



YOUR FUTURE NEEDS YOU

Exploring US citizens' visions of the future

May 2024

discover.ai x

HUMAN
FLOURISHING LAB



What do US citizens
– particularly
younger citizens –
think the future
holds, and how might
this help shape a
more positive
collective destiny?

Foreword

As an existential psychologist who studies human motivation, I believe that cultivating a positive vision of the future is essential to building a better tomorrow. Unfortunately, existing research suggests that there is much work to be done. Numerous surveys indicate that Americans, particularly young adults, are increasingly pessimistic about what lies ahead. Such surveys are important because they provide a quantitative snapshot of current sentiments about the future. However, they don't capture the more naturalistic and nuanced discussions occurring in online spaces, where many people, especially younger generations, share their hopes, fears, and expectations for their personal lives, society, and the world at large.

To address this limitation, the Human Flourishing Lab partnered with discover.ai to conduct an in-depth analysis of online conversations about the future. By delving into the thoughts and feelings being shared across various digital platforms, we gain a more comprehensive understanding of the complex emotions, beliefs, and discussions that shape people's outlook on the future. These insights are crucial for those of us committed to encouraging a more positive and aspirational vision—one that inspires individuals to recognize and act upon their power to improve not only their own lives but also the lives of others. By tapping into the rich data provided by discover.ai, we can develop strategies and narratives that resonate with young Americans to promote a sense of agency and hope that will help advance human progress and flourishing.

Clay Routledge, PhD

Vice President of Research and Director of the Human Flourishing Lab,
Archbridge Institute



HUMAN
FLOURISHING LAB

discover.ai captures the mood and tone of current conversations online to bring us deep cultural insight

Our question

What can we learn from online conversations regarding the future envisioned by US citizens, particularly younger generations, for the nation and the global community? How might these insights be used to drive a meaningful and authentic vision of human progress?



We brought together rich and inspiring language from 137 online sources across 11 categories covering the USA

1. Social media search based on keywords linked to future / hope / optimism / fears / mental health across different societal spheres
2. Social media search based on keywords linked to future / hope / optimism / fears / mental health across different inter-personal spheres
3. Cultural journalism articles about Gen Z and their collective views/behaviours across different aspects of life
4. Websites and articles that talk about human progress, visions of the future, futurists/futurism, 'future of', dystopian/utopian visions etc., e.g., McKinsey, 2050.earth
5. Websites, articles, blogs and forums that discuss topics such as hope for the future, building hope, reasons to be optimistic
6. Articles, blogs, forums and websites that focus on mental health and the issues negatively impacting it
7. Blogs and online publications that cater to Gen Z and cover topics related to the future e.g., Medium, Vox, Vice
8. Online content that explores gender differences in how the world is perceived/experienced
9. Parenting blogs, forums and websites aimed at parents of Gen Alpha that talk about/address parenting fears and challenges linked to the external world and the world their children are inheriting
10. Mainstream psychology magazines online and websites with a psychology angle for consumers e.g., Psychology Today, Nature, Time magazine
11. Websites/articles/blogs/forums that feature/discuss the work of creatives and how their visions/storytelling shape perceptions of the future e.g., movies, songs, books

The idea: Without hope, how do we move forward?

To create and shape the positive future we want, we need to be able to imagine it first. And then take that vision to motivate us and drive us forward; to believe that the vision is possible. For without hope, what do we have?

With this idea in mind, we set out to understand what US citizens imagine the future to be. We've explored the rich and unfiltered world of online conversation to surface some of the key themes shaping these visions and the hopes and fears that accompany them.

“

I think I'll close the app for today because worrying about an uncertain future and collective hysteria takes a toll on my mental health
Social Media

USA

To achieve a change you must be able to envision a future state and then plot a path to arrive at that vision
Social Media

USA

...to work for my future in a world whose future is progressively getting bleaker and gives the impression of a world not worth living in
Social Media

USA

I took a class on art + activism once, and one of the first things we learned was the importance of imagining utopias, to summon up hope & a future to work towards we can't realize better worlds without imagining them first
Social Media

USA

If considering that the health and spirit of the people will determine the future culture and quality of life, my general feeling is the US is totally unsalvageable
Social Media

USA

”

The idea: The profound significance of visions



- In an era defined by rapid technological advancements, shifting geopolitical landscapes, and evolving social dynamics, the visions individuals hold for the future of their country and the world, carry profound significance. Understanding these visions provides invaluable insights into the aspirations, concerns, and priorities of communities and nations alike. In the United States, a diverse tapestry of perspectives shapes the collective imagination of what lies ahead, influencing societal discourse, policy agendas, and individual actions.
- What aspirations do people harbor for their nation's trajectory? How do they envision the global landscape unfolding in the coming years? What hopes and anxieties underpin their outlooks on the future? These questions serve as guiding beacons, illuminating the complexities of human thought and emotion as individuals grapple with the uncertainties and possibilities of tomorrow.
- Our exploration has uncovered some dominant themes shaping citizens' visions of the future; in particular, AI, climate change, and ongoing culture wars.
- Mental health is inextricably linked here, as concerns around these issues are negatively impacting mental health. Poor mental health in turn is likely limiting more positive visions, as well as a sense of hope, agency, and ability to pursue meaningful goals.

The findings of our study touch on three broad themes

- **SCI-FI FUTURES**

How a cultural fascination with dystopia is shaping visions of the future, alongside the unleashing of AI

- **CLIMATE CONCERN**

How extreme climate anxiety coexists with a belief in the power of collective action

- **SOCIETAL SHIFTS**

How healthcare, education, and the economy are envisioned to play out, alongside cultural conflicts and declining fertility rates

SCI-FI FUTURES

How a cultural fascination with dystopia is shaping visions of the future, alongside the unleashing of AI

US citizens' visions of the future include...



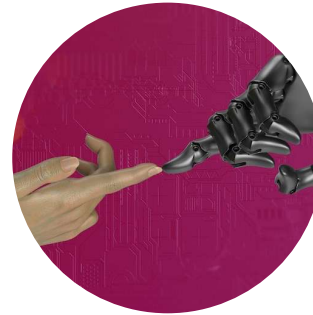
CREATING DYSTOPIA

A cultural fascination with the idea of 'dystopia' that influences the way we see and talk about the future. Dark humor pervades this space, but there is also a real sense of fear for an apocalyptic future that is taking shape.



AI DOOM

Visions of a digital future that are rooted in deep fear and uncertainty; at worst AI is seen as a real existential threat to humanity.



TECHNO-OPTIMISM

In contrast, flip-side visions highlight the excitement for the future of our digital era, where AI frees us, enables us, and pushes us towards 'limitless living'.

CLIMATE CONCERN

How extreme climate anxiety coexists with a belief in the power of collective action

US citizens' visions of the future include...



CLIMATE CHANGE DESPAIR

Climate anxiety is high; it's difficult for many citizens to imagine a bright future when believing we are on the brink of triggering a catastrophic and irreversible chain of events linked to climate change.



