

@steipete on X, Feb 14 2026

Top Apps in 2025/2026

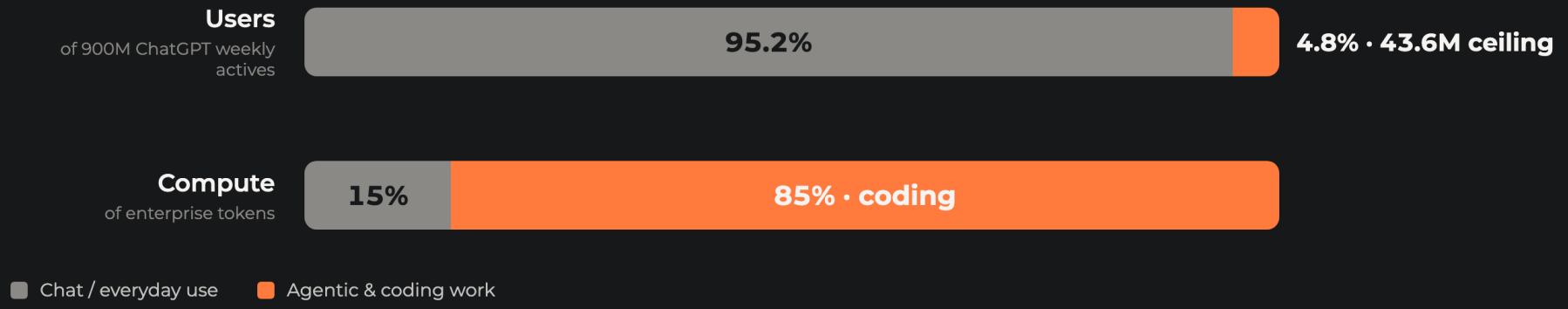
- Top apps are still the ones that we enjoy daily
- AI usecases are primarily powered by these handful of AI labs



SCALE VS. INTENSITY

Under 5% of the users. Most of the compute.

Two different populations, two different totals — read each bar against its own base.



The same small population is where the compute goes.

Users: OpenAI, Feb 2026 (900M WAU) · SlashData, 2026 (48.4M developers) · JetBrains, Aug 2026, n>15,000 (90% weekly agent use). Compute: Menlo Ventures, State of Generative AI, Mar 2026 (share of enterprise tokens, not of total compute).

APP GROWTH SUMMIT SF 2026

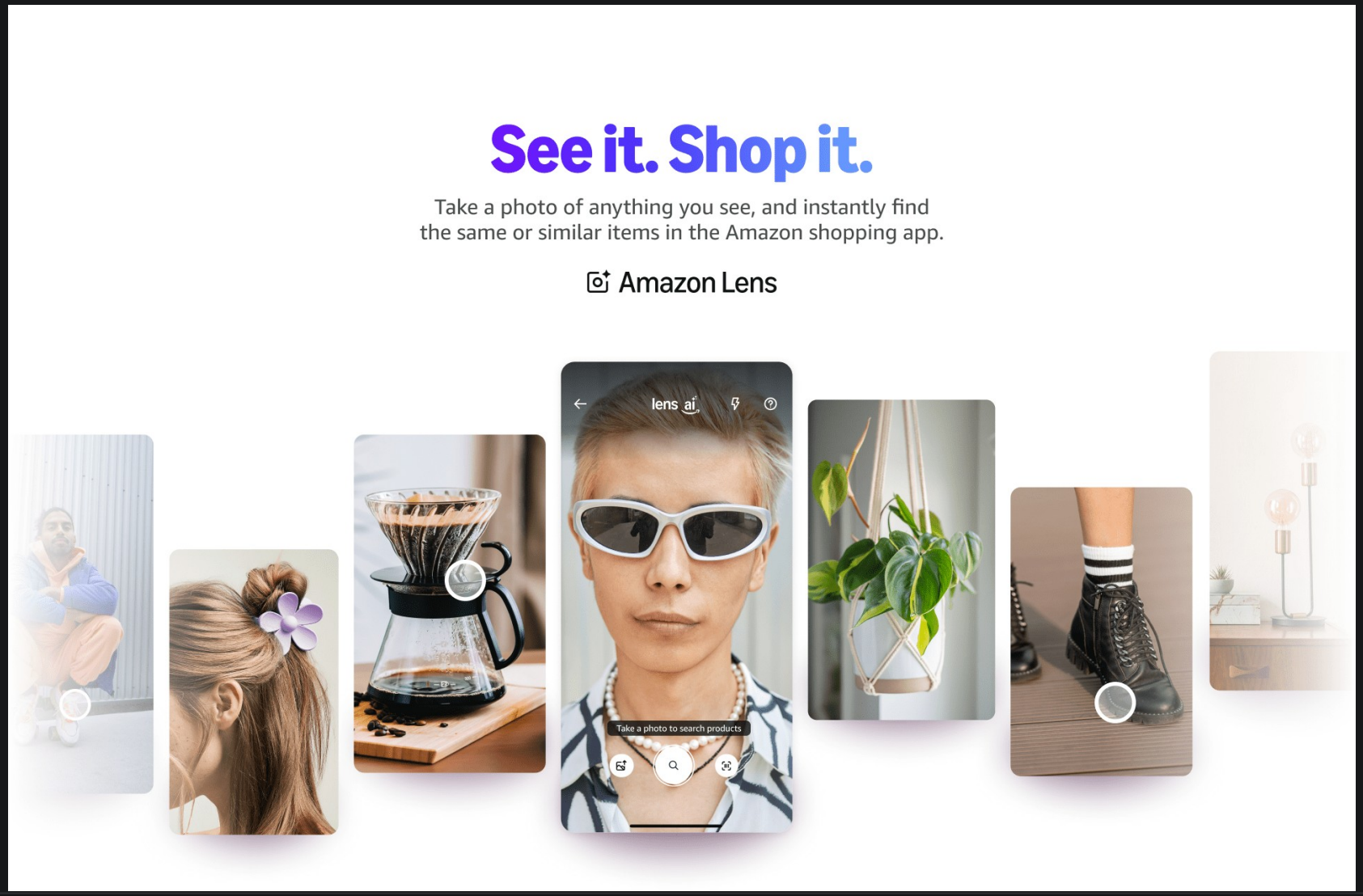
Building AI Features Users Actually Love

