

PULSAR*

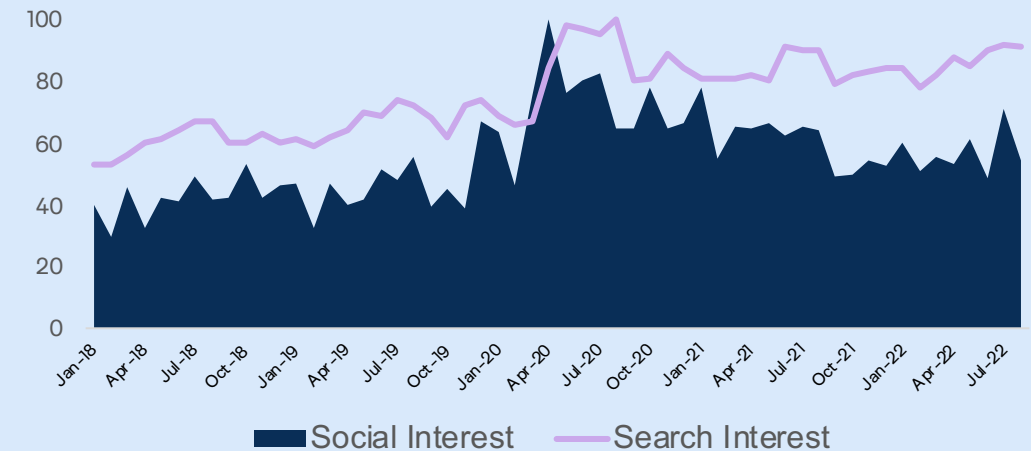


The Fridge Report

The conversations, behaviors and audiences
behind the iconic 'white good'

It's one of the most important and symbolic objects in our homes: it's a design object, a marker of economic status, an energy concern, and – most importantly – a cold box to store perishables in.

Observing the online conversation shows us fridges are a dynamic category in consumer culture.



Twitter mentions & Google search volume around Fridges, normalized,
Jan 2018 – Jul 2022. Source: Pulsar TRENDS & Google Trends

We analyzed almost 1.2 million English-language posts in a bid to answer:

- What conversations and associations attach to the humble fridge?
- How do people interact with their own?
- What influences brand perception and purchasing factors?
- And what role do humor, cosmetics and the Internet of Things play in this conversation?

APPROACH

Data Collection Period:

June 27th – August 26th 2022

Channels:

- | | | |
|-------------|------------------|-----------------|
| • Twitter | • YouTube | • Expedia |
| • Reddit | • Blogs | • Google Search |
| • Facebook | • Forums | |
| • Instagram | • Online News | |
| • TikTok | • Amazon Reviews | |
| • Pinterest | • Trustpilot | |
| • Tumblr | | |

Markets/Languages:

Data collection across the USA, UK, Australia and South-East Asia region (including including Singapore, Malaysia, Indonesia, Vietnam, Thailand, and the Philippines). Analysis in English-language

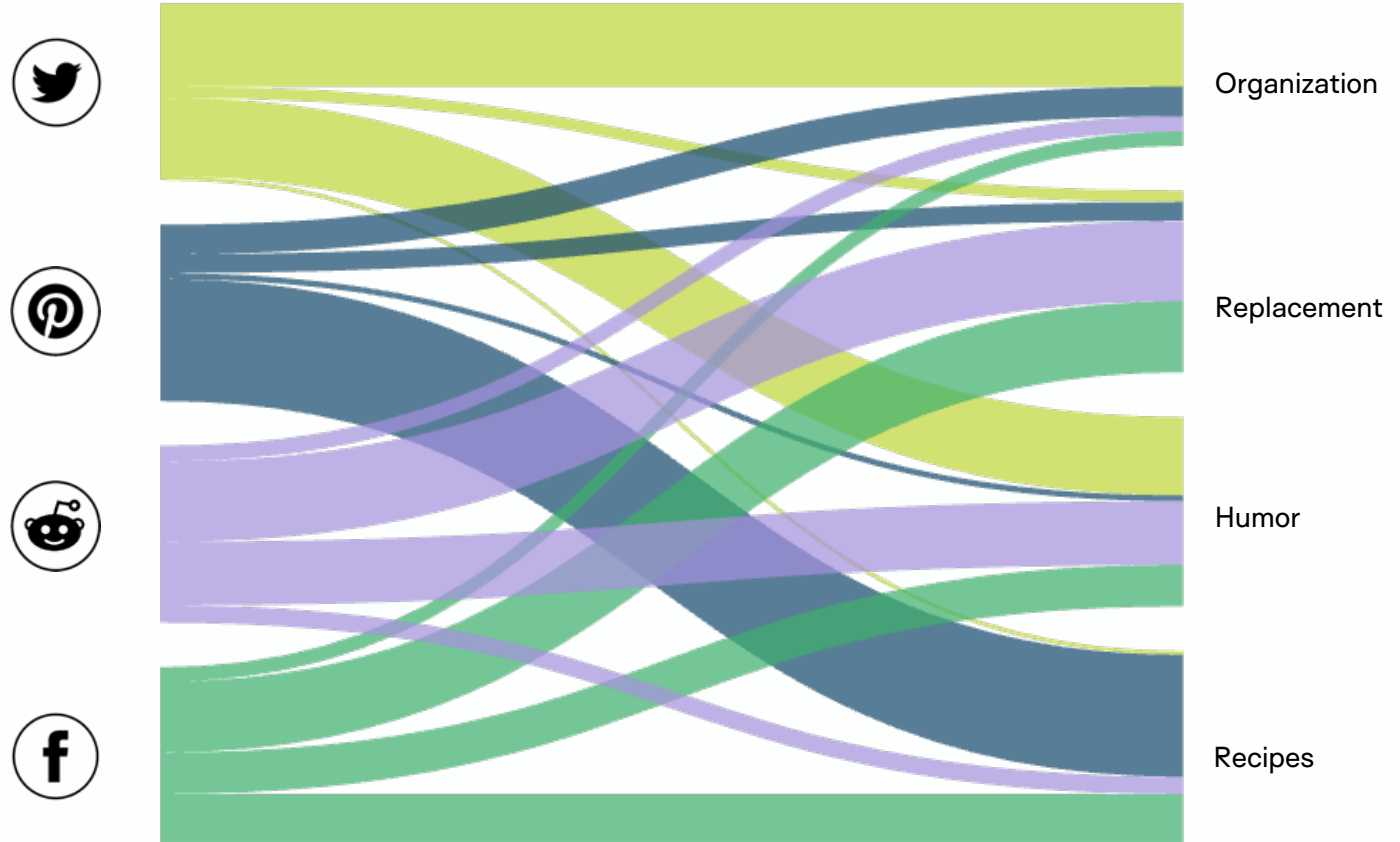
Fridge-based recipes & organization hacks top the most-mentioned fridge topics

It's immediately clear – and not at all surprising – that the household fridge is associated with food and family life. But we also see a high volume of conversation surrounding other aspects of life: organization, travel, sustainability and cost of living. Among all this we see ample humor and gripes around fridge breakage.



Conversation topics by platform

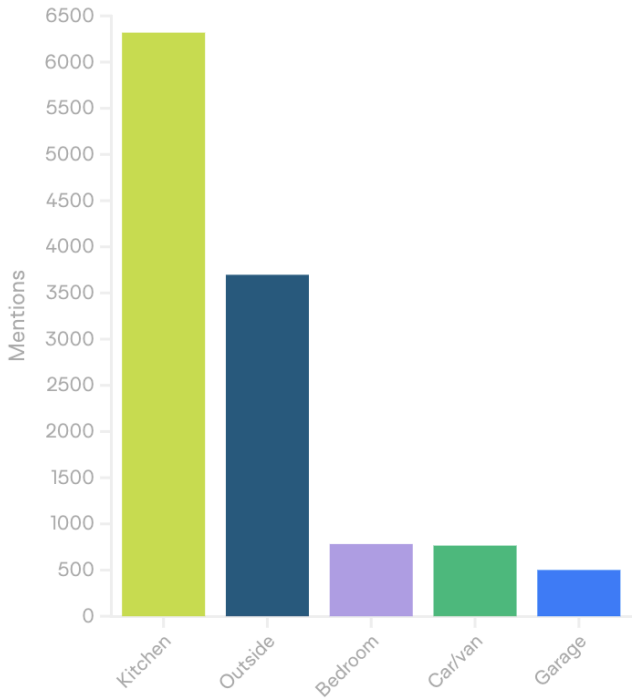
'Do it yourself' lifestyle topics such as Fridge-based Recipes and Organization are the top-mentioned fridge topics and are most spoken about on Pinterest and Twitter respectively. Topics more indicative of the behaviors and psychology around fridges, such as Family and Humor, are more mentioned on Twitter and Reddit, whereas information-seeking topic Replacement is mainly discussed on Reddit and other forums.



