



NAWA-DIGIT report on:

# Opportunities and Threats of AI for Marketing

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Artificial intelligence is transforming marketing by enabling unprecedented personalization, automation, data analysis, and content generation, with most marketers acknowledging its potential to outperform humans while also fearing job displacement. This report explores digital trends shaping marketing strategies, opportunities, and challenges, aligning with global trends and focusing on the competencies needed to navigate AI-driven changes in the industry.

## 1. Introduction

Artificial intelligence significantly impacts marketing work and is changing this market area. The new technology makes unprecedented personalization, automation, and optimization of many routine tasks, in-depth data analysis, more accurate forecasting, and content generation in various formats possible. The latest study of Influencer Marketing Hub (2024) on almost 1300 marketers shows that 70.6% think that AI can outperform humans in key marketing tasks, and nearly 60% fear it could replace their roles. How do we prepare for these changes and cope with their effects on the work of marketers, team management, and employee learning and training?

This report aims to identify digital trends affecting marketing research, strategy, and activities. We analyze digitalization's opportunities and challenges, aligning its findings with contemporary global trends. This study was conducted from the perspective of people working and willing to work in marketing departments and the marketing subsector of the creative industry.

This report is the first in several reports developed as part of the project "DIGIT: People and Algorithms in Organizations: Competencies to Work in the Digital Environment" under the NAWA Strategic Partnerships Program.

## 2. The AI World Megatrend

Two megatrends included in the Trends Map 2024 (INFUTURE.INSTITUTE Natalia Hatałska-Woźniak, 2025) have been extracted. These megatrends refer to digitalization and will serve as the forecasting framework for the NAWA project:

- **"Mirror World"** – parallel digital world evolves. It reflects, extends, and, in some aspects, replaces our physical reality. Consequently, it fundamentally reshapes how we live, work, and interact. Both technological advancements and socio-cultural transformations drive this megatrend.
- **"AI World"** – Artificial Intelligence (AI) plays a key role in all social, economic, and technological life aspects. This marks an era in which AI-based technologies shape education, healthcare, international relations, and the economy.

The key selection criterion was that a given trend should concern the development of AI technology and its social, economic, and cultural implications. Based on several key premises, we focus on the trends listed below: their technological affinity, the convergence of social consequences, and opportunities for application synergy in the marketing subsector.

- **Cyber Threat Analysis** – increased cyberattacks, information manipulation, and digital warfare on brand perception and consumer behavior.
- **Algorithmic Reality** – AI generates, modifies, and controls increasingly digital content, blurring the line between authentic and synthetic information.

- **Digital Inequalities** – growing disparities in access to digital technologies, the Internet, and digital skills.
- **Literacy Crisis** – a significant decline in the ability to read with understanding and formulate thoughts.
- **Democratized Digital Intelligence** – enabling and empowering people, regardless of technological advancement, to use AI effectively.
- **The Fight for Power** – a global movement for increased state control over the digital marketplace and curb global tech giants' influence.
- **Digital Rebellion** opposes the dominance of technology giants and their practices related to mass surveillance and the exploitation of user data. It manifests itself in tightening privacy regulations.
- **Creativity Reimagined** – increased, widespread access to generative artificial intelligence (GAI), thanks to which people have been equipped with competencies they did not have before.



## How does the literacy crisis change the way consumers operate in the market?

The lack of critical thinking and crisis in in-depth literacy contributes to the consumer-company power struggle. With simplified world viewers and reduced ability to see through the world around them, consumers will have limited rationality in decision making. That results in threatening consequences such as the failure to identify manipulative marketing, resistance to new or overreliance on false information or behaviors that are reactive, disregard long- term consequences and are based on emotional ques and surface-level perceptions. It sheds a light on the augmented responsibility of public policy but also companies to insist on strong ethical grounds of their intentions and actions to be clear, transparent and genuinely noble.



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### 3. Strategic Approach to AI in Marketing

AI is a phenomenon that changes markets and customers' needs, attitudes, and behaviors. It is a powerful tool of mechanical, cognitive, and emotional capabilities that change how we work in marketing (Huang & Rust, 2024). A three-phase model for using AI in marketing includes:

1. The use of AI in market and marketing research and data analysis,
2. Application of AI to marketing strategies, including segmentation, targeting, and positioning,
3. AI-based marketing operations enrich the value offered by service and product, pricing, distribution, selling, promotion, consumer engagement, cost reduction, convenience, and communication. Operations generate more data, which enhances marketing analysis.

