

Ciaran McKivergan - The migration toward subscription-based social media and AR opportunities



By [Ciaran McKivergan](#)

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Yes, I'm going to talk about Artificial Intelligence like everyone else is, but I also want to look at how the migration toward subscription-based social media and Augmented Reality (AR) opportunities is going to make life simultaneously easier and tougher for an industry that needs to keep up with cultural shifts to help create relevant content that keeps our clients memorable.



Image supplied. Ciaran McKivergan, founder and managing director at 8909 looks at how the migration toward subscription-based social media and AR opportunities is going to make life simultaneously easier and tougher for the creative industry

Ad-supported social media platforms were great for advertisers and platform owners, if less so for users. The platforms generated revenue by offering targeted advertising opportunities and sponsored content.

Advertisers could reach users more easily, more efficiently and in a more targeted way than ever before.

Users didn't mind an ad here and there in exchange for the free use of platforms that became an essential part of their daily lives – but when the volume of ads on certain platforms started to increase and affect the organic content they wanted to see, they started finding other ways to get their content fix.

Reaching ad-free users

As users became more concerned about privacy and social advertising started getting more closely regulated, ad revenues started to decline – so the answer to the existential threat was to do what streaming music and video providers had been doing for some time: offer ad-free or reduced-ad subscription models to supplement revenue.

Snapchat+, X Premium, Meta Verified and YouTube Premium— social media companies created these subscriptions to reduce their dependence on ad revenue.

This is going to affect advertisers in terms of having smaller pools of users to advertise to and increasing reliance on organic reach.



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The latter effect is actually an opportunity, rather than a challenge – and one advertisers and agencies should embrace next year.

Having to achieve better organic reach means moving towards influencer marketing and the content creator industry in a big way – and also allowing influencers to move your brand into their world so it's authentically presented and received.

Because of the shift to subscription, brands will need to now start creating content not advertising - content people really want to watch.

Red Bull has been doing this for years.

What we will also need to do is tap into the creator economy so that we can create authentic content that works - content that does not look forced or paid for, or content that does not interrupt your feed, but rather compliments it.

It's about experiencing the push without feeling the nudge – particularly for those who opt for the subscription side of the platform.

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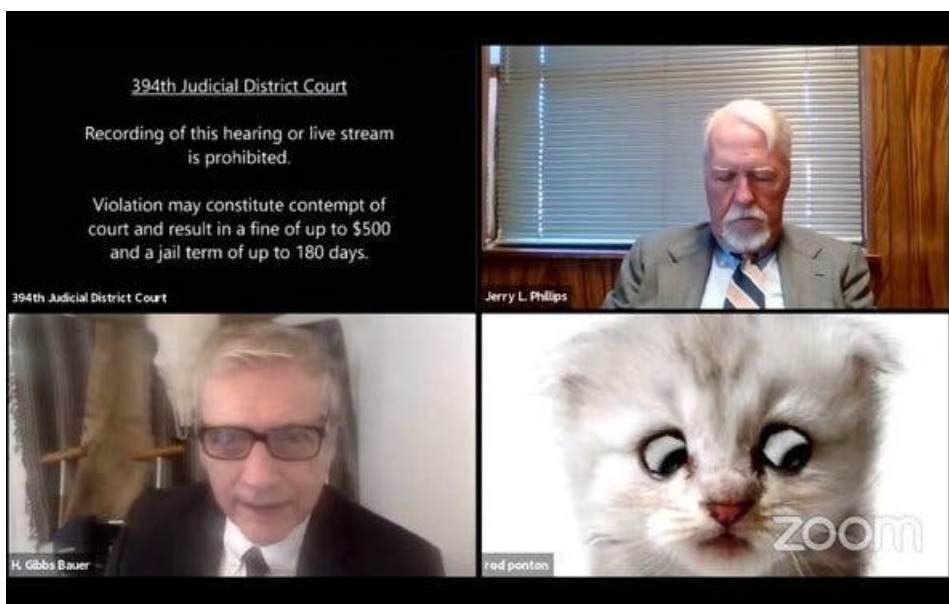
A glimpse into the future

[Meta teaming up with Ray-Ban](#) and Apple launching the [Vision Pro](#) this year is the first step toward taking AR mainstream.

Yes, they're still prohibitively expensive, but they're the start of a massive shift in our industry in terms of advertising – but also how it is created.

Snapchat, TikTok and Meta have already made the work comfortable with AR - we've been adding filters to images for years to enhance them or to add interactive elements.

Remember the lawyer who appeared virtually before Texas' 394th Judicial District Court in 2021 [as a cat](#) and couldn't switch the filter off?



Source: NY Times [NY Times](#)

The Vision Pro is effectively the first new way of engaging with a computer since the mouse arrived – you can take your computer with you, make a screen the size of the horizon and edit videos using hand gestures.

Once they're more affordable, they'll start having an impact on the way people consume media, but for now, many industries need to start taking advantage of yet another new way of working – or at least preparing too, because when the affordability onslaught arrives, the media world is going to change.



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Faster, not yet smarter

No, AI isn't coming for your job – but in 2024, we'll see it being implemented into workflows, from research to execution to doing the leg work in finding inspiration.

It's less about using ChatGPT to generate inoffensive copy and more about using integrated tools like Microsoft's Companion to work more effectively.

Companion is the 21st-century version of the annoying little paperclip assistant that used to pop up on your MS product screens and make largely useless suggestions.

The grown-up version will be packaged across the Microsoft Office suite and can now complete tasks on behalf of users.

Want to find a trend in the field of Excel data? Ask Companion. Need a quick pivot table? Companion will provide.

Rather than making people lazy, I hope that AI makes people better at their jobs.

It needs a human to drive it, input the right prompts and check and edit the information it's sourced from a pool created by other humans.

We can't fight it – it's coming – and any business that doesn't adopt some AI tools into its operations is going to get left in the dust.

ABOUT CIARAN MCKIVERGAN

Ciaran McKivergan is the founder and managing director at 8909. Founded in 2015 by McKivergan, 8909 is a digital agency that believes that human behavioural psychology and meaningful digital data should be the starting point for any effective marketing campaign, and data should be used as a continual benchmark to evaluate ongoing success.

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