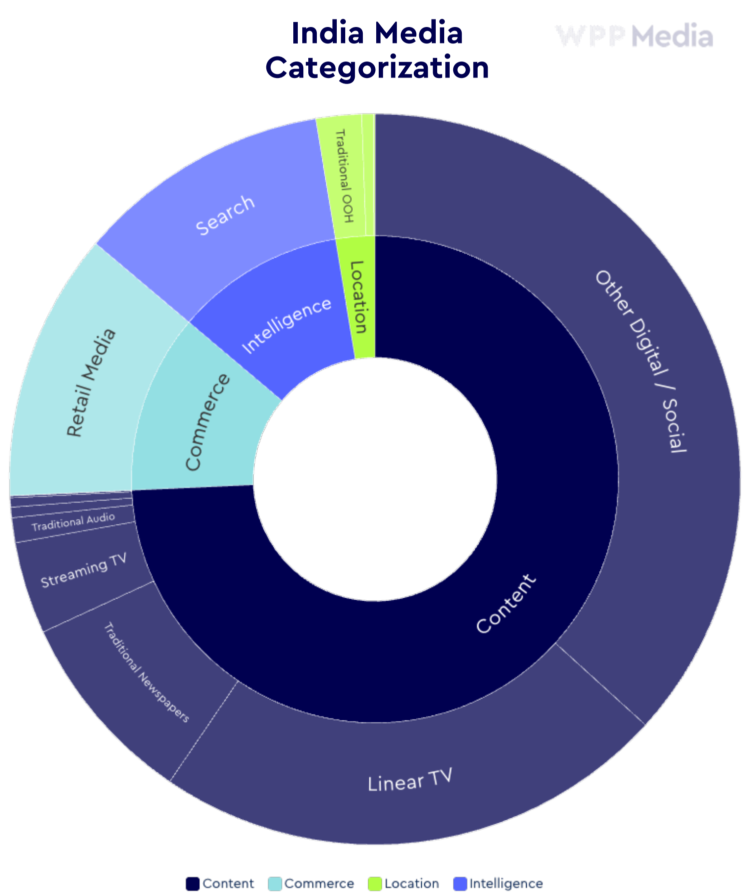
Intelligence

Search in 2025 is projected to grow 3.8% to $2.4 billion and will account for 11.3% of all ad revenue in the market. Search is expected to grow by high single digits in the years 2026-2030.

Location

OOH will grow 8.6% in 2025. OOH is still dominated by traditional formats, with transit advertising driving growth in the space. Expanding metro train routes in numerous cities, new airports being opened in smaller towns as part of government thrust on infrastructure, and the implementation of back-to-office policies across sectors is driving demand for premium OOH inventory. Digital OOH will only account for 10.8% of revenue in 2025 and is expected to grow another 12.0% next year.

Cinema ad revenue is projected to grow 10.0% in 2025 and could return to pre-pandemic levels by 2026.



Source: WPP Media

10 Australia

Australia's economy in 2025 is expected to experience moderate growth of around 1.8% to 2.1%, with inflation easing back into the Reserve Bank's target range at 2.4% to 2.9%. While unemployment is forecast to edge up to 4.3%, wage growth has also slowed, suggesting reduced pressure on business costs. Consumer confidence remains cautious (April's numbers were the lowest in 6 months), falling below the long-term average amid global uncertainty. Overall, 2025 marks a year of cautious recovery with an emphasis on stability and resilience in the face of persistent global and domestic challenges.

The Federal election resulting in a Labor party landslide will ensure legislation and policy are implemented, stimulating wider government spending, boosting business confidence.

