TBWA's Backslash Releases 2021 Edges

Introducing 40 Global Cultural Shifts Shaping Our World
This Isn't Just a Trend Report. It's a Glimpse Into a New Chapter of Our History. Welcome to Year Zero.

Backslash, the cultural intelligence unit of TBWA\Worldwide, released its annual glossary of Edges.
More than a trend, an Edge is defined as a meaningful cultural shift that has the scale and longevity to propel a brand toward a greater share of the future.

Backslash examines cultural shifts with an eye toward business impact, identifying opportunities for disruptive growth. This year, the opportunities are especially significant, says Agathe Guerrier, Co-Chief Strategy Officer, TBWA\Worldwide. "The pandemic has precipitated a cosmic reshuffle of global realities, social norms and individual beliefs. A world is ending, and another is being born. 2021 isn't just another year, it's Year Zero. And so this isn't just a trend report. It's a glimpse into a new chapter of our history."

The complete list of 40 Edges can be downloaded here.

Backslash's 2021 Edges explore the cultural shifts shaping our world in six chapters: Chaos, Preservation, Advancement, Identity, Liberation, and Rebirth.

From culture wars to information wars, nowhere is safe from conflict. The opening chapter sets the stage for our current era of **chaos**, and urges brands to provide a release from the pressure.

The second chapter explores how, in the face of disarray, **preservation** of our mental energy and physical resources will become a priority. As we hope for the best but prepare for the worst, we'll look to businesses to help us shelter, build resilience, and secure the essentials.

The third chapter, **advancement**, calls technology into question and asks: are we really ready to sacrifice privacy for convenience, worth for automation, or humanity for optimization?

The fourth chapter looks at how a culture craving authenticity is **liberating** itself from constraints, toxic polarization, perfectionism, and needless consumerism. In the great undoing, brands who celebrate raw transparency and experimentation will offer a breath of fresh air.

The final chapter, **rebirth**, offers a refreshingly optimistic vision for a new kind of world. One where greater inclusivity, sustainability, and equity become common goals.

As global headlines spread awareness around the now, Backslash's Edges point to what's next. These six Edges are especially pertinent to recent worldwide news:

1. **Body Debates**

   Between doctors providing vaccine education on TikTok and record-breaking participation in "Veganuary," matters of biology are being debated like never before. As the discussion heats up, industries from entertainment to Big Pharma will take a stand in the battlefield.

2. **Roots Revival**

   COVID-19 exposed the pitfalls of globalization, opening the door for localism and nationalism to make a modern comeback. Consumer preferences are shifting, and the push to 'buy local' is just the beginning.

3. **Platform Politics**

   Growing concerns are putting technology in the spotlight. The war between good tech vs. bad tech is on, and every business will need to choose its side carefully.

4. **Stability Pursuit**

   The world is becoming disillusioned with Silicon Valley. As the allure of startup culture fades, businesses will begin placing a new emphasis on stability.

5. **Counter Cancel**

   A record number of brands and public figures fell victim to cancel culture in 2020. But looking forward, a growing dialogue around the toxicity of online hate will lead to a more productive movement.

6. **Health Hedonism**

   The pandemic has accelerated healthcare innovation while emphasizing the importance of wellness. Every brand is now in the business of making us well.

Patrycja Sojka, Global Culture Spotter at TBWA\HAKUHODO said, "The pandemic that struck the world last year is still ongoing and the future is fraught with many questions. In the midst of the pandemic we are encountering changes that were previously unforeseen, such as the of stay-at-homes and remote work, and increasing levels of anxiety due to various uncertainties. The pulse of culture is now more important than ever to understand people's values and behaviors and prepare for an unknown future. The Backslash team, which uses TBWA's global network to understand and analyze the pulse of culture around the world and generate business insights from new trends, has released "Edges 2021", which contains many hints on how to lead the market in "Year Zero", the first year of the new normal, when the "norm" is no longer the norm. I hope you will find it useful."

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About Backslash

Backslash is a cultural intelligence unit powered by global advertising agency TBWA\Worldwide that monitors cultural shifts around the world and translates them into business opportunity for brands. Backslash is shaped by more than 250 agency creatives and strategists who monitor emerging and evolving trends that directly impact society, consumers and category behavior. Each cultural shift enables Backslash to codify a change and identify insights and opportunities for brands. For more information on Backslash, follow us on Instagram at @TBWABackslash or www.backslash.com.

About TBWA\Worldwide

TBWA is The Disruption® Company: the cultural engine for 21st-century business. Named one of the World's Most Innovative Companies by Fast Company and Adweek's 2018 Global Agency of the Year, we create disruptive ideas that locate and involve brands in culture, giving them a larger share of the future. Our collective has 11,300 creative minds across 275 offices in 95 countries, and also includes brands such as Auditoire, Digital Arts Network (DAN), eg+ worldwide, GMR, The Integer Group®, TBWA\Media Arts Lab, TBWA\WorldHealth and TRO. Global clients include adidas, Apple, Gatorade, Henkel, Hilton Hotels, McDonald's, Nissan and Singapore Airlines. Follow us on Twitter, LinkedIn and Instagram, and like us on Facebook. TBWA is part of Omnicom Group.

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