Prepared for the **BookNet Canada TechForum**

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Managing Disruption in a Volatile Age

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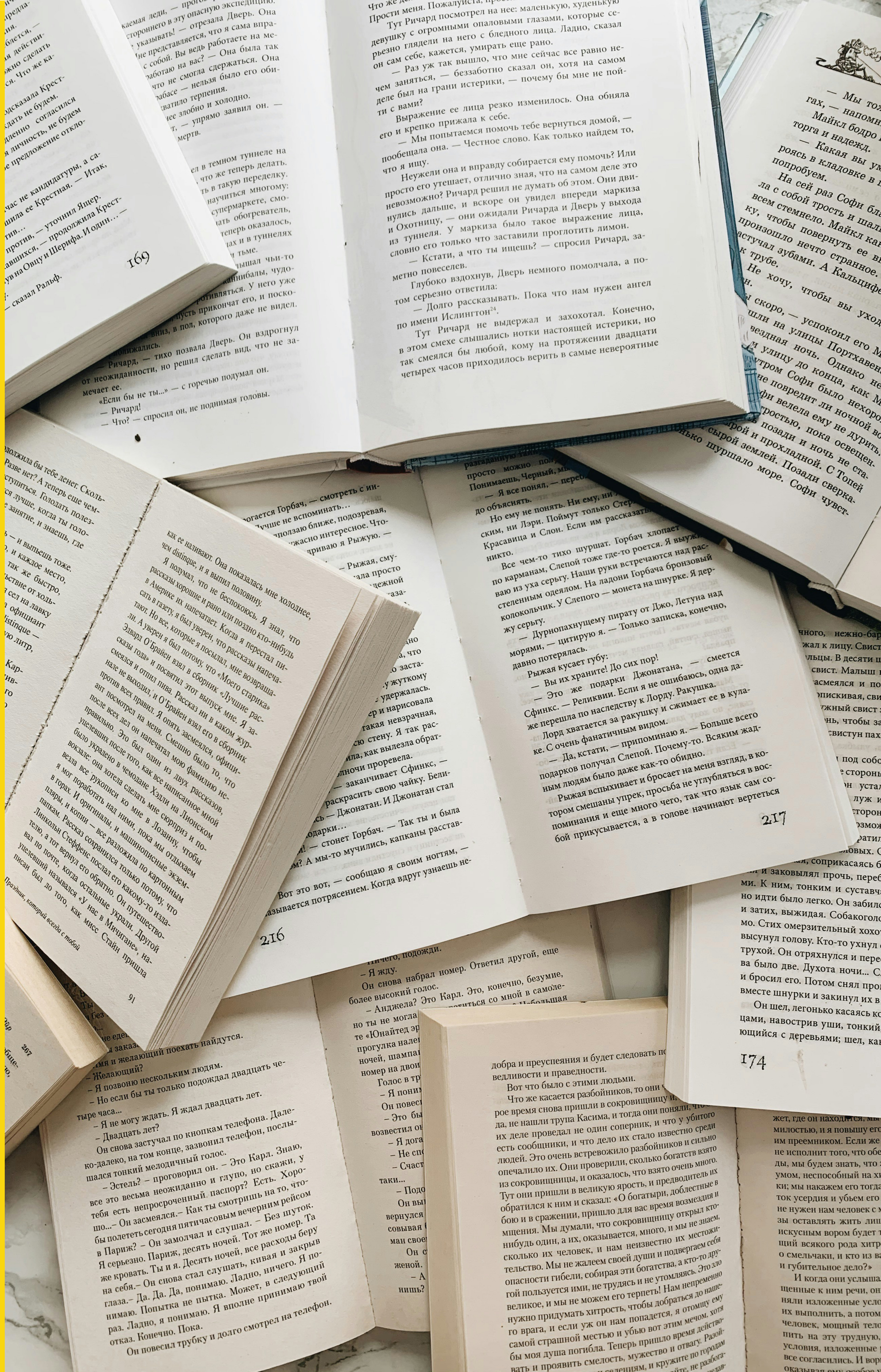

