



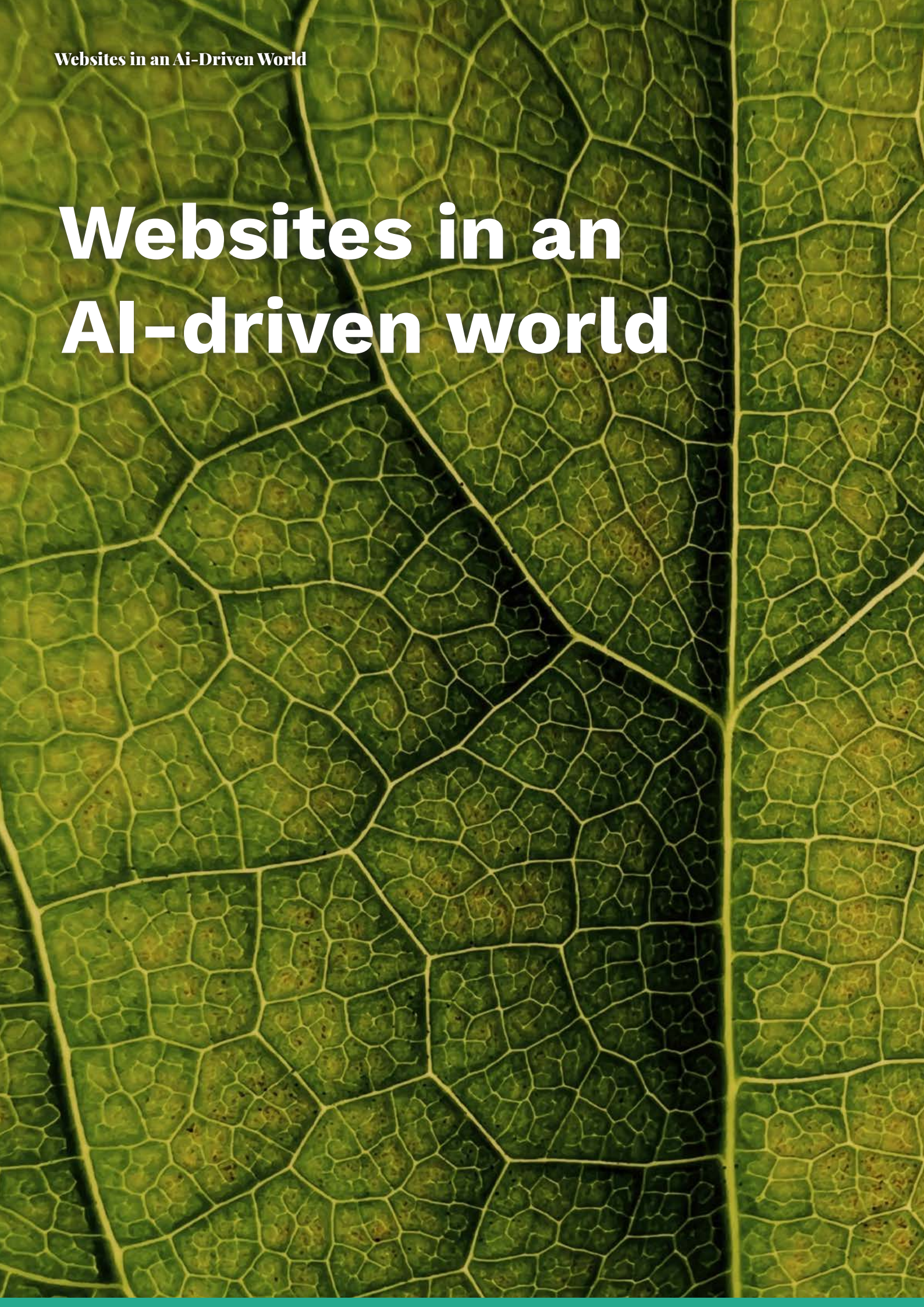
# Websites in an AI-driven world

Insights and practical advice from  
**NetworkNature**



Websites in an Ai-Driven World

# Websites in an AI-driven world





**As artificial intelligence gains popularity and credibility, how we access and interact with information online is rapidly changing. Researchers, practitioners and project managers are increasingly using AI to summarise documents, explore new topics or identify useful sources.**

Websites still play an essential role in the information ecosystem. They provide something that AI tools cannot: trustworthy information, meaningful human connections and a richer experience of exploring knowledge.

