

Dial into the next decade's digital world with foresight from 10-year-olds

 By [Leigh Andrews](#)

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In her Meltwater webinar presented on 5 July 2019, IAB CEO Paula Hulley recapped the main points of her IAB Digital Summit 2019 presentation, with extra tips and actionable insights from 10-year-olds, as well as the IAB Direct Brand Report on the current consumer economy.



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Meltwater Africa marketing manager Philippa Dods introduced the sessions with an explanation of the fact that 'brand experience' of today involves a wide range of online and offline activities, in which the customer gets immersed in the brand and builds an affinity for it.

When done effectively, this cultivates an emotional relationship with your brand, the strongest – and most elusive – brand currency of today.



#Loeries2019: "Relevance, resonance and emotions - the hardest brand currency to master" - Ralf Heuel

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With two decades of experience in this field, Dods said Hulley is the ideal person to share insights on building your best brand experience through her own experience as well as the IAB's mandate to empower the media and marketing industry to thrive in the digital economy.

It's 'the new now' and calls for better business decisions.



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Hulley said that some call it the 'consumer economy' as it's about ensuring brands have the best tools in their marketing toolkit to make those emotional connections, and also to take the relationship further in sharing and solving some of those consumers' problems.

For the IAB, when looking at a best brand experience, Hulley said it's important to look ahead and take note of trends elsewhere that we can learn from and anticipate in our own markets, especially with so much change in the digital and interactive marketing space.



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That's just what Hulley did when reading the May issue of *Wired* magazine's feature on what children think the world will be like in a decade's time. She kickstarted the discussion on building the best brand experience in today's digital economy by sharing three of these 10-years-olds' 10-year forecasting insights from the feature.

Lessons from 10-year-olds: Getting ready for the digital world of the next decade

What do you think the world will be like in a decade's time?

“ I think it will change, but I don't think it will change a lot. I think phones will be much more advanced. The internet will be a lot easier to use and everything will work much quicker. – Florence, 10 years old ”

Putting this into perspective for business, Hulley said to think of how fast we already work, and imagine that just getting faster and faster in future. How do we equip ourselves to move at the speed of culture, and also align that with our brand strategy?



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What new technology do you wish existed?

“ I think a new invention would be if you had a printer, and printed out a piece of paper with, let's say – a piece of toast on it, you put that through the printer and then you get the food – that would be cool. – Meliz, 10 years old ”

Hulley said the 3D-printing opportunity is already changing the market under our feet. We can already 'print food', though not for mass markets just yet.



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For business, this offers an amazing opportunity, especially from a marketing and branding experience perspective.

There's no denying the general business and marketing realms are merging closer than before in solving challenges for good, whether in your community, for your country or the broader continent.



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What do you think the world will be like in 2029?

“ Instead of using coal to make electricity, we will use renewables, like wind, the Sun, and also water. Also all electronics could be controlled by voice. Instead of having to turn it on, you could say “Something turn on”. – Enoch, 10 years old ”

Hulley said this specific prediction is bang on the money. First, there's the fact that having connected homes and smart devices costs less now than it did five years ago, so the cost will likely reduce further as the technology becomes more available.

The opportunity for marketers and brands is to get inside people's lives and solve their problems from the moment they wake up.



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When it comes to voice, Hulley added that half of all search is expected to be conducted by voice in 2022, so you're missing a trick if you think this is just a gimmick.

More tech means more bombardment for consumers, so the more your brand aims to simplify how they live their life in the digital economy, the more you'll be boosting brand experience best practice.

Business-as-unusual: Idea to product virtually overnight

Hulley noted that the *Wired* feature highlights Google Creative Lab director Iain Tait's point that we're now at a stage where digital already runs through "almost everything", which is why it's instrumental in how the IAB supports agencies, publishers and brands.



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Looking ahead at the digital economy, it's also clear that the 'business of business' is changing, and business as usual is no longer an option, due to the availability of constantly new technology for now.

Today, we're in the business where value is created in 'the new now' – it's a hyper-available, 'stack-you-own-supply-chain' way of creating value, where ideas can become products *virtually* (no pun intended) overnight.



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Hulley pointed out that you don't need to go it alone, as this new world has been intensively researched by the IAB globally.

She went on to share seven key insights into how the top [250 direct brands](#) have navigated their business, initially highlighted in her 2019 IAB Digital Summit presentation.



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Jessica Tennant 5 Jun 2019



By keeping these points in mind, Hulley said digitally native, disruptive brands are carving new paths to value, unearthing new ways of marketing, creating new ways of selling and unveiling new ways of competing in the current consumer economy.

Brand experience Q&A quickies

Answering questions from the audience on how to stay ahead of the curve in a constantly evolving digital world, Hulley said her top tip is to make an effort to **constantly upskill** both yourself and your business. Partner with learning academies and also attend webinars and industry networking talks, chat to others and get used to the 'fast learning' opportunities of today.

Hulley also spoke to the sticky topic of whether or not to **shift your brand identity**. To determine how often to do so, she reminded attendees that the reason your business is in operation is to solve a specific challenge for a customer group, and to deliver on a brand promise.



#YPOEdge: James Barty on brand humanity and doing good business, beyond ticking the 'CSI box'

Leigh Andrews 14 Mar 2019



So, if you receive a crucial insight that reflects on that specific challenge and changing the way you solve that problem, you'd need to consider it carefully as a brand's identity should be taken as seriously as you do your personal identity. Be clear on the specific values your brand stands for, and how you connect authentically with your customers.

Asked about **social influencers** and whether they add to or take away from a brand's credibility, Hulley set the context by stating she's a great believer in a good brief, no matter the action required.

If you know what you want for your brand, social media influencers can be a key part of the marketing mix. Finding those who genuinely build on that relationship with your consumers is the ideal.



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Leigh Andrews 4 Jun 2019



If your brand is disconnected or the influencer doesn't understand the objectives you're trying to reach, that's when things go wrong.

That's why Hulley says it's important to keep in touch with how your audience is responding to those influencers, and to create as clear a brief as possible so that the influencer better understands your brand and you better understand their power.

Touching on how to **measure the success of brand experiences**, Hulley said you can only manage what you set up to measure. You simply can't measure your brand's impact if you're not set up to do so.



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Hulley said to factor in the specifics of each communication, such as whether you're aiming to generate awareness and interest ahead of a product launch or to offer value that serves for customer retention, as these need different measurement points, as well as different frequency and tools of measurement.

With the likes of machine learning and AI, Hulley says it's an 'always-on' process, but this can be done at scale once you've ironed out the basics.



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That's how you succeed in the direct brand economy.

Hulley ended with a reminder that the IAB's latest global research serves as a new direct brand roadmap that uncovers

lessons for your business from incumbent brands, up-and-coming direct brands, publishers and the entire support system enabling growth, from technology to suppliers. [Click here](#) to access the IAB's Direct Brand Economy Report.

ABOUT LEIGH ANDREWS

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