How Marketers Can Remain Relevant in the Face of AI

March 2023
Redundancy or Reinforcement?

According to Yuval Noah Harari, prominent anthropologist and author of *Sapiens* and *Homo Deus*, in his book *21 Lessons for the 21st Century*, there are two schools of thought on how machine learning and robotics could impact our work over the coming decades:

- The first, albeit disheartening, school of thought is automation is on the cusp of creating a situation where “billions of people will become economically redundant.”
- The second, says “in the long run automation will keep generating new jobs and greater prosperity for all.”

AI often elicits widespread doubts and concerns among the masses, particularly related to job insecurity. I want us humans to remain empowered and relevant in the world of fast-moving AI technology.

So, we need to be realistic about where we can continue to add incremental value within the workplace moving forward. I propose that, in reality, we will end up somewhere in the middle of Harari’s two schools of thought. Because some roles will be completely transformed, a significant number of new roles will be created in the process. This is supported by the clear, overwhelming demand for the next generation of skills needed to apply AI and automation to applications across a range of industries.

Automation Anxiety is nothing new. In the 16th century, Queen Elizabeth I blocked a patent for an automated knitting machine, fearing it would take people’s jobs. In the mid-nineties, *The New York Times* wrote about the fear of the machine age, and there was even job anxiety after Ford reinvented the automotive sector.

And yet the world has prospered.
Who wants to reduce, or even eliminate, joyless work and gain greater satisfaction in their job? Then, embrace rather than fight this shift, because we can all use this technology to our benefit. While that might seem a bit “head in the clouds” for some people, I want to shift the focus to two broadly defined areas of AI that most impact the marketing and media landscape, generative AI and Predictive AI.

There are dozens of ways to slice the different types of AI, but I believe these two definitions that follow are a useful starting point.

The most talked-about AI today can be classified as generative AI. Generative AI is a type of artificial intelligence that creates new things like images, texts, or music by learning from existing examples, and then generating original outputs. You’ve possibly seen examples of this from OpenAI and organisations:

ChatGPT for generating text from chat queries.

---

I want to separate my living room into 2 parts by using plants. Which plant would you recommend for that purpose?

---

Using plants to divide a room can be a great way to add a natural and decorative element to your space. There are many plants that you can use for this purpose, depending on the look you want to achieve and the care requirements of the plants. Some options to consider include tall, slender plants such as bamboo or snake plants, which can create a vertical barrier; trailing plants such as pothos or spider plants, which can be hung from the ceiling or placed on shelves; or large, bushy plants such as ficus trees or rubber plants, which can create a more solid barrier. It’s important to choose plants that will thrive in the light and temperature conditions of your living room, and to make sure that they are placed in appropriate pots or planters.

---

Rubber plant sounds good, let’s focus on it. Is it easy to take care of it? How often should I water it?

---

The rubber plant (Ficus elastica) is a popular and attractive plant that is easy to care for. It is known for its glossy, leathery leaves and its ability to grow quite large over time. To care for a rubber plant, you should place it in a location with bright, indirect light and keep the soil evenly moist, but not soggy. Water the plant when the top inch of soil feels dry to the touch, and be sure to empty any excess water from the tray beneath the pot. The frequency with which you need to water your rubber plant will depend on the size of the plant, the size of the pot, and the conditions in your home, so you may need to experiment a bit to find the right watering schedule. In general, it’s better to err on the side of under-watering rather than over-watering, as rubber plants are sensitive to root rot.
Dall-E 2 for generating images based on prompts.

JukeBox for creating music

Curated Samples

Provided with genre, artist, and lyrics as input, Jukebox outputs a new music sample produced from scratch. Below, we show some of our favorite samples.

Unseen lyrics  Re- renditions  Completions  Fun songs

Jukebox produces a wide range of music and singing styles, and generalizes to lyrics not seen during training. All the lyrics below have been co-written by a language model and OpenAI researchers.

- Country, in the style of Alan Jackson – Jukebox
- Rock, in the style of Elvis Presley – Jukebox
- Pop, in the style of Katy Perry – Jukebox
- Blues Rock, in the style of Joe Bonamassa – Jukebox
- Heavy Metal, in the style of Rage – Jukebox
- Classic Pop, in the style of Frank Sinatra – Jukebox

To hear all uncurated samples, check out our sample explorer.

