



MOBILE & TELECOMS

INDUSTRY UPDATE

NOVEMBER 2016

WELCOME

...to TrendWatching's Mobile & Telecoms Industry Update, exclusively for TW:Premium clients.

As this is the final update of 2016, it's the perfect time to take stock and showcase our Innovator of the Year: the most on-trend Mobile & Telecoms brand from the past 12 months.

There's also a selection of 24 examples of industry best-practice, drawn from around the world and across the 16 mega-trends in our Trend Framework. We're sure they will inspire your trend-led innovation in the coming year (or sooner, if you can!).

Enjoy, and good luck!



[SEE ALL MOBILE & TELECOMS INNOVATION EXAMPLES ONLINE »](#)

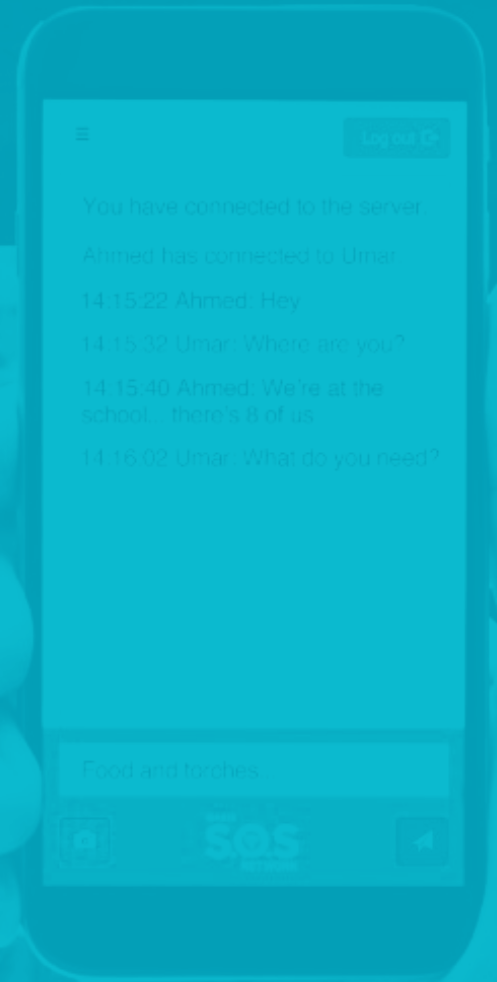
NOTE: When viewing the best-practice innovations from page 6 onward, look out for the trend tags! Each example is labeled with its related mega-trend (listed below), followed by the corresponding sub-trend.

- | | |
|--|---|
|  STATUS SEEKERS |  HUMAN BRANDS |
|  BETTERMENT |  BETTER BUSINESS |
|  YOUNIVERSE |  UBITECH |
|  LOCAL LOVE |  INFOLUST |
|  PLAYSUMERS |  FUZZYNOMICS |
|  EPHEMERAL |  PRICING PANDEMONIUM |
|  HELPFULL |  POST-DEMOGRAPHIC |
|  JOYNING |  REMAPPED |

FEATURING

INNOVATOR OF THE YEAR

- MAXIS -



INNOVATOR OF THE YEAR:

MAXIS*Telecoms company creates SOS network for flood victims*

Before we get started on Maxis, we'd like to give Samsung an honorable mention. In 2016, an explosive scandal tainted the brand's reputation and dented its profits. However, our team has admired many Samsung innovations that push forward multiple trends throughout the year. Search 'Samsung' in your Inspiration Dashboard if you don't believe us ;)

But back to Maxis. The Malaysian telecom provider understands that a brand must support the community it operates in. Customers increasingly expect large companies, like telecom brands, to utilize their resources for good. 80% of consumers agree that a company can take specific actions that both increase profits and social conditions in the community where it operates, up from 74% in 2015 (Edelman Trust Barometer, January 2016).

March 2016 saw [Maxis](#) set up a special SOS network in flood-prone areas of the country. Designed to support flood victims, the brand created a new communications network, which enables people to call for help when their power supply or cellular activity is affected. A portable weatherproof device with mesh 'nodes' is placed on the rooftops of houses and buildings; the nodes connect with each other to form an SOS network. Stranded people on any carrier can connect to send messages of help.

