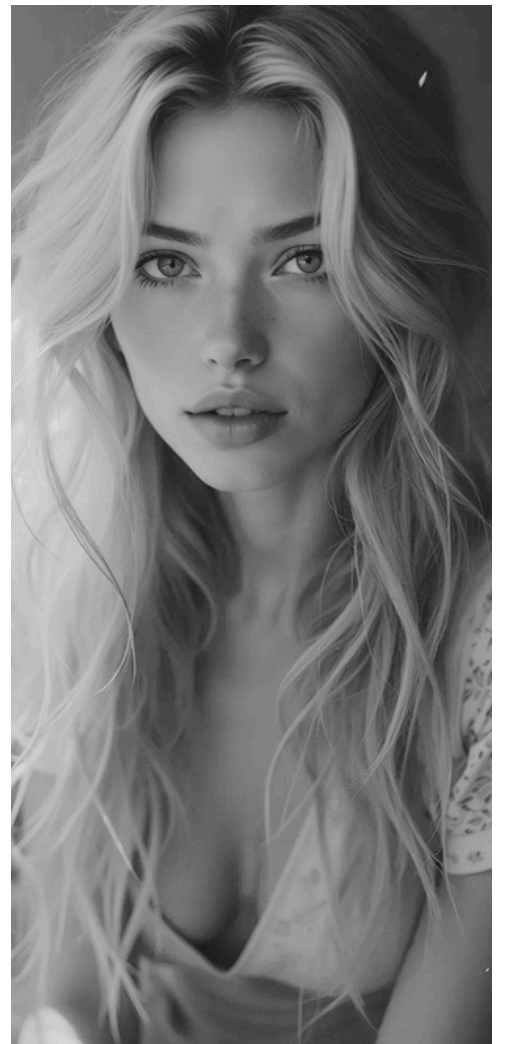


# Will People Stop Rejecting AI Generated Content?

Bi-Weekly  
AI Update Pulse  
by Abi Mangku Nagari

Edition #1 January 2026



# About This Pulse

Written by **Abi Mangku Nagari**.

I'm the founder of Epilog, a digital agency in Jakarta, and Infused, an AI agent development company.

I'm obsessed with AI because it helps me maintain structure in my thinking. I see AI not as a killer of human thought, but as an amplifier.

**My philosophy:** AI should be leverage for thinking, not a replacement. Will it eventually replace us? **Maybe. But where's the fun in that?**

Humans should think, create, and get our hands dirty. Like this Pulse. Most of the thinking and research came from me. The final writing? AI helped.

Check out my website at [www.abimangku.com](http://www.abimangku.com), where I share my AI learning journey and updates openly.

This Pulse is not academic research. I'm not claiming what I write is "truth." My goal is to share and write, because I love AI, I love writing, and I love sharing.

If you find this useful, follow me on Instagram and LinkedIn @abimangku, or email me at [abi@epilogcreative.com](mailto:abi@epilogcreative.com) or [abi@infused.asia](mailto:abi@infused.asia).

Thanks for reading. If you think someone else would benefit from this, share it.

Cheers.



# What's the Psychological Barrier When People Reject AI-Generated Content?

**The rejection isn't about what people see. It's about what they feel when they discover the source.**

Research identifies a phenomenon called the "authenticity valley." This occurs when a message initially interpreted as meaningful is later revealed to originate from a non-human source. The discovery causes a sharp reevaluation of its emotional and moral value.

**The key insight:** the more human-like the AI appears, the higher the standards it's held to, and the greater the disappointment when it fails.

Three Core Mechanisms Driving Rejection:

## 1. The Effort-Value Connection

Humans psychologically associate creative effort with emotional value. People understand that human creators invest time, skill, and emotional labor into work. That investment translates into perceived authenticity and care.

AI-generated content feels transactional rather than relational. When Coca-Cola defended their AI approach as "pushing the envelope" while revealing it as a cost-cutting measure, audiences interpreted this as: the brand prioritizing efficiency over emotional connection.