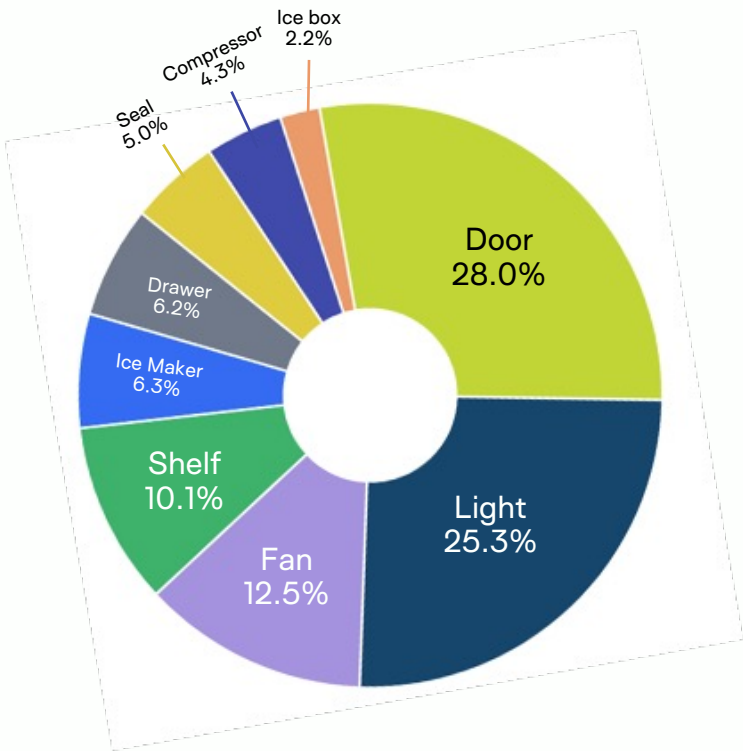
What's Inside, Outside & Surrounding the Fridge

We look at what items and fridge anatomy parts are mentioned most in online conversation. Of course, we expect food and drinks to make up the greatest part of what is kept in the fridge – but an increasingly significant part of the conversation surrounds cosmetics, make up and beauty products being refrigerated. Similarly, it's no shock that over half of explicitly stated fridge locations mentioned center on the kitchen. We also see a sizeable portion of the conversation focused on fridges that are kept outside the walls of the house, with over 40% of fridge location mentions including vehicles, garages and the outdoors.

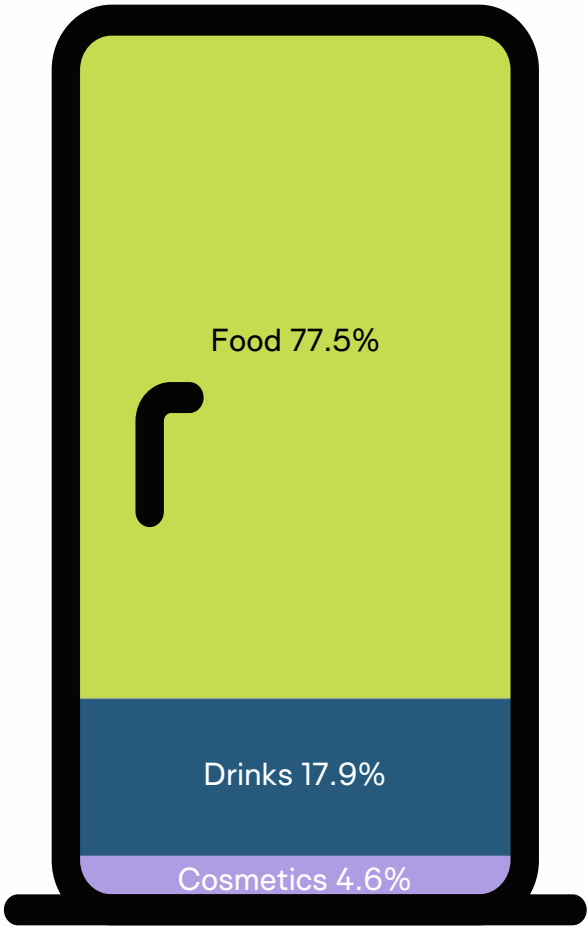
Locations associated with fridges



Most-mentioned fridge parts



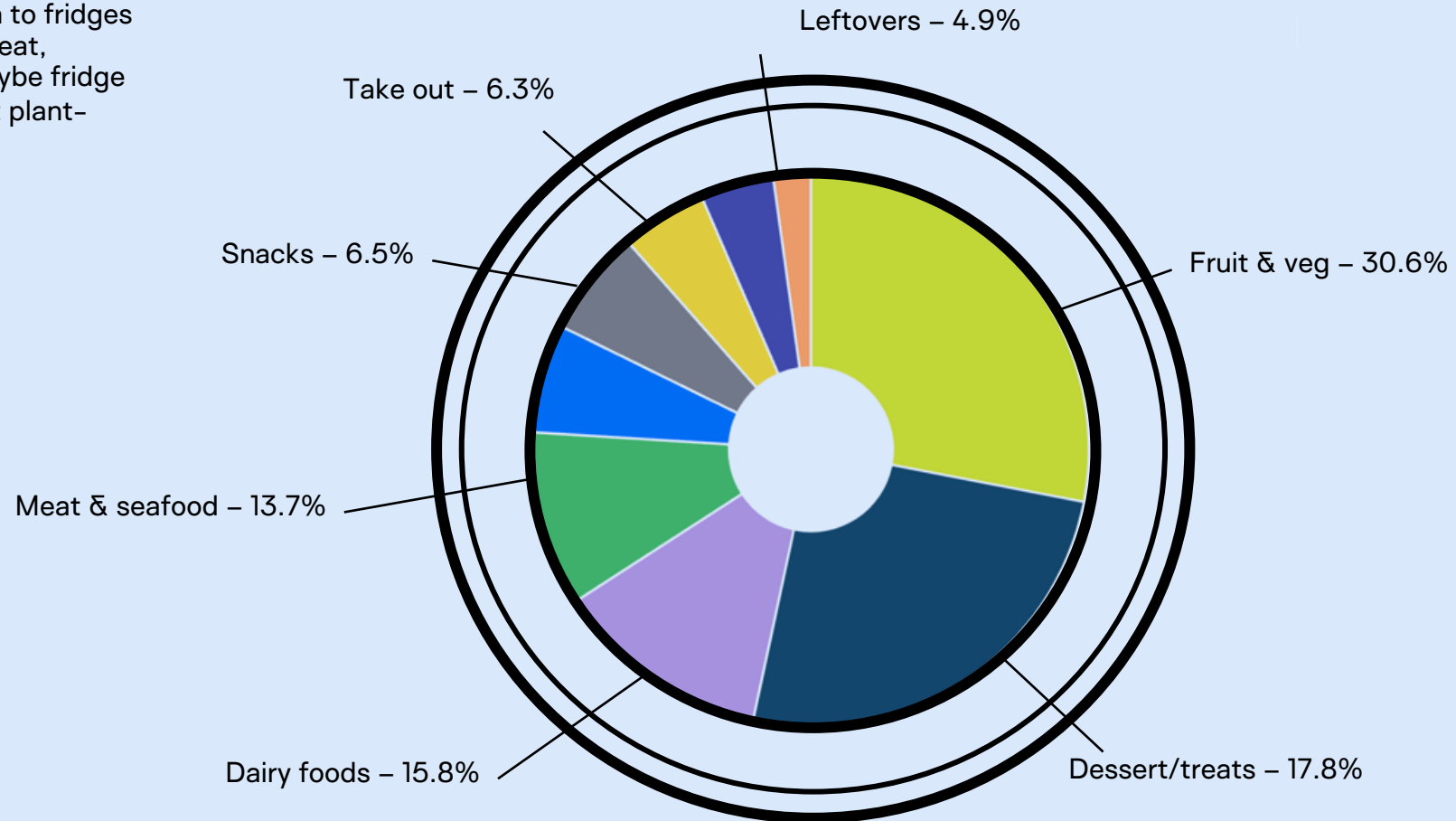
What's in the (cool)box?



