



NewNarrative

BANDWAGON BACKLASH TRACKER

THE AI ECONOMY TOO BIG TO FAIL, TOO FRAGILE TO TRUST

Q4 2025

ACUMEN
by New Narrative

The AI Economy: Too big to fail, too fragile to trust

About this report

The iN/Ntelligence Bandwagon Backlash Tracker is designed to help marketing and communications leaders cut through the noise surrounding dominant narratives. We focus on topics where excitement looks set to peak and the narrative arc is bending towards doubt across key industries and sectors.

Rather than chasing hype, the Bandwagon Backlash Tracker highlights where enthusiasm is waning and scepticism may be building, and how these shifts shape brand, investor, and policy conversations.

Each topic represents a distinct storyline detected in global media coverage, with a focus on how narratives rise, fragment, and inevitably turn into backlash. The aim is not only to describe market chatter but to

show where communicators can lead, defend, or reframe narratives to maximise the impact of their voice.

Each issue is aimed at helping busy communications leaders with concrete advice and narrative recommendations that are succinct, targeted and data-driven.



To learn more about
iN/Ntelligence

[click here](#)

Methodology

This report draws on a dataset of more than 1,400 global news and commentary articles collected between January - September 2025. Articles were enriched with metadata, including named entities (organisations, people, geographies), sentiment scores, and topic classifications.

To identify the dominant narratives, we applied **non-negative matrix factorisation (NMF) topic modelling** on English-language content (or English translations for non-English sources), using combined fields of title, description, and body text. Each resulting cluster was reviewed and labelled according to its dominant themes. We calculated share of voice (SOV) by aggregating mentions of organisations, institutions and key individuals across each topic. Mentions were normalised into categories to provide comparative visibility. The result is a structured view of where attention is concentrated, how it shifts over time, and which voices drive the conversation.

The AI Economy:

Too big to fail, too fragile to trust

Markets, investors & the AI economy

AI has shifted from a story of unlimited growth to a contested economic narrative. Companies are still eager to be seen at the cutting edge, but the questions savvy audiences are asking have changed: less "what can this do?" and more "will the returns justify the capital invested?"

Context: Why it matters now

AI is no longer a “tech story”—it shapes how investors, clients and prospective clients perceive companies and where budgets go. Media and analysts are asking whether the huge spend on AI hardware and cloud capacity is turning into real, repeatable revenue. That question now drives brand perception: the winners are the firms that can show proof, not just promise.

MARKETS & THE AI ECONOMY — YTD 2025 Commentary Snapshot

- **Tone:** Slightly negative (average = -0.16); sentiment immersion high.
- **Immediate risk:** Guidance/valuation gap; margin squeeze from pricing compression; export & supply shocks.
- **Priority actions:** Publish verified ROI & utilisation; prep earnings-day toolkit with plain-English KPIs; frame value beyond price (performance per watt, reliability, speed to deploy); own risk narrative with clear exposure/mitigations.

CONTROVERSY INDEX — Markets, Investors & the AI Economy

Measures how polarised and contrarian media coverage was in Q1 — Q3 2025.



77
Hot

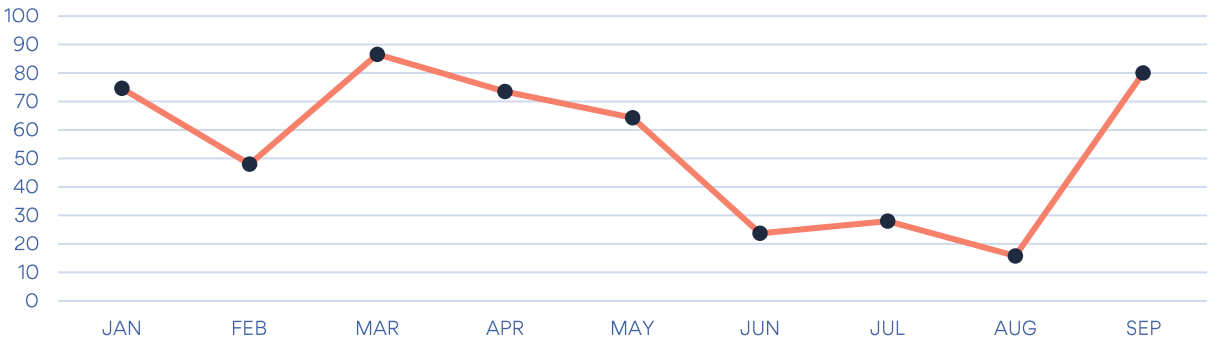
Combines sentiment dispersion, balance-to-zero, contrarian-language rate

