

Crowd SIGNALS

Finding cultural change and future opportunities
from unstructured data

Culture Shift:
Wellbeing Recharge



The Trend:
Psychedelic Health

Culture Shift: Wellbeing Recharge

Crowd Signals

Identifies cultural change and future opportunities using advanced NLP, AL and machine learning capabilities.

Signals

Trends

Unstructured
Data

Culture Shifts

Analysis & Story
Shaping

Using our Crowd Signals platform we have identified a cultural shift that we've labelled as **Wellbeing Recharge**.

The global pandemic, alongside Gen Z's wellness agenda, has made people prioritise their health. Wellbeing is now part of our work culture as well as our personal lives.

And as the world enters yet more times of uncertainty, our approach to wellbeing is shifting up a gear.

But what's the next chapter in our pursuit of total wellness?

Wellbeing Recharge

Psychedelic
Health

Knowledge Is
Power

Bio-connected
Living

Optimised Beauty

Back To Nature

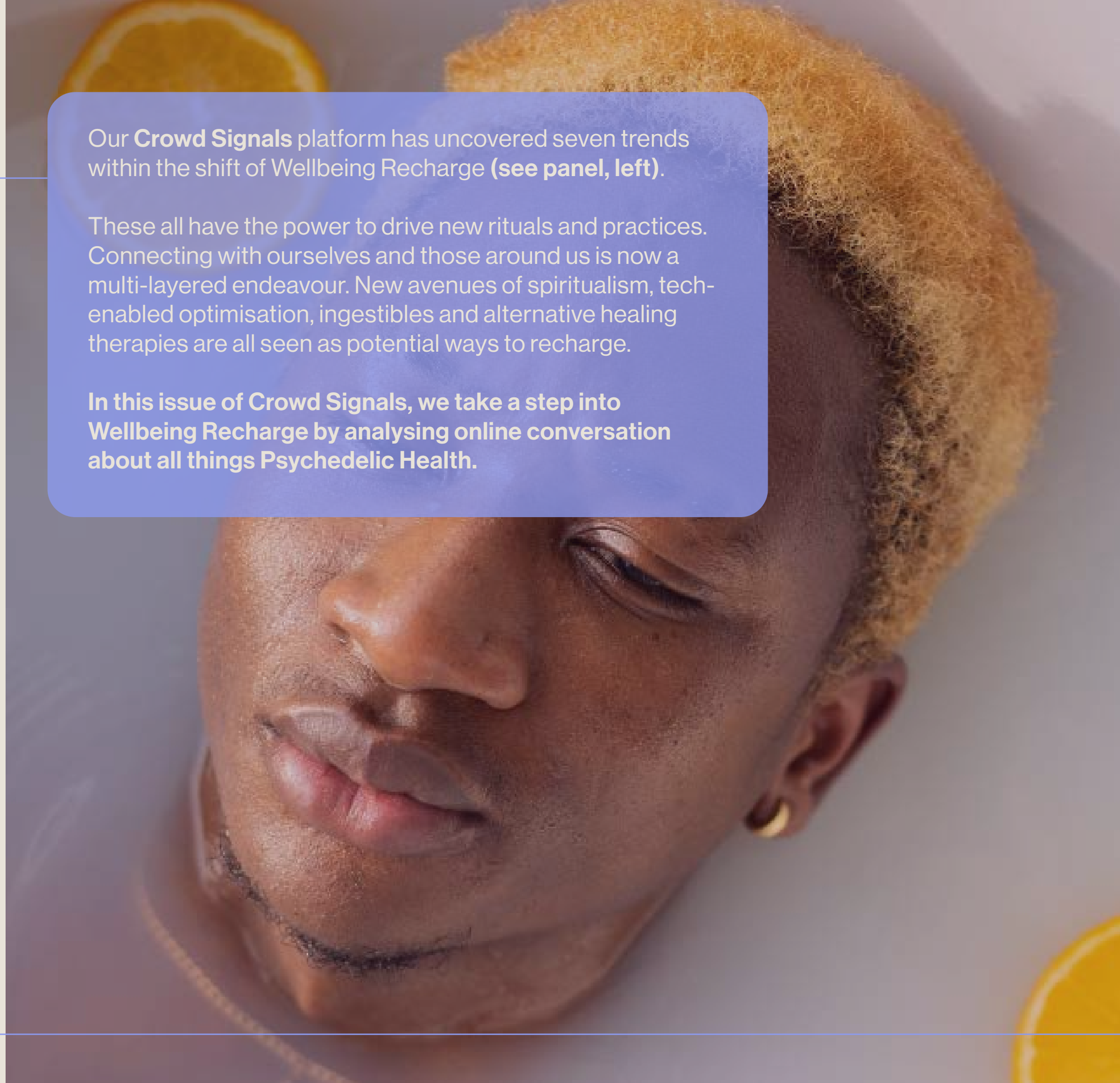
Future Health

Mind Matters

Our **Crowd Signals** platform has uncovered seven trends within the shift of Wellbeing Recharge (**see panel, left**).