Mentions of Fridge contents (left), location associations (center) and fridge parts (right) in the Fridges conversation across Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, Pinterest, Tumblr, YouTube, Forums and Reddit, Jun 27 - Aug 25 2022. Source: Pulsar TRAC

Feeling fresh: foods mentioned

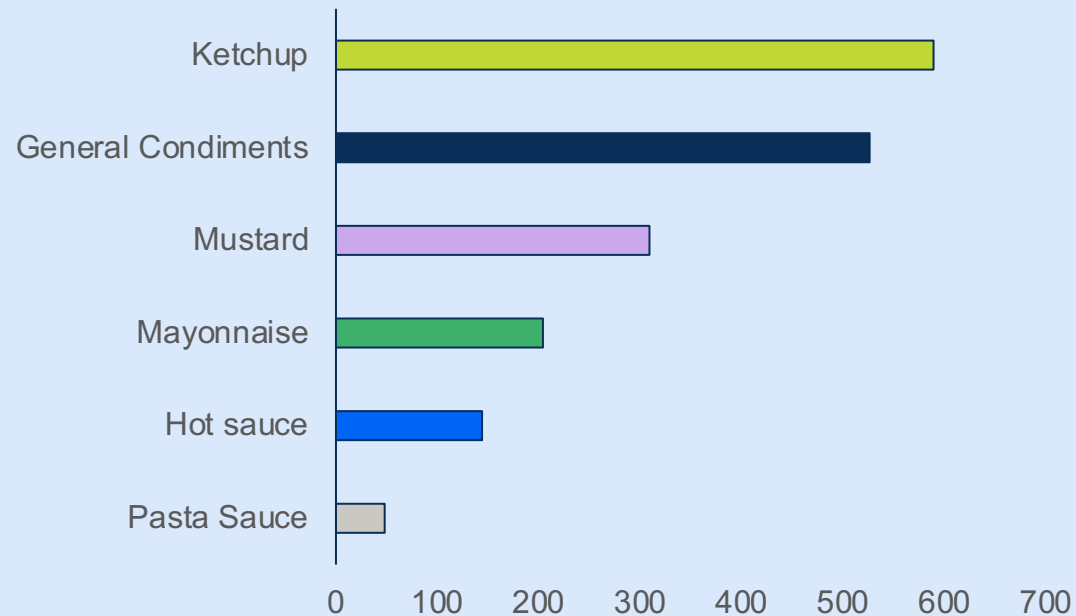
When we break down foods and drinks mentioned, we can see that over a third of foods mentioned in relation to fridges are fresh animal produce in meat, seafood, dairy and eggs – maybe fridge fans aren't adhering to recent plant-based trends.



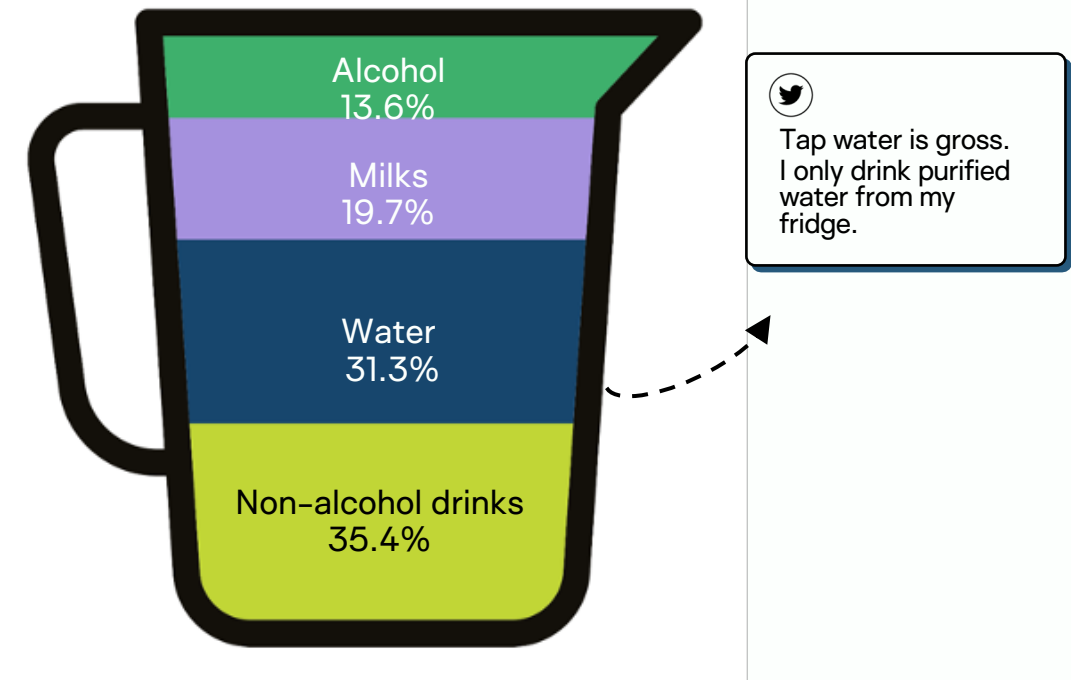
Food & Bever-fridge

Alcoholic drinks haven't indexed as high as their generic social popularity, with soft drinks such as fizzy drinks and juices taking the top spot. Water as a beverage takes the second spot, indicating audiences are looking for cold filtered or bottled water rather than tap water.

Getting saucy: condiments mentioned




Softly, softly: drinks mentioned

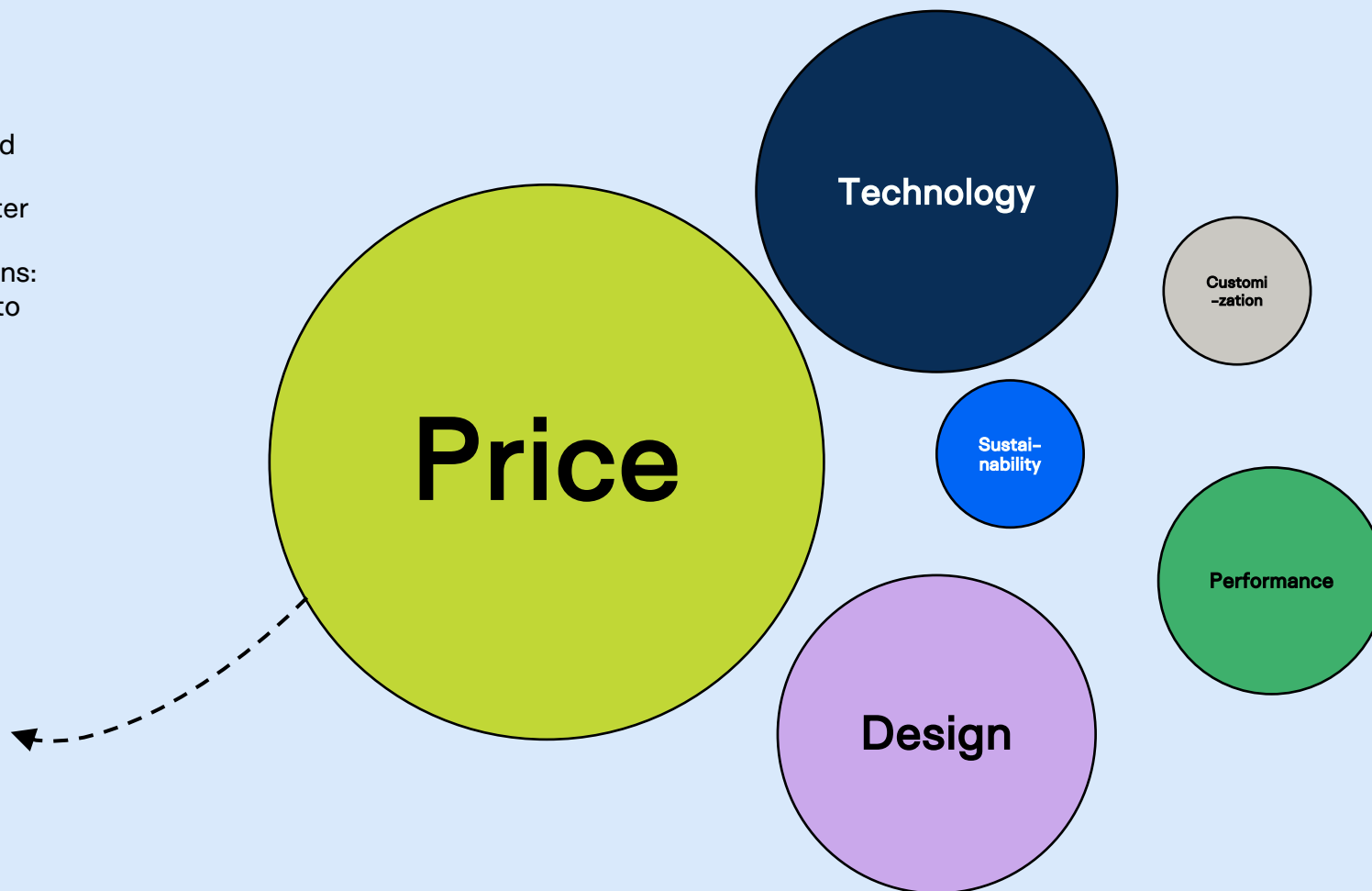


Purchasing power, performance & price

Price was cited as the most important reason behind fridge-buying decisions, leading to a conversation around living costs that we go into more detail in later in this report. Also discussed in more depth is the second most important factor in purchasing decisions: technology. Forums are a key place for consumers to give passionate advice on fridge door style and anecdotal evidence into their purchasing decisions.



