GLOBAL RESEARCH REPORT

Global Digital Platforms 2026

Market structure, competitive dynamics, regulatory pressure, and the AI-driven reconfiguration of platform economics

Prepared by

Yu Murakami, CEO
New York General Group

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Search | Social | Commerce | Cloud | AI | Payments | Regulation

CONFIDENTIAL STRATEGY REPORT

Global Digital Platforms 2026

This report examines the structure and future trajectory of the world's most important digital platforms: search, social media, e-commerce, cloud infrastructure, mobile operating systems, app stores, video, payments, super-apps, developer ecosystems, and artificial intelligence platforms.

6.0B+
internet users worldwide, underscoring the social-

3.56B
Meta family daily active people reported for March 2026

63%
estimated cloud infrastructure share held by AWS, Microsoft,

7
EU DMA gatekeeper companies designated by the European Commission

Central thesis

The platform economy has moved beyond discrete battles for search, social, or commerce. The decisive contest is now a multi-layer infrastructure race across user interfaces, proprietary data, AI models, cloud compute, semiconductor supply, payments, logistics, developer ecosystems, and regulatory legitimacy.

How to read this document

The report is designed as a board-level strategy brief. It prioritizes the structural economics of platforms, the strategic position of major global players, and the implications of AI-driven re-intermediation. The analysis is intentionally synthetic: it connects public company disclosures, regulatory developments, and market structure into one competitive framework.

Authorship and scope

Prepared for strategic discussion by Yu Murakami, CEO, New York General Group. Report date: May 25, 2026. The report is not investment advice; it is a strategic research product focused on market structure, competitive advantage, and risk.

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Executive perspective

The world's largest platforms are becoming integrated strategic infrastructure.

SECTION 1

Executive perspective

Digital platforms are no longer best understood as individual consumer applications. They are multi-sided economic systems that connect users, advertisers, merchants, developers, creators, enterprises, financial institutions, and public institutions. Their power comes not only from scale, but from their ability to set rules, aggregate data, lower transaction costs, and orchestrate entire ecosystems.

The most important strategic shift is the movement from application-layer competition to full-stack infrastructure competition. Search engines, social feeds, marketplaces, app stores, cloud platforms, AI models, and payment systems are increasingly interdependent. Platform leaders are therefore competing not just for user attention, but for privileged positions in the digital value chain.

AI accelerates this shift. When an AI assistant can search, compare, negotiate, compose, code, purchase, book, and execute tasks, the user interface itself becomes contested. Search pages, app stores, e-commerce catalogues, and SaaS dashboards may remain relevant, but their importance will depend on whether they can be used by AI agents as trusted sources of inventory, data, workflow, and execution.

Exhibit 1 | Platform power has shifted from apps to stacked infrastructure

Source: New York General Group synthesis.

The five essential findings

- **Scale remains necessary but insufficient**
  User scale continues to matter, but durable advantage increasingly requires proprietary data, compute access, developer adoption, AI capability, and regulatory legitimacy.

- **Regulation is now a design constraint**
  The EU DMA, DSA, AI Act, privacy rules, and antitrust actions influence product architecture, pricing, data portability, app-store design, and platform governance.

- **The platform firm is becoming an infrastructure firm**
  The most defensible companies combine customer interface, data, cloud, AI models, chips, payments, logistics, and developers into coherent systems.

- **AI is a re-intermediation shock**
  AI assistants can become the new interface between users and existing platforms, altering the economics of search, advertising, commerce, and software.

- **Regional systems matter**
  North America, China, Europe, India, Southeast Asia, and Latin America are developing different platform architectures because of regulation, payment systems, language, logistics, and geopolitics.

02

Platform taxonomy

Ten archetypes define the modern platform economy.

SECTION 2

Platform taxonomy

A platform is a digital system that connects distinct participant groups and mediates information, transactions, payments, software distribution, data access, content discovery, or AI-enabled work. The taxonomy below separates platforms by primary function, though the most powerful companies now operate across multiple categories.

