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Emerging *Trends* Zine

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[INNOVATION] became a word
of [MANDATORY USAGE].

Companies insist the future *will be*
[EFFICIENT], [AUTOMATED],
yet between the lines you can read
what's missing:

(personal time)

(labor rights)

(environmental impact).

What remains visible is a **shiny promise**—
but what's hidden is *the price* we'll pay
when **tomorrow's workplace**
no longer needs *workers*,
only DATA.

Promises, promises

PROMISES, PROMISES.

A new world, driven by technology,
innovative, **problem free**.
And I wonder if *they* **meant to lie**,
or if *they* believed the fakery
they spat through their teeth.

If, with every **fallen** tree, species **extinct**, black liquid **dirtying** the sea,
polluted air invading their lungs, fire in their cities and homes,
destruction, almost like karma, bringing devastation to the world,
they just **watched**, **unbothered**, and muttered: "Not my problem at all."

And now it is 2050, and I remember everything.
I think and think and **think** of what we could have done.
I am just an individual, after all.
I **remember** the park I used to visit, how **green** and **lively** it looked.
It seems so long ago now, how the sparrows flew.

The company next door had it all planned out, a **Fortune 100 corporation™**
and everyone eager to hear them out.

PROMISES, PROMISES, all around the world,
"technology and science,
we **will** make it work."

And good people, hard workers, they did try.
Reports, treaties, and summits, a strategy **to dream**.
"Do this, it's **sustainable**," they **all** said, but as it turned out
they were **too slow to decide** the pathway.

PROMISES, PROMISES, but I knew their true motives.
Mr. Money was behind it all, and I could not understand why.
Profit and profit and **profit**, will it really matter
when the world **dies out**?

Policies, memos, and investments.
Were they **really** thinking of the **consequences**? What was missing?
Commitment, discipline, **interest**? Time, **morals**, or maybe resources?

And now it is just **me** and my **thoughts** and the sparrow's ashes
as I stand in what used to be a park, grey clouds hanging over the sky.


The End of The Smartphone Is Near

We praise innovation,
but it feels like performance.
Each September, the world stops
to take another bite from the Apple.
As if creation began again,
promised a new life.

It buys us status,
but don't ask us about
battery percentage,
durability, or features.
It tells us we are someone,
a silent passport to a future
sold as perfection,
a quiet hierarchy
we pretend not to see.


The screen grows brighter,
the camera sharper,
the price higher,
but the question remains:
is this progress,
or just a carefully choreographed show?

And somewhere in the whispers
of tech prophets and tired users,
a quiet thought grows louder:
The end of the smartphone is near!
not with a bang, but with another
Apple reveal trying too hard
to convince us that the same shape
still holds new miracles.



Remote work didn't erase the office
walls,
it simply painted them the color of
my home.

Remote work was introduced as a promise: more freedom, more balance, more control over our time. Companies framed it as the future of work, a clean, efficient, flexible alternative to the traditional office. But for many people, this promise has slowly revealed itself as a mirage. What organizations call “flexibility” often translates into constant availability. What they describe as “autonomy” becomes self-imposed pressure to always be productive. And the idea of “work-life balance” hides a simple truth: the office did not disappear. It just moved into the living room, the kitchen, and the bedroom.

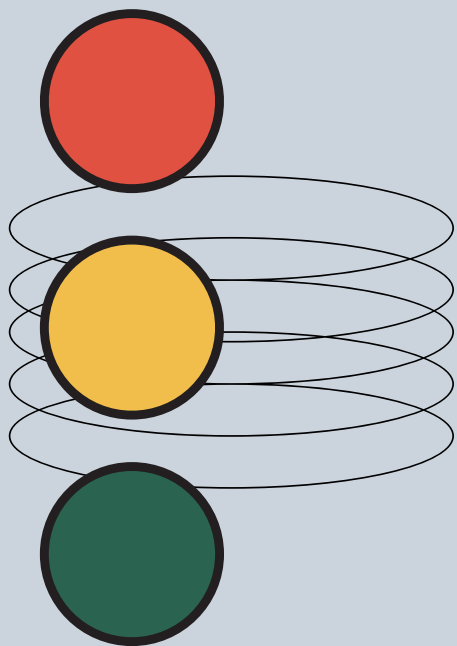


This shift creates a new type of invisible labor. Workers navigate isolation, blurred schedules, and the merging of private and professional spaces. At times, the home becomes less of a sanctuary and more of a quiet extension of corporate expectations. Remote work can truly be empowering, but only when companies confront its complexities with honest policies, realistic expectations, and psychological support.