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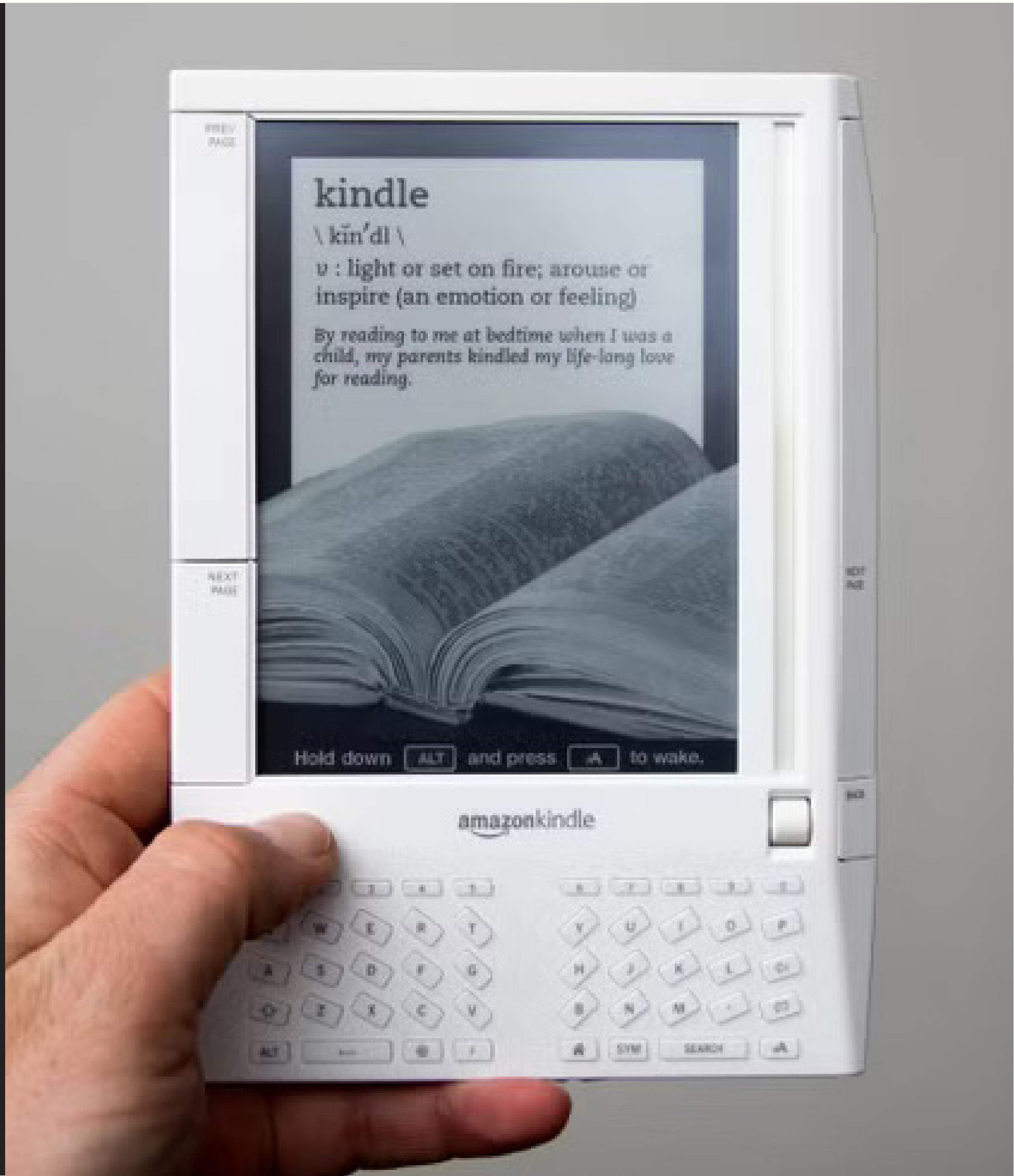
Mythbusting 101

Disruption has always been part of the publishing industry—and the industry has *always* adapted.

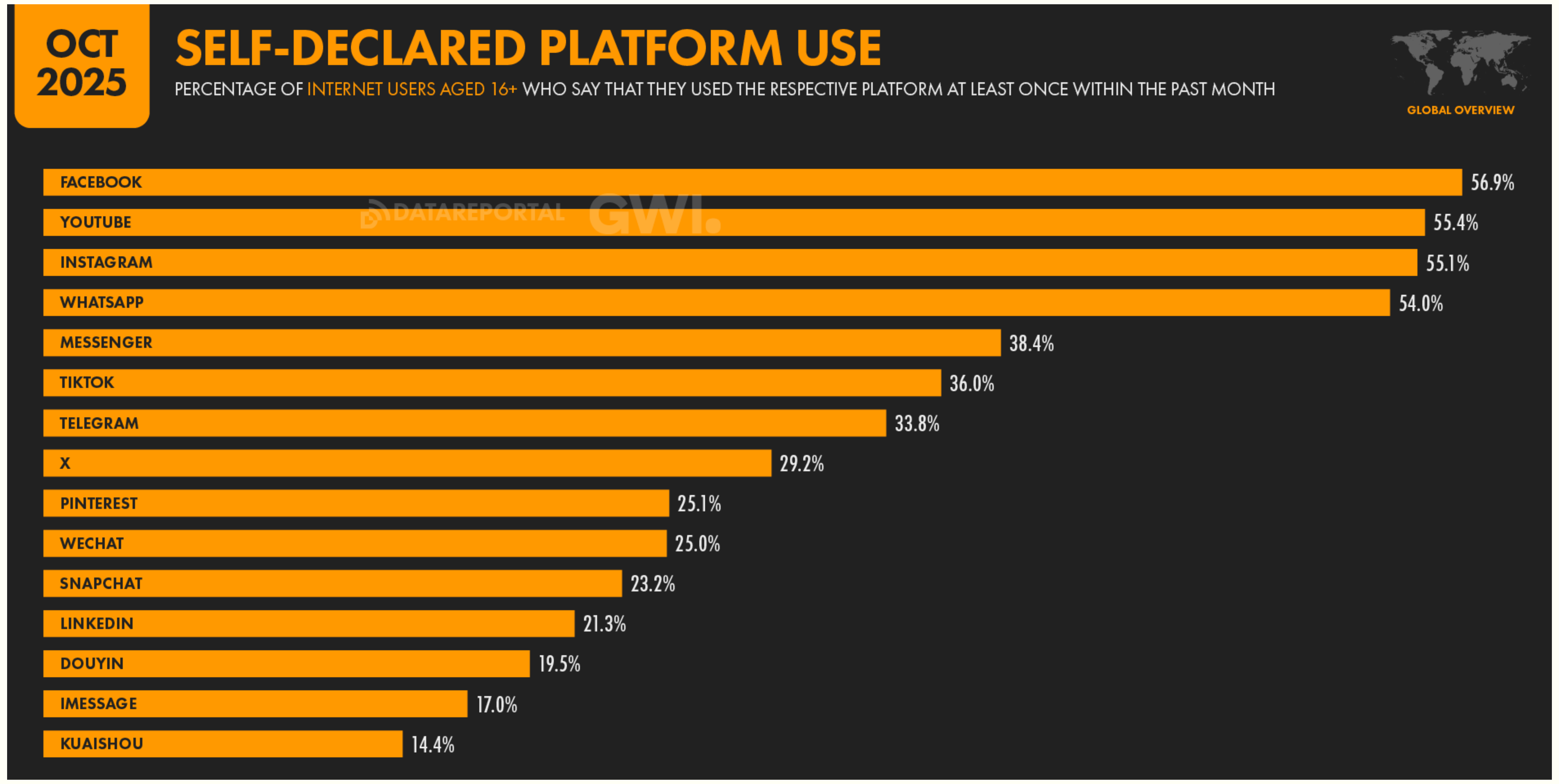
- Traditional and self-publishing models work in tandem, not against one another.
- Ebooks didn't kill print, and audiobooks didn't kill ebooks. Hardcovers persist.
- TikTok "upended" content creation, but Facebook is *still* the #1 platform worldwide.