## 2. Symbolic Violation in Emotional Contexts

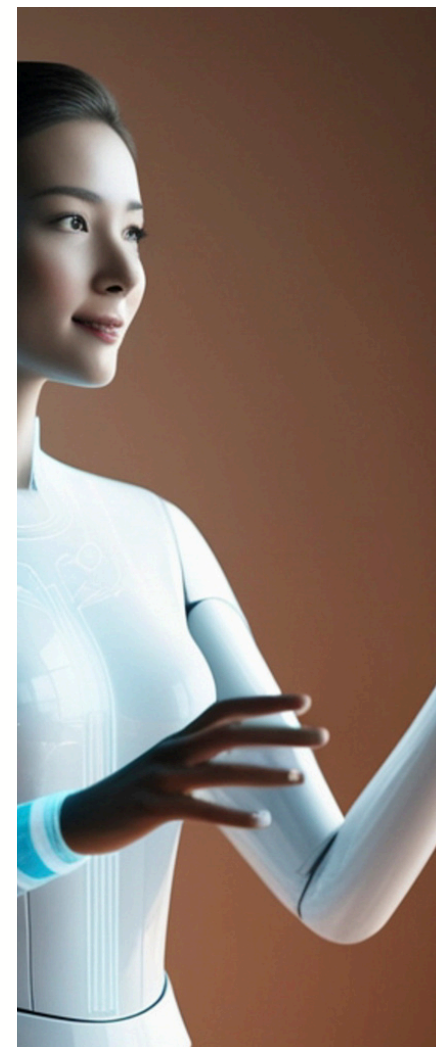
In Coca-Cola's case, this created jarring cognitive dissonance. The brand used the tagline "Real Magic" alongside obviously artificial content. Christmas is marketed as authentic, traditional, and human—which makes AI feel particularly wrong in that context. When people encounter AI content where they expect human creativity and emotional labor, the discovery violates their relational expectations.

## 3. The Disclosure Paradox

Humans detect AI content correctly only 50% of the time. But knowing something is AI-generated still triggers rejection in emotionally significant contexts. The trust deficit isn't about detection capability. It's about the symbolic meaning of human effort, emotional authenticity, and creative intentionality. Research shows that when consumers identified content creators as AI-generated, their perception of authenticity dropped dramatically. They reported heightened feelings of manipulation.

## The Bottom Line

The psychological resistance isn't going away just because AI gets better at mimicking humans. If anything, better mimicry without disclosure creates stronger backlash when the truth emerges.



# What's the Right Approach to Use AI for Content or Creative Output?

The research doesn't point to a single answer. It points to context.

## The Hybrid Strategy Works

Human content outperforms pure AI by 47% in engagement and generates 5.44× more traffic. But businesses using AI strategically report 15-25% increases in engagement.

The difference? 73% of marketers achieving strong results used hybrid approaches with human editors. Marketing copy using hybrid methods achieved 36% higher conversion rates. Customer communications using human-reviewed AI saw a 63% boost in conversions. **Pure AI underperforms. Strategic AI with human oversight outperforms both.**

## Context Determines Acceptance

Functional communication (customer service, technical docs): Higher acceptance. People care about speed and accuracy. Emotional communication (holiday campaigns, brand storytelling): Higher rejection. People expect human effort and emotional investment. Coca-Cola's mistake wasn't using AI. It was using AI for a Christmas campaign built on decades of emotional equity.

## The Transparency Dilemma

AI with humanlike interactivity encourages trust—until people discover it's AI. Then the expectancy violation creates backlash. Disclose and face psychological rejection, or hide and risk worse backlash when discovered.

## What's Actually Happening? Seventy-nine percent of creators use AI to produce content faster.

Seventy-eight percent of marketing teams use AI tools. Seventy-one percent of social media images are AI-generated. The AI in social media market is forecasted to surge from \$2.69 billion in 2025 to \$9.25 billion by 2030. **People are using AI extensively. They're just not always telling you.**

## The Practical Reality

Use AI for speed in functional contexts. Keep humans visible in emotional contexts. Use hybrid workflows in between. Be transparent when trust is critical.

**Acceptance depends on matching AI use to the psychological expectations of the context.**



# So the Big Question: **Will People Ever Accept AI-Generated Content?**

**The answer isn't yes or no. It's: they already do, selectively.**

Seventy-nine percent of creators use AI. Seventy-eight percent of marketing teams use AI tools. Seventy-one percent of social media images are AI-generated. The AI in social media market is projected to grow from \$2.69 billion in 2025 to \$9.25 billion by 2030.

Acceptance is happening quietly in functional contexts where efficiency matters more than emotional authenticity.

But resistance persists in emotional contexts. When consumers identify content as AI-generated in emotionally charged situations, their perception of authenticity drops dramatically. They report heightened feelings of manipulation.