Bala Ramdoss | Amazon



A practical lens for telling which AI features stick

Bala Ramdoss · Mobile Tech Lead · Amazon



Views and opinions are my own

How do you add value to the time users already spend inside your app?

AI features fit one of three categories.

1. The one that is your turn
2. The one that is embedded in the moment
3. The one for the show

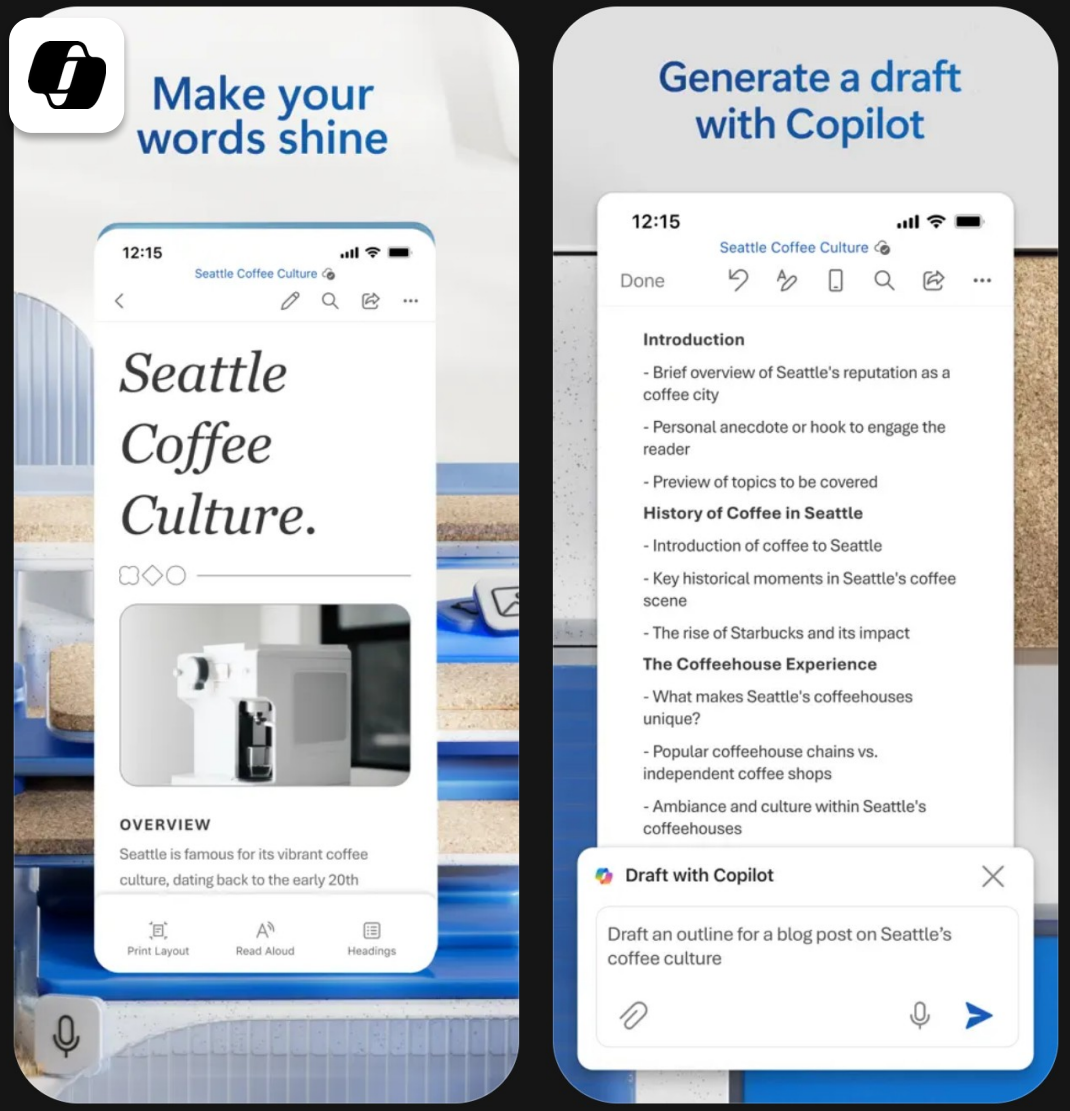
Category 1: The one that is your turn



Example: Microsoft Copilot, blank box

