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We have taken part in Cannes, every year since 2005. After each Festival, we like to wait a week or two: to analyse and reflect on the underlying trends and the longer term significance of what has been seen, heard and discussed; and then share our thoughts.

Here are our observations, this year. They are quite different from last year. We hope you find them interesting.

WHAT IS CANNES?

At its heart, Cannes is an Awards show. And just like the Oscars in the movie industry, a look at the top prizes – the Grand Prix, as they are known – offers intriguing insights into the way our industry is going.

Entries are mostly submitted by Creative Agencies, although some come from other kinds of agencies (PR agencies or media agencies, for example); from Corporate clients and Brand owners; and from film or other creative production companies.
This year, the Festival awarded 34 Grand Prix. Who won? And why?

**WHO WON?**

This year, 28 out of 34 Grand Prix winning entries came from Creative Agencies. Three came from a Corporate Client (Apple); and two from film production companies. So let’s focus on the agencies.

Unlike previous years, there was no ‘dominant’ agency or group.

Almost all the main “Holding Company” agencies – BBDO, Publicis, McCann, AKQA, FCB, Ogilvy, Wunderman Thompson, Proximity, DDB, Havas, Cheil and Accenture Song – won at least one GP, but none of them won more than three.

Between them all, the HoldCo agencies won 21 out of the 34 Prizes, but the independent agencies punched above their weight. Usually the Independents account for around 10 – 15% of entries, but this year they won 8 out of 34 GP’s: success coming to Gut (3), Wieden + Kennedy (2), Special Group and Uncommon. Ahead of the curve, but not dramatically so.

To note: Media and PR Agencies won no GP’s at all. Most of the time, they were not even close!

No PR agencies won a GP or any of the 2nd tier prizes (Gold Lions) in the PR category; and only one Media agency won a 2nd tier prize in the Media category.

*As an award show: Cannes is back where it used to be – a showcase for Creative Agencies.*

**WHERE DID THE WINNERS COME FROM?**

The organisers have tried really hard, to spread the net to parts of the world beyond the traditional “English-speaking” countries. They have representatives in over 100 markets and the juries are encouragingly diverse.
And yet – 21 / 34 GP winners still came from just five countries: USA, Canada, UK, Australia and New Zealand. The markets whose primary native language is English.

‘Also-ran’ countries were France (3), Argentina (2) and Japan (2), with Brazil, Dubai, India, Korea, Poland and Saudi Arabia clocking in with one GP each.

None for China, none for SE Asia, none for Africa. None for Spain, or Italy, or Germany.

Why is this? Is the English-speaking world more creative than other cultures? Is it the fact that the awarding jury debates all take place in English?

There is no obvious solution, but it was noticeable this year that the award-winning countries also sent the majority of delegates. If Cannes wants to remain a credibly ‘global’ event, there is more work to do.

**WHAT WON?**

Last year, almost 90% of the prize-winning work was “purpose-driven.” Perhaps a guilt-induced hangover from the pandemic? Or a feeling that agencies and their clients were no longer proud of work which drove market share, sales success and business growth?

Whichever way, the picture has changed in 2023.

By my count, in 2023, 50% of GP winning entries in 2023 (17 out of 34) were “purpose-driven.” Which implies that at least half were actually trying to help sell something.

Bruno Bertelli, Jury President of one of the most traditionally influential categories, Film, went on record saying that his jury had “made a decision to favour spots that sell, over big brand manifestos.”

Marc Pritchard, P&G’s Chief Brand Officer and arguably Cannes’ most influential “client”, said his company’s focus was strictly on performance. “Is the product superior? Does it provide a superior value? Are we reaching as many people as possible for each of their needs?” He continued, “We need to convey performance or benefits.. [we are] getting back to the fundamentals. I think in today’s world, moving into areas of advocacy that are outside of your brand’s wheelhouse, that’s where things can get undone.”
You can’t say clearer than that. Expect purpose-driven ads to trend back down towards 2013 levels, that’s around 12% of prize-winners, not 87%.

**WHO WAS THE WINNING WORK PRODUCED FOR?**

Perhaps reflecting the change in emphasis, the winning work was mostly produced for Brands. The Global Brands claimed the most GP’s: Adidas, Apple (3), British Airways, Cadbury, Clash of Clans (2), Dove, Mastercard, Michelob, Microsoft (2), Nike, Renault, Samsung and Stella Artois.