Mean sentiment
Slightly Negative

Sentiment dispersion
Polarised Sentiment

Contrarian-rate
High

Controversy Index – Markets, Investors & the AI Economy
(Tracking Controversy: Monthly Shifts in the AI Economy Narrative)



Higher values indicate greater controversy and polarisation in coverage.
Source: iN/Ntelligence / Narrative Tracker by New Narrative

NARRATIVE SHIFTS



From hype to proof.
Journalists, investors, and stakeholder audiences want evidence of business impact—customer wins, measured savings, new revenue—over visionary claims.



Valuation pressure.
Coverage connects guidance and margins to share-price swings. Loose language about "AI impact" invites scepticism.



Price vs. value. In this economy with efficiency at a premium, cheaper "good-enough" options will get coverage; premium players must show why they're worth more.

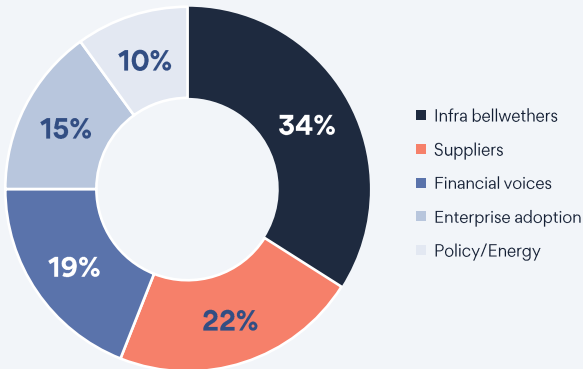


Geopolitics as background noise.
Export rules and China exposure appear routinely; audiences expect you to address them plainly.

SHARE OF VOICE & MARKET SIGNALS

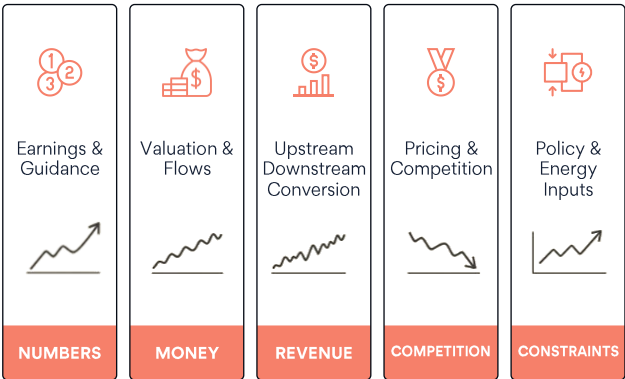
- Who sets the tone:** Chip makers and data-centre providers dominate mentions; their earnings colour coverage of the whole AI category.
- What reporters watch:** Spending plans from the biggest cloud platforms, delivery timelines, pricing comments, and signs customers are actually using what they bought.
- Why it matters for you:** When those signals are positive and concrete, stories tend to tilt constructive; when they are vague, sentiment is likely to turn cautious.

SHARE OF VOICE AND MARKET SIGNALS



SUB-NARRATIVES WORTH TRACKING

- EARNINGS & GUIDANCE:** Clear numbers and timelines beat broad ambition.
- VALUATION & FLOWS:** Articles link performance to whether money is moving into or out of "AI" exposures.
- CONVERSION TO REVENUE:** Proof that pilots became rollouts: contract names (where possible), go-live dates, and early results.
- PRICING & COMPETITION:** How you defend value beyond price: reliability, speed to deploy, support, ecosystem.
- POLICY & INPUTS:** Simple explanations of export exposure, supply chain and energy constraints (the less jargon, the better).





