

From Free to Fee: An Analysis of Consumer Willingness-to-Pay for Premium Generative AI Features and its Implications for Pricing Strategy

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Abstract: Pricing strategy serves as a primary mechanism for value communication and market positioning, and as the digital economy's zero-marginal-cost distribution model facilitated the proliferation of freemium frameworks, Generative AI firms have adopted analogous strategies to catalyze mass adoption and lower entry barriers.

This study found that the primary objective for said companies is to achieve mass adoption and secure market-share dominance as quickly as possible, since the tactic of offering powerful models to the public for free has been, by all measures, an unmitigated success in dramatically lowering the barrier to entry and rapidly embedding these novel tools into the daily personal and professional workflows of millions. Despite this initial success, the high computational intensity of Generative AI operations creates a critical tension between user acquisition and marginal operating costs.

The ultimate success of this critical pivot from a "free" service to a "fee-based" product is by no means guaranteed and can represent a precarious and complex managerial challenge that hinges entirely on acquiring a deep and nuanced understanding of consumer value perception.

Furthermore, beyond the static delivery of results, the process of iterative model-tuning represents a new paradigm of user-led co-creation, with studies showing that this shift provides a critical pivot for pricing innovation, where monetization can be anchored in the collaborative interaction, with the potential to transform the user from a passive consumer into an active stakeholder in the value-generation process

This article provides a systematic synthesis of current market data and scientific research on the use of Generative AI tools to analyze the 'freemium' trajectory of said products. By evaluating the existing state of knowledge regarding the strategic 'free-to-fee' pivot, the work identifies the theoretical determinants that influence consumer willingness-to-pay as discussed in contemporary literature.

Keywords: Artificial Intelligence, Monetization, Consumer Value Perception, Privacy Premium

Introduction: Generative AI Pricing Strategy: Value, Risk, and Policy

A generative pre-trained transformer (GPT) is the type of large language model that is widely used in generative AI chatbots and was initially introduced as GPT-1 in a paper published by (Radford, et al., 2018), a research team gathered under the OpenAI research organization. The main innovation in this case, compared to previous natural language processing models, was mainly the ability to implement a solution that would reduce the amount of human supervision when labeling data, which in turn allowed GPT to process and train on data with a significant increase in efficiency, diminishing the cost and the amount of resources for training future models.

With subsequent models being released in 2020 that would employ reinforcement learning from human feedback to better align the models' behavior to match with human preferences, OpenAI eventually released ChatGPT on November 30, 2022. Benefiting from immense popularity and fueled by the prospects of fundamentally changing industries on a global scale, ChatGPT spurred widespread development of competing GPT-based systems from major technology companies that followed with their own models, such as Google's GEMINI as well as Meta AI's LLAMA and even new players like Anthropic with CLAUDE and most recently Hangzhou DeepSeek Artificial Intelligence with the first Chinese GPT model.

Fast forward from the initial paper that introduced GPT models and we could see that currently we are genuinely experiencing an "AI revolution" with major players in the market shifting focus on building and implementing an infrastructure that would allow for the creation of Artificial General Intelligence, a hypothetical model that would intellectually match and eventually overcome the cognitive capacities of a human being. Data gathered by Statista shows that the GenAI market is projected to grow from \$37.87 billion in 2024 to \$442 billion by 2031.

With all this in mind, a pricing strategy of GenAI would represent a fundamental departure from traditional software monetization, where static SaaS tools had their value derived from feature access, GenAI operates as a dynamic, quasi-autonomous agent. This in turn introduced complex variables of trust, cognitive labor and institutional risk.

Consequently, the transition from a free user to a fee-paying customer relies on a synthesis of three main pillars: the augmentation of human capability (Value), the mitigation of existential and operational threats (Risk) and the enablement of safe and compliant integration (Governance)

To explore the mechanics of this strategic transition, this research seeks to evaluate the specific mechanisms through which consumer behavior aligns with the evolving strategic requirements of GenAI firms. Primarily, the study investigates the extent to which the "Privacy Premium" modulates a user's Willingness to Pay (WTP).

Expanding beyond the realm of data governance, the research further explores the economic implications of output accuracy by questioning how the "Verification Tax" correlates with the perceived economic value of "Truth-as-a-Service" models. This analysis of reliability leads naturally into a third inquiry regarding the "Co-Creation Lever," which examines how active user participation in prompting and tuning acts as a pivotal strategic point for converting free utility into high-value, fee-based partnerships.

