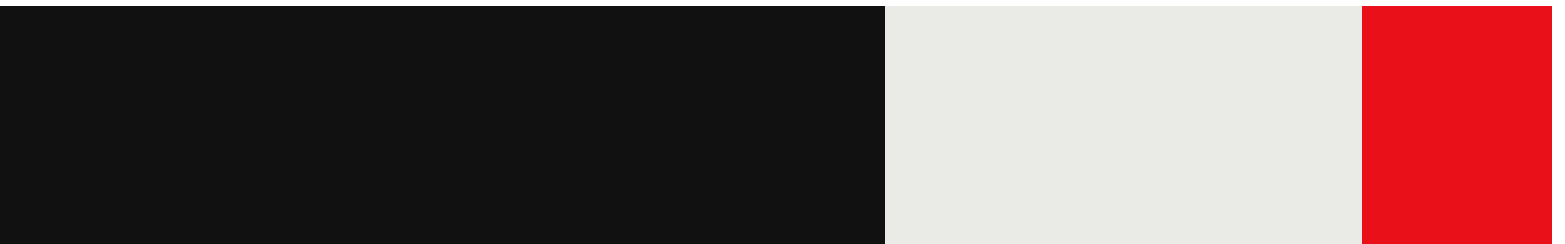


# The Weekly Listen: Can Threads keep up its momentum, TikTok Music's potential, and the Women's World Cup 2023

Audio



On today's episode, we discuss whether Threads can keep up its momentum, if TikTok Music can compete in the music streaming world, how engagement with the Women's World Cup will look, what to make of the Burger King rebrand, whether US consumers actually shop on social media platforms, who invented the first-ever hybrid car, and more. Tune in to the discussion with our analysts Ross Benes, Blake Droesch, and Max Willens.

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## Episode Transcript:

Marcus Johnson:

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Hello everyone and thanks for hanging out with us for the Behind the Numbers Weekly Listen, an eMarketer Podcast made possible by Verisk Marketing Solutions. This is the Friday show that thinks Max's kid should play for the Phillies. It's definitely the show that does not believe in the Mets. Let's just put that out there.

Blake Droesch:

Speak for yourself.

Marcus Johnson:

I'll speak for everyone. What are we talking about today? It's the Weekly Listen. I'm your host Marcus Johnson. I should probably say that. In today's show, can Threads keep up its momentum?

Max Willens:

I'm going to say that Threads is DOA.

Marcus Johnson:

Will TikTok Music catch on?

Ross Benes:

I think it could catch on. It'd be a fun service for people to use. But I worry about as if they get into big markets like the US and the UK. What will the rights issues look like?

Marcus Johnson:

What will the Women's World Cup engagement look like?

Blake Droesch:

I actually think that this is a good opportunity for advertisers in the US particularly because the US' team is so dominant.

Marcus Johnson:

Burger King rebrands. Do Americans actually like to shop on social media? And, some facts about hybrid cars. Joining me for this episode. We have three people, let's meet them. They're all senior analysts. We have two of them who are based on our digital advertising and media team. One of them is based on... I've done this very weird.

Blake Droesch:

This is the easiest intro ever, but you just completely over complicated it.

Marcus Johnson:

I've managed to ruin it, yeah. I was doing like the 12 days of Christmas. Three analysts, two on this one team and partridge in a pear tree. Ladies and gentlemen, Max Willens.

Max Willens:

Yo.

Marcus Johnson:

He's based out of Pennsylvania. We're also have one our analysts on the digital advertising media team based out of New York is Ross Benes.

Ross Benes:

Hello.

Marcus Johnson:

And the other senior analyst is based out of New York. We call him Blake Droesch.

Blake Droesch:

Hey everyone.

Marcus Johnson:

There we go. What are we talking about today? Well, we're talking about Threads still. We have to because they had a huge surge in users and we're trying to figure out whether that's going to continue. So we'll talk about them first. Then we move to the game of the week. Our three senior analysts will go head to head to head to try to give us the best takeaways they

can from each of the four stories we have for you. Then we end with dinner party data where we talk about some random information that we've found interesting. But we start of course, with the story of the week.

Can Threads keep up its momentum. Meta's Threads now has to keep its millions of users engaged. The tech space app has proven easy to join thanks to his Instagram sibling, but faces several challenges, writes Megan Bobrowsky and Lindsey Choo of the Wall Street Journal. The big story were was last week that Threads hit 100 million users within the first five days. Some newer estimates have it already crossing the 150 million user mark. So somewhere in that ballpark. There's lots of people for a new service.

