
NEED TO KNOW

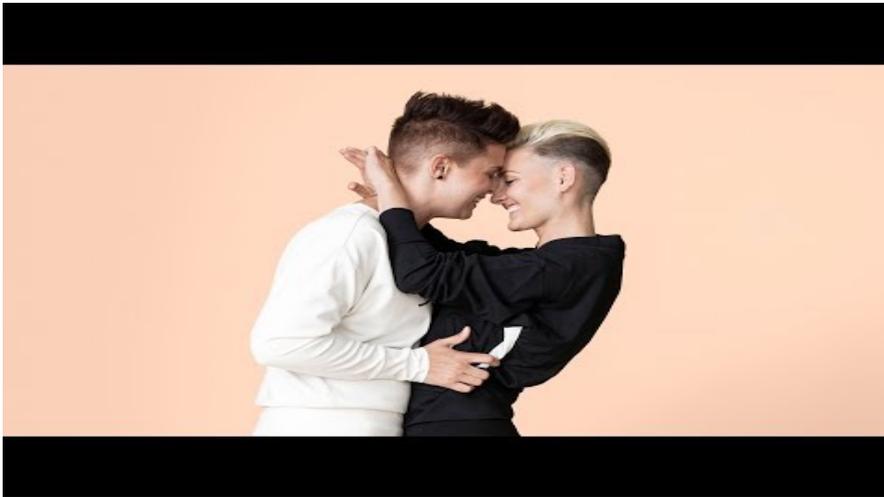
14 : 06 : 18

By Livvy Houghton

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Björn Borg enables same-sex marriage using blockchain, Gravy makes players compete for discounted products, Ikea ditches single-use plastics.

1. Björn Borg instigates same-sex marriage on the blockchain



Marriage Unblocked by Björn Borg

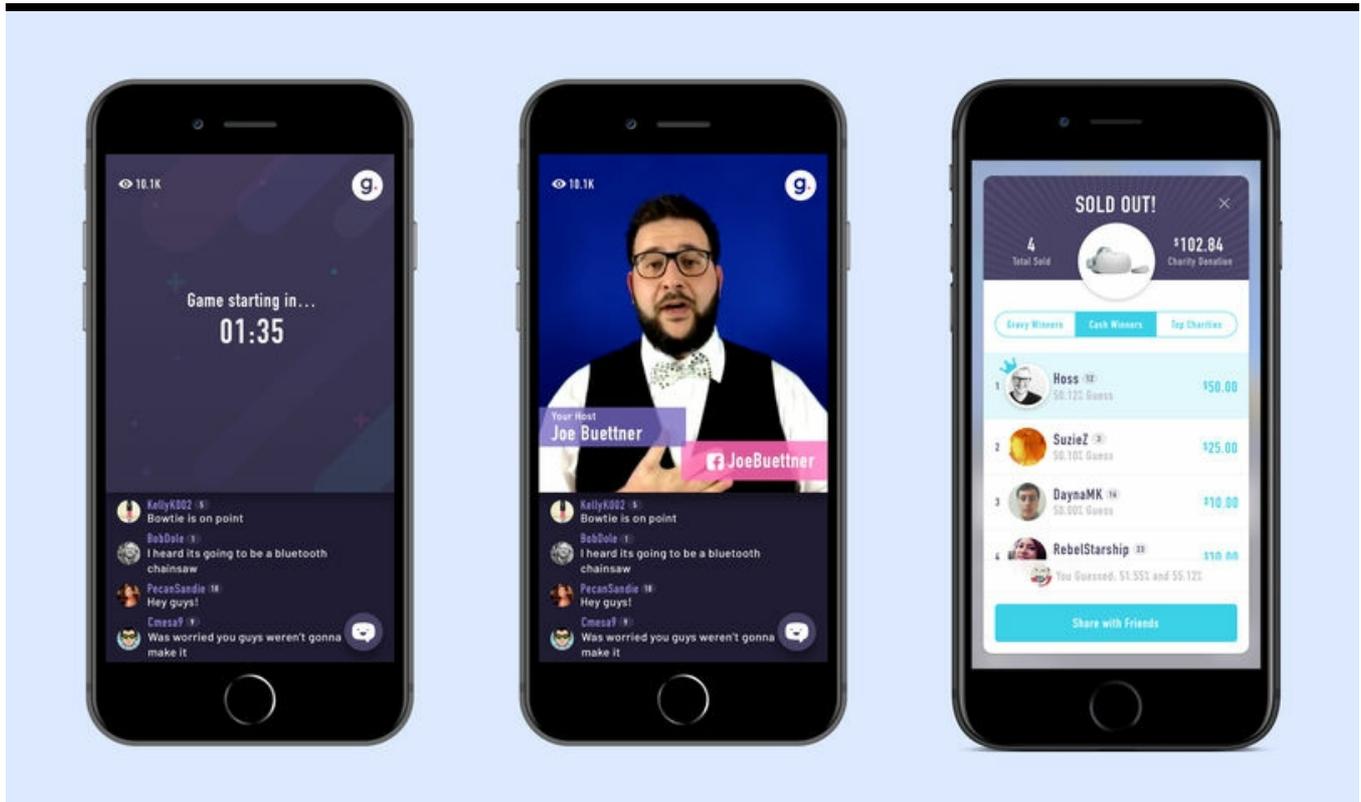
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Global – Swedish sportswear brand **Björn Borg** is demonstrating its support for romantic equality by enabling anyone – regardless of their gender or sexuality – to get married digitally on the blockchain.

