



MEDIA IN 2030: DATA & INSIGHT REPORT

What 30+ Future Publishing leaders drew when asked to imagine the media of 2030

Future Publishing leadership session · Bath, UK · July 2026 | A VisuAlse Futures analysis

Where the room's imagination concentrated

Theme	%	What it signals
AI Coaches & Mentors	25.0%	Joint-top of the leaderboard: media that watches you try and coaches you through – guitar practice, driving lessons, the working day. The tutorial becomes a companion.
Media You Can Talk To	25.0%	Tied at the top: synthetic journalists you can question, brand ambassadors built from the archive, briefings you can debate. The article becomes an interface.
Hyper-Personal Feeds & Curation	20.0%	Stuff you like × what to do with it × how you like it. Readers want to program their own product, not accept the edition.
Synthetic Presenters & Personas	20.0%	Homer Simpson reading the news, virtual bands, reporters' AI doubles. The face of media stops being fixed – or human.
Holograms & Immersive Entertainment	15.0%	Karaoke stages and legend concerts in the front room; hotel rooms you stand in before booking. The screen stops being a window and becomes a place.
Trust, Debate & Verification	10.0%	Verified source networks and devil's-advocate briefings. In a synthetic world, the room reached for provenance.
Financial Foresight Tools	10.0%	Money media that simulates your future instead of reporting the market's past.
Content-to-Commerce Agents	10.0%	The article that books the holiday. Affiliate links grow up into agents that finish the transaction.

Analysis runs on 20 unique ideas (23 submissions; three near-identical resubmissions merged). Coverage exceeds 100% because ideas span multiple themes, reflecting the integrated thinking of participants. One idea (an AI calendar optimiser) sits outside the media themes entirely – proof the blank page was genuinely blank.

What the data says

A publisher's audience drew a coach, not a publication.

Ask media leaders for the media of 2030 and the joint-biggest cluster – five unique ideas, 25% – contains nothing to read. It listens instead: to your guitar practice, your driving, your working day, and answers "try it like this". For a business whose stock-in-trade is expertise – how to play it, what to buy, how to master it – the room's instinct is clear: expertise stops being an article and becomes a companion that watches you improve. Content turns into capability.

Nobody redesigned the article. They gave it a voice.

One idea in four turns publishing into dialogue: interview a journalist's verified AI double, quiz a brand ambassador built from decades of articles, ask the archive "tell me what that means". The back catalogue stops being a library and becomes the training data for the product. The moat isn't the model – everyone will have a model. It's the verified pages the model answers from.

Personalisation arrived as a formula, not a wish.

One sketch specified the exact recipe: stuff you like × what to do with it × how you like it. Another dressed the same wish as a nightly news show anchored by Homer Simpson. The room doesn't want a better edition – it wants the machine that lets every reader assemble their own. One masthead, a million editions.

Reading becomes doing.

The magazine article that books the holiday it just sold you, within budget, one click. The VR preview that lets you stand in the hotel room before paying. The room took the affiliate model – inspiration nearby, transaction elsewhere – and deleted the gap between them. Links grow up into agents; the story finishes the job.

The silences are signals.

In a room full of media leaders, nobody drew the business model: no ads, no subscriptions, no paywalls. Nobody drew the newsroom or a production tool. And in a future crowded with synthetic presenters, only one idea grounded its personas in real, verifiable journalists – the human byline barely appeared. The mechanics of trust, and of revenue, went undrawn. Both silences are open opportunities.

Where the room argued with itself

The synthetic anchor vs. the trusted source.

The same room that wants Homer Simpson reading the news and AI doubles of its reporters also built verified source networks and anti-bias tools. When the face of the product is synthetic, trust has to move somewhere else: into the sourcing, the archive, the brand. Whoever engineers that transfer first owns the category.

Give me what I like vs. tell me what I'm missing.

Four ideas perfect the feed that agrees with you. One – a briefing that plays devil's advocate over breakfast – was built to argue with you. Personalisation's endgame is an echo chamber unless the argument is designed in. The room sensed it, and sketched both sides.

The destination vs. the ambient layer.

Holographic venues make the front room a place to gather again; drive-time feeds and in-flow coaches dissolve media into the background of other activities. Is the 2030 media brand somewhere you go, or something that travels with you? The room voted both.

What to do with this

- **Pick one vertical and build the coach.** Take a how-to franchise the audience already trusts and pilot a listening coach – one of the room's two biggest wishes. Measure practice minutes, not page views.
 - **Open the archive as a conversation.** Prototype "interview the article" on one trusted title and watch what readers actually ask. The questions are an editorial calendar no planning meeting could produce.
 - **Upgrade affiliate to agent.** Build one read-to-booked journey end to end, budget-aware. The commerce model the room drew is the current one with the friction deleted – and the margin kept.
 - **Make the human byline the feature.** Any synthetic-persona experiment should wear its verification on the outside: real journalists, real sources, visible provenance. The room built the anxiety; build the answer.
 - **Design the argument in.** Add a challenge-me mode to one briefing product. Against the infinite agreeable feed, judgment – not agreement – is the differentiator a trusted brand can own.
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The lens: who the room built for (directional)

Submissions do not carry the participant's role or brand, so these reads are inferred from each idea's content and shown as a directional cut, not an org-chart truth.

The learner.

The dominant customer in the room's imagination: someone mid-attempt – at a chord, a hill start, a spreadsheet – who needs expertise at the exact moment of trying, not an article the night before.

The reader.

Served conversation instead of publication: articles that answer back, briefings that debate, archives that explain themselves in your context.

The fan.

Given the venue at home: holographic karaoke, resurrected legends, a personal broadcaster with a sense of humour. Fandom gets a stage, not a screen.

The customer.

Handed the finished transaction: the holiday booked from the page, the trip stood in before purchase, the financial future rehearsed before it's chosen.

All concepts are AI-expanded from live audience sketches, designed to inspire rather than to express the views of Future Normal Ltd or its clients. Percentages derive from analysis of 23 submissions (20 unique after deduplication); published figures should be cited as-is, never recomputed. [Explore every idea in the Ideas Portal »](#)