

Audience targeting restrictions continue apace

Following the introduction of **GDPR** in Europe within 2018, more and more restrictions are now being imposed on the digital marketing sector by governing bodies, with the New York Privacy Act set to follow suit.

Alongside this, various devices and browsers are introducing **cookie restrictions**, with Apple leading the charge with **Intelligent Tracking Prevention (ITP)** for its Safari browser. But what does all this mean for digital marketers?

In 2020, we'll see the beginning of the end for remarketing. The session-based window within which you can operate currently will be reduced to nothing. As knowledge of users falls, an audience arms race will begin.

Chris Ford, Head of Analytics

Our industry will see a flurry of legislation passed to protect online users and 'social stability'. This will limit our ability to target audiences based on demographic information and user signals. Google and other players in the market will be looking at solutions that still allow user-level targeting by anonymising personal data.

Thuong Le Phong, Data Scientist



First-party data will be king

With data protection practices and the degradation of third-party cookies undermining conventional approaches to online advertising, first-party data will be key.

The industry is abuzz with enthusiasm for first-party data. Beating your competition will be down to how well you use your knowledge of your customers (and not how well you target third-party audiences).

Kevin Joyner, Director of Planning & Insight

Facebook, Google and others are making large strides in fully gearing their platforms towards automation and 'trusting the algorithm', with those who don't lean into this being punished within the auctions.

Optimal platform usage will be achieved through a high-quality first-party data infrastructure to feed the algorithm, with high volumes of platform bespoke creative to take advantage of the consumer's attention, creating somewhat of a level playing field for advertisers. This means that getting an edge on your competitors will become more challenging than just throwing money at the problem either through media or constant optimisation.

Anthony Macro, Head of Social Advertising

Machine learning and AI open up new possibilities

Whilst machine learning has undoubtedly been one of the buzzwords within digital marketing over the last few years, it is now starting to deliver real results for digital marketers.

Suppliers will use AI-driven products and services, and customers will increasingly want AI-driven products and services.

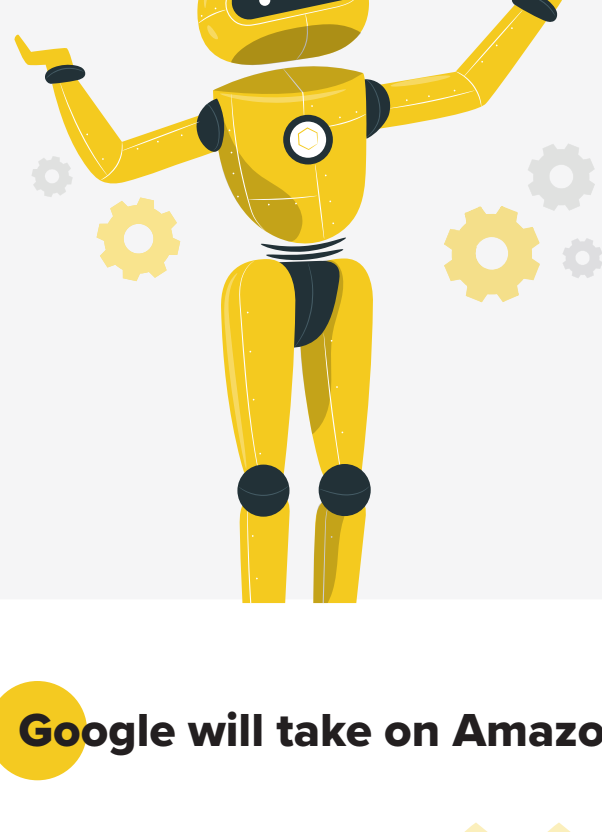
Chris Lindsey, Business Development Manager

The application of cloud tech and machine learning in marketing is opening up new possibilities. Advertising will begin to be replaced by artificially intelligent, personalised marketing - which itself will begin to merge with the design and delivery of products and services.

Kevin Joyner, Director of Planning & Insight

This year will see the next phase in machine learning-driven personal digital assistants. The market is hungry for more advanced AI that responds naturally to humans, and most major tech companies are working on it. I predict we'll see one major tech company buy up or partner with an NLP-based developer and announce a new phase in digital assistants.

Adam Clemence, SEO Associate Director



Google will take on Amazon in the marketplace battle

With almost **90% of UK shoppers using Amazon**, the battle is on to own the digital marketplace across the globe.

I predict Google will take market share in the digital marketplace battle with Amazon and eBay.

Google's new shopping marketplace is an improvement in UX from the traditional ad-based Google Shopping experience, and we've already seen Google develop a digital storefront, search-history-based product recommendations, price tracking and a universal checkout system to compete with Amazon.

This strategy will generate a commission from products sold on Google, in addition to ad revenue.

Kole Ogundipe, Client Strategy Director

Voice and 5G will change the face of search

Even back in May 2016, **20% of searches** in the Google app were by voice, and this percentage will now doubt increase.

Simultaneously, **5G networks** are beginning to appear, with more expected to launch across the globe in 2020. But what do these two developments mean for search?

Businesses will finally recognise the power of voice in 2020, and will redesign their sites to adapt to voice search and offer consumers a more interactive and engaging experience.

