

RESEARCH

## January 6, 2023



Global trend forecasting authority WGSN's latest report contains a long list of eccentricities slated to surge this year. Image credit: WGSN

By AMIRAH KEATON

Algae-based inks as fashion, metaverse fitness for wellness and couch sweaters' in home interiors are all set to rise to the surface this year, according to a new report.

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Global trend forecasting authority WGSN's latest forward-looking effort covers a wide variety of categories, including fashion, interiors, beauty, tech and food and drink. In addition to the static report, experts Lisa White and Andrea Bell, creative director and VP of consumer insights respectively at WGSN, join the company CEO and president Carla Buzasi for an episode of the WGSN podcast "Create Tomorrow" to expand on report insights.

## Future forward

Backed by data and informed by market research, each prediction tops the last in eccentricity, narrowing in on the trends 2023 may have to offer.

WGSN's first trend insight is particularly encouraging.

As sociopolitical tensions cause energy prices to skyrocket, the firm predicts solar power will spread far and wide, reaching corners of the consumer goods market never before seen.

Regarding individual use cases, solar technology will feel a boost not just from more traditional technologies such as solar panels, but in the case of everyday items everything from lamps to toys to fans to kettles, even heated blankets, experts share.

Conversely, another trend is quite analog in nature. "Furniture wear" is gaining fans.

"One [trend] that has resonated with a lot of people and, first of all, makes them laugh, we're calling it sweaters for furniture," WGSN's Ms. White says, on the podcast.

"Consumers are dressing up their furniture to renovate, update and customize, but also because it softens things, and

makes them warmer," she says. "Things are cool right now, and we do need to turn the energy down a little bit, to cope with the cost-of-living crisis and with what is going on with the climate crisis, so we're seeing the house and the furnishings getting softer and warmer and the same time."

"[The trend is] also about covering up old and new furniture with textiles and knits that are that much cozier."

Clearly, "chair jumpers" could be here to stay.

On the aforementioned wearable tech topic, though, WGSN has posed two related trends.

The first of which involves modular fashion. The report showcases detachable and interchangeable sneaker components, for specifics. Designs capable of morphing over the course of one's day could add a new dimension to the term, "dress to impress."

Note that, for the fashion category, the use of algae-based alternatives is also said to be all the rage in short order, replacing, for instance, the oil-based manufacturing options that form foam soles, for example.

Polyester and nylon are also on the chopping block, as Algae inks and fabric finishes make it to the sewing table, giving resource-intensive synthetics the boot.

The second portion of the wearable tech equation involves a rise in VR fitness options for wellness enthusiasts.

Budding metaverse health communities, and programs offering Web3 rewards for working out are no longer a figment of the imagination, according to the firm. While software benefits bolster, hardware companies are catching up.



*The second portion of the wearable tech equation involves a rise in VR fitness options for wellness enthusiasts. Image credit: WGSN*

Companies like Icaros, a VR home workout equipment brand based in Germany, allow superhuman actions like flying and diving in virtual worlds, prompting players to strengthen their muscles in the process.

Meanwhile, Norwegian stationary bike operation Playpulse's apparatus doubles as a games console, with intelligent controllers to be found across its handlebars for ease of use.

Switching gears, WGSN says beauty's business boom will be driven by a few interesting developments.

In 2023, personalization will enter a new realm, basing recommendations on biological factors like genome sequencing and skin health tracking, in addition to the elements location data and weather will play key roles.

Related, the WGSN report that Google searches for "skin repair microbiome" **increased 1,600 percent YoY from May 2021 to May 2022**, signaling that interest in skin rewilding specifically focused on fixing the skin's microbiome barrier, healing damage caused by harsh acids, chemical peels and celebrity skincare lines of the last few years ([see story](#)) to strengthen and protect is likely up next.

From skin bacteria to underwater biomes and back, algae's underwater relative, sea moss, joins the list of fast-growing beauty and wellness engrossments posts that include the ingredient as a hashtag on TikTok have totaled **over 450 million views**, says WGSN.