 HUMAN BRANDS / FIRST RESPONDERS




BEST OF 2016

MOBILE & TELECOMS INNOVATIONS


YOUNIVERSE / BRAND ME


OPPO

Selfie-specialized smartphone has the better of its two cameras on the front

The [Oppo F1s](#) is a smartphone designed for selfies, costing USD 270. Launched in India in August 2016, the 5.5-inch cellphone has a 16MP front camera and a 13MP camera to the rear. Typically a smartphone's front-facing camera is of lower quality than the rear one, but this device is specialized for selfies. The Oppo F1s also features a Beautify 4.0 function which allows users to airbrush their selfies, as well as voice and palm activation to enable individuals to take selfies easily. Oppo is a Chinese electronics manufacturer.


INFOLUST / INTIMATE INFO

UBITECH / INTUITIVE INTERFACES


SGNL

Smart wrist strap lets people answer calls using their fingertip

Crowdfunded in September 2016, [SGNL](#) is a smart watch strap allowing people to place or take phone calls using their finger rather than a headset. Via the US-created system, users can place their fingertip near their ear to have body conduction allow them to hear the call, with vibrations traveling from the wrist strap to their ear. The SGNL strap can be used with most watches, and connects to a cellphone via Bluetooth and a dedicated mobile app. Costing USD 149, the strap also features LED indicators which can be programmed to show users who's calling, for example.


BETTER BUSINESS / ECO-CYCLE

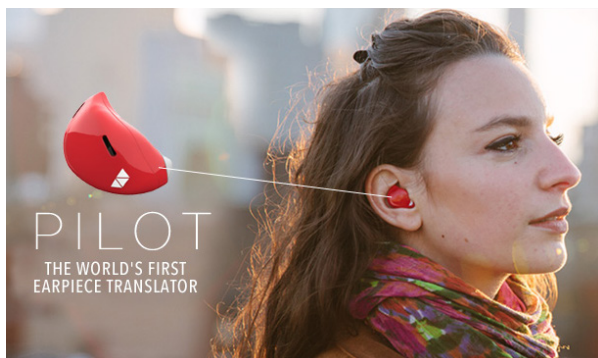

TOKYO 2020

Olympic medals to be made from electronic waste

August 2016 saw the [Tokyo](#) organizers of the 2020 Olympic Games announce plans to source the gold, silver and bronze needed for the future medals from electronic waste. Precious metals found in discarded smartphones and consumer electronics will be used to produce the medals – according to the organizers there is enough metal to produce all the medals needed for both the Olympic and Paralympic Games. Typically, Olympic hosts ask mining companies to donate the metals.

FUZZYNOMICS / PRESUMERS

EPHEMERAL / RAMPANT REAL-TIME



WAVERLY LABS

In-ear device translates languages in real-time

May 2016 saw the launch of an Indiegogo campaign for Pilot: an in-ear device developed by US-based [Waverly Labs](#). Sold in packs containing two pairs, the earpiece connects to users' smartphones and translates their language into that of their companion in real-time – without needing an internet connection. By the end of Q2 2016, the campaign had raised over USD 2.4 million, with the device retailing at USD 250-300. Pilot can also be used as wireless headphones.

UBITECH / SAFETY NET



VODAFONE NEW ZEALAND

Smart jacket for cyclists boosts road safety

September 2016 saw Vodafone New Zealand launch the prototype of a [Smart Jacket](#) that aids road safety for cyclists. The jacket is connected to the cyclist's cellphone via an app that has been pre-programmed with the desired travel route. Directions are communicated to the cyclist and surrounding traffic through the 300 built-in LED lights, which display illuminated arrows on the cuffs and back of the jacket.

EPHEMERAL / SNACK CULTURE



SMART FILMS

Festival celebrates smartphone-created movies

August 2016 saw the launch of the second edition of [Smart Films](#): a festival in Colombia celebrating short movies created purely via smartphone. The four-day event showcased the work of 311 finalists and each movie was a maximum of five minutes long. Five groups included children, youth, amateur, professional and a category created for people with disabilities. The organizers claim that films shot via smartphone allow the festival to be more inclusive and give more people the opportunity to participate.


