

October 2026

# IPSOS UPDATE

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A selection of the latest  
research and thinking  
from Ipsos teams around  
the world

# Ipsos Update October 2026

## Our round-up of research and thinking from Ipsos teams around the world

It is easy to look at what is happening in the world today – from climate change and geopolitical tensions to AI-driven disruption – and feel uneasy about the future. That sentiment is captured in the opening line of our latest [Ipsos Global Trends](#) report, which describes the era we are living through as the "restless decade". Across many dimensions, the warning lights are flashing red, and optimism can feel increasingly scarce.

But we do find some silver linings within the macro context, pointing the way towards a more positive future. More than a billion people have escaped extreme poverty since the 1990s. AI is already helping to drive breakthroughs in healthcare. Internet

access has become near universal, connecting billions of people to information, services and opportunities. For brands, there is also a clear opportunity: those that demonstrate a meaningful role in people's lives and deliver genuine value are well positioned to succeed. Across the 38 countries included in our survey, 77% say they are more likely to trust a new product from a brand they already know.

Trust, in fact, emerges as a recurring theme throughout this edition. Our [Global Trustworthiness Index](#) reveals a world of contrasts. Doctors, nurses and teachers continue to command high levels of trust, while politicians, advertising executives and social

media influencers remain among the least trusted professions. AI chatbots make their first appearance this year, receiving only a lukewarm response. Meanwhile, our [CX Global Insights](#) research reminds us that efficiency alone is rarely enough to build loyalty. Almost half of customer interactions are classified as "Nothing Notable". Smooth experiences may meet expectations, but memorable experiences are what create differentiation.

Distinctiveness also lies at the heart of effective brand building. [Recognisably You](#) explores how distinctive brand assets, from iconic packaging and product design to sonic cues, help brands stand out in crowded markets.

At the same time, [Modern Milestones](#) examines how changing life stages are reshaping consumer behaviour. As people buy homes, start families and reach traditional milestones later than previous generations, marketers need a more nuanced understanding of where people are in life, rather than relying solely on generational labels.

As ever, we hope you find this selection insightful and look forward to some great conversations on the implications for your organisation.



Simon Atkinson  
**Chief Knowledge  
Officer**

# Poll Digest

## Some of this month's findings from Ipsos polling around the world

### USA:

44% of Republicans approve of President Trump's handling on the cost of living (down from 70% in January 2026).

### Canada:

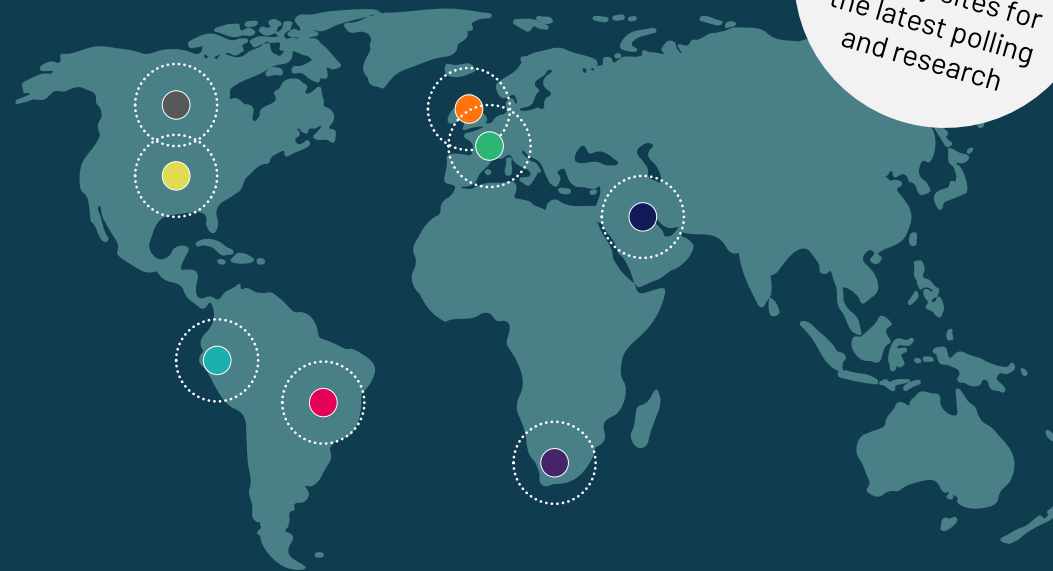
Nearly half (46%) of Gen Z business owners have a side hustle in addition to their primary career.

