



The Web Talent 2018 Digital Marketing Predictions

Think about 2017 as it relates to the discipline of marketing. Reflect on the sheer volume of change that happened this year relative to strategy, tactics, and technology. According to reports, Google made over 200 changes to their Search Algorithm in 2017 alone, AI matured, VR failed to get started, Snapchat gained users while failing to build a monetization strategy, Twitter got a ton of buzz but fails to showcase sustainable monetization, Amazon gobbles up more of everything, Adwords received a new coat of paint, brands are buying media companies, media companies are consolidating, and many others.

Around this time each year, marketing professionals from all over the industry sit down and discuss what they see is coming in the next year, as it relates to Traditional Marketing, Digital Marketing, Tech, and Brand strategy. With these predictions typically come a great deal of swings and misses. This isn't due to fai-

led methodology, poor training, or misdirection; but typically relates to two things:

Thinking too tactically: Marketers are focused on today, enamored with what they are working within everyday, which causes many to have lizard brain. They think about the platforms of which they operate and constitute small modifications within that platform as a trend.

Aspirational Thinking: Recovering from a constant state of whiplash due to the speed of Digital, many marketers want to cast a wide net into the future, being the one to predict the next big thing, platform, or discipline. However, consumer adoption tends to be significantly slower than marketer's aspirations. The reality is over 80% of purchases still happen in a store, a vast majority of people still have a cable subscription, and less than 10% of US eCom-merce purchases happen on a smartphone.



Around this time each year, marketing professionals from all over the industry sit down and discuss what they see is coming in the next year.

At Web Talent, we take a different approach to trends and predictions. While we are continuous students of the industry, we tend to look at future platforms, tactics, trends as an opportunity to reach our client's consumers in a more efficient, effective, and serendipitous manner. A trend is only a viable trend in our eyes if we are able to relate this trend back to an opportunity to help our clients execute their organizational goal.

For example, every year for the past 8 years has been the 'year of mobile,' but our team remained focused on how consumers seek, parse, and collect information on products, brands, services, and everyday questions. For some of our clients, over 75% of their traffic still comes from desktop, making an immediate move to mobile quite a cavalier move. Their mindset continued to focus on desktop first and mobile as a secondary discovery vehicle. Other clients, we looked at how a smaller screen, one primarily utilized while on the go with a connection significantly slower than data speeds at home, would impact their relationship with brands.

While we historically shared our predictions, trends, and insights on what we feel will happen in the next year internally and with our clients, this year, we are starting the inaugural *Fluff Free* Web Talent Digital Marketing Predictions. In true Web Talent fashion, we are not following the traditional mold and are adding 2 additional touch points throughout the year, to grade the performance on our predictions. Our predictions are organized into overall subject matters, to help you follow along easier.



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Amazon

PREDICTION:

Amazon will enter video in a big way; especially for user reviews

By: **Luke Detweiler**, Paid Search Specialist

Amid the holiday rush, Amazon has invited 2 million of its merchant partners to implement 30 second videos on their pages; both intended to be instructional and promotional. These videos launched mid December and while this feature may already be available on the bottom of a product page, this new video feature is meant to keep users on Amazon longer, thus avoiding the need to watch a product review on YouTube or Social Media.

This 'digital toe in the water' may spearhead a deeper video initiative from Amazon in the coming year, causing marketers to think of how else they might utilize video on Amazon. One of the ways that

Amazon may utilize video in is User Generated video reviews. They already rely on the concept of user generated videos (much with visual components already), why not allow people to upload their own videos? This particular activity is prevalent on YouTube already, and Amazon provides users an easy way to separate helpful and useful videos from the irrelevant and unuseful ones. Therefore, it is possible that in order to keep people on their site, they will continue to bring user-generated content into the brand-sponsored content. Amazon also owns two of the largest video platforms on the internet, Twitch and Amazon Prime Video, so their existing video experience is plentiful.

This new video feature is meant to keep users on Amazon longer, thus avoiding the need to watch a product review on YouTube or Social Media.