These all have the power to drive new rituals and practices. Connecting with ourselves and those around us is now a multi-layered endeavour. New avenues of spiritualism, tech-enabled optimisation, ingestibles and alternative healing therapies are all seen as potential ways to recharge.

In this issue of Crowd Signals, we take a step into Wellbeing Recharge by analysing online conversation about all things Psychedelic Health.



The Trend

Psychedelic Health

Following the relaxation of cannabis laws in certain parts of the world, there's a change in attitudes toward psychoactives. While the use of psychedelics is nothing new, tracking conversation and data points around the subject means we can point to a future where psychedelic drugs are accepted as a way to promote wellbeing. It's an exciting emerging trend, and people have a lot to say about it online.

How will behaviours shift if this alternative – and currently illegal – pursuit becomes mainstream? Will it be okay to 'drop out' and still operate at work? And what will it change about our understanding of how our brains work?

Keep an open mind, and read on.

“I just think it’s a very powerful potential treatment option.”

— Professor Robert Carhart-Harris,
Head of the Centre for Psychedelic
Research, Imperial College London

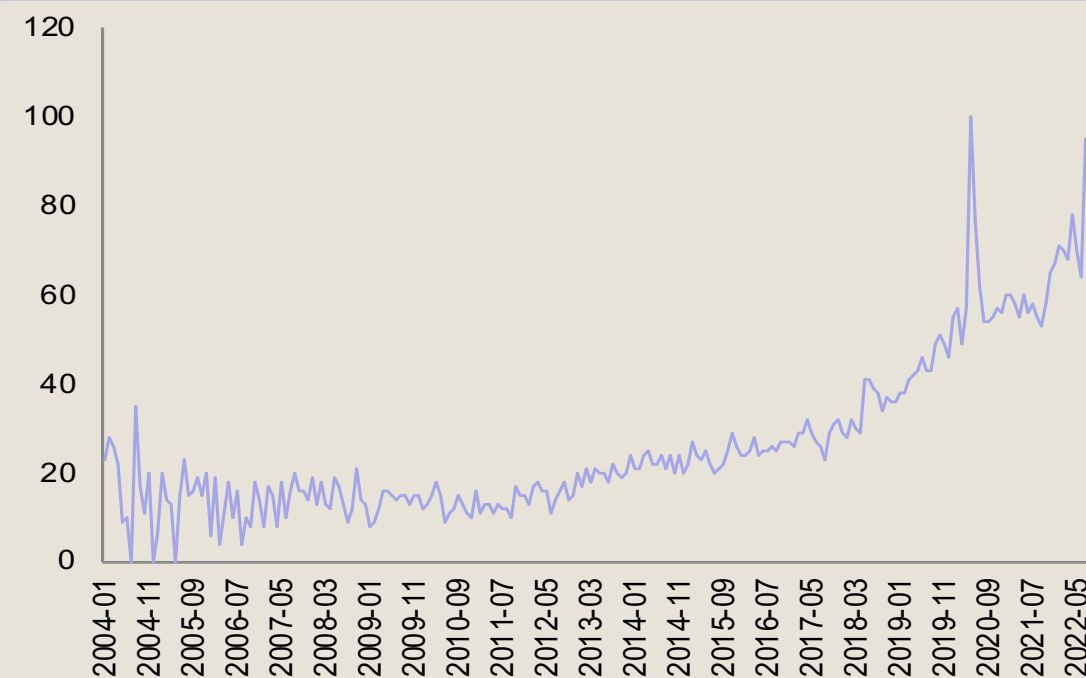
Signal Spotting

Psychedelics: Back For Good?

