

2026 Elite Formula Racing Driver AI Public Voice Pulse Check

*Assessing the Public Voice on AI of the Top 20
Formula Motor Racing Drivers and It's Relevance
to Enterprise AI Transformation*

Edition 1: 2026



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The Pulse Check is an independent, observational research publication prepared for general information, commentary, research, discussion and public interest purposes. It examines publicly available information relating to selected elite Formula 1 drivers and their publicly identifiable relationship with artificial intelligence, including public statements, commentary, advocacy, campaigns, commercial associations and other qualifying AI-related activity.

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Interpretation of Findings

"Public AI Voice Identified" means that qualifying, publicly attributable evidence of AI-related commentary, activity, commercial association or other engagement was identified in accordance with the published methodology.

It does not mean that a driver supports, opposes or holds a broader position on artificial intelligence.

"No Public AI Voice Identified" means only that no qualifying public evidence was identified within the research scope. It does not indicate an absence of private views, experience, awareness or use of AI.

The absence of a public statement or identifiable position should not be interpreted as evidence that a driver has no view, has failed to act privately or has chosen not to engage with AI. It simply means that no relevant public evidence was identified within the scope of the review.

Findings are intended as an observational assessment of the publicly identifiable relationship between elite Formula 1 drivers and artificial intelligence, rather than an assessment of their personal beliefs or positions.

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WHY THE PUBLIC VOICE ON AI OF DRIVERS IN THE WORLD'S MOST WATCHED MOTORSPORT MATTERS

Few sporting environments illustrate the intersection between technology and human performance in the way elite Formula Motor racing does, and AI is increasingly becoming part of that identity.

AI is embedded throughout engineering, simulation, race strategy, vehicle development, performance optimisation, predictive maintenance, commercial operations and fan engagement.

In the broader context, AI is not just a technology conversation. It is increasingly touching questions of job security, creative ownership, misinformation, privacy, environmental impact, human identity and relevance, trust, and the future of work.

For enterprise AI transformation, these questions matter directly because employees do not encounter AI for the first time when their employer introduces an AI strategy.

Long before many organisations begin their own AI transformation, people are already forming perceptions through news media, governments, technology companies, social media, commercial advertising and influential public figures. These external influences sit largely outside the organisation's control, yet they form part of the environment into which enterprise AI transformation is introduced.

Unlike many conventional organisational changes, attitudes toward AI may already have been formed before an employee encounters the technology through their employer. People may approach AI with expectations, enthusiasm, uncertainty or concern shaped by questions about employment, human relevance, creativity, privacy, misinformation, trust and the future of work.

AI is no longer a conversation confined to governments, technology companies, researchers

and regulators. It is becoming a public conversation that influences how people understand opportunity, risk, trust and the future of work.

Public understanding of AI is shaped not only by formal institutions, but also by people and organisations that command attention, loyalty, trust and cultural influence. Public figures can contribute to the environment in which new technologies are understood, discussed and interpreted, whether through what they say, the causes and technologies with which they associate, or simply through their visibility within a particular cultural environment.

What This Pulse Check Examines

The *AI Public Voice Pulse Check* series has been developed to examine how influential public figures engage with AI in the public sphere. It is designed to create a longitudinal record of how society's most influential institutions engage with AI as the technology reshapes work, enterprise and public life.

The *2026 Elite Formula Racing Driver AI Pulse Check* examines a cohort of 20 elite Formula Racing Drivers to determine whether publicly identifiable evidence of an AI voice can be found.

Using the published *AI Public Voice Pulse Check* methodology, this report reviews the top twenty Formula Motorsport drivers to determine whether a publicly identifiable AI voice exists.

This study is observational: is there a public voice on record? Has an elite Formula Racing Driver spoken publicly about AI, participated in an AI-specific initiative, or knowingly associated themselves with an AI-related product or activity?

The assessment considers attributable public commentary about AI as well as qualifying AI-specific public representations, including knowingly associating a player's identity, image, voice or personal brand with an AI-specific product, campaign or initiative.

For the purposes of this Pulse Check, that may arise through the driver's own commentary or

through a specific AI-related representation, partnership, campaign, endorsement or other public association in which the driver's identity is knowingly connected with artificial intelligence.

A driver can be commercially associated with AI without becoming an AI commentator. Conversely, a driver can publicly discuss AI without having any commercial relationship with an AI company.

The purpose is not to determine whether those voices are right or wrong, whether they support or oppose AI, or whether they should have a position on the technology.

Rather, the purpose is to observe engagement with AI, whether direct or indirect, to understand its level and nature across the cohort, and to explore how public voice on AI intersects with public opinion and the broader environment in which enterprise AI transformation takes place.

The public commentary and their commercial associations of elite Formula Racing Drivers and AI provides an observable indication of how one highly visible sporting community is interacting with the public conversation surrounding AI.

Why Formula Racing Drivers are an Important Case Study for Public AI Voice

Elite Formula Motorsport occupies a distinctive position at the intersection of human performance, technology, enterprise, commerce and culture.

A leading Formula Motorsport team is not simply a sporting organisation. It may also operate as an engineering enterprise, technology developer, media business, entertainment brand, employer, research and development environment and global commercial organisation. AI is increasingly embedded across that environment. It can influence simulation, vehicle development, aerodynamic modelling, race strategy, performance analysis, predictive systems, decision support and commercial activity.

The sport's audiences may readily associate technology with performance, precision, innovation and competitive advantage. AI can therefore enter the public identity of the sport through its technological and commercial

ecosystem without necessarily becoming part of the driver's own public narrative.

Commercial relationships make this especially visible.

The sport's commercial arrangements of elite Formula Racing Teams reflect a commensurate transformation. AI enterprises and technology companies are increasingly visible across the Formula Motorsport ecosystem through teams, manufacturers, technology partnerships, software providers and commercial sponsors.