But local and regional brands also had their share: An Nahar (Lebanon), Doordash (USA), Eurofarma (Brazil), Hunger Station (Saudi Arabia), Partners Life (Australasia), Pedidos Ya (Latin America) and Skinny Telecom (New Zealand).

And for sure, there were a few Institutional clients – the Brazil Stock Exchange, the Korean Police, Japan Railways, the Tuvalu Nation and three Charities: one for cancer support, one for Downs Syndrome and one for suicide prevention.

*But we can clearly say, in Cannes 2023: Brands are Back.*

**IS TECHNOLOGY CHANGING EVERYTHING?**

The panels and presentations in the Palais and the chatter on the Croisette were all about Generative AI. This meant ChatGPT (the one that does the words) and MidJourney (the one that does the pictures).

But Cannes has long lead times and most of the winning work was produced before many people had even heard of these upstarts (by my estimate, around February/March 2023).

So AI was not really a major issue in the awards.
Of course, many of the winning ideas were dependent on 21st Century technology. By my count, more than half were enabled by mobile apps. But a mobile app today is hardly innovative technology.

One or two were genuinely innovative tech: like the ‘Mouthpad’, developed by a start-up company called Augmental, so quadriplegic people can use their tongue, in the way most of us use our fingers on a trackpad.

But mostly: the GP’s were given for the application of technology, not the technology itself.

**SO WHO WAS...THE BEST OF THE BEST?**

Cannes does not choose a “Best in Show” from among the 34 Grand Prix winners. Or a “Worst in Show”, either.

So you will have to do that yourselves!! You can find all the winners, and their entries, on the official Cannes Lions site, [https://www.lovethework.com/en-GB/cannes-lions](https://www.lovethework.com/en-GB/cannes-lions) - or all major local trade media has links as well – Ad Age has them all in an easy-to-view format [here](https://www.lovethework.com/en-GB/cannes-lions).

HOWEVER – both these sources have paywalls. If you don’t subscribe, here’s another place where you can find the GP winners on YouTube, [free to view](https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL7kB0VspwEXKrkcvVu3x7MvgpuRP4f).

The case films that form (almost all) the entries are usually two or three minutes long and all the major advertising media publish lists with links. So allow a couple of hours to review all 34 winners. It’s well worth it.

For what it’s worth, here are my entirely subjective opinions.

*My personal “Worst in Show” –*

... *The Tuvalu Nation*, entered by The Monkeys, part of Accenture Song, which won the prestigious Titanium Grand Prix. A Government Official, standing on a sandbank with 37 palm trees and a lectern, announces that due to climate change, some islands in his country will soon be under water, so he is a creating a digital record of them for future generations.
Everything about this film is SO last year. Not just for moaning about Climate Change rather than thinking about how to prevent it – but the “digital record of lost heritage” was done a million times better by last year’s entry from Ukraine, about creating a digital record of Ukraine’s artistic and cultural heritage, then and now in the firing line of a hostile invasion.

**My personal “Best in Show” –**

...OK, I do think two of the UK entries are terrific. The suicide prevention campaign from AMV BBDO, showing the “last videos” of apparently happy people who were not so happy inside – and the whimsical British Airways campaign from Uncommon Studios, spoofing a conventional questionnaire with answers about the real reasons people want to travel. But that’s probably my own unconscious British bias, so they are both disqualified.

Instead, I’ll go for “Beautiful Life”, entered by Smuggler Films, winner of the Entertainment GP for Music (go figure) – not exactly an ad, more of a short film about (lack of) gun control featured in a Netflix documentary. Teenagers gambling with their lives. It’s five and a half minutes long and absolutely riveting. Watch it.
And as a footnote:

One agency, GUT, is runner up in both my personal categories: Worst and Best.

Worst, for “The Artois Probability” – a film purporting to show that beers featured in great classical paintings were probably pre-cursors of Stella Artois. Unfunny and derivative in every aspect.

Best, for being first out of the gate with Pedidos Ya (an app-based food delivery service), tracking the progress of the Soccer World Cup trophy’s journey home to Buenos Aires for the inevitable street party.

Which goes to show – the same agency that can make total turkeys, can also create great work.

But which will they present to you next?

Yes, agencies may have all the best tunes (and drink the most rosé) – but there is still a role for Marketing Clients.
Conversations on the Croisette

It will probably not surprise anyone that – alongside the work – THE topic of conversation everywhere was Artificial Intelligence (AI). And specifically, the new form of Generative AI which creates content for you: most famously, ChatGPT (for words) and Midjourney (for images).

