Welcome to the 2023 Predictionary: part-dictionary, part-prediction. We’ve crafted a series of words that will define the year ahead, in its uncertainty and promise, and plotted out how and why they’re worth your attention.
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DAY ONE AGENCY
**[PREE-CAL-I-BRAY-TING]**

Verb — Actioning 2022's hard-won lessons into creative solutions in 2023; a reminder of our own agency in defining and inventing the future.

In ascending order of weird and wild: a rookie squad of community-first social platforms gave the big dogs a run for their money, generative AI took over our feeds, men (not a typo, but enough for *to write an article* got leg extensions and the renewed specter of nuclear annihilation was brought to us by tonight's corporate sponsor *Applebees*. All this to say 2022 was a cold, sudden plunge. And while we didn't predict the rise of near-sentient AI, or Elon's Twitter takeover (close, though!) we were spot-on about the ambivalence we felt in facing this brave new world.

By the end, 2022 felt like the culmination of the longest episode of *The Rehearsal* ever. 2022 became 2020:II—less a "start," and more a round trip through tinseltown back to reality. We navigated a collective reckoning with the cultural and economic phenomena brought to us by a decade of low interest rates, weak labor markets, and the ubiquity of the gig economy. A comedown from *The Rehearsal* that shielded questionable brands, individuals and platforms untethered from reality any real scrutiny.

We explored profound questions: What is the role of humans in the creative process? How do we break from cultural stasis and reboot culture? *Whose feet is this?* Where are our friends? *Is my life the joke?* The stand that shaped our understanding of 2022—*return to history*. What else do you name it—reflected less about the future itself than our faith in our ability to navigate that future. After a year on the defensive—weathering geopolitical, cultural and existential crises—how do we regain agency and autonomy?

First, we remind ourselves of our own agency in defining and shaping solutions. For many, (for us, at least) 2022 felt at times like sitting shotgun in a beta-stage autonomous vehicle. We learned some hard lessons but we're better for them now. We can anticipate, rather than react. Instead of recalibrating with every new shock, we can start precalibrating building a firewall that enables us to block "semantic pollution" so we can anticipate and navigate a barrage of physical and digital detritus, carving out new lanes.

A quick scan on the horizon can give us some clues as to obstacles on the terrain ahead, and how we can precalibrate to meet them. The future of AI, for example, is both awesome and ominous (see *AI-anxiety*), but it doesn't have to be one where human creativity is sidelined. Creative genius doesn't need to manifest itself in the form of an elevated butt, or who can write the best prompts. If anything, this is a galvanizing force for a human-centered approach.

A cultural landscape blighted by refurbished storylines (see *Fatigue*) should prompt us to seek and spotlight stories that preside outside the confines of a pre-existing franchise, corporate control and *even our own borders*. And most importantly, we have to understand how certain forms of cultural analysis can actually lead to cultural paralysis. Creating a mental and organizational framework to segment eshermeral fad from era-defining movement—and act (or not act) accordingly on them—can help to give us a new vantage point, and better equip us to confront the road ahead (see *Trendfication*).

To the extent 2022 was a trial by fire, there's power in knowing we made it through and that we're not reinventing the wheel with each new shock to creative or cultural systems anymore. We hope "Precalibrating" and the following words in the 2023 Predictionary help you to step into that power, to form your own creative toolkit, to navigate the year with critical, creative thinking—and dare we say, optimism.
WHAT HAPPENED:
Getting whipped up into a frenzy over seemingly paradigm-shifting, revolutionary technology that will make the world a better place is deeply ingrained in Silicon Valley’s DNA. And for the last decade, an era defined by cheap money and weak labor markets, the predominant investment ideology involved staking huge bets, often on evangels evangelizing products with questionable utility and returns. 2022’s biggest story in tech—the boom in generative AI—feels different. AI is rapidly transforming art, media, journalism, politics and fashion. And for now, it’s absent its own Hair-Brained Scheme or Shiny Object. Through the year of tech’s self-immolation AI became a bright spot. Image generators like DALL-E, Stable Diffusion and Midjourney can create eye-catching images from questions like what would a marble statue of Hasbulla look like? How about footage of Caesar’s Assassination? With a simple text prompt, often less than the character cap of a single Tweet, anyone is able to generate a visual depiction of whatever they’re thinking. Meanwhile, AI text generators like ChatGPT, can generate human-adjacent responses to user prompts like “Can you invent an emotion?” or “Write an article about Trump reducing Prometheus.” ChatGPT’s answer engine has even prompted a Code Red in the upper ranks of Google, as many see it as an existential threat to the company’s search monopoly over search.