In the 1950s, psychedelic drugs were the focus of extensive psychiatric research, most famously by Timothy Leary. But criminalisation of psychedelics from the late-sixties all but pressed pause. Now, the buzz is back.

Top ten breakout searches on Google:

- Reddit Psychedelics
- What Is Psychedelics
- DMT
- Psychedelics Meaning
- What Are Psychedelics
- Psilocybin
- Netflix Psychedelics
- Psychedelic Drugs
- Psychedelics Therapy
- Ayahuasca

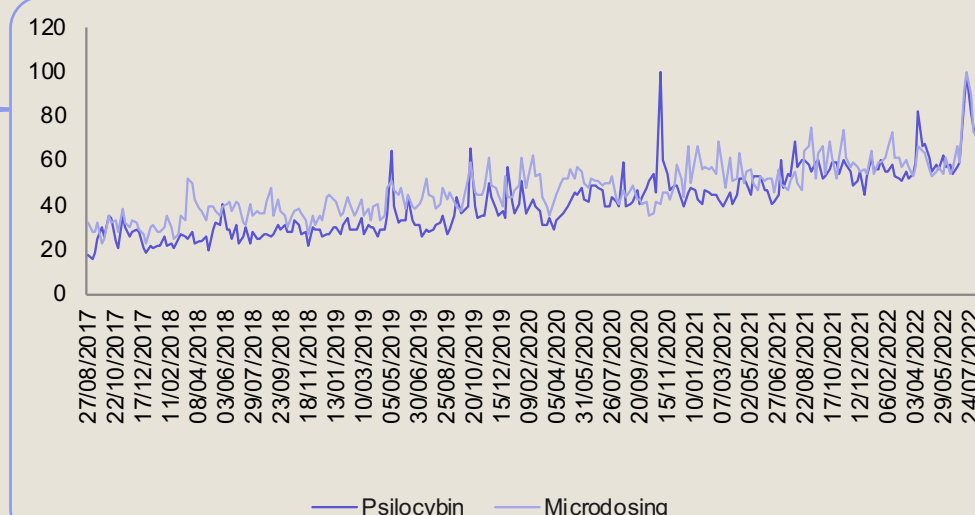


Google Searches For Psychedelics Over Time

(In 1,000s, 2004-Present)

Google Searches For Psilocybin And Microdosing Over Time

(In 1,000s, 2017-Present)



But seriously dude...

Drugs classified as Class A are being investigated for how they might benefit an individual's mindset. Scientists think that psychoactive drugs like psilocybin can stimulate serotonin receptors in the brain – and in part of the cortex associated with functions like mind-wandering and abstract thinking. These receptors seem to be linked to plasticity – that is, to neurological change.

But not everybody is sold...

Not least because there's a long way to go before psychedelics find full acceptance with regulatory bodies.