PREDICTION:

Amazon will become 3rd largest digital advertising platform, behind Google and Facebook

By: **Justin Emig**, Vice President of Marketing and Innovation

Talks of the duopoly dominated 2017. Latest stats from Emarketer show Google and Facebook account for 63% of all Digital Advertising revenue in the US and their combined revenue grows more than 20% each year, swallowing a larger share of the pie each quarter. The same report from Emarketer shows Amazon accounts for just over 5% of Digital Advertising Revenue in the US during 2017. Emarketer forecasts predict Amazon to account for 9% in 2019. I see this happening at a much more volatile rate, with the reason being exclusively related to the eCommerce stranglehold that Amazon has over the Digital landscape.

According to data from Adobe Digital Index, Amazon earned 45% of Black Friday eCommerce transactions and since roughly 50% of consumers start their product search on Amazon, marketers will finally realize the potential of Amazon Advertising solutions. Since Amazon Advertising solutions offer a self-service platform with features similar to Adwords, Digital Marketing professionals will realize the benefit that Amazon Advertising can offer in terms of providing another revenue vehicle.

Early adopters are catching on as according to a report after Amazon's Q3, revenue from the sector of their business with Advertising included, grew 53% year-over-year, earning the best quarter in the history of the sector at just over \$1 billion. This quietly makes Amazon Advertising solutions larger than that of Snap Inc. and Twitter, yet most are focused on the Social platform's monetization efforts. Several analysts predict Amazon's ad business to reach \$5 billion next year and \$7 billion in 2019. This would quickly catapult the eCommerce giant into the number 3 position as quickly as next year, as Bing is predicted to earn over \$4 billion in 2017.

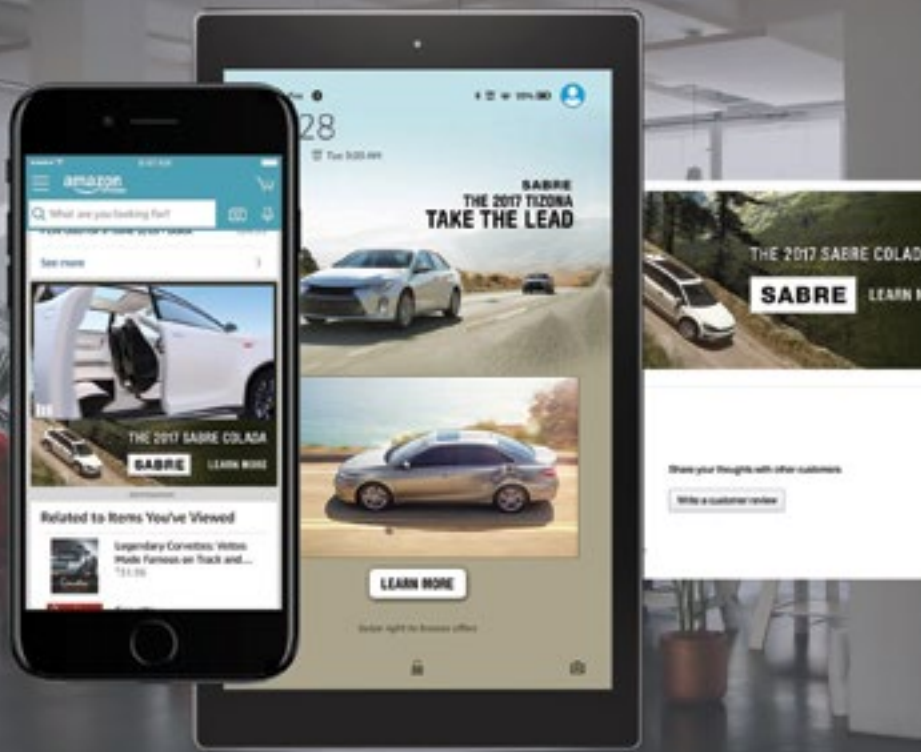
Twitch and Amazon Prime Video, so their existing video experience is plentiful.

