

GLOBAL BRAND LAB REPORT

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four



Our brand lab report is compiled by Four's team of retail and lifestyle experts and analyses some of the latest innovations, experimental campaigns and transformative developments, which are keeping iconic destinations, retail and lifestyle brands alive for consumers on a global scale. We also explore how consumer behaviour is changing - now and forever - and how brands are evolving to succeed during this evolutionary time.

The image on this page is of Liverpool, our destination spotlight this month. See page 6 to find out more.

CONSUMER TRENDS, CAMPAIGNS & BRAND ACTIVITY

THE INDEPENDENT TO DONATE AD SPACE TO BLACK CAUSES, ADVIL PAIN EQUITY PROJECT'S NEW CAMPAIGN AND BLACK BLOOD DONORS CELEBRATED WITH MURAL



The Independent to donate £120,000 of ad space to Black-led causes in 2024

The Independent is marking Black History Month with various initiatives, including donating £120,000 worth of advertising space to eight Black-led organisations in 2024. Throughout October, they'll feature dedicated editorial coverage and a curated Spotify playlist titled "Black History Month UK 2023" highlighting British Black musicians. The month's activities will culminate in a gala lunch on October 31st in partnership with the UK Black Comms Network.

Advil pain equity project launches Believe My Pain campaign

The Advil Pain Equity Project addresses pain inequity affecting Black Americans, with 83% reporting negative experiences when seeking pain management. The "Believe My Pain" campaign is part of this initiative, featuring a digital roundtable discussion and personal stories from Black individuals who've faced inequitable pain treatment. Advocate Elaine Welteroth shares her experience with racial bias in healthcare during pregnancy, emphasising the importance of advocating for one's needs and seeking alternative care when necessary.

Black blood donors celebrated with mural as a part of NHS campaign

A mural celebrating Black blood donors was unveiled in South London as part of an NHS campaign to combat sickle cell disease. The artwork by Neequaye Dreph aims to raise awareness and encourage more donors from African and Caribbean communities. Sickle cell disease predominantly affects these populations, and ethnically matched blood is essential for treatment, with over half of Black donors having the required blood type, compared to just 3% of the general population, according to NHS Blood and Transplant.

FASHION & LIFESTYLE

STONE ISLAND'S GOT SEOUL, SIENNA MILLER: NEW FACE OF M&S, V&A: GABRIELLE CHANEL. FASHION MANIFESTO



Puma shines light on emerging designers

Global sportswear brand Puma has launched a campaign in support of Black History Month, targeting rising stars in the design industry. Centred around their classic streetwear shoe, the Puma Suede, up and coming designers are being invited to create the ultimate outfit to pair with the shoe. The final winner will receive design equipment, £2000 and a mentoring session with the creative director of women's basketball, June Ambrose.



The Missing Thread: Untold Stories of Black British Fashion

A new exhibition at Somerset House is spotlighting the many untold stories in Black British fashion. "The Missing Thread," a new exhibition curated by the Black Orientated Legacy Development Agency (BOLD), spans from the 1970s to the present, showcasing the significant impact of Black creativity on British fashion and its evolution over the decades. Look out for works by Joe Casely-Hayford OBE, Chris Ofili, Maud Sulter, Rotimi Fans-Kayode, Marc Hare, and Jennie Baptiste.



Vogue x eBay's timeless accessories

Earlier this year, eBay and Vogue announced their timeless collaboration. This month, as part of this collab, they've recreated some of Vogue's archival moments utilising eBay's 'Authenticity Guarantee'- a service where industry experts examine eligible pieces to ensure their authenticity. Iconic supermodel Twiggy, acclaimed singer Rita Ora and social media sensation Wisdom Kaye bring their iconic looks back to life using these 'timeless accessories'.

SOCIAL MEDIA TRENDS

SHREK'S SWAMP, TUBE GIRL AND PINTEREST'S FIRST POP-UP

Tube Girl – Sabrina Bahsoon

Since starting her viral 'tube girl' trend, Sabrina has since re-created her viral video with luxury car brand Bentley, Troye Sivan and walked the MAC catwalk at London Fashion Week.