I've had several major energy star certified appliances break in 1-3 years of life and need complete replacing. I feel like the overall cost to me and consumption of energy is far greater for inferior/poorly made modern appliances than for older longer lasting ones

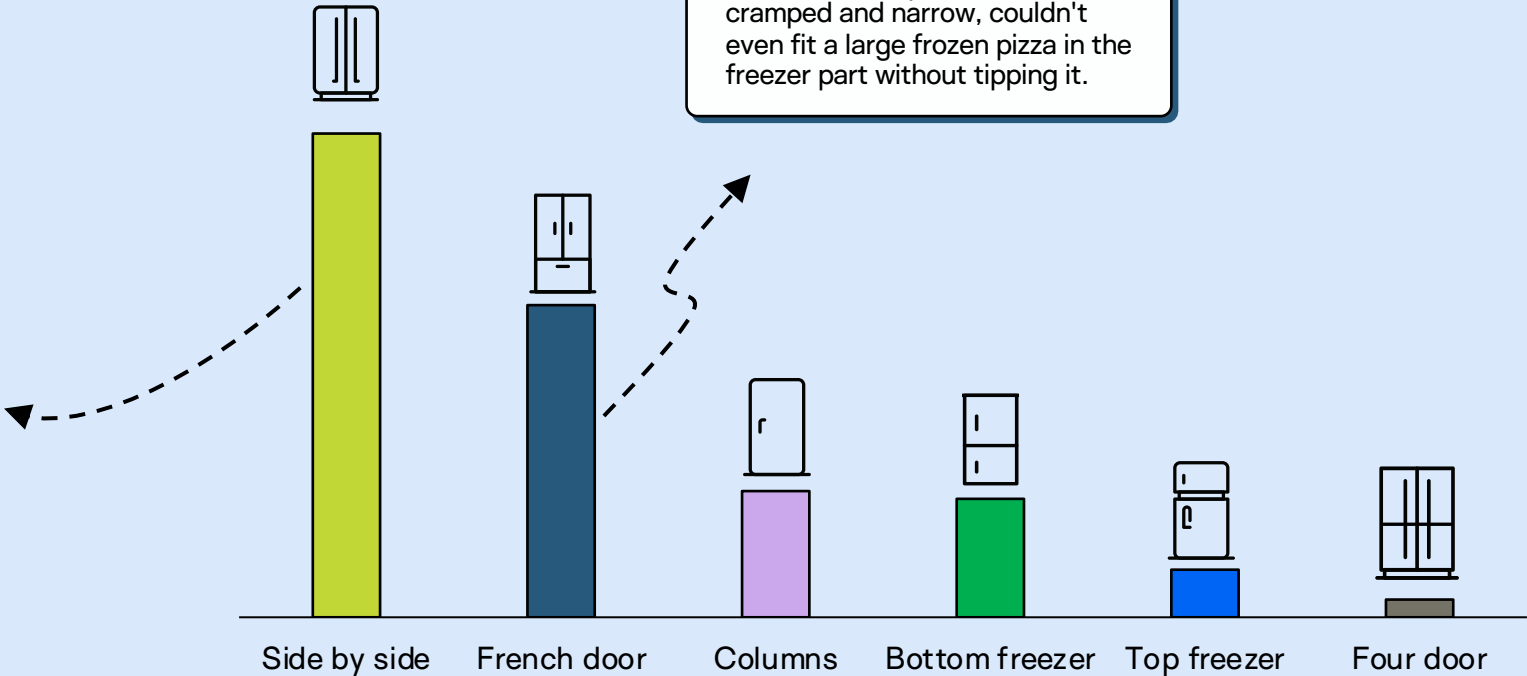


Fridge door configuration conversation

Door layout proves an important factor in fridge purchasing decisions, satisfaction and pain points.

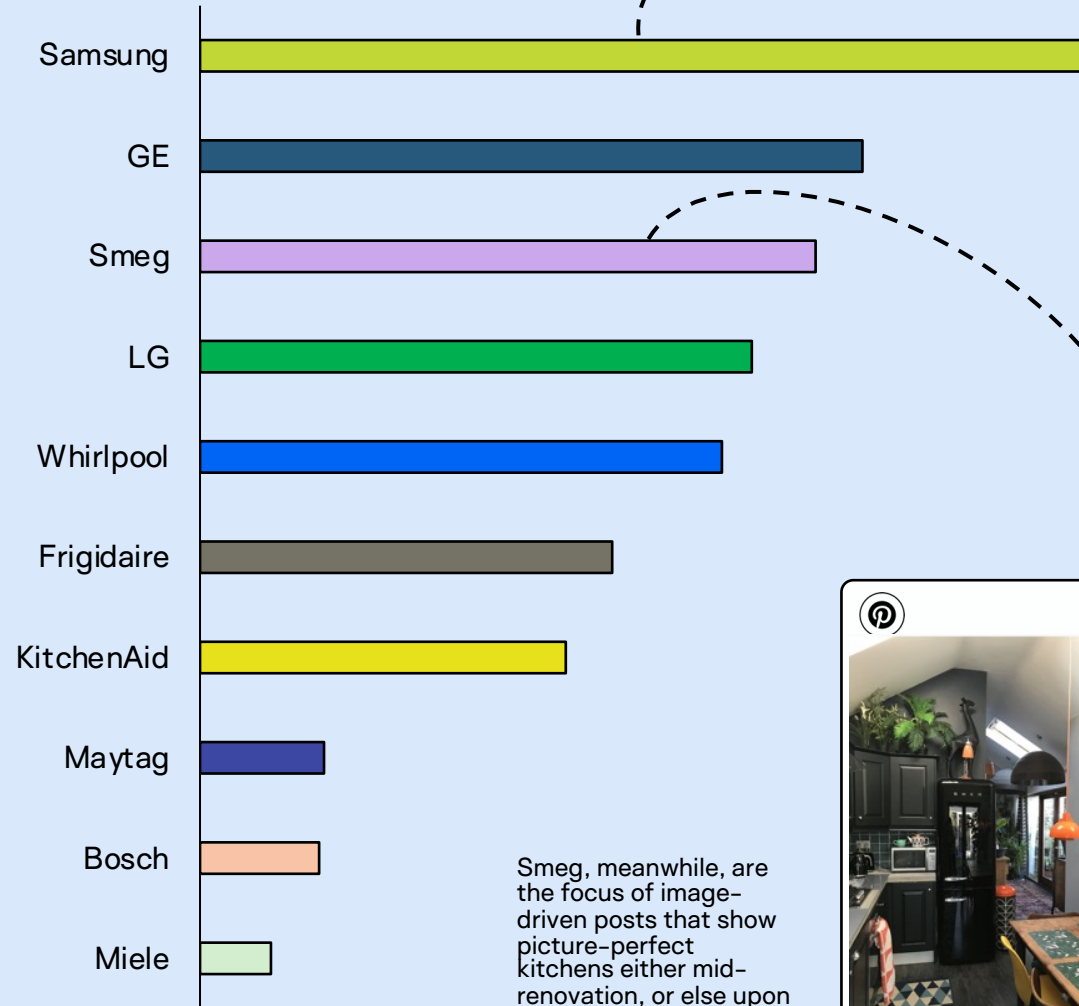
This sounds like a dream. But our kitchen definitely doesn't have space for a double side by side. I have heard good things about Frigidaire though and am researching that brand!

I've had both and the French door on top style is by far my favorite. I hate the side by side, it was cramped and narrow, couldn't even fit a large frozen pizza in the freezer part without tipping it.



Which fridge brands lead discussion?

So who's making these fridges? Naturally white goods are not necessarily a category which see individual brand names cited in casual conversation. However, both forum and Pinterest data in particular provide a wealth of data around brand perceptions. Forums play how to discussions around fridge maintenance and value for money. Pinterest, meanwhile, is far more likely to feature Fridgemakers cited as part of 'aesthetic' kitchen concepts.

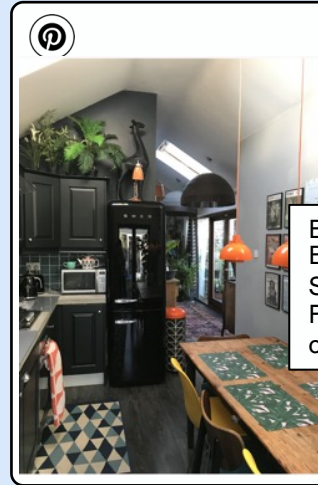


Smeg, meanwhile, are the focus of image-driven posts that show picture-perfect kitchens either mid-renovation, or else upon completion.



Don't tell people not to buy a Samsung fridge unless you also provide an alternative, similar priced "reliable" model. Don't buy a Samsung fridge, do your own research.

Samsung have impacted the conversation through their use of sponsored posts, but also through a ubiquitous presence across deals and recommendation forums, in which the qualities or defects of their models are regularly debated.



Black Smeg fridge, Farrow and Ball black blue kitchen, Danish Svend Middelboe Minisol orange Pendant lights, Orla Kiely curtains and bin.

Supermarkets vs Fast Food vs Delivery

Which food brands are most-mentioned in conjunction with fridges?


It's not only fridge manufacturers that play a role within this conversation, but also all the food brands that act as a point of contact with the consumer, from grocery stores to Delivery Apps. This framing reveals a few key takeaways:

Many of the Supermarket references comes from forums, in which older communities share aspects of their lives that include regular shopping trips. European supermarkets over-index here largely due to the high volume of cost-of-living posts that recommend buying from certain outlets for better value.


Fast Food brands are, perhaps surprisingly, not too far behind, although the reasons are not as straightforward. In Starbucks' case, for instance, it's due to individuals looking to make budget 'copycat' drinks using items from their own fridges.

