



BLU DIGITAL

DIGITAL TRENDS 2021

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Digital Trends in 2021

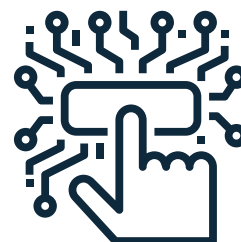
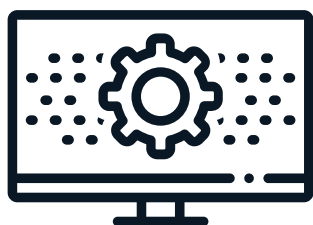
The digital landscape is constantly evolving and we're seeing new innovations changing the way we work as well as how we live our day-to-day lives. Businesses face the continuous challenge of being able to integrate these innovations and trends to provide solutions. The emergence of Artificial Intelligence has been a welcome and exciting one. Areas such as customer service has benefited greatly from such innovations, increasing engagement and results.

Among trends, voice search technology has become popular and convenient for consumers; the next challenge is implementing voice-automated solutions in strategy.

The new and innovative trends we're being graced with are making work more efficient and providing consumers with a more unique and convenient experience.

Due to current changes we're seeing in modern business, we are likely to see more businesses adopt a more 'digital' approach, and candidates will need to keep themselves up to date with the latest trends and equip themselves with the necessary skills.

There are a whole host of trends we expect to see in 2021. Trends such as Video Marketing and programmatic advertising are amongst the trends set to further evolve in 2021.



Digital Trends We Saw In 2020

2020 saw mass change in the way in which business conduct their activities and the digital trends that were predicted to make an impact in 2020, were called into play. Digital trends such as Personalisation, Machine Learning and Live Video have changed the face of digital marketing.

Personalisation

Digital and email marketing is evolving and personalisation was crucial heading into 2020. Personalisation is the practice of providing a customer experience which is well-aligned with the consumer's preferences and specific needs. Having a personalised homepage and content can increase sales greatly.

AI-Based Automation

2020 was considered 'the year of the robots'. AI technologies have been introduced in 2020 to assist business marketing efforts, providing fantastic customer experiences. AI is one of the major technologies behind Voice Search and smart assistants.

Customer Retention, Loyalty and Advocacy

For Ecommerce brands, returning customers are more valuable than new customers. Research has found that it costs five times as much to attract a new customer as it does to keep a new one. Loyal customers are likely to recommend and provide reviews when satisfied with a service, which increases the reputation and awareness of the brand. Personalisation is easy to apply with existing customers.

Live Video

Live video is very popular with consumers, and people spend three times longer watching live video than they do watching a pre-recorded video. Companies advertising their products find that a video makes it easier for consumers to engage and build trust with the brand. Live video's are more engaging and the audience feels they can participate in the occasion, whether that be in a webinar or through a social media feed.

Interactive Content Becoming Mainstream

Interactive content is anything that people can click on, swipe, or interact with online. This includes Augmented Reality advertisements, quizzes & polls and 360-degree videos. Technologies such as video content and Augmented Reality give the user a more engaging and memorable experience.

Omnichannel Marketing

Being able to connect with customers across various digital channels is vital; and that's what omnichannel marketing allows you to do. This can be done using platforms such as: social media, email marketing, websites and blog posts. Delivering a consistent voice and brand message across all channels, generates much better results and drive more engagement.

The digital trends that were predicted for 2020 did not disappoint. For some of the trends, they only scratched the surface in 2020, and we expect them to kick-on in 2021!

2020 was a year of change, for various reasons. This forced some businesses to adopt digital as part of their business strategy. The use of virtual communication became vital and as a result we saw an increase in the amount of virtual podcasts and events. Chatbots started to emerge in 2020 due to organisations and businesses being stretched and we expect to see chatbots feature across social media platforms and websites more regularly.

Changes in 2020 gave us a glimpse of what we could see in digital trends going into 2021. The future is unclear; however based on the trends that we've seen in 2020 and what we could see in 2021 - the future is exciting!