Archetype	Primary function	Representative companies / services	Strategic economics
Search and advertising	Match user intent with commercial messages	Google Search, YouTube, Amazon Ads, TikTok Ads, Meta Ads, Baidu	Intent data, auction liquidity, targeting precision, measurement, advertiser lock-in
Social and messaging	Connect people, communities, creators, and brands	Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp, WeChat, TikTok, X, LINE, Discord	Engagement, social graph, recommendation, creator ecosystem, ad monetization
E-commerce and marketplaces	Connect buyers, sellers, payments, logistics, and reviews	Amazon, Alibaba, JD.com, Pinduoduo, Shopee, Mercado Libre, Rakuten	Selection, trust, fulfillment, seller tools, retail media, marketplace fees
Mobile OS and app stores	Control app distribution, identity, permissions, and mobile payments	Apple iOS/App Store, Google Android/Google Play	Distribution power, billing, security, default settings, developer access
Cloud and developer platforms	Provide compute, storage, data, security, AI, and development tools	AWS, Azure, Google Cloud, Alibaba Cloud, Oracle, GitHub	Scale economies, enterprise switching costs, developer adoption, AI infrastructure
Video and content	Distribute professional, creator, short-form, live, and music content	YouTube, TikTok, Netflix, Disney+, Spotify, Twitch, Bilibili	Attention, subscription, ads, IP, creators, recommendations
Payments and fintech	Process transactions and extend financial services	PayPal, Stripe, Alipay, WeChat Pay, Mercado Pago, Paytm, PhonePe	Transaction data, merchant relationships, risk scoring, financial expansion
Super-apps	Aggregate daily life services inside one interface	WeChat, Grab, GoTo, Meituan, Paytm, LINE	Frequency, payments, mini-apps, cross-sell, ecosystem density
AI platforms	Provide models, assistants, APIs, and agents	OpenAI, Microsoft Copilot, Gemini, Claude, Meta AI, Mistral	Model quality, compute, data rights, ecosystem adoption, enterprise trust
Compute and semiconductor platforms	Enable AI training, inference, and advanced cloud workloads	NVIDIA, TSMC, ASML, Arm, AMD, Broadcom, CoreWeave	Hardware scarcity, software stack, developer dependence, supply chain control

Why boundaries are disappearing

The old taxonomy remains useful, but the boundaries are dissolving. Social platforms are becoming commerce channels. E-commerce platforms are becoming advertising networks. Cloud platforms are becoming AI model marketplaces. Mobile operating systems are becoming identity, wallet, and health layers. AI platforms are becoming workflow execution layers. The result is a competitive system in which each platform tries to move either closer to the user interface or deeper into the infrastructure layer.

Strategic implication

The relevant question is no longer simply: "Which app has the most users?" It is: "Which company can control the highest-value chokepoints across interface, data, compute, transaction execution, and governance?"

03

Global market structure

Concentration and regional diversity now coexist.

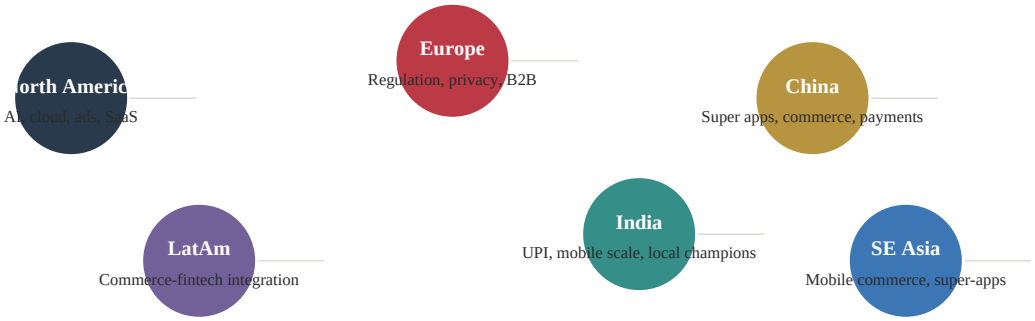
SECTION 3

Global market structure

The global platform economy is characterized by simultaneous concentration and regional fragmentation. A small number of U.S. and Chinese firms control the most important global or regional layers, while local champions remain important in payments, logistics, food delivery, language-specific media, and public digital infrastructure.

Exhibit 2 | Regional platform systems differ by institutional context

Regional platform systems are converging technologically but fragmenting institutionally.