EXPLORE ALL SAMPLES
Predictive AI

The other type of AI that we’ve seen change our workflows is Predictive AI, such as the algorithms built into ad buying platforms to help predict which audiences, days, times, and search terms will perform best. Likewise, Predictive AI is present in the planning tools that help us to understand the estimated performance of campaigns, or our attribution/marketing mix models.

Could Generative AI be used in conjunction with Predictive AI? Together they could not only generate optimal ad creative, but then also learn who to show it to, where, and when. That thought might cause you to wonder if there is even any room left for humans in the media/marketing workflow? The fact of the matter is not only is there room within this equation for marketers, but the human creative-strategic lens is more crucial than ever to drive differentiation and novelty for brands.

To explain why, we need to dive further into how Generative and Predictive AI work. It all comes down to training. Whether it’s Generative or Predictive AI, a core component of the predictions they make or the content they generate comes down to the information used to train the model.

Prompt Engineering and AI as an Accelerator

How you write prompts for generative AI will be key to it dealing with unfamiliar information. For example, you might describe aspects of King Charles’ coronation and get the AI to help you put your thoughts into words. Furthermore, it takes creativity to come up with the right prompts to ask the AI in the first place.

“The human creative-strategic lens is more crucial than ever to drive differentiation and novelty for brands.”
Here’s a real-life example with ChatGPT where we ask it to help us write the following email to people in our company:

Send an email asking people to respond quickly to my survey

Subject: Request for Quick Response to Survey

Dear [Name],

I hope this email finds you well. I am reaching out to request your participation in a survey that I am conducting. The survey is designed to gather valuable insights on [Survey topic].

Your participation in this survey would be greatly appreciated and will contribute to our understanding of the current situation. The survey should take no more than [Survey duration] to complete, and all responses will be kept confidential.

I would kindly ask that you take a few minutes to complete the survey at your earliest convenience. It is important that we receive your response as quickly as possible so that we can compile and analyze the data in a timely manner.

The survey can be accessed at the following link: [Insert link to survey].

Thank you in advance for your time and cooperation. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to reach out.

Best regards,

[Your Name]
Granted, this isn’t a bad starting point, but arguably it could be more compelling and include additional context. Compare this new version where I updated the prompt to improve the email’s quality:

**write an email asking my colleagues to complete the annual productivity survey this week.**
The survey will be used to help prioritise automation initiatives in 2023 which will improve their workflows. Make it punchy, positive, and to the point.

**Subject: Urgent: Complete the 2023 Productivity Survey This Week**

Dear Team,

I hope this email finds you well. I am writing to remind you of the annual productivity survey which is due this week. Your participation is critical to our efforts to improve workflows and prioritize automation initiatives for 2023.

This survey only takes a few minutes to complete and will help us understand how we can best support you in achieving your goals and improving your work experience. Your feedback is important and will be kept confidential.

To access the survey, please follow this link [insert link here]. The survey will be open until [insert deadline].

Let's make 2023 the year of increased productivity and improved workflows. Thank you for your time and contributions.

Best regards,

[Your Name]
By writing a richer prompt, the generated email is much more compelling and a better fit for my brief. This is just one example of how prompt engineering will be a key task where humans are essential to achieve higher quality outputs and for strategic thinking. In this situation, that led to the idea to create a productivity survey.

No Substitute for Thinking

To further increase the quality of your outputs, it helps to understand how these kinds of models work. Fundamentally, large language models (like GPT-3) are trained to simply predict the next words given the previous words generated. There is no logical reasoning taking place, it just predicts the next words. Because of that, it has been shown that, for example, asking it a question followed by “Let’s think step by step” gives much better results. And even more so, using “Let’s work this out in a step-by-step way to be sure we have the right answer” increases the accuracy of the output further. Not because the model actually thinks harder, but rather because it generates responses that correlate to what humans wrote when posed a question like that in its training data.
Image Generation
Here are some image generation examples that illustrate the vastly higher quality outputs possible with more thoughtful prompt writing:

The first task: Design a conceptual shoe to be used within ad creative mock-ups

Original
"Create a new green Nike shoe."