WHAT’S NEXT:
There are of course, several ethical, philosophical, economic and cultural implications to consider as generative AI seeps into the mainstream, interacting with ChatGPT. Mark Zuckerberg noted that conversations “can be friendly, and they can be bone-chillingly sociopathic.” An MIT fellow and venture capitalists likened OpenAI to a “virus [that] has been released into the wild with no concern for the consequences,” and forecast that it would drive the most disruptive change the U.S. economy has seen in 100 years. The question that’s been asked consistently since the formation of the internet—will a robot take my job?—has swung back into full view. There’s no doubt that both text and image generators will continue to play a pivotal role in creative industries, but it’s more likely that they’ll supplement human creativity—an autocomp for everything—than supplant it, at least in the short term.

Use cases will undoubtably grow wider and weirder, and on a more insidious level, it’s likely we’ll see how synthetic media can be weaponized to spread misinformation, especially ahead of what’s certain to be another contentious election cycle. Conversations around AI’s ramifications in classrooms will likely spark a debate around what’s acceptable in educational settings. And living through the golden age of crypto—whether you want to run for the White House (again), start a crypto exchange, or plan an exclusive music festival—grifters have another shiny tool to add to their arsenal. Generative AI is still in its nascent stage, but it’s already sparking an intensifying debate around what it means for the future of art, politics, and work. A greater reliance on the technology will inevitably foment more anxiety about the nature of humanity and our role in the creative process.

Noun — Unease about the overarching ramifications of AI on human creativity and ingenuity. The sense of foreboding as to whether or not what you’re seeing is being created by man or machine.
EX-FACTOR

Noun — The “exclusivity factor”; the pendulum swing from accessible luxury to growing demand for hyper-exclusive experiences, products and communities.

WHAT’S HAPPENED:
In 2022, luxury seemed to get less... luxurious? The meteoric rise of “accessible luxury” was a key driving factor. Mid-market brands like J.Crew and Banana Republic experienced revivals in 2022, offering quality and value with a trend-savvy point of view. Luxury brands like Gucci continued to take a page from Rimowa’s 2021 playbook, tapping Gen Z relevant talent and more digital touchpoints to build affinity with younger shoppers. And as pandemic restrictions loosened around the world, the floodgates opened on experiences once reserved for big spenders as consumers took advantage of eased pandemic restrictions: travel lounges, dream destinations, private jets, fine dining reached new levels of democratization. But the YOLO boom for the everyman coincided with an ultra-luxurious equivalent for the mega-rich. News of overcrowded ski slopes ran alongside the White Lotus-esque requests of wealthier clientele, not to mention what £620,000 can get you in the Alps. An average World Cup attendee was likely going home to a shipping container with not even one beer on their stomachs, while VVIP list members were drinking champagne in the Pearl Lounge.