### Brazil:

82% believe that people should be concerned about the risk of technology replacing jobs.

### Peru:

Over a third (35%) say they would run into the street during a major earthquake.



### Great Britain:

68% support making it legal for a doctor to assist a terminally ill patient in ending their life by prescribing life-ending medication.

### France:

83% believe that access to insurance will become more difficult in the face of rising climate risks.

### Kuwait:

Two-thirds (65%) are satisfied with the amount of time in their schedule for leisure.

### South Africa:

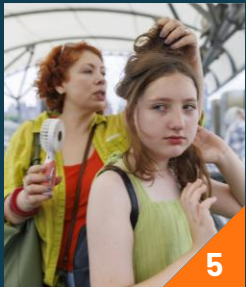
15% have not gone to work or school because they could not afford transport costs.

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# Ipsos Global Trends

The 10<sup>th</sup> edition of Ipsos Global Trends, *The Search for Silver Linings*, paints a picture of a world shaped by climate pressures, geopolitical instability, demographic change and rapid technological disruption. Yet its central finding is surprisingly hopeful: while optimism about the world is declining, people continue to find reasons for optimism in their own lives and ability to shape their futures.

Across 38 markets, only 25% are optimistic about the world and 36% about their country, but 55% remain optimistic about themselves and their families. The report argues that in today's "restless decade", hope has

become increasingly personal, with people focusing on areas where they feel they have agency and control.

This year's Ipsos Global Trends report identifies several major trend shifts. Climate concern is evolving from prevention towards adaptation, with consumers increasingly seeking practical ways to build resilience. Health is becoming more data-driven and proactive, as advances in technology and medicine encourage people to optimise both physical and mental wellbeing. Trust, meanwhile, is moving away from institutions and towards familiar brands, communities, and individuals.

Three trends are accelerating. Growing uncertainty is driving a stronger focus on self-improvement, personal success and individual agency. At the same time, attitudes towards AI are becoming more cautious, with people questioning whether technological progress automatically delivers social progress. Many consumers are also becoming more focused on immediate rewards and experiences as confidence in long-term advancement weakens.

Despite widespread concerns, the study highlights several reasons for optimism, including technological innovation, advances in healthcare and rising living standards. Progress

remains possible, but leaders, brands and institutions must help people see a credible path forward through visible action, practical solutions and opportunities that strengthen people's sense of control over their future.

Be sure to [watch the latest KEYS webinar](#), where our panel dissect essential findings from across the world.

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**In the US, more women in their 40s are having children than teenagers.**

# Modern Milestones

## Why it's critical to think in life stages

The temptation to rely on generations as a shorthand for understanding people remains as strong as ever. But while generational labels can provide useful context, they can also obscure a more important reality: **often it's people's life stages that play a bigger role in their needs, priorities, and behaviours.**

Today, timelines are shifting and the traditional life cycle has been disrupted. But traditional milestones have not disappeared – they're shifting. Around the world, people are getting married, starting families, and buying homes later in life than previous

generations. At the same time, older people are enjoying a longer period of post-retirement life, as their lifespan increases.

The result of this is some life stages extending, some life stages compressing – and some life stages emerging that are entirely new.

The changes are significant. In the US, more women in their 40s are having children than teenagers. The share of Americans owning a home by age 30 has fallen sharply since the 1980s. Meanwhile, longer life expectancy means many adults now spend more years caring simultaneously for children and

ageing parents.

The implications of these changes are far-reaching. Life stages influence everything from housing and healthcare to financial services, technology, travel and retail. As milestones shift, so too do spending patterns, expectations and the ways people engage with brands.

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# Recognisably You

## How distinctive brand assets drive growth

This Ipsos Voices paper explores how distinctive brand assets, from product shapes and packaging to colours, characters and sonic cues, help brands stand out in an increasingly fragmented media environment. Distinctive assets act as shortcuts to recognition, triggering memory structures that make brands easier to notice, recall, and choose.

