



2017 Marketing Word of the Year

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI)

Since 2014, the ANA has surveyed our members to identify the marketing word of the year. The ANA staff identifies a list of finalists and then asks members to cast their votes to determine the winner. This year, voting was done online during the week of November 27. In total, 403 members participated. “**Artificial Intelligence (AI)**” was selected by ANA members as the ANA 2017 Marketing Word of the Year.

Representative verbatim comments from those who voted for Artificial Intelligence (AI) are:

- It's not just the marketing word of the year. It's the transformative phenomenon that's going to reshape the world as we now know it.
- Automation, machine learning, cognitive... if we aren't thinking about using it, employing it already, or at the very least talking about it, we're missing out on some incredible “on the cusp” opportunities.
- 2017 was the year that AI moved from being this weird, misunderstood term on the periphery of marketing consciousness to this weird, somewhat understood term spiraling closer to the epicenter of marketing, on an unavoidable collision course with our daily lives and jobs.
- Seems to be something many marketers talk about this year, but not many understand the implications for marketing.
- AI has gone from something to think about to real-world development and implementation.

Examples of artificial intelligence include cognitive computing (e.g., IBM's Watson), driverless cars, voice-enabled digital assistants (e.g., Amazon's Alexa, Apple's Siri, Google Now), and recommendation engines. A good example of the latter is Amazon, which uses algorithms based on data including a user's purchase history, items in the shopping cart, items rated and liked, and what other customers have viewed and purchased. AI is also used in marketing automation, programmatic buying, chatbots, and customer service.

In the report “Artificial Intelligence for Marketers 2018: Finding Value Beyond the Hype,” published in October 2017, [eMarketer](#) identified six ways marketers are using AI today.

- **Marketing intelligence:** AI systems excel at parsing and crunching massive volumes of data from disparate sources, including data management platforms (DMPs), data warehouses, data lakes, and other repositories of structured and unstructured data. They can take information from a variety of inputs, find relationships, connect the dots, and make predictions in ways that are not humanly possible. Marketers are using these capabilities to enhance business intelligence, marketing research, and forecasting accuracy.
- **Lead generation and customer acquisition:** AI-powered solutions are proficient at helping marketers generate and score sales leads, with the ultimate goal of acquiring more customers. Many of these systems involve the use of machine learning and predictive analytics.
- **Marketing optimization:** These applications of AI technology can help marketers make the optimal media buying and content placement choices. Applications include programmatic advertising and campaign optimization and measurement.
- **Customer experience management:** Artificial intelligence and a number of related technologies are being used to enhance the customer experience and help companies better understand and manage relationships with their customers. Applications include AI-enhanced call center technology, bots and virtual digital assistants, smarter search interfaces, and recommender systems that can help with many different types of customer support.
- **Content creation and dynamic creative:** Companies in a variety of industries are turning to AI-powered content generators to create on-demand advertisements, articles, summaries, promotional material, websites, and other published content based on data inputs and other analytics. These include automated writing and image/video production tools that create specific content for targeted audiences based on data and learning algorithms.
- **Brand-building:** AI technologies are being used in a variety of customized campaigns to amplify and reinforce brand messaging. This involves some type of data analysis that uncovers insights related to brand positioning. It is generally viewed as an up-and-coming area for AI in marketing.

Other top choices in the ANA 2017 Marketing Word of the Year voting were *transparency* (the 2016 Marketing Word of the Year), *content marketing* (the 2015 Marketing Word of the Year), and *influencer*.