In synthesizing these inquiries, the research highlights the central hypothesis that value perception in the GenAI market has fundamentally shifted from the sheer volume of output to the structural reliability and security of the environment. Specifically, it is proposed that the mitigation of the "Verification Tax" and the provision of a "Privacy Premium" serve as the most significant predictors of premium tier conversion, as users increasingly prioritize the integrity of the process over the novelty of the result.

Literature Review

The Value Proposition: From Automation to Synergistic Augmentation

A crucial point in determining WTP in the GenAI market is establishing a different paradigm than of the traditional productivity software and propose a different technical and philosophical approach. As (Bianchini, 2025, p. 5) argues, GenAI marks a paradigm shift from a "passive instrument" to an "interactive agent in active support". Unlike standard tools that require

specific input logic, GenAI exhibits a “relatively advanced degree of autonomy” capable of producing complex outputs with minimal human supervision. These claims are also supported by findings in a Study conducted by (STATISTA, 2025), which shows that from 2022 to 2024 there has been a considerable growth in papers researching “Agentic Systems”, with the findings highlighting an increase from 91 per year, in 2022, to 1,576 per year in 2024.

As (Huo & Siau, 2024, p. 8) highlights through its research, this shift transforms the value proposition from simple utility to Intelligent Co-Ideation, as the premium value of GenAI is not found in replacing human effort, but in acting as a collaborative partner that “contributes to idea generation and refinement by offering constructive feedback and suggesting alternative perspectives”. Thus, companies are in fact charging a premium for Supportive Augmentation, or a service that empowers individuals to enhance productivity while freeing mental energy for strategic tasks.

The economic justification for a premium GenAI tier resides in Cognitive Economics, with the primary functional value of the tool being its ability to manipulate the user’s cognitive load. Research by (Zhao, et al., 2025, p. 13) further illustrates that GenAI serves as an offload mechanism, while helping users “reduce the extraneous cognitive load (ECL) to some extent, freeing up more space for the germane cognitive load (GCL)” which is required for deep learning and problem solving.

According to (Zhao et al. 2025), this divergence in utility generates a segmented value proposition, providing a strategic basis for price discrimination via tiering through the following options: The Democratization Tier (Free) and The Amplification Tier (Premium).

The Free Tier represents the value of GenAI as a “cognitive equalizer”, as the study found that when GenAI was introduced, the significant performance gap caused by differences in students’ prior knowledge disappeared. As students with more background knowledge traditionally perform better, GenAI compensated for this deficit by acting as an external knowledge base. The goal of this tier is therefore user acquisition by removing the barrier to entry and by making users competent, which in turn creates dependency.

The Premium Tier, however, represents the value of GenAI as a “force multiplier” for experts or for students with higher cognitive skills. This finding is further highlighted in the study where students with high critical thinking skills gained disproportionately more benefits from GenAI than those who didn’t manifest such capabilities. Furthermore, it was proven that the tool didn’t just aid them in completing tasks, it significantly amplified their superior cognitive abilities to reach a level of “in-depth learning” that was higher than the control group. In industrial settings, this is framed as Cognitive Ergonomics, where the value lies in shifting work from manual execution to high-level design, planning and problem solving.

Value in GenAI is not intrinsic to the software alone, it’s rather emergent, and (Hung, et al., 2025) utilize systems theory to propose that user value, defined as efficiency, effectiveness and innovation is in fact the result of Synergy between the IT asset and the user’s organizational resources. It is also stated that this synergy is not automatic and requires Integration Effort and Compatibility.

This insight introduces a clear blueprint for premium differentiation, while the free model offers the raw engine of an AI model, the premium tier can monetize the enablers of synergy. Examples of such enablers could be represented by API compatibility, workflow integration support and specialized training resources that reduce the user’s integration effort. As (Hung, et al., 2025, p. 5) note: “managers must allocate resources and provide necessary training programs to assist, guide and facilitate the successful implementation” to realize value. A premium pricing strategy

effectively charges for this facilitation, selling not just the tool, but the successful integration of it into the client's specific context.