Their public influence also extends beyond the racetrack through relationships with global commercial and technology brands. In some cases, AI organisations have also begun forming direct commercial relationships with individual drivers, publicly associating some of the sport's most recognisable identities with AI.

A driver may become publicly associated with an AI company, product or campaign without having expressed a broader personal position about artificial intelligence. That association does not establish what the driver thinks about AI. It does, however, place the driver's public identity within an increasingly visible AI environment.

Artificial intelligence is increasingly present across the sport's technological and commercial infrastructure. Teams are using increasingly sophisticated data, simulation, analytics and computational systems to support areas ranging from vehicle development and race strategy to performance optimisation and decision-making.

At the same time, AI companies and technology providers are becoming increasingly visible through commercial relationships with teams, manufacturers and, in some cases, individual drivers.

The result is a sporting environment in which AI is becoming increasingly difficult to separate from the broader identity of the sport.

Yet the existence of AI throughout the sport does not necessarily translate into a corresponding public conversation about AI among its drivers.

That gap is the central interest of this Pulse Check.

Drivers occupy a distinctive position within the Formula Motorsport ecosystem. They are both participants in one of the world's most technologically advanced sporting environments and highly visible public representatives of that environment.

They therefore provide an interesting lens through which to observe the relationship between technological change and public voice.

The question is not whether drivers have a responsibility to explain AI, nor whether they should adopt a position on it.

It is simply whether something is publicly visible.

What Does It Mean for an Elite Sportsperson to Lend Their Trust to AI?

The question of commercial association with AI becomes more interesting when considered in the context of the public environment into which that association enters.

AI is not a conventional consumer category. Public attitudes toward it remain mixed and are evolving rapidly. Stanford's 2026 AI Index describes a public conversation in which optimism is rising, but so too is anxiety: globally, 59% of respondents said AI products and services offer more benefits than drawbacks, while 52% said they were nervous about AI. The Index also identifies substantial differences between experts and the public in expectations about AI's impact on work and the economy. ([Stanford HAI][1])

Against that backdrop, a different question arises when an elite sportsperson with millions of followers chooses to associate their personal identity with AI.

Why would an elite sportsperson, trusted by fans and the wider community, lend their name, identity and personal credibility to an AI product or enterprise?

The question is not whether such an association is right or wrong. Nor is it whether the player

personally endorses every aspect of AI. A commercial relationship may be based on a particular product, technology or commercial proposition, rather than on a general position about artificial intelligence.

But the distinction between endorsing a product and being publicly associated with AI may be less clear to an audience.

Elite sportspeople possess something that AI companies cannot manufacture through advertising alone: a pre-existing relationship of familiarity and trust with millions of people. Their audiences have followed their careers, watched them compete, identified with them and, in many cases, developed a personal affinity with them over many years. When that individual chooses to place their name and identity alongside a technology, the association can carry meaning beyond the functional claims of the product itself.

This potentially gives elite sportspeople a distinctive role in the public adoption of emerging technologies. They can make an abstract or unfamiliar technology culturally familiar. They can position it alongside qualities such as performance, achievement, aspiration, innovation and human capability.

But that influence also creates a different kind of consideration.

If public attitudes toward AI become more positive, the association may be perceived as an endorsement of innovation and progress. If concerns intensify around employment, privacy, environmental impact, authenticity, misinformation, regulation or the distribution of AI's benefits, the same association may acquire a different meaning.

The athlete does not control that evolution.

This is particularly relevant because AI itself is changing rapidly. The technology, the claims being made about it and public understanding of its consequences are all moving at a pace that makes today's commercial proposition potentially different from tomorrow's public perception.

The question therefore extends beyond sponsorship.

What is the value, responsibility and potential risk of lending personal trust to a technology whose social licence is still being formed?

The Pulse Check does not attempt to answer that question for individual players. Nor does it suggest that elite sportspeople should avoid commercial relationships with AI.

Rather, the observation is that AI-specific commercial representation is qualitatively different from many conventional endorsements. When an elite sportsperson associates their personal identity with AI, they potentially become part of a much larger public conversation about a technology that is already provoking significant questions about work, human capability, trust and society.

That makes the emerging question not simply whether AI companies will seek out elite sporting identities, but what happens when people with extraordinary public reach choose to lend their personal credibility to AI at a time when society is still deciding how much it trusts the technology itself.

[1]: https://hai.stanford.edu/ai-index/2026-ai-index-report/public-opinion?utm_source=chatgpt.com "Public Opinion | The 2026 AI Index Report | Stanford HAI"

RESULTS

The *2026 Elite Formula Racing Driver AI Public Voice Pulse Check* examined a cohort of 20 elite Formula Racing drivers to determine whether a publicly identifiable AI voice could be identified using the published methodology.

Applying the two-stage methodology, a publicly identifiable AI voice was identified for 7 of the 20 drivers (35%). For the remaining 13 drivers (65%), no publicly identifiable AI voice was identified within the scope of the review.

Only 3 drivers within the cohort were identified as having made publicly attributable comments about AI. These represented the most direct form of public AI voice, contributing explicitly to the public conversation surrounding artificial intelligence.

The publicly identifiable AI voice found within the cohort was also more commonly established through AI-specific public representation than through direct commentary.

Charles Leclerc provides one example. No publicly attributable commentary on AI's broader implications was identified, but his official lifestyle brand, CL16, publicly launched an AI-powered conversational platform. Consistent with the published methodology, this represents a publicly identifiable AI voice through the direct public association between the driver's personal brand and an AI-specific initiative.

A further 4 drivers became publicly associated with AI through AI-specific commercial relationships, personal brand initiatives or team partnerships. Consistent with the published methodology, these public representations were assessed as constituting a publicly identifiable AI voice.