Holly Gilmartin, Commercial & Business Director

We'll start to see more applications of voice search in everyday life - such as in coffee machines and vending machines.

Alexandra Stamp, Marketing Manager

The rise in searches enabled by 5G, teamed with the rise in non-click searches, will mean that users will get more information directly from the SERP.

With informational queries answered directly in search engines (through quick answers or people also ask), the traffic that does go to websites will be for high purchase intent keywords, and so more qualified and more likely to convert.

Emma Woolley, SEO Account Director



Content gets creative

Blending SEO and creativity will continue to drive results for brands in 2020.

2020 is the year for content to rise up and shine above the rest of the channels. More and more brands are realising that they need great content on their site to have a chance in such a flooded market. Unique content is the way forward.

Lana Hodgkinson, Content Executive

From a content perspective, I think 2020 will bring an additional sense of creativity when it comes to writing with SEO in mind. Marketers and brands will focus on blending a bespoke tone of voice with strategic keywords. This means content marketers will need to step it up and think beyond the keywords this year - aiming to build the brand up by writing with a clear tone of voice and style in mind.

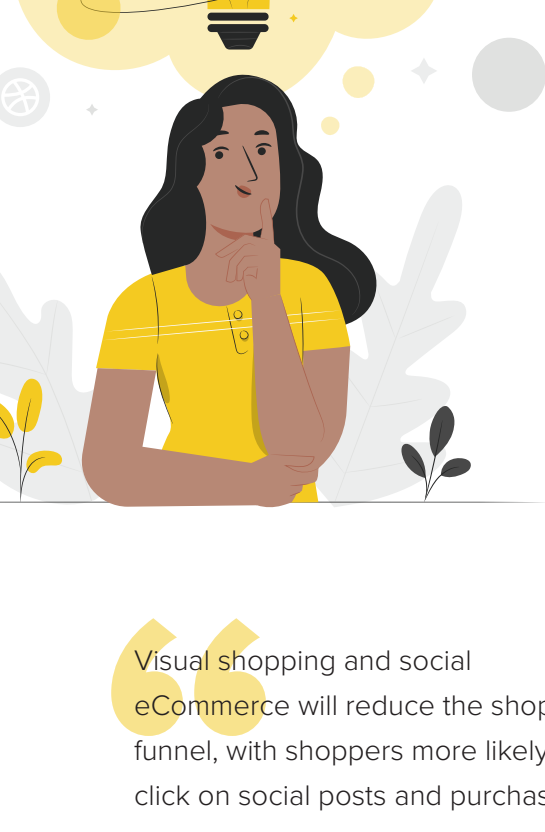
Rae Sturm, Digital Content Manager

Visual shopping and social eCommerce will reduce the shopping funnel, with shoppers more likely to click on social posts and purchase.

Gipi Gopinath, Director of Search, Australia

Instagram, with its adaptiveness to shopping and lead on Stories, will continue to increase its ad performance and will increase in dominance in Australia.

Pelin Tanyu, Client Strategy Manager



The pendulum swings back towards brand

The debate around 'brand' versus 'performance' marketing was a key one last decade - but what will 2020 hold for CMOs?

We'll see 'brand' marketing come to the fore. Senior brand marketers will (re)read The Long and the Short of It and become convinced that they have focused too much on performance, to the detriment of their brand.

Increasing costs and the demise of the cookie will add to the perception that performance media has had its day, and that brand advertising is the best way to grow sales in the long-run. Performance agencies will have to adapt to survive.

Duncan Nichols, Director of Strategy & Planning



New advertising inventory will emerge

With new formats and platforms emerging all the time on the digital advertising landscape, what are the big new opportunities for advertisers in 2020?

With demand increasing for connected TV and digital out-of-home, we'll see expedited growth of these channels. Users are consuming media outside of their desktops and mobiles, and the market needs to grow with this - the US has just arrived at this point, whilst the UK and other markets lag behind.

Connie del Bono, Associate Programmatic Director

There will be a couple of new, massive digital advertising inventory.

Of course Google and Facebook dominate, but there is fatigue and another generation of developers are about to come of age. With the likes of TikTok on the rise, there is clearly an appetite for new platforms, which opens up the potential for new ad inventory.

Agencies will be able to capitalize on this if they can build new teams and tech quickly.

Kris Tait, Managing Director, US

Online and offline converge

With the high street struggling in recent years, and many well-loved brands disappearing from our streets, how will the next generation of retailers look to join up on- and offline strategies?

We'll see more DTC brands opening physical stores for experiences and finding new ways to experiment with their marketing.

With DTC brands like Bonobos, Warby Parker and Casper already opening stores, as well as more traditional brands like Next pop-up stores, we'll no doubt see others follow suit.

Sebastian Clement, VP New Business & Partnerships

Keeping it simple in paid search

With the search giants, and in particular Google, constantly evolving their paid search offering, advertisers should look to keep things simple.

Google is now pushing for traffic consolidation and to run accounts using a few big campaigns grouped around ROI or CPA targets, promoting ad group granularity rather than campaign granularity.

Bid strategies are taking centre stage and Google has been tirelessly working on improving how they operate. Now that campaigns are going to be consolidated, they will have more data to work with per campaign and therefore they should work even better, promoting simplicity even further.

Maciej Wronski, PPC Strategist