Beyond functional utility, WTP is driven by profound psychological factors, and, as the interaction with high-competence AI evokes a state of “positive awe”, a feeling of wonder that enhances intrinsic motivation and encourages retention, (Zhao, et al., 2025) found that competence, or the perception of high capability, coupled with interactivity, or the sense of control, are in fact the primary drivers of this positive emotional state. Crucially, accuracy was found to have a lower impact on emotional experience, suggesting it is a “table stake”, or expected baseline, whereas super-human competence is the differentiator that drives “continued usage intention”.

This finding is reinforced by (Bouebdallah & Youssef, 2025) who identified hedonic motivation (enjoyment) and habit as critical drivers of adoption among students. The Free Tier's economic function is to build this habit loop, making the interaction with GenAI a daily routine. The Premium Tier, in turn, can then monetize the hedonic aspects, such as superior user interfaces, personalized avatar, or other delight features, that are key factors in sustaining the feeling of awe and enjoyment. Another particular augmentation was implied by (Mishra, 2025), who's research showed that personalized learning GenAI assistants could present a Socratic pivot in education, where traditional classroom experiences could be undermined in terms of costs and efficiency by the use of personalized learning through GPT tools.

In essence, findings reveal a sharp distinction in how value is perceived across different market segments, dictating a split pricing strategy between The Individual View (B2C) and The Managerial View (B2B).

The individual view fits best when considering the case of a student, whose primary value, as individual users, is transactional and outcome oriented. (Suchanek & Kralova, 2025) and (Youssef, 2025) found that in the case of students, satisfaction is driven by Performance Expectancy, with users mainly focusing on saving time and improving grades, and by the Perceived Quality of immediate output. Interestingly, students did not strongly associate GenAI with future job market advantages, viewing it instead as a tool for immediate academic survival. With these considerations, B2C pricing must be adjusted to be low-friction and tied to tangible immediate efficiency gains.

In the case of Managerial View, B2B managers are shown to value Uniqueness and Completeness. (Kumar, et al., 2025) found that managers adopt GenAI to create “distinctive output” and “customization potential” that allows their firm to stand out. In supply chain contexts, the value is even more specific, with users aiming for Risk Mitigation and Knowledge Management (bridging knowledge gaps). The B2B premium fee, therefore, is a tax on competitive advantage, or in particular, the ability to train models on internal data to create unique, proprietary assets that free models cannot replicate.

Data gathered by (STATISTA, 2025, p. 8) on AI impact on job markets reveals that the no.1 barrier to AI adoption worldwide, as cited by 50% of businesses is the “Lack of skills to support adoption”. Also, according to the same study, by 2030, it is estimated that the share of tasks performed by a “Combination of Human + Machine” is projected to remain steady and vital, growing by up to 33%, while purely human tasks decline. In the same study, the top core skills for 2025 are claimed to be “Analytical Thinking” (69%) and “Creative Thinking” (57%).

In essence, Companies are not just paying for software, they are paying to bridge a talent gap, since hiring AI experts is difficult and expensive, a premium GenAI tool that is “user-friendly” or implies “a no code approach” act as a substitute for hiring.

In summary, the value proposition of GenAI supports a pricing strategy that moves from Democratization (Free) to Amplification (Premium). The fee is justified through the provision of cognitive leverage, synergistic integration and the specific high-level capabilities (uniqueness, security, competence) that transform the AI from a novelty into a critical professional asset.

The cost of Trust: Risk, Anxiety and the Security Premium

While the value proposition of GenAI is rooted in augmentation, the primary barrier to its monetization goals is posed by Risk. In the “Free to Fee” transition, risk operates as a hidden cost that the user pays in the form of uncertainty, additional verification labor and degree of anxiety. Consequently, a successful premium pricing strategy must inversely correlate with risk and convince future customers that the fee is justified not just by what the AI model does, but by what it prevents. Along this section, we will analyze the technical, psychological and privacy risks that define the Cost of Trust.

While the GenAI risk profile presents a dichotomy between technical security vulnerabilities and the reliability of its output, each domain offers a unique avenue for constructing a premium value proposition.

Technically, the open or free nature of many AI models introduces significant exposure, as shown by (Al-Kharusi, et al., 2024) in his research where it was identified that opensource models are uniquely vulnerable to Model Inversion and Membership Interference Attacks, where adversaries can reverse-engineer sensitive training data. Furthermore, (He, et al., 2025) detail the threat of Data Poisoning and Backdoor Attacks, where malicious triggers are embedded into a model to alter its behavior and to compromise its output. For enterprise clients, using a free model carries the hidden cost of this exposure, thus the premium fee is economically justified as a Security Premium, with industrial users showing a high WTP to paying for a proprietary, sanitized or “walled garden” environment that immunizes the client against these specific technical threats.