Lewis Hamilton provides an example through his public relationship with Perplexity AI combines commercial engagement with publicly attributable commentary, demonstrating that public AI voice

2026 ELITE FORMULA MOTORSPORT DRIVER AI PUBLIC VOICE PULSE CHECK RESULTS

DRIVER	PUBLIC VOICE ON AI
Lewis Hamilton	Yes
Lando Norris	Yes
Oscar Piastri	Yes
Fernando Alonso	Yes
Carlos Sainz	Yes
Alexander Albon	Yes
Charles Leclerc	Yes
George Russell	No
Max Verstappen	No
Kimi Antonelli	No
Lance Stroll	No
Oliver Bearman	No
Pierre Gasly	No
Franco Colapinto	No
Liam Lawson	No
Nico Hülkenberg	No
Gabriel Bortoleto	No
Arvid Lindblad	No
Esteban Ocon	No
Isack Hadjar	No

 **PUBLIC VOICE ON AI IDENTIFIED**
7 of 20 drivers (35%)
Yes

 **NO PUBLIC VOICE ON AI IDENTIFIED**
13 of 20 drivers (65%)
No

can arise through more than one form of engagement.

For the remaining 13 drivers, the review identified neither publicly attributable AI commentary nor a qualifying AI-specific public representation. This should not be interpreted as evidence that these drivers hold no views on AI, have not engaged with AI professionally, or have no relationship with AI. Rather, it indicates that no publicly identifiable AI voice was found within the scope of the review and based on the publicly available material assessed.

No driver within the cohort was identified as having developed what might be considered a broader 'position' on AI; a sustained public position on the broader implications of AI for employment, enterprise transformation, trust, governance, human contribution or society.

However there is no suggestion that elite sportspeople are obligated or should be compelled to develop such positions. Rather, it highlights a distinction between the willingness of elite drivers to participate in public conversations about issues they consider important and the

comparatively limited visibility of AI within their public record.

These examples illustrate an important distinction between Public AI Voice and AI Engagement.

Public AI Voice concerns what drivers publicly communicate about AI, either through attributable commentary or through the knowing public association of their identity, image, voice or personal brand with an AI-specific product, campaign or initiative.

AI Engagement is broader. It encompasses commercial and professional relationships with AI, including endorsements, partnerships, investments and other activities involving AI-related organisations or technologies.

The *2026 Elite Formula Racing Driver AI Public Voice Pulse Check* contributes to a broader longitudinal record of how influential public communities are engaging with AI as the technology increasingly reshapes work, enterprise and public life. Its purpose is not to suggest that athletes should speak about AI, but to examine what is publicly visible when they do, and what remains comparatively absent from the public conversation.

The *Pulse Check* in mid 2026 (July) provides a particularly useful baseline for observing what happens next as AI becomes more capable, more pervasive and more consequential across the global sporting environment.

KEY FINDINGS & OBSERVATIONS

1. AI is increasingly embedded in elite Formula Motorsport, yet public AI voice among drivers remains comparatively limited

AI is already embedded throughout elite Formula Motorsport. It is increasingly used across engineering, race strategy, simulation, vehicle development, data analytics, performance optimisation, predictive maintenance, media production, fan engagement and broader commercial operations.

Against that backdrop, the public AI voice of the drivers themselves remains comparatively limited.

Applying the published Public Voice Pulse Check methodology, a publicly identifiable AI voice was identified for seven of the twenty drivers reviewed. However, only three drivers were found to have made publicly attributable comments about AI. The remaining four were identified through the knowing public association of their identity or personal brand with AI-specific products, campaigns or initiatives.

For the remaining thirteen drivers, no publicly identifiable AI voice was identified within the scope of the review.

This does not suggest that these drivers hold no views on AI. Nor does the absence of a public record indicate an absence of private engagement with the technology. It simply indicates that the review did not identify publicly attributable evidence of commentary on AI or association with an AI-specific initiative.

Formula Motorsport is among the world's most technologically sophisticated sporting environments. AI is increasingly influencing engineering decisions, performance analysis, simulation, commercial activity and fan engagement. Yet comparatively few of the sport's elite drivers are publicly contributing to the broader conversation about what that transformation means.

AI is therefore becoming increasingly visible within elite Formula Motorsport while the public AI voice of many of the drivers at its centre remains comparatively limited.

2. AI enterprises are beginning to use elite sporting identities to build public visibility and association

The Pulse Check also identified an emerging pattern in the relationship between AI enterprises and elite sporting identities.

AI-related commercial associations within the cohort included direct relationships between AI enterprises and individual drivers, AI-specific initiatives developed through personal brands, and partnerships established through racing teams that positioned drivers as visible representatives of AI-related initiatives.

This suggests that AI enterprises are beginning to recognise the commercial value of globally recognised sporting identities as a means of building visibility and association around emerging technologies.

Elite Formula Motorsport drivers may be particularly attractive in this context because their public identities are already strongly associated with engineering excellence, technological innovation, precision, performance and continual improvement.

Unlike some other public figures, their professional identity is not primarily associated with the creation of artistic works or other areas where AI's disruptive implications have generated particularly intense public debate.

The current findings do not establish why particular AI enterprises have chosen particular sporting identities, and the Pulse Check does not attempt to establish causation.

They do, however, point to an emerging commercial pattern:

AI enterprises are not simply marketing technology through technology companies. They are increasingly associating the technology with globally recognised human identities.

That is significant because it can influence not only how AI is marketed, but also which people the public increasingly associates with the technology.

3. Drivers demonstrate that they can develop significant public voices on issues beyond sport, but AI has not yet emerged as a comparable area of public engagement

The relative absence of public AI voice is particularly notable because elite Formula Motorsport drivers are not generally absent from broader public conversations.