1.

Where We Are

- **#1 Platform: Facebook (56.9%)**
- **2 out of 3 people, worldwide, use social media. That audience won’t get much larger from here — we need to meet the people that are already there.**
- **Most adults use more than one social media platform (important context for all of us gathered here!). The average is 6.75 globally.**
- **99.8% of TikTok, Instagram, X, Facebook, and LinkedIn users have userbases that overlap with other social media channels.** Only YouTube and WhatsApp have over 1% unique user bases.



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SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORM AUDIENCE OVERLAPS

PERCENTAGE OF ACTIVE USERS OF EACH PLATFORM AGED 16+ OUTSIDE OF CHINA WHO ALSO USE OTHER SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS

GLOBAL OVERVIEW

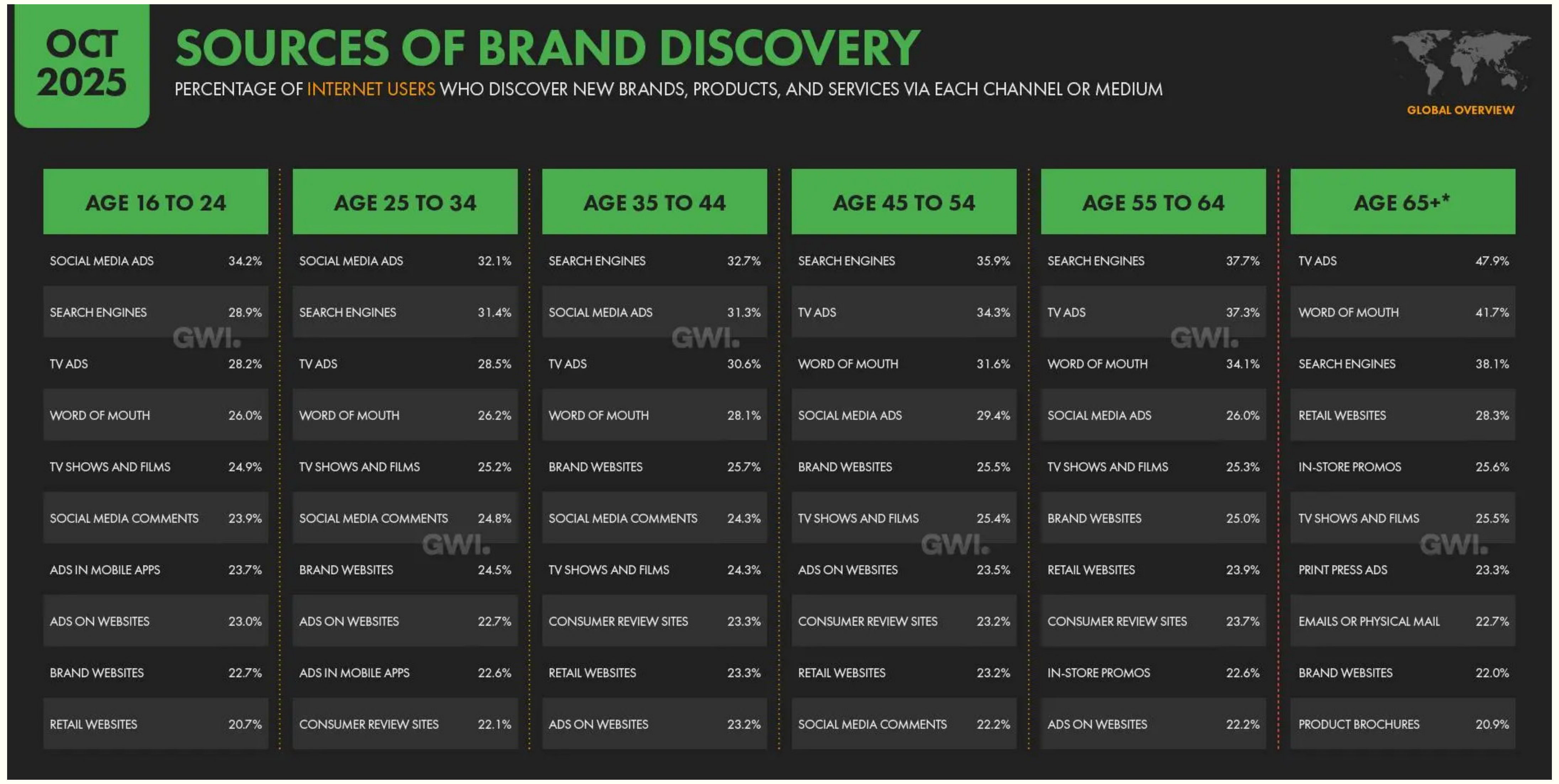
	UNIQUE TO PLATFORM	USING YOUTUBE	USING FACEBOOK	USING WHATSAPP	USING INSTAGRAM	USING TIKTOK	USING TELEGRAM	USING SNAPCHAT	USING X	USING REDDIT	USING PINTEREST	USING DISCORD	USING LINKEDIN	USING LINE
YOUTUBE USERS	1.2%	100.0%	75.7%	72.5%	77.4%	48.4%	48.0%	30.7%	42.0%	19.1%	37.5%	15.2%	32.1%	11.1%
FACEBOOK USERS	0.6%	73.4%	100.0%	75.1%	78.6%	53.9%	46.6%	32.9%	40.2%	16.0%	34.2%	12.6%	31.4%	8.6%
WHATSAPP USERS	1.0%	74.0%	77.3%	100.0%	78.9%	50.4%	52.6%	35.0%	39.9%	14.8%	36.2%	12.8%	32.2%	5.3%
INSTAGRAM USERS	0.1%	76.8%	80.5%	78.4%	100.0%	54.5%	50.6%	36.9%	45.0%	17.4%	38.8%	14.5%	32.6%	9.5%
TIKTOK USERS	0.2%	76.4%	81.8%	74.2%	80.9%	100.0%	51.3%	34.8%	48.7%	17.5%	39.9%	15.6%	29.6%	11.6%
TELEGRAM USERS	0.2%	79.8%	78.5%	86.1%	83.3%	57.0%	100.0%	41.2%	50.8%	18.8%	41.4%	18.0%	37.7%	7.7%
SNAPCHAT USERS	<0.1%	81.2%	80.7%	83.2%	88.5%	56.2%	59.9%	100.0%	48.2%	22.9%	45.8%	18.1%	38.5%	7.1%
X USERS	0.1%	81.0%	80.5%	77.5%	88.1%	64.3%	60.4%	39.4%	100.0%	25.7%	43.1%	22.3%	41.7%	14.1%
REDDIT USERS	0.1%	82.8%	79.5%	71.5%	84.4%	57.3%	55.4%	46.3%	63.9%	100.0%	61.4%	40.4%	55.1%	9.5%
PINTEREST USERS	0.2%	79.2%	77.7%	80.0%	86.3%	59.9%	55.9%	42.5%	49.0%	28.1%	100.0%	21.4%	43.8%	9.2%
DISCORD USERS	<0.1%	85.6%	77.3%	76.3%	87.1%	63.2%	65.7%	45.4%	68.6%	49.9%	57.9%	100.0%	48.7%	13.9%
LINKEDIN USERS	0.2%	78.6%	85.0%	84.5%	86.3%	52.8%	60.6%	42.5%	56.4%	30.0%	52.1%	21.4%	100.0%	9.0%