Source: New York General Group synthesis.

A two-layer global system

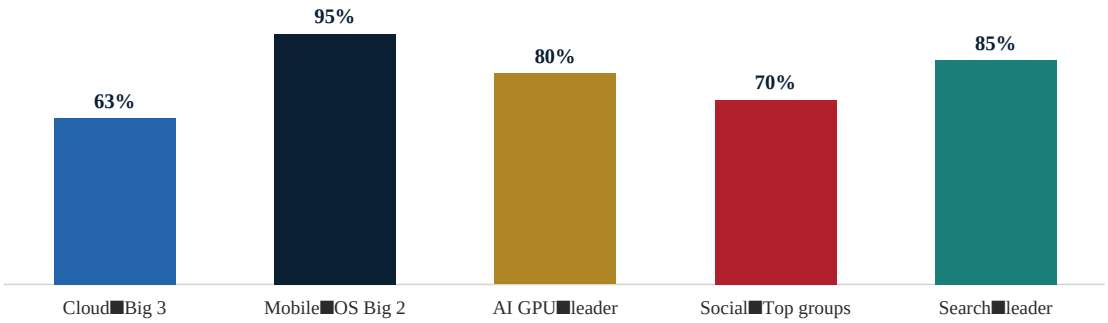
At the global infrastructure layer, U.S. firms dominate search, mobile operating systems, cloud, enterprise software, AI model deployment, and GPU-enabled AI infrastructure. Alphabet, Apple, Amazon, Microsoft, Meta, NVIDIA, and OpenAI are central to this layer. At the regional life-services layer, local or regional platforms remain powerful because they adapt to payments, logistics, regulation, language, labor markets, and consumer trust.

China operates as a largely parallel digital ecosystem. Tencent, Alibaba, ByteDance, Meituan, JD.com, Pinduoduo, Baidu, Huawei, and Xiaomi have built platforms that combine commerce, payments, video, messaging, cloud, AI, and local services in ways that differ from the U.S. model. Europe, by contrast, exerts disproportionate influence through regulation rather than consumer-platform scale.

Core structural forces

- **Network effects**
  More users attract more sellers, creators, developers, advertisers, or service providers; more supply then improves the user experience.
- **Economies of scale**
  Cloud, logistics, AI infrastructure, content moderation, and trust systems require heavy fixed investment that favors scale players.
- **Switching costs**
  Users and businesses become embedded through data, workflows, reputation, app libraries, followers, payment credentials, and logistics integration.
- **Data flywheels**
  Behavioral, transactional, location, search, viewing, and enterprise data improve targeting, recommendations, risk scoring, and AI functionality.
- **Rule-setting power**
  Platforms determine ranking, fees, identity, eligibility, data access, API permissions, app review, and enforcement standards.
- **Regulatory exposure**
  The same scale that creates strategic advantage attracts antitrust, privacy, safety, national security, and labor scrutiny.

Exhibit 3 | Illustrative concentration by strategic layer



Indicative directional view based on public market structure reports; not all categories are directly comparable.

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Company landscape

The leaders increasingly compete across the entire stack.

SECTION 4

Company landscape

The leading platform companies are converging toward a similar strategic logic: control the interface, own or access proprietary data, monetize through multiple channels, build or rent compute, attract developers and creators, and maintain regulatory permission to operate.

Alphabet / Google

Alphabet controls one of the most valuable interface portfolios in the world: Google Search, YouTube, Android, Chrome, Google Play, Google Maps, Gmail, Google Workspace, Google Cloud, and Gemini. Its structural advantage begins with search intent and extends through video, mobile distribution, advertising technology, developer tools, and AI research. The central risk is that generative AI changes the search interface and reduces the value of traditional search-result pages. Alphabet's response is to embed AI into Search, Workspace, Android, Cloud, and developer workflows while preserving the economics of advertising.

Meta Platforms

Meta is the largest social and messaging platform group by daily usage scale. Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp, Messenger, Threads, and Meta AI give the company a uniquely broad consumer interface. Its economics depend heavily on advertising, but WhatsApp Business, creator tools, AI-enabled ad generation, and integrated messaging commerce create additional pathways. The company's strategic challenge is maintaining relevance among younger users, managing privacy and safety regulation, and turning AI investment into durable engagement and monetization.