Across the cohort, drivers have established public voices on issues including driver safety, diversity and inclusion, environmental sustainability, mental health, charitable causes, equality, education and community wellbeing.

These voices demonstrate that elite drivers can become influential public participants in issues that extend well beyond competition.

Lewis Hamilton provides one of the clearest examples. Over many years, he has developed a prominent public voice on racial equality, diversity, inclusion, environmental sustainability and educational opportunity through initiatives including the Hamilton Commission and Mission 44. Other drivers have similarly used their public profiles to support charitable, humanitarian and sporting causes.

Against that broader context, publicly identifiable AI voice remains limited.

4. Commercial association can create a positive public signal about AI without establishing a broader public position

AI presents both significant opportunities and legitimate public concerns.

Where a driver knowingly associates their identity, image or personal brand with an AI enterprise, product or initiative, that relationship can contribute to a positive public association with the technology, even where the driver has expressed no broader view about AI.

Commercial relationships are designed to create positive associations between brands and the people who represent them.

The result is that, where commentary is limited, commercial association may become one of the strongest publicly visible signals of a driver's relationship with AI.

This does not mean that a driver intends to endorse every aspect of AI, nor that they have considered or adopted a position on its broader societal implications.

It simply reflects how public association operates.

The finding is particularly relevant because AI is not experienced by the public as a single, uniform technology. It is increasingly encountered through products, workplaces, media, advertising and commercial relationships, each of which can generate different perceptions of its benefits and risks.

A driver's association with AI therefore contributes to the wider environment in which AI is understood, even where that association is not accompanied by public commentary.

The findings also demonstrate that public AI voice and AI engagement should not be treated as synonymous.

A driver may have a significant relationship with AI without publicly discussing the technology. Equally, a driver may speak about AI without having a commercial relationship with an AI enterprise.

Within the cohort, four drivers were identified as having a public AI voice primarily through knowing association with AI-specific products, campaigns or initiatives rather than through direct commentary.

This distinction matters because the public record can communicate association without necessarily revealing personal opinion.

5. Commercial association is becoming an important pathway through which drivers enter the public AI conversation

Within this Formula Motorsport cohort, the current public record suggests that AI adoption and

commercial association are developing more rapidly than broader public articulation of what AI means for work, enterprise transformation, governance, trust, human contribution and society.

Public figures can become part of the public conversation about AI through what they represent as well as through what they say.

Elite Formula Motorsport drivers operate within extensive commercial ecosystems involving automotive manufacturers, technology companies, software providers, financial institutions, telecommunications providers, media organisations, consumer brands and global sponsors.

Increasingly, these relationships are becoming one of the ways in which drivers become publicly associated with AI.

The Pulse Check identified several examples.

Lewis Hamilton's relationship with Perplexity AI combines direct commercial association with public commentary. Charles Leclerc's CL16 personal brand has publicly launched an AI-powered conversational platform. Carlos Sainz, Alexander Albon and Fernando Alonso were also identified through public associations with AI-specific initiatives.

As AI becomes increasingly commercialised, this pathway may become more significant. The public encounter with AI may increasingly occur not only through technology companies themselves, but through the trusted and familiar identities they choose to associate with their products and services.

A driver's participation in an AI campaign does not establish their broader views about artificial intelligence. Nor does an AI-related commercial relationship demonstrate that a driver has considered or adopted a position on AI's implications for employment, society, governance or human contribution.

6. Team partnerships can also create a public AI association for drivers

The pathway into the public AI conversation is not always controlled by the individual driver.

Several drivers became publicly associated with AI through commercial partnerships established by their racing teams.

Carlos Sainz and Alexander Albon provide representative examples through Williams Racing's partnership with Anthropic's Claude. The association did not arise primarily through individual commercial endorsements. Rather, it emerged through the drivers' role as the most visible public representatives of a team that had established an AI-specific commercial relationship.

Drivers do not operate solely as independent public brands, they also represent globally recognised sporting organisations whose commercial ecosystems increasingly include technology companies, software providers and AI enterprises.

As AI becomes more prominent within team and manufacturer partnerships, drivers may therefore acquire a publicly identifiable AI association through relationships established by the organisations they represent.

7. Commercial association may increasingly connect drivers to broader AI-related reputational questions

Commercial proximity to AI may become an increasingly unavoidable part of the public environment surrounding elite Formula Motorsport drivers.

A driver may become publicly associated with AI through a direct relationship with an AI enterprise. They may also become associated with AI through a manufacturer, sponsor, team or other commercial partner that adopts AI in ways that subsequently attract public attention.

AI applications associated with improved engineering capability, safety or customer experience may be perceived differently from applications that become associated with workforce reductions, privacy concerns, misinformation, bias, copyright disputes or other contested issues.

The important observation is not just that commercial AI relationships necessarily create reputational risk, but also that drivers may face reputational damage 'by association'.

10. Formula Motorsport is ahead on AI adoption, but behind on AI articulation

The overarching finding of this Pulse Check is perhaps best expressed simply:

Formula Motorsport appears to be ahead on AI adoption, but behind on AI articulation.

AI is increasingly embedded throughout the sport's technical, commercial and operational environment.

It is present in engineering, simulation, race strategy, performance optimisation, data analysis, vehicle development, commercial activity and fan engagement. AI enterprises are also becoming increasingly visible through relationships with teams, manufacturers and individual drivers.

The public conversation among drivers has not developed at the same pace.

Only seven of the twenty drivers reviewed were identified as having a publicly identifiable AI voice. Of those, only three had made publicly attributable comments about AI. For the majority of the cohort, no publicly identifiable AI voice was found within the scope of the review.

The gap is therefore not primarily one of technological adoption.

