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WEB SUMMIT LISBON 2025

CREATIVITY, AI, AND THE FUTURE OF COMMUNICATION IN A WORLD OF AGENTS

December, 2025

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From November 10th to 13th, 2025, Lisbon once again became the global epicenter of technology, bringing together more than 70,000 participants, 2,500 startups, and representatives from over 160 countries at the Web Summit Lisbon 2025.

In a year in which **artificial intelligence ceased to be a "trend" and became infrastructure**, the event revolved around three major themes: **the advancement of agentic AI, the consolidation of the creator economy, and the urgency of rebuilding trust in information, brands, and the internet itself.**

For those working in communication, the message was clear: **the human element remains increasingly strategic.** Discussions about business models for journalism, the role of authenticity in brands, and the new relationships between publishers and AI companies point to a scenario in which voice, context, community, and rights to content become assets as relevant as the technology itself.

Enjoy your reading!

WEB SUMMIT LISBON 2025

OPENING

When? November 10–13, 2025, in Lisbon

Who? Over 70,000 participants and 2,500 startups present, reinforcing the Web Summit's position as one of the world's largest technology gatherings.

What was seen there? Queues, a packed schedule, and even restrictions on private jet landings due to the volume of executives attending the event – a sign of the strategic weight the Web Summit has gained in the global technology and innovation calendar.

Opening and main narratives from the Center Stage:
The opening night featured names like Khaby Lame (TikTok), tennis player Maria Sharapova, and Anton Osika (Lovable AI), connecting technology, digital influence, and personal entrepreneurship.

In their introductory messages, the curators emphasized that the event's objective is not only to "discuss the future of creativity," but **to actively build it, inviting founders, creators, and leaders to collaborate practically on new models, products, and experiences.**

WEB SUMMIT LISBON 2025

NUMBERS AND GENERAL CONTEXT

web summit

DOUGLAS CANTU, ABERJE

INNOVATION, JOURNALISM AND THE *PRESS* FUTURE

When he opened the 2025 edition of **Web Summit Lisbon**, Irishman Paddy Cosgrave, co-founder and CEO of the event, wore a black sweater with the word PRESS written in large letters. In his two-minute speech, he praised Brazil for creating Pix, which, according to him, is the greatest innovation in the financial market in recent years and will spread throughout the world; he spoke of China's consolidation as the leading global technological power; and discussed how Europe and the United States no longer dictate innovation trends.

Two days later, the press conference Cosgrave gave was one of the most prestigious among journalists in the press room. Many questions were asked about China, including speculation about a possible move of the event there. Rumors that grew after Paddy's trip to the country and a minor controversy caused by his criticism of the prices charged by Lisbon's hotel industry.

But one detail caught the attention of some journalists – or at least mine and that of a Portuguese reporter who was quicker than me to ask why Paddy was wearing the same sweater from the event's opening – the one with the word PRESS written on it in English.

And it wasn't just a detail.

Seeming to have been expecting that question, Cosgrave adjusted himself in his chair to answer that he had never considered the role of the press in the world so important. "The sweater is from an artisan I met in Dublin. I asked her to embroider it especially for the event because I think this message is important. We need to talk about democracy in today's world and, for that, the profession of journalism must be protected." He also said that the 2025 edition of the Web Summit Lisbon was the one that received the largest number of heads of major media groups and government delegations in the event's history.

Several lectures and debates addressed topics related to the press, but, unlike the focus on democracy and the protection of human rights (and of humans themselves), the most common approach was about the paths of new communication with social media as the main platform and artificial intelligence as the main tool.

On the other side, there is the content consumer, who, despite also being a content producer, still demands increasingly innovative information and entertainment, whether produced by groups of people or digital tools.

In the midst of this controversy, humans also discussed the paths to regulating the use of networks and AI, a stalemate that seems increasingly far from the fulfillment of globalized rules replicable in different corners of the Earth. This discussion will still be present in many editions of the event, whether in Lisbon, Rio, or perhaps even China...

GREAT CONVERSATIONS

THE 5 MAIN THEMES THAT RAN THROUGH THE EVENT

THE RISE OF AGENTIC AI

ONE OF THE CENTRAL THEMES

Talks such as *"The agentic future of business"* and *"The curve of the agentic web"* showed how companies are beginning to replace traditional interfaces (SaaS, dashboards) with **AI agents that operate autonomously,** connecting data, executing tasks, and making decisions on behalf of users and organizations.