Drawing on Ipsos' database of more than 12,000 assets from over 900 brands, the report finds that truly distinctive assets are rare: only 15% achieve "gold" status, meaning they are uniquely and instantly linked to the correct brand. Yet brands with stronger portfolios of distinctive assets significantly outperform others on awareness, consideration

and usage. Brands with many strong assets are 31% more likely to be considered and 38% more likely to be used than those with weaker asset portfolios.

The paper argues that effectiveness comes not from the number of assets a brand owns, but from how consistently and intelligently they are deployed. Combining assets, such as visual, verbal and sonic cues, strengthens memory encoding and brand attribution. Examples include O2's Bubl character working alongside its established blue colour palette and bubble imagery, and brands such as Netflix and McDonald's using distinctive audio signatures to drive rapid recognition.

The key lesson is that brands should identify their strongest assets, establish clear usage guidelines, and apply them consistently across channels while evolving them carefully over time. In a marketplace characterised by infinite scroll and shrinking attention spans, the brands that are easiest to recognise are often the easiest to choose. As the report concludes: If your logo disappeared tomorrow, what would people unmistakably recognise as you?

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**If your logo disappeared tomorrow, what would people unmistakably recognise as you?**





**Changes to an audience measurement currency often raise important questions across a market.**

# Launching an Audience Measurement Currency

## A strategic guide for market transition, education, and adoption

Launching a new audience measurement currency is one of the most significant changes a media market can undertake. Audience currencies underpin trading, planning and investment decisions, providing a common standard for buyers, sellers and advertisers. When audience data changes, stakeholders need clarity, transparency, and confidence in the new measurement approach.

Changes to an audience measurement currency often raise important questions across a market. What has changed? Why are the results different? How should the new data be interpreted? And how can confidence be maintained

throughout the transition?

For decades, Ipsos has partnered with Joint Industry Committees (JICs) and media industry bodies worldwide to design, launch and operate audience measurement currencies across television, radio, print, digital, out-of-home and cross-media environments.

Drawing on this experience, we have developed a guide to help markets navigate change, build trust, and accelerate adoption.

Topics covered include:

- How to engage stakeholders early and build industry-wide alignment through co-creation and collaboration.

- Ways to equip buyers, sellers and planners with the tools and support they need to act on new insights.
- Effective approaches for communicating methodological change with clarity and transparency.
- How to manage transitions, including both bridge and clean-break approaches.

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# The Sustainability Reality Check

## Will climate urgency become an everyday reality?

Climate change is becoming harder to ignore. A summer marked by heatwaves, wildfires and drought has brought the reality of a changing climate into everyday life, with three-quarters of people across 18 countries now saying they feel vulnerable to climate change in their daily lives.

Yet there's a paradox at the heart of the sustainability landscape in 2026. As climate change becomes more tangible, the urgency to act is competing with something equally tangible: the realities of everyday life. Cost of living, economic uncertainty, health, and security are all shaping what people feel able and willing to do.

Consumers aren't abandoning sustainable behaviours; they're becoming more selective. Sustainable actions that also save money, such as recycling, hang-drying clothes or driving less, continue to hold up well. More demanding behaviours, like avoiding air travel, or buying renewable energy are proving less resilient.