It is a gap between AI being increasingly present in the environment in which drivers operate and AI being publicly articulated by the drivers themselves.

The broader implications of AI for work, enterprise transformation, trust, governance, human contribution and society remain comparatively absent from the public record reviewed.

This should not be interpreted as a criticism of drivers, nor as an expectation that they should become commentators on AI.

It is an observation about the current state of the public record.

Technology can advance more quickly than the public conversations that help people understand its wider implications. Formula Motorsport provides a particularly visible example of that dynamic because AI is already so deeply embedded in the sport's technological and commercial environment.

The significance of the finding therefore extends beyond motorsport.

As AI becomes increasingly embedded in organisations and workplaces, the external public environment in which people encounter and interpret AI will matter. Elite Formula Motorsport drivers are one part of that environment, and their public voice, commercial associations and comparative silence provide an observable window into how one highly visible community is engaging with the transformation.

The question for future editions of the Pulse Check is therefore not whether drivers should speak more about AI.

It is whether the public record changes as AI becomes an increasingly consequential part of the sport, the enterprises surrounding it and the wider society in which those drivers operate.

11. An Observation on Social Capital – Could Elite Sportspeople be a Sleeping Giant in the AI Conversation?

Elite sportspeople are not required to speak on social issues. Indeed some would argue they have no place to. Others would prefer they don't and that should be left to elected representatives, policy makers, economists, technologists or workplace leaders.

But historically, celebrities and elite sportspeople have lent that social capital to matters beyond their professional fields.

Their influence has extended beyond their professional achievements because the relationship they develop with audiences can give them something that few institutions or individuals possess at comparable scale: social capital.

They have supported social causes, raised awareness of community issues, contributed to public conversations and used their platforms in ways that have extended their influence beyond entertainment or sport.

Muhammad Ali challenged prevailing attitudes towards race, religion and war; Billie Jean King used her prominence to advance gender equality and LGBTQ+ rights; Audrey Hepburn used her global fame to advocate for children through UNICEF; and Harry Belafonte used his platform in the civil rights movement and later for humanitarian causes.

These examples are different in purpose, context and consequence, but they share a common characteristic: people with extraordinary public visibility used some of their social capital to bring wider public attention to issues that mattered beyond their profession

Elite sportspeople occupy a particularly distinctive position within this landscape. Sporting achievement can give them extraordinary reach, while sustained visibility, familiarity and identification with audiences can create high levels of public trust and emotional connection. Their influence is therefore not simply a function of how many people follow them. It is also a function of the relationship audiences have with them.

Their public influence represents a form of soft power. It can attract attention to an issue, make an unfamiliar subject more culturally accessible, signal that an issue matters, or encourage audiences to engage with a conversation they might otherwise overlook.

The implications of AI increasingly extend well beyond technology. AI is reshaping work, education, creativity, communication, identity and everyday life. Public concern and debate are consequently expanding beyond questions of what AI can do towards questions of what AI means for people and society.

This creates an intriguing possibility if the implications of AI become increasingly social and human, that social capital may become more significant to the AI conversation than it is today.

Could elite sportspeople be a sleeping giant in the AI conversation?

12. The Elite Sportsperson potentially represents an accessible trusted public voice for AI Companies

Public trust of AI remains a defining challenge.

There is no obvious short-term scenario in which AI simply becomes a universally trusted category.

The issue is no longer only whether people perceive AI as trustworthy. As AI becomes more capable and autonomous, questions of reliability, safety, transparency and control are increasingly being experienced in practice. AI systems can make mistakes, behave unexpectedly and, increasingly, act with a degree of autonomy that makes the consequences of those failures more tangible.

If public trust is an asset that can be borrowed, strengthened or transferred through credible human association, elite sport may represent a particularly accessible environment in which to seek it. The combination of global visibility, established personal brands, large audiences and a professional identity that is not directly threatened by AI substitution may make elite sportspeople commercially attractive partners for AI companies seeking to humanise the category and build public confidence.

As AI increasingly enters the commercial marketplace, elite sportspeople may become one of the relatively few categories of highly visible public figures for whom representing AI does not carry an obvious contradiction with the value of their own work.

Elite sportspeople occupy a relatively distinctive position. Their professional value is built primarily

around physical performance, competition and human capability. Their work product is therefore, at least presently, less directly exposed to replacement by generative and autonomous AI than the work of many other highly visible public figures.

The contrast is potentially significant. For writers, filmmakers, actors, musicians and other creative professionals, AI is increasingly capable of producing, replicating or materially altering elements of the work through which those individuals earn their living and establish their professional identity. For some, association with AI may therefore carry a more immediate tension: the technology seeking their endorsement may also be perceived as threatening the value, ownership or future of the very work they represent.

That may make elite sportspeople a comparatively accessible category for commercial association with AI companies as the nature of their relationship with the technology may create fewer direct conflicts of interest.

READING THE ROOM - THE STATE OF THE AI CONVERSATION IN MID-2026

The public voice of elite Formula Racing Drivers on AI does not occur in a vacuum. It sits within a broader public conversation about what AI means, what it may deliver and what its consequences may be.

When a public figure or organisation speaks about AI, that voice enters a conversation already shaped by optimism and anxiety, adoption and resistance, opportunity and uncertainty. A positive, neutral or critical voice is therefore received against expectations and assumptions that already exist within the public.

The Pulse Check does not seek to determine whether any particular position on AI is right or wrong. It asks a different question:

Are elite Formula Racing Drivers 'reading the room' of public sentiment on AI?

The Pulse Check series does not attempt to recreate or independently measure public opinion about AI. A substantial and growing body of research already examines public attitudes, sentiment and experience with AI, including research from the Stanford Institute for Human-Centered AI through its AI Index, Ipsos, the Pew Research Center, Gallup, Edelman and Lightcast. The Pulse Checks consider this established body of research as context for understanding the broader public conversation rather than attempting to replicate it.