WHAT’S NEXT:
Paradoxically due to savvy marketing by luxury and mid-tier brands, the value propositions of luxury and exclusivity aren’t as closely tied as they once were. And consumers are catching on. Luxury could mean a chic but crowded hotel in Positano, or it might mean a private island off the coast. Regardless of income, we’ll probably see consumers starting to want not just “luxury” but the most premium and exclusive option available: the offering with the most “x-factor.” For the wealthy, this will likely continue to come down to price. Hospitality, dining, even news media offering high-caliber service and exclusivity via velvet-roped reservation lists, and VVIP membership. For more price-conscious consumers, especially younger ones, ex-factor might come via cultural niche—or gatekeeping—rather than price point as a way to cultivate exclusivity in their wardrobe and product choices without upping their spend. It’s an opportunity for brands to get cleaner on their value proposition where luxury and exclusivity are concerned. The simplest path, as many brands and services have done, is raising the barrier to entry. But it doesn’t have to be so cut and dry: is our ex-factor offering a luxe upgrade to a consumer pain point or offering YKKK cachet for a tight-knit community?
WHAT'S HAPPENED:
We're currently living through an unprecedented period of content creation. For the nearly 50 million people who consider themselves creators around the globe, the tools needed to produce music, films and art have never been more readily available. And yet billboards, box offices and even branding feels overwhelmingly homogenized and 

PHR-UH-TEEG
Noun — Franchise fatigue. Entertainment's law of diminishing returns; when the constant and inevitable churn of franchise spinoffs fuels exhaustion instead of hype.

WHAT'S NEXT:
The macroeconomic conditions in 2023—high interest rates and a diminished appetite for major bets—will usher Hollywood studios and streaming platforms further into an "age of austerity." The prevailing mood will be one of stasis, as commercial imperatives (laying the bottom line and trimming the fat) will place a greater emphasis on an intergalactic and a Russian nesting doll of franchises that are unlikely to et viewers down. The Atlantic's Derek Thompson coined the term "Cultural Moneyballism" to describe how the analytics revolution that swept the sports world over the past decade has infiltrated entertainment, with Hollywood studios and record labels "correctly observing that audiences respond predictably to familiar intellectual property." But you don't need to be in front of a screen to see face-to-face with the same cookie cutter creativity embraced by Hollywood. A quick walk on any American sidewalk today and you'll confront the similar uniformity manifested through cheap, faux mid century building design. In a recent essay in n+1 magazine titled "Why is Everything So Ugly?" the editors bemoan a landscape that's "compelled developers to copy designs that had already been rubber-stamped elsewhere," and stress "the unmistakable fact of cardboard modernism is that its buildings are less ambitious, less humane, and uglier than anyone deserves." The same is painfully evident in "new" TV shows and movies, where recycled IP has become a safe financial bet over the untapped potential of more ambitious storytelling. But creativity isn't formulaic, nor should it be. Franchises may provide financial windfalls for studios, but over time they become reliable yet empty vessels for tired, stale storytelling. Consumers, seeking radical creativity, will find themselves eager to be released from the clenched jaws of familiarity and cultural symmetry.
WHAT'S HAPPENED:
Spurred by "eco conscious" shoppers and a sisyphean attempt at keeping up with the frenetic churn of new microtrends, the resale market has nearly tripled in size since 2020. The U.S. market for secondhand clothing, footwear and accessories is expected to total $43 billion in 2022, up 23% from 2021. And in a year when inflation reached a 42-year high, used items became an attractive option for shoppers, with 38% of consumers saying that secondhand shopping has helped them in some way during a time of inflation. Even items that consumers traditionally wouldn't have gone near with a ten-foot pole, like used workout apparel became covered items. Vying for the wallets (and minds) of younger consumers—and responding to influence of platforms like Depop and The RealReal—brands are realizing they can ill afford to ignore the resale market. Selfridges announced its goal to have nearly half of its sales based on resale, repair, rental or refills by 2030. Pandemic-induced demand for mass produced "fast furniture" saw sales of cheap desks, chairs and tables jump by more than $4 billion from 2019 to 2021, prompting IKEA to permanently institute its resale initiative. And even luxury brands like Gucci, Balenciaga and Burberry wary of demand for used items eating into new sales, decided to enter the fray. Resale in the luxury space is forecasted to be especially lucrative, per Bain & Co, which predicts that secondhand luxury sales will increase annually at around 15% double the expected rate of new sales.