Category 1: The one that is your turn

- Copilot went across Microsoft 365 as a side panel and a ribbon icon on desktop and web, and reached phones later through buttons like "Draft with Copilot". Both hand the user a free-text prompt field.
- Users could edit the document by typing their prompt into the box.
- Then they shipped Copilot Lab and prompt coaching.



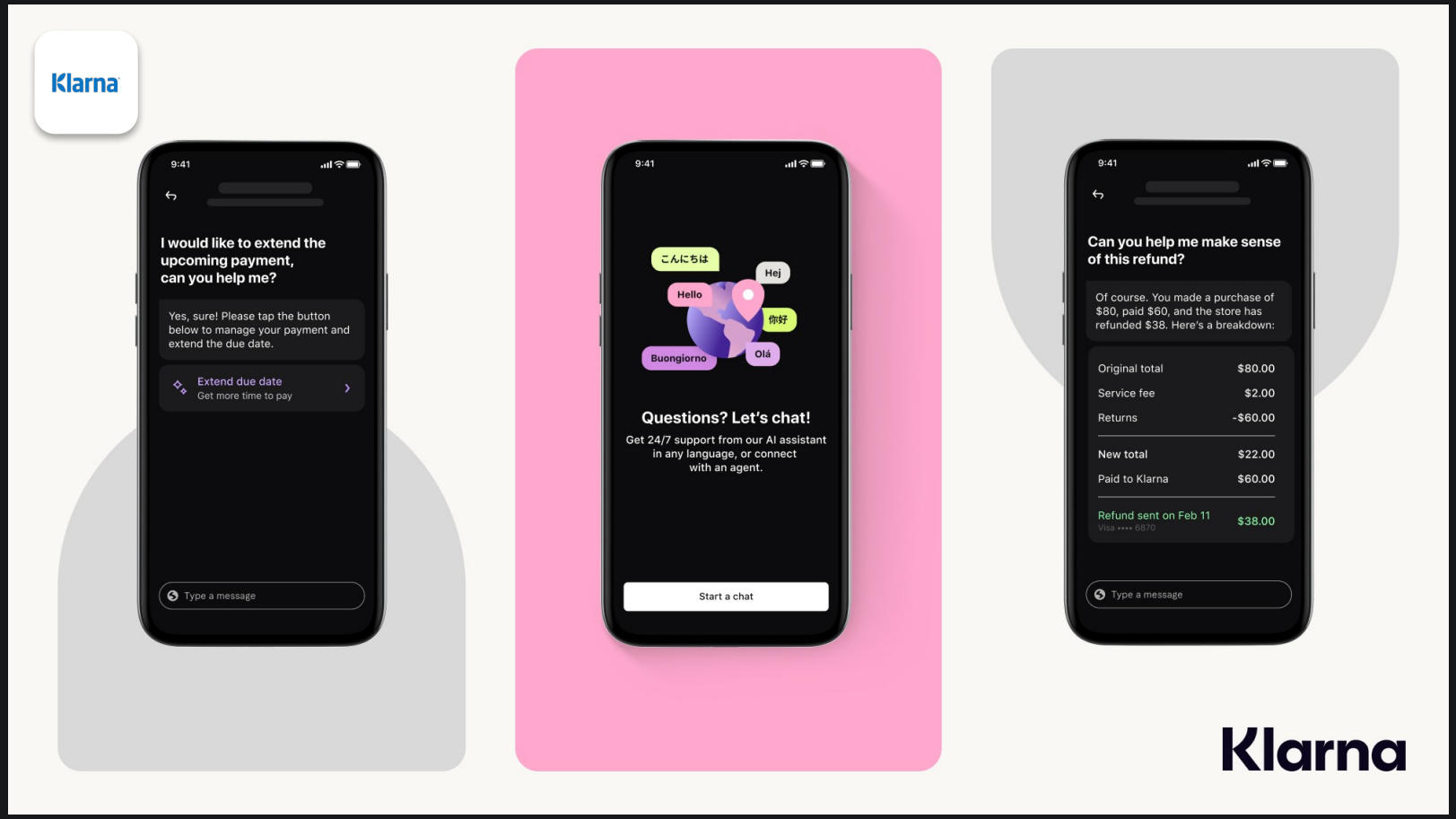
Word already gives you a blank page. Copilot's answer to that blank page is another blank box.