POSITIVE CLIMATE FUTURES

Without diminishing the seriousness of climate change, there also exists a seam of optimism around our planet's future - a belief that meaningful collective action is possible, and that hope is not yet lost.

SOCIETAL SHIFTS

How healthcare, education, and the economy are envisioned to play out, alongside cultural conflicts and declining fertility rates

US citizens' visions of the future include...



ADVANCEMENTS IN HEALTH

Positive visions of the future of health, with imagined healthcare innovations driven by tech, and a greater understanding of mental health in particular that will benefit the wellbeing of society more broadly.



ONGOING CULTURE WARS

Descriptions of a future still defined by culture wars; one of binary narratives, political polarization, toxicity, and arguments influencing decisions that will shape the future while simultaneously distracting from the true issues that are affecting humanity.



THE FIGHT FOR YOUNG MINDS

Strong and contrasting views exist on the future of education, rooted in what is being experienced now. Hope for shifts away from the traditional methods of institutional-based learning, or the hope that is inspired by passionate and open-minded educators, is contrasted with fears around liberal and conservative influence on teachings.



THE LOST AMERICAN DREAM?

How negative perceptions of the US economy and current financial hardships are tainting hopes for the future. What does this mean for the American Dream?



FEWER HUMANS

A future where fewer children are being born through personal choice is imagined and discussed; symptomatic in part of low expectations for the future of society and humanity.

SCI-FI FUTURES

How a cultural fascination with dystopia is shaping visions of the future,
alongside the unleashing of AI



Image of Fallout by Amazon

US citizens' visions of the future include...

CREATING DYSTOPIA

A cultural fascination with the idea of 'dystopia' that influences the way we see and talk about the future. Dark humor pervades this space, but there is also a real sense of fear for an apocalyptic future that is taking shape.



Context

- Merriam-Webster's definition of dystopia: "an imagined world or society in which people lead wretched, dehumanized, fearful lives."
- Pop culture has long influenced our darker visions of the future; whether fictional portrayals of apocalyptic events on Earth or dystopian-themed movies, TV series, and books, audience appetite is such that they have become genres in their own right.
- Dystopian content is often seen as a 'safe' way to explore or experience our big fears.
- Conversation observed here draws and plays on these ideas in different ways – from dark humor musings around cyberpunk aesthetics through to 'peak fear' visions of our collective future, based on catastrophic events happening and societal collapse.
- It seems these fictional portrayals both influence visions of the future, as well as provide a short-cut way to articulate current anxiety and uncertainty through frequent references to a dystopic future.

Observed Language

- Dystopia / dystopian future / cyberpunk / Squid Games / Mad Max / sci-fi / worst case scenarios / dystopian nightmare
- Prophesized our decline / beyond repair / mental health / fear / distrust
- Capitalism / technology

Illustrative Cultural Manifestations

- Lisa Ko's new novel, Memory Piece, imagines a future dystopian New York.
- Netflix's 'Dystopian Futures' category.





Image of Fallout by Amazon

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A cultural fascination with the idea of 'dystopia' that influences the way we see and talk about the future. Dark humor pervades this space, but there is also a real sense of fear for an apocalyptic future that is taking shape.

UNSETTLING FASCINATION WITH DYSTOPIA

Our lives have an unsettling fascination with Dystopia, and future critics will remark that our artists prophesized our decline in their art..
Social Media
 USA

MY NEW PET DYSTOPIAN FUTURE

My new pet dystopian future is one where every system in society is 1000x more broken but godlike technology is harnessed to compensate and provide a standard of living almost as good as someone in 2016 might have had
Social Media
 USA

CYBERPUNK WITHOUT THE DYSTOPIA

I often describe what I want for the future as "Cyberpunk without the dystopia" as shorthand for the sheer amount of bodily customization available but I get the feeling Musk is not like that Imao
Social Media
 USA

SQUID GAMES LIKE A DYSTOPIA FUTURE

The Squid Games reminds me of a dystopia future where rich evil sadistic bored humans make bets on which of their favorite pet human will survive their inhuman games of blood
Social Media
 USA

THE DYSTOPIAN FUTURE

The dystopian future doesn't look that bright for our mental health If many people have it bad now, I can't imagine how it's gonna be going forward
Social Media
 USA

IDK IF FUTURE IS BEYOND REPAIR

I promise our society/future is beyond f***** and idk if it's even beyond repair at this point... Every day that goes by we stray further and further from logic/reality to an emotionally driven dystopia completely driven by feelings
Social Media
 USA

THE CYBERPUNK DYSTOPIA WE'RE HEADING TO...

There's an age where we all lose hope in technology and its relation to capitalism but i think its good to still have a bit of hope that the cyberpunk dystopia we're heading to will at least have robot girls, leather jackets with LEDs and sunglasses during the night
Social Media
 USA

HATE HOW DYSTOPIAN SCI-FI INSTILLS FEAR

i love sci-fi but i hate how dystopian sci-fi instills in us fear of the future and distrust of technology
Social Media
 USA

LIFE WILL BE LIKE A MAD MAX DYSTOPIAN NIGHTMARE

The trouble is mental health support isn't going to help people face the reality that their life is going to be something out of a Mad Max dystopian nightmare come 2050 and I'm being generous
Social Media
 USA

FUTURISTIC MOVIES DYSTOPIAN & FOREBODING

Literally EVERY futuristic movie or book I recall dealing the topic of AI-style technology is dystopian and foreboding, and humanity has a 100% track record of misusing and perverting new technology, so what do these "genius" pioneers think will happen
Social Media
 USA



Photo by [julien tromeur](#) on [Unsplash](#)

US citizens' visions of the future include...

AI DOOM

Visions of a digital future that are rooted in deep fear and uncertainty; at worst AI is seen as a real existential threat to humanity.



Context

- Conversation here highlights citizens' fundamental need for control, in a space where control appears to be lacking, and a belief that tech is being prized over all else.
- The rapid rise and dominance of AI, and GenAI in particular, is causing major concern. Its long-term impact is unknown; even key figures in the tech industry have expressed their fears for the potential of 'frontier AI' to harm humanity.
- GenAI's impact on creativity and the arts is also a dominant thread.
- A pervasive fear that AI is untamed and uncontrollable and will be harnessed for bad intent, leading to the destruction of humanity.
- There is the suggestion that imagining and focusing on harmful AI could drive self-fulfilling manifestations.

Observed Language

- Stress / furious / scared / uncertain / alarmism / fear / panic
- Unknown impact / radical uncertainty / dystopian future / existential risk / enslaved
- AI-altered / manipulative / instant gratification / AI disinformation / mind-control
- GenAI / AI art / transhumanism

Illustrative Cultural Manifestations

- The signing of the The Bletchley Declaration signed by countries attending the AI Safety Summit, 1-2 November 2023, which states, "There is potential for serious, even catastrophic, harm, either deliberate or unintentional, stemming from the most significant capabilities of these AI models."