WHAT'S NEXT:
Several converging forces—from continued supply chain instability exacerbated by climate change, ongoing price sensitivities and fractious politics placing a greater emphasis on "globalization"—will place a spotlight on the secondhand market in 2023. But arguably the most crucial area to watch will be increased scrutiny placed on fast fashion using resale as a channel for greenwashing—or "Sheinwashing." Greater attention is already being paid to the increasingly problematic elements of thrifting, namely that "haul" culture still encourages overconsumption. Launching resale services gives fast fashion brands a veneer of sustainability, a banner to promote faux environmental credentials and while adding a convenient cover for them to continue engaging in unsavory business practices. Already, some secondhand platforms have announced that they won't carry fast fashion brands on their sites, and as greenwashing climbs up the list of governmental agendas around the globe, more attention will be paid to pseudo-sustainability practices.
WHAT'S HAPPENED:
The wellness market is booming nowhere more than in the U.S. where it's valued at $52.5 billion. But the impacts of blurred boundaries between "wellness" categories (which can span healthcare, beauty, technology, social influence, even extended) and the rapid rate of innovation in the space began to show more clearly in 2022, for better and worse.

Take Goop: Gwyneth Paltrow's famously aspirational, and at times absurdly so, wellness line. That brand of pedal-to-the-metal self-improvement is waning in appeal for Gen Z, which prefers influencers with Prevent seed oils.

2022 also saw beauty brands step beyond traditional bounds of the industry, in Sephora's case, expanding "beauty" to include sexual wellness and on-demand sex toys. This "category collapse"—a sub-Predictory word, if you will—fueled growth, innovation and loyalty across the sector but it also opened some brands up to criticism of mental health "wellness washing." The collapse of boundaries between healthcare and selfcare, coupled with increased digital options for has also exposed some more insidious consequences. Gen Zers generally fall into less engaged segments of behavioral healthcare, and choose digital telehealth platforms over traditional outpatient care. Social media has also become rife with health guidance, where mental health influencers and misleading advice urge users towards self-diagnosis of serious conditions. The confluence of these trends with a lack of regulatory oversight in telemedicine can spell "foul" for those managing addiction and set the stage for improperly combined medications.

WHAT'S NEXT:
"Wellness washing" criticisms will be a space to watch in 2023—especially in non-wellness industries as more apparel, home and tech brands begin to embrace wellness in their positioning, and industry leaders are held accountable to their marketing messages. Personalization is key for younger wellness consumers, and the markets for wellness products will continue to winnow down. Custom-crafted for more niche cohorts which have built and grown their communities in tighter circles social and tight-knit community platforms like Xand. And although Gen Z is largely less brand loyal than older generations, 2022 proved younger consumers are often loyal shoppers in wellness and beauty categories. As brands outside the industry look to rejuvenate their loyalty programs—and break in authentically in the wellness space—expect to see more of them tap the fandom around Gen Z favorites like Ulta.
[TIK-TOK-O-SCENE]
Noun — The cultural era in which TikTok is a dominant influence over culture: a driving force for taste, celebrity, news, and consumption which may outlast the app’s existence.

WHAT’S HAPPENED:
It’s hard to imagine a corner of the cultural hemisphere that hasn’t been bolstered or rejuvenated, shaped or expedited by TikTok. The platform has changed how Gen Z shops, from luxury skincare dupes to drive purchase decisions and give young creatives their star turn (if they can).

On a more existential level, TikTok redefined the social contract of social media with its decentralized and democratic “network structure.” Its algorithm prioritizes creator discovery over connecting users with their friends, and the FYP has turned the bid for fame and fortune into a tempting, volatile game of Roulette. Politically-speaking, TikTok has been a powder keg for U.S.-China relations as national security fears, data privacy, and safety concerns continue to dog the app. FCC Commissioner Brendan Carr memorably likened his congressional testimony to the dance-free town from Footloose: “I’m the guy who comes in and says, ‘Stop the dancing!’” This is a rather colorful build to his main point: TikTok has far outstripped its “dancing app” roots to become something more consequential, at times insidiously so. He’s right, and not just on the big stuff (you know, personal data).