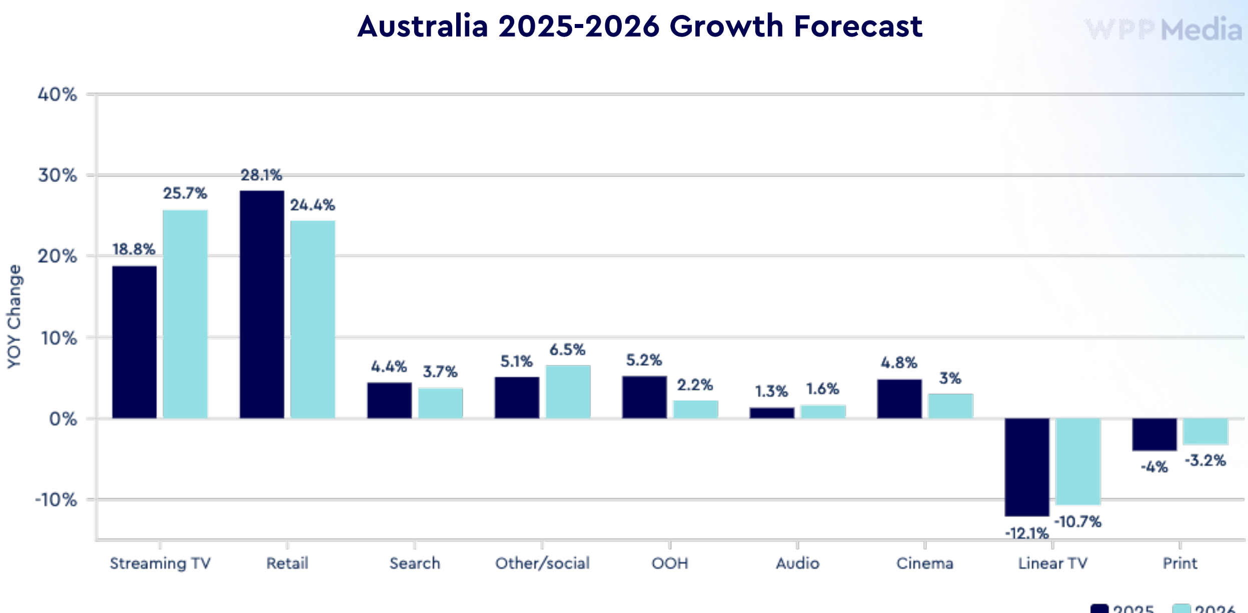
Total ad revenue in Australia will grow 4.1% in 2025 to $17.7 billion.

Streaming TV will overtake linear TV in 2030 at

52.8%

of total TV ad revenue

Australia 2025-2026 Growth Forecast



Source: WPP Media

Content

We project total TV ad revenue (including streaming TV) for the year will be down 6.9%, dragged down by an 12.1% decrease in linear TV. As in the U.S., streaming TV has seen the entry of a number of ad-supported streamers including Netflix, Paramount+, Binge, Kayo, Amazon Prime Video, and Stan. Streaming TV will grow 18.8% in 2025 and is projected to grow another 25.7% in 2026, moving the total TV market back into positive territory.

Other digital (mostly social) will grow 5.1% in 2025.

Newspaper ad revenue will decline 4.1% in 2025, while magazine revenue is expected to fall 2.6%. Newspapers aren't expected to return to growth in the next five years. Audio will see modest growth over the next five years, driven by digital audio, which is projected to climb 16.0% in 2025. Australia is the fifth largest market globally for audio advertising in 2025.

Australia Media Categorization

WPP Media

Source: WPP Media

Commerce

Retail media will grow 28.1% this year reaching $1.2 billion. By 2030, projected revenue will reach $2.9 billion for the channel. Major players in the space include Woolworth's Cartology, Coles 360, Chemist Warehouse, and Amazon. Cartology continues to hold the lion's share. Australia is also seeing the entrance of many non-endemic publishers creating retail/commerce products.

Intelligence

Search growth is forecast to grow 4.4% for the year reaching $3.9 billion. Over the next five years, search will grow at a 4.1% CAGR, though data and privacy legislation is likely to play a role in shaping the market.

Location

Total OOH (including digital) will grow 5.2% in 2025 to $862.3 million. Steady growth, powered largely by DOOH will bring total OOH to $1.0 billion in 2029. DOOH will grow 6.5% in 2025 and is projected to grow another 2.8% in 2026.

Box office receipts are still below pre-pandemic levels. Cinema ad revenue is expected to grow 4.8% in 2025.

Conclusion

The media and advertising industry shows clear resilience, with projected 6.0% growth in 2025 to $1.08 trillion. Amid profound global shifts like the potential de-coupling of the world's two largest economies, marketers will be tasked with employing greater intelligence and adaptability as new technologies and new norms evolve.

Within this landscape, we do see several constants — the enduring and global appeal of sports and premium video, the push for more personalization and individualized content, and the appeal of advertising as a revenue model across varied business sectors.