However, Insider Intelligence, senior director of briefings, Jeremy Goldman points out user engagement has since fallen with analytics data from Sensor Tower and SimilarWeb indicating significant drops in daily active users and time spent on the app. Sensor tower, they say it's a 20% drop in daily active users, 50% fall in time spent on the app, a week post launch falling from 20 minutes to 10. SimilarWeb says basically similar things, things are aren't going in the right direction after a great start. Gents can Threads keep its momentum?

Ross Benes:

Well, it got a huge bump right away just from being associated with Instagram. You're never going to repeat that initial bump. Very few services are going to get 100 plus million people to just sign on because they already have an account with the affiliated service.

Max Willens:

I'm going to say that Threads is DOA. To what Ross was saying, it's very easy when you have an active user base that is in the billions to get a bunch of people to try out something new and shiny. But I feel like because Threads has not yet added ads, it has not really yet begun to reckon with how it will function as a business, it is fair to analyze it through the lens of its content and user experience. And for that I turned to a newsletter that I read religiously called Garbage Day. I'm sure a lot of people in this audience also read it.

And after a week of it being launched, it's author Ryan Broderick wrote about Threads and I will read a quote from that newsletter which I've edited slightly for brevity, clarity and to take out all the cursing. But he writes of Threads, quote, "It has no purpose. It is for no one. It launched as a content graveyard and will only assuredly become more of one over time. It feels like a '90s themed office party organized by a human resources department. Threads'

true purpose was to act as a fresh coat of paint for Instagram's code in the hopes it might make the network relevant again. And Threads is also proof that Meta, after all these years, still has no ambitions aside from scale."

Marcus Johnson:

That's a soft no.

Max Willens:

Yeah, that's a we'll wait and see. I think that the only reason that Meta did this, and I think they've all but said this publicly, is that they saw weakness at Twitter itself and thought that they could land a kill shot while people were not sure of where else to go because maybe they were too intimidated to sign up for Blue Sky or they weren't sure how to use Mastodon and they were scared of Discord. But I don't see this succeeding in any way, shape or form. But because Meta is as big as it is, it's not really going to matter to them. But I think the idea that Threads is going to sort of eat Twitter is ridiculous.

Marcus Johnson:

So Blake, is this a bit of a flash in the pan? Is it kind of similar to X Factor, America's Got Talent type fame where you become famous overnight and you've not had that kind of more sustainable music or whatever career where you're able to really establish yourself over time and proven that you do have staying power? They reached 100 million users very, very, very fast. It took them five days. LinkedIn, it took them eight years. Twitter took them five, WhatsApp over three, Instagram over two. Even TikTok took nine months. Threads gained to 100 million plus in five days. Is this more flash in the pan?

Blake Drosch:

There's a lot of smoke around that because of just the massive marketing push that Meta did around Threads. But I think just to going off of what Max is saying about who is this app for, it's not going to get a lot of people who are still using Twitter to move over to Threads because it's not like you can just click a button and all the people that you're following on Twitter are going to appear on Threads. And a lot of the people that you know like following on Twitter, not necessarily people that you want to follow on Instagram or do follow on Instagram.

So bringing over an audience from Twitter to Threads is not something that's likely to happen. Bringing over the audience from Instagram to Threads, it was easier for them to sort of pull the trigger. But presumably, this is an audience that if they were going to use Twitter, they already were using it and if they weren't using, didn't have any in interest in a text-based app, then this is not necessarily going to convince them to do so in the long term.

There are also some huge issues with Threads and the user experience, the one of which is that they launched without any timetable for having a general feed of people that you follow. So it's basically just populated by this weird algorithm that people don't find helpful. It seems very cookie cutter, very dry. And it's for that very reason, just a lot less sophisticated than what Twitter, for all of its flaws in the algorithm, the user experience since Elon Musk took over is still more of a user-friendly app for basically just following and getting updates from the people that you want to hear from and cutting out the noise. Where Threads doesn't do any of that. So you could have a bunch of your friends on Instagram on Threads and even if they are using it, the engagement is going to be skewed towards whatever the algorithm thinks. So I just don't see that initial bump being able to sustain itself long term purely because of the fact that the user experience is not really up to snuff.

Max Willens:

100%.