The long-term influence of TikTok on trends and perceptions of way and the evolution of social media could be seismic. The “Tiktokocene” is about that impact.

WHAT’S NEXT:
Anthropocene is the geological designation—albeit an unofficial and divisive one—for when human activity started to directly impact the Earth’s climate and ecosystems. The “Tiktokocene”—also unofficial yes, but hear us out—is about a cultural shift in consumer expectations and tastes which may prove hard to shake. The litmus test for the Tiktokocene thesis could arrive as early as this year; the 2023 legal outlook for the app in the US, its largest audience, is hazy to say the least. Will its influence outlast its availability on the app store? Time will tell. But in the meantime, here’s a few hot zones to brace for impact: first up, the music industry.

After a year on the offensive—navigating a brick wall Billboard chart, TikTok’s relentless ambitions in distribution and streaming, the realization that minting a hit on TikTok was a marketing mirage all along—labels, audio platforms and artists will need to go back to the drawing board on strategy. It’s worth keeping an eye on news about royalties as music companies push for a larger cut from TikTok and advertisers leverage the platform, which has been a squeaky wheel to say the least.

TikTok’s global head of music Ole Obermann estimated that brand-usable music could be a “billion or even multi-billion dollar business in a very short period of time.” Speaking of potential billion-dollar business, TikTok in-app purchase revenues quietly set records this year and the runway is open for innovation and industry shake ups into next year. Purchases via TikTok Coins offer creators the ability to monetize and deepen their relationship with their communities through tips and subscription tiers rather than gaming the algorithm or praying for the next brand deal. They also offer TikTok a thus far profitable way to accommodate the million-dollar creator economy on its platform. Expect to see other shopping and social platforms get in on the action.
WHAT'S HAPPENED:
2022 was the year of the false prophet. No profession seemed to capture the public's increasingly fleeting attention spans throughout the pandemic more than that of the trend forecaster. Skyrocketing screen time and a media ecosystem that gives credence to the absurd, has laid the groundwork for terminally online cultural commentators and journalists to grant outsized influence and validation to "trends" that are in reality inconsequential and fleeting. The pandemic offered fertile ground for journalists and influence to proselytize about the "next thing" — a new sandbox for insatiable speculation where sweeping proclamations about the future of work, hospitality, travel, education and entertainment were rewarded with an untold number of think pieces, watercooler debates and even billion dollar valuations. TikTok, where trend forecasting itself has become its own industry of sorts, has brought this all to a fever pitch. An onslaught of -cores, vibes, aesthetics, and seemingly novel behaviors like the "lobotomy pout" or "caesar bump" and "quiet quitting" raise the newscycle. D.T.F's Terry Nguyen notes that "no one is sure exactly what a trend is anymore or if it's just an unfounded observation gone viral," and coined the term "trend brain" to describe the impulse "to simplify everything online into something either buyable, understandable, or moral." Harper's Bazaar's Rachael Jaschil proclaimed that we're living through "a mass psychosis expressing itself through trend reporting." But the challenges confronting our path forward, in 2023 and beyond, require us to rid our minds, and feeds, of the amoeba that causes "trend brain" to metastasize.

WHAT'S NEXT:
When our existence constantly feels out of sync atomized and where Murphy's Law feels more or less confirmed, we all need guides for the daily catastrophe tour; the trend forecaster has regularly come through—often with the end result of giving us a false sense of security. And it is, admittedly perhaps ironic that in our own trend report, where we assign value to what are essentially made up words, we're eyeing a moratorium on giving viral fads real estate in headlines and our feeds, a "trendcession" if you will. But the ability to anticipate and navigate a series of sweeping changes is crucial, particularly when the current state of change is swift and powerful—dramatically altering institutions and relationships at an intensifying rate of acceleration. We need a curriculum on the future. As culture newsletter Blackbird Spyplane wrote in the aptly titled piece You're locked in a prison of trends, "there's no such thing as a total trend escapee—just someone who shows more wit, sophistication, judgment and agency when it comes to their engagement with trends." Surely we can distinguish cynicism with skepticism, as our capacity to adapt and navigate complex, complicated and interconnected issues depends on adopting cultural proficiency and competency that allows us to separate trend from TikTok.