*New readers start here:*

Artificial Intelligence (as opposed to human intelligence) is not a new concept. The Oracle of Delphi, which foretold the future in ancient Greece and the Mechanical Turk of the eighteenth century, who played chess against Napoleon, are precursors; as are modern computers.

Serious attempts to mimic or rival the capabilities of the human brain developed throughout the 20th century, but all of them attempted to set rules for machines for an exponential number of variables, which proved limiting.

The breakthrough came when scientists realised it would be much simpler to show actual processes leading to a desired outcome and let the machine figure out why the outcome occurred, rather than write all the rules. This is called ‘Machine Learning.’ This is partly why creative people get much more excited about it all, these days.

The brilliant and hilarious Rory Sutherland, in a seminar away from the main stages and again last week at Nudgestock, explained that while sensible management types expect scientific advances to come from following a defined process, this is prescriptive approach leads to very slow and small progress; whereas most great scientific advances come from noticing something weird and wonderful (the outcome) and working backwards to figure
out why it happens. And why if you are a creative, and a risk-averse client hands you a document titled “Creative Framework,” you should immediately pass it, unread, back to your Account Executive.

Having discovered Machine Learning, scientists then went on to develop ‘Large Language Models’ to help AI produce articulate responses to questions and challenges (Generative AI), which is why some creative people (and lawyers, and accountants, and a lot of other people) have started to get worried, that they might simply be replaced by machines.

As indeed, many of them will be, unless they figure out how to remain useful: as former world chess champion Gary Kasparov did, when after a ten year sulk following a loss to IBM’s Big Blue, he discovered that human plus machine could beat machine only – which is roughly where we are today.

ChatGPT can write quite decent advertising copy, newspaper articles and legal arguments, but humans can suss out whether they are accurate and true.

Midjourney can summon up images of anything you might wish to depict, but humans are still needed to stop them all looking like 1980’s sci-fi.

**HOW WILL THIS AFFECT OUR INDUSTRY?**

It already is. Big time.

ChatGPT is available for anyone to try. There were countless sessions up and down the Croisette where creatives voted on whether AI is a friend or foe, usually with a split decision. And if you’re the kind of person who is still trying to figure out the “share screen” function on Zoom or Teams, there are new generation agencies like Adcreative.ai who will do it for you.
However: as Hattie Matthews of Science Magic explained, in one of thenetworkone’s Indie Forum panels, large corporates are using AI with extreme caution - to avoid being sued, delisted or simply cancelled altogether.

ChatGPT has an annoying tendency to invent facts, plagiarise previous writers, develop unconscious biases and grossly offend just about every minority group you could think of, in the name of its most important Corporate client or brand. Any parent will easily understand this. Hands up any of you, who has never suggested one or two judicious improvements to your child’s homework? Now we start to see the possibilities.

Nick Law, CCO of Droga 5 put forward the idea that “creativity is landing at CURATION”. That’s an interesting view.

Manuel Arroyo, Global CMO of Coca-Cola, talked of an experiment where in 17 days, AI created 120,000 “amazing ideas” for his brands. Creativity has been “democratised” and today “the creative industry is an amplifier” (of talent, knowledge and ideas that the brand owners already have.
And the few media agencies who still turn up to Cannes in person would have heard Brad Lightcap, COO of Open AI (the inventors of ChatGPT), first of all admitting that their first-five-year revenue projection for ChatGPT was... guess? ZERO dollars; and now going head to head against the world’s biggest advertising company, Google.

Brad explained: “Search guesses at what people want” - and serves up a list of answers, all of which are likely to be wrong, because people don’t describe their needs accurately enough.

The user wants hyper-personalised responses, not a page of semi-relevant classified ads. So ChatGPT creates a dialogue with the user – asks relevant questions (like a university student impersonating a chatbot, but a lot faster) and “weaves in a tailored response for you.”

No wonder Google was panicked into releasing a version of Bard, its own generative AI, which clearly was not ready – and damaged their own reputation in the process.

Meanwhile, Open AI is partnering with every giant multinational who can afford them, offering their help to Governments in designing safeguards and rules which won’t hobble them, and openly talking about by-passing the conservative regulators in Europe (ChatGPT is banned in Italy – can you believe that?) and the USA, in favour of moving development to more adventurous regimes in the Middle East and Asia.

Wow.

So agencies are pivoting frantically.