Ross Benes:

I just got to say I really enjoy Max coming in hard and just saying this thing that's new, it's dead.

Max Willens:

It's Friday baby, I got to come correct. But I mean will say, and this is not really a defensive thread so much as a dig against its alternative. It's not like things are going great at Twitter either. Earlier this week Elon Musk coming out and saying that their ad revenue is down 50%, they're cashflow negative. There are a lot of people now opining that Elon might have to raise more money just to keep the ship from sinking while he gets everything kind of under control a little. I think that that's a little alarmist, but I thought I would make the point that things are not exactly going gangbusters at Twitter either. Just for what it's worth.

Marcus Johnson:



That stood out to me as well. Yeah, half of its add revenue down since Elon bought the company for 44 billion last year. And yeah, they users declining. We'd updated our Twitter forecast before Threads came out and we had users going in the wrong direction before this was a thing. We estimate that Twitter has about 360 million users worldwide, but they're going to lose 330 million in the next two years. In the US specifically Twitter users will go from 56 million today down to 47 by 2025. That's down 16% over the next two years in terms of users.

How about if I push back and say, well, maybe this is version 1.0 and the reason that this app doesn't look the way folks want it to is because they were planning this app, but maybe they rushed the launch of it to counter, to get it out there the most opportune time when Twitter was really kind of down and out. And so they are going to make changes to it. They are going to add the chronological feed, they are going to add maybe a desktop app, hashtags, DMs, the ability to edit posts. When they do all of that, will V2 change your minds at all?

Max Willens:

I think that the issue there is, I mean although user experience flaws as Blake pointed out are absolutely drawbacks, especially for power users. But I think that the thing that really keeps Twitter, Twitter in a lot of respects is the presence of real newsmakers and real journalists. I know that sounds a little self-important coming from an analyst, but I really do think that that is the draw. It is a place where people can go to talk about news and politics.

And Adam Mosseri of Meta has openly said that they do not want that stuff on Threads. And I think that absent that, it just becomes then what are they hoping for it to be, like a text-based platform where people are funny? Because there's already, I would argue something like Tumblr or even just meme accounts on Instagram for that, and so it just becomes a platform in search of a niche. And so I think that absent that kind of differentiator, which will be very hard to kind of pry away from Twitter, no matter how many problems it has, it's just not going to be able to carve out any meaningful kind of reason to exist, I would say.

Blake Droesch:

Right. And you could look at Twitter in the big picture and yes, as a business model and user declining. But however it might be small, but there is a culture on Twitter and that can't necessarily just be replicated on another platform overnight. These things, a lot of the times tech companies, they try to foster community, but what really ends up developing and the way that people use the app is really in the hands of the users. So I think this idea that a clone

can be created and then that culture is either going to emerge quickly just because it has user growth or is going to migrate over from another app is still, it's a very farfetched idea.

Max Willens:

Also, for all the lip service being paid to apps that believe in community and fostering a certain kind of feeling of belonging, I would not put Meta high on the list of platforms that I would trust to build a culture and a community and a feeling of welcome and inclusion and non-hostility I guess.

Marcus Johnson:

Yeah. They're backed by Meta and so maybe we give them more of a longer leash because of that, because we know that Meta is going to throw a lot of effort at this and have the dollars to.-+.

But making it easy is important. Making it easy for folks to sign up to your thing to get access to your thing is important. Making it too easy could be smoke and mirrors like Apple+ was given to a lot of folks who bought an Apple device. And so the number of subscribers went up a lot, but our people using that service just because you gave it to them for free. It made it really easy, is quite a different conversation. We've seen others come and go as well, BeReal. Not to say that they've gone, but there was a lot of hype about BeReal, Clubhouse Social Audio, Lemon8 as well, maybe a potential TikTok replacement. 16 million worldwide users. I saw that number somewhere. And not heard anything really about it since April. So yeah, we'll see.

Ross Benes:

I just got to say, dominant companies have always struggled to just clone a service that is gone to a competitor. And what I'm referring to is in the '90s, Diesel and Razor Ramon left the WWF and went to WCW as Scott Hall and Kevin Nash and WWF tried to recapture their glory by having other guys that weren't those two fellows play a new version of Diesel and Razor Ramon. And even though WWF had the largest popularity, was the most known wrestling brand, the new guys just weren't received by the fans. They just couldn't duplicate what Scott Hall and Kevin Nash had done.