Nondupoly* US Digital Ad Revenue Share, by Company, 2013-2019

% of total

	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Microsoft	11.4%	8.2%	8.9%	11.2%	11.8%	12.0%	11.8%
Oath	4.8%	4.6%	4.5%	4.2%	11.8%	11.5%	11.0%
Amazon	2.7%	2.6%	2.6%	3.7%	5.4%	7.3%	9.3%
Twitter	1.9%	3.3%	4.7%	4.6%	4.0%	3.6%	3.4%
Yelp	0.9%	1.4%	1.7%	2.1%	2.4%	2.6%	2.9%
Snapchat	-	-	0.2%	1.0%	2.1%	3.7%	6.0%
IAC	3.6%	3.3%	2.6%	1.7%	1.5%	1.3%	1.1%
Yahoo	11.1%	10.2%	9.3%	7.5%	-	-	-
Other	62.1%	64.5%	63.3%	64.0%	61.2%	58.1%	54.5%

Note: net ad revenues after companies pay traffic acquisition costs (TAC) to partner sites; includes display (banners, rich media, video and other), search and messaging-based advertising includes ad spending on tablets; numbers may not add up to 100% due to rounding; *Companies other than Facebook and Google. Source: eMarketer, Sep 2017



Since Amazon includes their Prime Video platform with a Prime membership, it seems only logical Amazon would utilize video as a means to further monetize this platform through ad support.

PREDICTION:

Amazon will announce video ads on prime; for select advertiser categories

By: **Justin Emig**, Vice President of Marketing and Innovation

It is no surprise that Amazon is making a push into Video. Luke covered it in his prediction and since Amazon spent \$4.5 billion on original content for their Prime platform in 2017, Amazon has the expertise, ambition, and platform to further its advances into Video in 2018. This isn't even including Twitch.tv, which is a mature product that earns over \$1.5 billion in revenue each year.

While Netflix has been adamant about their resistance to advertising within the platform, Amazon hasn't been public with its intentions. The growth of Amazon Prime Video, coupled with the growth

of Amazon's Advertising platform, I feel that Amazon will take a play from Google's YouTube playbook and introduce video ads onto the Prime platform in 2018.

While I think the full rollout of these ads will happen after 2018, I think a select group of advertiser categories will be introduced to this platform in 2018. Since Amazon includes their Prime Video platform with a Prime membership, it seems only logical Amazon would utilize video as a means to further monetize this platform through ad support.

PREDICTION:

Amazon will use paid ads to give users discounts

By: **Luke Detweiler**, Paid Search Specialist

In October of 2017, an interesting patent showed up at the patent office from Amazon. The patent was titled: "content-based price reductions and incentives." While the ingenuity of this patent may be questionable, it is very possible that we will see a feature that will incentivize interaction with advertising; along the lines of "watch this ad and get \$X discount." History shows Amazon has already utilized 'loss leader' tactics, coupled with the millennial consumers' interest in discounts, opens up a possibility of another way for Amazon to break MAP pricing for competitive offerings. 2018 could be the year for this, as consumers continue to have a strong interest in discounting and coupons.



With reports of brand affinity declining, Amazon is taking advantage of their product search share to earn a higher percentage of purchase.

PREDICTION:

Amazon will continue to build their private label brands, to the tune of 25% more brands

By: **Justin Emig**, Vice President of Marketing and Innovation

While we are talking about easier ways for product marketers to sell product on Amazon, we would be remiss if we didn't discuss Amazon's growing Private Label business as a potential threat. Research firm L2 reports Amazon has over 41 Private Label brands, ranging in categories from food, apparel, shoes, batteries, baby products, kitchen, hardware,

furniture, electronics, and more. Recently, Amazon announced they are creating a line of Activewear products under 3 different brands, targeting the likes of Under Armour, Nike, Adidas and more.

29 of their 41 Private Label brands are within Fashion, so expanding past Fashion appears to be a useful exercise in 2018. With this being said, a trend for 2018 will be further expansion, and with the acquisition of Whole Foods, maturing their private label business within the Food and Beverage category seems like a logical fit. With reports of brand affinity declining, Amazon is taking advantage of their product search share to earn a higher percentage of purchase.

Did you know 94% of all batteries sold on Amazon are their AmazonBasics brand? Yea... they are focused on Private Label and eating everyone else in their way.