This summary highlights key insights from NetworkNature's investigation into the role of websites in an AI-driven world, sharing recommendations for people managing EU research and innovation platforms.

# What do people value about websites?



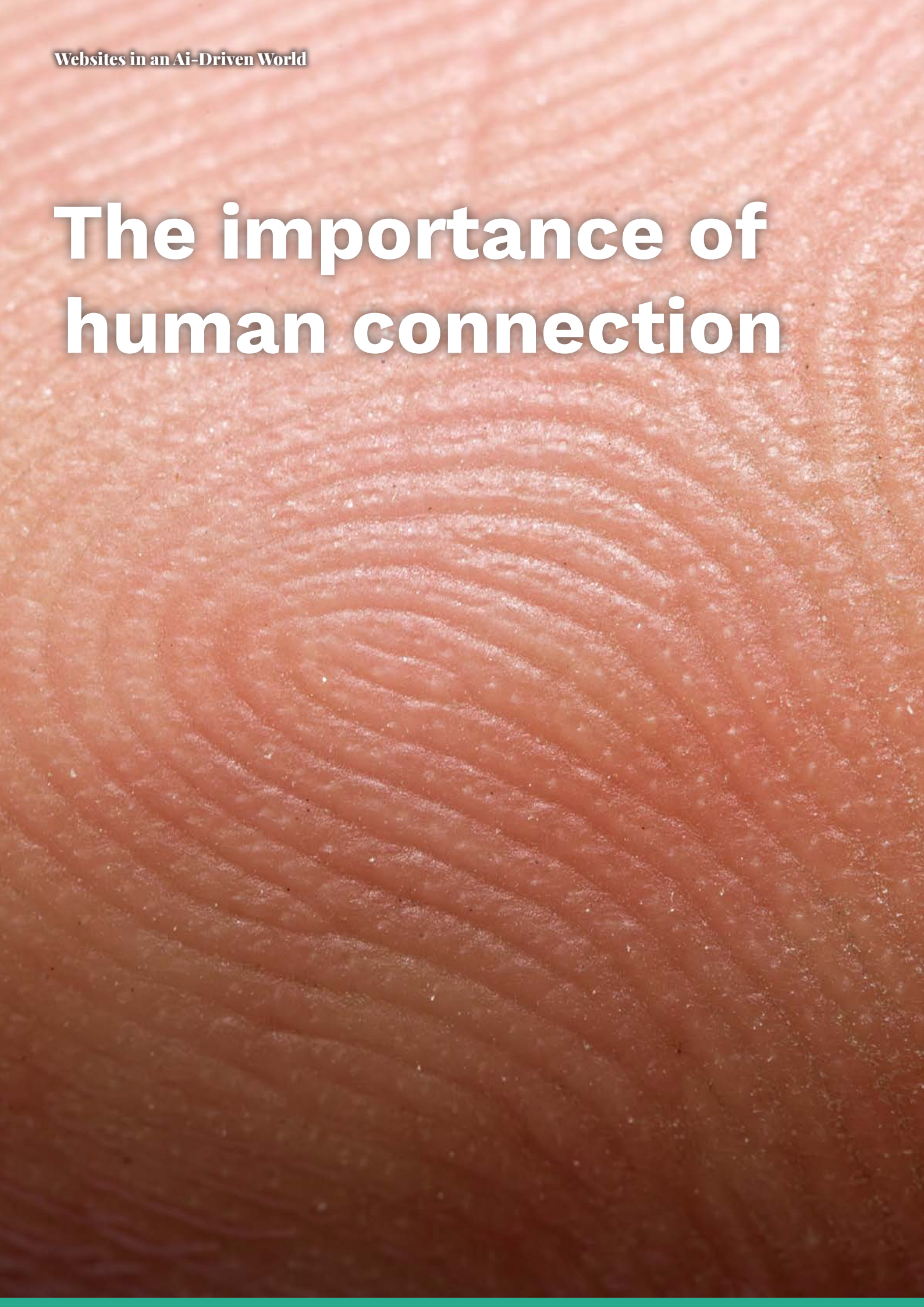
**Many people use websites every day to access information relevant to their work. Websites are still more effective than AI in terms of providing instant access to the latest news, helping professionals stay connected to their field and industry experts.**

While AI tools are useful for summarising content or suggesting starting points, many people still prefer to read and interpret information themselves. AI can help identify relevant sources, but people working in research still want to examine the underlying material before drawing conclusions.

