

A NEW WORLD DISORDER?

Navigating the polycrisis

Key takeouts for the
TECHNOLOGY SECTOR

May 2023

**GLOBAL
TRENDS**
2023

TRACKING HOW ARE PEOPLE CHANGING

Since 2013 Ipsos has been tracking the values, attitudes and behaviours of people around the world via our Ipsos Global Trends service (IGT). This year's survey, conducted at the end of 2022, is our biggest ever, comprising some 48,000+ interviews across 50 markets, with strong representation across all regions, allowing us an unprecedented window into the lives and concerns of the public.

Understanding change within any sector is about understanding both top-down and bottom-up change:

- **Top-down change** refers to broad cross-category changes. These affect people irrespective of their relationship with specific product categories but will have different impacts from one sector to another
- **Bottom-up change** refers to specific changes within individual categories – both changes in what users need and want, and changes in what those in category bring to the market and how they do so

Ipsos Global Trends is a hugely valuable resource to understand top-down change. Our 2023 report entitled “**A NEW WORLD DISORDER? Navigating the polycrisis**” is available for [download](#) and covers the key dimensions driving change, including 6 Macro Forces (that cover 26 more detailed themes) and 12 consumer trends that we have been tracking since 2019.



At a glance: the Ipsos Global Trends

In 2019 we used advanced analytics and perspectives from our team of trends and foresight experts to analyse 370 questions across 36 markets, identifying 36 global values and 12 trends, which we have been tracking ever since.

Since then, our annual updates have highlighted how our 12 trends (which cover populism, brand-building, climate change, technology, data security, politics and social issues) have changed – or not changed – over time.

We are delighted to be able to share with you what they look like in 2023, blending our latest data, local signals, our updated Macro Forces and some thought-starter provocations on what they might mean for your organisation, whether it is a government department, a corporation or an NGO.

We hope you find these insights thought-provoking.



WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR THE TECHNOLOGY SECTOR?

In this document, our **Technology** category experts have evaluated the macro force and trend dimensions covered in IGT and identified the key factors that will shape the **Technology sector** during 2023 and beyond.

From these, we have identified **five key drivers of change** and brainstormed some thought-starter implications for each.

Once you have digested these, please:

- Download our free Global Trends report for 2023 for more insight, data, marketplace signals and thought-starters relating to the Macro Forces and trends described in this document, : <https://www.ipsos.com/en/global-trends>
- Contact us to discuss how we can help you navigate the polycrisis and beyond.
- Attitudes to technology, data and privacy are highly driven by cultural factors and traditions. The trends we have outlined in this document are global in nature but, of course, will vary widely from one market to another. We can leverage our 50 country dataset to help you understand what these trends look like in the markets you care about.



IPSOS GLOBAL TRENDS COVERS SIX MACRO FORCES (INCLUDE 26 DETAILED THEMES) AND 12 GLOBAL TRENDS



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THESE BROADER MACRO FORCES AND GLOBAL TRENDS DRIVE CHANGE IN THE TECHNOLOGY SECTOR, CREATING FIVE BROAD DRIVERS

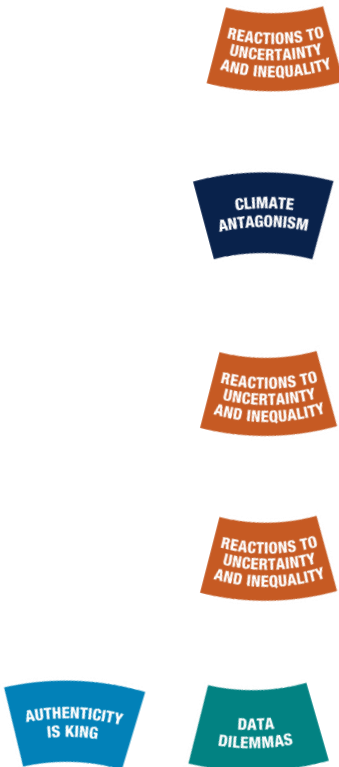


Our six global Macro Forces and key themes

Operating at a broad level, Macro Forces have far-reaching impacts within countries and across borders, affecting societies, markets and people.