Marcus Johnson:

It was the best analogy this podcast has ever seen.

Max Willens:

The listeners can't see it, but all three of us are nodding, sagely and solemnly at this point that Ross is just making.

Marcus Johnson:

'90s wrestling, there's no better examples. If you do want more on this, Jasmine, who we spoke with on Monday with Debbie, there are two principal analysts covering social media. We talked about Threads on Monday with both of them. We talked about last week on the Weekly Listen as well, if you want to check out that episode. But Jasmine has just put out some new research and it is called Threads is Here, rather fittingly. It's already a Twitter rival. Now Meta must keep users engaged. You can head to [insiderintelligence.com](https://insiderintelligence.com) if you want to read the full report. We'll also put a link in the show notes. That's what we've got time for. The story of the week time, of course, for the game of the week. Today's game, what's the point?

I read out four stories. Max, Ross and Blake tell us what they think is the main takeaway of the story. Okay answers will get you one point, good answers get you two and answers that give you the same feeling as when you wake up in a panic, think you're late for work, but then you realize it's the weekends, you go back to sleep, answers that leave you with that feeling, get you three points. It doesn't really happen to anymore because less people have to go to work. Wake up, realize meeting's in 10 minutes, go to sleep for another five, then get up and log in with your camera off. That's how it is now. Each person gets 20 seconds to answer answer before they hear this. If you run long, technical foul, minus two points. Two techs gets you ejected from the game, whoever has the most points, wins. Let's play. We start with Ross for-

Ross Benes:

Have you ejected anyone before, Marcus?

Marcus Johnson:

I've come close. Susie, she's pushing it most episodes.

Ross Benes:

Okay. She's like Dennis Rodman?

Marcus Johnson:

I was going to say the Draymond Green. Yeah, she is, she's the Dennis Rodman of Weekly Listen. Round one, and we start with Ross and we're talking about whether TikTok Music will catch on. TikTok will try to challenge Spotify and Apple Music with its new music streaming service, TikTok Music. Initially introduced in Brazil and Indonesia, the subscription service will include the libraries of leading record companies. Insider Intelligence, senior director of briefings, Jeremy Goldman, notes that TikTok Music will let folks synchronize their existing TikTok accounts to listen to, download and share songs. It will also feature realtime lyrics, a Shazam like song identifier, collaborative playlists, and offline listening. Membership isn't free, but there is a one month free trial for new users, Jeremy notes. But Ross will TikTok Music catch on? What's the point?

Ross Benes:

I think it could catch on and be a fun service for people to use, but what I worry about is if they get into big markets like the US and the UK, what will the rights issues look like? If you really want to rival Spotify and Pandora, you're going to have to clear some bigger legal rights than I think TikTok's ever had to deal with when they're having user generated stuff in short snippets.

Marcus Johnson:

Blake.

Blake Droesch:

I think obviously digital music adoption is super high. Basically, I would say most people have their sort of preferred service right now and Spotify for example, has a very dedicated user base and there's community on there, there's exclusives. People like to share their year-end wraps. They do a lot of marketing and user engagement to keep people on the platform. So I think it's going to be hard for someone else to come in and really steal share of that market. But I think where their opportunity lies are with younger users who maybe start paying for a music app for the first time, off their parents' account or something, and TikTok could potentially snag those existing users. But in terms of stealing share from current users, it's going to be very difficult.

Marcus Johnson:

Max.

Max Willens:

I think that Ross highlights something that I think is very important here, which is just to point out the context that the record labels are currently furious with TikTok and trying to force them to pay a different royalty rate. Late last year, Billboard wrote a story about how little artists get paid for having their songs on TikTok. One artist who had their track featured in over 500,000 videos that were streamed billions of times made \$8,000. But because TikTok is the homepage for Gen Z and a lot of them are going to need to eventually become paying streaming music subscribers, I do think that this could carve out a small and modest user base.

Marcus Johnson:

Yeah. The piece by, I think it was Jeremy has a survey. So according to a June Morning Consult survey, streaming music was Gen Z's second favorite daily media activity, behind of course video watching for all adults, all of them 18 plus, music streaming was their fourth favorite activity, nearly fifth. So it was, yeah, quite a bit further behind.