Technology

PREDICTION:

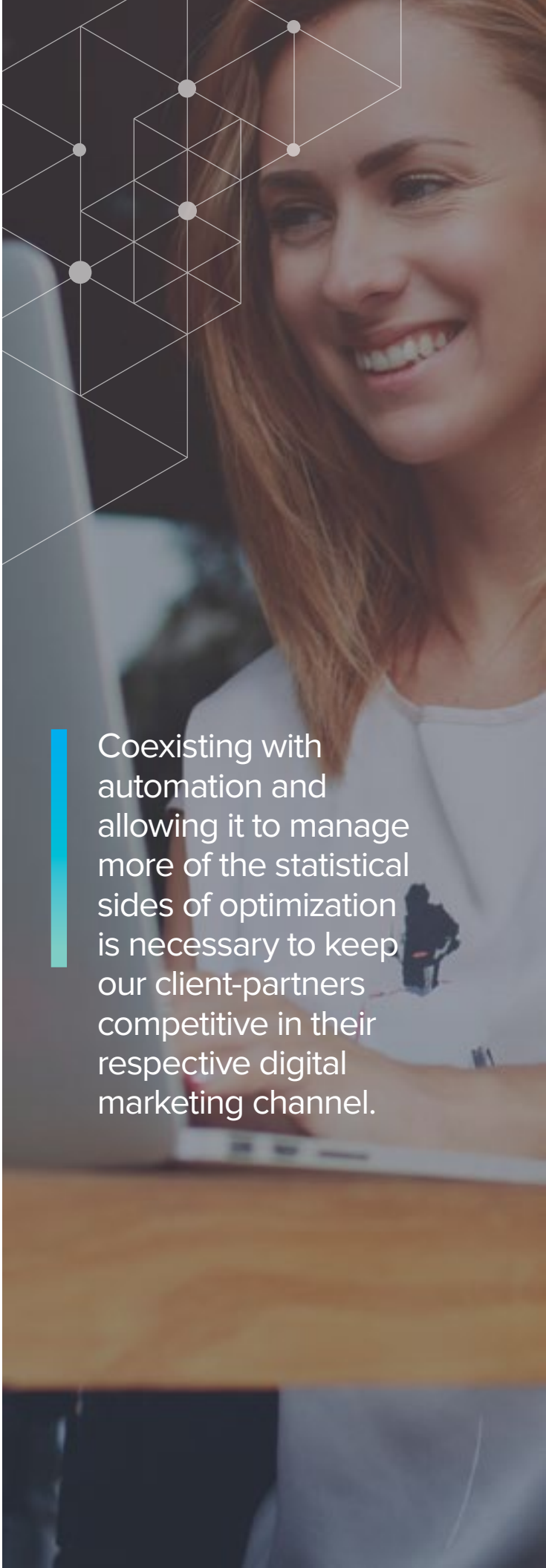
Automation and Machine Learning as a Compliment to Human Touch

By: **Matt Burkarth**, Paid Advertising Manager

We're progressing into a world where artificial intelligence and automation (coupled with the use of machine learning) are becoming increasingly effective at specific tasks. As digital marketers, it is our duty to find areas where automation/machine learning is warranted, and where it underperforms. Coexisting with automation and allowing it to manage more of the statistical sides of optimization is necessary to keep our client-partners competitive in their respective digital marketing channel.

- This doesn't mean automation will be a replacement for the human touch. There will always be areas where human judgement is paramount, and where AI should not be overvalued:
- Campaign strategies
- Campaign builds
- Understanding the nuances of client-partner goals
- Performance analysis

Marketing professionals need to successfully utilize automation/AI and machine learning to augment their abilities, without relying on these technologies to drive strategic decisions. Digital Marketing especially relies on consumer intent, intentional nuance, and methodologies reserved for the human touch in order to be effective and reach organizational goals.



Coexisting with automation and allowing it to manage more of the statistical sides of optimization is necessary to keep our client-partners competitive in their respective digital marketing channel.

PREDICTION:

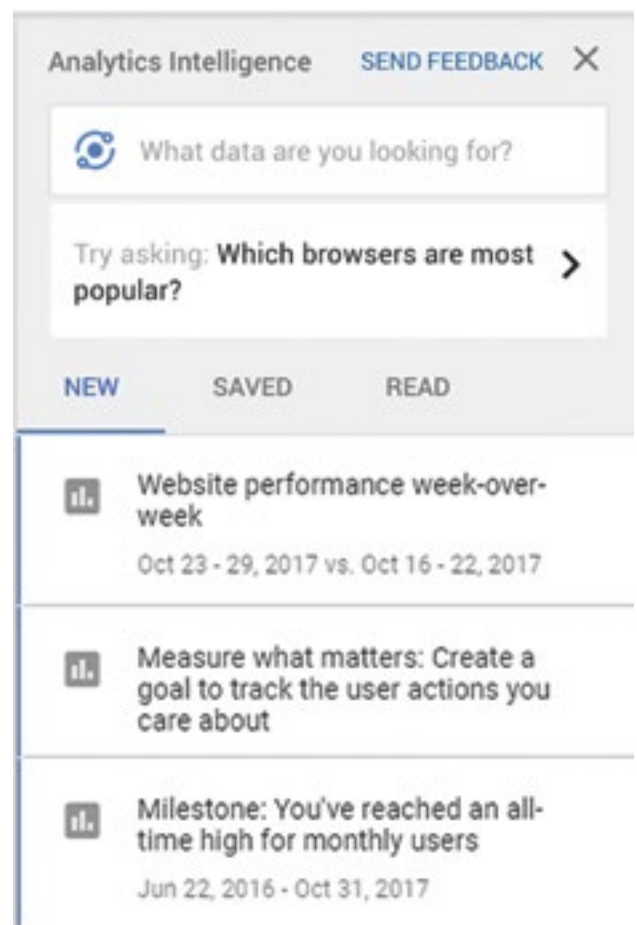
AI will fundamentally change the way we measure digital performance

By: **Justin Emig**, Vice President of Marketing and Innovation

Machine learning and AI have been around for years and are quickly making their way into our everyday lives. Google and Facebook have both admitted to relying heavily on AI and machine learning, utilizing the technology in their algorithms. Other platforms such as Netflix and Amazon have also shared similar use cases within their algorithms. In 2017, Google brought AI to its free analytics platform, Google Analytics. While most marketers might have not noticed this addition, Google added a featured called 'Analytics Intelligence' into the platform in 2017. The featured can be accessed in the upper right hand corner of your reports (illustrated here).

I feel this is Google's entry into implementing machine learning and AI within the Google Analytics platform, allowing marketers to make smarter decisions about their performance. While the current functionality is uneventful, if Google incorporates their search behavior and consumer data into the platform to forecast demand and proactively recommend areas of concern, this could bring the power of big data to the lehman. This data availability will change the way non-data junkies look at digital performance.

This example just discusses Google Analytics, but with machine learning and AI becoming more user-friendly and WYSIWYG, this opens up the opportunity for more to utilize the technology to improve their data sets. Combine this functionality with API integration and a wider data set, and you have the ability to forecast demand at a relatively accurate rate.



The screenshot shows the 'Analytics Intelligence' section of a Google Analytics report. At the top, it says 'Analytics Intelligence' with a 'SEND FEEDBACK' link and a close icon. Below this is a search bar with the text 'What data are you looking for?'. Underneath the search bar, there is a suggestion: 'Try asking: Which browsers are most popular?' with a right-pointing arrow. Below the suggestion are three tabs: 'NEW', 'SAVED', and 'READ'. The 'NEW' tab is selected. Under the 'NEW' tab, there are three items listed:

- Website performance week-over-week**
Oct 23 - 29, 2017 vs. Oct 16 - 22, 2017
- Measure what matters: Create a goal to track the user actions you care about**
- Milestone: You've reached an all-time high for monthly users**
Jun 22, 2016 - Oct 31, 2017

PREDICTION:

Companies will allocate more budget to keep their site current

By: Mike Canarelli, CEO

Just as retailers have a budget to maintain, improve, and augment their retail presence, organizations will increasingly allocate a budget for continuous improvement and maintenance of their websites. The days of setting and forgetting their web presence are long gone and with evolving consumer shopping habits, cross-device behavior, and added privacy regulations, organizations will begin to treat their website the same as a retail storefront. This heightened focus and budget includes improvements such as aesthetics, functionality, security, usability and traffic flow.



2018 is the year that online retailers take time to think deeply about whether cryptocurrency is in their short term and long-term plans.

PREDICTION:

Cryptocurrency's role in eCommerce Behavior

By: Mike Canarelli, CEO

Q4 2017 brought incredible volatility of cryptocurrency, as Bitcoin created billionaires overnight with almost no end in sight. This causes online retailers to think about what cryptocurrency represents as it relates to consumer adoption and behavior. Should retailers accept cryptocurrency as a method of payment? With GDPR and privacy regulations at online retailer's doorstep, what role does a seemingly anonymous payment method have on eCommerce behavior? The lack of regulation

and taxation leaves room for continued volatility and unknown. The lack of privacy might have an impact on whether stores accept this method of payment without some sort of financial backing. 2018 is the year that online retailers take time to think deeply about whether cryptocurrency is in their short term and long-term plans.