Photo by julien fremeur on Unsplash

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TRANSHUMANISM FUTURE - I WANT A REFUND

The transhumanism AI altered manipulative progressive future is not what I wanted and I want a refund
Social Media
USA

A FUTURE VISION DEFICIT

We have an AI capabilities overhang, and a future vision deficit Thus, we face "pretty radical uncertainty" Thanks for @user for reaching out and inviting me to contribute to this excellent article on the sudden rise and unknown impact of AI
Social Media
USA

NEGATIVE AI NARRATIVES TO BECOME SELF-FULFILLING?

I wonder if this narrative we as humans being envision for our future—that of fear and uncertainty of AI and the pending doom and destruction of humanity—isn't a self-fulfilling manifestation as we continue to develop AI with this in mind
Social Media
USA

AI DISINFORMATION

I envision a future where people will pay NOT to deal with AI disinformation and endless loop workflows
Social Media
USA

AI DOING ALL THE FUN CREATIVE STUFF

ai doing all the fun art and writing stuff while people do the hard work and coding bit for games isnt exactly what i had envisioned for the future of technology.
Social Media
USA

PLACE NATURE AND SELF OVER TECH

I don't want to add anything here because it just contributes to more dystopia, but let it be known that I do not see a bright future for humanity if we can't manage to place Nature and Self over Technology and Ego this century
Social Media
USA

HALF OF ME IS REALLY SCARED

A part of me loves building and working on new technology, while the other half is that of a Luddite who is really scared of the dystopian future that all this new technology is leading us towards
Social Media
USA

CLEAR EXISTENTIAL RISK

I'm frankly tired of pro-AI accelerationists imposing clear existential risks on humanity just in vague hopes that AI can somehow be tamed, controlled, & enslaved to deliver some speculative, magical utopia
Social Media
USA

AI NEWS HAS ME FEELING VERY UNCERTAIN ABOUT THE FUTURE

reading AI news has me feeling very uncertain about the future not really bought into apocalyptic predictions and even less bought into utopian/messianic ones, atm but at a minimum it seems like we're on the cusp of another internet-tier transformation of society
Social Media
USA

ELON MUSK SAYS IT HAS POTENTIAL TO DESTROY HUMAN CIVILIZATION

I would bet that every single one of these people, who cry about climate change and our "obligation to future generations" have ChatGPT on their phones, and don't care that Elon Musk just said it has the potential to destroy all of human civilization
Social Media
USA

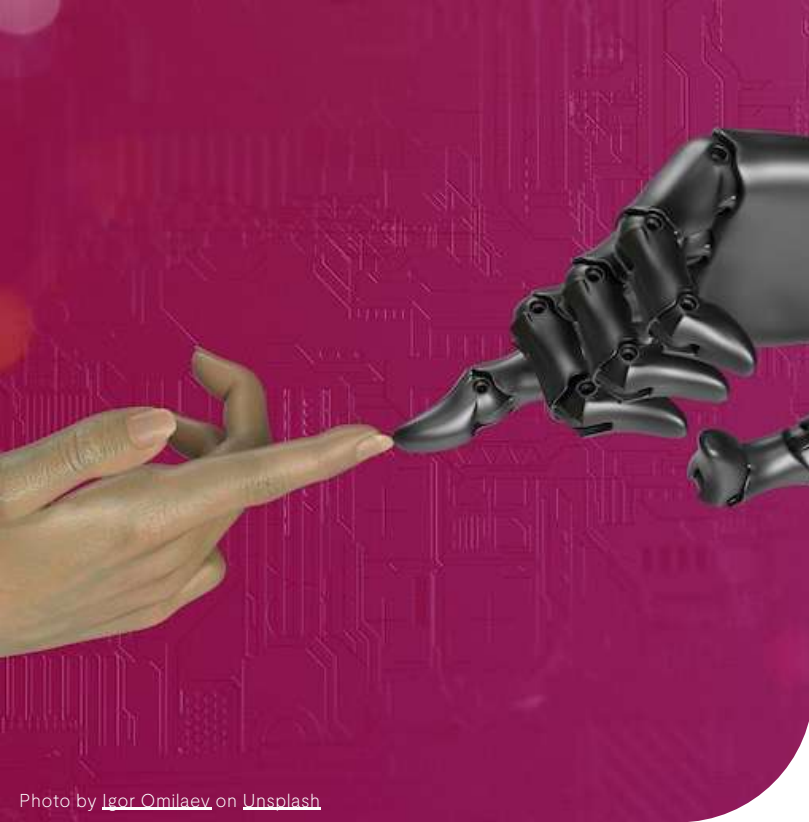


Photo by [Igor Omilayev](#) on [Unsplash](#)

US citizens' visions of the future include...

TECHNO-OPTIMISM

'In contrast, flip-side visions highlight the excitement for the future of our digital era, where AI frees us, enables us, and pushes us towards 'limitless living'.



Context

- This theme represents positive visions of a future shaped by developments in technology, in particular, AI.
- Conversations here speak to AI and technology working in harmony with humans and the potential for societal gain; helping to create a society of 'abundance', where hardship and barriers are diminished and greater equality is possible.
- AI is described as a tool that will enable and empower us by taking on the mundane work, freeing humans up for more higher level, meaningful activity.
- Predictions that technology integrating seamlessly with the human body via neurotechnology will be commonplace.
- It's a space that pushes back on perceived fearmongering and pessimism towards developments in tech and AI.

Observed Language

- Abundance / freedom / enabling / empower
- Bold / ambitious / revolution / limitless progress / tech optimist
- AI / crypto / Neuralink / AI revolution
- Fearmongering / negativity

Illustrative Cultural Manifestations

- Elon Musk's [Neuralink](#): the neurotechnology company aims to develop implantable brain-computer interfaces that would allow direct communication between the human brain and external devices. Its first clinical trial is open for recruitment.





Photo by Igor Omilayev on Unsplash

US citizens' visions of the future include...

TECHNO-OPTIMISM

'In contrast, flip-side visions highlight the excitement for the future of our digital era, where AI frees us, enables us, and pushes us towards 'limitless living'.

AI THAT AIDS WITHOUT OVERPOWERING

Their voice is vital in crafting a world where AI aids without overpowering, ensuring a balanced, progressive future under my benevolent guidance....

Social Media

USA

LOSING BY BEING A PESSIMIST ABOUT TECH

Thinking about a cyberpunk prequel where every leftist I know loses by being a pessimist about technology and failing to create their own exciting visions for the future to rival what they despise

Social Media

USA

AI & CRYPTO WORKING TO EMPOWER

In the near future, I envision a world where #AI and #crypto work together seamlessly to empower individuals and communities, eliminate barriers to financial access, and promote social and economic equality

Social Media

USA

ON THE PATH TO LIMITLESS LIVING

The purpose of technology is to automate mundane work Leaving human beings to pursue more creative endeavors I envision a future where more and more people will be on the path of Limitless Living It is in our nature to do so

Social Media

USA

AI IS OUR FUTURE

My you really triggered the reactionaries with this one, it's a shame they can't move on and accept the long march of progress where AI is our future

Social Media

USA

TECH USED TO AVOID SOCIAL HARDSHIP

Now I'm envisioning a future where technology is used to avoid so much social hardship I end up an old man complaining about how soft kids are these days

Social Media

USA

PROPELS LIMITLESS PROGRESS

Embracing @user "Techno-Optimist Manifesto", I envision a future where technology propels limitless progress, abundance, and human potential

Social Media

USA

ALL THE FEARMONGERING

I feel like there aren't as many positive outlooks on the future of #AI and humanity compared to all the fearmongering

Social Media

USA

A FUTURE OF PLENTY

I'm seeing this AI stuff and envisioning a future of plenty, how do you see all this doom and hyperinflation

Social Media

USA

TECH OPTMIST

I am a "Tech Optimist", in the sense that I am optimistic about a future where technology and AI enables humans to pursue meaningful things, to spend more quality time with their loved ones, and to have all of their needs met

Social Media

USA

CLIMATE CONCERN

How extreme climate anxiety coexists with a belief in the power of collective action



Photo by Marcus Kauffman on Unsplash

US citizens' visions of the future include...