Round two, we start with Blake. Women's World Cup engagement. It's game on for the National Women's Soccer League's World Cup marketing campaign writes Mollie Cahillane of Adweek, noting that two-time FIFA Women's World Cup champion and two-time Olympic gold medalist, Brandi Chastain, will narrate a new 32nd spot in the league's largest digital media by to date. The US women's soccer team will look to secure their third World Cup championship in a row. Now that the tournament has kicked off down in Australia and New Zealand, Fox and Telemundo have the US broadcast rights and worldwide, 2 billion people are expected to tune into the 2023 FIFA Women's World Cup. But Blake, the Women's World Cup engagement, what's the point?

Blake Drosch:

Let me think about what I want to say here for a second. Because I don't want to just talk about how boring I find soccer because I've spent enough time talking about that on this podcast.

Marcus Johnson:

Moving on. Max.

Max Willens:

I think that the-

Marcus Johnson:

No, no, no, no, no. Blake, go on. Go on, sorry.

Blake Droesch:

I think that having sort of a midsummer, at least for a US audience, this is sort of an interesting time of year for sports, right? Because you're kind of in the mid slog of the baseball season and all of the other major sports or in the off season. So I actually think that this is a good opportunity for advertisers in the US particularly because the US' team is so dominant. There's great reason for a larger audience to be engaged here and it's sort of a perfect timing. Unless you've got the Open in the PGA happening this week, I'm the only one who cares about that. And then baseball, I care about that too. But yeah, I think this is a good time and I like the campaign and there is good reason actually for advertisers to be paying attention to this, especially as the sport keeps growing.

Marcus Johnson:

Max?

Max Willens:

Yeah, I think that the points Blake made are right. And also, the thing that's leapt out at me is that I think there's a temptation to think of this league like so many other women's sports leagues in North America and just kind of imagine that in about 16 months they're going to go under. But there is actually real momentum behind the North American Women's Soccer League. In the spring when their season gets started, they had an average attendance for the opening weekend of 15,000 people, which is really nothing to sneeze at. That's not an NFL game, but it's definitely on par with what you might see from a not super popular basketball team or pretty strong attendance for a baseball game.

Marcus Johnson:

Knicks?

Max Willens:

How dare you. They sell out every game.

Marcus Johnson:

They do.

Blake Droesch:

That's true.

Max Willens:

It's because of tourists. I'm not stupid.

Marcus Johnson:

Exclusively. Yeah.

Max Willens:

But that's a real number. And if a healthy portion of the people that tune in to watch the Women's World Cup think, "Oh, let's try it out," then it'll have been money well spent, indeed.

Marcus Johnson:

Russ.

Ross Benes:

The point is that the US team is going to dominate.

Blake Droesch:

Okay.

Marcus Johnson:

They probably will. I said they're looking for their third consecutive. They've won four times, '91, '99, 2015, and 2019. Germany has won twice, they're in second place. Then Norway's won once, Japan's won once and no one else has won. Well played England. But in terms of viewership, yeah, the women's football interest is rapidly climbing. The article from Ms. Cahillane noting that 2023, the US National Women's Soccer League, NWSL, reached record attendance numbers halfway through the season, up nearly 50% over last year, and then also noting that Paramount, who have the exclusive broadcast rights to the league until the end of this season, the viewership on CBS up over 20% year on year and are up 50% on Paramount+.

At the halfway mark, how are we looking? It's Max just out in front with five, Blake and Ross on four a piece. We start with Max for round three, Burger King rebrands. A recent Wall Street Journal article notes that Burger King revealed its first total rebrand in over 20 years as it looks to win back sales from rivals like McDonald's and Wendy's. Burger King has had seven different logos, dating back to 1953. The most recent 2021 logo is a stripped down version that resembles earlier logos, red letters, white background, but on top and bottom. Some folks may still see the old one with the blue swoosh around it since it's up to franchisees who decide if and when they want to adopt the new change. But Max, Burger King rebranding, what's the point?

Max Willens:

Well, I think the main takeaway is that no one has any new ideas because as you point out. This is basically just them dusting off the logo that they had in the '70s.

Marcus Johnson:

Ross.

Ross Benes:

When I look at all the Burger King logos, the newest one would be the one I would choose to eat. It looks like the letters in between the buns would taste pretty good, so I would eat this logo.

Marcus Johnson:

Blake.