Take A Good Trip

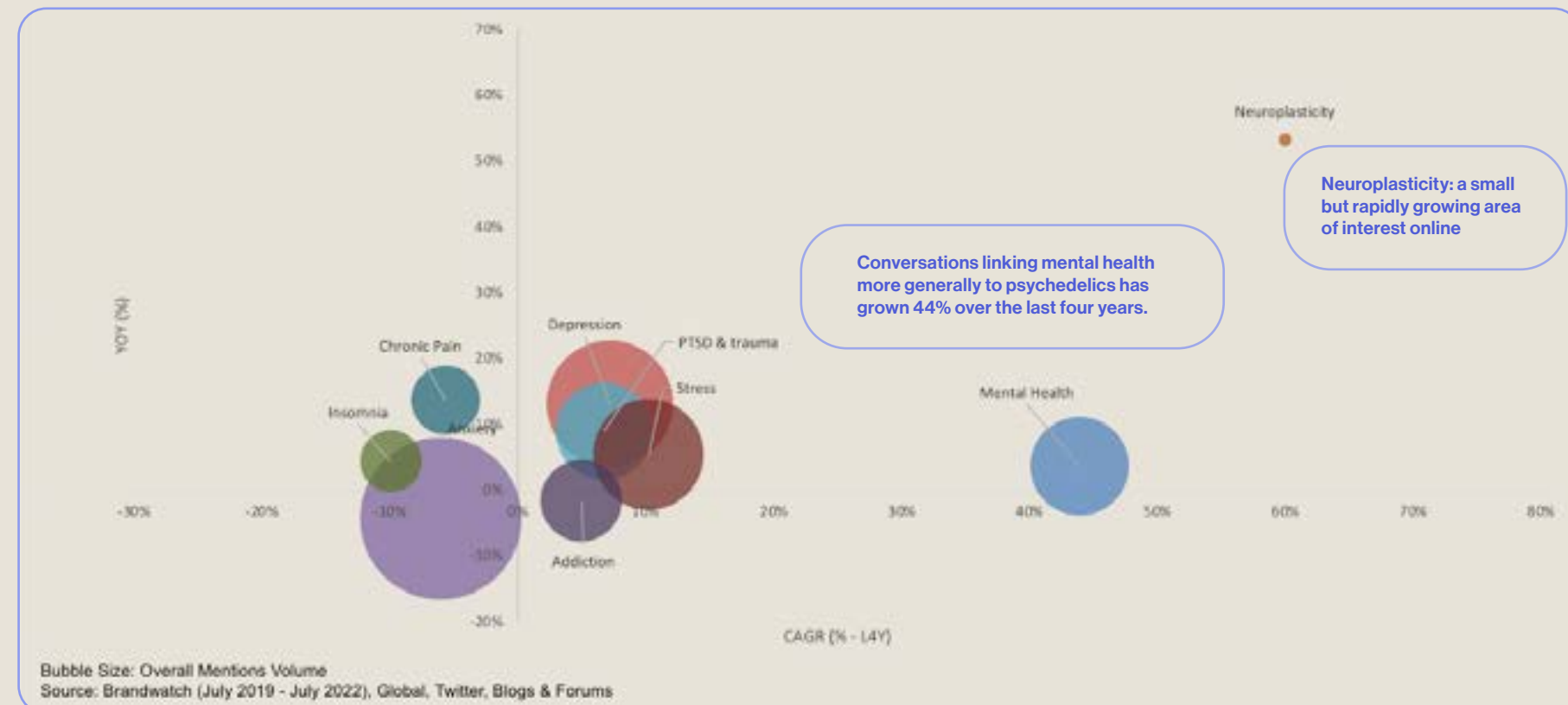
Psychedelics As Therapy

Looking online, conversations center around the therapeutic potential in psychedelics, especially in treating mental health issues such as anxiety, depression and PTSD.

The takeaway is that psychedelic drugs are becoming linked to topics discussed as part of general healthcare. There is also a growing interest in psychedelic therapy and neuroplasticity – the idea that our brain can be ‘rewired’ – conversation has grown 66 percent since 2018.

Conversation Growth Around Psychedelics And Health

(July 2018- July 2022)



Conversations linking mental health more generally to psychedelics has grown 44% over the last four years.

Neuroplasticity: a small but rapidly growing area of interest online

Mental Health

"I've always wanted to try psilocybin to see if it would help ease my treatment-resistant depression." (Twitter, 2022)

PTSD and Depression

"LSD made me realise I was depressed and gave me the ability to stop bad habits and pick up good ones. ... Microdosing also stopped my PTSD triggers." (Reddit, 2022)

Neuroplasticity

"Ketamine therapy works by increasing neuroplasticity in your brain... it allows for your thoughts to take new paths when responding to stressful events in your life." (Twitter, 2022)

Not Just For Personal Use

Interest In Psychedelics Beyond Scientific Conversations

Knowledge about psychedelics is no longer confined to the scientific community. As early as 2017, the Economist ran the cover story, 'Turn on, tune in and drop by the office', covering the Silicon Valley 'avant gardes, breakfasting on acid'.