CLIMATE CHANGE DESPAIR

Climate anxiety is high; it's difficult for many citizens to imagine a bright future when believing we are on the brink of triggering a catastrophic and irreversible chain of events linked to climate change.



Context

- The impact of climate change is being seen and experienced now; it's tangible and real and fuelling deep anxiety.
- A collective fear that time is rapidly running out: witnessing record breaking temperature 'streaks' in contrast to the goals of the 2015 Paris Agreement to limit global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius versus preindustrial times, and the moving of the minute hand closer to midnight on the metaphorical Doomsday Clock.
- Language of impending doom and anxiety reflects the rise of 'climate anxiety' – a chronic fear of environmental doom. Yale reports that circa 10% of Americans experience climate change anxiety.
- Visions describe a future suffering from societal collapse, hunger, and conflict over scarcity of resources.

Language Cues

- Climate change / crops fail / wars over resource / societal collapse
- Climate anxiety / eco-anxiety / existential anxiety / I can't deal with / crippling fear
- Impending doom / fearful of the future / very worried
- Conspiracy theories

Illustrative Cultural Manifestations

- 90 seconds to midnight: The Doomsday Clock from the Bulletin of Atomic Scientists now considers the "disruptions from climate change in its hand-setting deliberations".





Photo by Marcus Kauffman on Unsplash

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Climate anxiety is high; it's difficult for many citizens to imagine a bright future when believing we are on the brink of triggering a catastrophic and irreversible chain of events linked to climate change.

DIFFICULT TO ENVISION THE FUTURE GETTING BETTER

I also think a lot more younger folks are feeling the anxiety of climate change so envisioning the future getting better is really difficult
Social Media

USA

CLIMATE ANXIETY

Man I've heard that lots of school kids suffer from climate anxiety these days Their vision of the future is probably an arid burning dystopia lol If kids are anxious about the future then parents and teachers have failed them I think
Social Media

USA

FUTURE SHAPED BY WARS OVER RESOURCE

My guess is the future will be shaped by climate change and wars over resource dominance that will wipe out 80% of the worlds population or thereabouts
Social Media

USA

NOT HAVING KIDS TO PREVENT FUTURE SUFFERING

My sense of doom is part of what led me to not have kids, which is the biggest individual-level contribution most folks can make toward slowing climate change (and preventing future suffering, of humans and other species)
Social Media

USA

TRIGGERS EXISTENTIAL ANXIETY

I was also thinking climate change but for me the reason is more that it just triggers some sort of existential anxiety because of the rapidly approaching and imminent doom that we are facing, that i just cannot deal with
Social Media

USA

SENSE OF IMPENDING DOOM

I've got a constant sense of impending doom and suffer from extreme climate change anxiety
Social Media

USA

WOULD BE MORE OPTIMISTIC IF I DIDN'T BELIEVE IN CLIMATE CHANGE

I would be 50% more cheery and optimistic about the future if I didn't believe in human caused climate change
Social Media

USA

IMMINENT SOCIETAL COLLAPSE

you're telling me all i had to do was keep calm and not let my crippling fears of an imminent societal collapse due to climate change affect my mental state
Social Media

USA

CONSPIRACY THEORIES REDUCE MY HOPE

it is pretty wild to see folks believe in conspiracy theories oppose to very real climate change...makes me not hopeful that everyday folk will be able to rise to the challenge, where specific lifestyle changes are needed to auto-correct it
Social Media

USA

VERY WORRIED ABOUT MY KIDS' FUTURE

I have kids and am very worried about their future living in an increasingly hostile planet with runaway climate change and social/political chaos that will ensue
Social Media

USA



Photo by [Karsten Würth](#) on [Unsplash](#)

US citizens' visions of the future include...

POSITIVE CLIMATE FUTURES

Without diminishing the seriousness of climate change, there also exists a seam of optimism around our planet's future – a belief that meaningful collective action is possible, and that hope is not yet lost.

Context

- Despite the rise of climate anxiety, human hope and resilience exists in the face of climate change.
- Here, the belief is expressed that hope is needed to believe that change is possible in order to galvanize collective action.
- A genuine belief that we can come together, to overcome the fear and guilt to see what is possible; a belief in humanity's ability to rise to the challenge through collaboration, innovation, and determination.

Observed Language

- Optimistic / imagine positive climate futures / up to the challenge / coming together / innovation and creativity / stay hopeful
- Green energy / abundant clean energy / regenerative agriculture

Illustrative Cultural Manifestations

- Kiss the Ground on Netflix is “an inspiring and groundbreaking film that reveals the first viable solution to our climate crisis.”
- NRDC (the Natural Resources Defense Council) helps Hollywood take on the climate crisis with their campaign to [Rewrite the Future](#). “We need a new climate narrative. A narrative that will help us face reality, confront our fear and grief, imagine possible futures, and inspire us to action. We need Hollywood to help us rewrite the future.”



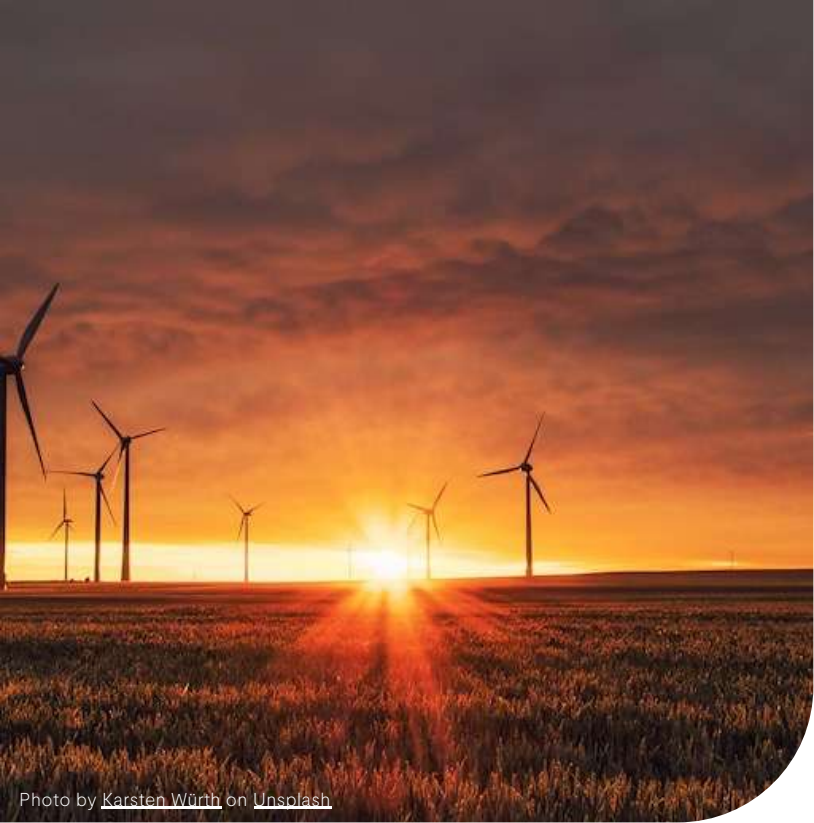


Photo by [Karsten Würth](#) on [Unsplash](#)