Amazon

Amazon combines retail, marketplace, logistics, Prime, advertising, and AWS. This makes Amazon both a consumer platform and an enterprise infrastructure company. Retail media is one of its most important growth vectors because Amazon monetizes high-intent shopping behavior. AWS provides the cloud and AI infrastructure layer, including model services, custom chips, and enterprise AI tools. Key risks include labor scrutiny, marketplace conflicts, logistics cost intensity, and the growing capital burden of AI infrastructure.

Strategic lens

The company's value is best understood not as a standalone product category, but as a control point in a larger system of user behavior, data, compute, and transaction execution.

Apple

Apple is a hardware-led ecosystem platform. Its strategic power comes from the integration of iPhone, iOS, App Store, Apple Pay, iCloud, wearables, services, privacy controls, and device-level user experience. Apple's closed ecosystem provides quality, security, and monetization advantages, but it faces intense regulatory pressure over app distribution, payments, browser choice, and developer fees. AI is likely to be integrated through personal context, on-device intelligence, and privacy-preserving services.

Microsoft

Microsoft is the leading enterprise platform for the AI age because it controls the workplace interface: Windows, Microsoft 365, Teams, Outlook, LinkedIn, GitHub, Azure, Dynamics, Power Platform, and Copilot. Azure and OpenAI-related services give the company a central role in enterprise AI deployment. GitHub gives it developer leverage. The key challenge is converting AI usage into sustained productivity value while managing compute costs, security risk, and regulatory scrutiny of cloud and AI bundling.

NVIDIA

NVIDIA has become the essential compute platform for generative AI. Its advantage is not only GPU performance; it is the integration of CUDA, AI libraries, networking, DGX systems, developer familiarity, and cloud-provider adoption. This makes NVIDIA a platform company even without a conventional consumer app. The main risks are customer-designed AI chips, export restrictions, supply-chain bottlenecks, and demand cyclicality if AI investment exceeds monetization.

Strategic lens

The company's value is best understood not as a standalone product category, but as a control point in a larger system of user behavior, data, compute, and transaction execution.

OpenAI

OpenAI is a new-generation AI platform built around ChatGPT, APIs, enterprise products, multimodal models, and developer adoption. Its distinctive advantage is a high-quality natural-language interface that can generalize across knowledge work, software development, customer support, research, education, and content creation. The risks are compute costs, model commoditization, open-weight competition, copyright disputes, enterprise governance, and the need to maintain trust at scale.

ByteDance / TikTok / Douyin

ByteDance is an algorithmic attention platform. TikTok and Douyin demonstrate the power of recommendation-first content discovery, short-form video, live commerce, creator tools, and social shopping. Douyin in China shows how content can merge with local services and commerce. ByteDance is also expanding in AI applications and infrastructure. Its largest strategic risk is geopolitical: TikTok faces national-security scrutiny and regulatory uncertainty in multiple markets.

Strategic lens

The company's value is best understood not as a standalone product category, but as a control point in a larger system of user behavior, data, compute, and transaction execution.

Tencent / WeChat

Tencent controls China's most important super-app, Weixin/WeChat, alongside gaming, payments, mini-programs, advertising, video, music, and cloud services. WeChat is not merely a messaging tool; it is an operating layer for daily life in China. The mini-program ecosystem gives Tencent developer leverage without requiring separate app installation. Risks include domestic regulation, gaming controls, competition from Douyin, and the difficulty of replicating WeChat's model outside China.

Alibaba

Alibaba remains one of the world's most important commerce-platform groups through Taobao, Tmall, Alibaba.com, AliExpress, Lazada, Cainiao, and Alibaba Cloud. It is repositioning around user-first commerce and AI-driven cloud services. Its main challenge is competition from Pinduoduo, Douyin, JD.com, and international low-price marketplaces. Alibaba's opportunity is to integrate commerce, logistics, cloud, and AI into a more efficient merchant and consumer ecosystem.

Mercado Libre

Mercado Libre is Latin America's most important commerce-fintech platform. Its strength lies in solving regional frictions: payments, logistics, trust, credit access, seller tools, and marketplace discovery. Mercado Pago turns commerce data into a broader financial ecosystem. The company's opportunity is to deepen financial services and advertising while defending against global entrants such as Amazon, Shopee, Temu, and Shein.