Now, psychedelics are very much part of the cultural conversation. It's a topic frequently picked up by mainstream media, referenced in TV dramas and discussed among thought leaders.

"Psychedelics and MDMA can make a real difference to mental health, especially for extreme depression and PTSD. We should take this seriously."

—Elon Musk (Twitter, 2022)

Down To Business

As with the rise of CBD in everyday products, some are seeing the commercial opportunity of psychedelics and are ready for potential legislation change.

Micro Tracker

An app designed to help users schedule their doses and input observations about their experience.

"Start my microdosing journey tomorrow!... I have also heard about the MicroTracker app from another Redditor which is helpful to know..." (Reddit, 2021)

Microdose.Me

A mobile microdosing study open to microdosers as well as non-users investigating the effect of microdosing on brain performance and mental health.

"I'd like to track while microdosing to see if it has an effect on me, something with options for mood, focus, journalling, tracking dose, and lets you view progress overtime in a graph... I've heard Microdose.Me is the best?" (Reddit, 2022)

Psychedelic Health: Recommended Watch List



"How To Change Your Mind has taken me from "idk not something I'd put much serious thought into" to "okay actually I would like to seriously look into doing this." (Tumblr, 2022)



"It amazes me the range of mushrooms and fungi can be found. I think mycology might be a new found interest. There's a few different documentaries I've watched on Netflix, Magic Medicine was really interesting." (Reddit, 2022)



"Just finished watching Fantastic Fungi it was really good and very moving, I wasn't expecting that. Maybe we all need to be taking magic mushrooms." (Twitter, 2021)

Mind Blown

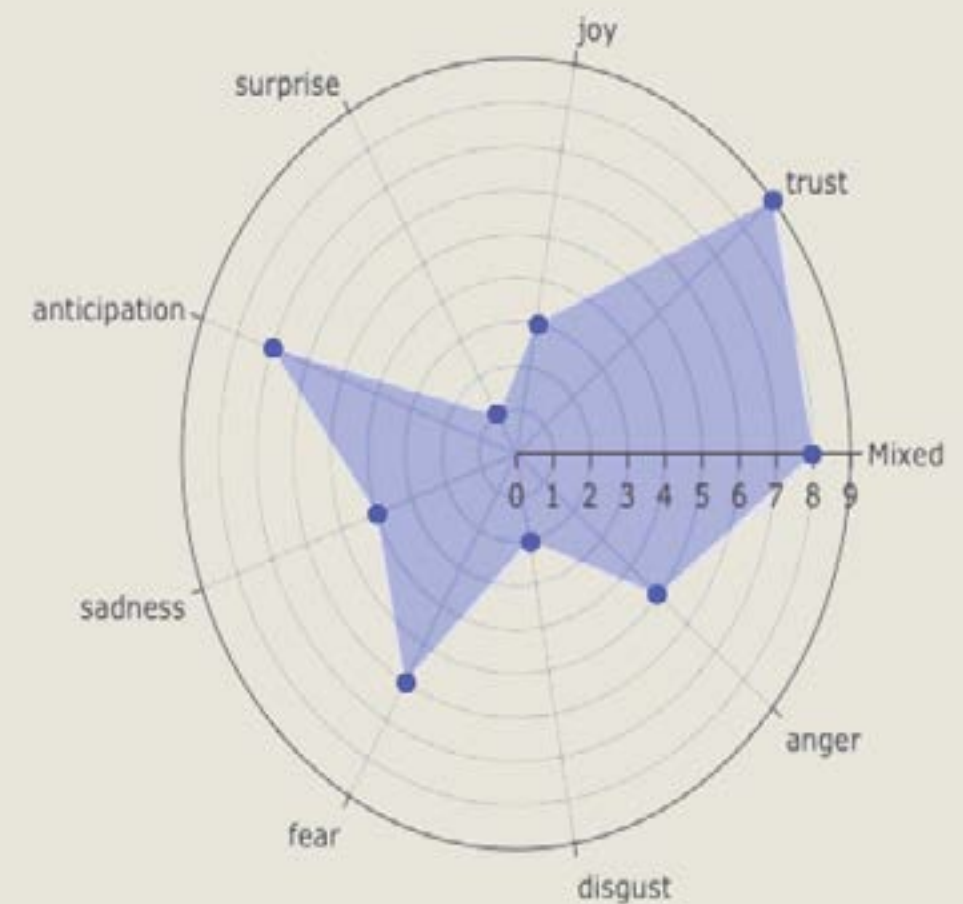
The Emotions Of Mind-Bending Experiences