Revised
"Imagine a retro Nike shoe in the color scheme of the 1980s Boston Celtics basketball team. Render it on a black background in a hyper modern style with a green background glow."

Original
"A man applying face cream"

Revised
"A youthful 40-year-old man applying face cream below his eye. He's smiling and looking at the camera"

As you might have noticed, Dall-E is infamous for adding / distorting fingers in images and generating unrealistic eyes.
As you can see, providing ample, relevant details yields a more relevant output. More than ever, I can’t help but feel the relevance and importance of this anonymous quote:

AI tools are only as powerful as the applications we can imagine for them, just like all the tools humans have created since the dawn of time.

This leads us to the key theme of the next decade of AI. AI will act as an assistant that will accelerate and enhance your work. As humans our value is in asking the right questions.

**Transformation of “The Brief”**

We can equate the "prompt" that we give to AI, as the "brief" that we give marketing / creative / media teams. In a world where those teams are augmented by generative AI, it’s worthwhile looking at how we can align those two concepts. The right brief, used in conjunction with AI, will be a fast, effective path to successful campaign activation. The wrong brief, however, will be a quick path to bland, mediocre activation. We will need to spend more time and energy on really thinking about what our creative and messaging is intended to do, it’s tone of voice, useful context, and role within an inventive and effective fundamental strategy. In doing so, we’re going to be able to enable these teams to effectively tap into AI-charged processes where possible, maximising their output.

**AI can’t beat genuine human creativity (today)**

I offer this example of how genuine human originality can’t be beaten by AI (at least today). In this [LinkedIn post](https://www.linkedin.com) by Melbourne-based Creative Consultant, Michael Skarbek, a Spotify creative brief was compared to the outputs of London creative agency, Who Wot Why with ChatGPT. In the example below, the top images represent the human-generated creative, and the bottom images represent what AI produced given a similar brief:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1979</th>
<th>2019</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>London Calling.</td>
<td>Conference calling.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="https://www.spotify.com">Spotify</a></td>
<td>Listen like you used to.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1995</th>
<th>2019</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Smashing Pumpkins.</td>
<td>Smashing avocados.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="https://www.spotify.com">Spotify</a></td>
<td>Listen like you used to.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

AI:

“Discover the bands you grew up with on Spotify - the perfect platform for all your listening needs”

AI:

“Experience the past, present, and future of music on Spotify - the perfect platform for Gen Xers”

It’s evident the AI output lacks the impact, creativity, and flair of the human output. There’s no doubt AI could be used to help within the creative process, but, for now, it can’t replace it.
The Battle for AI Supremacy
Training Data Quality, Volume, Recency, & UI

Recently, people have been speculating ChatGPT represents a huge threat to the world’s largest search engine, Google, despite ChatGPT not bringing any new training data or model improvements (it’s based on GPT 3 which has been around since 2020). The key differences were its user interface and method of interaction, in the form of a chatbot. Combined with the fact that it’s currently free, ChatGPT has broken records for the fastest-growing user base in history. People can now see the practical use cases for generative AI and have reportedly used it for applications from passing medical and Ivy League Business School exams in the US, to using it to write code, to coming up with new cooking recipes. It’s been a real eye opener to the future, and as I’ve said to colleagues who have signed up for the tool, “your life will never be the same.”

This mass adoption and hype have led to people speculating that it could threaten Google’s search business. Particularly, as the owner of the Bing search engine, Microsoft, acquired ChatGPT’s creator, OpenAI. You can understand where that speculation comes from. Instead of asking Google, and then looking through a series of web pages, ChatGPT could surface answers directly without the need to synthesise search results yourself.

Google’s CEO, Sundar Pichai, addressed speculation head-on. First, he highlighted that the technology used in generative text AI was originally developed at Google and is something that they have continued to invest in heavily. So, Google is not behind the 8-ball in this area. And secondly, he announced the launch of Bard, a Conversational AI service (like ChatGPT), which will launch imminently within the Google search results. Although Bard’s launch was controversial for the inaccurate information that it surfaced, the race is far from over. We’re sure we’ve yet to see Google completely flex its Conversational AI muscles.