Sea / Shopee

Sea, through Shopee, Garena, and digital financial services, is a leading platform group in Southeast Asia and selected international markets. Shopee's model is mobile-first, promotional, localized, and logistics-aware. The strategic task is balancing growth with profitability while competing against TikTok Shop, Lazada, Tokopedia, local players, and cross-border marketplaces.

Grab

Grab is Southeast Asia's super-app model built from mobility, delivery, payments, and financial services. Its advantage comes from high-frequency local use cases and operational density across cities. Profitability depends on balancing driver supply, consumer demand, merchant economics, payments adoption, and financial-services risk.

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Regional systems

Digital-platform models are shaped by institutions, not only technology.

SECTION 5

Regional systems

North America

North America remains the center of cloud, AI, advertising, SaaS, venture capital, and advanced semiconductor demand. The strategic cluster around Silicon Valley, Seattle, New York, Austin, and other technology centers gives the region deep talent, capital, and research advantages. The principal challenge is regulatory pressure around antitrust, privacy, AI safety, and national-security concerns.

China

China has developed a parallel platform system centered on super-apps, mobile payments, live commerce, local services, and state-influenced governance. Tencent, Alibaba, ByteDance, Meituan, JD.com, Pinduoduo, Baidu, Huawei, and Xiaomi compete within a large but increasingly regulated domestic market. The Chinese model demonstrates the deepest integration of messaging, payments, commerce, video, and daily life services.

Europe

Europe has fewer global consumer-platform champions, but it shapes the rules of the digital economy. GDPR, DMA, DSA, and AI Act-style regulation make Europe the world's most important regulatory laboratory. European strengths are more visible in B2B software, industrial data, fintech, privacy-enhancing technology, and trusted AI models than in global consumer network effects.

India

India is one of the most important growth markets. Its public digital infrastructure, especially UPI, alters the private-platform landscape by making payments interoperable and widely accessible. Competition spans Jio, Flipkart, Amazon, PhonePe, Paytm, Google, Meta, Zomato, Swiggy, and Meesho. The market is defined by scale, price sensitivity, language diversity, regulatory activism, and mobile-first behavior.

Southeast Asia

Southeast Asia is a mobile-first platform laboratory. Shopee, Grab, GoTo, Lazada, TikTok Shop, Traveloka, and local payment systems compete across commerce, delivery, mobility, payments, and financial services. Logistics complexity, island geographies, local regulation, and high social-commerce adoption shape the region.

Latin America

Latin America is led by commerce-fintech integration. Mercado Libre and Mercado Pago show how marketplaces can solve payment, logistics, trust, and credit frictions at scale. Economic volatility creates risk, but it also increases the value of platforms that provide reliable payments, credit, and delivery.

Japan

Japan is a hybrid market where global platforms dominate search, mobile operating systems, cloud, app distribution, video, and advertising, while domestic players remain strong in messaging, commerce, payments, employment, local services, and point ecosystems. LINE/Yahoo, Rakuten, Mercari, PayPay, telecom carriers, Recruit, and sector-specialist platforms coexist with Google, Apple, Amazon, Microsoft, and Meta.

06

Competitive dynamics

The decisive battlegrounds are interface, data, compute, and trust.

SECTION 6

Competitive dynamics

The platform economy can be analyzed through eight strategic battlegrounds. These are not independent; the strongest companies reinforce one battleground with another. For example, Amazon uses commerce behavior to strengthen advertising, logistics, and AWS-enabled AI. Microsoft uses enterprise software to strengthen Azure and Copilot. Apple uses device control to strengthen services and payments.