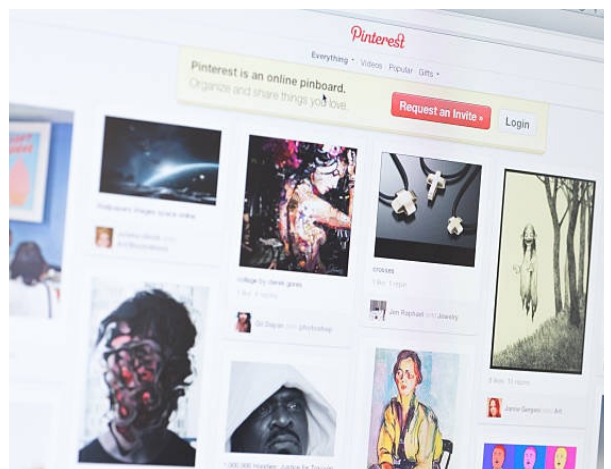
TikTok uses analytics to push videos to creators of similar demographics and, then to wider accounts depending on the video's interaction. In Tube Girl's case, her video was first shown to young women of colour in London, followed by young women in large cities, and then young women in general – causing the video to go viral.

AirBnB recreates Shrek's Swamp

AirBnB has partnered with Shrek creator Pixar to bring his swamp to life in Scotland. His 'swamp' features decorative touches including earwax candles.

Pinterest has launched its first ever 'real life' pop-up

Social media platform Pinterest has launched Possibility Place designed to bring the platform to the high-street in its first ever in-person pop-up in Covent Garden.



DESTINATION SPOTLIGHT

LIVERPOOL IS HOSTING A WIDE ARRAY OF EVENTS IN CELEBRATION OF BLACK HISTORY MONTH 2023



Comprising arts, heritage, culture and community activism, Liverpool partners have spent months collaborating on Black History Month 2023. Liverpool BHM23 shines a light on Black creativity, heritage and achievement and the incredible work that goes on in the city in October, as well as all year round. A host of arts and cultural organisations, universities and businesses have created an impressive, inclusive programme with a focus on celebrating the 'Power of Words Through Storytelling & Shared Histories'.

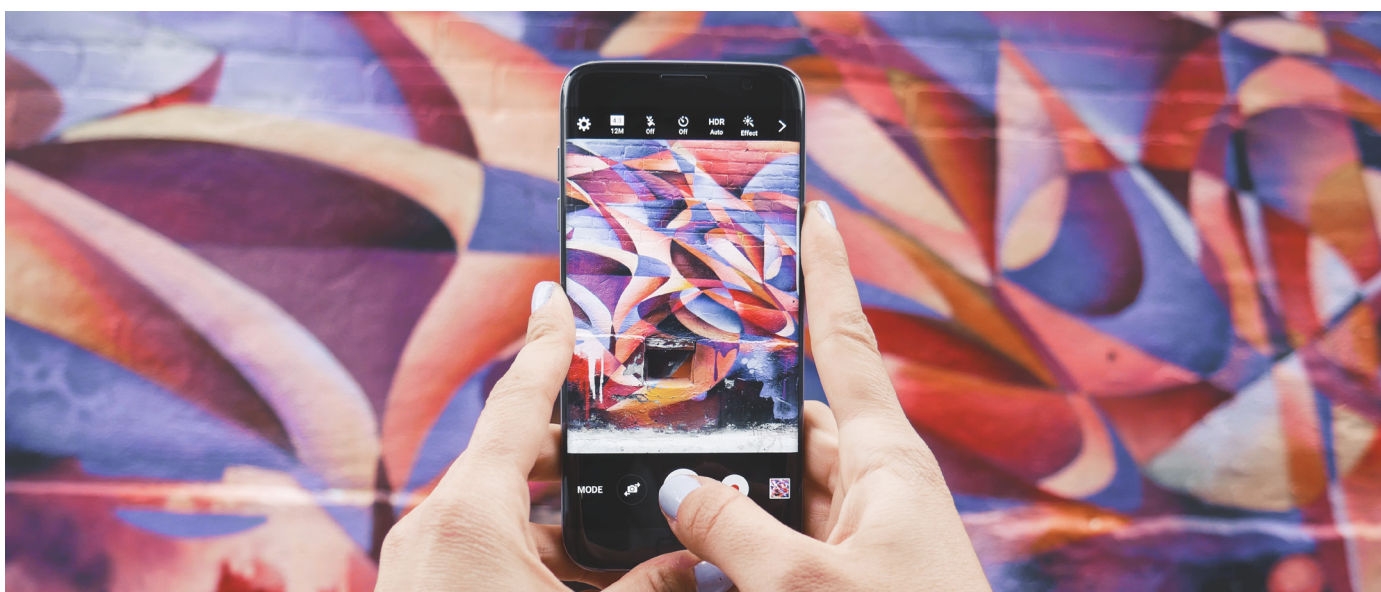
Offerings include, drumming and movement sessions from **Katumba** exploring elements of the African Brazilian artform: carnival! At the end of the project, participants will be given the opportunity to perform at the Halloween Carnival with the rest of the Katumba troupe! The sessions and the carnival will be celebrating the heritage, culture and wellbeing practices of people of the African Diaspora during Black History Month.