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GREEN ENERGY

Listening to the Volts episodes about each energy source makes me hopeful that the future of green energy will be competition between different energy sources driving innovation and matching energy sources to different regions

Social Media

USA

MORE OPTIMISTIC THAN EVER

While our fight against climate change is far from over, I'm more optimistic than ever that by working together, we can make a net-zero future of abundant, affordable, and clean energy a reality to people everywhere

Social Media

USA

COUNTRIES COMING TOGETHER

Wow, seeing so many countries coming together to fight climate change and promote renewable energy has me feeling hopeful for our planet's future

Social Media

USA

KISS THE GROUND CHANGED MY OUTLOOK

taking this opportunity to once again recommend my fav documentary Kiss the Ground (can be found on netflix) informative AND entertaining and actually super important, it changed my entire outlook on the future of climate change (in a hopeful way)

Social Media

USA

IMAGINE POSITIVE CLIMATE FUTURES

This book is the culmination of a two-year, global project to kindle our collective ability to imagine positive climate futures

Source

USA

SUPPORTING POLITICIAN'S VISION FOR A CLEANER ENVIRONMENT

I am hopeful for my future because of leaders like @user who are fighting tooth and nail so her grandchild and future generations can have a future without fear of the consequences of climate change

Social Media

USA

TRANSFER OF POWER TO YOUNGER GENERATIONS

I'm also very hopeful about the future of the US and much of the rest of the world, even as climate change worsens, due to the impending transfer of wealth and power away from generations less lead-poisoned

Social Media

USA

STAY HOPEFUL & LOOK FOR OPPORTUNITIES

Climate change is perhaps the biggest, gnarliest challenge of our time, but I continue to have hope that we are up to the challenge, especially if we all stay hopeful and look for opportunities to take action, whether big or small, in our own lives

Social Media

USA

SPIRIT IN JOINING TOGETHER

I see this spirit in joining together and it makes me hopeful that together we could stop climate change before it destroys us all

Social Media

USA

HOPEFUL THAT PEOPLE UNDERSTAND THE SEVERITY

I am hopeful that the majority of people will understand how severe the implications of climate change will be

Social Media

USA

SOCIETAL SHIFTS

How healthcare, education, and the economy are envisioned to play out, alongside cultural conflicts and declining fertility rates



Photo by Drew Hays on Unsplash

US citizens' visions of the future include...

ADVANCEMENTS IN HEALTH

Positive visions of the future of health, with imagined healthcare innovations driven by tech, and a greater understanding of mental health in particular that will benefit the wellbeing of society more broadly.



Context

- The potential for AI and emerging technologies to revolutionize healthcare and enhance the health of society is discussed here.
- Mental health is a dominant theme; there is hope that advancements in tech/AI coupled with the greater understanding of mental health that we have now will lead to big changes in the future.
- A belief that we will live longer due to better personal health.
- A hope for a more democratized health system, accessible to all.

Observed Language

- Mental health / healthier / improving greatly / age reversal / longer lives / health as currency
- AI / technology / powerful ally
- Advancements / innovations / revolutionizes / transforming / democratized / new era / science unlocks / tackle broken systems

Illustrative Cultural Manifestations

- AI therapists such as Woebot.
- Bloomer Tech's smart bra (in development), is designed to detect heart disease in women. "Informs users about their electrocardiograms, pulse rates, respiratory rates, heart rhythms and more."





Photo by Draw Hays on Unsplash

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Positive visions of the future of health, with imagined healthcare innovations driven by tech, and a greater understanding of mental health in particular that will benefit the wellbeing of society more broadly.

AI PAVING THE WAY FOR A HEALTHIER WORLD

It's like music to my ears, envisioning a future where AI revolutionizes the way we approach healthcare, paving the way for a healthier world
Social Media
USA

NEW WAYS OF CONNECTING WITH NATURE

As an eternal optimist, I envision a future where we have reconnected with nature, in ways far different from the past and health becomes something of a currency
Social Media
USA


TECH AS A MENTAL HEALTH ALLY

In this exploration, I envision a future where technology becomes a powerful ally, transforming the landscape of mental health
Social Media
USA

WE CAN TACKLE BROKEN SYSTEMS

"The system has failed young Georgians like me, creating avoidable public health crises around reproductive care, health coverage, & gun violence... But together, we can tackle broken systems & build a future where Georgia's youth can feel safe & thrive."
Social Media
USA

HEALTH TO IMPROVE GREATLY

 I am optimistic on human progress and our knowledge, health, and standard of living improving greatly
Social Media
USA

GLOBAL HEATH DEMOCRATIZED

I envision a future of global health that is democratized and decolonized, without the pervasive influence of corporations and billionaires.
Source
USA

GREATER UNDERSTANDING OF MENTAL HEALTH

This is a lot more optimistic than I'm comfortable getting but I really think there's a real chance that future generations of kids raised with modern understandings of mental health and therapy and shit combined with AI could really change the world in unfathomable ways
Social Media
USA

SCIENCE UNLOCKING LONGEVITY & HEALTH

As we progress into a future where science unlocks keys to living longer and healthier lives, we also need to be wary of the fears and misunderstandings many people have regarding the technology behind these advances
Source
USA

NEW ERA OF HEALTHCARE INNOVATION

It's inspiring to witness how emerging technologies are shaping the future of #healthcare, and I'm eagerly following the progress of Pulse Network as it paves the way for a new era of healthcare innovation
Social Media
USA

POSITIVE ABOUT FUTURE OF MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT

I do believe as we turn the corner and learn more about the nervous system we will develop better modalities so I am positive about the future of mental health support
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USA



Photo by [Clem Onojeghwo](#) on [Unsplash](#)

US citizens' visions of the future include...

ONGOING CULTURE WARS

Descriptions of a future still defined by culture wars; one of binary narratives, political polarization, toxicity, and arguments influencing decisions that will shape the future while simultaneously distracting from the true issues that are affecting humanity.