**What do the clients think?**

There were a lot of CMO’s in evidence at Cannes this year. Because this particular breed of human is rather time-poor these days, most of them opted to appear in panel discussions rather than prepare carefully honed presentations (Tor Myrhen of Apple being a notable exception). Being on a half-hour panel of three or four speakers, plus a moderator and quite likely a sponsor too, means that each CMO comes well prepared to get their favourite soundbite in. So their personal position(ing) needs to be both succinct and distinct.
Many of them were smarting from last year, having waxed lyrical about the seminal importance of the Metaverse, NFT’s, blockchain and other “shiny objects” (Fernando Machado’s words) from which the chattering classes have now moved on. Others are unrepentant.

The two camps are:

- **The reborn traditionalists** – the Bruce Willises of the marketing world – from Coca-Cola, Pepsico, Walmart and others, whose mantra is and always will be, “the role of the CMO is to drive growth”. Mark Kirkham, CMO of International Brands at Pepsico, described the role of marketing as “to push boundaries within frameworks”, to acknowledge that “it’s not ALL about control” (but it is, you know), to understand that the company needs “a growth mindset, not just creative thinking” (you wimps) and explain to any remaining greenwashers that “purpose can drive growth.”

William White, CMO of Walmart, put it more simply: “The CMO’s role is to drive growth.” OK!!

- **The sensitive ones** - Kory Marchisoto, CMO of ELF Beauty, told us how the CMO should be “in service to the community, not the numbers.” Lina Polimeni, CMO of Eli Lilly, talked of creating a ‘journey of hope’ through sport, health and medicine. Tyler Lamotte, EMEA Marketing Director of Patagonia, quoting his company’s founder Yvon Chouinard, explained that his company is “in business to save our home planet... Earth is our only shareholder”. And it has to be said, they do walk the talk.

**Can they be brought together?**

Well yes, if you are really a grown-up marketer. Fernando Machado (CMO of Burger King, then Activision Blizzard, now leading a start-up called “Why not”?) kind of nailed it: we need to do the basics right – customer centricity, a focus on attribution and the ability to convince all stakeholders; avoid being distracted by the afore-mentioned shiny new objects; and get more involved internally, with recruitment and company culture, to replace the CFO as the right hand man of the CEO.

Wow, again.
But pride of place in this stellar line-up had to go to Conny Braams, who in her last appearance as Unilever’s CMO, gave a truly Elton-John-at-Glasto performance, to rapturous applause. “Everything is changing after 20 relatively stable years”, she told all of us who are basically trying to get through 12 months without being fired, or shunted sideways to a Chief Customer Officer role.

Conny’s sweeping overview took in population change (36 major countries are now in population decline, with South Korea projecting 53% reduction); e-commerce; the rise and rise of gaming; Generative AI (of course), Covid and the rise of remote working, and so much else.

And of course she talked about Dove... and introduced her star guest, Alessandro Manfredi, Dove’s CMO, to share the next episode in the story: the “Turn Your Back” campaign. For those of you who have been on a distant planet recently, this is a campaign to counter the shameful statistics that 80% of young women and girls don’t feel good about their bodies; and the same percentage use filters to ‘enhance’ their appearance.

Was it just me, or is this a darkening of the zeitgeist? In recent years Dove has felt positive and celebratory, are they now seeing ‘beauty tech’ in a more negative light?

**IT’S ALL ABOUT METRICS**

There were other manifestations of a changing mood. Everything these days has to be measured, and has to ‘measure up’.

As Matt Cooper’s panel on the LBB beach noted – sportsmen and musicians earn vastly more than we do (and Stagwell’s Sports Beach was the most popular hangout on the Croisette) because they live in worlds where everything can be measured.

The inimitable Rory Sutherland, away from the main stages, talked about his early career. “You can measure everything in direct marketing. The problem is, you are not allowed to do anything you can’t measure.” And as a result, “Do something irrational and it fails: you are fired. Do something boring and it fails: you keep your job.”
Is this what Creativity is coming to?

We remember the panel of ex-Wieden and Kennedy friends, Paula Bloodworth of Uncommon, plus Rob Campbell and Martin Weigel from BBDO somewhere, lamenting “Corporations are sterile and want control... ecosystems evolve and integrate... we need to kill toxic positivity and stop obsessing about optimising efficiency.”

And Nick Law, pithily suggesting that “we should not be worried about machines becoming more like humans. We should be more worried about humans becoming more like machines.”

Has it really come to this?

Well, maybe. And maybe not.

**HUMANITY STRIKES BACK?**

The signs are not all good. On a rare excursion from my comfort zone, I accepted an invitation to a seminar inside the closely guarded enclave of Holding Company IPG and their flagship agency, McCann, presenting five panels about diversity (sorry, I could not face that many), but an interesting looking report on their recent research into work and life.