Digital Trends to Lookout For in 2021

Heading into 2021, we're set to be graced with even more innovative technology that will undoubtedly reshape the digital industry!

2020 was a tough year for many industries, having to get used to a different way of working, whilst providing the necessary service to consumers. 2020 did see the intro of a few digital marketing trends such as the use of chatbots, a rise in personalisation and the strong presence of video marketing.

The future of digital is exciting and intriguing for sure and we'll take a look at some of the trends we will lookout for heading in 2021!



Voice Search Elevation

Voice search is becoming more popular and the technologies available make it easy to use. Voice search can be conducted through various technologies including smart speakers, mobile phones, desktops and laptops.

Amongst the top voice search devices are:

- Google Home
- Amazon Echo/Alexa
- Google Assistant
- iPhone/Siri
- Android Devices
- Microsoft Cortana

According to Quoracreative, 40% of the adults now use mobile voice search at least once daily. 20% of the adults use mobile voice search at least once monthly. When it comes to keywords that are used most when using voice, 'how' is the most used word at a total of 8.64%.

Voice search is growing and businesses will be looking to stay one step ahead of their competitors by optimising voice search effectively. Studies show that by 2021, 70% of searches will be done with voice search.



Artificial Intelligence (AI) in Marketing

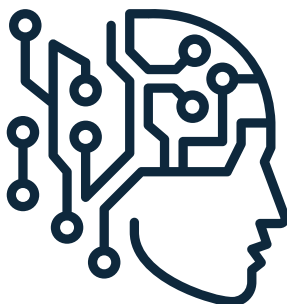
Artificial Intelligence is playing it's part in marketing; providing solutions in customer experiences. The trends that have been present and will likely evolve in 2021 include:

- Chatbots
- Predictive Analytics
- Enhanced Customization
- AI
- Driven customer support and Assistance

Not only businesses have benefitted from Artificial Intelligence, but also consumers in their day-to-day lives. Personal gadgets, media streaming gadgets, smart cars, and home appliances use artificial intelligence.

AI driven customer support is vital, especially across social media channels and instant messaging platforms. Humans being able to respond to every single customer query in a short amount of time won't be possible.

The unfortunate circumstances regarding jobs in 2020 due to the outbreak of Covid-19 has left many businesses searching for next steps. With the implementation of AI, businesses are able to carry out activities with limited staff, and AI also opens up opportunities for sectors such as healthcare and increases business productivity.



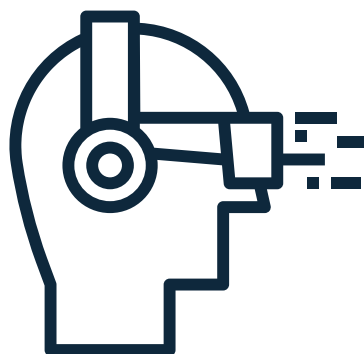
Virtual Reality and Augmented Reality Continuing To Play It's Part

Virtual and augmented reality is being looked at as one of the breakthroughs in marketing, technologies and communion strategies. According to UK Web Host Review, It is estimated that AR spending is estimated to hit \$60 billion in 2020 and It's estimated that 500 million VR headsets will be purchased by 2025.

AR and VR help to present a more realistic experience for the customer; an alternative for when they do not have time to visit the brands websites. Brands are investing in AR technologies in a bid to enhance the customer experience. Customers are able to now try on clothing and products whilst shopping online. The organic way of advertising products and services is still effective, however, unique experiences will be remembered by consumers who are likely to return.

According to futurist, virtual reality is set to become completely realistic by 2030, and most people will be spending a significant amount of their time in virtual spaces.

According to BOSS Magazine, virtual reality is set to help the healthcare industry and VR will be able to virtually transport the patient into a conflict situation so they are facing the exact thing they are so desperate to avoid.