FLASHPOINTS: RISKS & CATALYSTS

Catalysts

- Specific customer outcomes (e.g., “X% cost reduction in Y months,” “Z% productivity gain for function A”).
- Clean delivery stories: Commitments met on time, with utilisation and adoption trending.
- Consistent language from leadership across media, thought leadership and earnings materials.

Risks

- Unsubstantiated or vague claims without named evidence or timeframes.
- Mixed messages on pricing or “profit later” narratives.
- Silence on geopolitics or supply issues that others will end up defining for you.

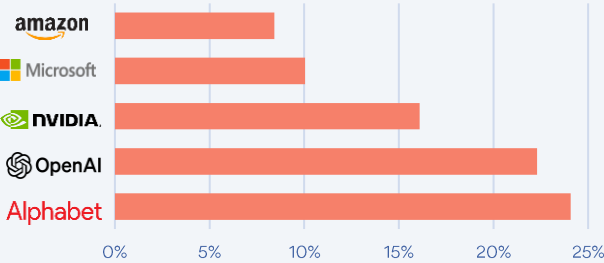
IMPLICATIONS FOR COMMUNICATIONS

- Lead with receipts.** Build a public “evidence pack”: 1-2 customer case studies with numbers, a benchmark or third-party validation, and a short explainer of how the result was measured.
- Tighten the story around three metrics.** Pick the simplest, repeatable proof points (e.g., time-to-value, cost-to-serve, customer adoption) and use them everywhere.
- Make earnings week easy.** Prepare a one-pager that translates your achievements into plain English: what shipped, who’s using it, early results, what changes next quarter.
- Frame value, not price.** Spell out why you’re worth more: reliability guarantees, deployment speed, security/support, partner network. Put those in headlines and captions, not footnotes.
- Own the risk narrative.** Publish a short “What we’re watching” note on export rules, supply, and energy. Name the exposure, the mitigations, and the contingency plan.
- Keep proof flowing.** Feed comms and sales with a steady drumbeat of small wins: logos (when allowed), go-live milestones, usage stats, before/after quotes.

Bottom Line

Investor and media attention is still high, but patience is shorter. The brands that win now pair a bold vision with simple, verifiable proof of business impact and a clear plan for risks.

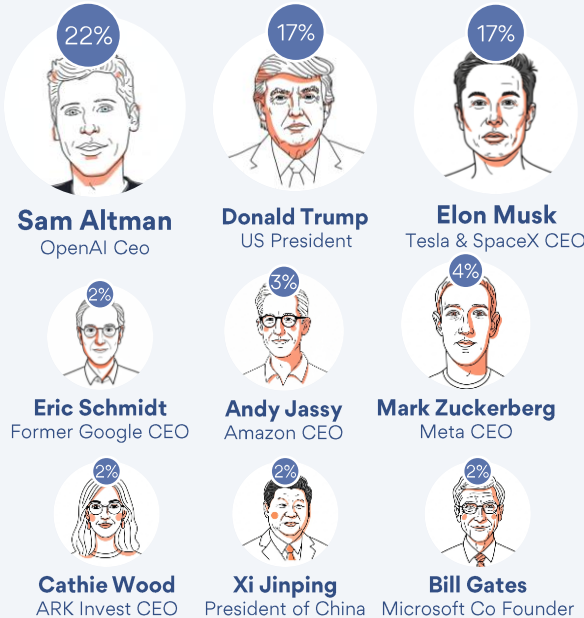
TOP 5 COMPANIES MENTIONED



Top 5 = 81% of mentions

- Average Sentiment : Slightly negative
- Dispersion : Highly polarised
- Contrarian rate : High

TOP MENTIONED PEOPLE: MARKETS, INVESTORS & THE AI ECONOMY (YTD 2025)





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