The Role of Voice

PREDICTION:

Voice's Role with Localized Searches



By: **Ashley Rabuck**, Client Relations Manager

My 2018 Digital Marketing Prediction is that our conversations with clients will change from being focused on how to optimize for online search, to discussing how to optimize for voice search. I specifically feel this will be an essential part of our SEO and SEM strategies for local clientele.

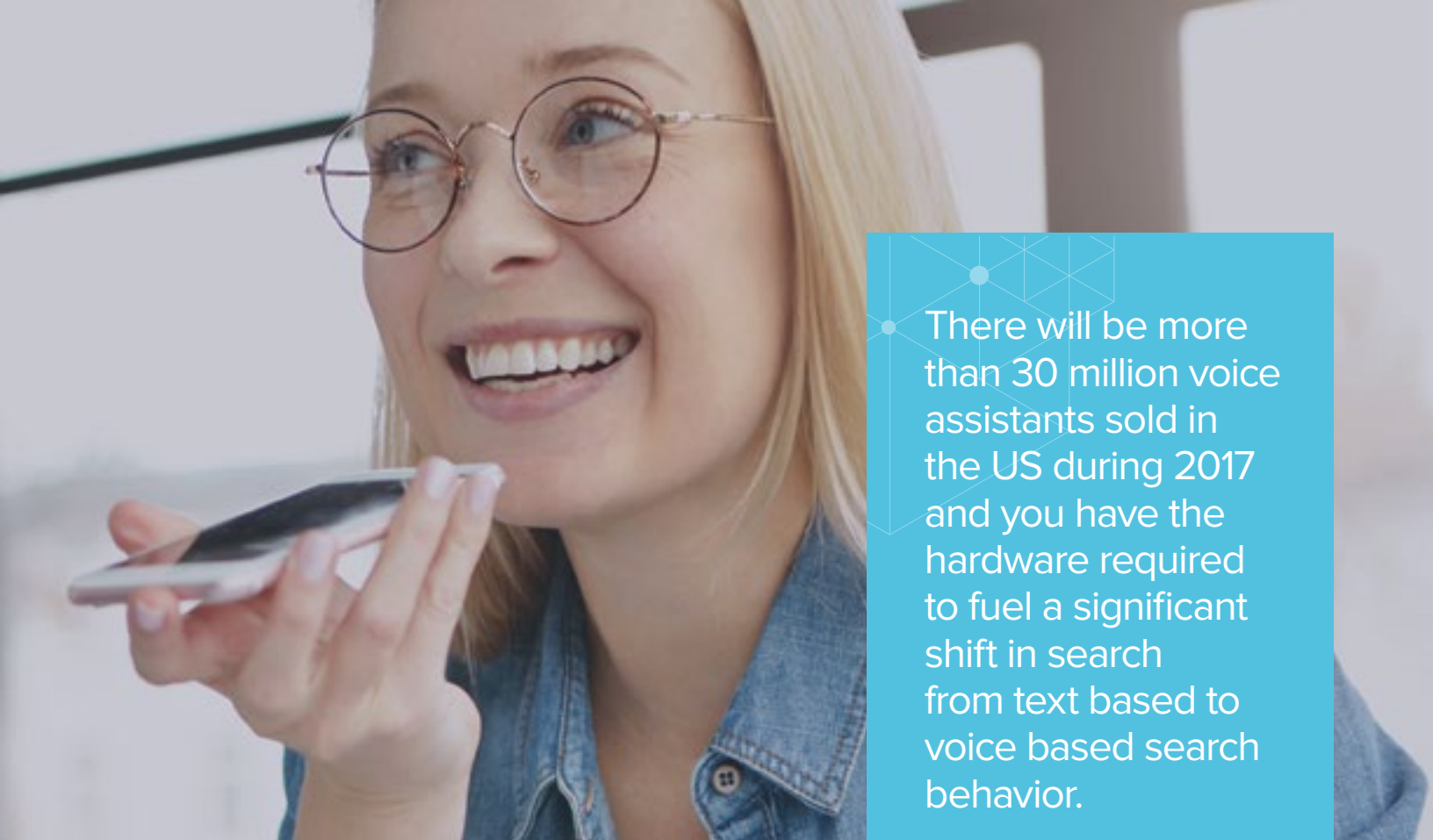
With voice assists becoming more prominent in everyday life, we need to make sure we are thinking about what questions consumers could be questioning their new tech device by starting with either a Hey Siri, Okay Google, or Hey Alexa.