The image of psychedelics for recreational as well as medicinal purposes is becoming more nuanced, and inquisitiveness is gradually replacing fear.

Using our Crowd Signals emotions tracking tool we can clearly see the conversation around psychedelics is dominated by trust (see graph). This is expressed by individuals posting about their positive experiences and how they dose psychedelics, as well as people asking for and giving advice (see quote, for example).

We are also seeing that anticipation is overcoming fear, suggesting a tendency for open-mindedness when it comes to psychedelics.

“Every time I have done ‘shrooms it has reduced my anxiety once it kicked in. I have also never had a hangover from them, it always makes me feel pretty serene after I come down from a trip. I suggest trying regular dried mushrooms, and preferably eat a bit of food first.” (Reddit, 2022)



Our Crowd Signals emotional radar uses a machine learning model trained on 50,000 data points to label online conversations with one of eight emotions.

Altered States

The Many Different Faces Of Psychedelics



A 'breakthrough therapy'

The use of psychedelics in the medical community is seen as innovative and revolutionary, and with the potential for use on treatment resistant illness like chronic pain and trauma.

"Psilocybin, the psychoactive ingredient in magic mushrooms, **can help treat severe cases of depression** and have been described as a '**breakthrough therapy**' for a **variety of mental health conditions.**" (Twitter)



Portals to spiritual healing and growth

Psychedelics can help individuals reach another level of consciousness and other states of reality, with some users likening their experiences to a spiritual awakening.

"All of us need healing now more than ever. Between Covid, labor crises, radical politics, radical religion, all time highs in greed, housing insecurity...our humanity is suffering and **we need to heal inwards if we want a better world around us. Psychedelics can do that.**" (Reddit)



Self-realisation

Some individuals emphasise how taking psychedelics has changed their world view – 'ego death' is often talked about in relation to mushrooms and LSD.

"I've had an ego death on LSD my second time doing it [...] still to this day **it's affected the way that I see the world.**" (Forums)

Microdosing

The New Coffee Break?

A major subtopic within conversations about psychedelics is microdosing – taking small amounts which don't trigger hallucinations, but are said to sharpen the mind, increase productivity and maintain focus.

This practice is said to have started in Silicon Valley by those looking for self-improvement in everyday life. Our data shows that conversation around microdosing has lifted off since the start of 2021. It's now a widespread talking point, providing both a focal point for jokes “microdosing will really have you falling in love with the way the wind blows trees lol” as well as discussions around the scientific evidence linked to clinical trials.

Meanwhile, though mental wellbeing is still a priority use with 37 percent of people saying they microdose for depression, many reference their usage in relation to work related contexts, such as ‘focus’ and ‘productivity’.

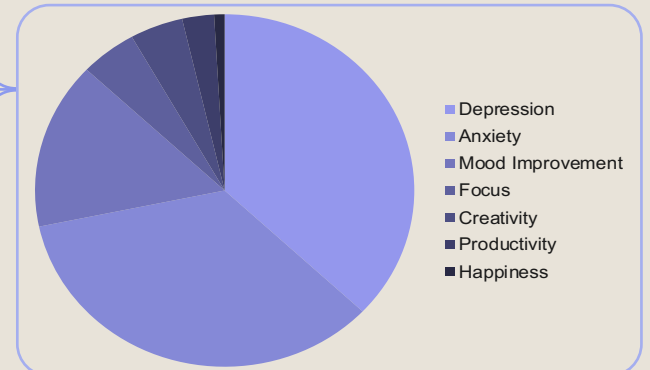
Creativity

“From my experience, microdosing mushrooms works wonders for creativity. Not only you get new ideas but also it's easier to motivate yourself to pursue ones you have already.” (Reddit, 2022)