Blake Droesch:

As someone who's really given zero thought to Burger King, this article and just thinking about it for two minutes was really interesting that it dawned on me, just compared to other fast food companies, how bad their advertising has really always been. They don't have a good slogan and this logo is I guess kind of better, but their old logo really, really was just kind of in your face vibrant and it was very '90s, and I guess it needed some updating. But if you think about it, McDonald's, I'm loving it like, the jingle, you know. Arby's, we have the meats. Taco Bell, the sound of the ding. I feel like everybody can automatically think of the brand. And this



stuff comes to mind when I think of Burger King, it's kind of like crickets. You have those weird commercials with the king, but what's their slogan?

Marcus Johnson:

The have it your way. That's the one Max, right?

Blake Droesch:

Yeah, have it your way, right? Yeah, yeah.

Marcus Johnson:

But you can't have it the way that's on the board because we have very specific options from you to choose from. So you can't create your own burger, can you?

Max Willens:

No.

Marcus Johnson:

Okay. Why not? There we go. Should rebrand again. Sorry, have you finished your answer Blake? I just jumped in.

Blake Droesch:

No, no, I've made my peace.

Marcus Johnson:

You have. Yeah, you've been going on for too long, if anything. Well, yeah, what Ross said about wanting to eat the logo, it is interesting because the most recent logo was to communicate the quality of the food. So branding and design expert Debbie Millman who's in this Wall Street Journal video, noting that all of the colors in the identity correspond to something specific like the actual color of the bun, tomato. Also going on to say people typically see colors first, then shapes, then numbers and words as well. So like a lot of logos, a ton of thought put into this rebranding. The video also noting in 2020, Burger King dropped to third place behind Wendy's in US sales in terms of burger places, fast food places. McDonald's are a first by a lot.

We moved round four. Everyone's tied up on seven. Fantastic game being played. Double points, round four, of course. We start with Ross. Americans just don't shop on social media or do they? A new payment study found US consumers look a lot, but by little on social media. 43% of consumers may browse social media to find goods and services, but just 14% compared to 43, 14% ultimately purchase those goods and services. Inside Intelligence retail briefings analyst, Rachel Wolff points to why folks don't buy things on social media saying nearly four out of 10 shoppers don't buy because they don't trust the platforms with their personal data. Three out of 10 have concerns over seller authenticity and nearly three in 10 are worried about products quality. But Ross, Americans just don't shop on social media. What's the point?

Ross Benes:

Well, I feel like social media is often used for consideration rather than purchasing. Even if you aren't going through Instagram and clicking on something to add to your cart, I still think it has a lot of influence on what you buy, especially when you're researching a product.

Marcus Johnson:

Blake.

Blake Droesch:

Yeah. I think this is a situation where 14% isn't necessarily that small of a figure, when you consider the fact that social media buying is a very specific type of buying. It has to be a lot of things there. It's very, very rare that somebody sees something and then purchases it in the same action. Usually it takes several iterations. At that point, if the awareness is created on social media, you're way more likely to purchase the product elsewhere, not in the environment where you may not have a credit card already on file. So I think the fact that it is driving 14% of these purchases and then influencing a hell of a lot more is actually not something to scoff at.

Marcus Johnson:

Max.

Max Willens:

Yeah, I think that point that Blake made is exactly right, which is to just say that like 14% is still high enough that there is now basically an entire subculture of brands that exist only because they have found a cheap and efficient marketing and distribution method through social media. The number that really leapt out to me from that study was that about a third of the respondents said that they don't trust the legitimacy of the brands that are selling them goods and services on social media. And the only reason they feel that way is because I feel like most people have either direct or secondhand experience with getting duped into trying to buy something on Instagram or TikTok and having it just not show up. And that's only happening because there are so many brands that have gotten into the game of selling things through social media because 14%, while a small share of the whole still represents a gigantic real life number of consumers.

Marcus Johnson:

It does. And a staggering amount of dollars. So we have some numbers on this. \$70 billion will be spent buying things on social media in the US. That's going to cross the \$100 billion dollar mark by 2025. That 70 billion today is 16% of online sales. So it's not nothing. It's definitely not nothing. That's all we've got time for, for the game of the week. This week's winner is, it would be Blake because he's got the most points, but it's Ross because he said he would eat this logo. And that's just one of the best lies we've heard. And also, wrestling reference, didn't hate that. So Ross wins this week. Sorry Blake. It was technically you, but it's not anymore.

Blake Droesch:

But I had the most points.

Marcus Johnson:

No one cares. I was also worried that you were going to talk about golf.

Blake Droesch:

I was going to talk about golf.