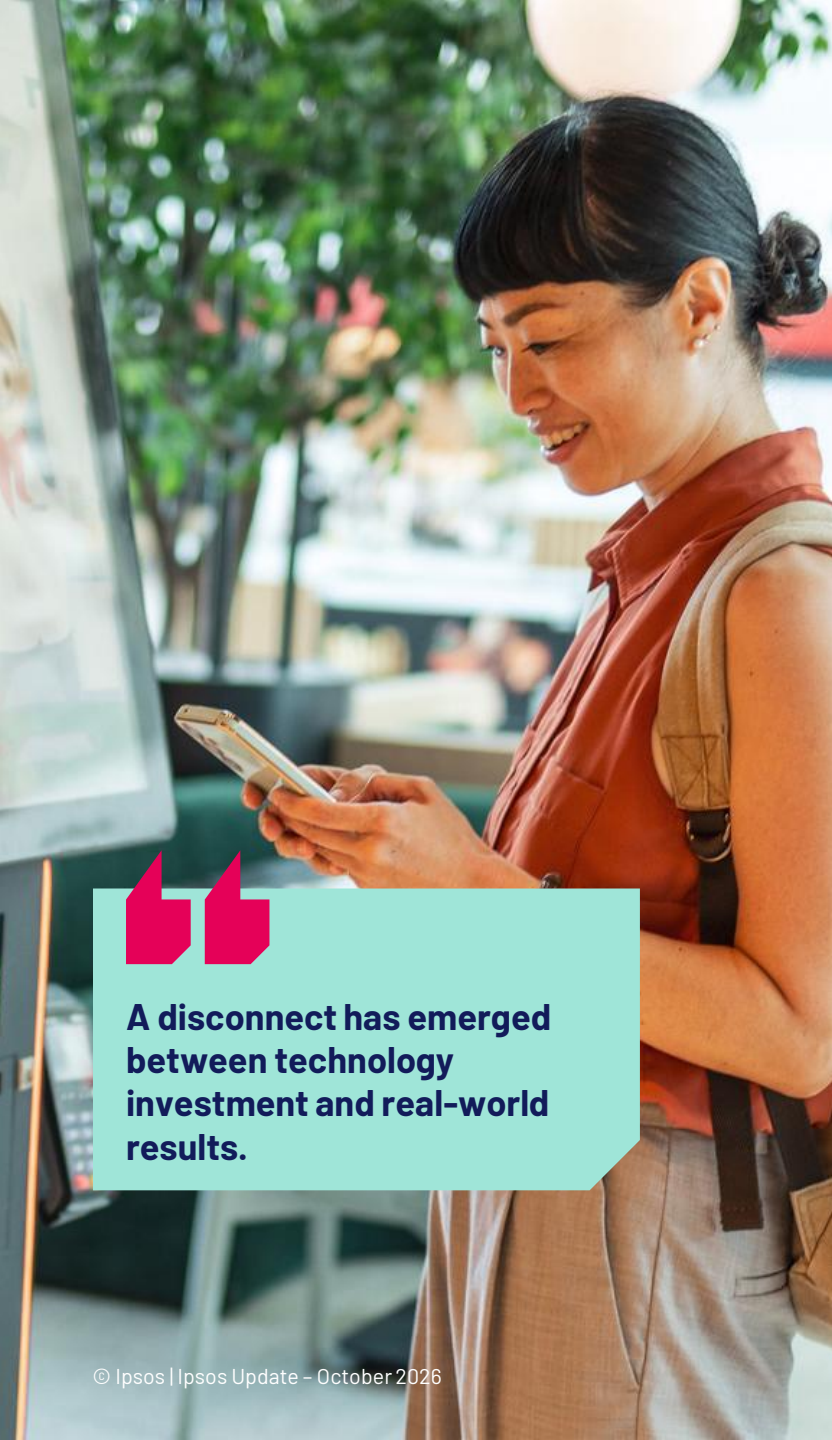
People still want action, but they need someone else to make it possible. People are increasingly looking to governments and businesses – not individuals – to lead, particularly where action involves significant financial or behavioural trade-offs.

For businesses, this shifts the question. It is no longer simply about persuading consumers to pay for sustainability. It is about making sustainable and resilient choices economically viable options in the first place.

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**People still want action, but they need someone else to make it possible.**





**A disconnect has emerged between technology investment and real-world results.**

# Trust Is Not Automated

## Why AI can't buy what CX must earn

While organisations are investing heavily in AI-enabled tools and automation, improvements in customer perceptions are not keeping pace. Drawing on findings from the 2026 [Ipsos CX Global Insights](#) study across 23 markets, this paper argues that efficiency gains alone are not enough to create stronger customer relationships or deliver meaningful business value.

There are three interconnected challenges. First, customer expectations are rising faster than many organisations can deliver, creating an “expectation alignment” gap. Second, the drive to remove friction has often removed the human and emotional elements that make experiences memorable. As a result,

many interactions become competent but unremarkable, limiting their ability to build loyalty or emotional attachment. Third, a trust deficit is emerging around AI, with many customers believing the technology benefits companies more than consumers. When asked who really benefits from AI, customers are clear: 38% believe companies will benefit most, while only 12% believe customers will be the primary beneficiaries.