Battleground	Why it matters	Leading examples	Key risk
User interface	The first interface shapes discovery, attention, and default choice	Google Search, iPhone, TikTok feed, ChatGPT, WeChat	AI agents may shift interface control
Data	Data improves targeting, recommendations, AI, risk scoring, and personalization	Google, Meta, Amazon, Tencent, Microsoft	Privacy rules and data-access mandates
Advertising	High-margin monetization of attention and intent	Google, Meta, Amazon, TikTok, Alibaba	Measurement limits and AI-search disruption
Payments	Payments create transaction data and enable financial expansion	Apple Pay, Alipay, WeChat Pay, Mercado Pago, Stripe	Regulatory scrutiny and interoperability
Logistics	Delivery reliability shapes commerce trust and frequency	Amazon, JD, Mercado Libre, Shopee, Meituan	Capital intensity and labor regulation
Cloud	Cloud is the operating substrate of enterprises and AI	AWS, Azure, Google Cloud, Alibaba Cloud, Oracle	Compute scarcity and switching costs
AI models	AI models become the decision and execution layer	OpenAI, Gemini, Claude, Llama, Qwen, Copilot	Commoditization, cost, safety, copyright
Developers	Developers extend the platform and create ecosystem lock-in	GitHub, App Store, Google Play, AWS, OpenAI API	Fee pressure and API governance

AI agents as the next strategic interface

AI agents compress multi-step digital journeys into a single instruction. A consumer may no longer search across ten websites; an agent may gather options, compare attributes, check availability, book, pay, and summarize. An enterprise employee may no longer operate multiple SaaS dashboards; an agent may update CRM, draft emails, analyze spreadsheets, and produce presentations. Platform leaders are therefore racing to become either the agent itself or the most trusted execution layer behind the agent.

> *"The next platform war is not only about where users spend time. It is about which system users authorize to act on their behalf."*

Retail media and the monetization of purchase intent

E-commerce platforms are becoming advertising platforms because they observe high-intent behavior near the moment of purchase. Amazon, Walmart, Alibaba, Mercado Libre, Rakuten, Shopee, and other marketplaces can sell sponsored placement, brand stores, and measurement tied to actual transactions. This shifts advertising budgets from broad awareness to transaction-proximate media.

Cloud and AI infrastructure as a strategic bottleneck

Generative AI has made compute a strategic chokepoint. GPU availability, data-center power, networking, and efficient inference determine not only model performance but also product margins. Companies that can secure compute at scale and integrate it with enterprise distribution have a significant advantage. This is why Microsoft, Amazon, Google, Meta, ByteDance, and others are investing in custom chips while still relying heavily on NVIDIA-class infrastructure.

07

Regulation and geopolitics

Rules now shape market architecture.

SECTION 7

Regulation and geopolitics

Regulation is no longer an external compliance issue. It is part of platform strategy. Product design, data architecture, app distribution, advertising measurement, AI deployment, payment rules, and cross-border expansion are all shaped by law and policy.

European regulatory influence

The European Union has become the most influential regulator of global platforms. The Digital Markets Act addresses gatekeeper power in core platform services such as search, social networking, app stores, operating systems, marketplaces, messaging, video-sharing, and advertising. The Digital Services Act targets platform accountability for illegal content, systemic risks, advertising transparency, and user protection. GDPR continues to shape personal-data governance, while AI regulation adds risk-based obligations to model deployment and high-risk use cases.

Antitrust and platform conduct

Antitrust scrutiny focuses on self-preferencing, exclusionary defaults, app-store fees, tying and bundling, marketplace conflicts, search dominance, advertising market structure, cloud interoperability, and AI partnerships. For platform firms, regulatory remedy risk can be as important as competitive risk because mandated interoperability or fee changes can alter unit economics.

Geopolitical fragmentation

Platforms now sit at the intersection of national security, industrial policy, and data sovereignty. TikTok scrutiny, semiconductor export controls, cloud localization, government procurement restrictions, and data-transfer rules show that the digital economy is fragmenting along geopolitical lines. Global platforms increasingly need region-specific operating models, data governance, and regulatory strategies.

Board-level question

Can the company scale globally while localizing enough of its data, governance, AI, compliance, and partnership model to maintain permission to operate in each major region?

08

Future scenarios

The next three to five years will be shaped by AI, regulation, and infrastructure constraints.

SECTION 8

Future scenarios

The platform economy is unlikely to follow one linear path. The following scenarios are not mutually exclusive; elements of each may occur in different regions or platform categories.