Focus and Motivation

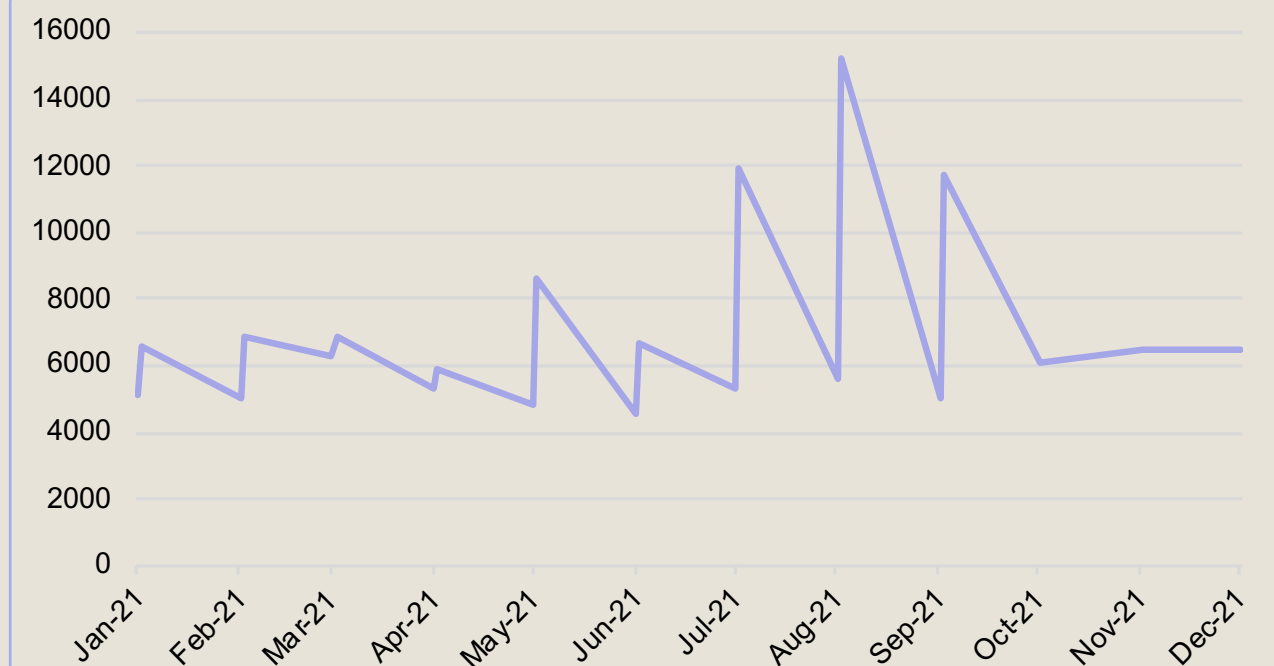
“I've recently started microdosing psilocybin and having focus and motivation to get things done are definitely what I've experienced from microdosing in addition to a lift in my mood.” (Reddit, 2022)

Reasons Why People Microdose



Social Conversation Around Microdosing (Jan 2021- Dec 2021)

Global searches spike in light of Netflix documentary 'Have A Good Trip: An Adventure In Psychedelics' in August 2021



Not To Harsh Your Vibe, But...

It's important to acknowledge that psychedelics remain under researched and should not be viewed as a 'magic bullet' treatment. Researchers have underlined that therapeutic use of them should be done in a medically controlled setting.

Unpacking the thoughts of those in the highly engaged and (generally) informed **Reddit communities such as r/Futurology and r/Psychedelics**, we can see a range of potentially scary side-effects being referenced, while others simply believe their potential is over-hyped.