Glossy ads hiding the truth
Real impact left unmeasured
Empy claims wrapped in leaves
Eco-words masking harmful practices
Nice slogans, no substance



Well-crafted illusions
Appealing but misleading
Stories built to distract
Hollow promises of “clean”
Images greener than reality
Numbers twisted to impress
Green outside, grey inside



Telling things as they are
Revealing facts, not fantasies
Upholding honesty over comfort
Transparency as a real commitment
Holding companies accountable

Thirty Days of Color, Eleven Months of Silence

A Meditation on **Rainbow**-Washing

June arrives like a costume change.

Logos bloom overnight— **red** becomes **rainbow**,
blue becomes **rainbow**, the **golden** arches bend
into a **spectrum** they will forget by July 1st.

The Mechanics of **Rainbow**-Washing

Rainbow-washing represents a calculated corporate strategy that exploits LGBTQ+ identity for profit while avoiding **meaningful** commitment to queer rights and welfare. This phenomenon intensifies each June, when companies suddenly discover their "values" align with Pride Month, only to retreat into silence once the calendar turns and the marketing opportunity expires.

The practice operates on several interconnected levels. First, there's the superficial rebranding: logos receive temporary rainbow makeovers, products get limited-edition pride packaging, and social media accounts flood feeds with rainbow flags and generic statements about "**love**" and "**inclusion**." This costs companies virtually nothing—a designer's time, some digital assets, perhaps a few production runs of themed merchandise that often sells at **premium** prices.

But scratch beneath this colorful surface and the **contradictions** emerge. The same corporations painting their profiles rainbow often maintain political **donation** records that tell a different story. Many contribute to politicians and political action committees that actively work **against** LGBTQ+ rights—opposing anti-discrimination legislation, supporting bathroom bills, blocking healthcare access for trans individuals, and fighting against marriage equality protections. The financial trail reveals where actual priorities lie, and it's rarely with the communities these brands claim to celebrate.



We Are Committed To Transformation

PENDING APPROVAL

“INNOVATION” has become one of the most overused words in business. Companies claim they’re *transforming the future, revolutionizing workflows*, or *“thinking outside the box.”* Yet, when you look closely, much of this so-called innovation is more performance than progress. The difference between authentic and performative innovation is widening, and most organizations are far more comfortable with the latter.

Performative innovation is the version everyone recognizes: flashy announcements, trendy vocabulary, and initiatives designed to look transformative without requiring much change. It’s the new “INNOVATION LAB” with colorful furniture but no clear purpose. It’s the annual report filled with futuristic graphics while internal systems run on outdated processes. It’s innovation as image management, not problem-solving.

This kind of innovation tends to favor visibility over value. It prioritizes storytelling over learning, and optics over outcomes. The goal is to signal relevance “Look, we’re innovating too!” even when nothing meaningful shifts beneath the surface.

Authentic innovation, on the other hand, is quieter—and, ironically, far more disruptive. It requires honesty about what isn’t working and discipline to address it. Real innovation rarely appears glamorous; it often involves tedious redesigns, rethinking everyday workflows, or questioning assumptions that have gone unquestioned for years. Authentic innovators care less about being seen as innovative and more about actually improving something. What makes authentic innovation difficult is that it demands vulnerability. It requires admitting limitations, tolerating failure, and inviting collaboration across hierarchies. It doesn’t hide behind buzzwords; it focuses on outcomes that genuinely benefit users, employees, or communities.

So what would it look like if companies leaned into authenticity? They might share transparent progress updates instead of grand declarations. They might empower employees outside traditional innovation roles, valuing practical insights over trend-chasing. They might prioritize sustained experimentation over short-lived campaigns designed for attention.

The future belongs to organizations that understand that innovation is not a performance, it’s a practice. The ones who commit to the unglamorous work of improving systems, not just the glamorous language of pretending to.

AUTHENTIC VS. PERFORMATIVE INNOVATION:

● THE GAP NO ONE WANTS TO ADMIT ●

● Authentic innovation is harder. But it’s also the only kind that lasts.

November 24, 2050

To all business leaders and teams from the 2020s...

I am writing this letter to express my gratitude for your courage in embracing change. As I write this from a workplace that barely resembles the offices you once knew, I find myself remembering the generation that preceded us, the generation that had to unlearn everything. And I want to thank you for questioning the unquestionable and breaking down stigmas. Challenging the 9-to-5 workday, the physical office as the center of productivity, and the idea that supervision equaled trust. You faced criticism, uncertainty, and resistance, but you still chose to experiment. You began opening those doors.

And so you became the generation that had to unlearn:

Unlearn that meetings must be in person.