All three aspects – strategies, operations, and research – are closely linked and co-create modern marketing. The development of technology and changing consumer expectations influence how marketing strategies are shaped, and operational activities are undertaken. AI allows for more precise customer targeting and resource optimization, and empirical data help determine which marketing elements can be automated and which still require human control. The result is a hybrid marketing model in which artificial intelligence and humans cooperate to maximize value for consumers and companies. This approach allows for flexible adjustment of strategies to changing market conditions and uses AI as a support, not a replacement for human intuition and experience.



The concept of Marketing 5.0 (Kotler et al., 2021) defines the use of AI to create, communicate, deliver, and enhance the value experienced by the customer. Its implementation is currently a challenge for many organizations, as it requires competencies related to access to information, the development of technology, and its use in communication and collaboration. AI-based marketing also needs a new approach to organizing work and developing competencies to cope with the instability and clarity of managing such work. The role of automation in managing human resources, tasks, and projects is also a dilemma that needs to be resolved, especially in learning in a digital context and using data in customer service. This raises many questions about the development strategies and the forms of work organization to be taken in marketing concerning AI-induced changes.





## What measures should companies implement to ensure they are adequately prepared in terms of competencies for the inevitable changes resulting from the increasing use of AI in their business operations?

In the field of marketing where technology, data, and creativity intersect, the need to embrace AI has especially significant implications. Those organizations that are keen to be competitive not only have to put in place AI technologies but also get their employees equipped with the skills, the mindset, and the ethical foundations necessary to harness such tools. Organizations need to focus on both upskilling the current talent pool and reskilling individuals whose roles are transforming with automation. Consequently, continuous learning must become firmly embedded in the organisational culture. AI's ability to process vast amounts of customer data and automate personalized experiences presents ethical considerations that must be addressed proactively. Issues such as data privacy, bias in algorithms, and transparency have become increasingly important. Transparency and responsibility are emerging as brand differentiators. What is more, agile techniques and cross-functional team work are becoming the norm in high-performing marketing firms. AI facilitates agility by making quicker, better decisions and automating procedures, but it is dependent on the extent to which organizations redesign the way they function. In worlds where AI lives, successful leadership translates to enabling teams to experiment and learn from trial and error, and emphasizing customer value. Empathy, adaptability, and vision for embracing AI on board to marketing initiatives are beginning to be the essential leadership competencies.



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## 4. The Strategic Roadmap for Marketing in AI-dominated Landscape

We built a matrix of AI-related trends and marketing elements to reveal how AI can influence marketing development. Companies can apply it to leverage AI in marketing by defining their model of navigating through three key areas: research, strategies, and operations. Individual marketers can glean several actionable insights from this report to enhance their skills and techniques in an AI-driven marketing landscape. Finally, students and academic teachers can take the insights from this matrix to prepare themselves for the future of their field.