*In 2023, personalization will enter a new realm, basing recommendations on biological factors like genome sequencing and skin health tracking, in addition to the elements location data and weather will play key roles. Image credit: WGSN*

Sea mosses' pointed presence across haircare, bath and body, and beauty supplements is not far off.

Speaking of edible arrangements, across the globe, Mexican manufacturers are apparently preparing for a Sotol production surge, as the age-old liquor is likely to surpass tequila in popularity, according to the trend forecasting experts.

"[Of the trends revealed] I loved Sotol, which I hadn't heard of until our food and drinks team brought this to the list for [this] year," Ms. Buzasi says.

"[Sotol is a] Mexican spirit [that] like lots of these spirits, [has] been around for decades, if not hundreds of years," the host says. "It is just beginning to get prominence now outside of Mexico."

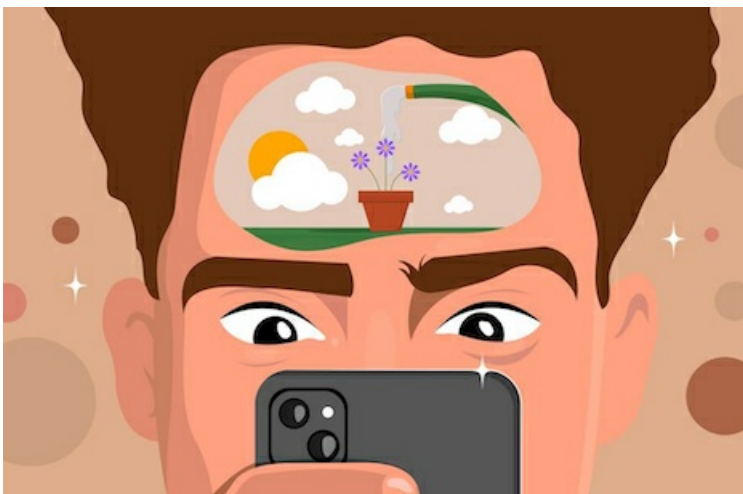
"We believe Sotol will be the next it' spirit that you will start seeing in cool, hipster bars and then potentially, as we look further and further, might make its way into your cocktail cabinet."

Back to basics

Between the plateauing of early Silicon Valley boom-era tech babies like Snapchat ([see story](#)), the proliferation of new platforms like TikTok ([see story](#)) and timely conversations about ethics and tech spurred by recent AI advancements ([see story](#)), one overarching report theme involves analysis of the ways in which consumers are currently interacting with or opting out of ([see story](#)) their devices.

Experts unearth the topic during the accompanying podcast episode, sharing that forty-seven percent of respondents to a tech wellness survey said that they actively seek downtime from internet-enabled devices due to digital fatigue, concerning as it pertains to another report trend concerning the future pervasiveness of AR WGSN's reporting includes the statistic that nearly 75 percent of the world's population will use AR ([see story](#)) regularly by 2025.

"Digital fatigue is a real thing," WGSN's Ms. White says.



*Forty-seven percent of respondents said that they actively seek downtime from internet-enabled devices due to digital fatigue. Image credit: WGSN*

"Tech brands are starting to respond to this with what they are calling calm device principles, and those are ambient devices that help reduce stress by taking on certain tasks autonomously, and delivering more gentle notifications especially."

The desire for less screen time, and more control over what content finds its way to one's feed, is undeniable. Mindful gaming i.e., the [World Health Organization](#)'s new digital creation which taps game characters to promote physical and emotional well-being and the outpaced growth of decentralized social media sites see Jack Dorsey's novel nonprofit [Blue Sky](#) represent the tech industry's own response to this slow, albeit important, recognition.

As consumers seek increased offline time, many may turn to the food and drink, fashion, fitness, wellness and interior trends that bring comfort, thus, leaning into the trends above all the more intensely.

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