Marcus Johnson:

Yeah, we can't have that's. So Ross-

Blake Droesch:

It's the British Open this week at Royal Liverpool.

Marcus Johnson:

No one care.

Ross Benes:

So for an award instead of a belt this time, can I get a food stuff in the shape of a particular fast food logo?

Marcus Johnson:

You want a Burger King coupon?

Ross Benes:

Burger King would work. The Sbarros logo, I would eat that. It would probably not be that good, but I would still go for it.

Marcus Johnson:

Maybe we can get you some kind of a gift card. Stuart, he runs the team, get on that please, if you wouldn't mind. He's probably going to make me do it.

Ross Benes:

I would go to a mall food court and gladly eat a Sbarro's slice that is the size of my head.

Marcus Johnson:

All right.

Max Willens:

This pizza and an ottoman.

Marcus Johnson:

All we've got time for, for today's game of the week. Congratulations to Ross, the true winner of the game of the week. Sorry, Blake. Had to do it. Time now for dinner party data. This is the part of the show where we tell you about the most interesting thing we've learned this week. Ross, you're up first.

Ross Benes:

Okay. So this data comes from Baseball-Reference, Spotrac and a Reddit post by user Jose Conesco milkshake. And it's about the New York Mets who are having a terrible year. I know Blake went to a Mets game earlier this week, so he may be interested in this data.

Marcus Johnson:

The only one. He's the only one.

Ross Benes:

Okay. So I know that they're the highest paid team in baseball, so you would expect them to not have a losing record. And they're projected right now to finish the season with about 80 wins. I think that's a little too high. Blake probably thinks that's too low. Take in mind that there's 162 baseball games in a regular season. So I went searching for who's had the worst finish for the highest paid team, and that is the 1985 Braves. They had just 66 wins. You can take that to mean that the Mets aren't the worst team ever to have the highest payroll. But consider that the Braves' payroll back then was only 15 million for the whole team. And if you adjust that for inflation, that would be \$43 million in real terms, which happens to be the salaries that Max Scherzer and Justin Verlander alone are receiving to pitch this year for the Mets, and pitch not very well.

So the Mets, by contrast are getting paid \$270 million and if you take in the luxury tax, it comes out to actually \$380 million. So the Mets will probably have a much better season than the 1985 Braves did. But given how much more money they've spent due to how baseball and professional sports has changed, they're still spending money pretty spectacularly terribly.

Marcus Johnson:

Ross, you've really taken this segment seriously for a change. Ross is normally like, "I don't have anything. I didn't even try to look."

Ross Benes:

Yeah, that's my typical response. But I had a few minutes alone on the couch yesterday with my phone and browsing on sports pages.

Marcus Johnson:

Oh, okay, thanks. I had nothing better to do.

Ross Benes:

Yeah, the baby was sleeping and I was like, I'm on this podcast tomorrow.

Marcus Johnson:

Okay, great. Nevermind.

Ross Benes:

The Mets aren't doing well. I'll see how I can put this in historical context.

Marcus Johnson:

Fantastic. Very good. Very good. Blake, you're up, mate.

Blake Droesch:

Well, since I don't really have any incentive to win the game of the week because Marcus will just hand it over to someone else even when I get the most points, I'm going to respond with a very elementary and not super explosive piece of dinner party data that I found in my inbox in maybe five seconds.

Marcus Johnson:

Jeez.

Blake Droesch:

This is from a study AiBuy that found that 20% of their US based respondents admit that they often find themselves purchasing items while using the bathroom. So marketers can take that information and do with it what they will. This is the type of energy that I'm going to be bringing to dinner party data as long as Marcus continues to take away what is rightfully mine.

Marcus Johnson:

Blake's in protest.

Ross Benes:

Marcus awards a belt, I believe, to the champion, or at least I've seen a belt in the office. And if you're going to have a wrestling belt, from time to time, it should go to a guy who actually lost the match or deserve to lose the match. I mean, if you've watched any pay-per-view with the special guest referee, you would know this happens.

Marcus Johnson:

Let's pretend that's what I was doing. Thanks Russ. Good save.

Blake Droesch:

It was all just a giant wrestling metaphor.

Marcus Johnson:

Exactly.

Ross Benes:

This is the only way I can relate to anything.

Marcus Johnson:

Playing 3D chess. All right, Max, you're up.