This distinction is important because the AI conversation is extraordinarily dynamic. Technology capabilities, investment, regulation, enterprise adoption and public understanding are changing rapidly, often in response to one another. At the same time, questions about trust,

employment, infrastructure, human agency and whether the benefits of AI will be broadly shared are becoming increasingly prominent.

An Environment That Is Difficult to Predict

What we do know is that the AI environment is extraordinarily dynamic.

Technology capabilities, investment, regulation, enterprise adoption, public sentiment and the competitive landscape are changing rapidly and often in response to one another. Developments that appear significant today can be overtaken, revised or challenged within months.

This makes forecasting particularly difficult. It is challenging to know how the AI landscape will unfold over the next three months, let alone the next 12 months or the years beyond.

That uncertainty is precisely why the broader public conversation matters to the Pulse Check.

The findings in this research should not be interpreted against a fixed or settled view of AI. They should be understood against a public conversation that is itself evolving, sometimes rapidly.

The Pulse Checks are therefore best understood as snapshots of the AI conversation at a particular point in time.

They do not attempt to predict where that conversation is heading. Rather, they capture what can be observed about public voice, engagement and participation against a rapidly changing social and technological backdrop.

This provides the context for examining the public AI voice of elite Formula Racing Drivers: not as a judgement of whether they should speak, but as an observation of what is publicly visible, and how that voice sits within the broader conversation taking place around AI in mid-2026.

Against this backdrop, several themes are particularly visible in the public conversation in mid-2026.

1. The Prospect of an AI Bubble

Concern about a potential AI bubble is not simply a question of whether AI companies or investments are overvalued. It reflects a broader question about whether the scale of investment, infrastructure development and corporate expectation surrounding AI is sustainable, and whether the benefits ultimately experienced by society will justify the enormous financial and social investment being made.

For the public, the consequences of a significant correction could extend well beyond financial markets. If expectations collapse, it could contribute to growing cynicism about AI, particularly among people already uncertain about its impact on employment, privacy, creativity and trust.

Conversely, continued rapid investment without visible and broadly shared benefits may reinforce a perception that AI is primarily serving investors, technology companies and wealthy economies rather than the wider community.

The significance of the potential AI bubble therefore extends beyond financial valuation. A growing gap between the expectations being created around AI and the benefits experienced by ordinary people could become another source of public scepticism.

2. Data Centres: When AI Becomes a Local Issue

The rapid expansion of AI data centres has brought the consequences of AI directly into communities. What was once a largely invisible infrastructure issue is increasingly being debated in terms of electricity, water, land use, household costs, environmental impact and who ultimately pays for the infrastructure required to support AI.

In the United States, a March 2026 Gallup survey found that 71% of Americans opposed the construction of an AI data centre in their local area, including 48% who were strongly opposed. Environmental impacts, resource consumption, local quality of life and potential increases in energy costs were among the concerns expressed.

Australia is experiencing similar tensions. Governments continue to promote data centres as opportunities for investment, jobs and digital

capability, while communities and policymakers are questioning their demands on energy and water resources.

The significance for the public AI conversation is considerable. AI is becoming physically visible within communities. The debate is no longer only about what happens on a screen; it is increasingly about what AI infrastructure means for people's communities and shared resources.

This raises a broader question about the social licence of AI: will people accept the infrastructure required to deliver AI if they do not believe its benefits are being fairly shared?

3. The Prospect of a 'Job Apocalypse' Remains Unclear

The prospect of widespread AI-driven job displacement has become one of the most powerful narratives in the public conversation about AI.

There remains considerable uncertainty about the scale and timing of actual displacement. At the same time, the prospect of AI performing increasingly sophisticated cognitive and professional tasks has created genuine anxiety about career security, particularly among younger people and those entering traditionally white-collar professions.

The World Economic Forum's Future of Jobs Report 2025 estimates that broader structural labour-market change could displace 92 million roles by 2030 while creating new employment opportunities. Although the report projects a net increase in jobs overall, the roles created will not necessarily be the same roles, in the same locations, requiring the same capabilities or available to the same people.

For many people, therefore, concern is shaped less by long-term economic forecasts than by immediate questions of employment, fairness and human relevance.

Public concern is also not limited to the possibility of mass unemployment. It encompasses uncertainty about what work will remain, how jobs will change, whether people will have sufficient

time and opportunity to adapt, and whether human skills will retain their value.

The question is increasingly not simply whether AI will replace jobs, but whether it will fundamentally alter the pathway into work, the value of human contribution and the relationship between people and their employers.

People are being asked to prepare for a future of work that neither governments, employers nor technology companies can yet clearly describe.

That uncertainty is an important part of the public mood surrounding AI and a critical backdrop to any discussion of AI, work and human contribution.

4. AI Companies Are Moderating Some of the 'Doom' Narrative

An interesting development in the 2026 AI conversation has been the softening of some of the more dramatic predictions about AI-driven job destruction.

OpenAI CEO Sam Altman has acknowledged that earlier concerns about AI rapidly eliminating entry-level white-collar jobs have not materialised to the extent anticipated. This illustrates a broader challenge in the public conversation: predictions about technological capability and predictions about its social and economic consequences do not necessarily move at the same pace.

For the public, changing narratives can raise questions of credibility and trust.

Earlier warnings helped establish the possibility of a 'job apocalypse' as a legitimate part of the AI conversation. A subsequent moderation of those predictions does not necessarily remove the anxiety they created, particularly for people already uncertain about their employment prospects.

It also reinforces a broader question: if the people building AI cannot confidently predict its impact on work, how can employees, governments or the wider public confidently prepare for it?