 REMAPPED / FUNCTIONALL
**ALCOM**

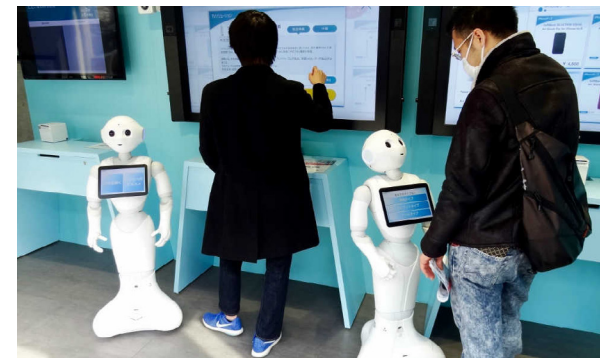
Telecoms company supplies low-income 'red zones' with internet access

[Alcom](#) provides internet access to underserved areas in Chile via local stores. 40% of the Chilean population lacks internet access, in part due to 'red zones' (poor areas where telecom brands see little profit in offering their service). Alcom installs wireless antennas in neighborhood grocery stores, then residents can purchase routers and connect to the store. In February 2016, Alcom asked red zone residents to call attention to their neighborhoods on social media.


 BETTER BUSINESS / ECO-BOOSTERS
**BIOO**

Cellphone charger produces electricity from plants

In April 2016, Spanish startup [Bioo](#) launched a renewable energy plant pot that can charge a smartphone. The Bioo Lite contains a biological and chemical cell, which uses the process of photosynthesis to generate electricity. Any plant, soil or irrigation system can be used in the pot. The charger can emit up to five volts, comes with a USB connector and can recharge a cellphone up to three times a day. Crowdfunded on Indiegogo, Bioo chargers were available to pre-order from USD 89.


 UBITECH / INTUITIVE INTERFACES
**SOFTBANK**

Humanoid robots staff Japanese cellphone store

In January 2016, Japanese telecommunications company, [SoftBank](#) announced a store staffed entirely by robots. Open for a limited time in Q2 2016, the Tokyo store will feature Pepper robots helping customers to buy a cellphone with the company's wireless service. The robots, around four feet tall, have chest-mounted touch-screens; humans will also be on hand to assist, and to conduct the customer identity verification process.

 STATUS SEEKERS / BRAND FANATICS


KAKAO

Mobile messaging company opens retail space and café

In July 2016, South Korean mobile messaging company, [Kakao](#) opened a flagship store in Seoul. The three-story retail space sells products based on Kakao Friends – characters from the app’s series of mobile stickers – and has a themed café. Named for its most popular character, The Ryan Cafe has 100 seats and offers Kakao Friends-inspired deserts and beverages.

 POST-DEMOGRAPHIC / TRIBEFACTURING


ETISALAT

Nigerian mobile package comes preloaded to support children’s education

Launched in Nigeria in July 2016, the [Cliqlite](#) tablet comes preloaded with a special data plan, providing access to selected educational and entertainment applications. Targeted at children aged between eight and fifteen, the tablet was created by United Arab Emirates telecommunications corporation Etisalat. Costing NGN 50 (around USD 15) per megabyte, the mobile prepaid service package also has a preloaded parental control app, so parents can monitor their children’s online activities.

 HUMAN BRANDS / FIRST RESPONDERS

 PRICING PANDEMONIUM / SYMPATHETIC PRICING


VERIZON, AT&T & SPRINT

Free calls on offer after Brussels terrorist attack

In the days following the March 2016 terrorist attack on Brussels, US-based telecoms companies [Verizon](#), [AT&T](#) and [Sprint](#) offered free calls and SMS between the US, Belgium and Turkey. The move was designed to help family and friends get in touch with loved ones who might have been affected by the events. Similarly, [Google](#) offered free calls to Belgium and Turkey via Google Hangouts, Hangouts Dialer and Google Voice.


 HELPFULL / BRAND BUTLERS


TELEKOM MALAYSIA

Umbrella attachment combats mosquito-borne illnesses

[Telekom Malaysia](#) has developed an umbrella accessory that combats the spread of mosquitoes. RainSprout attaches to the top of umbrellas and a replaceable pack releases a non-toxic larvicide that mixes with rainwater and deposits in puddles, killing mosquito larvae before they can develop and potentially infect people with Dengue fever. The attachment was revealed in April 2016, when the telecommunications company announced plans to host the device on its crowdfunding platform, webe community. Telekom Malaysia also donated RainSprouts to areas hit by recent Dengue outbreaks.


