

STANDING OUT IN THE AI BOOM

How technology brands can cut through
as the AI conversation explodes



INTRODUCTION

Digital transformation. Hybrid working. The metaverse.

Since 2020, we've seen huge changes to the way we live and work, with each year defined by a new wave of technology-led innovation.

2023 has been no exception. Buoyed by the launch of ChatGPT in late 2022, Artificial Intelligence (AI) has made its way into the zeitgeist. Generative AI platforms have taken the technology from a behind the scenes assistant to something that can easily give detailed answers to questions and help with writing, creative and organisational tasks.

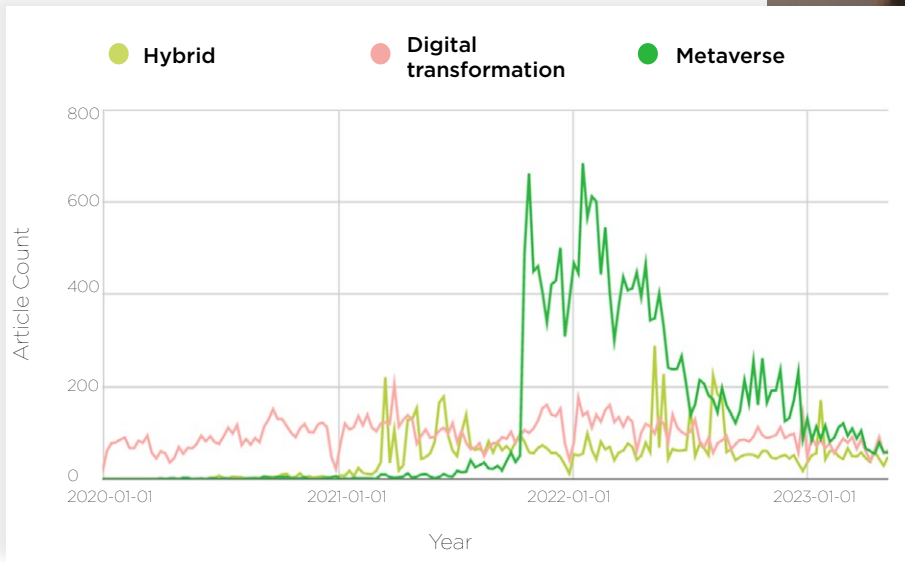
While trends like digital transformation have established themselves as part of the media's lexicon, hybrid working and the metaverse both saw spikes in articles

on the topics before decreased levels of coverage. What can this tell us about the current AI boom and how media will report on it?

As with many other technologies entering the public consciousness, the AI space has quickly become crowded. Product launches incorporating AI have gathered pace, research reports are delving into both its potential and downfalls, and the number of brands commenting on the technology has grown, both from within the sector and beyond, as businesses of all sizes look to leverage its potential.

But for many technology businesses, being part of the AI conversation is essential. Showcasing their expertise, innovations and product updates will help win customers and secure the company's long-term success.

**VOLUME OF ARTICLES MENTION PREVIOUS TECHNOLOGY
BUZZWORDS (1/1/2020 - 15/5/2023)**



Given this importance, how can brands make sure their AI stories don't get lost in the boom of reporting, and avoid they're not wrapped into anything negative?

We looked at how the AI conversation has evolved over the past six months. The stories that are driving engagement, the media writing about it and the volume of brands getting involved. We broke this down to analyse what people care about most - and how businesses with an AI story to tell can set themselves up for success.

What we found was a huge appetite for AI stories - both from the media and its readers. This has translated into a set of new journalists focused on the technology, and a boom in reporting on every element of the topic. With fierce competition, brands need to balance their desire to be a part of the discussion with the ability to showcase (and apply) innovation, bring new insights into the debate and minimise concerns over the perceived and actual risks associated with AI.

Read on to find out more and for our tips on standing out in the AI boom.