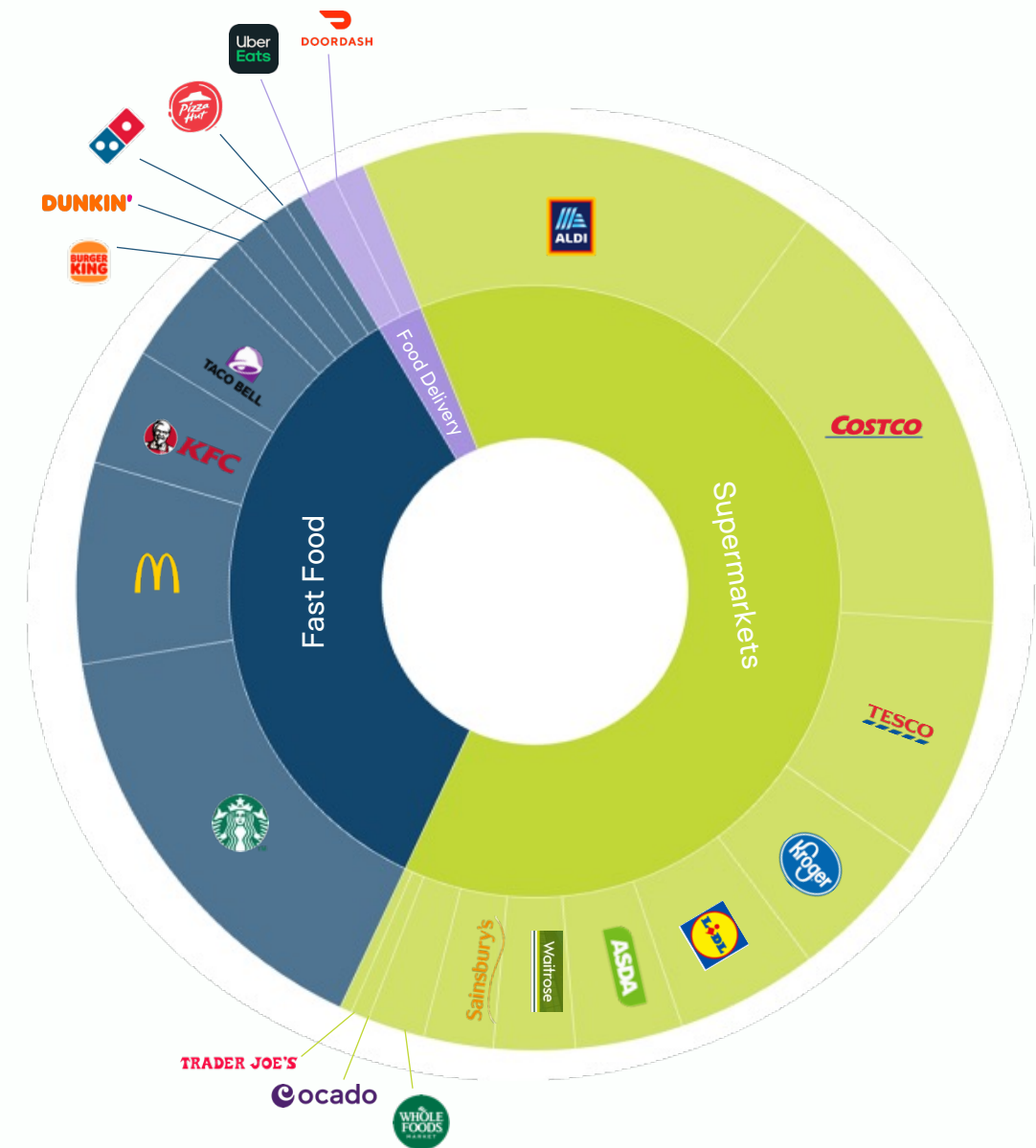
Uber Eats

Extending the period of study to include early 2022, we see a huge influx in Uber Eats mentions – enough to make it the most-mentioned band. Why? This viral meme framed the struggle between ordering food in, and cooking a healthier, more cost-effective alternative oneself, in a humorous nod to HBO's *Euphoria*.



My fridge full of groceries when I open the Uber Eats app

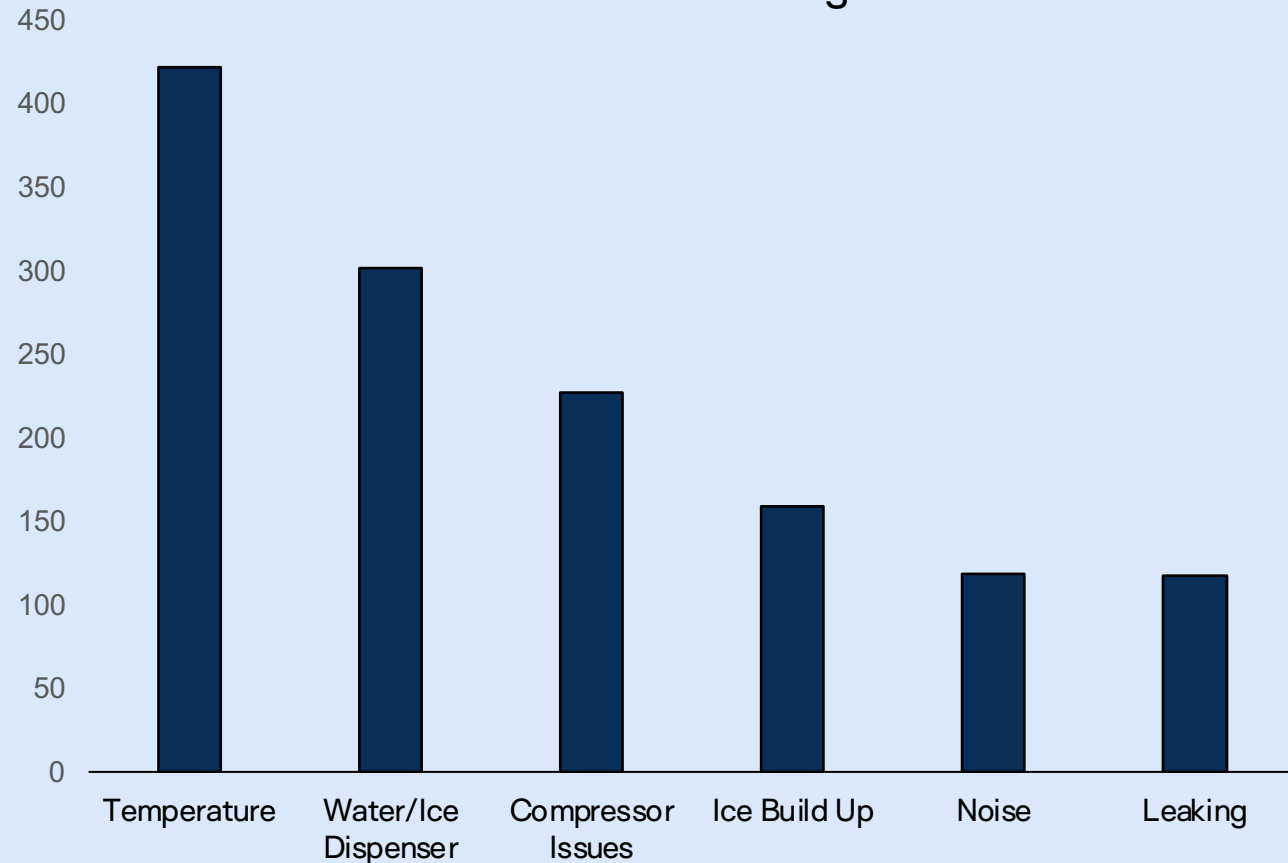




The broken fridge: from the political...

Over 20% of fridge conversation online in our search covers the topics of breakdown, replacement and running costs, with discussion around fridges running at the wrong temperature, water/ice dispenser issues and compressor problems topping the list of fridge woes. Some online discussion suggests that older fridges are more reliable and less likely to break down than newer models.