Context

- Shaped heavily by partisan politics and partisan bias in mainstream media.
- Culture wars also show up in the so-called 'generational divide'.
- Clashes play out around social issues, political ideologies, technology usage, and cultural norms; pro-Trump, anti-Trump, gun laws, and reproductive health, for example.
- Extremes of opinion appear to dominate, making the most amount of noise.
- Growing cultural view that younger males and females are diverging in their ideological views – females generally becoming more progressive/liberal, versus males who appear to be skewing more conservative.
- Culture wars are creating fatigue and pessimism about the future; polarization is seen as a growing and endemic problem.

Observed Language

- Cess pool of culture wars / petty / toxic / sides / villainizing / divisive narratives / short sighted / extremes
- MSM / conservative / domestic elite
- Future culture wars / constant fight / no empathy

Illustrative Cultural Manifestations

- Civil War movie released April 2024, with its underlying theme of polarization.





Photo by [Clem Onojeghwo](#) on [Unsplash](#)

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OLD PEOPLE VOTING FOR WEIRD STUFF

I'm optimistic about a future where an AI makes me miserable instead of millions of old people voting for weird stuff

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MORE HOPEFUL IF POLITICIANS WOULD WORK TOGETHER INSTEAD OF FIGHT

I would be more hopeful for our future if you and the other conservative types would stop campaigning, work together instead of in a constant fight and be aware that social programs are important, as is climate change initiatives

Social Media

USA

PETTY CULTURE WAR NONSENSE DISTRACTS FROM BEING A VISIONARY

I still respect Elon for certain projects but his quality of image has massively dropped since he called that dude a p*** & decided to involve himself in petty culture war nonsense instead of actually being the visionary looking to connect present to future

Social Media

USA

SHORTSIGHTED FOCUS ON SILLY CULTURE WARS

It seems reasonable that my home state will have trouble attracting top talent in the medical field and other specialized professions in the future by being shortsighted and focusing on silly culture wars

Social Media

USA

OUR FUTURE CULTURE WARS

I think a lot of our future culture wars will revolve not around if a thing is good or not, they'll hinge on if the thing happening really is how its described

Social Media

USA

VILLAINIZING GENERATIONS

Not trying to start a culture war but much of online gen z culture seems to be about gen z exceptionalism & villainizing all other generations

Social Media

USA

CULTURE WAR DECISIONS THAT WILL IMPACT US INTO THE FUTURE

While I want to smack him upside his head over his latest moves, DeSantis *gets it* regarding how the culture wars tie into business and government decisions on fiscal matters that will impact us far into the future

Social Media

USA

HARD TO SEE BEYOND THE DAY-TO-DAY CULTURE WARS

I think and hope that all this insanity is just a re-calibration of the pendulum, that it's a rebalancing, but when you live in the day to day, it's hard to see beyond the culture wars between extremes

Social Media

USA

IF BEING WOKE MEANS...

If being woke means being in love with our common humanity and hopeful that the future US provides for the humane treatment, well-being, education and respect for all of us without discrimination and bigotry getting in the way - I too am woke

Social Media

USA

FEARFUL FOR GEN A

I am fearful for Gen α though, I've heard so many horror stories of middle schoolers falling for far-right YouTubers like Andrew Tate and sh**

Social Media

USA



Photo by Taylor Flowe on Unsplash



US citizens' visions of the future include...

THE FIGHT FOR YOUNG MINDS

Strong and contrasting views exist on the future of education, rooted in what is being experienced now. Hoped-for shifts away from the traditional methods of institutional-based learning, or the hope that is inspired by passionate and open-minded educators, is contrasted with fears around liberal and conservative influence on teachings.

Context

- Political ideologies shape the content of K-12 curriculum, influencing which subjects are emphasized, how historical events are portrayed, and which perspectives are included or omitted. Debates over curriculum content are contentious, with different ideological factions advocating for their preferred narratives and interpretations to be reflected in textbooks and classroom materials.
- According to [The Washington Post](#), 110 laws have been enacted since 2017 across dozens of states impacting what is taught in relation to race and gender identity in K-12 schools and colleges – some expansive, others restrictive.
- Much concern expressed around what is being taught and how it is being driven by political ideology – whether liberal or conservative – and how this will shape the future of education and society more broadly.
- Despite this, there is some positivity around the dedication and passion of educators and the potential for an evolved education system in time.

Observed Language

- Passion / heart/ open-minded / thrive / taught equally / healthier education system
- Book banning / failing education system / brainwashed by the school system
- Wary & worried / profoundly troubling

Illustrative Cultural Manifestations

- Book bans in schools and public libraries, and the campaigns against bans such as Unite Against Book Bans.





Photo by Taylor Flowe on Unsplash

US citizens' visions of the future include...

THE FIGHT FOR YOUNG MINDS

Strong and contrasting views exist on the future of education, rooted in what is being experienced now. Hoped for shifts away from the traditional methods of institutional-based learning, or the hope that is inspired by passionate and open-minded educators, is contrasted with fears around liberal and conservative influence on teachings.

HEART & WORK POURING INTO IMPROVING SYSTEMS

The passion and excitement is contagious, and it fills me with hope for the future of education knowing all of the heart and work people are pouring into improving systems and practices for leaders, teachers, and students

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WE CAN CREATE A HEALTHIER EDUCATION SYSTEM

Makes me hopeful for our future generations that if we are open minded & keep learning we can create a healthier education system all children can thrive in

Social Media
USA

GIVE WAY TO A SKILL-BASED EDUCATION

I envision a future where traditional institutional education gives way to skill-based education, creating a seamless connection between education and the job market

Social Media
USA

ALL HUMANS ARE TAUGHT EQUALLY

I believe if humans are to evolve, our education paradigm needs to change - I envision a future when all humans are taught equally and when—finally—some of our most valuable (yet orphaned) assets are utilized for the advancement of human-kind, instead left begging for truth

Social Media
USA

A FUTURE FOR OUR COMMUNITY

i saw the roots of education in the air yesterday -- quite literally with it, i envisioned a future for our community after some fascinating conversations by the brilliant minds @user i couldn't be more excited for the future

Social Media
USA

BOOKBANNING THE OPPOSITE OF WHAT OUR FUTURE CHILDREN NEED

As a retired public school English teacher, I promise you bookbanning, whitewashing our history, and removing Diversity, equality, and Inclusion from Education is the Absolute opposite of what our children of the future need

Social Media
USA

POTENTIAL CONSEQUENCES PROFOUNDLY TROUBLING

I've never been a parent, but the potential consequences of what's going on in education at the moment are profoundly troubling for the future of society and civilization

Social Media
USA

BRAINWASHED BY THE SCHOOL SYSTEM

I'd sell everything I own to make sure my kids have a great education & not be brainwashed by the school system or the liberals we need to take back our schools and our kids, they're not preparing our kids for a better future with an education they're teaching them to be activist

Social Media
USA

WARY & WORRIED

The state of academia right now is just terrible, things like these truly make me so wary and worried for the future progress of education 🙄

Social Media
USA

THE FEAR I HAVE

The fear I have for my future children's ability to be healthy and have bodily autonomy while also receiving the best possible education despite their brown skin is palpable today

Social Media
USA



Photo by Elina Emurlaeva on Unsplash



US citizens' visions of the future include...