David Lucas

Head of Technology at Zeno London



FOUR WAYS

TECH BRANDS CAN CUT THROUGH IN THE AI ERA

1. Practical application trumps innovation...
2. ...but privacy and security trump everything
3. Data stories can get cut through if they provide something different
4. Be ready to adapt at speed





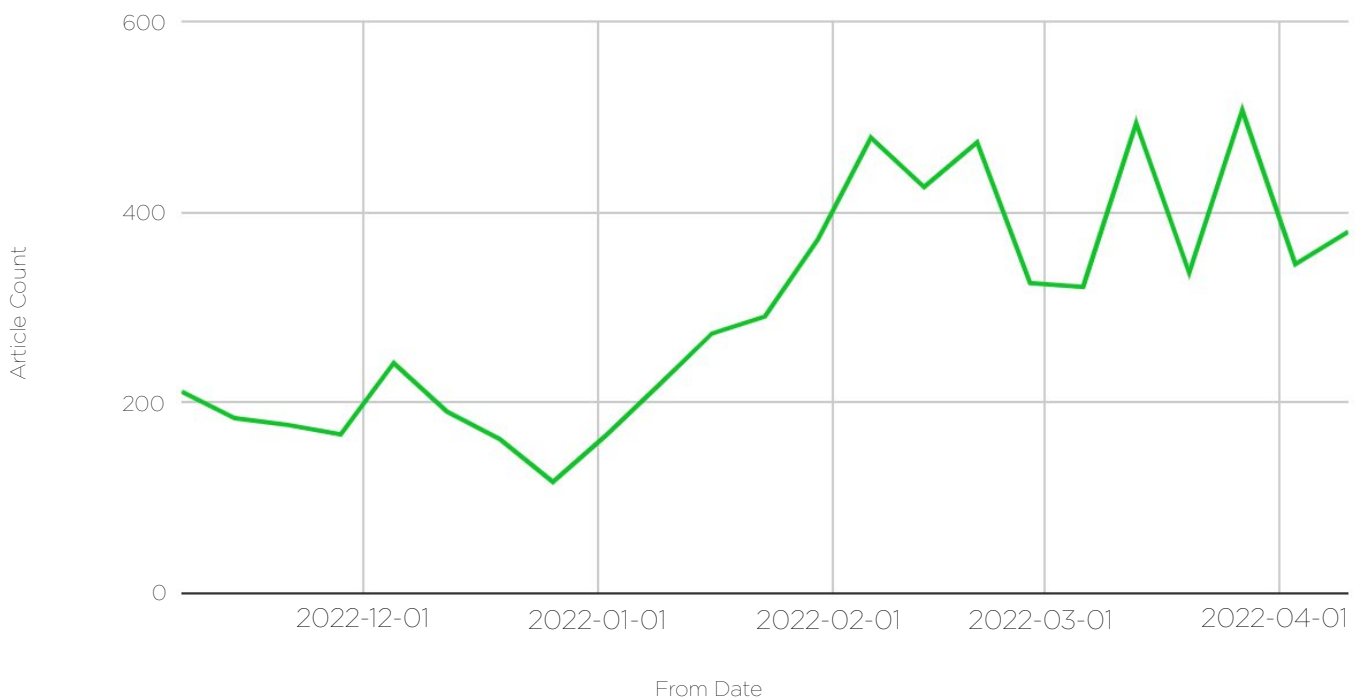
REACHING THE AI BOOM

Our first step was to look at the volume of stories mentioning AI over the past six months, taken from UK news sources. We analysed the quantity of stories mentioning AI to provide an understanding of the conversation's size. We then overlaid this with data on engagement to assess the extent to which these stories were capturing the audience's attention.

The peak around the ChatGPT launch in late November is clear. But we also found an even bigger spike in early February, with coverage levels now consistently higher than previously - does this represent a new normal in terms of AI reporting?