**Table 1. AI Trends in Marketing Research, Strategy and Operations**

Trends	AI in research	AI in strategy	AI in operations
Cyber Threat Analysis	<p><b>Reputation protection strategies</b></p> <p>Implementation of strategies to protect brand reputation from disinformation attacks, smear campaigns, and false narratives.</p>	<p><b>Digital media defense</b></p> <p>Protecting campaigns from fake interactions, analyzing the impact of information wars on the product/brand image, responding to attacks.</p>	<p><b>Cybersecurity communication</b></p> <p>Automated protection against information manipulation, ensuring the authenticity of messages, detecting deepfakes, filtering false comments and combating disinformation campaigns.</p>
Algorithmic Reality	<p><b>Automatic market perception</b></p> <p>Using advanced algorithms to analyze consumer behavior, and simulating customer behavior.</p>	<p><b>Hyperpersonalization vs. Manipulation</b></p> <p>Algorithmic reality allows brands to create hyper-personalized AI-based campaigns, but at the same time it carries the risk of manipulating audience perceptions.</p>	<p><b>Synthetic content creation</b></p> <p>Generative AI can automatically create content and customer interactions, but also it raises concerns about the authenticity of communication and the risk of weakening trust in brands.</p>
Digital Inequalities	<p><b>Digital access segmentation</b></p> <p>Adapt data collections to account for differences in the use of the internet, social media, and digital tools and identify groups at risk of digital exclusion.</p>	<p><b>Inclusive marketing</b></p> <p>Develop strategies that address technology inequalities and adapt their approach to different levels of digital literacy.</p>	<p><b>Accessibility of content</b></p> <p>Enabling automatic adaptation of content to the technological capabilities of recipients.</p>
Literacy Crisis	<p><b>Analysis of simplified content</b></p> <p>Analyzing user preferences for simpler forms of communication, such as infographics, emojis, audio-visual content, or short summaries.</p>	<p><b>Audiovisual dominance</b></p> <p>Focusing on visual and audiovisual communication, applying AI to transcribe content into audio recordings, generating summaries, and intuitive, interactive user interfaces.</p>	<p><b>Microcontent and contextual communication</b></p> <p>Generating simplified and easily digestible content that does not require advanced reading skills.</p>
Democratized Digital Intelligence	<p><b>Accessible data analytics</b></p> <p>Non-technical marketers and business analysts can perform complex data analysis with no-code AI, cloud-based machine learning, and interactive analytics tools.</p>	<p><b>Hybrid decision-making</b></p> <p>Collaboration of humans and AI allows for better adjustments to customer segmentation, targeting, testing scenarios and making predictions.</p>	<p><b>Automated personalization</b></p> <p>With AI and robotics, companies can automatically customize ad content, product offerings, and communications based on customer behavior and preferences.</p>
The Fight for Power	<p><b>Data fragmentation</b></p> <p>Adapting data collection and usage strategies to local regulations, leading to fragmented marketing analytics and more difficult scaling of AI algorithms across markets.</p>	<p><b>Technological localization</b></p> <p>Segmentation, targeting, and marketing positioning strategies must consider differences in data access, payment models, and communication methods across regions.</p>	<p><b>Regulatory-driven personalization</b></p> <p>Using advanced personalization technologies that operate within local regulations and implementing new forms of contextual advertising instead of the current behavioral advertising.</p>
Digital Rebellion	<p><b>Privacy analytics</b></p> <p>Need to rely on data collected directly from customers and technologies that provide greater transparency in the analysis of consumer behavior.</p>	<p><b>Privacy as the new brand value</b></p> <p>Adapting business models and strategies to the growing awareness of consumers about data privacy and the expectation of transparency in information processing.</p>	<p><b>The new era of targeting</b></p> <p>AI-driven marketing automation, contextual analysis, and personalization based on interactions rather than tracking online behavior will play an increasingly important role.</p>
Creativity Reimagined	<p><b>Creative analytics</b></p> <p>Using AI to test the effectiveness of different ad formats, assess the emotional impact of content, and generate insights from large data sets.</p>	<p><b>AI-driven content personalization</b></p> <p>Dynamically changing messages, adapting them to consumer trends and preferences in real time.</p>	<p><b>Automated creation</b></p> <p>Automation of the process of creating marketing content and handling the risk of unification of messages and overuse of algorithms in content generation.</p>

Source: Own elaboration

## 5. Finding Your Way in AI-dominated Business Landscape

The strategic roadmap for marketing allows for planning research, strategy, and operations regarding global trends related to the rapid development of AI. It provides a holistic view of marketing's evolution in the context of AI's growing role.

This roadmap can be used for defining several strategic viewpoints:

- Marketing coherence – verify each row if your strategy, operations, and research align with each other and respond to emerging trends. Select the most significant trend and invest in the coherence of elements to achieve competitiveness.
- Marketing focus: Decide on the element of your marketing that needs development to address AI-based trends, invest in the required competencies and resources, or mobilize your business partners to strengthen your AI capabilities.
- Take a selective approach. Choose fields where you can capitalize on trends and craft your strategy for this collection.