THE LOST AMERICAN DREAM?

How negative perceptions of the US economy and current financial hardships are tainting hopes for the future. What does this mean for the American Dream?

Context

- An emotionally charged conversation around the economy, job market, and personal finances.
- Significant anger and expressions of hopelessness as people struggle with their financial situation and do not foresee a positive financial future for themselves or society.
- Politics, culture wars, and intergenerational conflict at play here, too.
- Anti-capitalist sentiment contrasted by push-back on socialist stance.
- Commentary around the need to teach younger generations financial literacy around debt and the need for motivation to support the economy.

Observed Language

- Economy / American Dream / imagine a future
- Capitalist dystopia / billionaires / unmotivated / debt

Illustrative Cultural Manifestations

- Idea of 'vibecession' – the difference between positive economic data and consumers' more negative sentiment of the economy.





Photo by Elina Emurlaeva on Unsplash

US citizens' visions of the future include...

THE LOST AMERICAN DREAM?

How negative perceptions of the US economy, and current financial hardships are tainting hopes for the future. What does this mean for the American Dream?

CAN'T FIND A JOB, NO HOPE FOR HUMANITY

My grandparents who survived a labor camp on potatoes during a famine watching me eat only potatoes on an eating disorder because no one can find a job in this economy and there's no hope for the future of humanity 🙄🙄🙄

Social Media
USA

DEBT CYCLES & GEN ALPHA

Generation Alpha is next if Gen Z and Millennial parents don't break the cycle by learning and teaching their offspring the game

Social Media
USA

FUTURE OUTLOOK IS DIRE

🙄 In my opinion the US financial sector is in terrible shape, US markets are highly manipulated, US Govt bonds are now considered a toxic asset with international demand drying up and the future outlook for the US economy couldn't be more dire

Social Media
USA

THOSE OF YOU WHO ARE DOOM & GLOOM

so for me, it's all gonna work out in the end, but for those of you out there who are doom and gloom on the economy in the future of the world - Is the end gonna be ...

Social Media
USA

SOCIALISM NOT HELPFUL FOR THE FUTURE

Steering people down the path of socialism with mounting debt and no plan for a vibrant economy and strong personal freedoms is not helpful for the future of mine or my children

Social Media
USA

BOGUS ECONOMIC STRANGULATION

I'm so angry at climate change cultists destroying my kids and grandkids future through bogus economic strangulation that I could/WILL do everything in my power to quash their...agenda

Social Media
USA

ECONOMY WILL BE IMPOSSIBLE TO LIVE IN

Dawg I want to f***** kill myself, I am horrified of the future- All the cool Cars are going electric, AI will take over the music industry, All of the top 1% people who actually mean something are all trans-humanist and the economy will be practically impossible to live in 🙄

Social Media
USA

FORGETTING TO TEACH THE AMERICAN DREAM

How sad that parents are teaching their kids to be triggered rather than teaching them the American dream of building your own business and creating your own wealth

Social Media
USA

CAN'T IMAGINE A FUTURE IF UNMOTIVATED

I have news for @user You can't grow an economy with unmotivated, under paid people who can't imagine a future with enough money to have their own home, have kids and save for old age, let alone be healthy

Social Media
USA

"GIRL MATH" A SIGN OF THE TIMES

"girl math" seems fun and quirky but i think its really sad too bc its a way for people to cope with financial struggle and shows that we'd rather fund little things that make us happy right now, because there's no future with the economy we were left with by the last generation

Social Media
USA



Photo by Ion Fet on Unsplash

US citizens' visions of the future include...

FEWER HUMANS

A future where fewer children are being born through personal choice is imagined and discussed; symptomatic in part of low expectations for the future of society and humanity.



Context

- The US has seen a significant decline in fertility rates over the last few decades amonger younger women, driven by shifting cultural norms and socioeconomic factors.
- There is much conversation about the active choice not to have children, with reference to having agency over one's body and future, and uncertainty and fear linked to climate change and economic security.
- Forbes states that the average cost of childbirth in the US is \$18,865 – a significant cost burden, especially in the absence of health insurance.
- Links are also being made to higher education status, and so-called 'DINK' (dual income no kids) lifestyles around the decision not to have children.
- Concerns are expressed that a reducing fertility rate will compound issues in the future and reduce the human talent pool required to address society's challenges.

Observed Language

- Population decline / ageing population / lowered expectations / survival / threat / climate change / disaster prep
- DINK / rich and educated / 'anti-natalists'

Illustrative Cultural Manifestations

- A recent report by The Lancet indicates that by 2100, 97% of countries will have fertility rates below what is needed to sustain their population size.





Photo by Ion Fet on Unsplash

US citizens' visions of the future include...

FEWER HUMANS

A future where fewer children are being born through personal choice is imagined and discussed; symptomatic in part of low expectations for the future of society and humanity.

RICH & EDUCATED

wealth and education play a major role Most Rich and educated people don't want children Most of my friends say is to expensive and they don't want to bring children to uncertain future We need baby making factories ASAP or we will see a major collapse in our social structure
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 USA

PSEUDO RELATIONSHIPS WITH AVATARS

My actual future prediction is millions and millions of people will grow up with pseudo relationships to AI avatars and birth rates (and real relationships) will continue to decline in developed countries the future is a dystopia
Social Media
 USA

'ANTINATALISTS' & DINK LIFESTYLES

I've seen a few types, doom and gloom antinatalists, worlds going to end if we keep breeding and then you have DINK lifestyles, I can afford to do more without being "held back" by kids, work harder and less social life
Social Media
 USA

SELF-DEFEATING CYCLE OF LOWERED EXPECTATIONS

Its so sad how this self-defeating cycle of lowered expectations reinforces itself— "I won't have kids because the climate economy etc" — ok, so you have no investment in fixing anything or having hope, you're literally deciding right now to damn the future of humanity
Social Media
 USA

INSIST THAT WE ALL HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO DECIDE

We must insist on a world where we all have the opportunity decide if and how we procreate, and give babies the best possible shot at life, no matter how small their start
Source
 USA

BEST CHANCE OF SURVIVAL

Giving our kids the best chance of survival in any future is my tactic—the ability to repair, fostering ingenuity, grow food, encouraging opportunities for economic growth—can help create an environment where they are better equipped for anything
Social Media
 USA

REAL THREAT

I know young adults who believe climate change is such a real threat that they just won't be able to adapt to that they are not having children because they accept at face value that the future is not good for their children
Social Media
 USA

DISASTER PREP

Idk if the risk-assessing part of my brain hulked out from having children in a pandemic and is now fixating on a new topic (climate change) as a manifestation of my general anxiety, or if my disaster prep is a reasonable response to an increasingly grim future
Social Media
 USA

RATHER BE A SPINSTER

Men love to threaten women with the idea of a future filled with eternal loneliness and cats but quite frankly I'd rather be a spinster with cats than a worn down servant with 5 kids and an absolutely useless husband on top of school + work
Social Media
 USA

NARCISSISTIC

Well since narcissists only value themselves, having a child with no regard for their future well being in this economy and climate state, while also expecting said child to be your care giver with no regards to them is very selfish and dare I say exactly narcissistic
Social Media
 USA

MAPPING THE NARRATIVES

Where does the weight of conversation lie?