Category 1, Continued: Somewhere Else

- Same empty box, now in a different product entirely.
- Worse if what comes back is a wall of text.

Example: Klarna

Category 1: The one that is your turn



FEB 2024

Klarna, press release, "Klarna AI assistant handles two-thirds of customer service chats in its first month," Feb 27 2024. CEO Sebastian Siemiatkowski, quoted by Bloomberg, "Klarna Turns From AI to Real Person Customer Service," May 8 2025.

Category 2: The one that is embedded in the moment

- The app already holds the context.
- The question, the answer, the action and the outcome are already prepared.
- Zero activation cost.

Example: Robinhood

Category 2: The one that is embedded in the moment

- Open a stock that moved today. Robinhood already knows which one, and points you to learn more.
- Cortex Digest puts the explanation right there. Read it, or keep scrolling.

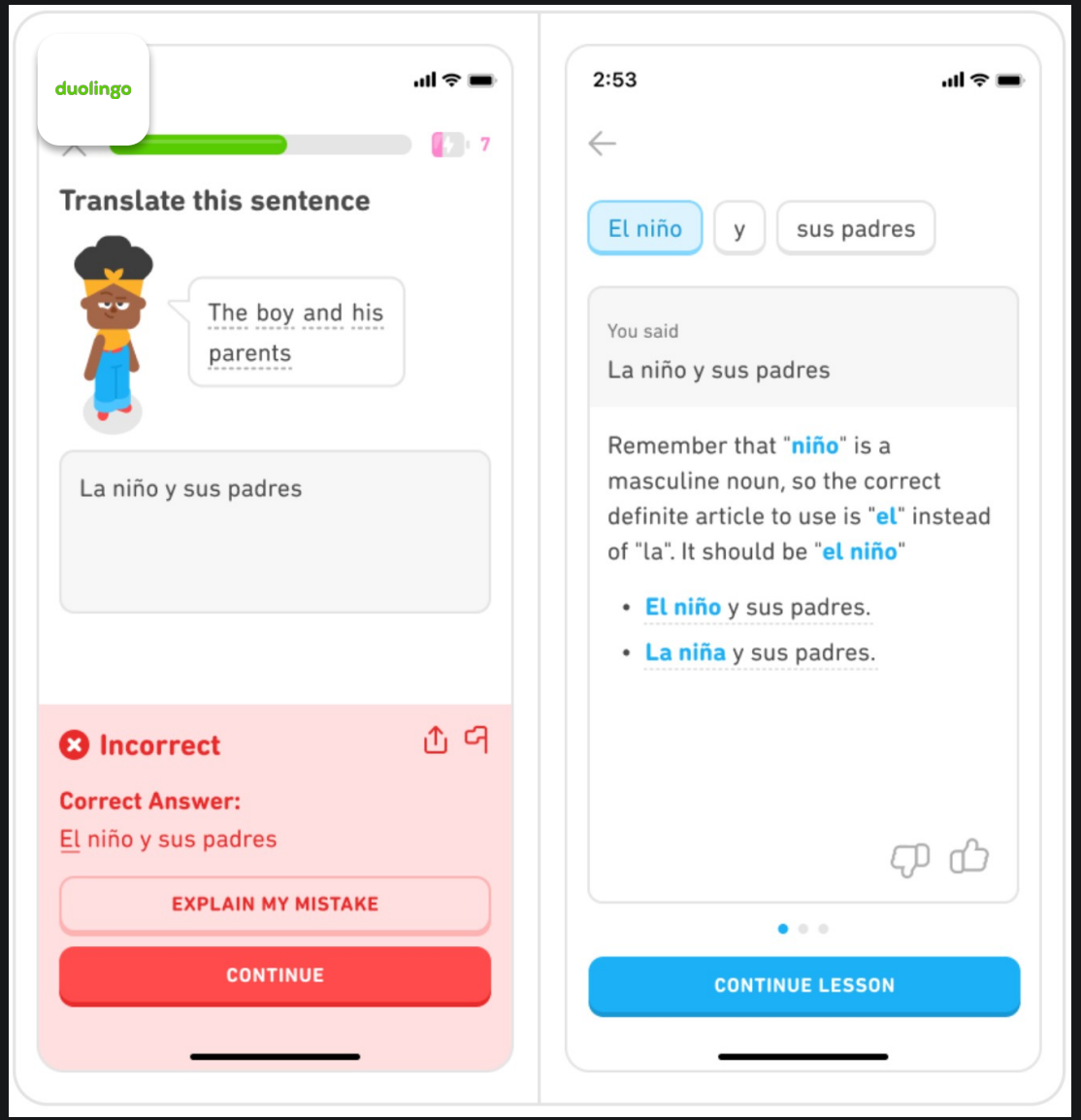


Robinhood, newsroom post, "Digests by Robinhood Cortex," 2026. Feature use confirmed via App Store reviews, Aug 2026 (Tier C, directional).