Unlearn that long hours equal dedication.

Unlearn that careers follow a linear path.

Unlearn that leadership is about control instead of guidance.

Today, in 2050, we operate in hybrid worlds where physical and digital environments interact without any problems. Teams are easily formed across continents. Our days are structured around energy, not hours. Employees collaboratively create their roles. Workflows adapt to people, not people to workflows.

I'm writing to express my gratitude...

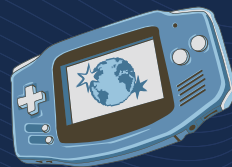
Thank you for doubting traditions.

Thank you for valuing employees.

Thank you for believing in equality.

Thank you for admitting you didn't have all the answers and experimenting.

Thank you for unlearning so that we could build.



Because of you, our workplaces in 2050 are more humane, more inclusive, and more adaptable than ever before.

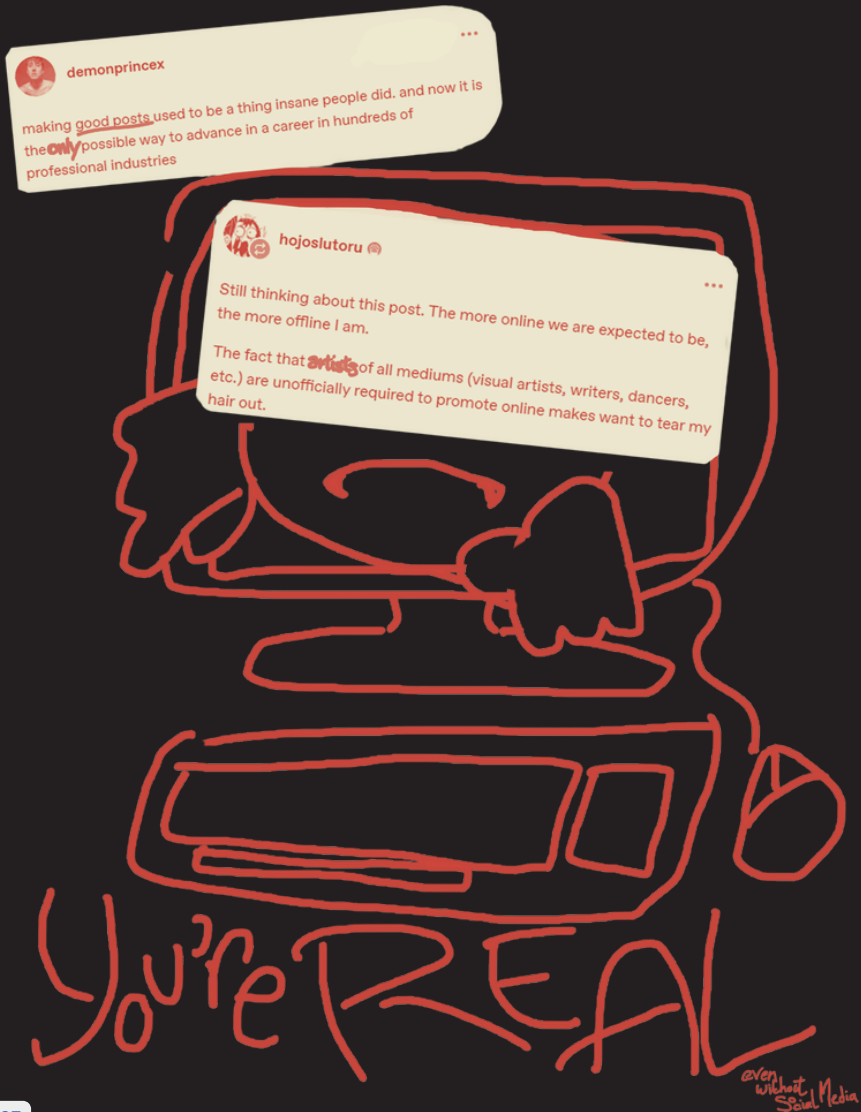
—A voice from the future,
a grateful successor



Itzel Espinosa Nava
Michelle Castañeda

The Human Fear

Social media is filled with *details, details, details*, but **not the plot**. Getting into any type of productive activity should not be tied to your **social media metrics**. Why is everyone suddenly yelling at me to **monetize** my **hobbies**? When did we stop being allowed to exist? To enjoy an activity without amounting it to its financial gain or loss?