Ten years on from its **Love for All** campaign, the brand continues its messaging with the launch of new digital platform Marriage Unblocked. With same-sex marriage prohibited in 87% of countries in the world, the platform provides a place for couples to exchange their promises in a symbolic digital marriage, which permanently stores their certificate and vows in blockchain **without the need for third-party approval**. The couples can choose to keep their records anonymous or show them proudly in public.

Opportunities and usage beyond the financial sphere continue to emerge for blockchain technology. Diamond producer **De Beers** recently demonstrated the successful use of **blockchain to provide assurances of authenticity** and provenance along the diamond supply chain.

2. Gravy hypes audiences with gamified discounting



Gravy, US

US – Live media company **Gravy** has launched the first app-based shopping game show. Airing each night at 8:30pm ET, audiences compete to buy products at a highly discounted price.

Mimicking the format of shopping channels, a live host reveals each new product on sale. Audiences can buy the product at any time but the longer they wait, the lower the prices fall, until the quantity – which is hidden, thus heightening the gamble – sells out. A leader board then shows the players who bought the item for the lowest price. Adding a charitable twist, Gravy donates between 20% and 100% of sale proceeds from each product to one of its approved charities.

As consumers pursue the high-energy anticipation that comes with **competitive live-streaming**, app-based games that mimic classic tv game shows are gaining in popularity around the world. **HQ Trivia** is another example of a quiz that requires players to log in to the app at a specified time each day, to be in with a chance of winning prize money.

3. Ikea to eradicate single-use plastics from its stores



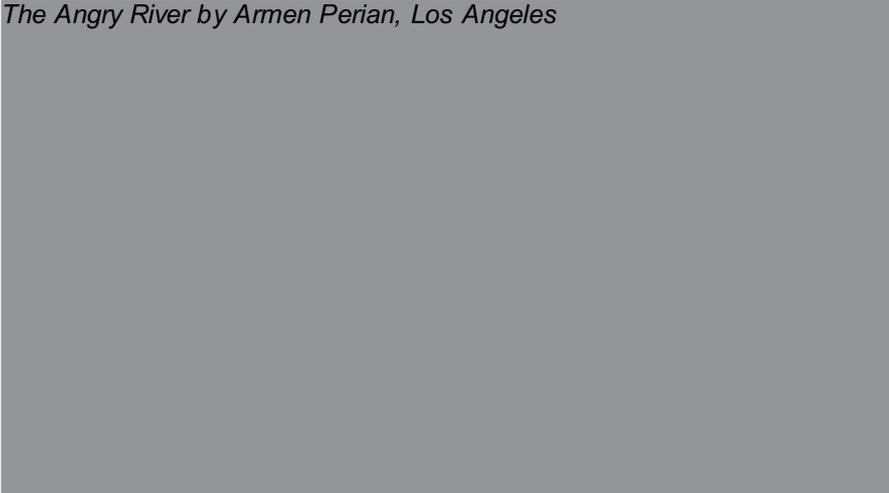
Älmhult, Sweden – At its Democratic Design Days 2018, **Ikea** announced its intention to remove all single-use plastic products from its collections and in-store restaurants by 2020. Alongside pledges to use only renewable energy and recycled materials, Ikea will ditch items such as plastic straws, plates, cups and bin bags.

‘Our ambition is to become people- and planet-positive by 2030 while growing the Ikea business. Through our size and reach we have the opportunity to inspire and enable more than one billion people to live better lives, within the limits of the planet,’ says Torbjörn Lööf, CEO of Inter Ikea Group.

With consumers increasingly concerned about plastic’s environmental impact, retailers must act now to reduce their reliance on the material. Supermarkets are already exploring plastic-free innovations, with a number of initiatives explored [here](#).