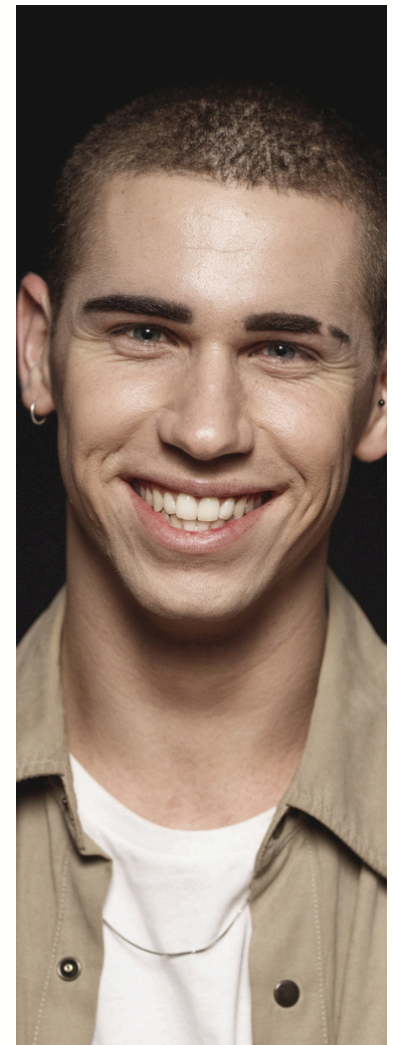
This resistance is structural, not temporary.

Only 0.1% of people can accurately detect AI content. Humans cannot reliably tell the difference anymore. But knowing something is AI-generated still matters because it signals what the creator values.

Full acceptance won't happen uniformly. AI will become invisible in functional communication. AI will remain contested in emotional communication where human effort carries psychological weight.

People will accept AI-generated content when it solves problems without violating expectations. That acceptance is already happening. But in emotionally significant contexts? That requires a cultural shift where AI effort equals human effort.

**I don't see that happening soon.**



# 3 Things We Should Care About When Making AI-Generated Content.

## 3 Things We Should Care About When Making AI-Generated Content

### Context Matters More Than Capability

Functional communication (customer service, technical docs): AI acceptance is high. People prioritize speed and accuracy. Emotional communication (holiday campaigns, brand storytelling): AI rejection is high. People expect human effort as proof of care. Coca-Cola's Christmas ad failed because they used AI in the wrong context. Match AI use to psychological expectations.

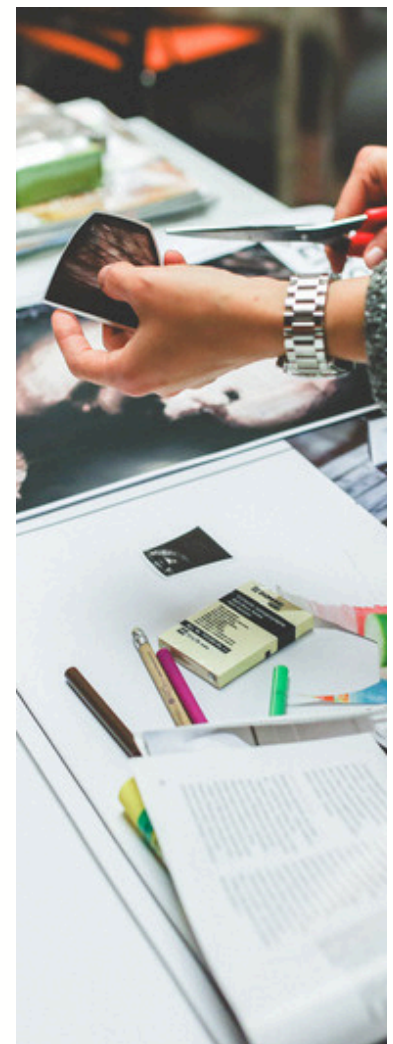
### Hybrid Approaches Outperform Pure AI

Pure AI underperforms human content by 47% in engagement and generates 5.44× less traffic. But 73% of marketers achieving strong results used hybrid approaches—AI with human editors. Hybrid marketing copy achieved 36% higher conversion rates. Hybrid customer communications saw a 63% boost in conversions. Strategic AI with human oversight beats both pure human and pure AI.