Websites also support structured exploration of knowledge. Collections of resources grouped by topic make it easier to dive deeper into a specific subject or follow a research trail across different projects and outputs. Making these information journeys enjoyable is another area where websites outperform AI.

In short, websites remain valuable because they provide live updates, context, depth and authority in ways that automated summaries do not.

# The importance of human connection



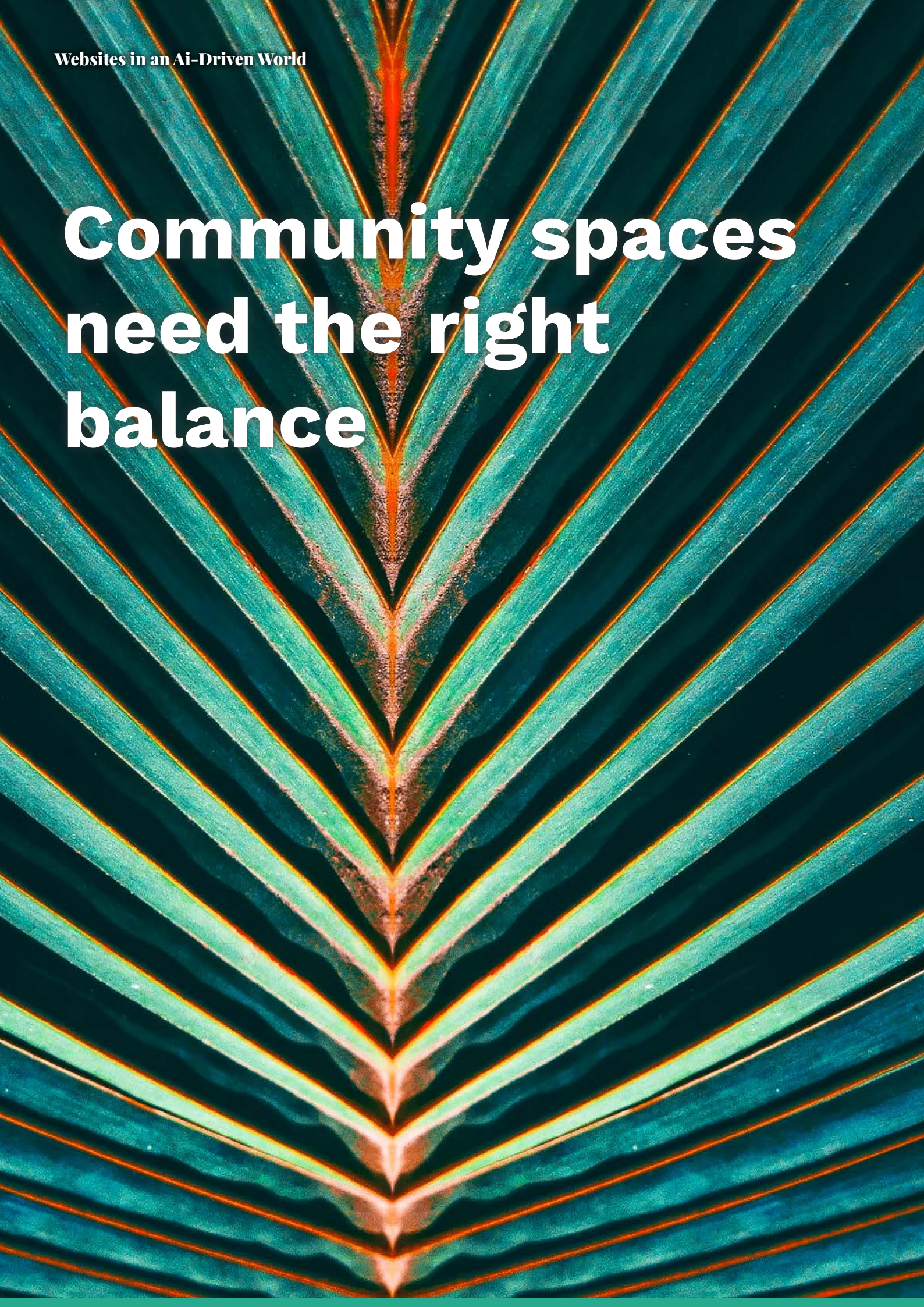


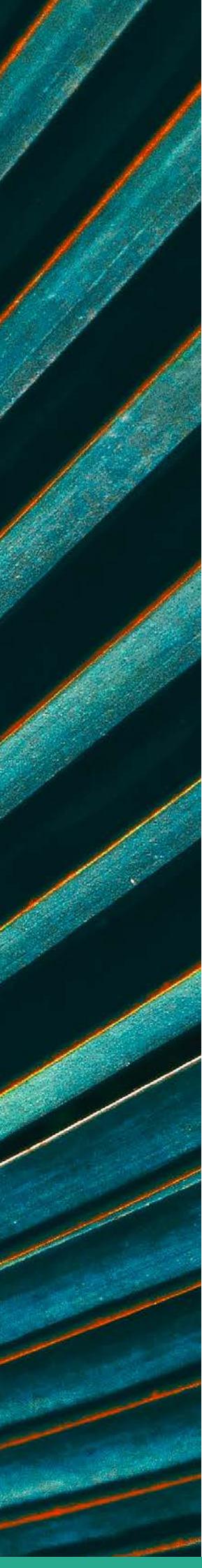
**Human interaction emerged a strong theme of our consultation on the role of websites. People sometimes feel isolated working across organisations and countries, and websites can help them make valuable connections with others in their field.**

People are more likely to engage when a platform has a clear purpose and visible community members. Seeing that other real people are involved, especially people we recognise professionally, helps build trust and encourages participation.

Trust is becoming more complicated in an era of AI-generated content. Traditional signals such as “verification” or automated badges are becoming less prestigious. Instead, people are looking for more human signals of credibility, such as clear authorship, professional background and institutional affiliation.

# Community spaces need the right balance





**Creating effective online communities is challenging. Participants in our consultation noted that large communities can feel overwhelming, particularly when there are many updates and notifications. At the same time, very small communities may struggle to remain active if only a few people contribute.**

Finding the right balance is essential to encourage consistent activity and make new participants feel comfortable contributing. Platforms may need to experiment with ways of supporting smaller interactions within larger communities, such as topic-focused groups or short collaborative discussions.

Clear community rules and moderation are also important. Knowing that discussions are respectful and constructive helps people feel more comfortable contributing as they are both protected and have a clear understanding of the community's purpose (giving them confidence that their contributions are valid).

# What websites can offer that AI cannot





**Although AI tools are becoming increasingly capable, websites still offer several unique advantages.**


**1 Direct access to authoritative sources.** AI summaries can be helpful, but users want to verify information themselves and understand the full context.

**2 Enhanced discovery.** Websites allow users to discover unexpected connections between projects, ideas and resources. Browsing curated collections or following links between related topics often leads to insights that automated tools might not suggest.

**3 Visual engagement and exploration.** Experiences that go beyond simple question-and-answer interactions. Navigating through content, maps, case studies or visual storytelling can make information more engaging and easier to understand.

**4 Real collaboration between people.** Working together on a shared challenge or helping another person solve a problem creates a level of motivation and satisfaction that automated tools cannot replicate.