Our findings show that trust, rather than technology, determines customers’ willingness to embrace AI. Customers who feel emotionally attached to a brand are significantly more likely to accept AI-enabled experiences and grant greater

autonomy to AI systems.

The most successful organisations will be those that use AI to strengthen, scale and support human connection rather than replace it. Future competitive advantage will come not from adopting the most advanced technology, but from combining AI efficiency with experiences that make customers feel valued, understood and respected.

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# Ipsos Global Trustworthiness Index 2026

## Trust remains personal in an era of institutional scepticism

The latest index, based on surveys across 31 countries, reveals a clear hierarchy of trust. Doctors remain the world's most trusted profession (58%), followed by scientists (57%) and teachers (53%). At the other end of the spectrum, politicians are the least trusted, with just 13% considering them trustworthy, while social media influencers (14%) and government ministers (17%) also rank poorly.

The findings suggest trust increasingly resides with expertise and individuals rather than institutions. Around one-third (34%) of people trust the "ordinary

man or woman" in their country, twice the proportion who distrust them. Meanwhile, AI chatbots occupy an uncertain middle ground: 23% consider them trustworthy, compared with 40% who see them as untrustworthy.

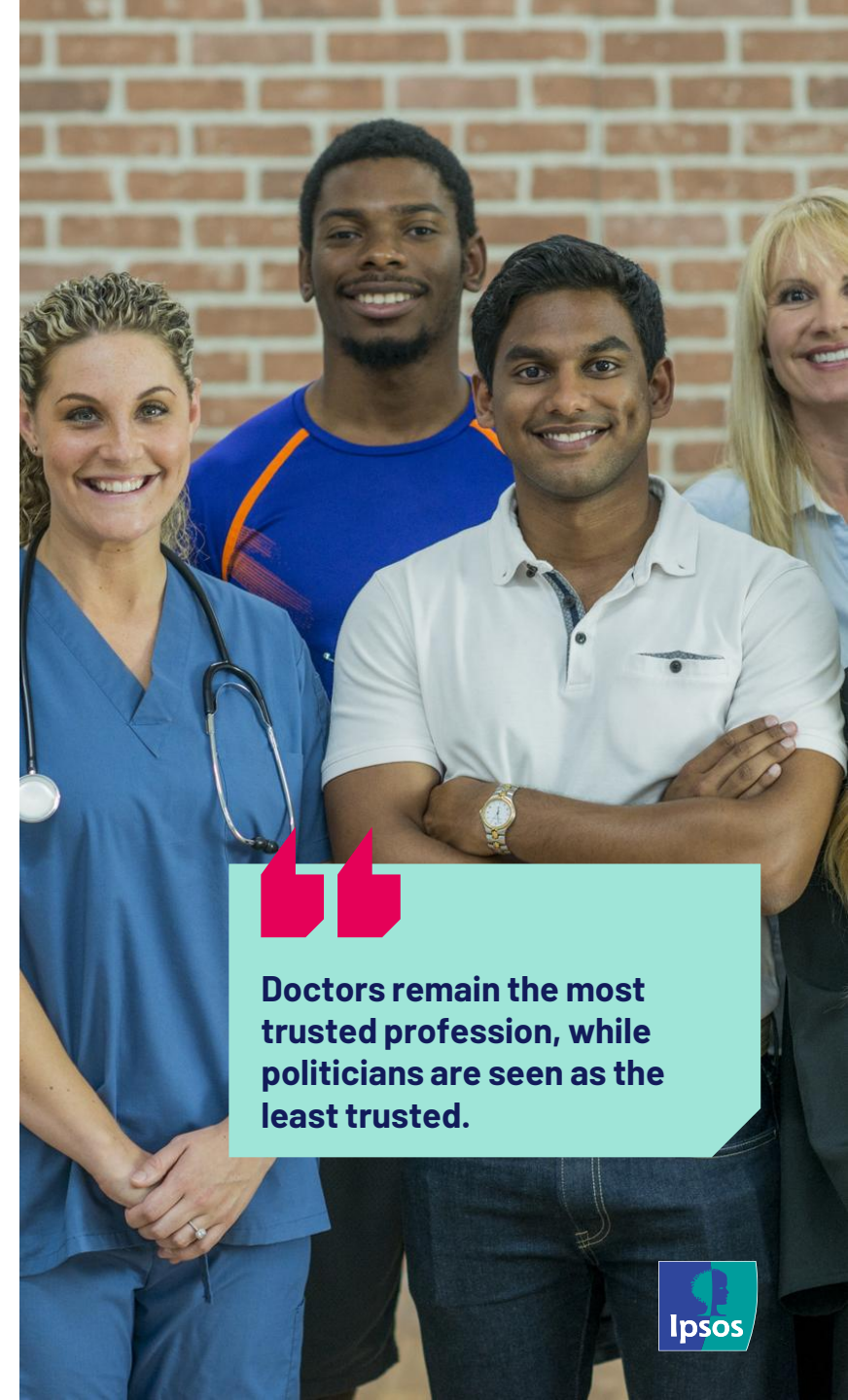
Looking over time, trust levels have remained remarkably stable. Doctors, scientists and teachers have consistently occupied the top tier since 2018, while politicians have remained the least trusted profession. Trust in social media influencers remains low despite their growing visibility, and trust in AI systems has yet to catch up with their rapidly expanding role in