Many of the SEO practices that we are using today, will continue into 2018 as the main idea behind voice search is keeping the answers conversational. In 2017, we further matured our SEO methodology to focus more on long tail keywords instead of general, high-volume, one-word queries. I imagine this will continue to be essential to our SEO strategy and will become more influential for SEM's optimization plans in 2018.

While there aren't analytical reports specific to voice search today, there are ways that we could analyze and infer the existing data to optimize SEM campaigns for voice search. For example, one of the most common reasons consumers use their voice assist programs is for Directions. Instead of saying, "Hey Siri, Domino's directions near me" like we type into the search engine; we would say, "Hey Siri, Where is the closest Dominos?" This shift in consumer language is why I feel voice will be key for local clients and putting even more importance on their business information; keeping that information easily accessible for search and voice to recognize independently.



With voice assists becoming more prominent in everyday life, we need to make sure we are thinking about what questions consumers could be questioning their new tech device.



There will be more than 30 million voice assistants sold in the US during 2017 and you have the hardware required to fuel a significant shift in search from text based to voice based search behavior.

PREDICTION:

Voice search will account for over 40% of total search traffic on mobile.

By: Justin Emig, Vice President of Marketing and Innovation

ComScore predicts that Voice will account for over 50% of searches by 2020. According to Google data, 20% of searches today are done via voice, with over 40% of consumers stating they first started to use voice commands for search, within the last 6 months. Thinking of the volume of searches that Google sees everyday, this volatile adoption schedule is only going to fuel increased adoption. When voice search made its introduction into the market, it was clunky, cumbersome, and often wrong. As Sr. Paid Adver-

tising Specialist, Bill Hartz shared with me, machine learning, AI, and increased data sets has fueled voice assistants to be able to determine the differences between people, as well as the differences between conversations and music. Add in the fact that reports state there will be more than 30 million voice assistants sold in the US during 2017 and you have the hardware required to fuel a significant shift in search from text based to voice based search behavior.

Mobile

PREDICTION:

Mobile will account for over 45% of e-commerce transactions

By: Justin Emig, Vice President of Marketing and Innovation

What a difference 7 years makes. According to Statistica, mobile accounted for just 1% of eCommerce transactions in 2010. Fast forward to 2015, the year many people state mobile 'arrived' and mobile accounted for 16% of eCommerce transactions. Move to 2016 and that number increases to 21%. According to Adobe Digital Index research, 33% of holiday eCommerce transactions are happening from a mobile device, up 12% vs. prior year. While Statistica also predicts mobile will account for 39.6% of total eCommerce transactions in 2018, I feel the percentage will increase past the forecast, as mobile payment gateways, faster checkout processes, and consumer adoption all reach an all time high. Not to mention the continued growth of Amazon, Walmart, and even Google's mobile first purchase mindset are hastening consumer adoption.

33% of holiday eCommerce transactions are happening from a mobile device, up 12% vs. prior year. While Statistica also predicts mobile will account for 39.6% of total eCommerce transactions in 2018.

Social Media

PREDICTION:

Organic Social becomes more of a trust signal and recruitment tool, rather than a lead gen or sales tool

By: Mike Canarelli, CEO

Organic social continues to plummet in reach, making the medium as a sales vehicle almost nominal. Organizations are increasingly abandoning their use of Organic Social and this may have a negative impact on the brand, as consumers who may not be within the targeting window for your Paid Social efforts, may visit your social profile to get an idea of your organization culture. What could be a tremendously detrimental exercise is if the consumer or candidate finds the most recent posts dating back several years ago. Organic Social is becoming an expectation play. Organic Social is a window into your organization and culture and this medium allows you to showcase the human side of your organization vs. the sales generating, direct response side that you portray on your Paid Social efforts.