Because... the talent crisis has not gone away. No-one has fully cracked the work in office / work from home formula, although the school of T***S (no offence intended! this is now a widely-used acronym for Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays) seems to be gaining ground.

But why work in our industry at all? If you work the McCann way, you have two possible approaches:

a) Do some large-scale research with tens of thousands of people who don’t know the answer either. But they will generate some useful soundbites. Employees today, we
learned, do NOT want to ‘bring their whole selves to work’, they would much rather save their interesting bits for later. Work-life balance is BS. 70% of employees think the company cares more about the customer than it does about the staff (right, that’s called customer centricity).

b) As option a) did not produce the right answers, the nice people from McCann turned to option b): put some senior people on stage and ask the employees in the front row, why they come into work.

Sure enough, b) worked a lot better. They come into work –
   a. To provide for themselves and their families
   b. To gain a sense of accomplishment
   c. Because they have a sense of purpose
   d. Having sold their own agencies to McCann, because they share McCann’s values.

Do you notice something? Yes, that’s right. Not a single person in the audience or on the stage said they come into work because they enjoy it.

Or as Tor Myrhen, Apple’s CMO, put it – part of being creative, is having fun.

**Not enough fun?**

It depends on who you ask. Let’s try the Independent sector.

Fast forward to our own panel of independent agency leaders. Far away from McCann’s corporate suite in the glitzily refurbished Martinez (by the way: what were they thinking of, putting that big golden statue of a naked woman with tyre tracks all over her torso, slap bang in the middle of the reception lobby???), we were privileged to host two inspirational panels.

The first was with people who ENJOY HAVING FUN WITH TECH.
Elli Tuominen from Kurio in Finland explained how she and her colleagues had asked 25 agencies around the world to predict social media trends for 2023. They came up with “social is the new search”, and predicted why Google was going to have such trouble with ChatGPT before we had even heard of it.

Hattie Matthews, ex-Karmarama, spent 4 years with Accenture learning how they made money from digital transformation and left to start her own shop, ScienceMagic.

Matt Talbot is keeping the Alex Bogusky spirit alive in Boulder, Colorado; JC Valenzuela of Propel is streaking ahead of the competition in the Philippines by enjoying the heady mix of data and creativity; and PG Aditya and Gautam Reghunath have left Dentsu Web Chutney, where they won Grands Prix last year for the Unfiltered History campaign, to start their own shop, based on... well, the clue’s in the name, ‘Talented.’

Instead of coming to preach about their clients’ purpose, PG and Gautam talked about their own.

Their strategy is simple: ‘Pay a premium for people who do better work you can charge higher prices for.’ But they do more than that.

They pay job applicants to come and take their copy test. Do they have to? No. It’s a sign that at Talented, your work will be valued and you will be fairly treated. Do people enjoy working there? I bet they do.

And that was just for starters.

We were equally proud of our second panel of indie agency leaders: Katie Newman from Mischief @ No Fixed Address, voted #1 US Agency 4 times in a row; Josh Rosenberg’s Day One Agency (because that’s what every day should feel like), voted Ad Age’s small agency of the year; Christine McNab of Zulu Alpha Kilo, setting New York alight after setting Canada alight; and Tony Bradbourne of Special Group, Campaign’s Global Creative Agency of the Year.
That’s right: these agencies aren’t winning “Independent Agency of the Year”, they are independents making the running on the big board, because the agencies that clients want to work with are independent, innovative, creative and fun. They say no to clients who aren’t right for them - and no to people who aren’t good to have around.

They are integral components of the people-driven “creator economy” which is replacing the shareholder-capitalism-driven “Holding Company” ethos, which prevailed in the 20th century and spawned global conglomerates like WPP, Omnicom, Interpublic Group, Publicis Groupe, Havas and Dentsu.

Accenture / Accenture Song may prove to be the last throw of the dice for this mega-holding company approach.

It’s interesting to see already, how many CEO’s and leaders of Accenture’s Galactico agencies have already jumped ship. In UK, Ben Bilboul and (only last week) Jon Wilkins of “Karmarama, part of Accenture Song.” In Germany, Andreas Winter-Buerke, CEO of “Kolle Rebbe, part of Accenture Song.” In Spain, Pablo Alzugaray, CEO of “Shackleton, Part of Accenture Song.” How long before the leaders of The Monkeys, Part of Accenture Song and King James, part of Accenture Song, follow them out of the door? Time will tell.