 HUMAN BRANDS / SUBVERSIVE BRANDS


SPRINT

Competitor's former spokesperson features in telecommunications brand's ad

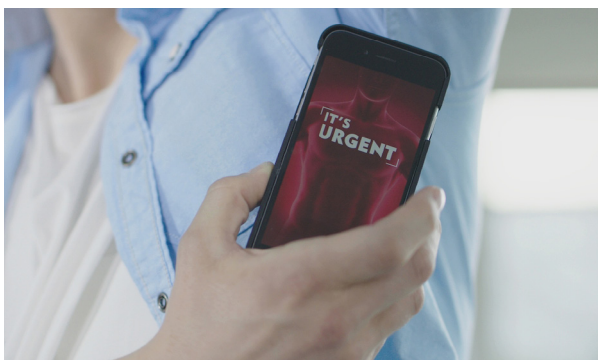
In June 2016, [Sprint](#) launched a television commercial featuring an actor who formerly appeared in Verizon Wireless' commercials – one of the US-based mobile network provider's competitors. Made popular for his "can you hear me now" tagline on the Verizon advertisements, Paul Marcarelli appeared in Verizon Wireless' campaigns from 2002-2011. The Sprint ad features Marcarelli addressing his former association, introducing himself as a Sprint customer and stating that in 2016, all mobile networks are great.


 PRICING PANDEMONIUM / FREE LOVE


SAFARICOM

Mobile network's on-demand cabs offer free wifi

July 2016 saw Safaricom launch [Little Cab](#): a ride-hailing service designed to rival Uber. The Kenya-based telecommunications company's service provides cars with in-vehicle wifi, while payments can be made using M-Pesa. Customers can book their rides using the Little Cab mobile app, and choose optional services such as selecting a female driver, for example. The service also pledges to provide cheap fares – free of price surges, as well as corporate packages for businesses.


PLAYSUMERS / FAKETASTIC
**NIVEA**

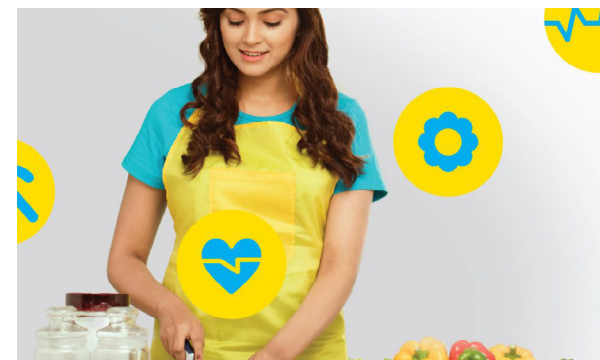
Smartphone case automatically detects body odor

In Germany in May 2016, [NIVEA](#) announced NIVEA NOSE MEN: a sensor-embedded smartphone case allowing cellphones to 'smell' body odor. Scents are detected when cellphones are placed near users' armpits and data is evaluated by a specialized algorithm. A dedicated mobile app sends users notifications about body odor levels, and links to recommended products via an online store. The free app does not function without its dedicated smartphone cover.


POST-DEMOGRAPHIC / POST-DEMOGRAPHIC EMPOWERMENT
**ILY**

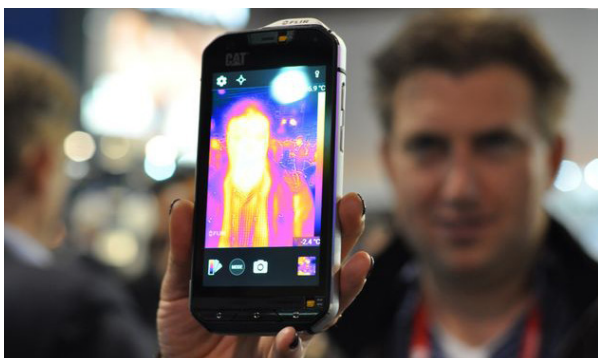
Updated landline phone connects families across the generations

Crowdfunded via Kickstarter in June 2016, [Ily](#) is a USD 199 device for families designed to replace traditional landline phones. The US-created device features a touchscreen where users can place calls to saved contacts using Ily phones or the free Ily mobile app. Users can call normally, or use video calling or messaging, and Ily features a simple interface meaning that it's easy to use for kids or seniors. Ily also features a dedicated emergency facility, should children or grandparents need to contact someone urgently.