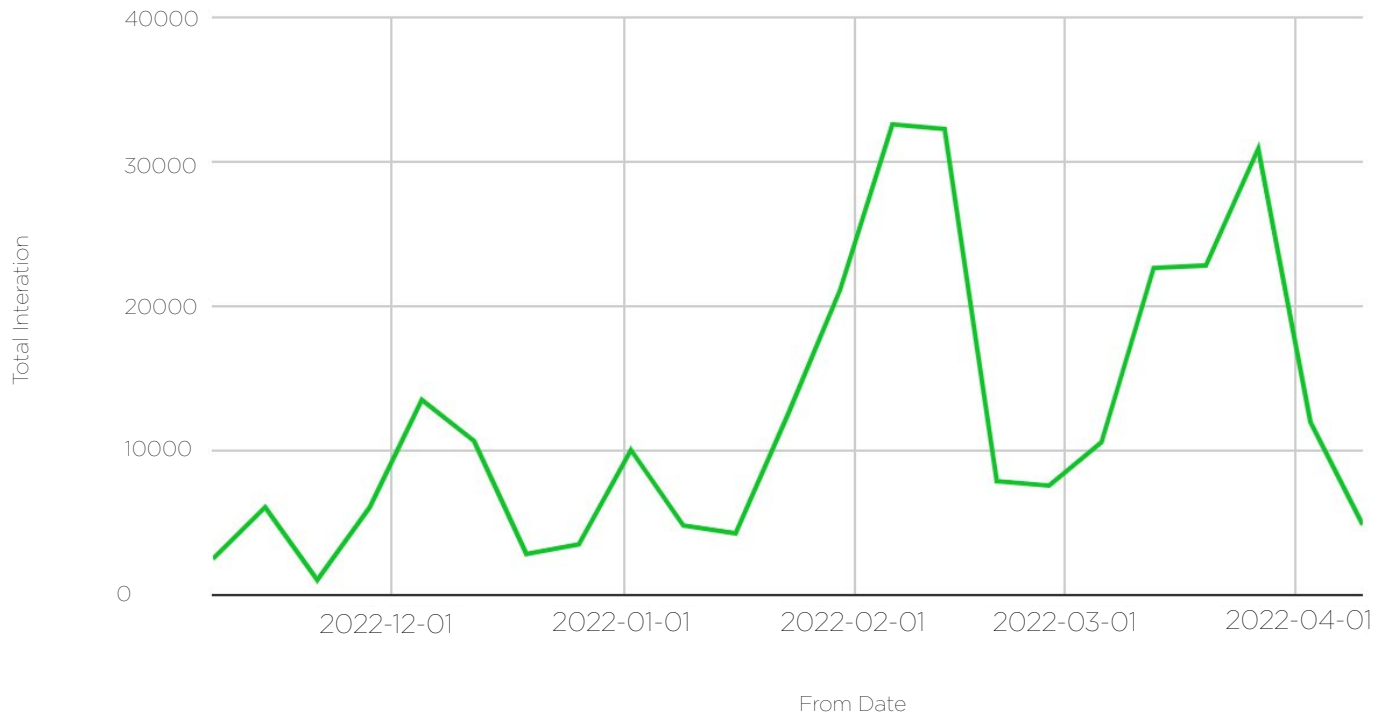
TOTAL ARTICLES MENTIONING AI

Article Count vs. From Date



TOTAL ENGAGEMENT WITH ARTICLES MENTIONING AI

Total Interactions vs. From Date



Media are certainly betting on this interest in AI sustaining. Publications like the FT, Bloomberg and Fortune announced dedicated AI reporters, while others increased their focus on AI and related topics.

And these investments seem to be paying off. According to data from Taboola's network of publishers, readership of articles focused on AI increased by 317% over the past few months. This isn't just passive consumption of content. Engagement - shares or likes of articles to social media platforms - is also increasing in line with volume. As fast as media can write about the topic, it's being shared. AI isn't just media hype - there is a genuine interest.

It's logical that having more stories to engage with should mean more engagement overall. But it's not always a given, and the fact that engagement is rising in lockstep shows the appetite and confirms that the new level of reporting on AI will be sustained.

FT creates AI editor role to lead coverage on new tech

The FT said it is well-positioned to "provide authoritative analysis on AI developments".