Accenture Song CEO David Droga, at least for now, is still holding court on the main stage. These days, he talks like a true Holding Company boss, celebrating Accenture’s 1496 patents, $3 billion of investment and 80,000 people working on Artificial Intelligence.

And yet… far from the main stage, at a WSJ fringe event, we learned from Ben Lightcap, COO of a very different company: that Open AI, the inventors of ChatGPT, employs just 500 people. With Google, Meta and Amazon laying off tens of thousands of programmers, developers and other staff, does Song really need eighty thousand?

Open AI is smart, agile and entrepreneurial. And less arrogant than some. Ben Lightcap actually said, they come to Cannes to learn, not to preach.

And if the US or the European regulators become too much of a drag on their business – they and the next generation of leading-edge developers may simply move to more ‘lightly-
regulated’ regions of the world, like Asia and the Middle East. If you are small and agile, you can do this. Joe, Rishi and Ursula, you have been warned.

THE BIGGEST ISSUE OF ALL?

A lot has been said about Artificial Intelligence. There is no doubt it will have a major impact on the Creative Industries.

But here’s our take.

A lot of the talk at Cannes, looked at AI in a narrow way: at its impact on screen-based communications.

We have, it’s true, become obsessed with screens. And not just with iPhones and their competitors.

Gaming and Entertainment – the big growth areas at the Cannes Lions - take place on screens.

E-commerce, the big growth area of the real world’s consumer economy, mostly takes place on screens.

Google’s money-spinner, Search, may be moving to social channels but still takes place on screens. So does Twitter and so will Instagram Threads - and we confess, we have already signed up.)

The Premier League, the NFL, the NBA, the Olympics – and this week, Wimbledon – for most people, they take place on screen. Sports broadcasters attract more audiences and drive more revenue from screen-based analysis and celebrity chat than they do from actual live football games.

If you go into a fast-food restaurant today, the chances are you order on a screen and never have to interact with a real live person.
If you attend a business meeting, or pitch a new creative account, the chances are you will do this on a screen.

ChatGPT gives you words on a screen and mid-Journey gives you images on a screen.

So what is happening?

**OUR PROFESSION USED TO BE FUN, BECAUSE IT USED TO BE HUMAN.**

Today, it’s still lucrative – but it’s no longer fun.

Anyone running an agency or a business unit on a human scale – let’s say, up to 100 people – knows that the biggest problem in our industry is the mental health of our workforce.

Why?

Because our people have become – to re-use a phrase from almost two centuries ago: *Alienated.*

The seminal text to read on this is Karl Marx’s Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844, written long before he progressed to the dodgy economic theory which led to the failed experiment of the Soviet Union.

Marx realises that working people were literally alienated, or estranged, from normal human social activity, by the processes of mass production.

The screens which dominate our lives and our industry are artefacts that today, separate us from other people and from the physical world.
We live in grey cities where we no longer notice the seasons. We scan our food at automated supermarket checkouts, without the need to chat to shop assistants. If we feel ill, or depressed, it takes so long even to get a video appointment with a doctor that most people probably just go online to order some more Oxycontin.

We don’t notice that (speaking from UK) the beans in our local supermarket are from Kenya, the asparagus is from Peru and the apples are from Argentina – we just notice that the weather seems a little hotter these days.

But there is a light at the end of the tunnel.

People are starting to choose holidays which offer meaningful human experiences, rather than commoditized sunshine. The ‘unprecedented economic self-harm’ of Brexit might just lead us to grow, make and repair more stuff, in human-scale businesses close to our own communities.

AI will help.

Hattie Matthews’ brilliant 2-minute summary of what she learned at SXSW this year, explained that the next generation thinking in the world of tech is not about shiny objects (NFT’s, the metaverse, etc) but about the structure and interconnectivity of the internet. That’s Web 3, to you and me.

This goes way beyond what you see on a screen – it connects everything to do with societies, the human body and our brains, with everything in the natural and the created or adapted or discovered world. IBM have been talking about the Internet of Things for years.

Because what we call AI may be artificial (not human), but it is not Intelligence. It’s the sharing and application of existing knowledge.

It will not be long, before (for example) AI will be able to assess the best treatment for a disease and the probable outcomes for a given individual, factoring in a huge number of patient variables.

But which treatment will the doctor recommend? And which course of action will the patient choose?

The origin of the word intelligence, lies in the ability to choose.

Which – last time I looked – is still a human quality.

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