### Disclosure Creates a Dilemma

Only 0.1% of people can detect AI content accurately. But knowing something is AI-generated still triggers rejection in emotional contexts. You face a choice: disclose and accept psychological rejection, or hide and risk worse backlash when discovered. Transparency matters most when trust is critical. Be strategic about disclosure based on context and stakes.

**AI works when you match its use to what people psychologically expect from that type of communication.**



# My Take on This

I don't believe AI is meant to make the final output. AI is meant to improve the process. The process to understand people. The process to communicate the right things, in the right place, at the right time.

The research proves this. Hybrid approaches outperform pure AI by 36% in conversion rates and 63% in customer communications. Why? Because humans remain in the loop where judgment matters.

AI excels at speed, pattern recognition, and scaling repetition. But it fails at reading symbolic meaning, understanding emotional stakes, and knowing when context shifts from functional to personal.

## **That's not a limitation to fix. That's the division of labor.**

Use AI to process faster. Use AI to structure thinking. Use AI to generate options. But keep humans in control of the final decision—especially when emotional connection matters. The psychological barriers aren't bugs in human perception. They're features protecting something real: the symbolic value of human effort and care.

## **AI should amplify human judgment, not replace it.**

That's why I hesitate to tell my team to go 100% AI on creative work. Not because AI can't do it technically. But because the process of human thinking, editing, and judgment is where the actual value lives.