2 CREATOR ECONOMY AS A NEW ECONOMIC AXIS

The creator economy has moved beyond being a "niche" and is now being treated as economic infrastructure, with companies like Visa launching AI-powered financial tools specifically for creators (invoice management, brand proposal evaluation, payment automation).

COMMUNITY + AUTHENTICITY

MAIN CURRENCIES OF TRUST

3

Panels on brands like Loop Earplugs, OnlyFans, and the Fizz app reinforced the idea that community isn't manufactured – it's earned. **Authenticity emerged as an antidote to the excess** of automated content and algorithm fatigue.

"You decide what you want your brand to be, but your community decides what your brand is."

ROB WESTON, Loop Earplugs

THE FUTURE OF THE PRESS AND SUSTAINABLE JOURNALISM MODELS

Executives from groups like Dow Jones discussed the decline in viewership of local media outlets, the increase in threats to the press, and the need for sustainable content licensing models for AI, with concrete examples of marketplaces **for journalistic data and commercial agreements with technology companies.**

5

ENHANCED CREATIVITY - NOT REPLACED - BY AI

From Adobe to Coca-Cola, the discourse converged: AI accelerates and expands creative work, but it doesn't replace intuition, judgment, and worldview. The concern becomes how to avoid the "sea of sameness" – a sea of generic outputs.

TRUST, TRUTH AND TECHNOLOGY

SARA FISCHER, Axios

ALMAR LATOUR, Dow Jones

In the session "Trust, truth and technology in the media", Sara Fischer (Axios) and Almar Latour (CEO of Dow Jones) discussed:

1. The erosion of press freedom: Latour celebrated the release of journalist Evan Gershkovich, but warned of the global decline in press freedom and the closure of approximately 40% of local media outlets in the US, weakening community journalism.

2. Journalism as civic infrastructure: He argued that the sector needs to reinvent itself, adopting sustainable models – and presented Dow Jones itself, now highly profitable, as proof that it is possible to grow by combining quality journalism with solid business.

3. "Sue or woo" strategy with AI: Faced with AI companies that use journalistic content to train models, Latour described Dow Jones' approach as "sue or woo": prioritizing commercial agreements, but not hesitating to litigate when necessary to protect intellectual property.

4. Factiva as a generative AI marketplace: the Factiva case was presented as a marketplace that connects more than 7,150 global publishers to AI clients, remunerating content holders for its use – a model that signals how the press can capture value instead of simply being exploited by generative models.

FROM "RISK" TO NEW BUSINESS MODELS FOR THE PRESS

Web Summit 2025 marks a turning point: the conversation about AI and the press is shifting from just "risk" to also focusing on "business models"—with practical examples of licensing and revenue sharing.

New Media Summit and community as the new "editor-in-chief"

In media and entertainment content, the focus fell on the community as a filter of relevance: Rob Weston (Loop) warned that brands often try to "manufacture" communities, when in practice they should understand the life narrative of their consumers and put their agenda at the center.

Native niche platforms:

Cases like the Fizz app demonstrate the power of hyper-focused student communities, which become spaces for exchange, resale, and influence, often more relevant than mainstream networks in the daily lives of young people.

For newsrooms and brands:

Developing proprietary community channels (newsletters, closed groups, clubs) becomes as important as maintaining an active presence on platforms.
The future of media seems less about "audience size" and more about depth of relationship and clear governance of data and rights.

AI + CREATIVITY

FROM THE "SLOT MACHINE" TO PURPOSEFUL DESIGN

"Design's role is shaping the future of creativity in the age of AI"
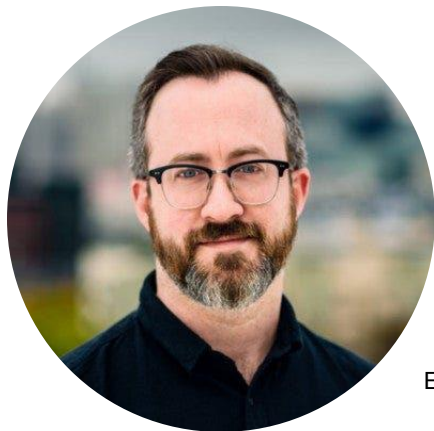
ERIC SNOWDEN, Adobe

Eric Snowden, SVP of Design at Adobe, offered a very mature perspective on **the role of design in the AI age:**

The paradox of creative AI: the easier it is to create, the harder it is to stand out. Snowden criticized tools that function like image "slot machines," without allowing real control over the creative process and intent.

Design for alignment, not just for deliverables: he differentiated "design for deliverables" (UX, screens, specifications) from "design for alignment"—using design to unlock decisions, align teams, and accelerate product strategy. In this view, designers are strategic actors in defining the direction of AI, not just users of tools.