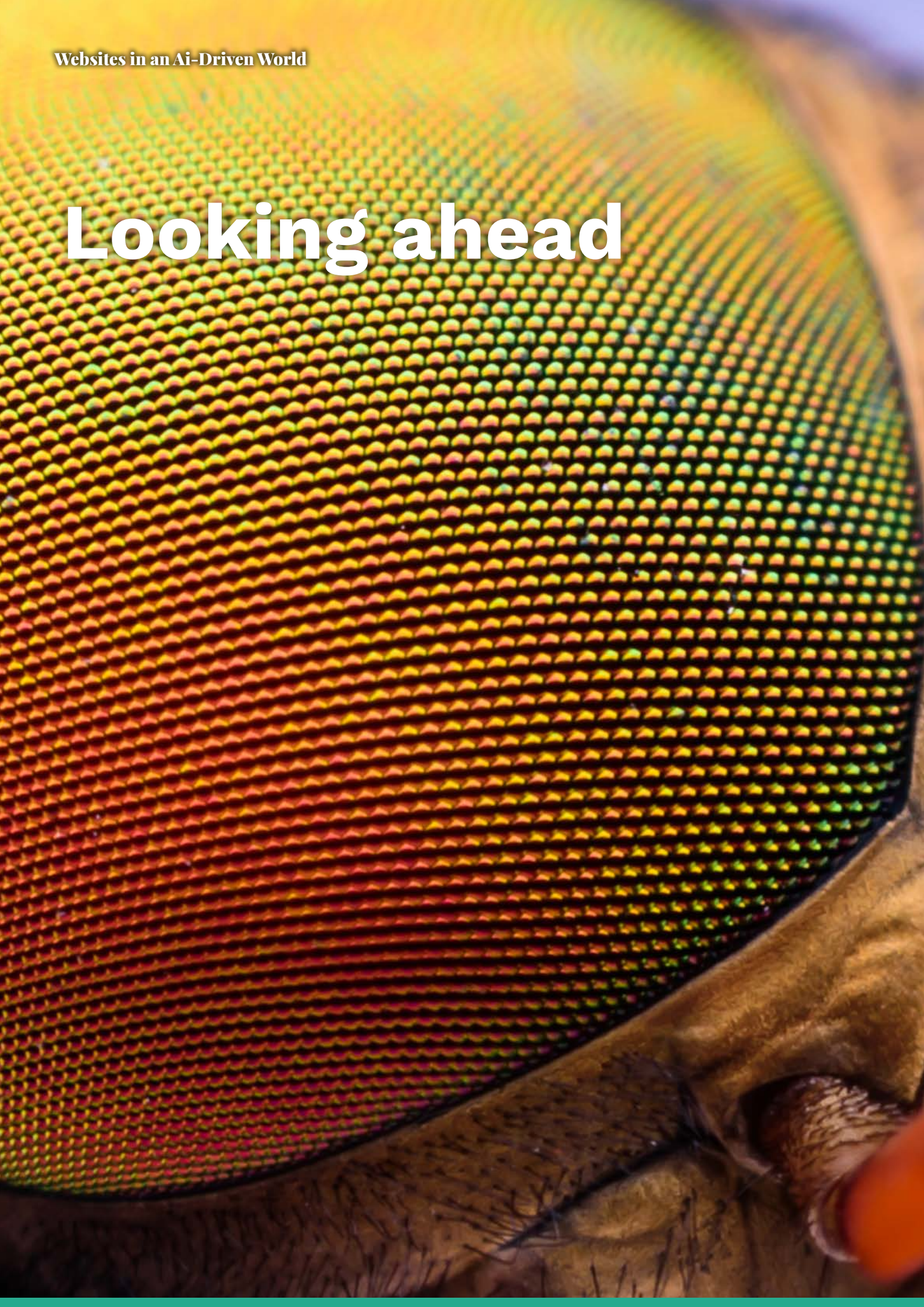
# Practical advice for project websites



**These insights are helping to guide the NetworkNature website. You might also find them useful when developing or improving your own project website:**

- 1 Ease exploration:** Group resources, case studies and outputs around themes so users can easily delve into a topic. Curated collections encourage moving beyond simple searches and prompt users to explore related content.
- 2 Highlight the people behind the work:** Clearly display authors, contributors and their affiliations. Profiles that show expertise and experience help establish trust and encourage connections between users.
- 3 Support meaningful community interaction:** If your website includes community features, make sure they have a clear purpose. Smaller, topic-focused discussions are often more effective than large, general forums.
- 4 Quality over quantity:** Quality and relevance matter more than the number of resources available. Curated, well-explained content is far more valuable than large quantities of poorly structured material.
- 5 Clear user journeys:** Think about how people move through the website. Provide pathways that help new visitors understand where to start and how to find the information they need; and support existing users to contribute and get involved.
- 6 Design for discovery, not just search:** Search tools are important, but many users prefer to browse topics and explore connections between ideas. Clear navigation, related content suggestions, calls to action, consistent signposting and accessible online support all help to improve the user journey.
- 7 Emphasise credibility and transparency:** In an AI-driven information landscape, trust is more important than ever. Make it clear where information comes from and who is responsible for it.

# Looking ahead





**AI is changing how people access information, but it is not replacing websites. Instead, it is shifting the role they play.**

Websites are likely to become trusted hubs of curated knowledge and human connection - places where people can explore new ideas, verify information and engage with others in their field. For research and innovation projects, this means focusing less on listing information and more on creating spaces where knowledge is showcased effectively, inviting curiosity and collaboration.



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