Rest as a New Competency: The Next Requirement for a “Good Employee”

Conversations about the future of work usually revolve around productivity, automation, and efficiency. What frustrates us is that these discussions often ignore one of the most transformative trends emerging in research and industry reports: the strategic importance of rest. Week 15 materials emphasized that digital transformation is not just about new technologies but about rethinking human-centered systems. Yet companies still frame rest as a perk, not as a skill.

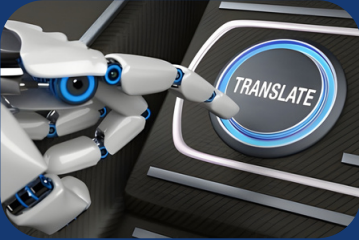
With burnout rates rising globally and hybrid work blurring every boundary, organizations are starting to realize that knowing how and when to rest is becoming a measurable competency. Some companies already track vacation usage; others send automated alerts encouraging employees to disconnect. However, these efforts often feel superficial—treating rest as something to monitor rather than something to teach.

An alternative approach would redefine rest as a professional capability, similar to communication or project management. In a digitally accelerated workplace, “rest literacy” could mean recognizing cognitive overload, planning restorative breaks, and using downtime strategically to sustain long-term performance. Companies could integrate this into performance reviews not to police employees, but to protect them.



Instead of asking, “How many tasks did you complete?” organizations might ask, “How sustainably did you work?” But this shift comes with risks. If rest becomes trackable data, employers could use it to shame employees for “resting incorrectly.” Surveillance disguised as wellness is still surveillance. For this transformation to be meaningful, rest must be treated as a right before it becomes a requirement. Our statement is clear: the future of work will demand not just productivity, but mastery of rest—and the way companies implement this will determine whether it’s empowering or exploitative. True innovation means designing systems where employees are evaluated not for how relentlessly they work, but for how wisely they rest.

“The Revolution Will Be Machine-Translated (...and Still Wrong)”



We are constantly informed that AI has “reinvented” translation. A press release appears on LinkedIn every week like a glittery balloon: Neural engines! Excessive personalization Language disruption of the next generation! Nevertheless, translators are still bound to the same old sentence-by-sentence grid behind the glossy buzzwords, cleaning up after machines like digital janitors. Rethinking instant noodles as “artisan ramen” must also qualify as culinary innovation if this is “transformation.”

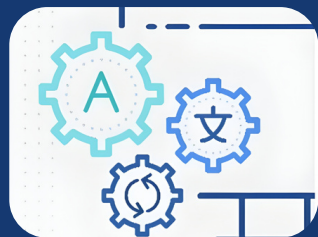
The technology itself doesn't irritate me—NMT (Neural Machine Translation) is strong, impressive, and sometimes magical.

What irritates me is the performance of innovation. Businesses deliver optimization while claiming revolution. The workflow always reverts to the same file-based treadmill: translate, review, export, and deliver, despite their promises of multilingual futures. The unit is always the same. The incentives are always the same. Data scraping, surveillance-linguistics, and invisible labor are examples of ethical issues that are disregarded in favor of “efficiency.”

How would real transformation look like, then?

Perhaps a world where interfaces, documentation, and storytelling are created as ecosystems rather than as afterthoughts, and content is created multilingually from the beginning, where translators influence not just sentences but also product strategy, where data is not mined from underpaid online laborers in the Global South and data practices are transparent. “AI assistance” does not entail “replacing humans, then hiring them back as post-editors at half price.”

Instead of merely automating tasks, true innovation would redistribute power. In addition to correcting machine errors, it would grant linguists authorship over context. With traceable data, consent-based corpora, and just compensation for the voices that train the machines, it would establish ethical pipelines.



The industry will continue to market incremental updates as the way of the future until then. And we—translators, interpreters, and multilingual workers—will never stop posing the true question that lies beneath the curtain of buzzwords:

Is your purported revolution truly a revolution if it still relies on human labor that you refuse to acknowledge? or simply a less expensive process masquerading as the future?

The Future of Work Is Not About Technology, It's About Redefining How We Value People

The future of work is often framed as a technological inevitability—automation will replace certain tasks, remote work will continue to expand, and employment relationships will become more flexible. While these trends are real, the way companies discuss them is frequently shallow and overly optimistic. Organizations often claim that remote work “empowers employees,” or that automation “frees workers for creative tasks,” without acknowledging the structural inequalities and pressures that shape people’s actual experiences. Remote work, for example, created new opportunities, but it also intensified digital surveillance, blurred work-life boundaries, and reinforced global pay gaps as companies outsource roles to lower-cost regions. Similarly, automation is usually celebrated as a sign of progress, but industry reports show that the benefits disproportionately go to employers through cost savings, while workers face job insecurity and a growing demand for skills they are rarely supported in developing. What frustrates me most is the assumption that workers should constantly “adapt” while institutions avoid making meaningful commitments to reskilling, equitable compensation, or sustainable workload design.