4. A film that adapts to your subconscious preferences

The Angry River by Armen Perian, Los Angeles



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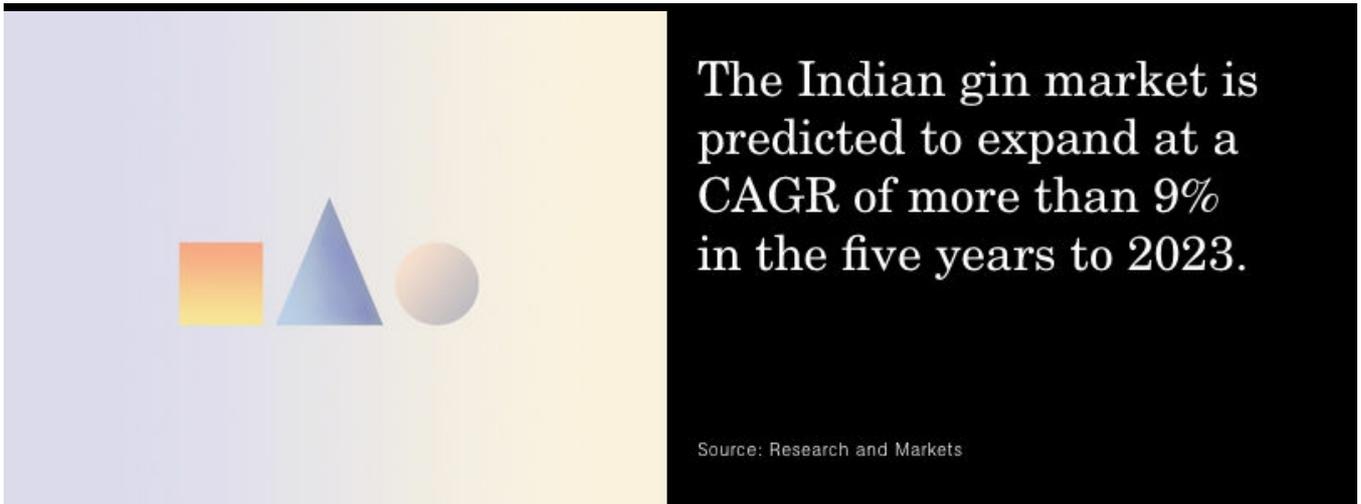
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Los Angeles – California film-maker **Armen Perian** has developed a short film that adapts its storyline based on an individual's viewing patterns.

The Angry River taps into viewers' webcams and monitors their gaze through eye-tracking technology. This technology detects where and when their eye lingers, switching the storyline of the film to one of five possibilities, crafted to their interests. Perian worked with Crossbeat New York, which developed the eye-gaze detection and machine learning that power the story's algorithm. 'You watch it like any other film. But watching something is still making decisions, and what the viewer decides to pay attention to ultimately drives the action. It changes the movie they see,' explains Perian.

Neuro-experiences are increasingly being used in media to offer an extreme form of personalised entertainment. **The MOMENT** is another recent example of an interactive film that adapts its storyline depending on the viewer's subconscious responses.

5. Indian consumers develop a taste for gin



After years of being the world's top whisky consumers, Indian consumers are beginning to explore the rest of the spirits aisle. While gin is often more expensive than other spirits in India, an increase in disposable income is contributing to a rise in its sales. Meanwhile, vodka sales are forecast to reach double-digit growth (12%) over the next five years, as a result of flavoured vodka attracting consumption among India's younger demographic.

For more insight into consumers' changing alcohol tastes around the world, read our [Global Spirits Market](#).

6. Thought-starter: Can gaming boost relations between men?



Players and developers are exploring gaming's potential to build positive, meaningful relationships between boys and men.

Long regarded as isolating, video games are transforming into a conduit for boys and men to discuss their mental health. **Just Boys IRL**, a recent BBC 3 documentary, explores this topic by bringing together a group of British teenagers with a range of mental health concerns who have formed a strong bond playing Dota 2 online. The web series follows the group as they meet for the first time in person and then travel across Europe, getting to know each other away from their screens.

The video games industry has evolved dramatically over the past decade, with a burgeoning indie sector producing games that explore the human condition in a much broader way than the blockbuster titles that take up most consumer screen time. One of the hit games of 2018 thus far, **God of War** for PlayStation, has won much critical and player acclaim for the way it explores the vicissitudes of a father-son relationship within the confines of what is otherwise a typically violent game style.

For more, see the full microtrend [here](#).