Cybersecurity Securing More Importance

Cyber security isn't at the top of the list in terms of digital trends considered to be the most exciting; however, considering the Covid-19 pandemic the world has suffered during 2020, it has become even more relevant. Hackers and online fraudsters are finding new ways to commit online fraud, with numbers surging throughout the UK.

According to FintechNews, 80% of firms have seen an increase in cyberattacks and attacks were up 30% in Q1 2020 on UK businesses. 27% of attacks target banks or healthcare.

As most UK workers had to work from home during the pandemic, it is not guaranteed that all networks are secure. With remote work likely to be a flexible option for most companies going forward, it's vital that tighten their networks and upgrade their cybersecurity strategies, possibly expanding them to devices specifically for working from home.

As a result of the breaches, the official statistics from the Cyber Security Breaches Survey revealed that the majority of businesses (80%) and charities (74%) say that cyber security is a high priority for their senior management.

Businesses are becoming aware of the online threats and are beginning to take action.



Programmatic Advertising

Online advertising is a sector that is always evolving as brands find new and innovative ways to connect with consumers. As we continue to adjust and get used to the new realities of working, businesses are looking to quickly adapt and better serve customers.

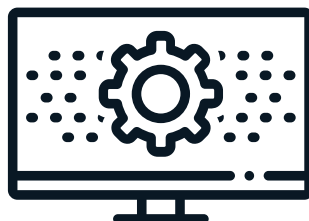
Some interesting advertising statistics:

- 70-80% of users ignore sponsored search results. (Search Engine Land)
- Videos are shared 1,200% more than text and links combined. (Forbes)
- 76% of marketers fail to use behavioural data for online ad targeting. (Adweek)
- Over 70% of YouTube watch time comes from viewers on mobile devices. (eMarketer)

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A programmatic advertising platform uses real-time data to identify the best online audience for the campaign, by taking into account things like: Gender, Age, Interests and location.

Going into 2021, 5G networks with outstanding data speeds will drive further growth of content streaming on mobile phones. This then gives brands opportunity to invest in short-form video adverts suited for mobile environments and on-the-go mobile audiences.



More Engagement on Messaging Channels

In 2021, we expect more companies will utilise the already popular messaging platforms to communicate with their customers. Having a dedicated app has its benefits, but there are also some disadvantages. Consumers find it easier to be able to reach out to companies via channels they already use.

Rather than having a separate application for each company on their phone, being able to reach out via Facebook, Twitter, Instagram or WhatsApp, may be easier. We expect more companies to start using these channels for customer service rather than focusing all of their attention on live chat within a dedicated consumer app.

Focus on social media apps isn't just a focus on providing customer care, consumers are now able to purchase items via various social media platforms. Before this, accessibility to Ecommerce websites via desktop, laptop and phone were endless. However, there is a rising switch towards social shopping. Instagram shop and Facebook shop, allows businesses to share featured products through your organic posts and Stories.

Recent research by Visa revealed that almost a quarter of all online purchases are now made through social media. This figure could rise in 2021.



Rise Of The Chatbots

Chatbots are an exciting digital trend heading into 2021. Although some brands are now adopting chatbots, mainly through social media channels, according to Linchpin, AI will be a major investment in customer experience for a few years. 47% of organisations will be expected to implement chatbots for customer support and 40% are expected to adopt virtual assistants.

Businesses will benefit greatly from implementing chatbots, bringing convenience to both business and consumer. If a business runs 24/7 and is available worldwide, having a system to see to customer needs at all times comes in handy. A chatbot can also handle the requests of thousands of customers at a time, saving a business money and resources. For those that complain about customer service, the good news is chatbots don't have mood swings! Although they will be programmed to pick up human qualities, they will always be nice to customers.

Some of the chatbot trends that look to reshape 2021 include: Voice Chatbots and AI assistants in the workplace.

Not only will chatbots help enhance customer experience, but it also looks set to play a pivotal role across internal business activity in 2021.