A transformed approach to the future of work would center human needs rather than technological efficiency. Instead of treating employees as infinitely flexible resources, organizations could design systems that prioritize autonomy, psychological safety, and long-term employability. Hybrid work could be structured around genuine flexibility rather than constant availability. Automation strategies could include guaranteed training pathways and job transition support. Most importantly, companies should acknowledge that technological change is not neutral, it reflects the values and choices of those who implement it.

Imagining the future of work requires more than predicting trends; it requires questioning who benefits and who is left behind. A more honest, people-centered approach would not only prepare organizations for technological shifts, it would create workplaces where innovation is measured not by speed or savings, but by how well we support the humans at the center of it all.

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Are we supposed to fear AI?

We shouldn't fear AI, but we should definitely respect it. AI is a powerful tool that can boost creativity, improve healthcare, and solve complex problems, but like any technology, it carries risks if misused—such as misinformation, bias, or loss of privacy. The key is not panic, but **responsible development**, clear rules, and **human oversight**. When used ethically, AI becomes less something to fear and more something to guide, shape, and benefit from.

BUT, can we?

Viviana Aideé Delgado

Digital Empathy: The Value We Forgot to Program

Maria Fernanda Galván

For years, companies have chased every new gadget, every algorithm, every “game-changing” platform—believing that the future of work lives in whatever can be automated, optimized, or packaged as innovation. Yet beneath this obsession with disruption, one essential element keeps slipping through the cracks: empathy.

Digital transformation promised smoother workflows, faster communication, and smarter systems. And surely, it delivered speed. It delivered data. It delivered dashboards that glow at 2 a.m. But somewhere in that race toward efficiency, the human pulse got quieter.

Teams became icons on a screen. Messages turned into tasks. People began talking in metrics instead of emotions. And suddenly, the workplace didn't feel like a community anymore—it felt like a server room wearing a smiley-face sticker.

Empathy isn't soft. It isn't optional. It's infrastructure.

Real digital evolution requires understanding how humans live, feel, and break down. Without that, every “innovation” is just ornamented automation—cold, efficient, and fundamentally detached. Workplaces keep asking people to adapt to tools instead of designing tools that adapt to people.

Imagine a future where empathy becomes a strategic priority, not a poster in the hallway.

A future where notifications don't demand urgency, but respect boundaries.

Where AI systems are trained with ethical intention, not convenience.

Where leaders value emotional intelligence as much as KPIs.

Where rest, mental health, and community aren't perks—they're policies.

Machines can compute.

Machines can predict.

But they can't care.

And caring is still our greatest technology.

The next real disruption won't come from code.

It'll come from companies brave enough to rebuild their culture around what algorithms can't replicate: presence, compassion, and humanity.





Arantza González
Alan Aldana

Innovation Theatre

once more,
the curtain rises on
innovation

executives announce
disruption
to an applauding audience
under perfect lighting

sticky-note strategies
neon labs
sponsored hackathons
rehearse the future
without touching
the present

slides transform,
structures don't

we redesign slogans,
not systems
measure activity,
not impact

real change waits backstage
in underfunded teams,
in questions
that never make it
to the script

one day
the audience will leave
and the theatre will discover
the world
innovated
without them

and when the lights go dark,
the stage will remember
every promise
made for show—
the openings celebrated,
the prototypes applauded,
the futures imagined
but never built.
behind the velvet curtain,
dust gathers on ideas
that once sounded brave
but were never allowed
to live outside rehearsal.
meanwhile,
beyond the theatre walls,
people rewrite the script
with no spotlight,
no applause—
just the quiet work
of changing things
for real.

REFLECTION

“Innovation Theatre” exposes the tension between the performance of innovation and the reality of organizational inertia. Through its stage imagery and rhythmic structure, the poem reveals how companies often mistake aesthetic change for meaningful transformation. The spotlights, slogans, and perfectly curated presentations become symbols of a corporate culture more invested in appearing progressive than in confronting the deeper structural work that true innovation demands.

What stands out is the poem’s quiet assertion that real change grows backstage—away from the applause, away from the spectacle, in the overlooked spaces where honest questions and under-resourced teams persist. The final stanzas remind us that innovation is not a show to be performed, but a practice that happens collectively, often invisibly, and sometimes in spite of institutional resistance.

Ultimately, the poem critiques a system that values performance over progress, while also pointing toward a future where genuine innovation emerges not because of the theatre, but beyond it.