HELPFULL / TIME SAVIORS
**TELENOR**

Mobile network unveils comprehensive digital health service

[Tonic](#) is a mobile health service created by telecoms company, Telenor. Launched in Bangladesh during May 2016, Tonic provides wellness and medical information, gives users access to a 24/7 helpline staffed by doctors (costing TKD 5 (USD 0.06) per minute) and offers cashback and discounts for medical services. Tonic can be accessed by any Grameenphone (a Telenor network) customer, with services also on offer via SMS and Facebook.


 UBITECH / POINT & KNOW


CATERPILLAR INC.

Smartphone's camera can see through walls

The [Cat S60](#) is the world's first smartphone to feature an integrated thermal camera. Unveiled in February 2016, US-based Caterpillar Inc.'s device picks up heat which is invisible to the naked eye, measuring temperatures from a distance of up to 100 feet, and can see through obscurants such as smoke. The USD 599 cellphone also has a 13-megapixel main camera which is waterproof to depths of up to 5 meters for one hour.


 FUZZYNOMICS / PEER ARMIES


TOYOTA

SUVs provide pop-up communication network in the Australian outback

An initiative to enable Toyota LandCruisers to operate as communications hotspots in the signal-absent Australian outback was announced in May 2016. In partnership with Flinders University, [Saatchi & Saatchi](#) is engineering a device which can be fitted to individual vehicles. Using a mix of wifi, UHF and Delay Tolerant Networking technology, each device offers a communication range of 25km.


 BETTERMENT / CURRENCIES OF CHANGE

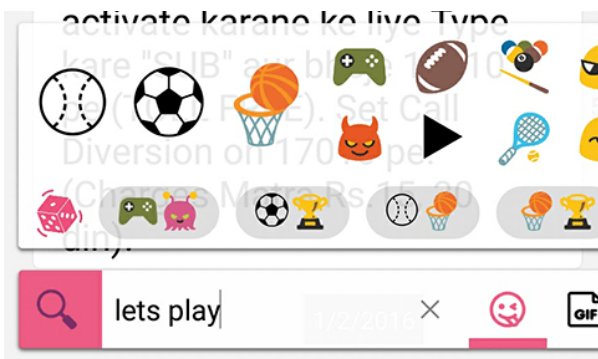

FOROYA TELE

Active Pokémon Go players rewarded with free data

July 2016 saw [Foroya Tele](#) unveil a campaign enabling customers to earn free data. Based in the Faroe Islands – where data is often expensive – the mobile network pledged to award up to 1GB of data every week for people playing Pokémon Go. Customers who could show staff in Foroya Tele stores that they had walked at least five kilometers while playing Pokémon Go were eligible to have the free data added to their account.

 EPHEMERAL / TIME SAVIORS

 YOUNIVERSE / DATA DIVINITY



DANGO

Smart keyboard allows people to communicate in emojis

Developed in Canada and launched in June 2016, [Dango](#) is a smart keyboard assistant using neural networks to learn from the user's behavior and prompt suitable emoji or GIF responses. Fully customizable, the free mobile app automatically associates words with particular emotions to suggest relevant emojis to respond to messages with. Dango also allows users to upload their own artwork.

 LOCAL LOVE / BRANDED GOVERNMENT



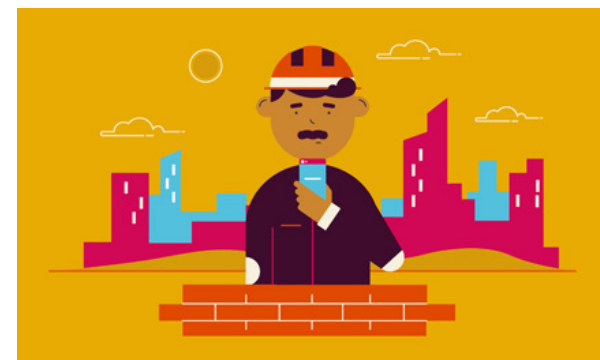
VODAFONE

Rainwater-harvesting billboards help India's drought-affected farmers

In July 2016, [Vodafone](#) fitted its billboards in the Indian city of Pune with tanks that harvest rainwater. The advertisements store up to 2,000 liters of water in U-curved aluminum sheets that can be distributed to drought-affected farmers, and water sensor technology alerts collection teams who transport the rainwater to rural farms. The Indian government revealed in April 2016 that about 330 million people are affected by drought in the country.