Societies in Flux	Tech-celeration	Inequalities and Opportunities	Environmental Emergencies	Political Splintering	Well-rounded Well-being
Ageing populations	Pervasive technology	Rise & fall of middle classes	Climate change	Plateau of globalisation	Growing mental health crisis
Community migration	The immersive frontier	Employee power shift	A greener way of thinking	Security dilemmas	Systemic health inequality
Life stage evolutions	AI advances & quantum computing	Generational wealth disparities	Over-development	Rethinking institutions	Integration of health & technology
Greater ethnic & religious diversity	Increased automation	Impacts of inflation		Increasing geopolitical conflicts	
Identity fluidity	Toll of technology	Alternative value structures		Entrenched inequality	

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DRIVERS OF CHANGE IN TECHNOLOGY

REPLACEMENT CYCLES ARE NOT WHAT THEY ONCE WERE

TACKLING THE E-WASTE MOUNTAIN

RUSHING TO RIGHT SIZE

WAITING FOR THE NEXT BIG THING

GEARING UP FOR THE COMING TRUST 2.0 BATTLE

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REPLACEMENT CYCLES ARE NOT WHAT THEY ONCE WERE

THE WHAT? What is the story here?

Macro Forces: IMPACTS OF INFLATION	Trends: REACTIONS TO UNCERTAINTY AND INEQUALITY
Uncertainty has become the only certainty. People in many markets are facing economic instability as currencies shift in value, inflation rises, supply chains continue to be disrupted, and governments change. Financial inequality, already a driver of change, worsened in the pandemic. In every corner of the globe, struggles to achieve parity based on gender, race, ethnicity and religion dominated headlines. Where can people turn to find confidence, and how can they hedge their bets in an uncertain climate?	

1/3
of the world will
be in recession in
2023
Kristalina Georgieva,
IMF's Managing
Director, 1 January
2023

63%
are concerned
about the rate of
inflation in their
country and
mention this as the
most pressing
concern for their
household

45%
are concerned
about their
disposable income
and mention this
as the most
pressing concern
for their household

THE “SO WHAT”? What might this mean for the technology sector?

WHERE IS THE BANG FOR THE BUCK?	UNSUSTAINABLE SUSTAINABILITY	SEGMENTING THE AUDIENCE AND THE OFFERING
Cash-squeezed customers are hanging on to their devices for longer before replacing them. Platform users are trimming back on “unnecessary” expenditure by rationalising subscription portfolios that had become bloated. All of this means reduced revenues and profits in the short-term, and question marks over business models in the longer-term. It means that the battle to tie users in to the brands they use and product ecosystems has never been more intense.	Tech companies are having to fight the inherent contradictions in their traditional business models. Keeping replacement cycles short may keep the CFO happy but disappoints the CSO.	Device manufacturers have recognised the differential effects of the economic crisis on different groups in society – wealth inequality across countries may be been reduced by the pandemic but inequality within countries has moved in the opposite direction. While the latest launch products naturally take the media attention, and win sales from affluent parts of the market, companies now recognise the importance of appealing across the board – keeping multiple generations of a product line on the shelves for longer than they would have done previously. This gives shoppes multiple price points to work with while still bolstering hard-won brand loyalty.



THE INDUSTRY IS RUSHING TO RIGHT-SIZE AFTER LOCKDOWN-DRIVEN OVER-EXPANSION

THE WHAT? What is the story here?

Macro Forces: IMPACTS OF INFLATION PLATEAU OF GLOBALISATION	Trends: CAPITALISM’S TURNING POINT
One of the key challenges of all businesses is how to balance short-term fluctuations in the market with long-term strategic planning, particularly over a time period – the so-called polycrisis – when significant disruptions pop up with alarming frequency, and interact with other to create pressures that are even greater than the sum of the parts. Tech businesses generally did well in lockdown, particularly tech platforms that offered users an escape route out of their lockdown boredom. So they scaled up accordingly. With usage levels now trending back towards pre-lockdown levels they are faced with the choice of laying off staff or redistributing them into other parts of their operations.	

102,000+
workers in U.S.-based tech Companies have been laid off in mass job cuts so far in 2023

81%
globally agree that “Social media companies have too much power”

60%
globally agree that “I fear that technical progress is destroying our lives”

THE “SO WHAT”? What might this mean for the technology sector

COVID DROVE HEADCOUNT EXPANSION AND THE POST-COVID HEADCOUNT RESET	ALSO A REDISTRIBUTION OF WHERE HEADCOUNT SITS
Industry-wide layoffs, particularly in tech platform companies like Meta, Google, Amazon and Twitter, have dominated the headlines, with some taking these as “proof” that tech brands had got too big for their boots. In fact, most of not all of the downsizing is better regarded as right-sizing, with those same companies having take on huge numbers of workers to serve the increased user numbers many were experiencing because of new users and changed usage patterns during Covid-19. In many cases, the layoffs have still left tech companies with greater headcount than before the pandemic.	What the headlines around layoffs also fail to take into account is the changing nature of tech businesses. While UX, customer service, and other business units are often nowadays able to leverage new technologies or software to streamline their processes, other parts of tech businesses have been growing rapidly, requiring significant investment – some estimates suggest that Meta has invested some \$36B in its Metaverse development, in the form of specialist headcount and tech infrastructure.