This announcement coincides with Microsoft’s announcement to launch a ChatGPT-powered Conversational AI service within its Bing search results.
As we’ve discussed, a model is only as good as the data used to train it. How will that play out? Because as mentioned, although ChatGPT is extremely powerful, it only has knowledge of the world up to 2021. But as we’re starting to see within Bing Chat, it can be easily adapted to take more recent information into account including information from social media platforms, news, and Bing/Google’s web index. Here’s an example of Bing Chat referring to my recent LinkedIn Post about ChatGPT:

Key Action Points and Takeaways for Marketers:

Where can you really add value to the conversation

Long gone are the days when SEO professionals could simply write thin, low-value content with the aim of capturing organic search demand. As evidenced by Google’s most recent search quality updates, users (and search engines) are looking for genuine expertise from search. As a new rule, if ChatGPT can write it as good as you, you might not be an expert. Conversely, brands, publishers, and marketers should focus on developing the types of content that cannot be automatically generated. That’s where you will be able to create real value for users, and ultimately for your brand.

Search is here to stay, albeit change

Google and Bing search results will be changing imminently. We’ve had questions around the longevity of search engines in the wake of ChatGPT. In fact, Google has been showing knowledge panels and

Image Source: https://searchengineland.com/microsoft-bing-search-chatgpt-392789
How to choose what to automate

As a practical next step for yourself professionally, or for your team, map your daily tasks on a quadrant chart with axes of how Valuable and Automatable each task is. There are different actions you may take to embrace automation and/or double down on you/your team’s skills in each area.

Futureproof your briefing process

Think about how you design a brief today. Add a section dedicated to Automation and AI. Ask yourself the following questions while writing (or receiving) the brief:

- Could aspects of this be created by Generative AI? If so, does my brief give actionable insight into what sorts of prompts would be valuable?

- Could aspects of optimisation or targeting be handled by Predictive AI? Do they augment or replace my existing plan?

Double down on sustainable competitive advantage

Don’t expect technological changes to create a sustainable competitive advantage for you. There may be a temporary advantage that you can gain by adopting new technology before your competitors, but, ultimately, they will catch up as the technology moves through the adoption cycle. Continue to think about how your brand and business can gain a sustainable competitive advantage within the marketplace while using “technology as an accelerator” – a concept made popular by Jim Collins in his book Good to Great.
Think about AI ethics

Finally, we would be remiss if we didn’t touch on AI ethics, an increasingly important topic as we adopt more and more AI within our lives. When using Generative or Predictive AI, marketers should consider the following ethical considerations:

**Bias:** AI systems can perpetuate and amplify existing biases, if they are not trained on diverse and inclusive data sets. Marketers should be aware of this and make efforts to actively reduce bias in their AI systems.

**Transparency:** AI systems should be transparent in their decision-making processes and the data they use. This helps to ensure accountability and build trust with consumers.

**Data Privacy:** Marketers should ensure they handle customer data responsibly and comply with relevant privacy regulations, such as GDPR or CCPA. Any training data sets should be procured from legal sources, and for Predictive AI you must ensure explicit consent is attained before using training data for predictions.

**Responsibility:** Marketers should be aware of the potential consequences of their AI systems and take responsibility. This includes ensuring their AI systems do not produce content that is harmful, misleading, or discriminatory.

**Human Control:** AI systems should be designed with human oversight and control in mind to ensure that decisions are made in an ethical and responsible manner.

Marketers can help brands to build trust with consumers, and ensure that their use of AI aligns with their values and obligations, by being aware of these ethical considerations and incorporating them into their AI strategies.

In closing, AI is no longer a futuristic concept, it’s a present reality. As marketers we need to continue to adopt AI responsibly within our workflows to remain relevant. And we need to consider the ethical aspects of doing so. As with anything new, we will make mistakes, but as an industry, we must continually push ourselves to learn and adapt to new information (just like our AI). In doing so, the hope is that AI doesn’t replace us, but instead removes joyless aspects of our work and leaves more time to focus on what makes us human.
Thank You

Questions? Reach out to Chris Schimkat, Global Head of Analytics, Alison@reprisesoftware.com