On the output side, the obvious risk is a “behavior” specific to AI models called Hallucination. (YAN, et al., 2024, p. 6) identify hallucinations as “the outputs that may not align with factual information” and is regarded as a critical imperfection that undermines reliability. This creates a unique “verification tax” on the user, particularly the time he spends on fact-checking the AI. (Mo, 2025) reinforces this by highlighting that “hallucinations or errors” are a fundamental problem in high-stakes domains like finance for instance, where accuracy is non-negotiable. In turn, a premium pricing strategy can monetize the removal of this tax by offering Grounding features such as citations or access to RAG (Retrieval-Augmented Generation) architectures that guarantee accuracy, effectively selling “truth” as a service. Research by (ChristBrendemühl, 2025, p. 5) further emphasizes that in the case of the academic environment “the primary risk addressed is scientific inaccuracy” with 53.7% of the 67 university guidelines studied expressing direct concerns about misinformation, and 55.2% of institutions recognizing “the non-declared use of AI tools as a potential attempt to deceive”. (Razi, et al., 2025) state that users are particularly aware and afraid of confident hallucinations in the way that the only option to avoid the consequences of these inaccurate results is for users to possess a thorough understanding of how a GenAI platform “thinks” or to rely on their own extensive knowledge on the topic at hand.

When considering the psychological aspects of using AI, WTP is particularly governed by a complex interplay of fear and desire. (Baek & Kim, 2023) showcase that “Creepiness”, the feeling of discomfort when AI mimics human behavior too closely, is in fact a significant barrier

to continuance intention. Paradoxically, the same study found that high task efficiency can increase creepiness, suggesting that raw power alone can alienate users. In order to capture WTP, premium tiers must offer Control and Personalization, which were found to actively reduce creepiness and build trust.

Conversely, anxiety can also be a driver of adoption, with research conducted by (Chen, 2025) stating that GenAI anxiety, and particularly the fear of job replacement, positively correlates with usage since it was revealed that this negative feeling was mediated by fear of missing out. The implications for a pricing strategy are hence related to the ability of leveraging Loss Aversion, which compels companies to position the premium tool not just as an advantage, but as essential insurance against professional obsolescence. In the case of B2B, managers express a high level of anxiety toward Hallucinations, or “Deceptiveness” as revealed by K (Kumar, et al., 2025), which pivots the premium narrative from “fear of missing out” (B2C) to “fear of deception” for B2B customers where further tools that mitigate the risk of misleading outputs must be addressed.

A final consideration regards the tension between data utility and privacy which forms a critical constraint on WTP. Here, (Yang & Zhang, 2025) explore the Privacy-Profit Paradox where it is highlighted that while data analysis improves service quality, therefore it increases Value, it subsequently raises privacy concerns that can lower WTP. Additionally, they argue that this friction can be overcome in markets where Functional Value registers high levels, and may tolerate lower privacy, but it becomes a nonnegotiable in risk-averse segments like legal or health.

Privacy is particularly valued in the case of Intellectual Property (IP) and in a B2B scenario, there is a proven risk of financial damage if the data used in Co-Ideation is proprietary for the companies. According to (Borger, et al., 2023, p. 9), sharing information that is bound by IP confinements “on these platforms, the information is considered a public disclosure and is no longer confidential”, to which they illustrate that SAMSUNG has officially banned the use of ChatGPT after engineers disclosed trade secrets while employing GenAI to solve the proprietary code. This liability is also shown by (Gennaro, 2025, p. 2) with his research pointing out that “free and easily accessible forms of AI are most likely to cache information and thereby potentially violate author rights”, with the author also adding that “this can be avoided if the peer reviewer is careful to use a form of AI that does not share information”. Given that organizations (Journals, Universities, Corporations) represent a particular *blocked market* due to the compliance rules that assess and guarantee the quality of their end products, the only way to unlock this market is through an “Enterprise License” that guarantees zero-retention, where data is immediately deleted after a task is done. It is to be noted that, as shown by (Fontana, 2025), currently, regulators are also faced with the future possibility of allowing for a dual ownership of Intellectual Property, with it being split between a human author and AI as valid owners of content. The author further implies that the value from GenAI tools might not reside fully in just generating content, but in tracking it as well, which could turn a compliance cost into a sellable Governance Feature.