New frontier: "coding vibe"—designers participate in the actual construction of products (prototyping, adjusting, even fixing bugs in tools like Premiere on iOS), shortening the distance between idea, experience, and software.

ETHICS, TECHNOLOGY AND CREATIVITY

"Harness your creativity before AI takes over."
In the panel with Javier Meza Robayo (Coca-Cola) and Maira Genovese (MG Empower), moderated by The Drum, the main points were:

1. Human connection as the raison d'être of marketing: AI scales production and efficiency, but doesn't change the "why": understanding human desires, emotions, and aspirations.

2. Safe experimentation with AI: Coca-Cola adopts a "living lab" approach, encouraging teams to test AI, fail fast, and learn – including in iconic campaigns, always with transparency.

3. Ethics and transparency: trust in AI depends on clear principles: accountability, fairness, privacy, and honest communication about when and how AI is used in content.

4. Customization by category: in luxury, AI cannot dilute the aura of craftsmanship; in beauty, it enhances immersive experiences (try-ons, personalization) without replacing the human touch.

Bluesky + Hootsuite: AI as an amplifier, not a replacement
In an interview during the event, leaders from Bluesky and Hootsuite emphasized that AI "amplifies what we already know how to do, but doesn't replace creativity" and that the key issue for creators is consent – how data, voices, and content are used to train models.

Creativity, therefore, is becoming less about "producing pieces" and more about curating, directing, and orchestrating AI systems.

Creative teams need to develop new skills: prompt design, critical evaluation of outputs, definition of ethical guidelines, and rights management.

The differentiator isn't who uses AI – it's who uses AI without losing their own voice and brand purpose.

AGENTIC AI

THE NEXT REVOLUTION IS UNDERWAY

FUTURE OF THE WEB: AGENTS, DATA AND THE NEW POWER OF USERS

SIR TIM BERNERS-LEE

Sir Tim Berners-Lee: "Hanging in the balance"

In one of the most symbolic moments of the Center Stage, Sir Tim Berners-Lee, creator of the Web, discussed with John Bruce (Inrupt) the need for an internet "reset."

They advocated for a model in which an individual's data is under the user's own control, allowing them to choose which services and agents they access – a kind of "return to the origins" of an open, creative web less concentrated in large platforms.

In the context of the "agentic web," where AI agents operate autonomously, this architecture is vital to avoid a future where a few players concentrate data, power, and decision-making capacity.

"The agentic future of business" and "the death of SaaS"

Talks about the "agentic future of business" showed how companies are migrating from static applications to systems composed of multiple AI agents that test hypotheses, automate workflows, and personalize decisions on a large scale.

The idea of the "death of SaaS" is not literal, but symbolic: the value shifts from software as a product to agents as a continuous service, embedded in multiple channels.

Consequence for communication and reputation:
Narratives about privacy, data usage, content licensing, and algorithmic responsibility will be central reputation themes for technology, media, and finance brands in the coming years. anos.

LESSONS TO KEEP IN MIND

GENERAL IMPLICATIONS FOR THE PRESS AND BRANDS

GENERAL IMPLICATIONS FOR THE PRESS AND BRANDS

TREAT AI AS CREATIVE INFRASTRUCTURE, NOT AS A "CAMPAIGN"

- Map where AI agents can automate routine tasks and free up time for strategy and relationship building.
- Create clear internal guidelines on AI usage (transparency with the public, respect for copyright, fact-checking).

REPOSITIONING CONTENT AS A TRADABLE ASSET WITH AI

- For media companies, evaluate opportunities for structured content licensing for AI models.
- For brands, treat community data and proprietary content as "currency" in technology partnerships.

BUILDING REAL COMMUNITIES, NOT JUST "CAMPAIGN FANS"

- Develop forums, clubs, newsletters, and platforms where the public can co-create, provide feedback, and influence product roadmaps.
- Measure success not only in reach but also in depth of engagement and co-participation.

REPOSITIONING NEWSROOMS AND COMMS TEAMS AS CONTEXT HUBS

- In a world saturated with automated information, the value lies in contextualizing, prioritizing, and explaining.
- Investing in data and AI training for journalists and communicators – without abandoning the classic skills of fact-checking and storytelling.

PREPARING LEADERS TO TALK ABOUT AI, TRUST, AND ACCOUNTABILITY

- The narrative of "AI as a human amplifier" has appeared on various stages; it's a powerful statement for corporate speeches and public pronouncements.

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