And while the speed of AI advances and adoption remains an unknown (at least as far as reaching AGI or superintelligence goes), AI as an underlying technology is more likely to speed existing trends and lead to shifts in our advertising forecast rather than wholesale disruption. That is, search behavior may shift away from search engines, and brands will adapt by evolving their messaging and interactions with consumers across social, retail, and answer-engine environments.

Change often brings opportunities for those brave enough to embrace uncertainty. The biggest opportunity we see is the chance for our industry to think deeply and act with fortitude in setting incentives and goals for the use of AI in media. Media is now everywhere and in everything, which makes its integration with a powerful technology like AI that much more profound.

Global Summary Data Table

U.S. Dollars in Millions	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030
Total TV	$136,663.2	$158,138.2	$160,046.5	$157,990.7	$160,963.6	$162,467.9	$164,872.9	$167,630.9	$171,488.4	$175,162.9	$178,470.3
• Growth	-12.3%	15.7%	1.2%	-1.3%	1.9%	0.9%	1.5%	1.7%	2.3%	2.1%	1.9%
• Share	21.8%	19.7%	18.8%	17.0%	15.8%	15.1%	14.4%	13.9%	13.5%	13.1%	12.7%
Traditional TV	119,359.3	133,947.6	132,374.7	126,311.5	123,772.8	120,621.5	116,818.3	113,518.3	111,409.6	109,103.4	106,553.9
• Growth	-15.7%	12.2%	-1.2%	-4.6%	-2.0%	-2.5%	-3.2%	-2.8%	-1.9%	-2.1%	-2.3%
• Share	87.3%	84.7%	82.7%	79.9%	76.9%	74.2%	70.9%	67.7%	65.0%	62.3%	59.7%
Streaming TV	17,303.8	24,190.6	27,671.7	31,679.2	37,190.8	41,846.4	48,054.6	54,112.6	60,078.8	66,059.5	71,916.3
• Growth	20.7%	39.8%	14.4%	14.5%	17.4%	12.5%	14.8%	12.6%	11.0%	10.0%	8.9%
• Share	12.7%	15.3%	17.3%	20.1%	23.1%	25.8%	29.1%	32.3%	35.0%	37.7%	40.3%
Audio	22,638.8	26,125.9	27,034.0	26,484.7	26,373.7	26,475.3	26,293.6	26,120.7	25,911.2	25,393.3	24,796.3
• Growth	-25.2%	15.4%	3.5%	-2.0%	-0.4%	0.4%	-0.7%	-0.7%	-0.8%	-2.0%	-2.4%
• Share	3.6%	3.3%	3.2%	2.9%	2.6%	2.5%	2.3%	2.2%	2.0%	1.9%	1.8%
Newspapers	31,370.3	33,159.7	32,955.8	31,637.8	30,522.9	29,921.3	29,372.1	28,925.5	28,386.1	27,394.3	26,244.3
• Growth	-25.6%	5.7%	-0.6%	-4.0%	-3.5%	-2.0%	-1.8%	-1.5%	-1.9%	-3.5%	-4.2%
• Share	5.0%	4.1%	3.9%	3.4%	3.0%	2.8%	2.6%	2.4%	2.2%	2.1%	1.9%
Magazines	19,132.1	20,199.3	19,412.8	18,337.3	16,440.4	15,594.3	14,959.4	14,256.5	13,489.2	12,575.6	11,590.0
• Growth	-20.5%	5.6%	-3.9%	-5.5%	-10.3%	-5.1%	-4.1%	-4.7%	-5.4%	-6.8%	-7.8%
• Share	3.1%	2.5%	2.3%	2.0%	1.6%	1.4%	1.3%	1.2%	1.1%	0.9%	0.8%
Outdoor	29,180.6	35,763.3	39,032.9	44,751.9	49,038.2	52,075.2	55,340.0	58,174.6	61,377.7	64,637.0	67,600.6
