

Artificial Intelligence: What Will It Mean For Marketing?

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It seems like every day there's a headline either predicting that Artificial Intelligence (AI) will revolutionise a field or asking if it will spell the end for humanity!

At the moment, 36% of Brits think that robots will be running our lives by 2030 and the speed of the change is raising difficult questions about whether AI should have human rights! And things are certainly speeding up: Robot cops are now patrolling Dubai and some people are already in the strange position of teaching robots to do their job and potentially replace them. Last year, a Japanese Insurance company replaced an entire office with IBM's AI called Watson.

For the world of marketing, AI is still equal parts threat and opportunity. Although it's inevitable that changes in technology will make some jobs redundant, as has happened so many times before, there is a bright side. Nobody likes doing tedious work that you feel a computer could do better. When repetitive, tedious tasks can be taken over by AI, humans will be freed up to do more interesting work: the challenging tasks that require analysis, creativity, imagination and exploration. We've recently seen that there are some creative tasks that AI should just not be allowed to do, like naming shades of paint!

Recently some news has cut a little close to the bone for marketers: the lingerie company Cosabella replaced its digital media agency with an AI called Albert and the Japanese wing of McCann now has an AI creative director that directs adverts that some people prefer to the human-made ads. Now there is even a 'marketing optimisation bot' called Optimove that supposedly uses AI and machine learning to automate the analysis of digital marketing campaigns, recommend insights and target segments that respond well and not so well to the campaign.

In the long run, some jobs are bound to be automated, but the safe jobs are those that rely on the human ingenuity that AI cannot simulate with pre-programmed and predictable code. The best bet is to plan ahead, embrace the future and make sure there's a place for you in the workplace of tomorrow. There will always be jobs people with three key skill sets: consultants who take a big picture view and come up with strategies, specialists who are experts in their field and polymaths who are skilled in multiple areas and can combine insights and skills from different fields.

No matter how smart computers get, there will always be a need for human marketers who can gain insights into consumers and their lives and use this new knowledge to create

innovative campaigns that break the mould!

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