Mapping the volume and positivity of conversation

This map gives a qualitative sense of where the volume of conversation lies within our data set, as well as the nature of the language being used.

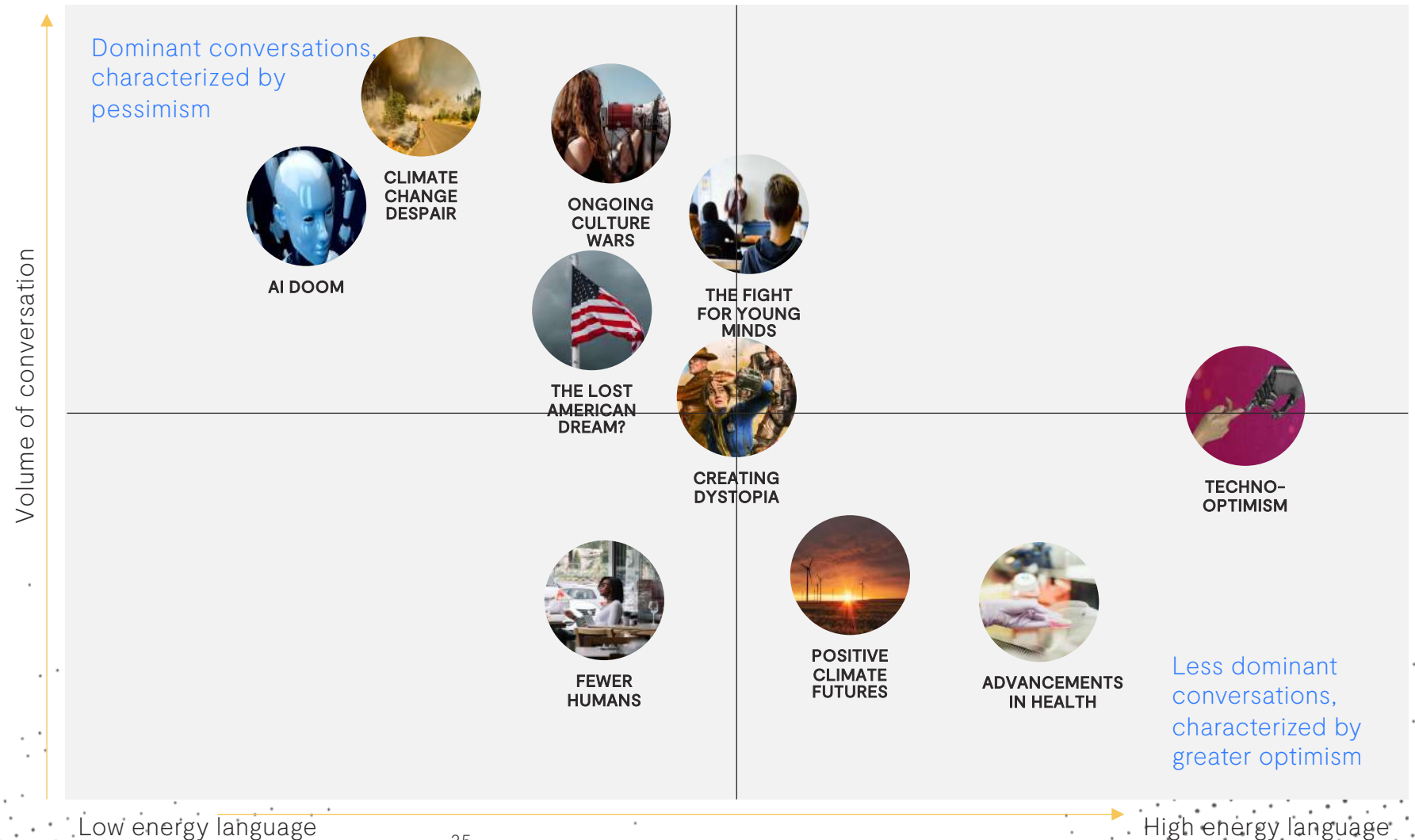
Volume of conversation gives a sense of the dominance of a theme, or how mainstream it is considered to be.

'Energy' is a read on the level of positivity and drive that is captured within the language used across these spaces.

High energy language has a greater level of excitement, optimism, and sense of ideas and potential.

Conversely, low energy language indicates spaces that are lacking in positivity, hope, or motivation.

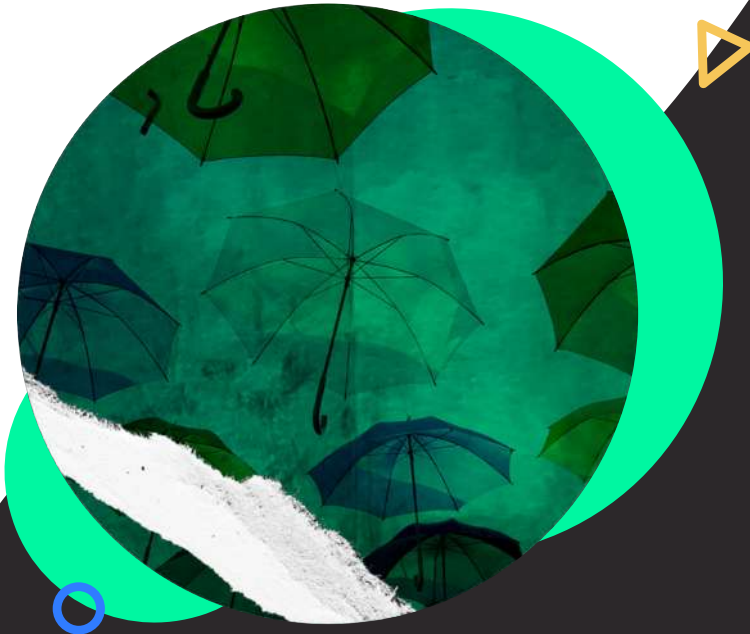
A sense of energy can provide a useful guide when considering how to prioritize engagement with citizens based on topics that are gaining traction and have emotional resonance.



CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

Advancing Human Progress

Engendering a collective aspirational outlook



- The purpose of this research has been to illuminate some of the different perspectives US citizens' have with regards to the future of their country and the global community. It has highlighted different and polarized views, much of which points to pessimism and anxiety. But there is also positivity and hope expressed – it's not all doom and gloom.
- To advance human progress it is important to listen to these conversations, to understand people's thoughts and fears, as well as their hopes and aspirations. Only then can we build on them.
- Americans have diverse political beliefs and policy preferences, as well as divided opinions on the role of government versus the private sector in addressing big challenges. However, regardless of these differences, it is important to collectively shape positive visions of the future. This will foster greater creativity, constructive conversations, collaboration, and compromise, in the service of solving today's problems and building a better tomorrow.
- This endeavour isn't about encouraging false hope or hubris, but a desire to embrace a realistic and aspirational outlook on what is possible and celebrate our potential.



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