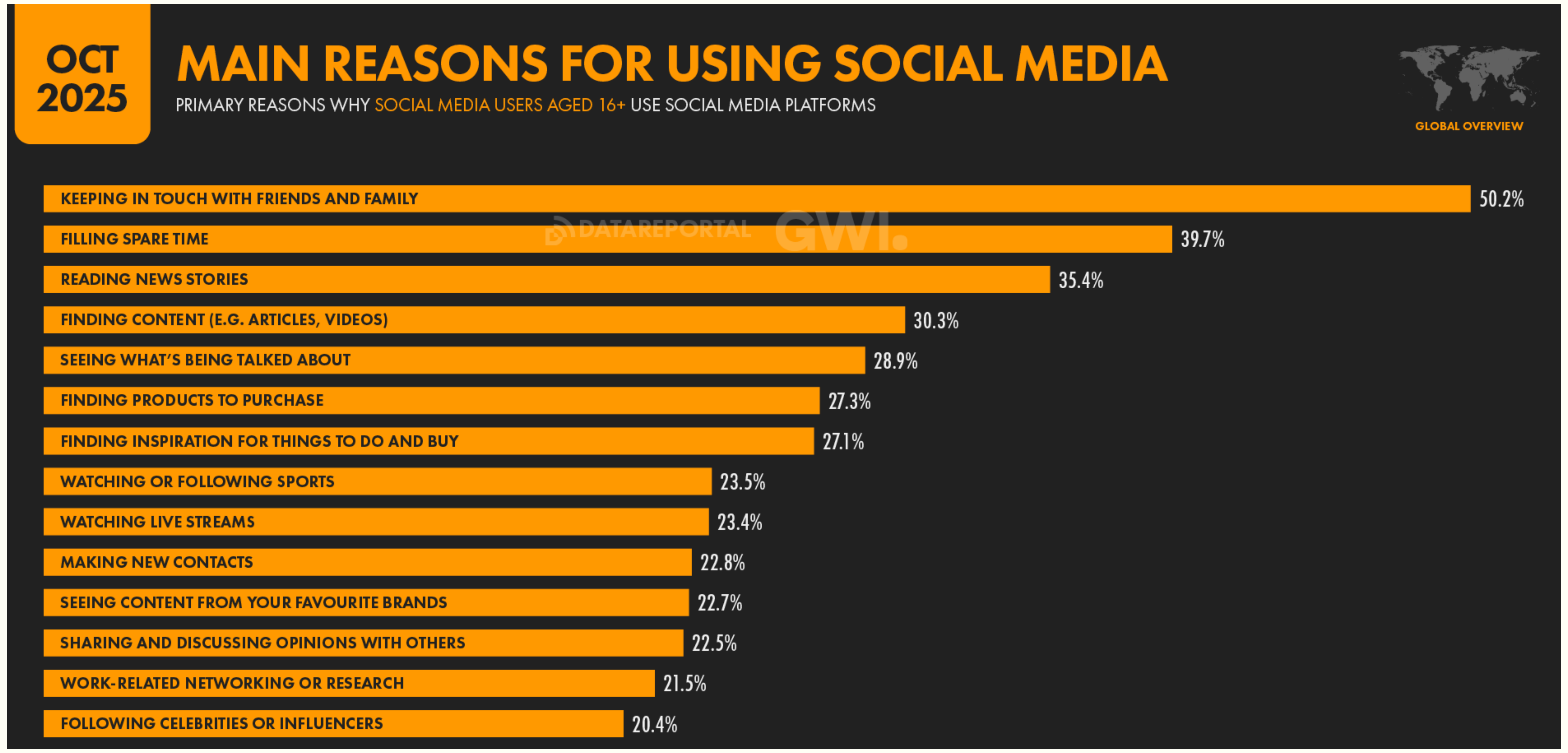
[Digital 2026 Global Overview Report](). *Credit Meltwater, 2025, compiling data from 8 sources worldwide.*