By Charlotte Tobitt



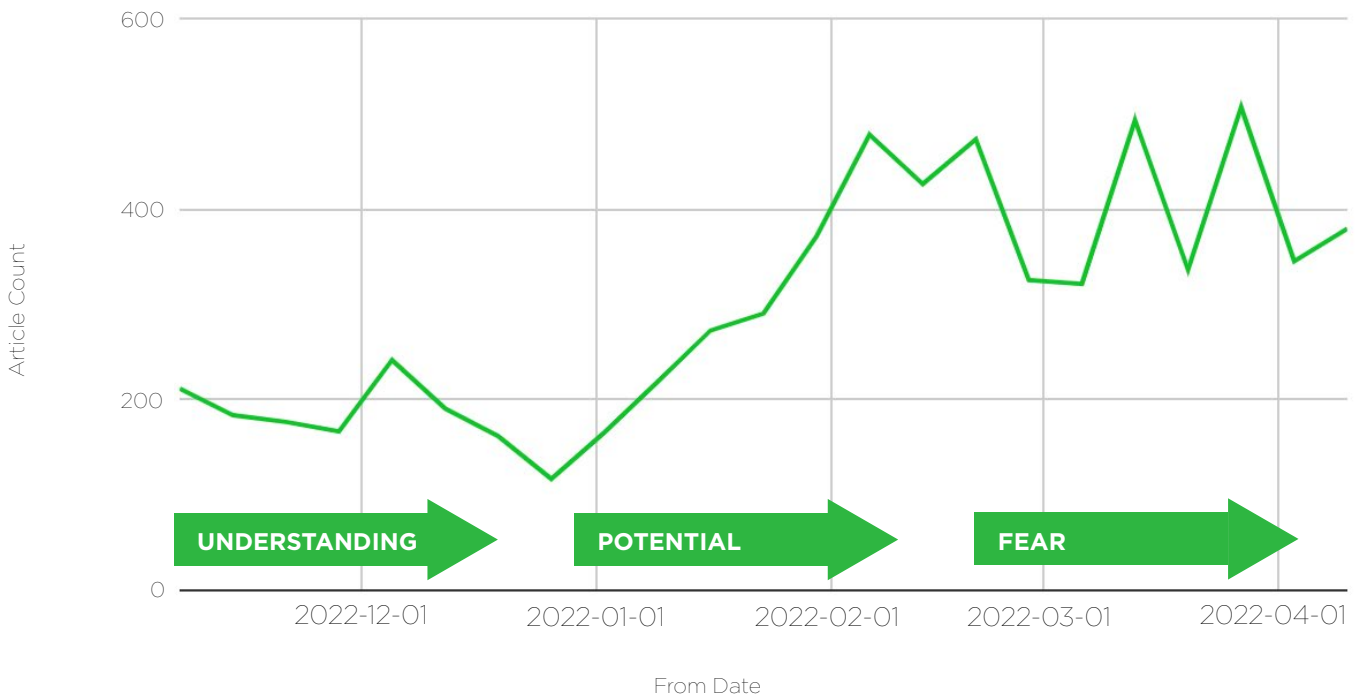
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People are going on a journey
– from understanding recently
launched tools and being excited
about their potential, to sharing
fears and examining risks

THE STORIES CUTTING THROUGH

To help understand the stories that people care most about, we examined what drove the peaks the peaks in engagement over the past six months. We found that people are going on a journey – from understanding recently launched tools and being excited about their potential to sharing fears and examining risks.

Article Count vs. From Date



BUILDING AN UNDERSTANDING

Before ChatGPT's public launch in late November, media reporting on AI had followed similar trends for a while. Stories such as AI being harnessed to predict how celebrities would look in the future or without cosmetic work and the use of the technology to create orchestral music drove engagement, largely due to their connections to well-known figures and the surprising results they generated.

ChatGPT's launch was a turning point. Stories that drove engagement after this started to focus on more practical and everyday applications of the technology – how it would impact the jobs of the future and be integrated into technology that is already in use. In particular, the consumer applications of AI and its ability to solve common problems were being shared.

RECOGNISING AI'S POTENTIAL

Reporting around AI quickly moved to discussion on its potential - in the December to February period, coverage and interactions both doubled from the previous peak. This came as media explored how AI could generate convincing images, use of the technology to take on writing tasks and launches from the likes of Google. Over this timeframe, however, the conversation started to move from initial intrigue to exploring the realities of widespread use of the technology. As media discussed its potential, they also looked at where it could take jobs and - in one extreme case - 'kill off the human race and make us extinct.'

FACING THE REALITY

This transitioned into the next phase, which explored more of the realities, often focusing on fear and risk. In particular, fears around the speed of AI's development before the broader implications have been worked through, punctuated by the Future of Life Institute's open letter calling for a pause in giant AI experiments.

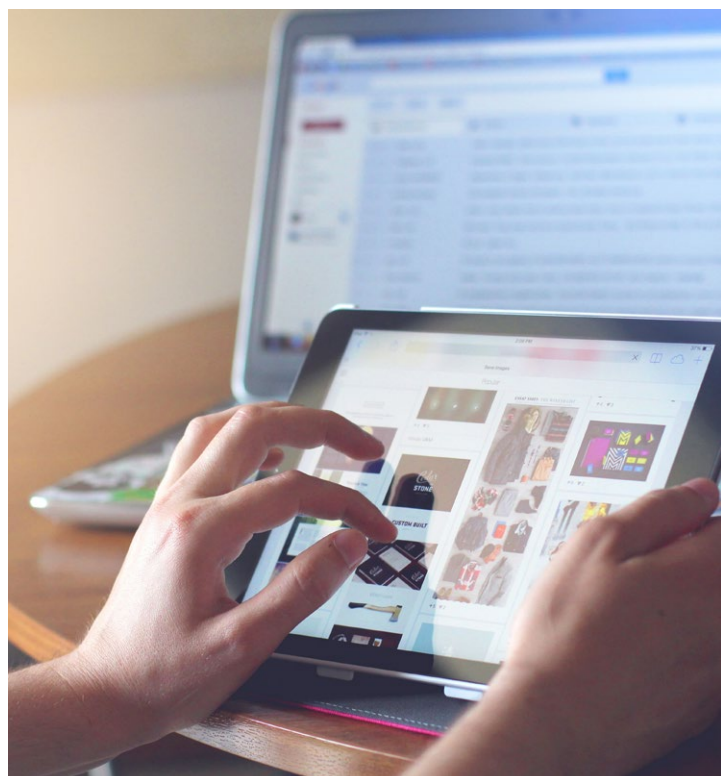
Reporting and engagement were also fuelled by industry figures such as Elon Musk making comments about how quickly AI is becoming 'human competitive at general tasks', and that it 'should be developed once we're confident that their effects will be positive and their risks manageable'. Adding to this were discussions around governments and their role in building the next generation of safe AI.



