

Digital marketing disruption

By [Louise Marsland](#)

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"Content marketing is the biggest trend."

The latest trends in digital marketing are disrupting every industry. And true digital integration should be able to predict the future for your business as big data is analysed through predictive modelling.

How many industries are currently being disrupted by new technology? Think new start-ups like Uber and Airbnb and the global impact they have had on the taxi and leisure industries. What will self-drive cars do to transport in the future? And the impact of drone technologies are only now being tested across a range of industries. Regulators can't even keep up.

The disruption to every industry is coming - remember the dead industries like CD shops and film processing; and products like video machines and Walkman's; and brands like Blackberry which used to lead only a couple of years ago - now where are they? Your industry might be next and digital intelligence can predict where and when.

There are good reasons as to why certain digital marketing trends are trending right now and [Gartner](#) produced an interesting slide showing the key influencers.



5 Underlying digital marketing trends

- 1** 
Purchase funnel has been blown to bits
Customers have moved from a discrete linear purchase path to moving at their pace when and wherever they want to.
- 2** 
CRM is dead
It's the customer who manages the relationship.
- 3** 
The Rise of big data
Collect it intelligently to move customers along their path.
- 4** 
The Rise of big content
According to Gartner surveys, content is the most important thing marketers can do and yet they're unequipped to take it on from a skills and sourcing level.
- 5** 
The Experience Economy
Think less in terms of discrete steps for a standard campaign and instead think of every interaction over time as the experience.

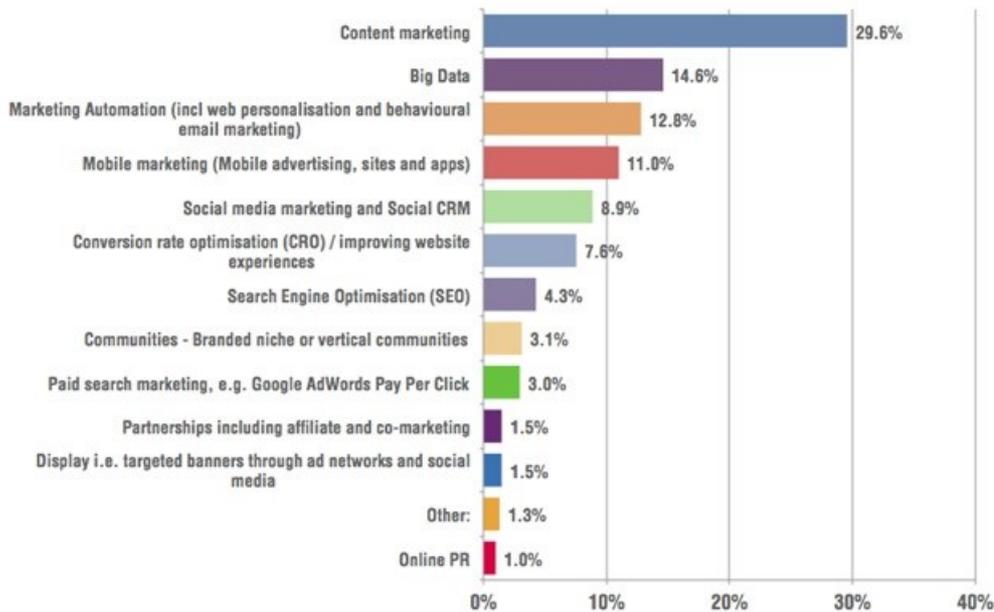
gartner.com/SmarterWithGartner

Source: Top Emerging Trends in Digital Marketing, Gartner Digital Marketing Conference
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SmartInsights.com in its [State of Digital Marketing in 2015](#) report with trends sourced from digital marketers around the globe, produced a handy graphic showing the biggest trends that marketers were focussing on in 2015. Content marketing is the biggest trend by far, followed by big data, marketing automation and mobile marketing.

Most commercially important Digital Marketing Trend for 2015?



Digital marketing trends were sourced from: [Forbes](#); [Huffington Post](#); [SmartInsights.com](#); [JeffBullas.com](#); [TopRankBlog](#); [Gartner](#).

The trends

1. Mobile-first: It is predicted that we will reach smartphone penetration of 50% in South Africa this year and 70% 3G penetration across Africa. Both Fred Roed, World Wide Creative CEO and Prakash Patel, chief strategy officer of Fogg Experiential Design, peg a mobile-first strategy as the most important trend. Mobile-first will replace 'mobile-friendly'.

2. Content marketing: Content marketing continues to dominate with content curation and distribution tools being added to the mix. There is a definite gap in the market for more curation and distribution tools.

3. Content creators: Journalists and editors have never been more in demand as good content creation and content marketing become mission critical in digital marketing as another opportunity for brands to connect with their customers through authentic storytelling.

4. Social conversion: We all know about the power and influence of social media, but discussions are now happening around the importance of social conversion for ecommerce and lead generation sites where social can improve conversion rates and gain new conversion channels.

5. Big data: Real big data is the kind of complex data set that can predict the future, be it weather patterns or societal trends. Most marketers don't really understand the term big data and how to extract the digital intelligence needed from it. However, there are many tools to harness 'small data' to get started in getting to know your customers better and their buying patterns. True digital integration is needed in an organisation for data analytics to be effective for any organisation.

6. Authenticity: "Brands that succeed at being human will win". So predicts the Huffington Post and brands that want to be liked and trusted by consumers will have to work hard at building personal relationships and "humanising" their marketing experience, putting building connections ahead of sales and focussing on building community and providing "amazing content".

7. Wearables, augmented and virtual reality: Apple Watch apps, the relaunch of Google Glass and Oculus Rift augmented reality applications are being tested by innovative marketers. This industry segment will only increase as fashion is a key partner and mobile, electronics and tech companies see valuable brand extensions and new product opportunities to connect us to the Internet of Things, like our homes, cars, offices, the fashion we wear and our appliances.

8. Visual media: Images, photos, embedded video and streaming video through apps like Meerkat and Periscope is amplifying the social, marketing and media environment significantly. According to [Jeff Bullas](#), there is an increase of 59% engagement when a tweet includes an image.

9. Email is still alive and kicking: The death of email has been predicted for years since social media and chat apps became part of our connected worlds. What will happen is that email marketing is becoming smarter and content more valuable, so smart marketers will capitalise on this, giving true value back to subscribers through ebooks, white papers and other value offerings to loyal customers.

10. Programmatic media buying: While seemingly complicated and a disrupter to the media industry, programmatic is following on from the growing trend towards marketing automation. Programmatic media is made up of an array of technologies that automate the buying, placement and optimisation of media inventory, limiting face-to-face human contact when it comes to sales. It can spell better deals and a better control of media inventory and measurement for marketers.

ABOUT LOUISE MARSLAND

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