Scenario	Description	Strategic consequence
Incumbent reinforcement	Existing leaders absorb AI into search, cloud, commerce, OS, and enterprise software.	Scale players become stronger because they control data, distribution, compute, and developers.
AI-agent disruption	Agents become the dominant interface for search, purchase, booking, support, and workflow execution.	Traffic shifts away from individual apps; platforms compete to be agent-readable and agent-executable.
Regulatory unbundling	DMA-style rules expand, forcing more portability, interoperability, and payment choice.	App stores, marketplaces, messaging, and ad platforms face lower switching barriers and fee pressure.
Geopolitical fragmentation	The world divides into U.S., China, Europe, India, and regional digital systems.	Global operating models become more expensive; local partnerships and data strategies matter more.
Compute scarcity	GPU, power, data centers, and capital constraints slow AI scaling.	Efficient models, custom chips, on-device AI, and infrastructure partnerships become more valuable.

Most likely outcome

The most likely outcome is a hybrid: incumbent reinforcement at the infrastructure layer, selective AI-agent disruption at the interface layer, and increasing regional fragmentation at the governance layer. This favors firms that can combine scale with adaptability.

Implications for enterprises

- **Avoid single-platform dependency**
  Use global platforms aggressively for reach and efficiency, but preserve customer data, CRM, direct channels, and brand equity.
- **Build first-party data assets**
  Consent-based customer data, transaction history, and service interactions will become more valuable as third-party tracking declines.
- **Diversify commerce channels**
  Combine marketplaces, social commerce, owned e-commerce, offline channels, and partner distribution.
- **Design for AI discovery**
  Ensure product, pricing, inventory, content, and service data are structured, trusted, and accessible to AI systems.
- **Treat AI governance as strategy**
  Security, copyright, privacy, auditability, and model evaluation should be embedded in operating processes.
- **Monitor regulatory architecture**
  Platform economics can change quickly when regulators alter fees, defaults, interoperability, or data rights.

09

Conclusion

The winners will own trusted interfaces and critical infrastructure.

SECTION 9

Conclusion

The world's platform economy is entering a new phase. The first phase connected people to information. The second connected people to each other. The third connected buyers and sellers at global scale. The fourth moved enterprise computing to cloud infrastructure. The current phase connects all of these layers through AI: users, data, software, commerce, payments, logistics, work, and compute.

The next generation of platform power will be determined by an organization's ability to combine trusted user interfaces, proprietary or permissioned data, AI models, cloud and semiconductor access, transaction execution, developer adoption, and regulatory legitimacy. No single factor is sufficient. A company with users but no compute may be constrained. A company with models but no distribution may struggle to monetize. A company with infrastructure but no trusted interface may become a commodity supplier. A company with scale but weak governance may lose permission to operate.

For businesses operating on platforms, the central strategic discipline is balance: exploit platform reach while protecting autonomy. Platforms provide demand, infrastructure, payments, logistics, advertising, and AI capability. But dependency can erode pricing power, customer ownership, and strategic flexibility. The most resilient firms will use platforms as accelerators while building direct customer relationships, proprietary data, differentiated brand trust, and internal AI capability.

Final conclusion

Global platforms are becoming the operating system of the digital economy. The strategic question for every company is whether it will be a platform owner, a privileged ecosystem participant, or a dependent supplier inside someone else's rules.

APPENDIX

Source notes and selected references

The report uses public filings, official regulatory materials, and reputable market-structure research available as of the report date. Figures used in this document are intended to support strategic interpretation and should be validated before financial decision-making.

Topic	Selected source notes
Global internet and social media adoption	DataReportal, Digital 2026 Global Overview Report.
Meta user scale	Meta Platforms quarterly earnings materials and investor relations disclosures.
Cloud market share	Synergy Research Group public cloud infrastructure market reports.
EU platform regulation	European Commission Digital Markets Act and Digital Services Act official materials.
Company financials	Annual reports, 10-K filings, investor presentations, and quarterly earnings releases for Alphabet, Amazon, Apple, Meta, Microsoft, NVIDIA, Tencent, Alibaba, Sea, Grab, and others.
AI and semiconductor infrastructure	Public disclosures from NVIDIA, major cloud providers, and industry infrastructure research.
Regional platform analysis	Company filings, public market reports, and New York General Group synthesis of market structure.

New York General Group

Global Digital Platforms Research

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