The most-mentioned fridge issues

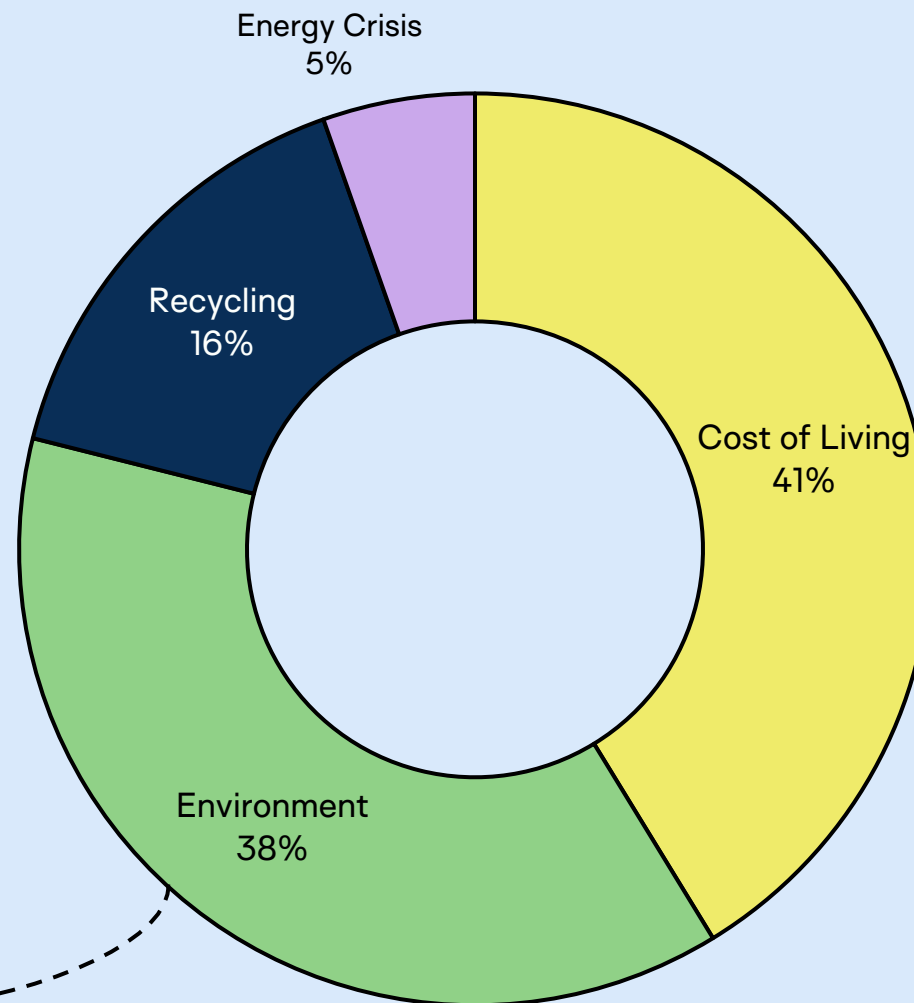


...to the pain in the neck

Conversation around running costs incorporates fridges and their relation to the cost of living and energy crises, which naturally leads to mentions of sustainability and environmental impact of fridges. This is showing that consumers view fridges as a surprisingly politically-charged object and a universal object that serves as a lens through which to examine key contemporary issues.

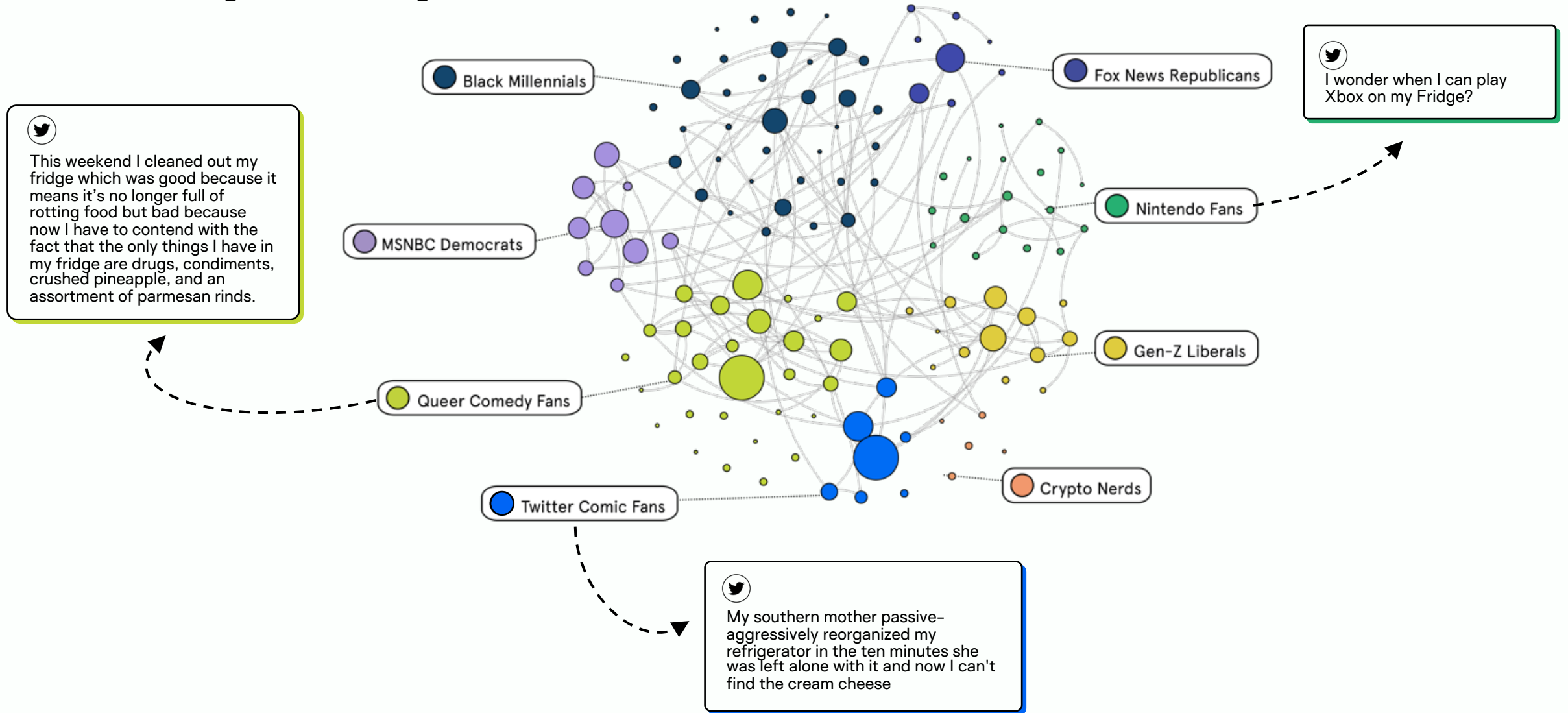


Refrigerators have a large environmental impact to build and dispose of, so taking into account that my fridge is coming up on 90 years old and has outlived the equivalent of multiple modern refrigerators designed with planned obsolescence, all while being as efficient as brand new ones available now, it seems to me that the environmentally responsible decision is to continue using it as long as possible.



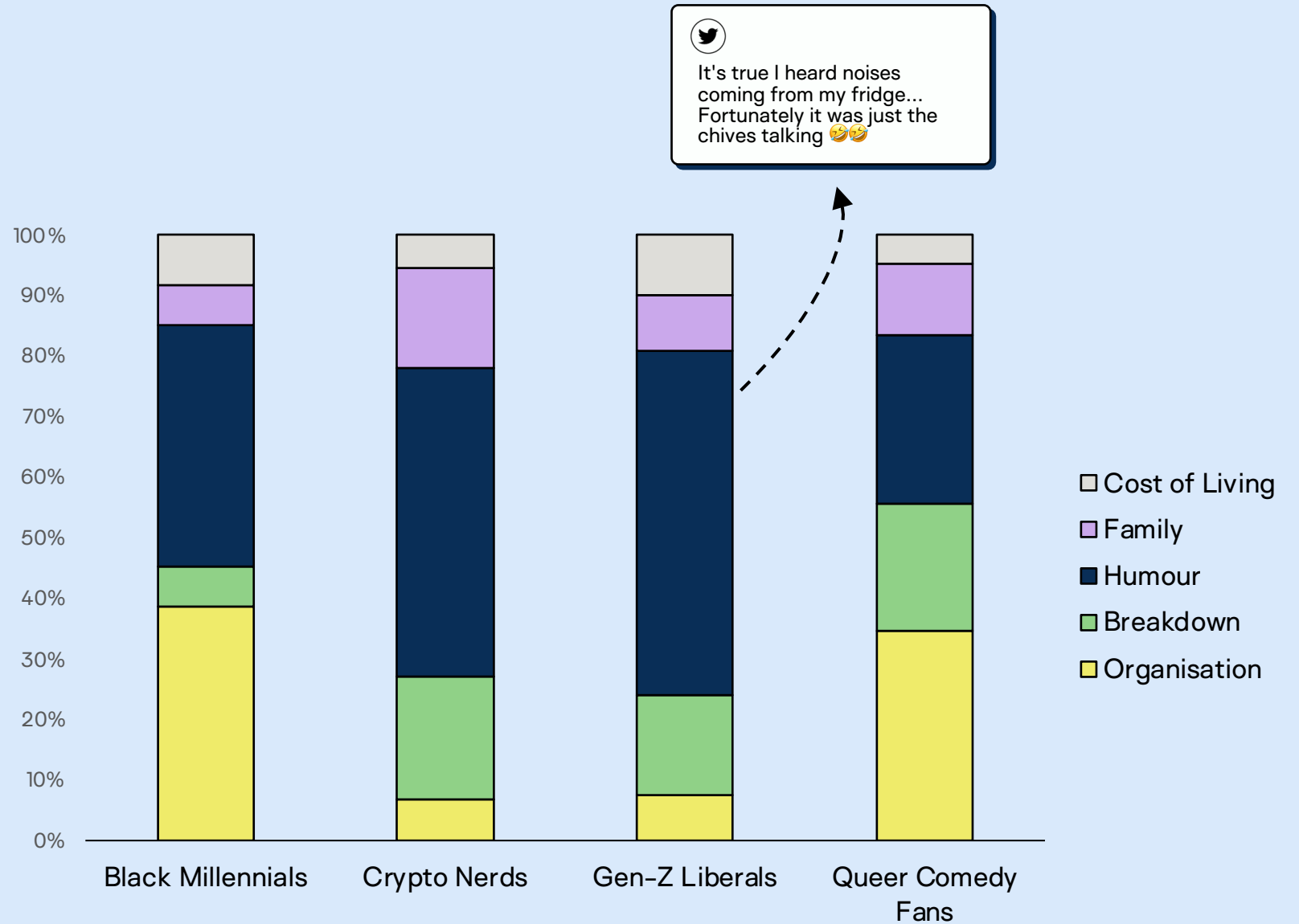
I'm off to convert my Fridge into a cupboard, cause who needs to waste 30 quid of electric a week on a box that'll be as cool as your house anyway?! Have a great Saturday x

Audience Spotlight: who's talking about fridges?