1.

Where We Are

- **Sources of Brand Discovery (top two per age group):**
  - **Ages 16-24:** Social Media Ads & Search
  - **Ages 25-34:** Social Media Ads & Search
  - **Ages 35–44:** Search & Social Media Ads
  - **Ages 45–54:** Search & TV Ads
  - **Ages 55–64:** Search & TV Ads
  - **Ages 65+:** TV Ads & Word of Mouth
- **Some "Sleeper" Discoverabiltiy Methods:** Social Media Comments (25%+ across the board), Word of Mouth (26%+), Retail Websites (23%+), Ads on Websites (22%+), In-Store Promos (ages 55+).
- **Primary Use of Social Media:** Information Gathering & Fun





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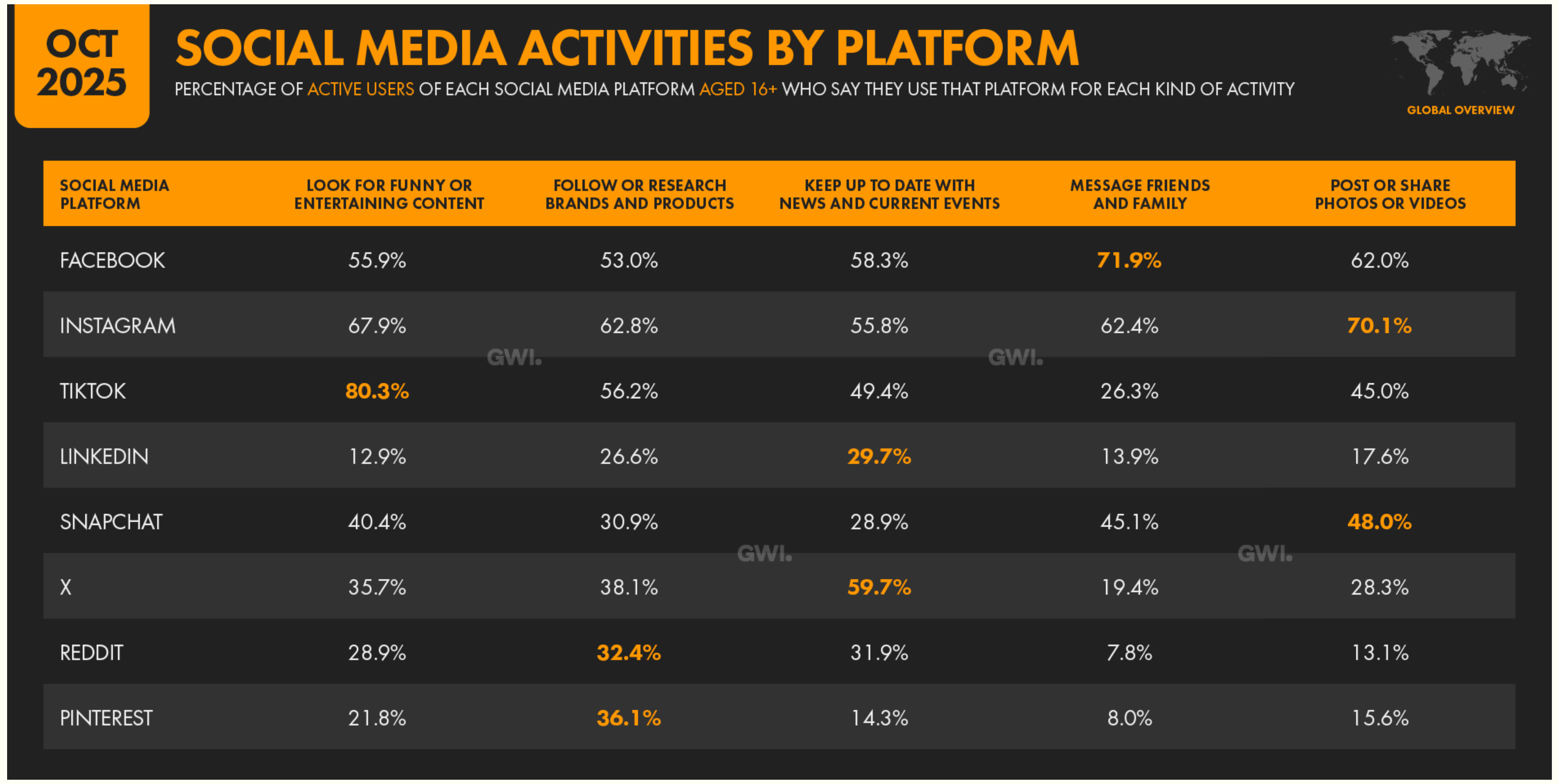
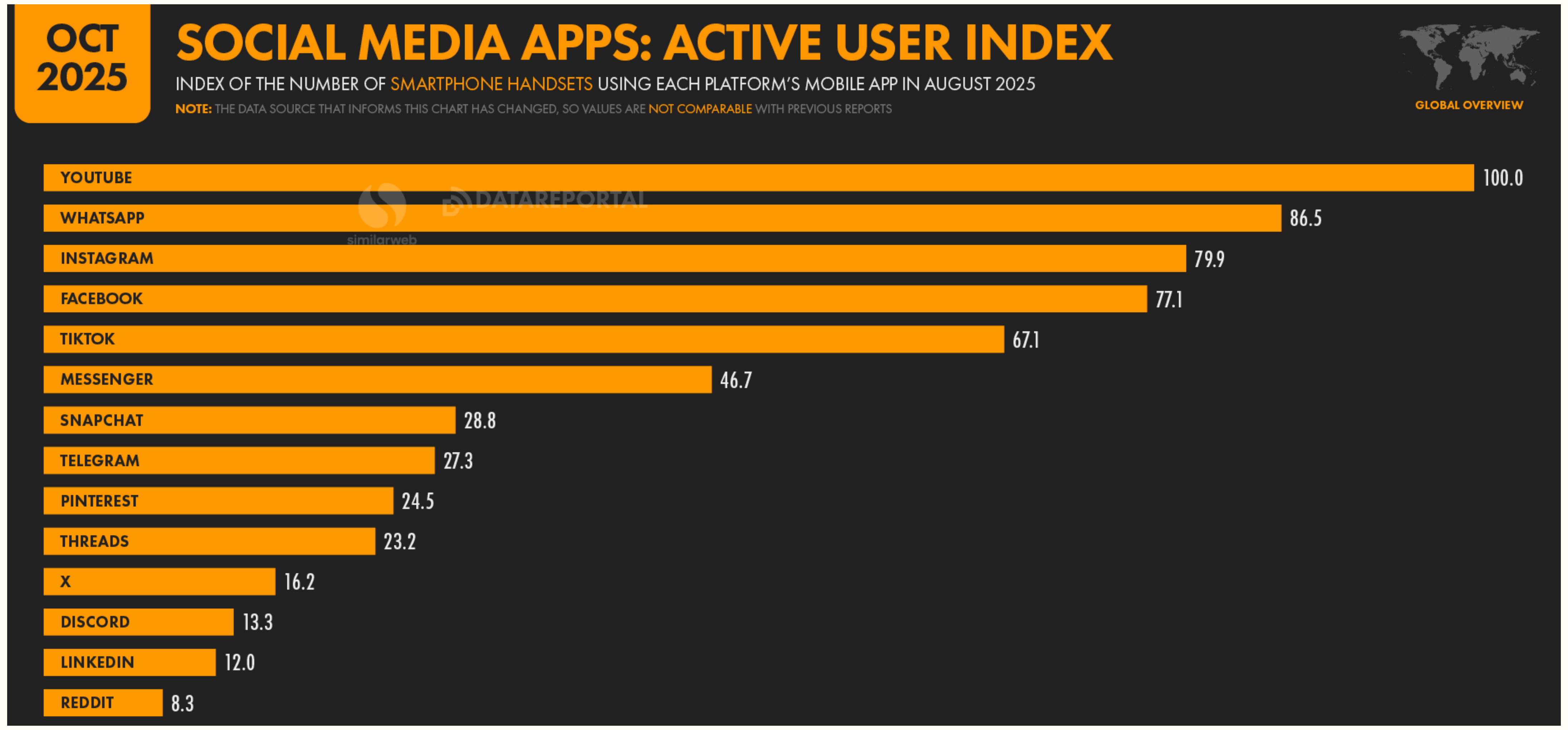
1.

Where We Are

- A user's *intent* on social media matters, *sort of*. According to the data, Facebook is about connection; Instagram is for sharing visual experiences; TikTok is for entertainment; LinkedIn and X are for staying informed; Reddit and Pinterest are to research products and brands. ***But those are only the top reasons.***
- Content, both organic and paid, needs to be optimized for the mobile experience, *except* when content is being shared on Pinterest, Threads, X / Bluesky, Discord, LinkedIn or Reddit.
- **As companies**, the majority of you are probably creating social and advertising content based on "generalist" best practices not refined for the book industry, or are largely *reacting* to changes as they happen. ***This isn't sustainable.***


OCT 2025
SOCIAL MEDIA ACTIVITIES BY PLATFORM
PERCENTAGE OF ACTIVE USERS OF EACH SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORM AGED 16+ WHO SAY THEY USE THAT PLATFORM FOR EACH KIND OF ACTIVITY
GLOBAL OVERVIEW

SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORM	LOOK FOR FUNNY OR ENTERTAINING CONTENT	FOLLOW OR RESEARCH BRANDS AND PRODUCTS	KEEP UP TO DATE WITH NEWS AND CURRENT EVENTS	MESSAGE FRIENDS AND FAMILY	POST OR SHARE PHOTOS OR VIDEOS
FACEBOOK	55.9%	53.0%	58.3%	71.9%	62.0%
INSTAGRAM	67.9%	62.8%	55.8%	62.4%	70.1%
TIKTOK	80.3%	56.2%	49.4%	26.3%	45.0%
LINKEDIN	12.9%	26.6%	29.7%	13.9%	17.6%
SNAPCHAT	40.4%	30.9%	28.9%	45.1%	48.0%
X	35.7%	38.1%	59.7%	19.4%	28.3%
REDDIT	28.9%	32.4%	31.9%	7.8%	13.1%
PINTEREST	21.8%	36.1%	14.3%	8.0%	15.6%



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2.

Where We're Going

A THOUGHT TO PONDER

Why has it gotten harder to reach relevant readers?

Consumer Saturation in Canada Is LOW

→ **31% of Canadians** read or listen to books at least once a day; that number goes up to 49% over a week. 74% of Canadians (over 30 million people) read at least 1 book a year. (1–5 books: 45%; 6–11 books: 29%).

→ **In the USA, these numbers are largely the same,** with 51% of Americans report not completing a book (at all) in the last 12 months. 19% of readers read 82% percent of all purchased or lended books.

→ **What this means for marketing strategies:** North America has enough customers, but Canadian publishers currently hold **only 5.6%** of the total market share of books purchased in Canada. **We need to fundamentally retool how we talk about and share books with online audiences.**

2.

Where We're Going

The Playing Field

→ **Social media strategies need a reset.** Instead of chasing volatile algorithms and fads, we need to lean into our core strengths, and stop treating these tools as the primary drivers of audience / consumer growth.

→ Social media **shouldn't warp how we talk about books**, just because they don't fit into trending narratives or genres.

Social Media Is *Only* a Tool

Given we can't rely on social media to connect with the public — or even our own followers — organically, *without* us needing to deploy complex formulas of design, AI, timing, or music (or pay), a fundamental shift in how we prioritize these platforms and build content is long overdue.

What would your social media strategy look like if it used the same strategies you've used for decades to hand-sell books? What if we treated social media as "just" another distribution channel?

2.

Where We're Going

The Playing Field

→ **Advertising plans need more diversification and investment.** Meta, Google, and retail ad spaces are important, but they aren't evergreen or infallible. Advertising should build momentum, and not always for single titles.

Digital Advertising *Will* Face Disruption... Soon.

If all of Meta collapsed tomorrow; If Google fundamentally changed; if Amazon lost its marketshare (stranger things have happened!) ... how would customers find your books?

Are you building enough diversity into your advertising approach to reach and RETAIN new customers? Are you selling the right product in your ads? Are you directing people to the right places? Do people know who YOU are so you aren't starting over each time?

2.

Where We're Going

The Playing Field

→ **Influencers are for communities you'll never reach alone.** There are some spaces brands simply can't penetrate on their own (TikTok, Reddit, etc). Influencers should be engaged where you don't already have a foothold, or saturation is very unlikely.

→ The bigger the footprint (followers), the bigger the bill. Canadian book influencers increasingly have brand managers, so expect to pay big for big accounts ($5k or more). **In lieu of huge budgets, relationships always win. Start with contesting, affiliate programs, partnerships, and VIP access.**

2.