In celebration of Black women, a brand new exhibition, '**Black, Female, Scouse**', from co-curators Vicki Caren and Janaya Pickett, celebrates strong women and their incredible achievements over the past few decades.

Another contributor to the celebrations is world-class Kora player, **Diabel Cissokho**. Diabel grew up in Dakar and Tambacounda, Senegal. Surrounded by a rich musical heritage and a family of musicians, he began playing a number of traditional instruments and will host a musical instrument workshop and an acoustic performance at Metal Liverpool.

INFLUENCERS & KOLS

ONES TO WATCH



254K Instagram Followers

A Nigerian-American entrepreneur & the creator of @glographics, Glo is dedicated to anti-racism, wellness, and cultural commentary. She educates her audience with clear, contemporary visuals. For Black History Month, she is offering guidance to businesses and brands interested in addressing the racial issues.

275K Instagram Followers

A 'Mummy Blogger' & influencer, Candice is a busy businesswoman keen to show that young Black families weren't just surviving, but thriving. She founded Make Motherhood Diverse - an online initiative that aims to encourage a more accurately representative and diverse depiction of motherhood in the media. Her blog covers everything from her own life to tackling bigger issues (think mental health, colourism and male circumcision). And she's never afraid to tell it like it is. A very admirable trait.

591K Instagram Followers

Blair Imani is an educational influencer who tackles a wide range of themes, including race, gender, feminism, alcoholism and diet culture. The Smarter in Seconds series is a highlight among Blair's content. She offers fast answers to a lot of challenging topics utilising Instagram Reel's 60-second time limit.

ARTS & CULTURE

AI INFLATABLE FASHION, IMMERSIVE SURREALISM IN MUMBAI AND PARIS HILTON & ROBLOX COLLAB

Google and Youtube have curated an extensive digital archive celebrating the impact of Black British music

The online archive **UNION Black: Sounds of a Nation** collates and showcases videos, photographs, documentaries and podcasts that highlight the extensive contributions of Black British music artists, creatives and movements. By bringing the materials together from sources including the Black Cultural Archives, Horniman Museum and Notting Hill Carnival, audiences can immerse and educate themselves about the pioneers and innovators who shaped the fabric of British music and culture.

Alex Beresford goes on a journey looking at the mental health of Black men in his documentary 'Black Boys Can Cry'

Following the abuse he received after challenging Piers Morgan over his comments about Meghan Markle, he felt compelled to reverse the narrative that Black men can't be vulnerable. In this documentary, he meets several Black men from across the country who have struggled with their mental health.



CONSUMER FINANCIAL PLANNING TRENDS

SUSTAINABLE INVESTMENTS, CONSUMER DUTY UPDATES AND AI FUELED TOOLS



AI-powered tools are setting new standards in client engagement

Artificial intelligence is on the verge of being fully democratized, and wealth managers must prepare for how this could potentially change their workflows. This time the change would not only concern glamorous fintechs. Household names such as Goldman Sachs and Morgan Stanley are now using generative AI tools to generate market intelligence, reducing the effort required by investment research analysts to aggregate and process the information.



Increase in interest for ESG investment – more than a ‘nice to have’

The amplified call for more sustainable investments from customers, coupled with tightening ESG regulations, has compelled wealth management firms to accentuate their allegiance to sustainable investments. Regulatory directives like the Sustainable Finance Disclosure Regulation (SFDR) are now stipulating GPs to declare the sustainability metrics of their offerings. This mandate urges firms to use efficient systems for data calculation, acquisition, and management.