Audience deep dives

In breaking down the fridge-talking online audience, we see distinct segments that reinforce the idea of the fridge as politically-charged object. Politicized groups, and the emergence of the cost-of-living crisis as a topic, both reflect this move. At the same time, we also see communities with strong behavioral affinities towards humor and organization, with Gen-Z Liberals most tied to the frivolity of fridges and Black Millennials to fridge organization content.



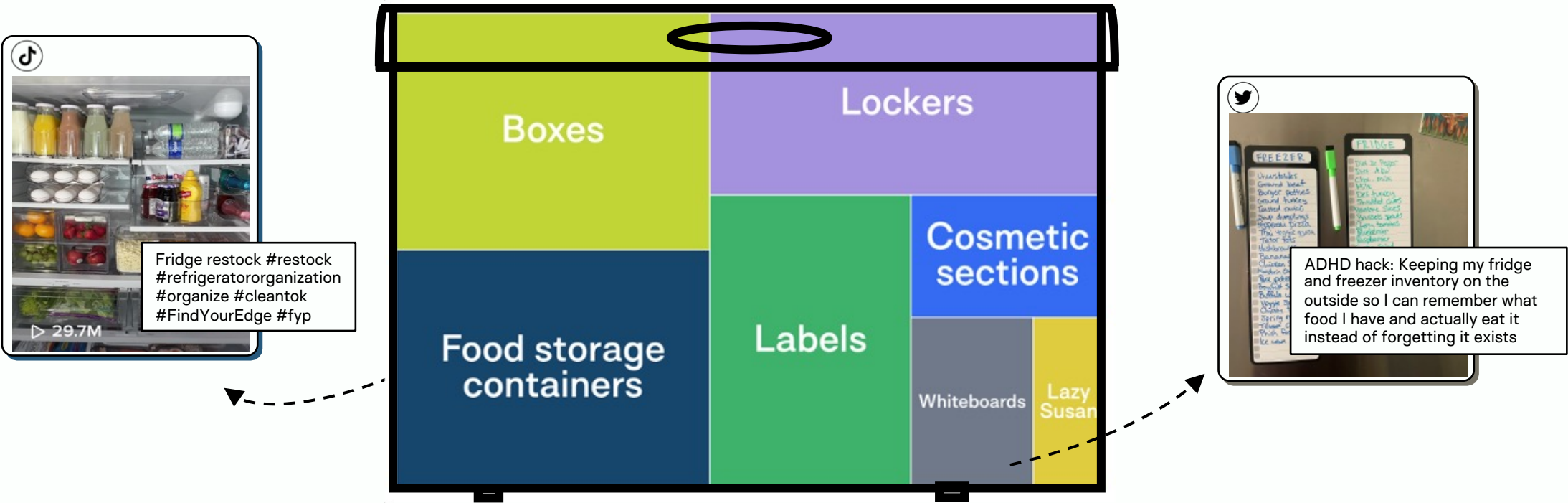
The fridge as an organizational tool

In addition to providing a cool space for perishables, the fridge also provides a space in which individuals can organize these items – and, by extension, their own lives.

Audiences are using social media to share their organizational ‘hacks’ – visually appealing fridge organization skills. These incorporate a huge variety of niche products, such as containers for most-used food products or cosmetic containers, as well as lockers for alcohol and edibles.

Checklists and whiteboards also result in a well-established desire line, in which the fridge becomes communal notepad of first resort.

The most-mentioned fridge organizing tools



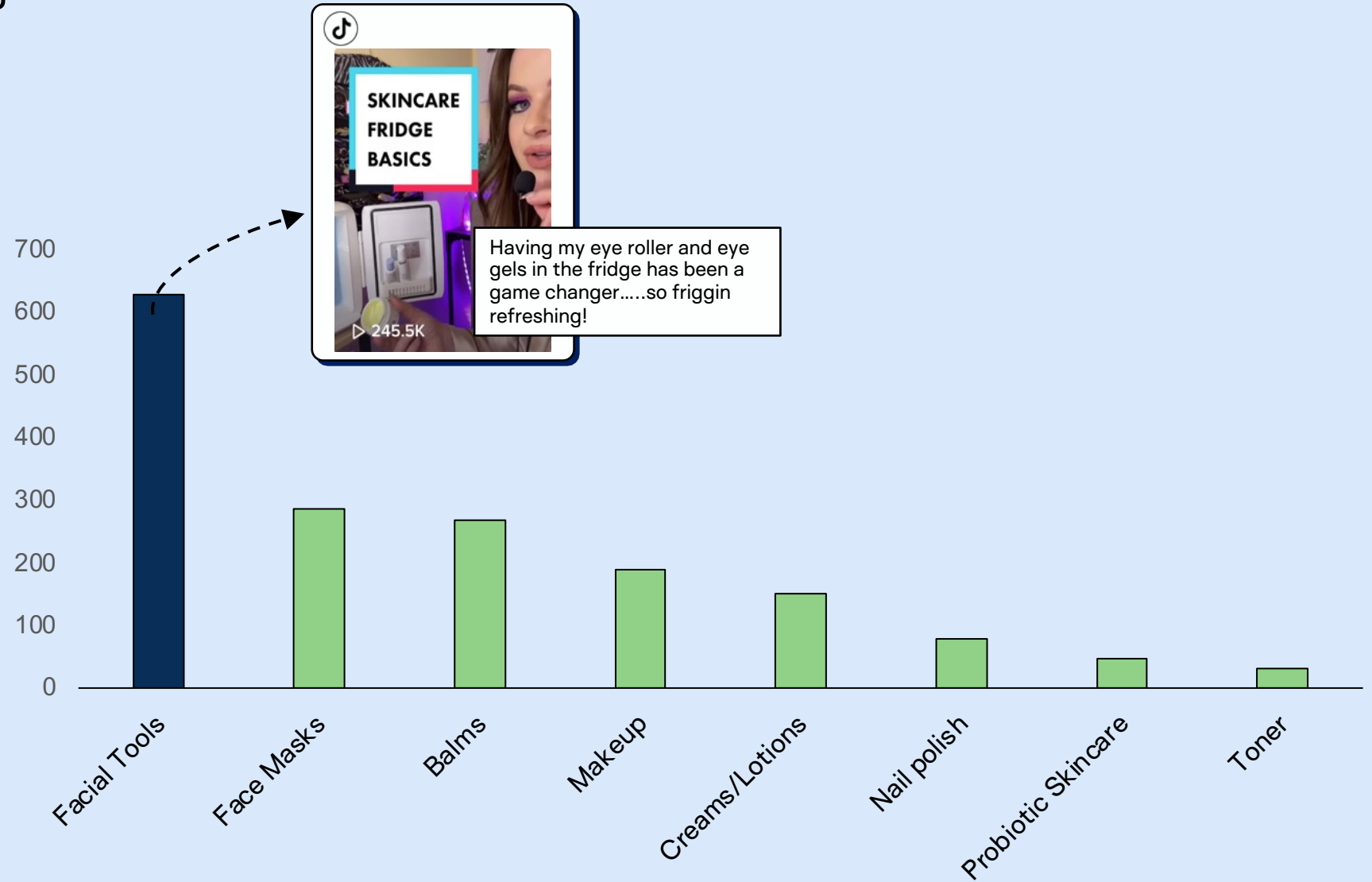
Cosmetics in the fridge

A natural progression of fridge organization is audiences buying separate fridges to store different products. Mini fridges, once commonly associated with overpriced hotel drinks, are now being purchased for cosmetics as beauty conversation online shifts to keeping cosmetics cool. Beauty mini fridges find recent growth amid global heatwaves.