Traumatic Experiences

"I'm tired of people praising psychedelic drugs like they're the second coming of Christ. I used to be into all the 'mushroom worship and then **one day I had a traumatic mushroom trip that changed everything.**"

Psychosis

"LSD is extremely risky for mentally ill people with propensity towards psychosis and delusion..."

Debunking "Magic bullet thinking"

"Psychedelics are one part of the mental health puzzle but certainly not a 'magic bullet.' Strong psychedelic experiences are like 'hard resets' but you also have to **run the software for a while** afterwards and go through the tutorials to make sense of what's changed."

Brain Damage

"I'm personally pretty pro-psychedelics myself haha, which can be fun in the right doses in the right context... a lot of people do MDMA more than the recommended... which **can cause brain damage and make your baseline mental state be 'more depressed'** by messing up your serotonin."

False Hope

"Psychedelics can break down your old habits but you also need to see a path forward to new ones. Psychedelics might give you a glimmer of **false hope** for a week. **It's not a magic bullet and people say that for a reason.**"

Trippy Futures?

In the coming years, microdosing and psychedelic therapies are becoming increasingly accepted into science, healthcare and society as effective ways to manage mental health and promote cognitive wellness.

That said, people's responses to psychedelic substances can vary hugely, meaning widespread medicinal use is probably a bit far-out for now.

In the coming years, expect to see opportunist companies develop new products and services in the psychoactive space and don't be surprised when someone offers you a mushroom in the bathroom.

Read More:

[Bringing Psychedelic Drugs To The NHS](#)

[New Academic Centre For Psychedelic Research And Mental Health In The UK \(March 2022\)](#)



Crowd SIGNALS

Finding cultural change and future opportunities from unstructured data

Crowd Signals is a powerful new addition to how Crowd DNA pinpoints and tracks trends, unlocking future opportunities at scale and at speed.

Supported by the advanced NLP, AI and machine learning capabilities of strat7.ai, Crowd Signals:

- Pinpoints prominent cultural shifts across the world
- Spots emerging trends and visualises their trajectory
- Quantifies signals and tracks their rate of change
- Unpacks visual codes and the linguistic evolution behind signals
- Define future scenarios and viable opportunity spaces
- Future proofs brands across multiple categories

A cultural framework to bring structure to our work

Crowd Signals is structured around a bespoke taxonomy of nine fundamentals of modern life - each evidencing a macro culture shift, five to eight micro trends and thousands of real time cultural signals, from slow to fast. The framework lives within a single platform, tracking and visualising cultural change over time.

Each culture shift looks ahead five or more years; the micro trends predict change over two to three years; signals are live indicators of real time change.



Data sources and AI powered analysis

Crowd Signals tracks the evolution and expression of each shift via text, images, content and conversations, interrogating data from social posts, forums, search, review sites, client sales and behavioural sets, leveraging AI to provide highly evidenced foresight

Data sources: 100,000+ publicly available global sources from 170 countries. GDPR and TOS compliance is assured.

Crowd SIGNALS

STRAT7
CROWD.DNA

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How we work with clients

One-off explorations or ongoing programmes - access Signals ad hoc at a moment in time or on a continuous, quarterly or monthly basis.

Standard reporting or bespoke consultancy - tap into ready-made reports and recommendations, or opt for custom data enrichment calling on further trends consultancy, semiotics and KIN – our 1,000+ global network of experts, creators and connectors.

Strategic outcomes

Futures & Trends

Culturally charged forecasting and scenario planning

Brand Strategy

Positioning and brand recommendations rooted in cultural signals

Comms & Activations

Culturally nuanced and impactful marketing executions

Innovation

Opportunity areas for culturally relevant, future proofed innovation

Thanks for reading.

Crowd DNA is a cultural insights and strategy consultancy with offices in London, Amsterdam, New York, Singapore, Sydney, Stockholm, and Los Angeles.

Formed in 2008, operating in 70+ markets, we bring together trends specialists, researchers, strategists, data analysts, writers, designers and film-makers, creating culturally charged commercial advantage for the world's most exciting brands.