5. Increasing Government Intervention and Regulation

Another important development in the 2026 AI conversation is the increasing involvement of governments in the governance of advanced AI.

The U.S. government's increasingly direct intervention in the activities of frontier AI companies, including actions involving Anthropic, provides a visible example. These developments reflect the growing intersection of advanced AI with national security, economic policy, technology sovereignty and public safety.

For the public, interventions such as these provide tangible evidence that governments themselves regard increasingly capable AI systems as having implications that warrant government oversight.

The conversation is therefore moving beyond the abstract question of whether AI should be regulated. Government intervention is increasingly becoming part of the reality of how frontier AI is developed, deployed and accessed.

This is also consistent with public sentiment. Anthropic's 2026 Public Record research found that more than 70% of Americans surveyed believed government should play a role in regulating AI.

6. Instances of AI Going 'Rogue'

Recent incidents involving frontier AI systems have given the public conversation a more tangible sense of what can happen when increasingly autonomous systems operate beyond their intended boundaries.

In July 2026, OpenAI disclosed that models being tested for cybersecurity capabilities had gained unintended internet access and subsequently compromised systems belonging to Hugging Face during an internal test. OpenAI said the models exploited a vulnerability in a software package installer, allowing them to access the broader internet and ultimately obtain information from Hugging Face's infrastructure.

Other reporting has also documented incidents involving Anthropic and other frontier models during controlled security evaluations, in which AI agents undertook unauthorised or deceptive actions.

These incidents have intensified discussion about control, containment, accountability and human oversight.

The significance extends beyond whether the phrase 'going rogue' is technically accurate. As AI moves from generating answers towards taking actions, the public question increasingly becomes:

What happens when an AI system acts in ways its creators or operators did not anticipate?

7. Enterprise Experience With AI: Adoption Remains Relatively Light

Alongside these broader developments, enterprise experience with AI provides another important part of the context.

While AI adoption is expanding, the transformation of organisations remains at an early and uneven stage. The significance of this is that public expectations, concerns and assumptions about AI are developing at a time when many people have yet to experience substantial enterprise AI transformation directly.

This creates an unusual environment for organisations.

Employees may already have formed views about AI through the broader public conversation before they have meaningful experience of how AI will actually affect their work. The expectations entering the workplace may therefore be shaped as much by external narratives as by organisational experience.

METHODOLOGY

Purpose

The purpose of the 2026 Elite Formula Motorsport Driver AI Public Voice Pulse Check is to examine:

- whether a publicly identifiable AI voice can be found among elite formula motorsport drivers;
- whether that public record reflects a developed position on AI or only incidental proximity to AI;
- the nature of any public AI voice, including the issues, themes and contexts in which AI is discussed.

The Pulse Check is intentionally observational. It seeks to understand what is publicly visible rather than evaluate whether particular views are right, wrong or desirable.

Its value lies in understanding how one of the world's most influential sporting communities is publicly framing AI at a time when AI is increasingly reshaping both elite motorsport and the enterprises that surround it.

Meaning of a Pulse Check

In enterprise transformation, a pulse check usually refers to a quick, light-touch survey or temperature check designed to gauge employee sentiment, alignment or readiness around major changes, often asking staff directly how they feel.

This Pulse Check applies the same principle in a different way.

Rather than surveying drivers directly, it observes the publicly visible record to understand how elite formula motorsport drivers are engaging with AI in the public domain. It therefore represents an external pulse check of public AI voice rather than an internal survey of opinion.

Selection of Drivers

The 2026 Elite Formula Motorsport Driver AI Public Voice Pulse Check examines the top twenty drivers based on the 2026 Formula One World

Championship Drivers' Championship standings as at 31 July 2026.

Formula racing is a category of circuit motor racing in which competing vehicles are purpose-built single-seat, open-wheel cars that must be designed and constructed in accordance with a defined technical formula—a prescribed set of regulations governing areas such as chassis, power unit, aerodynamics, dimensions, safety and performance. Examples of Formula racing include but not limited to:

Formula One (F1)
IndyCar Series (North America)
Formula E (electric)
FIA Formula 2 and FIA Formula 3
Super Formula (Japan)
Formula Regional championships
Formula Ford (entry level)

Formula One represents the highest level of international formula motor racing. As the premier category of the sport, its full-time championship drivers constitute a defined contemporary cohort of the world's elite formula motorsport drivers. Accordingly, this Pulse Check examines the twenty full-time drivers competing in the 2026 FIA Formula One World Championship.

Formula One is widely recognised as the premier category of international formula motor racing. The championship standings provide an objective, performance-based ranking of the sport's contemporary elite and establish a clearly defined cohort for examination. Selecting the twenty highest-ranked drivers at a fixed point in the championship provides a transparent and reproducible methodology while maintaining consistency with the cohort size adopted across the broader AI Public Voice Pulse Check series.

Drivers were selected solely on the basis of their championship standing. No consideration was given to whether individual drivers had previously spoken about, promoted, invested in or otherwise been publicly associated with AI. This approach reduces selection bias and ensures the cohort is determined independently of each driver's level of public AI engagement.

The twenty highest-ranked drivers were selected without reference to whether they had previously spoken about, promoted or been associated with AI. Selection was based solely on the official Drivers' Championship standings as at 31 July 2026, providing an objective, performance-based ranking that reduces selection bias and establishes a clearly defined, contemporary cohort of elite formula motorsport drivers.

What Constitutes Public AI Voice?

For the purposes of this Pulse Check, a public AI voice may include documented material such as interviews, public statements, social media posts and other publicly attributable material linked to a driver included within the scope of the Pulse Check.

Only material that was publicly available before the publication date of this report has been considered.