TRENDFLATION

**[TREND-FLAY-SHUN]**

**Noun** — The exponential rise in mass manufactured "trends" met with decreased cultural value and/or impact.
ADDENDUMS

A 2022 Look Backwords (read: lookback, words). Revisiting some of the predictions we got right in 2022, how they’re evolving in 2023, and why you should keep them on your radar.

SUPPLY PAIN

2022: While the supply chain disruptions that came to characterize much of 2021 have abated, Russia’s invasion of Ukraine, China’s gyrating Covid policy, and the ongoing climate crisis disrupted global markets and led to shortages in key industries like energy, medicine and silicon chips.

2023: There are several key areas to watch that will determine the year’s outlook: a protracted crisis in Ukraine, China’s surprise elimination of “zero covid” and a new, more virulent Covid variant could cause widespread labor shortages. Net-net, it depends on a bunch of known unknowns. But given the fragility of the geopolitical arena and the state of the economy, more strategic sectors, like medical supplies and semiconductors, will be regionalized.

PSYCHIA-TRIP

2022: Successful ballot measures in Oregon and Colorado to legalize the adult use of psilocybin, a naturally occurring psychedelic, have paved the way for more widespread use of psychedelics. And as psychologists continue to espouse the mental health benefits of “wet” psychedelics are coming to the fore as a viable and attractive outlet for introspection and transcendence.

2023: Unlike Marijuana, neither Colorado or Oregon will allow psilocybin to be sold at retail destinations. Instead, it must be consumed at a licensed service center. This has kicked off a race among startups to file patents on everything from treatment rooms with “muted colors” to unique drug delivery methods. Expect competition to heat up in this space, as well as a greater infiltration of psychedelics into the luxury and travel sectors.

FLOCK MARKET

2022: We couldn’t quite predict that Elon Musk would go ahead and buy Twitter, and by the time you’re reading this, it is in fact possible that he no longer helms the ship. However he remains the face of the flock market movement, especially when a flasgo over Twitter verification wiped billions of market cap off from major companies like Apple, Lockheed Martin and Nintendo.

2023: Some commentators are calling it the “revenge of reality.” The retail trading revolution has largely tapered off—in fact retail traders saw a $350 billion users erased from their portfolios as rising interest rates triggered a market reversal. A fragile market landscape is not a favorable environment to make speculative bets on already overvalued companies, so we won’t likely see too much activity on platforms like Robinhood, once the Flock Market’s primary domain.

ANALOG OFF

2022: 2022 saw the crypto ice age. Elon Musk’s chaotic Twitter takeover and cascading trends all culminate in an overwhelming sense of cultural malaise. A proliferation of headlines like “The Internet Reached Peak Stagnancy,” “The Internet is Already Over,” “Why the Past 10 Years of American Life has been Uniquely Stupid,” and “The Year in Apps: Save up or Die” where Kyle Chayka notes that in 2022, the entire Internet began to feel something like a dying mall populated only by stores we don’t want to visit.”

2023: Enter the age of “Airplane Mode.” Perhaps now we’ll finally have our long-awaited Log Off moment. Gen Zers—already the most online generation—are forming “uicide clubs” promoting the virtues of the phone and increasingly isolated with the negative effects of social media online discourse. Meanwhile apps prompting users to “touch grass” like the Bread app, which believe “everyone deserves the luxury of real life interactions,” will crop up with increasing frequency.
Head to our website and subscribe to our newsletter for more rising trends and insights!

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