With all these considerations considered, there is a clear opportunity to leverage “Trust” as a premium commodity. As (Thiebes, et al., 2020) argue that the full economic potential of AI will only be realized if trust is established through principles like “Nonmaleficence” and “Explicability”. Furthermore, (Dwork & Minow, 2022) research suggests that entities should “compete in the marketplace for trust and reputation”, with (Zhao, et al., 2025) empirically confirming this by highlighting that “Perceived Transparency” and “Perceived Confidentiality” significantly reduce all dimensions of user risk.

To conclude on Risk factors associated with GenAI, the literature states that the Free Model effectively demonetizes the generation of content but leaves the user with high costs of Risk, represented by Hallucination, Data Leakage and the Anxiety derived from these issues. The Fee model is therefore not a charge for content but a charge for Risk Mitigation. Consequently, the premium price is represented by the cost of Safety, Accuracy and Privacy, which are features that aim to transform AI models from a risky novelty into a trusted and desired professional instrument.

Governance and Organizational Strategy: The B2B “Fee” Driver

Although initially GenAI availability to the public funneled its growth by showcasing potential uses in creativity related tasks and helped the models get trained, it is worth noting that the highest-revenue segment is represented by institutional and enterprise buyers, with big tech companies ultimately looking to secure B2B deals to better secure their position in the market. While addressing this particular clientele, companies that develop AI models should take an interest in the organizational alignment and the governance of their solution.

Organizations, particularly in higher education and regulated industries, are currently in a state of reactive adaptation, with (Gering, et al., 2025) analyzing the strategic responses of top universities and finding out that while awareness is high of GenAI Models and their evolution, actual implementation is lagging, often relying on ad-hoc “dedicated committees” to manage the disruption. This Institutional Response Lag creates a specific market opportunity, since institutions are struggling with the complexity of “transformative-generative technologies” and the lack of standardized frameworks.

Consequently, the premium pricing strategy for this segment should be built around Governance-as-a-Service. Enterprises are willing to pay for tools that offer “out-of-the-box” policy controls, standardized usage guidelines and integration frameworks that speed up their internal adaption process. As (Gering, et al., 2025, p. 5) note, the increasing complexity of GenAI’s societal impact “demands a shift from the individual and classroom-level analyses to a broader, institution-wide perspective”. The premium fee, therefore, pays for the institutional capabilities that individual free accounts cannot provide.

The Return on Investments of GenAI is not uniform across all firms and it is significantly moderated by the quality of leadership. (Kumar, et al., 2025) found that Ethical Leadership acts as a critical moderator, while B2B firms with high ethical standards see a stronger positive link between GenAI adoption and firm performance. This suggests that “Responsible AI” features, such as bias detection, fairness auditing and ethical guardrails are not just compliance checklists but performance enhancers.

Pricing strategies should therefore target firms with strong ethical governance structures, positioning the premium tool as an enabler of their values. By offering features that allow “ethical leaders to guide the responsible adoption and utilization of AI”, the provider aligns the software with the firm’s strategic mission, justifying a higher price point based on long-term sustainability and reputation management.

Finally, the literature identifies specific organizational units that are primed for premium adoption. (Gering, et al., 2025, p. 12) research pinpoints “Teaching-Learning Units” and development centers as the “foremost innovators and the quickest-responding organizational units”, with these acting as structural pivots, absorbing bottom-up innovation and translating it into institutional strategy. A successful B2B pricing strategy should therefore segment the market to target these specific high-WTP units first, offering them tailored solutions that address their specific needs for innovation and rapid deployment, rather than attempting to sell a generic site license to the entire, slower-moving organization.

Methodology

To ensure a comprehensive mapping of the Generative AI pricing landscape, a systematic search was conducted across major academic databases, including Springer, Emerald, Elsevier, Wiley Journals, supplemented by industry-specific data from Statista and official technical reports from leading AI organizations. The search was bounded by a temporal framework of 2018 to 2026, capturing the evolution from the initial introduction of the Transformer architecture to the most recent shifts in the 2026 market landscape.

The literature was identified using a combination of primary and Boolean search terms, including: (*“Generative AI” OR “LLM”*) AND (*“Pricing Strategy” OR “Willingnessto-Pay”*) AND (*“Freemium” OR “Monetization”*).