Example: Duolingo

Category 2: The one that is embedded in the moment

- Missed a question?
- Tap Explain my mistake and Duolingo explains your specific mistake right there, without leaving the exercise.

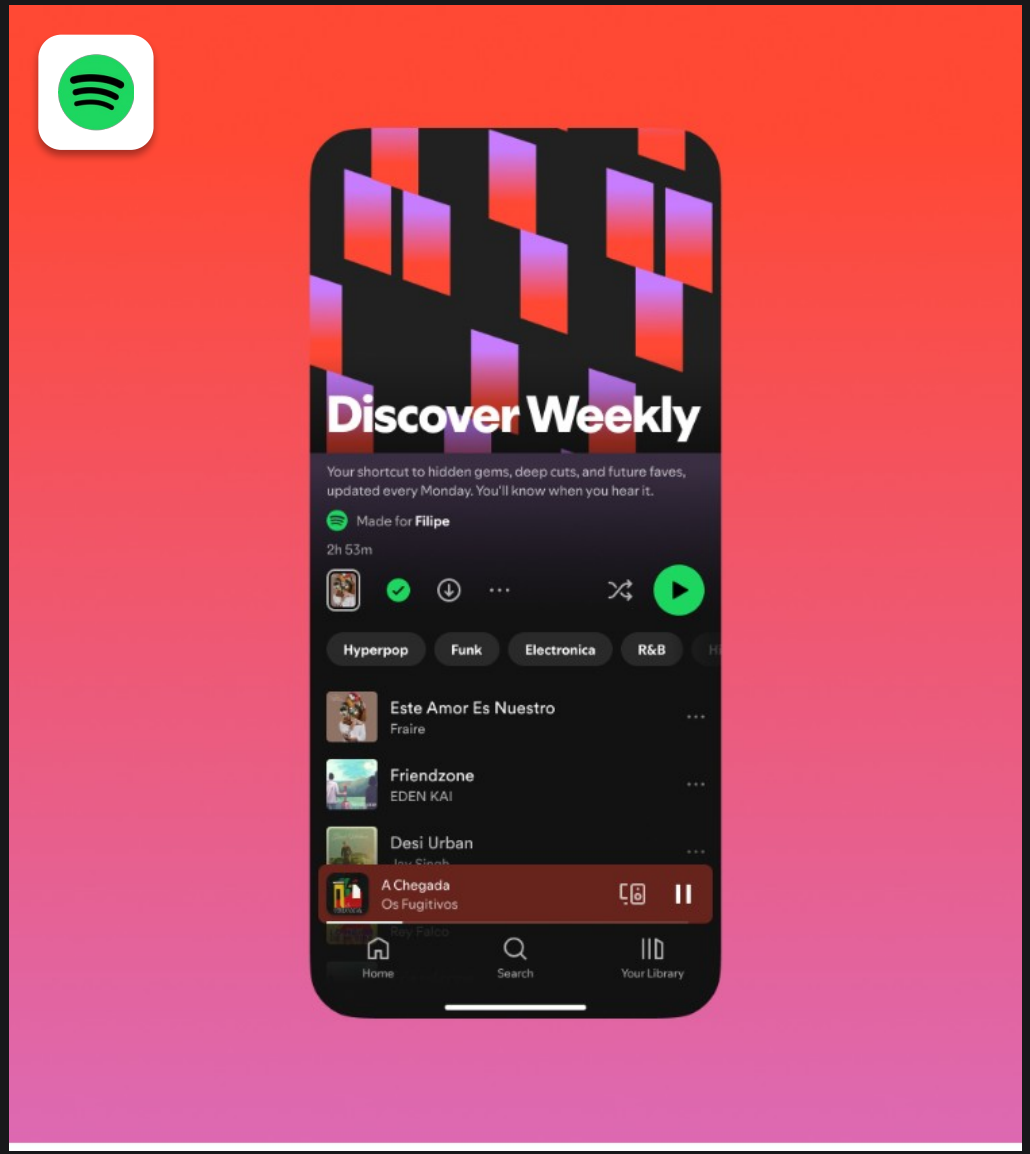


credits: Duolingo blog

Example: Spotify

Category 2: The one that is embedded in the moment

- Discover Weekly, personalized playlist since 2015. Zero prompt. It is already there when you open the app.