Max Willens:

I started doing research into my dinner party data and I realized that I'm just grabbing from the 2023 edition of the Luminate bi-annual look at music consumption, which is quickly becoming something that I kind of look forward to every year. So I feel like one of the things that everyone knows is that music has kind of been the canary in the coal mine for lots of digital media. It had its distribution pathways completely destroyed by the internet. It had the kind of mode of compensation, and those rules get completely rewritten by streaming. And it is now, I think, starting to prove something else that's really interesting and really important, which is that Americans' tastes and preference for almost nothing, but American content are finally starting to change. So there's been this kind of long held belief that American consumers are really not interested in cultural products that don't come from America.

There will be people that like stuff from Britain maybe or from Canada, but basically it has to be in English or it's just not going to sell. But increasingly, when you look at music consumption, that is starting to change. So this is again, data from Luminate. 69% of music

listeners in the US are listening to music that comes from outside the United States. 40% of them are listening to music in languages that are not English.

And you know could say, okay, that's people that heard Gangnam Style and put it on a playlist or heard Despacito on the radio and threw it on a playlist. But the share of time that people are spending with this music is growing a lot too. So this year, 8% or nearly 8% of the music consumed on Spotify was in Spanish. And this is a number that has gone up. In number of points, it's nearly doubled in the last two years. I don't think that we're going to get to a point where it exceeds English for many, many, many years. But just the rate at which this is climbing upwards I thought was really notable.

Marcus Johnson:

I didn't know Despacito was a song until two years after it came out.

Max Willens:

So when they say that they're listening to music that comes from outside the US, could that mean just people are listening to Drake?

Max Willens:

Yeah, Drake is actually... that's a really good point. So things like Drake, things like Adele, that stuff technically counts. But I think that the sort of 40% number is maybe the most important number, even if it's not the biggest one I threw out there. Because you're right, there have always been very big, very popular artists in America that are not American. But I think that you're starting to see meaningful kind of inroads made by non-English speaking non-American artists.

Marcus Johnson:

Of that share, I wonder how much Ed Sheeran that accounts for.

Max Willens:

He's another good one.

Marcus Johnson:

All right, folks, I got one for you real quick. It's about hybrid cars. I was in one recently, which is why I have these facts. So there's three for you. So hybrid cars, they combine the electric



motor with the conventional engine. And so three facts. One, where they come from. Well, the Porsche founder and engineer, Ferdinand Porsche, you might say Porsche, designed the first ever hybrid car called the system Lohner-Porsche Mixte, it's probably pronounced, unveiled as a prototype in 1900. So he invented the first one in 1900, prototype, 110 years before the launch of the Cayenne S hybrid in 2010, the first electrified Porsche of the modern era. The Mixte were received. Over 300 were produced, which is not a small number back then. But the demand for hybrids began to wane when Henry Ford started the first automobile assembly line a few years later in 1904. So that's where they came from.

Two, hybrids use 30% less fuel per mile than conventional vehicles according to British Automotive Services Company, the RAC. Finally, US sales of hybrid vehicles jumps nearly 80%, to 800,000 vehicles in 2021, accounting for 5% of US live vehicle sales. That's from analytics firm, Wards Intelligence. So I once rented a car and about seven hours into my drive, I looked down to see how much gas I had and it was still pretty close to full. My first thought was, I think the petrol gauge is broken. But it turns out I rented a hybrid and didn't realize until seven hours in. And they're brilliant.

Max Willens:

They are pretty sweet.

Marcus Johnson:

Saved so much money. Saved too much, if anything. That's all we've got time for, for today's episode. Thank you so much to my guests. Thank you to Ross.

Ross Benes:

Thanks Marcus.

Marcus Johnson:

This week's winner of the game of the week. Thank you to Blake.

Blake Droesch:

Thanks Marcus.

Marcus Johnson:

Thank you to Max.

Max Willens:

Always a pleasure.

Marcus Johnson:

And thank you to Scott, who is editing today's show for us. Victoria, who edits the show is out on vacation. James, who copy edits it, thank you to him and thank you of course, to Stuart who runs the team and will be getting Ross a Burger King voucher. Thanks to everyone for listening in. You can head to [BehindtheNumbers\\_podcast](#) on Instagram if you want to say hi to us there. We'll see you guys hopefully though on Monday for the Behind the Numbers Daily, an eMarketer podcast made possible by Verisk Marketing Solutions. Happy Weekend.