### Strategic marketing coherence

Trends	AI in research	AI in strategy	AI in operations
Cyber Threat Analysis			
Algorithmic Reality			
Digital Inequalities			
Literacy Crisis			
Democratized Digital Intelligence			
The Fight for Power			
Digital Rebellion			
Creativity Reimagined			

Strategic coherence: research delivers insights for strategy, which defines aims and framework for and operations to react to the literacy crisis.

For example, a company focuses on the literacy crisis, considering diminished reading comprehension and lower critical thinking skills as market opportunities. It utilizes AI-powered sentiment analysis to identify how literacy challenges affect audience perception of brand messages. Then, it implements visual communication strategies, using infographics, videos, and other visual aids to complement written content. Then, it prioritizes channels accessible to audiences with varying literacy levels, such as video platforms and social media, and optimizes content for mobile devices, ensuring accessibility for audiences who primarily access information through smartphones.

### Strategic marketing focus

Trends	AI in research	AI in strategy	AI in operations
Cyber Threat Analysis			
Algorithmic Reality			
Digital Inequalities			
Literacy Crisis			
Democratized Digital Intelligence			
The Fight for Power			
Digital Rebellion			
Creativity Reimagined			

Strategic focus: build a strategy around AI trends to leverage opportunities and challenges and prepare your organization for the full-scale effects of the AI wave.

For example, focusing on research should consider that AI is increasingly penetrating this marketing area, enabling precise analysis of massive data sets, identification of fake news, and tracking disinformation campaigns. An example is the development of tools for detecting manipulated content on social media, assessing brand reputation in real-time, enabling a better understanding of customer perception, and dynamically adjusting communication or threats resulting from information manipulation.

**Selective approach**

Trends	AI in research	AI in strategy	AI in operations
Cyber Threat Analysis			
Algorithmic Reality			
Digital Inequalities			
Literacy Crisis			
Democratized Digital Intelligence			
The Fight for Power			
Digital Rebellion			
Creativity Reimagined			

Selective rationality: choose fields where you can win the most on trends and craft your strategy to this collection.

For example, the company can focus on one of the key aspects of algorithmic reality: hyper-personalization in marketing. Automatic personalization is becoming a standard in marketing, enabling dynamic adjustment of offers to individual customer preferences. AI enables the analysis of consumer behavior on an unprecedented scale, allowing for real-time content adaptation. At the same time, the table emphasizes the risk associated with manipulating recipients' perceptions - excessive personalization can create narrow information bubbles that distort the reality of consumers. Companies must combine different elements of research, strategy, and operations to find a balance between the effectiveness of AI and the ethical use of these tools to avoid accusations of manipulation and loss of authenticity.



The roadmap can also illustrate how market leaders answer to AI-based transformation of the business landscape and give companies concrete guidance on implementing innovative strategies and operations in the digital age.