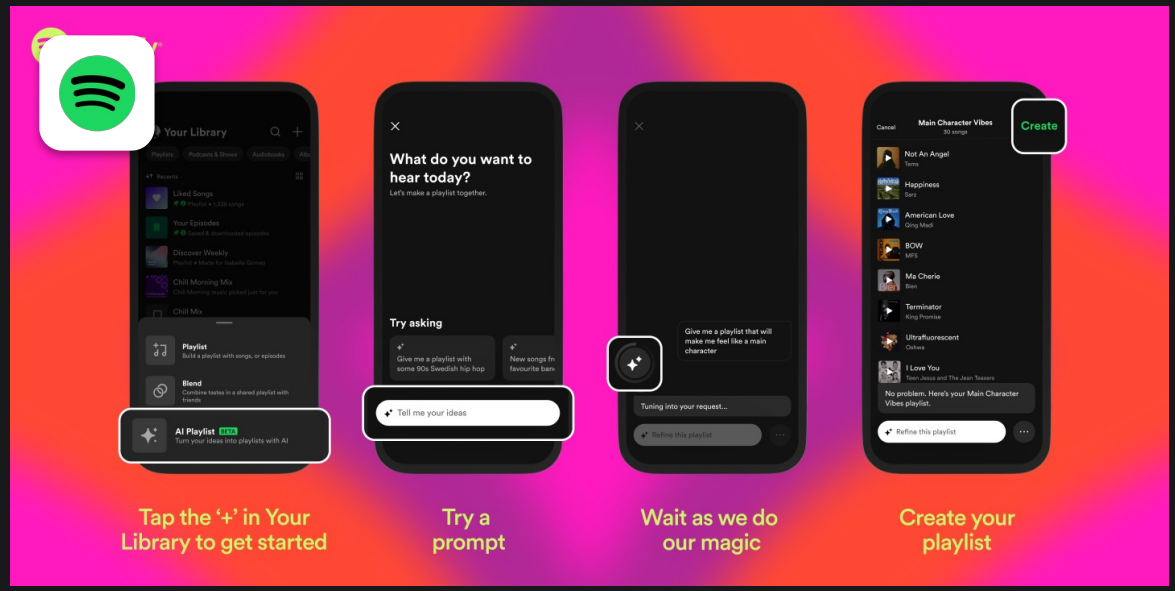


Discover Weekly: Spotify newsroom, "Discover Weekly turns 10," Jun 2025.

Example: Spotify

Category 2: The one that is embedded in the moment

- AI Playlist, in beta since April 2024, for Premium subscribers to create a playlist using prompts.
- The category is a choice made feature by feature



AI Playlist: beta launched Apr 2024, Premium subscribers, per Engadget launch coverage.

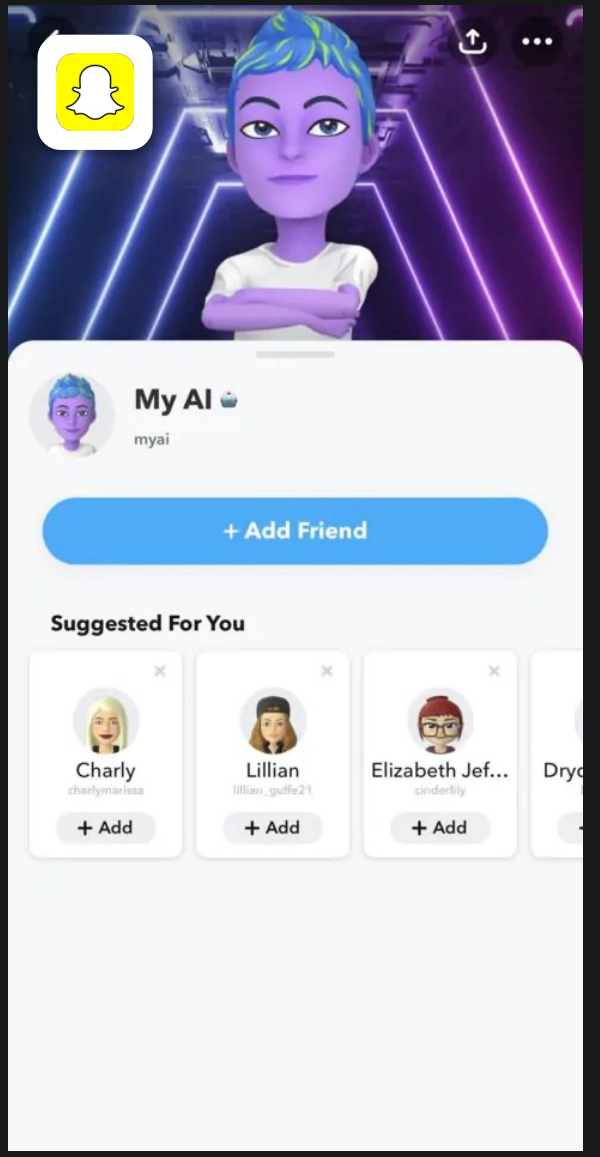
Category 3: The one for the show

- Categories 1 and 2 at least do something for the user.
- Category 3 is for apps that need to be seen doing AI.
- Level of execution doesn't matter.