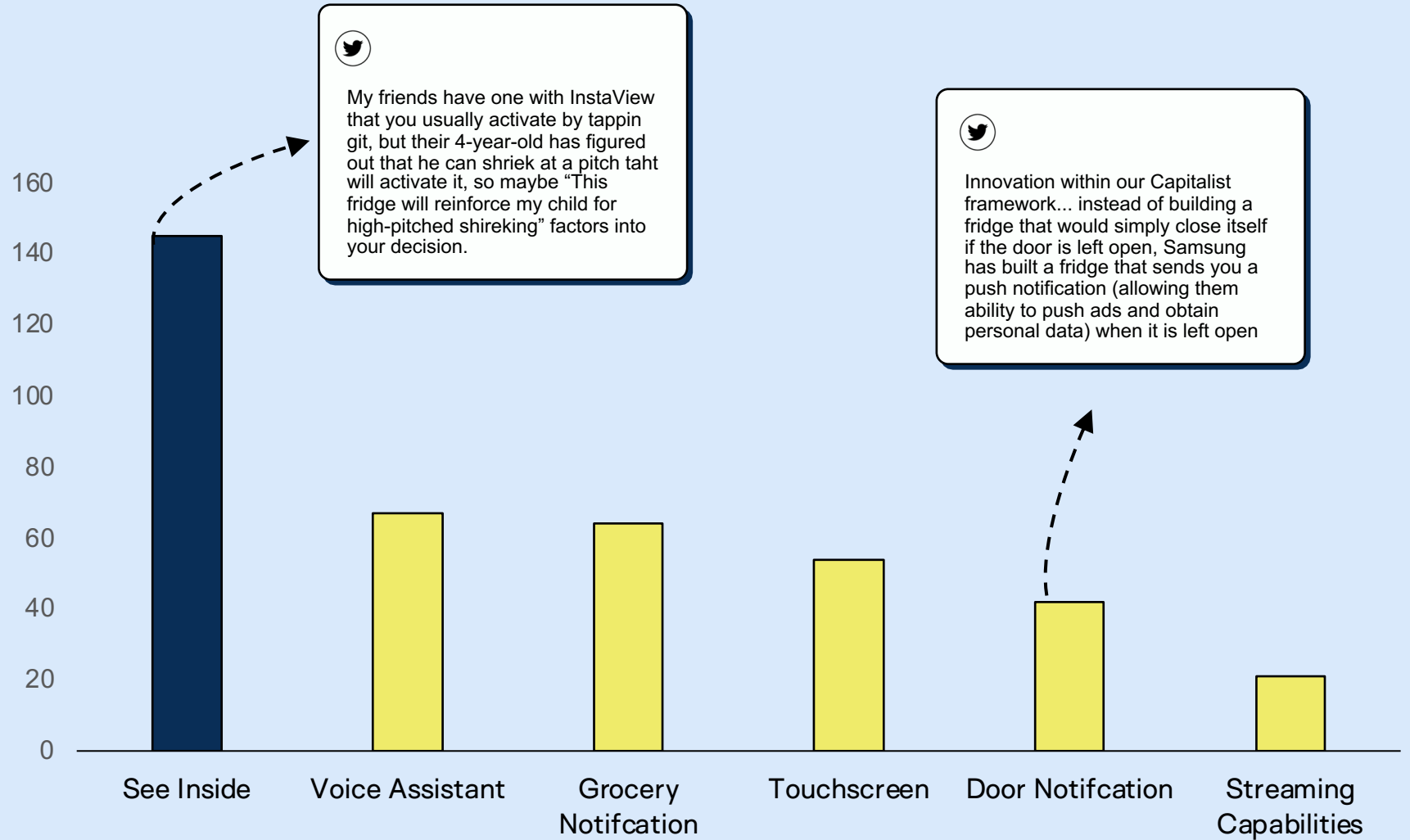
Which cosmetics are being put in the fridge?

Summer 2022 and its ubiquitous heatwaves saw the conversation reach its peak, with image- and video-based influencers giving tours of their aesthetically pleasing mini fridges.



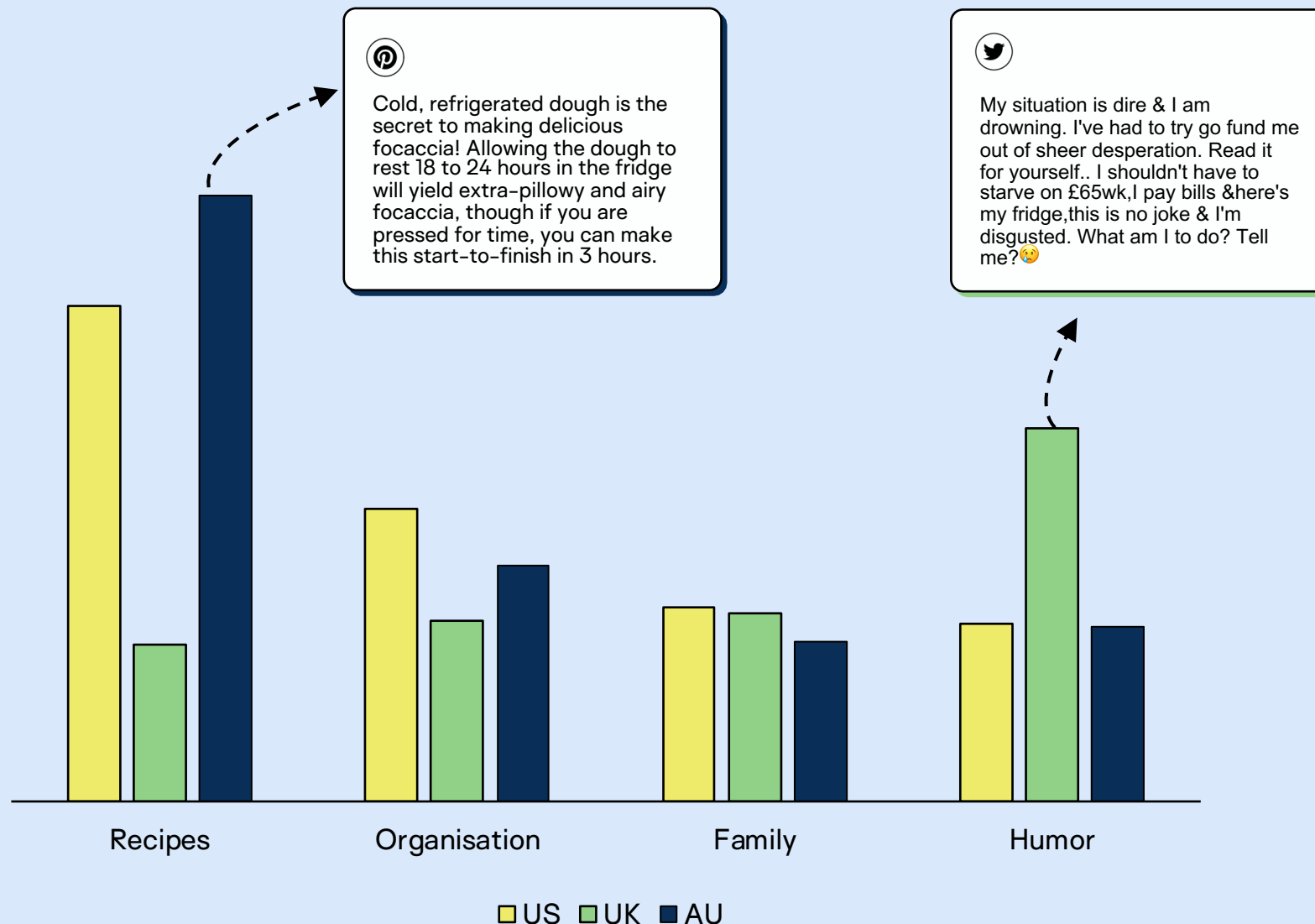
Smart fridges aren't so cool... yet

Audiences are showing mixed responses to smart fridges, with several notable rants asking for more manual features rather than smart ones. In-built Voice Assistants are painted as a creepy presence in the kitchen, while a smart feature that notifies users when the fridge door is left open has also received criticism, with consumers tying the manufacturer decision to a capitalist framework of problem-solving, unnecessarily distracting from an easy-to-solve problem. Once again this shows the fridge's surprising potential for politicization and polemic. Streaming Capabilities, however, are attracting a more positively-inclined, younger audience of fans showing their dedication to their favorite artists by streaming their music everywhere... including their fridge.



While US & AU focus on fridge practicality, UK stands out with humor & negativity

Breaking down conversation topic by region gives a glimpse into different perceptions and uses of fridges across regions. While Australian conversation focused on the creative elements of fridges such as baking recipes and decoration, the US sees an outstanding interest in organization hacks, with both countries seeing fridges as hubs for practicality. Meanwhile, the UK's talk of fridges contains a broader scope of conversation emphasis, from breakdown issues to humor and cost of living. The latter in particular sees a recent surge on socials where more people are revealing what's in their fridges as proof to share their economic struggles as the cost-of-living crisis deepens. It's no surprise then that with this focus on a more difficult topic, we see UK audiences turning to humor in their fridge-based online conversation too.



PULSAR*

Pulsar is the leading AI-powered audience intelligence platform, combining conversational and behavioral signals from the world's leading digital sources to help organizations understand their audiences and create messages that matter to them.

Get in touch
info@pulsarplatform.com
www.pulsarplatform.com