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# Robots Will Soon Do Your Taxes

By: Megan Miller

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A quick search of recent headlines and blog posts suggests there is anxiety surrounding artificial intelligence (AI). One article shouts **“Robots will soon do your Taxes!”** And another reads **“Lawyers could be the next profession to be replaced by computers.”**

Those of us involved in technology marketing strategy and communications are struggling to understand what the true impact of AI will be on our respective companies and clients, and on the technology-based products and services they provide. Will new AI applications in legal research, contracts management or e-discovery fundamentally change the value proposition? How can we convince fearful legal workers that AI technology can enhance their roles, not eliminate them? How can marketers and communications teams effectively educate prospects and customers on the nature of AI?

Now here’s another headline to consider: **“Artificial Intelligence Could Change Marketing Forever.”**

That’s right. While AI is being integrated into legal and accounting technology solutions, it’s also emerging in marketing automation, social media and publishing tools as well. Double whammy! Those of us who market technology will face AI both in the products and services we market, as well as in the marketing discipline.

It can be tempting to ignore a “new, new, big, big thing” like artificial intelligence. It’s complex, abstract, a little scary, and besides, we are busy getting today’s campaigns, lists, news and placements together. Those of us in smaller organizations may want to believe that it’s a trend happening only on the scale of IBM and Watson – big companies and big money – and therefore it doesn’t apply to us.

It’s time to face reality: Small companies will feel the impact of the AI revolution. In fact, you may already be leveraging AI in your marketing efforts, and you may not even realize it. Following are some examples of platforms and applications that are leveraging AI for successful marketing, lead nurturing and sales.

## Suggestion Marketing

With AI, marketers can sift through large amounts of data to determine patterns and trends. For years we have used CRM tools, databases and queries to confirm hunches or to pull targeted lists. With AI, the manual data analysis is greatly reduced or eliminated. AI identifies patterns that identify target groups by areas of interest, allowing marketing teams to promote personalized solutions, products or programs to highly targeted audience segments. Well-known uses that come to mind here are Amazon’s “Recommendations for You” and “Customers who bought this item also bought ...” features. These are examples of data-driven suggestion marketing. Amazon tracks search, browser and shopping cart actions, as well as actual purchases by millions of shoppers. The site compares customer actions on the site and uses data patterns to make relevant recommendations to a visitor, based on his or her behavior and activity.

## Content Recommendation

Marketing professional services and technology rests on sharing high-quality content with prospective clients. Content recommendation engines help personalize the lead nurturing process, resulting in a natural progression of the user’s experience and offering increasingly useful content based on his or her browsing and download history. Marketing automation platforms like HubSpot and Marketo can



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accomplish the recommendation process within a site. Tools in this category use machine learning and predictive analytics to identify and tag available content on the website, to feed recommendations. For content-heavy sites, and those who seek to push topical content to publishing sites, recommendation engines provide targeting and management of content recommendations that you see on page borders of third party media and publication websites.

### **Google AdWords**

If you have used AdWords for digital ad campaigns, you may have pondered the process of keyword bidding and how to determine an optimal bid. Google recently integrated AI and machine learning technology to leverage information from millions of ad placements to help advertisers bid at a more informed level. The AI tool, called Smart Bidding, analyzes millions of data points and tailors bids to each auction across Google's properties. Smart Bidding uses machine learning to optimize your bids to maximize conversions and conversion value across your campaign or bidding portfolio. This allows ad buyers to factor in a wide range of parameters including device, location, time of day, remarketing lists, browser, language, and more. A telecom advertiser whose best leads come in via mobile, for instance, can set a higher target CPA for that platform compared with other devices.

### **LinkedIn Advertising**

LinkedIn has done an exceptional job of simplifying social media advertising, while retaining strengths in targeting by industry, title, geography and other attributes. Data marketing firm DataSift recently announced plans to join forces with LinkedIn to provide greater insights for B2B marketers.

The company, a provider of "human data intelligence," gives users various methods of increasing their engagement, from discovering new audiences for brands and products to benchmarking and learning which content works best with audiences. The technology processes LinkedIn's news feed and the engagement around it, including clicks, impressions, shares, likes and comments, and then uses AI to get a firmer grip on the text, including companies and products mentioned. The data will increase the value of ROI and performance reports from LinkedIn ads. Keep an eye on LinkedIn advertising for new features enabled by AI.

### **Chatbots**

About those tax returns ...

A commercial run during Super Bowl 2017 featured actress Kathy Bates, sitting in a dark creepy house full of zombie children. Bates used her cell phone to do a live chat with a support person at TurboTax. Her question? "There's a bunch of creepy kids in this house that I moved into. Can I claim them as dependents?" The digital tax expert answering her question appears to be a chatbot – an AI creation that uses AI and a data store of tax rules. A chatbot (short for **chat robot**) is a computer program that maintains a conversation with a user in natural language, understands the intent of the user and sends a response based on the business rules and data of the organization.

So there's no need to fear artificial intelligence. You have already experienced it on some level, and as with most emerging technologies, there will be time for us as consumers to adapt and thrive. As marketers, keeping on top of the changes in this amazing technology and selecting the right tools to support our marketing strategies will be the keys to success.

### *About the author*

Megan Miller is a senior consultant with Edge Marketing, assisting clients in development and execution of strategic marketing plans and implementation of marketing technologies. A global technology hound, Miller has built brands, trained teams and introduced successful products for global companies and startups. A certified eDiscovery expert, Miller has written on trends and topics in electronic discovery, consumer electronics and the Internet of Things – before it was even called the Internet of Things. Her work has appeared in Attorney at Law, US Tech, TechnoLawyer, ACEDS and other industry publications.



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