Articles were selected based on their relevance to the economic transition of digital goods, with a specific focus on three inclusion criteria: Peer-reviewed scholarship addressing the behavioral economics of AI adoption, Industry reports quantifying the computational overhead of model inference and Legal and policy frameworks regarding data privacy and commercial usage rights.

Rather than a chronological summary, this study utilizes a thematic synthesis approach. The identified literature was coded into three distinct conceptual categories: Operational Risk (Privacy), Cognitive Labor (The Verification Tax), and Collaborative Utility (Cocreation). By cross-referencing these themes, the study delineates the current "state of the art" and identifies the theoretical gaps that necessitate future empirical validation.

Identified Research Gaps and Conclusion

While existing literature extensively explores the technical risks, adoption drivers, and legal frameworks of GenAI, a significant void persists in understanding how these factors converge to form sustainable business models. Current research tends to treat security, pedagogy, and trust as isolated variables, lacking a convergent framework that bridges technical risk with economic strategy. This gap becomes particularly evident when examining four interconnected dimensions: operational risk and pricing architecture, the economic cost of unreliability, user expertise segmentation, and the monetization potential of co-creation.

A critical disconnect exists between documented operational liabilities, such as security vulnerabilities and data protection infringements and established pricing mechanisms. Although existing studies measure WTP through feature sets or user satisfaction, they frequently overlook what this research terms the "Privacy Premium." Rather than treating data protection as a compliance cost, this study repositions it as a central value proposition. By distinguishing between commercial and non-commercial data usage, it establishes data protection as both a structural mandate for pricing tiers and a determinant of the floor price in B2C markets. In this sense, privacy is not merely a regulatory obligation but a competitive differentiator capable of shaping user expectations and justifying premium positioning.

Building on this, while hallucinations are widely acknowledged as trust barriers, they are primarily examined through a psychological or usability lens. This research reframes them as an economic friction — the "Verification Tax" — representing the quantifiable cost users incur when fact-checking AI outputs. It is argued that the commercial value of GenAI is inversely proportional to this tax, and accordingly, this study advocates for a shift from volume-based pricing toward reliability-centered models, conceptualized here as "Truth-as-a-Service." This reframing connects operational shortcomings directly to revenue architecture, reinforcing the argument that technical reliability is not a product feature but a monetization foundation.

Prevailing literature further treats Performance Expectancy as a uniform adoption driver, failing to account for its interaction with users' initial skill levels. In knowledgeintensive sectors, the economic trade-offs differ substantially across user segments. This research argues that sustainable monetization requires a bifurcated approach: one that distinguishes between the access valued by novice users and the reliability demanded by expert users. By segmenting these variables, the study illuminates how perceived quality and domain expertise jointly shape market value and inform differentiated pricing strategies, suggesting that a one-size-fits-all model is inherently insufficient in capturing the full spectrum of user-driven value.

Finally, although Technological Co-Creation has emerged as a concept in the literature, it is predominantly confined to legal or operational discussions rather than recognized as a driver of WTP. A critical gap therefore remains in understanding the monetization tipping point at which users transition from experimental to formal engagement. This research posits that the "Free-to-Fee" conversion is primarily motivated by users' desire to formalize the co-creation process. The opportunity to generate high-value, proprietary assets emerges as the strongest predictor of premium adoption, moving beyond simple utility toward value-driven partnership, and repositioning the user from passive consumer to active co-producer of commercial value.

Conclusion

Ultimately, the synthesis of these identified research gaps underscores a profound realization: that the flourishing landscape of GenAI monetization defies any unidimensional analysis, as sustainable and fiscally resilient business models appear to emerge only at the complex nexus of operational risk mitigation, granular user segmentation, and the inherent utility of co-creative value. While current scholarship persists in addressing these critical domains in isolation, treating privacy, reliability, and user participation as secondary operational hurdles, the present article submits a synergy between said elements as the foundational pillars upon which a coherent and commercially viable pricing architecture must be constructed. Consequently, this article serves as scholarly precursor for an impending empirical study, which will seek to validate these propositions through quantitative research and ultimately formulate a comprehensive, data-driven framework for pricing strategies, providing firms with the strategic roadmap necessary to navigate the precarious transition from rapid user acquisition to long-term, value-based monetization.

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