Where We're Going

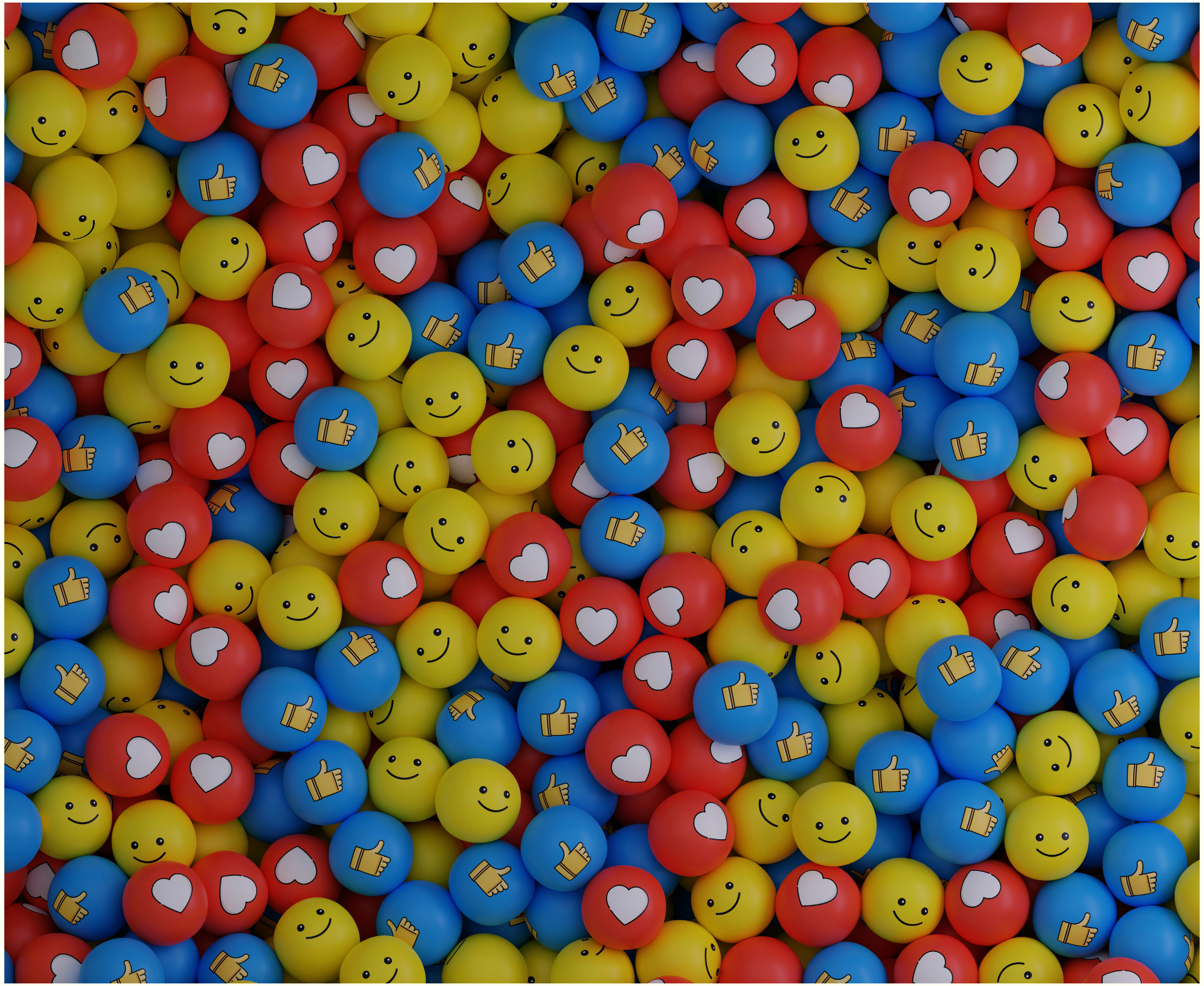
The Playing Field

→ **Websites and book descriptions need to change.** In an era where web traffic is down 75% on average, and GEO / AEO / SEO are more important than ever, there is no such thing as copy that doesn't matter.

- → Online Retail Descriptions
- → Websites & FAQs
- → Social Media Captions
- → Author Websites
- → Bookstore Websites
- → Metadata & Keywording
- → Alt Text on Images

3.

Data-Informed Strategy



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Data-Informed Strategy

→ **Key methodology:** While "it" works, stay the course, but keep an eye out for disruption, pivoting as required.

→ **Data shouldn't be single-stream.** As platforms decentralize, more data sets will be required to see the whole picture. View data through multiple lenses: Meta, Google, Cart, Sales, Mailchimp...

→ **Choose your baseline carefully.** Don't make decisions based on outlier data. Look for the average and test from there.

→ **Truly understand where sales & purchasing decisions happen.** Rely on historical *trends*, rather than individual periods, on their own. (Recall how age factors into discovery, for example.)

What Data-Driven Strategy Looks Like in Practice:

→ **Prioritizing socials that show returns.** Where are mailing list sign-ups *and / or* purchasing decisions actually happening? Have you looked at your traffic reports? The rate of engagement (esp. shares / DMs)?

→ **Alternating advertising platforms when saturation is apparent.** Are you booking these ads because they still show net-positive return, or because it has become habit? Have you explored new targets and outlets lately?

→ **Reviewing aligned *and* competitor presences in the same space.** How is their engagement? What content approaches are they using that is working (or not)?

4.

Values-Driven Harmonization

4.

Values-Driven Harmonization

→ **The book supply chain needs the human touch.** Online users *don't* engage with products. They engage with people: **direct** conversations, **messy** experiments and **friction** are all critical. All of these elements may not feel "perfect," but they drive engagement far better than any flashy graphic or reel. (Ex. Sora AI)

→ **Resource (time, money, creativity) should be actively considered against data findings.** Data will show *ideal* scenarios and factual results. But every company will need to balance those findings with the reality of their *capacity* — this means **being ruthless** toward low-return activities for some.

→ **The end goal is to build an ecosystem that is self-regenerating.** This will be hard at first, with excellent dividends later. What tools and platforms are required?

5.

Practical Tips

SOCIALS

→ Prioritize content distribution by platform; Seek out communities that are already established; Create platform-agnostic content; Look underneath aesthetic to understand true performance. UTMs!!

ADVERTISING

→ Be rigorous in your review of data; Employ remarketing AND set new target goals regularly; Remember that diversification & experimentation are key. UTMs!!

INFLUENCERS

→ Seek influencers on platforms you aren't on, for book topics or genres you don't normally publish. Be your own influencer for everything else. Personal discount codes!

5.

Practical Tips

WEBSITES

→ Build out for GEO / AEO / SEO. Pre-empt questions and spell out relevance and credentials. Add links to media and award announcements, not just quoted text. Google Tags!

MAILING LISTS

→ Sign-up forms at every stage of the customer journey. Appropriate tagging and list maintenance. Engage with often, even if it's low-content delivery. Alternate subject lines to avoid fatigue. **Your #1 priority for disruption management.**

CONTESTING

→ Not for follows, or engagement. **List building is the priority!** Use "DM for..." processes or tools. Landing pages!

6.

Questions

Thank You!

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Contact Us:

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