Bridging the trust gap: consumer duty sets new standards for customer care

According to Consumer Duty, banks, insurers and wealth managers are now obligated to ensure relevance and understanding of the information supplied to the consumers. Wealth managers' mindset will have to shift to ensuring a more value-oriented standard of service beyond additional reporting, including fulfilling required standards of care towards the customers in B2B relationships.

RACE AND AI TOOLS

WHO CONTROLS AI CONTENT AND HOW IS IT'S PREJUDICE MONITORED?



With the recent surge in the virality of AI tools and apps, we are seeing how this technology is permeating almost every aspect of our lives, changing the way we work, communicate and interact with others.

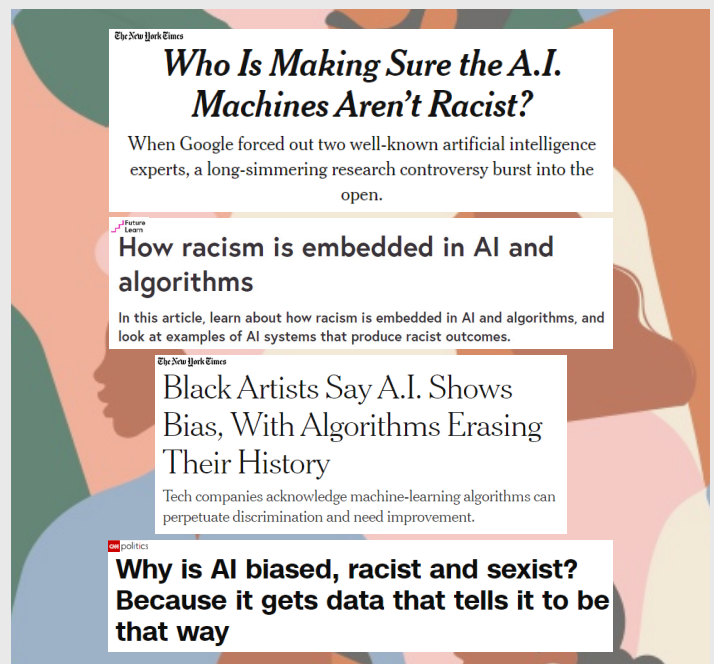
But who controls AI content? Recent reviews show how AI can be biased, racist and sexist. But why is this and how do we make sure this doesn't happen? As the NY Times article states, 'Who is making sure the AI Machines aren't racist?'

- **80.5%** increase in the number of ChatGPT users, growing from 100 million in January 2023 to 180.5 million by August 2023
- Around **one in six UK organisations**, totalling 432,000, have embraced at least one AI technology
- The UK AI market is worth more than **£16.9 billion**

Are we passing on our prejudices to AI tools?

Amidst the current wave of popularity surrounding AI tools and applications, more and more concerned voices are emerging around how AI tools are biased, and how us humans are passing our own bias when programming or feeding data into AI tools.

Cases include automatic soap dispensers that do not work when a person with darker skin is trying to use it, or driverless cars which algorithm used to detect human figure was more likely to fail to detect people with darker skin. Such incidents are becoming alarmingly more common as AI technology is being used in more areas of everyday life.



See page 12 to read full articles

RACE AND AI TOOLS

THE CONCERN REGARDING THE AI BIAS

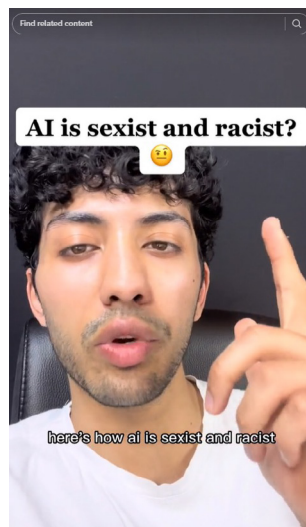
People are sharing their concern about ai bias and how racism is being ingrained into ai tools:



@richdapluginjohnson



@c4news



@genzdiplomat



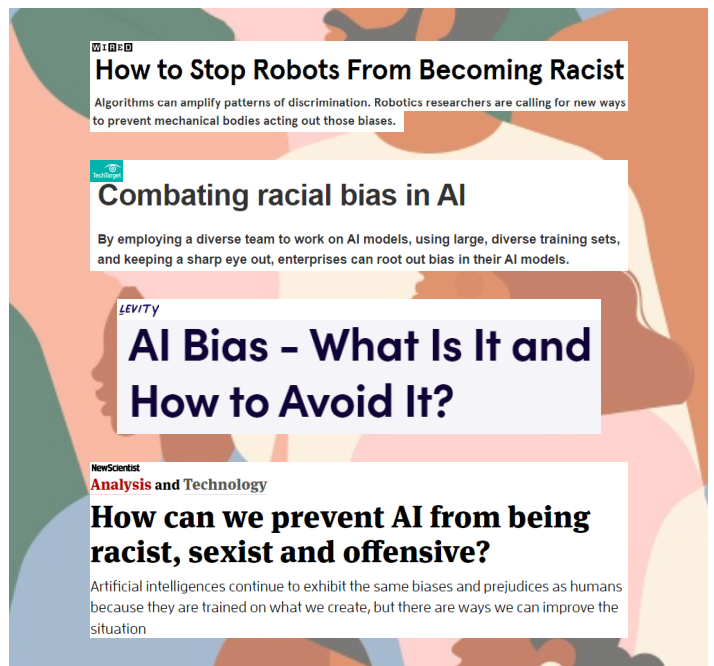
@the_fool

So what's the solution and what's our role in it?

In order to detect this Artificial Intelligence Bias, we need humans to check and verify the content. This is why humans' role is so important and that's when **Mapper360®** and our team comes in, with actual people analysing data and finding that AI bias.

Possible solutions that are being suggested to stop this trend are the following:

- Testing algorithms in a real-life setting
- Check final outputs: Check fairness in output
- Human reviewing and solving AI machine issues
- Monitor for problems, highlighting suspicious biased patterns



See page 12 to read full articles

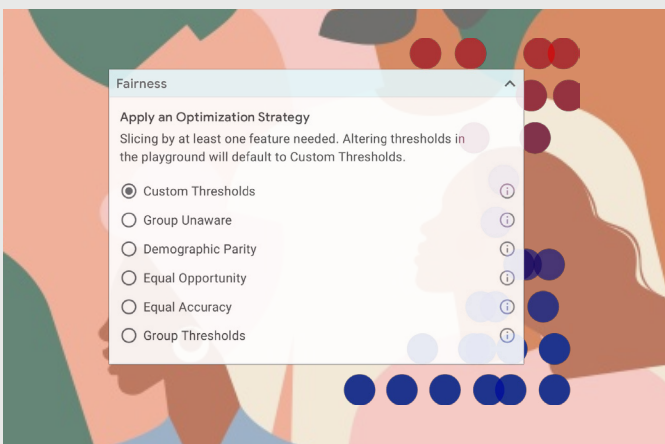
TOOLS TO DETECT AI BIAS

TO ADDRESS THIS AI BIAS, THERE ARE SOME TOOLS AVAILABLE TO PREVENT AND CORRECT ANY RACIAL OR GENDER BIAS



FACET by Meta

Meta is promoting greater diversity and fairness in AI models by introducing the **FACET** (FAirness in Computer Vision EvaluaTion) dataset, which includes 32,000 human-labeled images assessing demographic attributes such as gender, skin tone, and hairstyle. This initiative aims to encourage AI developers to incorporate these attributes into their models, ensuring improved representation for historically marginalised communities.



Google's What-if Tool

With **Google's What-If Tool**, you can assess how a model performs in different scenarios and understand the significance of various data aspects. This tool has been used to identify how biases can unintentionally find their way into models, due to overly simplistic design choices, resulting in unfair racial discrimination.

Further reading on the matter:

- "I can be racist, sexist and creepy. What should we do about it?" (CNN Politics)
- "Black Artists Say A.I. Shows Bias, With Algorithms Erasing Their History" (The New York Times)
- "How racism is embedded in AI and algorithms" (Future Learn)
- "Who Is Making Sure the A.I. Machines Aren't Racist?" (The New York Times)
- "Manage Ai Bias Instead Of Trying To Eliminate It. A three-step approach to remediate bias built into AI data" (Oliver Wyman)
- "AI Bias - What Is It and How to Avoid It?" (Levity)
- "How can we manage biases in artificial intelligence systems – A systematic literature review" (Science Direct)
- "How can we prevent AI from being racist, sexist and offensive?" (New Scientist)
- "Combating racial bias in AI" (Tech Target)
- "How to Stop Robots From Becoming Racist" (Wired)



Four Agency Worldwide is an independent media, marketing and communications agency and certified B Corp. Find out more at four.agency

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