• Growth	-22.0%	22.6%	9.1%	14.7%	9.6%	6.2%	6.3%	5.1%	5.5%	5.3%	4.6%
• Share	4.7%	4.5%	4.6%	4.8%	4.8%	4.8%	4.8%	4.8%	4.8%	4.8%	4.8%
Traditional Outdoor	20,142.6	22,717.0	24,585.2	27,461.1	29,572.9	30,725.7	31,542.6	32,865.2	34,297.6	35,667.5	36,930.9
• Growth	-23.6%	12.8%	8.2%	11.7%	7.7%	3.9%	2.7%	4.2%	4.4%	4.0%	3.5%
• Share	69.0%	63.5%	63.0%	61.4%	60.3%	59.0%	57.0%	56.5%	55.9%	55.2%	54.6%
Digital OOH	9,038.0	13,046.2	14,447.7	17,290.9	19,465.3	21,349.5	23,797.5	25,309.4	27,080.1	28,969.4	30,669.6
• Growth	-18.4%	44.3%	10.7%	19.7%	12.6%	9.7%	11.5%	6.4%	7.0%	7.0%	5.9%
• Share	31.0%	36.5%	37.0%	38.6%	39.7%	41.0%	43.0%	43.5%	44.1%	44.8%	45.4%
Cinema	597.6	834.0	1,751.8	1,944.5	1,988.1	2,086.4	2,158.7	2,215.5	2,272.3	2,322.2	2,375.7
• Growth	-78.6%	39.6%	110.1%	11.0%	2.2%	4.9%	3.5%	2.6%	2.6%	2.2%	2.3%
• Share	0.1%	0.1%	0.2%	0.2%	0.2%	0.2%	0.2%	0.2%	0.2%	0.2%	0.2%
Digital Pure-Play	386,681.7	527,205.7	571,380.7	646,784.7	732,207.9	790,028.8	851,040.8	908,518.4	968,057.2	1,025,839.7	1,091,170.2
• Growth	15.8%	36.3%	8.4%	13.2%	13.2%	7.9%	7.7%	6.8%	6.6%	6.0%	6.4%
• Share	61.7%	65.8%	67.1%	69.7%	72.0%	73.2%	74.4%	75.3%	76.2%	76.9%	77.8%
Search	122,315.9	165,717.3	181,251.5	191,822.9	210,748.6	226,249.0	240,155.4	255,139.9	271,684.1	286,604.0	302,296.1
• Growth	4.0%	35.5%	9.4%	5.8%	9.9%	7.4%	6.1%	6.2%	6.5%	5.5%	5.5%
• Share	19.5%	20.7%	21.3%	20.7%	20.7%	21.0%	21.0%	21.2%	21.4%	21.5%	21.6%
Other Digital	193,085.1	261,827.2	278,208.1	322,165.4	367,191.1	394,130.7	425,491.0	452,209.3	478,941.5	504,937.5	536,767.3
• Growth	15.5%	35.6%	6.3%	15.8%	14.0%	7.3%	8.0%	6.3%	5.9%	5.4%	6.3%
• Share	30.8%	32.7%	32.7%	34.7%	36.1%	36.5%	37.2%	37.5%	37.7%	37.9%	38.3%
Retail	71,280.8	99,661.2	111,921.2	132,796.4	154,268.2	169,649.1	185,394.5	201,169.2	217,431.6	234,298.2	252,106.8
• Growth	45.2%	39.8%	12.3%	18.7%	16.2%	10.0%	9.3%	8.5%	8.1%	7.8%	7.6%
• Share	11.4%	12.4%	13.1%	14.3%	15.2%	15.7%	16.2%	16.7%	17.1%	17.6%	18.0%
Advertising Ex-U.S. Political	626,264.3	801,426.0	851,614.5	927,931.7	1,017,534.8	1,078,649.2	1,144,037.6	1,205,842.2	1,270,982.0	1,333,325.0	1,402,247.4
• Growth	0.0%	28.0%	6.3%	9.0%	9.7%	6.0%	6.1%	5.4%	5.4%	4.9%	5.2%
U.S. Political Advertising	10,841.4	2,440.7	11,556.9	2,922.8	15,106.9	3,090.5	12,804.3	3,298.5	16,650.5	3,575.9	14,188.0
Total Advertising	637,105.7	803,866.7	863,171.4	930,854.5	1,032,641.7	1,081,739.7	1,156,841.9	1,209,140.7	1,287,632.5	1,336,901.0	1,416,435.3
• Growth	1.4%	26.2%	7.4%	7.8%	10.9%	4.8%	6.9%	4.5%	6.5%	3.8%	5.9%

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