everyday life.

Overall, the study points to a world where trust is increasingly earned through expertise, competence and personal credibility rather than authority or status. For organisations, the implication is clear: trust must be built through demonstrable actions, reliable performance and authentic human connection.

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**Doctors remain the most trusted profession, while politicians are seen as the least trusted.**





**Online communities can provide a uniquely valuable foundation for building digital twins.**

# The Next Era of B2B Communities

## How community-trained digital twins can make your data go further

The demand for fast, high-quality insights continues to grow, yet access to specialist business audiences remains limited. As a result, many organisations are turning to research communities to build deeper, ongoing relationships with the audiences they need to understand.

Research communities offer a powerful alternative to traditional research models. By bringing participants together in an ongoing environment, they enable brands to engage audiences over time, observe changing attitudes and behaviours, and generate richer understanding through a

mix of research activities. They also create value for participants themselves by providing opportunities to connect, share experiences, and contribute to conversations that matter to them.

But as AI capabilities continue to evolve, a new question is emerging: how can organisations extend the value of community-generated data even further? In this Ipsos Views paper, we explore the potential of community-trained digital twins and the role they could play in the future of B2B insight.

Drawing on a real-world pilot

conducted with an online community of Mexican shop owners, the study investigates how different types of data influence the quality, authenticity, and usefulness of digital twins.

The paper highlights what makes a digital twin genuinely useful, offering practical lessons for anyone looking to harness community data, scale insight, and apply AI responsibly in B2B research.

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# Shortcuts



## 9/11: 25 Years later

On the 25th anniversary, Ipsos in the US found most Americans feel the September 11th attacks had a major impact on both the US and the world.

Americans are split on how safe the country is from foreign terrorist attacks compared to before 9/11: 36% hold the view that the country is about as safe as it was before 9/11, while 32% say the US is safer and 29% say it is less safe.

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## The Long Inflation Impact of the Middle East Conflict

An end to conflict does not necessarily mean an end to inflation.

Drawing on Ipsos behavioural expertise and global consumer insights, this paper examines why inflationary pressures linked to the ongoing Middle East conflict may continue through 2027 and beyond, and what this means for marketers, brand leaders, and decision-makers.

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## Synthetic Data in Product Testing

For food brands, changing a beloved recipe is one of the riskiest decisions they can make.

Consumers may welcome innovation, but they also expect their favourite products to taste exactly as they remember. That was the challenge facing Barilla as it explored potential changes to its flagship Ragù alla Bolognese pasta sauce.

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## What Worries the World: September

Across a 30-country average, we see little change among the top concerns, with crime & violence still top. However, country-by-country, there is marked change.

It's now been around 100 days since the Iran War conflict started and we see a shift in concern from military conflict to the repercussions of the war.

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All the information within this **Ipsos Update** is in the public domain – and is therefore available to both Ipsos colleagues and clients.

Content is also regularly updated on our website and social media outlets.

Please email [IKC@ipsos.com](mailto:IKC@ipsos.com) with any comments, including ideas for future content.

Cover photo: **Wuhan, China.** Eight in ten people in China are concerned about climate change.

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