 HUMAN BRANDS / EMBEDDED GENEROSITY

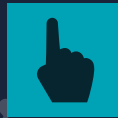
 REMAPPED / IMMIGREAT



LENOVO

Switching off cellphones results in free data for migrant workers

Launched during Ramadan in June 2016, Lenovo's [Hadia Time](#) mobile app enabled residents of various countries across the Middle East to donate free data to migrant workers. For every minute that people kept their cellphone locked between 7pm and 10pm, Lenovo donated one minute of data so that workers could connect with their families back home. The free app was designed to help families reconnect, with a result of almost 3 million minutes being donated to migrant workers.



DON'T FORGET

INNOVATIONS THAT INSPIRE NEW PRODUCTS, SERVICES
AND CAMPAIGNS CAN COME FROM ANY INDUSTRY.
CHECK OUT THESE 8 EXAMPLES AND GET INSPIRED!

 **AUTOMOTIVE**



BENTLEY & FILLD

Luxury car brand offers automated gas delivery service »

 **BEAUTY & PERSONAL CARE**



LARAMARA

Beauty course aids the blind and visually-impaired »

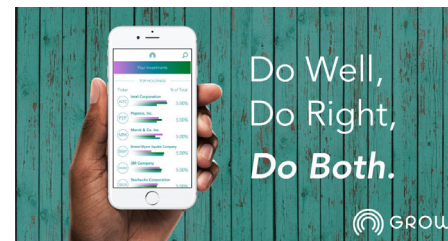
 **TRAVEL**



HAWAII TOURISM AUTHORITY

Facial recognition generates personalized vacation suggestions »

 **FINANCIAL SERVICES**



GROW

App facilitates socially responsible investments »

 **HEALTH**



DAMAN

Sun-sensitive ink reveals Vitamin D message »

 **FOOD & BEVERAGE**



PLACED ON THE SURFACE OF THE SKIN, IT ACTS UNLIKE NORMAL TATTOOS

PIZZA HUT

QR code tattoos used to order pizza »

 **RETAIL**



ALEXANDER WANG

Touring truck sells limited edition apparel line »

 **TRANSPORT**

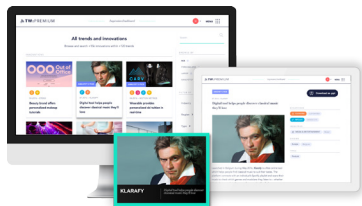


JAPAN RAILWAY COMPANY

Railway company introduces healthy eating food service »

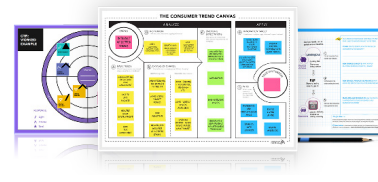
WHAT NEXT?

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Filter over 15,000 innovations by multiple regions, industries, trends and type, explore the latest examples or browse results tailored to your preferences.



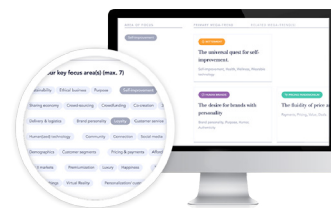
APPLY TOOLKIT »

A comprehensive guide to the trend-led innovation process. SCAN all the consumer trends; FOCUS on those which matter to your business; then apply them and GENERATE ideas!



TREND REPORT »

Explore our recently-released 2017 Trend Report, featuring the key trends and game-changing innovations to spur your strategy for the year ahead.



TREND MAPPER »

Map your key focus areas to related consumer mega-trends in the Trend Framework.

ABOUT US

Established in 2002, TrendWatching is the world's leading trend firm, scanning the globe for the most promising consumer trends, insights and related hands-on business ideas. Our TW:Premium Service counts many of the world's leading brands as clients, while our free monthly Trend Briefings go out to over 260,000 subscribers in 180 countries.

More at premium.trendwatching.com

If you have any comments, suggestions or questions, just email **Paul Backman**, Customer Success Director, at paul@trendwatching.com.