**Table 2. Market leaders' reactions to AI-driven transformation**

Trends	AI in research	AI in strategy	AI in operations
Cyber Threat Analysis	<p><b>Reputation protection strategies</b></p> <p>Coca-Cola and Nike deploy digital reputation teams to analyze fake news about brands in real time.</p>	<p><b>Digital media defense</b></p> <p>Amazon analyzes reviews for fake reviews linked to information warfare.</p>	<p><b>Cybersecurity communication</b></p> <p>AI in advertising systems (e.g. Google Ads) detects bots clicking on ads in order to manipulate campaign costs.</p>
Algorithmic Reality	<p><b>Automatic market perception</b></p> <p>Netflix uses AI to analyze reviews and generate predictions about customer preferences.</p>	<p><b>Hyperpersonalization vs. Manipulation</b></p> <p>L'Oreal uses generative AI to personalize beauty recommendations, but must also avoid the ethical pitfalls of image manipulation.</p>	<p><b>Synthetic content creation</b></p> <p>Lexus used IBM Watson to script an ad, showing how AI is starting to influence ad narratives.</p>
Digital Inequalities	<p><b>Digital access segmentation</b></p> <p>Unilever uses big data analytics to study media consumption in regions with limited internet access.</p>	<p><b>Inclusive marketing</b></p> <p>Amazon is adapting Alexa and Kindle interfaces for seniors by simplifying voice interactions and increasing font sizes on e-book devices.</p>	<p><b>Accessibility of content</b></p> <p>TikTok Lite – a lighter version of the application, intended for markets with limited access to high-speed internet.</p>
Literacy Crisis	<p><b>Analysis of simplified content</b></p> <p>Meta AI analyzes which content formats generate the most engagement among audiences with varying reading levels.</p>	<p><b>Audiovisual dominance</b></p> <p>Generative AI in Canva creates automatic content summaries in the form of graphical slides.</p>	<p><b>Microcontent and contextual communication</b></p> <p>LinkedIn Auto-Summary AI – generate short, easy-to-digest summaries of longer posts.</p>
Democratized Digital Intelligence	<p><b>Accessible data analytics</b></p> <p>MonkeyLearn – a no-code platform using AI to analyze consumer opinions based on reviews and comments on social media.</p>	<p><b>Hybrid decision-making</b></p> <p>HubSpot AI-Powered Campaigns analyze customer interaction history and suggest the best approach to email marketing.</p>	<p><b>Automated personalization</b></p> <p>AI chatbots (e.g. Drift, Intercom) adapt conversations to the customer's style, anticipating their needs based on previous interactions.</p>
The Fight for Power	<p><b>Data fragmentation</b></p> <p>Meta has restricted advertising targeting in Europe following the introduction of GDPR regulations.</p>	<p><b>Technological localization</b></p> <p>Amazon is opening data centers in different countries to meet localization requirements for processing user data.</p>	<p><b>Regulatory-driven personalization</b></p> <p>Brave Browser offers an advertising model based on user consent instead of traditional online behavior tracking.</p>
Digital Rebellion	<p><b>Privacy analytics</b></p> <p>Apple App Tracking Transparency (ATT) – restricts user tracking by mobile apps, forcing companies to adjust their data collection strategies.</p>	<p><b>Privacy as the new brand value</b></p> <p>Unilever is adapting its advertising strategies, limiting its use of user data and moving to contextual ad targeting rather than behavioral targeting.</p>	<p><b>The new era of targeting</b></p> <p>TikTok Ads – uses contextual analysis to match ads to video content rather than a user's browsing history.</p>
Creativity Reimagined	<p><b>Creative analytics</b></p> <p>Brandwatch analyze viral content to determine which creative formats are most engaging.</p>	<p><b>AI-driven content personalization</b></p> <p>Nike uses AI to dynamically personalize advertising messages, adapting social media content to customer style and behavior.</p>	<p><b>Automated creation</b></p> <p>Albert AI optimizes advertising campaigns in real time by testing and automatically adapting creatives to target groups.</p>

Source: Own elaboration



## 6. Conclusions

*“The only thing we know about the future is that it will be different.”* Peter Drucker defines what we can expect when considering working with AI in marketing, managing that work, and learning to prepare for it. In this report, we suggest what that might look like. To conclude, we encourage all marketers to consider the following questions:

- How much of my organization’s resources, strategy, operational abilities, and capabilities are ready for reshaped marketing? Are we equipped with technical (e.g., data analysis, automation) and strategic (e.g., ethics, compliance, creativity, critical thinking) competencies?
  - How do we address data privacy and security awareness in the AI-driven marketing landscape to ensure compliance with global regulations?
  - How do we ensure inclusiveness and accessibility among consumers and employees in times of technological disparities?
  - In the increasing prevalence of synthetic content, how can we ensure that automation is balanced with brand uniqueness, thus maintaining authenticity and trust?
  - How do we organize human oversight to ensure ethical use and strategic relevance in AI-driven decision-making?
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## Project Overview

DIGIT (People and algorithms in organizations: competencies for working in the digital environment) is the NAWA Strategic Partnership project focused on understanding and developing the competencies needed to work with AI and manage AI-enabled work in marketing environments.

The primary objective is identifying and developing the competencies to work with AI in marketing contexts, manage AI-enabled work processes, and adapt to Marketing 5.0 environments.

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The report is based on secondary sources, including reports, scholarly articles, and analytical publications that provide additional context and validation of findings. The selection of secondary sources was guided by the following criteria: information quality, broad and diverse coverage across the research, business, and educational sectors, a global perspective on digital trends and their implications, and publication dates between 2020 and 2024 to ensure relevance and up-to-date information.

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