WHAT THE MEDIA ARE LOOKING FOR

Across our network of media contacts, below are the most common topics that we're seeing requests about:

- The impact and practicalities of pausing generative AI development
- AI and the workplace, including where AI is helping knowledge workers perform
- AI use across industries and business functions
- Government regulations, the contrast between countries and their approaches, and government investment strategies
- Issues and risks associated with AI, including diversity, equality and copyright
- The key platforms and what they offer





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**Technology
brands big and small
will have a point of
view on AI.**



WHAT THE TOP TECH BRANDS ARE SAYING

We also looked at 20 of the top global technology brands to examine how they are approaching AI and where this is coming through in their comms.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, each has recently spoken about AI in some form - with a mix of product/platform updates, thought leadership and partnerships leading the way. From an investor and customer perspective, it's now expected that technology brands big and small will have a point of view on AI.

The main themes coming through included:

COLLABORATION/PARTNERSHIP

- Interesting and unexpected collaborations particularly resonate, with a clear link to providing better AI experience, optimising training, enhancing the technology, better serving customers, supporting sales, reducing costs

PRODUCT/INNOVATIONS

- Product and innovation stories focusing on areas such as coding and CRM, improving accessibility, reducing harmful content, image and text generation, hybrid work and new language models

INITIATIVES

- Programmes/initiatives launching to help startups engage with AI technologies

GOVERNMENT REGULATIONS/POLICY

- Announcements on participation in government trials and commenting on new regulations

PREDICTIONS/FUTURE OF AI

- Thought leadership and research stories tying company messaging with AI innovations



CUTTING THROUGH IN THE AI ERA

The AI conversation is unfolding at rapid speed, with most major technology brands fighting for share of voice and to position themselves as category leaders. As a live debate, what's written one week can easily become out of date the next. But from what we've seen so far, four themes are emerging as priorities for brands looking to drive cut through for their AI thought and products:

PRACTICAL APPLICATION TRUMPS INNOVATION...

- While there's a certain cache to being first, showcasing a new tool or being able to contribute to the conversation, media want to write about practical applications. Without real examples of how AI will benefit the intended user and solve problems, it's hard to see its full potential and build a story. Consider waiting until demos can be provided, or bring customers into beta testing and have them be part of the launch story

...BUT PRIVACY AND SECURITY TRUMP EVERYTHING

- Media and influencers are all waiting for news of privacy and security issues with AI platforms - these stories drive strong engagement and provide good content to continue the narrative on AI risks.

Competitor brands are also ready to jump on any negativity and push their own stories. Comms teams need to work closely with their product counterparts to ask questions that the media might have and ensure they're confident that no unknown issues will arise after launch. Small mistakes at this point can have a lasting impact.

DATA STORIES CAN GET CUT THROUGH IF THEY PROVIDE SOMETHING DIFFERENT

- The real power lies in showcasing applications, and a lot of data stories will go unnoticed because they're not showing anything new. Think carefully about whether there's any benefit to commissioning data or if efforts could be better placed to bring an application to life in a meaningful way.

BE READY TO ADAPT AT SPEED

- The rapid rise of conversations around AI, fuelled largely by generative AI platforms, shows how quickly the story can develop. As new models, innovations and platforms are launched, we can expect more changes to happen at pace. Technology brands need to be ready to react, with their basic AI story prepared and steps in place to update depending on the latest advances.

**For more information
on how to make your
brand's AI story cut
through, contact:**



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