

# Here's to the next 100 years

Picking up this 2025 Innovation Report was a very good idea – reading it cover to cover will be even better. In the year that FIPP celebrates its centenary, innovation is as critical for the future of our industry as it ever has been. In laying out the challenges and showcasing the great work being done to overcome them, from news to lifestyle, B2B to specialist niche and from across all corners of the world, Juan and Jayant's report will, I hope, help you to grow in 2026.

The first and most immediate challenge, as laid out so clearly in this year's report, is the overhaul of digital discovery. As AI-powered search and “zero-click” answers become dominant, the foundation of SEO-driven traffic – once the lifeblood of digital media – has been fundamentally disrupted. Licensing arrangements and negotiations with AI platforms present both hopes and hazards, with benefits skewed heavily toward the largest players while others risk further loss of control over their content, IP and business models. I really hope that 2026 is the year when we can find a framework and industry standards that address these issues and bring the balance back toward quality publishers.

The second theme is the rise of direct, owned reader relationships. With advertising models disrupted and platform dependency ever more precarious, the pulse of our industry, as demonstrated so vividly at the FIPP World Media Congress in Madrid, now beats strongest where publishers invest in community, brand loyalty, and flexible access. Print remains a vital revenue stream, with premium, niche, and high-quality titles demonstrating lasting appeal. The opportunity lies in leveraging every available tool to bring readers closer, earning trust and habit even as competition multiplies.

Finally, the integration of AI offers more than efficiency and automation; it is unlocking creative and collaborative horizons. Magazine brands are reinventing their production pipelines and audience products – summarising, translating, recommending, and personalising at scale – freeing editorial teams to pursue deeper reporting, stronger design, and bold experiments. AI's promise is not to replace human creativity, but to support it: accelerating the grunt work and amplifying what only talented editors, writers, designers and marketers can provide. The key to success will be responsible adoption: building editorial guardrails, investing in new skills, and keeping trust and transparency at the very heart of innovation.

The old certainties have eroded, and the rate of change is unlikely to slow. For every bold experiment and niche success story, there are pitfalls that warrant caution: from intensifying competition and regulatory complexity to fickle consumer behaviour and relentless technological acceleration.

What does this mean for us today? It means the future is wider, faster, and more open than ever – provided we embrace the changes while doubling down on the values that make what we do so compelling. There is no greater moment to be inventive, authentic, and reader-first. The experiments we launch, the relationships we forge, and the risks we take now will set the course for the next decade.

The 2025 report is not a roadmap of easy answers, but an inspiration and a guide for what might come next. The way forward may not always be easy, but, as has been the case over the past 100 years of FIPP's existence, for those willing to confront uncertainty directly, there remains a real future for distinctive, connected, meaningful publishing that engages audiences the world over.

**Alastair Lewis, CEO**

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