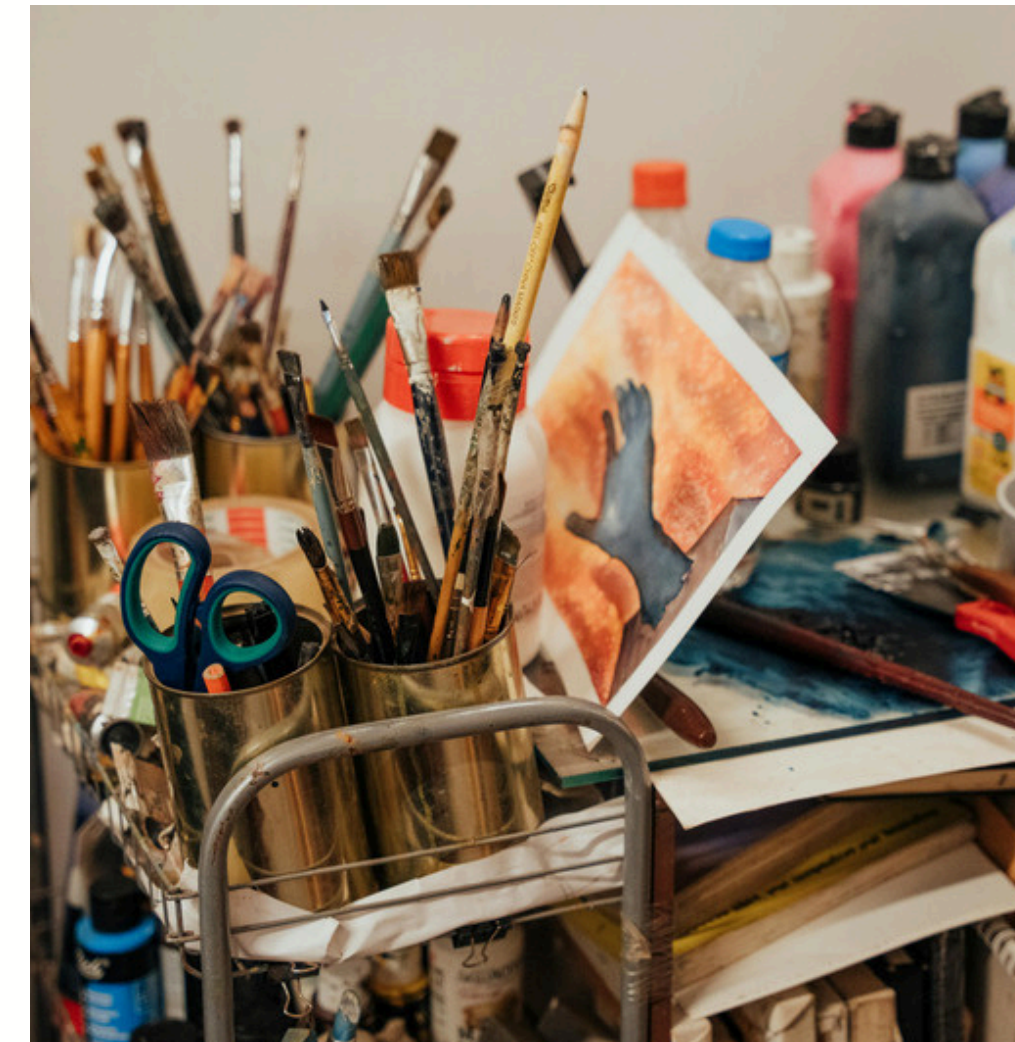
## **AI is leverage. Not replacement.**



# Resources

**This Pulse is based on research from the following sources:**

- <https://www.imgix.com/blog/8-ethical-concerns-raised-by-ai-images-and-video>
- <https://www.pewresearch.org/science/2025/09/17/how-americans-view-ai-and-its-impact-on-people-and-society/>
- <https://cispa.de/en/holz-ai-generated-media>
- <https://astrumcontent.com/the-future-of-ai-in-video-marketing-trends-shaping-2025-2026/>
- <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/global-deepfake-ai-market-trends-growth-future-outlook-shubham-joshi-ijxsc>
- <https://clippie.ai/blog/ai-video-creation-trends-2025-2026>
- <http://ijmrmap.com/wp-content/uploads/2025/06/IJMRAP-V7N12P230Y25.pdf>
- <https://www.theadfirm.net/ai-content-vs-human-content-what-google-prefers-in-2025/>
- <https://draymor.com/blog/ai-vs-human-content-which-performs-better-in-2025>
- <https://www.grafit.agency/blog/ai-content-vs-human-content>
- <https://artsmart.ai/blog/ai-in-social-media-statistics/>
- <https://drainpipe.io/ai-in-social-media-going-viral-in-2025/>
- <https://archive.com/blog/user-generated-content>
- <https://www.frontiersin.org/journals/psychology/articles/10.3389/fpsyg.2025.1568911/full>
- <https://www.campaignasia.com/video/coca-cola-faces-backlash-for-ugly-ai-generated-christmas-spot/499379>
- <https://www.contentgrip.com/coca-cola-ai-holiday-ad-backlash/>
- [https://www.hbs.edu/ris/Publication Files/DeFreitas - Nature Human Behavior - Psychological Barriers to AI\\_b802852e-5cfb-4dca-8e68-d45af0b7d818.pdf](https://www.hbs.edu/ris/Publication%20Files/DeFreitas%20-%20Nature%20Human%20Behavior%20-%20Psychological%20Barriers%20to%20AI_b802852e-5cfb-4dca-8e68-d45af0b7d818.pdf)
- <https://www.marketergems.com/p/coca-cola-ai-generated-holiday-campaign-marketing-breakdown>
- <https://www.euronews.com/culture/2025/11/05/real-magic-coca-colas-ai-generated-christmas-ad-sparks-widespread-backlash-again>
- <https://focaml.com/blog/how-ai-video-is-learning-to-master-subtle-human-emotions-to-overcome-the-uncanny-valley/>
- <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/coca-cola-gen-ai-psychology-behind-why-ad-feels-wrong-burns-m-s--etkjc>
- <https://www.iproov.com/press/study-reveals-deepfake-blindspot-detect-ai-generated-content>
- <https://mila.quebec/en/article/unmasking-deepfakes-with-ai>
- [https://iacis.org/iis/2025/3\\_iis\\_2025\\_401-412.pdf](https://iacis.org/iis/2025/3_iis_2025_401-412.pdf)
- <https://www.forbes.com/sites/bernardmarr/2025/10/24/8-ai-ethics-trends-that-will-redefine-trust-and-accountability-in-2026/>
- <https://observer.com/2025/12/confidential-ai-trust-enterprise-adoption-2026/>
- <https://cybersecurityasia.net/sas-idx-warn-of-trust-dilemma-as-ai-rises/>
- <https://assets.kpmg.com/content/dam/kpmgsites/xx/pdf/2025/05/trust-attitudes-and-use-of-ai-global-report.pdf>
- <https://www.nature.com/articles/s41599-024-04044-8>



# Thank You for Reading!

You've reached the end of this Pulse.

Thank you for reading. Thank you for sharing.

Follow me on Instagram and LinkedIn: @abimangku

I publish a new Pulse every two weeks at [www.abimangku.com](http://www.abimangku.com)  
There, I share experiments, AI news, and other writing.

**Check it out!**

Thanks again.  
Abi Mangku Nagari