Example: Snapchat

Category 3: The one for the show

- Snapchat expanded My AI from paying subscribers to everyone in April 2023, pinned to the top of the chat list.
- Free users could not remove it.
- Its US App Store rating fell to 1.67 stars over the following week.
- More than 70% of new reviews that week were one star, and "AI" was the top keyword in them.

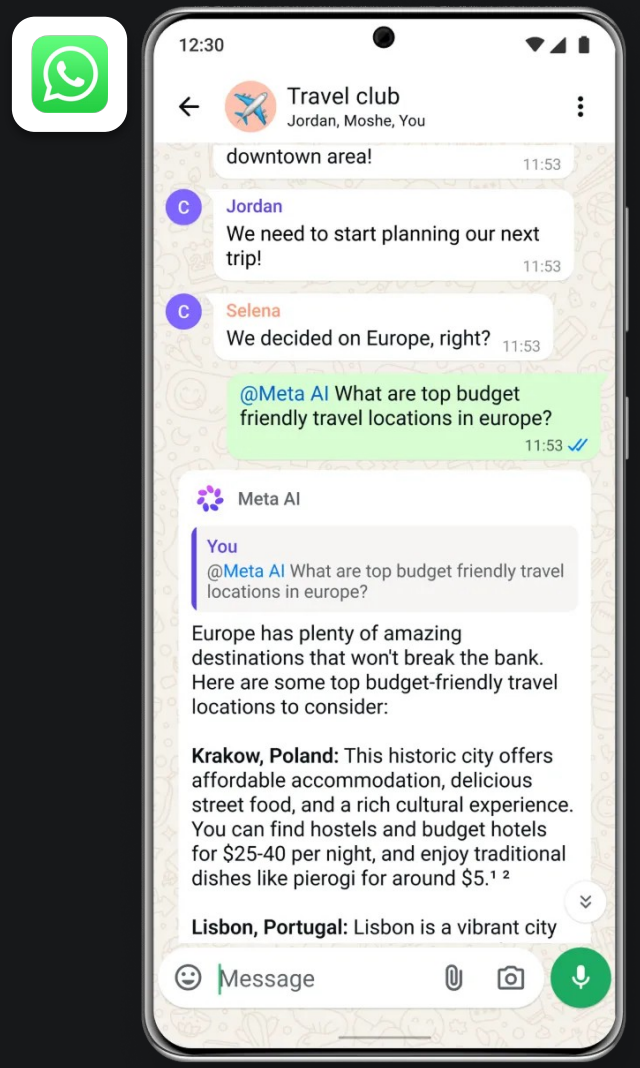


TechCrunch, Sarah Perez, "Snapchat sees spike in 1-star reviews as users pan the My AI feature, calling for its removal," Apr 24 2023, citing Apptopia.

Example: Meta AI in WhatsApp

Category 3: The one for the show

- WhatsApp's own promise: "no one outside of the chat, not even WhatsApp or Meta, can read… them."
- WhatsApp's own words on Meta AI: "don't send messages to Meta with information you don't want it to know."
- The app people picked because Meta couldn't read it now ships a Meta feature that can.



WhatsApp, "Answering your questions about privacy on WhatsApp" (whatsapp.com/privacyquestions). WhatsApp Help Center, "About using AI experiences available through WhatsApp."

Example: More rollbacks

Category 3: The one for the show



Google Earth AI imagery: TechRadar and NPR, both Jul 31 2026.