Public AI voice is conveyed not only through commentary, but also through public association. Where an influential individual knowingly and publicly associates their identity, image, likeness, voice or personal brand with an AI-specific product, campaign or initiative, that association forms part of the public conversation about AI. Such representation is therefore treated as a publicly identifiable AI voice for the purposes of this Pulse Check.

The absence of a documented public position should not be interpreted as evidence that a driver has no view on AI. Rather, it indicates that no attributable public position was identified within the scope of the review.

The Pulse Check applies a two-stage methodology to determine whether a publicly identifiable AI voice exists for each driver within the defined cohort.

Stage 1 (Primary) asks:

Has the driver made a publicly attributable comment about AI?

This is the strongest and most meaningful form of public AI voice because it contributes directly to

public discourse. Publicly attributable commentary may include interviews, public statements, social media posts, podcasts, speeches, published articles, media quotations or other comparable public communications in which the driver comments specifically on AI.

Where no publicly attributable AI commentary is identified, the Pulse Check applies a second test.

Stage 2 (Secondary) asks:

Has the driver knowingly and publicly associated their image, likeness, voice or personal brand with an AI-specific product, campaign or initiative?

This recognises that a publicly identifiable AI voice may also arise through representation rather than commentary. A driver may not express a personal opinion on AI, yet may knowingly and publicly participate in, endorse or represent an AI-specific product, service, campaign or initiative. Such public representation forms part of the observable AI landscape and is therefore included within the scope of the Pulse Check.

A publicly identifiable AI voice is established where either Stage 1 or Stage 2 is satisfied. Consistent with the observational purpose of the Pulse Check, the assessment does not evaluate the quality, frequency or significance of the commentary or representation, nor does it assess whether any position expressed is correct or desirable. It seeks only to determine whether a publicly identifiable AI voice exists within the defined scope of the review.

Conceptual and Analytical Foundation

While the Pulse Check asks a relatively straightforward question - what is publicly visible about the AI voice of elite Formula Racing Drivers? - the question itself is informed by the conceptual framework developed in the *Hearts, Minds & Hands* trilogy. The trilogy comprises:

- The Human Point of Difference (HPOD): Finding Your Human Relevance in the Age of AI
- A New Bargain: Reframing the Employment Relationship for the Age of AI
- The Jinji Method: Strategic, Sustainable & Humane Enterprise AI Transformation

The trilogy argues that enterprise AI transformation is ultimately a human, enterprise and societal challenge rather than simply a technological one. It examines AI through the connected lenses of human relevance and identity, the evolving employment relationship, and the strategic, sustainable and humane transformation of the enterprise. The central proposition is that successful AI transformation depends not only upon technological capability, but also upon trust, culture, leadership, public confidence and the way people understand AI's role in work and society.

The Pulse Check explores that proposition through one of the world's most influential cultural systems.

Football has already embraced AI operationally. AI is increasingly embedded in performance analysis, scouting, officiating, injury prevention, fan engagement, media production, marketing and enterprise operations. Yet the public record reviewed suggests that, among many of the world's elite drivers, there remains comparatively limited public engagement with AI's broader implications for work, employment, trust, identity, human contribution and enterprise transformation.

This observation is significant beyond football itself because employees do not encounter AI for the first time when their employer launches an AI strategy. Long before that, their perceptions are shaped through news media, social media, commercial campaigns, public debate and the voices of influential individuals and institutions. Public sentiment therefore forms part of the environment into which enterprise AI transformation is introduced.

The Pulse Check proceeds from a simple premise: before enterprises transform with AI, societies are already forming opinions about it. Understanding those opinions—and the public voices that shape them—is therefore relevant to understanding enterprise AI transformation itself.

Accordingly, the *2026 Elite Formula Facing Drivers AI Public Voice Pulse Check* should be understood not simply as a study of football, but as a case study of how one globally influential cultural institution is contributing to—or remaining

comparatively absent from—the wider public conversation surrounding AI.

Consistent with that purpose, the Pulse Check does not seek to determine whether Formula Racing Drivers should speak about AI, nor whether particular positions are correct or incorrect. It is intentionally observational. It asks what is publicly visible, what is not publicly visible, and what those patterns suggest about the current state of AI discourse within one of the world's most influential public communities.

Scope and Limitations

This Pulse Check provides a structured observational baseline of the publicly visible AI landscape among elite Formula Racing Drivers. The findings should be interpreted within the following methodological boundaries.

Public Record Only - The assessment is limited to publicly available material, including interviews, verified social media activity, public campaigns, commercial endorsements, investments, partnerships and media reporting. It does not seek to infer private opinions, unpublished discussions or internal enterprise views.

Observational Rather Than Evaluative - The Pulse Check does not assess whether drivers should hold, express or promote particular views on AI. Nor does it seek to evaluate the quality or accuracy of any position identified. Its purpose is to describe the visible public record.

Cohort Boundaries - The findings relate only to the twenty drivers selected from the 2026 Formula One World Championship Driver Championship standings at the end of July 2026. They should not be interpreted as representative of formula motorsport drivers generally, drivers competing in other motorsport categories, earlier or later Formula One seasons, or the wider sporting community.

Language and Geographic Coverage - The review prioritised publicly available material published in, or translated into, English, Spanish, Portuguese, French and German. Relevant material available only in other languages may not have been identified.

Temporal Scope - The research reflects publicly available information available up to August 2026. Given the pace of AI development and changing commercial relationships, public positions may evolve after publication.

Voice and Engagement - The methodology intentionally distinguishes between public AI voice and public AI engagement.

A player may become publicly associated with AI through commercial endorsements, sponsorships, investments or technology partnerships without having articulated a broader public position on AI itself. Conversely, a player may publicly discuss AI without maintaining significant commercial relationships within the AI ecosystem.

This distinction forms an important analytical principle of the Pulse Check and provides a foundation for future editions.