WAITING FOR THE NEXT BIG THING

THE WHAT?

What is the story here?

Macro Forces:
TECH-CELERATION and
IMPACTS OF INFLATION

Trends: **DATA DILEMMAS**
and **THE TECH**
DIMENSION

The combined effects of economic uncertainty and public ambivalence and technology suggest that public sentiment towards the real-world value of new product features is decidedly lukewarm. The frantic excitement of past product launches in the days when launch events were mainstream media content and queues formed around the block seem a very long time ago indeed.

Have we come to the end of one cycle of features innovation? Is another cycle starting yet, or is the industry confronting a sea-change in the levels of passion, excitement, engagement and spending that its products can elicit from an increasingly fatigued and stretched public?

47%

globally agree that “I am usually the first among my friends to try out new things”

71%

globally agree that “I cannot imagine life without the internet”

THE “SO WHAT”?

What might this mean for the technology sector

**HOW MUCH BETTER DO
SMARTPHONE CAMERAS
NEED TO BE?**

In a sector that has traditionally grown by incremental innovation of its products, there are worrying signs that one cycle of innovation may be coming to an end.

Within the smartphone sector, for example, waves of incremental product improvement were sustained by ever better cameras, the addition of privacy/login innovations and/or voice assistants, but in an inflationary environment where discretionary spending is being questioned, it may be that continuing with such incremental improvements may not drive the purchase levels needed to sustain previously seen levels of growth.

Identifying the next killer feature and then rapidly bringing it to the market is clearly of vital importance.

**HOW TO ADD AND
COMMUNICATE VALUE?**

To an industry that has become used to performance-based marketing – our new phone can do XYZ – a performance plateau (whether real or merely perceived by the public) represents an interesting challenge.

**DOES AI POINT THE WAY
FORWARD?**

The recent launch of Open AI’s ChatGPT and the wave of me-too offerings from around the industry have dominated the headlines and caused much debate about the future of content.

But, could AI-driven apps and operating systems be the new killer feature that the industry is looking for?

If so, what do these look like? What consumer needs should they seek to serve? What should the UX around such features look like? How would the industry market such features to a public that may be wary of the power of AI running unchecked in their lives.

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TACKLING THE E-WASTE MOUNTAIN [AND OTHER ESG ISSUES]

THE WHAT? What is the story here?

Macro Forces: ENVIRONMENTAL EMERGENCIES	Trends: CLIMATE ANTAGONISM
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Climate change has become a visceral reality, with the past year seeing the largest number of climate-related disasters in recorded history.

But there is rampant debate about who is responsible for climate change and how to address it: some consumers are changing how they make purchasing decisions according to their environmental impact, while others (particularly Gen Z) are putting the responsibility squarely on the shoulders of government, systems and corporations.

28 July
Earth Overshoot Day in 2022: the date by which demand for natural resources had exhausted what the Earth can regenerate

80%
feel that we are heading for environmental disaster unless we change our habits quickly

THE “SO WHAT”? What might this mean for the technology sector

DO USERS CARE ENOUGH?	FINDING WAYS TO LESSEN THE IMPACT	HOW GREEN IS GREEN TECH?	ESG IS MORE THAN JUST GREEN
As in some other sectors, there is much debate about the degree to which technology users care enough about sustainability, given the short replacement cycles seen in the past. With the industry having severe reputational challenges on other fronts too, environmental wins would be very helpful in cleaning up the image of the sector and creating goodwill amongst legislators.	Over the years the technology industry has had a relatively poor track record with regards to the environmental impact of its products. From the emissions associated with production to the depletion of key resources like gold, cobalt, lithium, and other heavy metals. While the industry has toyed with modular, replaceable, and more easily repairable products in the past, genuinely prioritising innovation of these types could allow the industry to begin to fight back against adverse coverage of its record to date.	Efforts to create green tech are subject to rigorous scrutiny by a public that is highly motivated to unpick even the slightest ambiguity, over-claim or sub-optimal feature. Electric cars, for example, are much touted as eco-friendly but their adoption in anything like the numbers needed will create a mountain of electric batteries in landfill sites around the world.	As well as sustainability initiatives, the tech sector must also focus on the S and the G of ESG: social and governance if it is to create a positive brand purpose. Efforts could include: • Recognising the rights of the workers • Employee-focused ESG initiatives • Acknowledging the past mistakes of the industry



GEARING UP FOR THE COMING TRUST 2.0 BATTLE

THE WHAT? What is the story here?