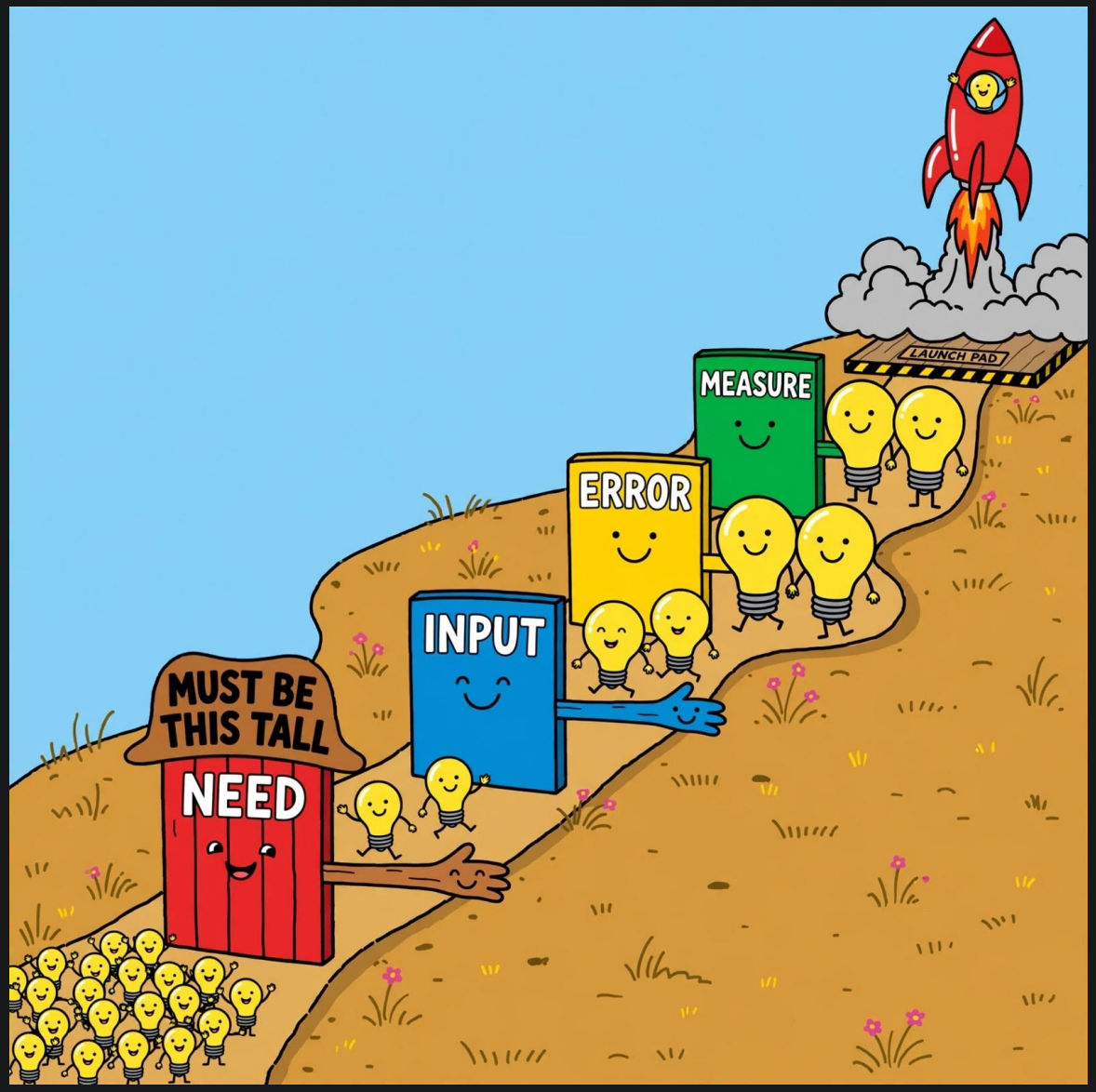
Example: Muse Image



Meta Newsroom, "Introducing Muse Image: Image Generation Built for Your World," Jul 7 2026, updated Jul 10 2026. The Guardian, Jul 11 2026.

Framework to use before you add an AI feature

- **Need.** Name the user's scarcity in one sentence. If you cannot, stop.
- **Input.** What does it read? Does the app already hold it, and is it yours to use?
- **Error.** What does a wrong answer cost, who pays, and can they catch it?
- **Measure.** Bounded or unbounded. Decide what counts as working before launch.



Revisiting the examples

FEATURE	NEED	INPUT	ERROR	MEASURE	VERDICT
Snapchat My AI	**Fail**	**Fail**	**Fail**	**Fail**	Fails gate 1
Meta celebrity personas	**Fail**	**Fail**	**Fail**	**Fail**	Fails gate 1
Spotify Discover Weekly	**Pass**	**Pass**	**Pass**	**Pass**	Passes all four
Spotify AI Playlist	**Pass**	**Weak**	**Pass**	**Pass**	Weak at gate 2
Meta Muse Image	**Pass**	**Fail**	**Fail**	**Fail**	Fails gate 2, ownership
Meta AI in WhatsApp	**Pass**	**Fail**	**Fail**	**Fail**	Fails gate 2, terms
Apple notification summaries	**Pass**	**Pass**	**Fail**	**Pass**	Fails gate 3
Microsoft Copilot in Word	**Pass**	**Weak**	**Fail**	**Pass**	Fails gate 3
Amazon Alexa for Shopping	**Pass**	**Pass**	**Pass**	**Pass**	Passes all four
Klarna AI assistant	**Weak**	**Weak**	**Fail**	**Fail**	Weak everywhere

Building for Agents

- Apps within ChatGPT, Claude or Gemini or any AI native app.
- Your App but used by agents
- Still use the thinking framework

Thank You

- Bala Ramdoss · Amazon
- App Growth Summit SF 2026