Macro Forces: TECH-CELERATION	Trends: DATA DILEMMAS and THE TECH DIMENSION
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Whether it's that eerily accurate advert that pops up after you and your spouse have agreed to buy a new sofa, or your quick acceptance of the default cookie settings on a website so you can read an article a colleague just sent you, at times we all question who has our data and what they're doing with it. But how much do people *really* care? And perhaps more importantly, are they willing to do something about it? The rapid pace of technological change and disruption over the past few decades cannot be understated. However, years on, many people are wondering whether the promises made by Big Tech have been kept, and what we need to do collectively to harness the potential of tech – and mitigate its risks.

81% feel that it is inevitable that we will lose some privacy in the future because of what new technology can do	81% I am concerned about how information being collected about me when I go online is being used by my own government	45% People worry too much about their privacy online - I'm not concerned about what companies, or the government know about me
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THE “SO WHAT”? What might this mean for the technology sector

TRUST 1.0 BATTLE HAS LARGELY BEEN WON	USE CASES ARE PROLIFERATING	NEW PERMISSIONS – NEW TRUST?	GETTING REGULATORS ONBOARD
Trust in data sharing is a complex issue. The public say they care deeply about it but, at the same time, they share willingly and often unquestioningly in their rush to avoid the Ts & Cs and use their new app as quickly as possible. In essence the battle for trust in the sharing of basic data has been won. Most people are either willing to share or ambivalent about doing so. Those who care or say they do often don't act on their concerns because it is simply easier to go with the flow.	Tech never stands still. New technologies are emerging that will require new levels of data sharing. A good example is what we might call. Personalisation 2.0. if personalisation to date has largely been about recommendation engines based on previous service history, the next generation of personalisation will likely be contextual: not just what products do I tend to like but what do I need right now based on in-the-moment data like the weather, my location or my mood and body's vital signs. Other examples include the very contentious area of facial recognition.	Getting access to this data will be very challenging and will require all new permissions. As with any data sharing discussion, it will still come down to whether or not tech companies can make a compelling case: what are the benefits of sharing? What are the drawbacks? Even if the pros outweigh the cons, the public may still need convincing or even paying to share their valuable information.	Regulators have enacted wide-ranging and powerful measures to protect the public from data misuse but they may actually lag behind the public in terms of the protections they have put in place versus the freedoms that the public might like tech companies to have. This may be rooted in a fundamental disconnect between regulators and the public (even in simple demographic terms).

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What to do next: These are just thought-starters. Here are just some ways we can help you push them further

We can help you leverage the trends:

Beyond this public report, get in touch with the The Global Trends and Foresight Team to discuss:

- **In-depth analysis** of the trends or a specific market's attitudes – and how they will change
- **A custom presentation** tailored with data & signals for your organisation and key countries
- **Workshops & activations** to apply the trends to your strategic planning processes
- **Data access** through your Ipsos team, or directly via our Portal for up to 50 markets
- **Macro Forces** with supporting data, to feed into your own foresight processes
- **Market-specific highlights** to inform your global footprint and strategy

We can help you shape the future:

Beyond the trends, our advisory services in trends and foresight consulting include:

- **'Future of...'** foresight consulting to prepare for the obstacles and opportunities ahead
- **Trend Tracking** to monitor trend evolution and scale
- **Custom trends frameworks**, inspired by Ipsos Global Trends but customised for your organisation
- **Scenario building** and horizon scanning to consult with your organisation on preparation
- **Innovation sprints** to turn the trends into platforms for growth and to develop concepts



About Ipsos

In our world of rapid change, the need for reliable information to make confident decisions has never been greater.

At Ipsos we believe our clients need more than a data supplier, they need a partner who can produce accurate and relevant information and turn it into actionable truth.

This is why our passionately curious experts not only provide the most precise measurement, but shape it to provide a True Understanding of Society, Markets and People. To do this we use the best of science, technology and know-how and apply the principles of security, simplicity, speed and substance to everything we do. So that our clients can act faster, smarter and bolder. Ultimately, success comes down to a simple truth: You act better when you are sure.

GLOBAL TRENDS 2023

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GAME CHANGERS