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PREDICTION:

Snap, Inc. rolls out a self-service ads platform, bought non-programmatically

By: Justin Emig, Vice President of Marketing and Innovation

Snap's monetization struggles are well documented and 2017 provided no change to that rhetoric. The stock valuation reached an all-time low in 2017 and the quest for sustainable monetization has never been more important to the boardroom. While marketers are able to create custom filters through a self-service platform, the ability to buy sponsored lens, and other mass reach options are

only available to premium advertisers. However, true growth of the platform will come from empowering the small and medium size organizations through a self-service platform. Snap will introduce this in 2018, however, their cloak reporting will cause the platform to sputter; continuing their monetization struggles.

Retail

PREDICTION:

Considerably more retail store closures

By: Justin Emig and Mike Canarelli

2017 was a tough year for retail. Reports state over 5,000 retail stores closed in 2017, of which many were from prominent retailers. Even the likes of Walmart and Target are slowing down their new store growth. During their 2017 Holiday Reports, Adobe Digital Index reported 2% decline in foot traffic on Black Friday 2017, with growth moving to eCommerce. Growth in eCommerce, declines in retail foot traffic coming on the biggest day in Retail spells bad news for traditional retail.

However, it isn't all gloom and doom for retail as a number of organizations are expanding their retail footprint. However, many of those organizations are rooted in eCommerce, choosing to expand their business into Retail, such as Warby Parker, Bonobos, etc.

Reports from Clark announce over 1,000 retail stores are set to close in 2018, including Bon-Ton, Macy, K-Mart/Sears, Michael Kors, J. Crew, every Teavana store (owned by Starbucks), and more. We see this continuing in 2018, as retailers struggle to keep up with consumer's interest in omnichannel, as well as the commoditization of eCommerce.



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PREDICTION:

Brands and manufacturers will increasingly start eCommerce and then move to Retail

By: Justin Emig and Mike Canarelli

As we highlighted in the previous prediction, organizations are seen starting online and then expanding into a retail footprint. But not all organizations are creating a retail store for the traditional use case. Several organizations are creating retail stores to act as showrooms for their products. Amazon is creating bookstores with select inventory, Warby Parker created retail stores where users try on products, Bonobos created stores to help pair consumers with stylists, as well as try on clothing. This isn't necessarily the retail expansion we see from brands and manufacturers.

We see organizations adopting an eCommerce first mentality, choosing to launch and sell their product on the online marketplaces vs. earning shelf space in retail. With retail closures continuing in 2018, organizations will look to prove concept online, offering a much wider product set, to earn evangelists, then take their flagship items to select retailers. This gives much of the control back to the brands, allowing them to preserve maximum margin. This also allows them to diversify their revenue streams, thus providing a sustainable growth strategy, free of seismic peaks and valleys often associated with retail distribution.

The barrier to entry has never been lower, so organizations with a wider product set, or even a unique product attempting to prove concept, may look to eCommerce to launch their brand first. An example is the direct to consumer mattress category, as Casper, Purple, and countless other brands launched online and are now seeing entries into select retailers.



With retail closures continuing in 2018, organizations will look to prove concept online, offering a much wider product set, to earn evangelists, then take their flagship items to select retailers.

New episodes

Most watched

Recordings

Shows

Movies

Sports



Monday Night Football



The Voice



This Is Us



College Football

This opens up an opportunity for Google to add another arrow to Digital Marketer's quivers, this time in a passive, non-direct response vertical such as television.

Digital Advertising

PREDICTION:

Google announces plan for advertisers to buy TV ads through YouTube TV platform

By: **Justin Emig**, Vice President of Marketing and Innovation

In April 2017, Google announced that marketers are able to purchase traditional TV advertisements programmatically through DoubleClick Bid Manager. This was done via partnerships with several outlets, including Google's own Fiber product. With YouTube showcasing significant growth with regards to digital ad revenue (despite the brand safety issues of 2017), this opens up an opportunity for Google to add another arrow to Digital Marketer's quivers, this time in a passive, non-direct response vertical such as television.

Enter YouTube TV, which has expanded quickly since its inception in April 2017. What started in 6 markets has expanded to over 34 markets and Google is actively looking to expand further. While I do not feel marketers will be able to purchase ads on YouTube TV within the calendar year 2018, I believe that Google will announce (or rumor) plans to add this feature to its already robust Adwords platform, or even through DoubleClick Bid Manager.

PREDICTION:

Local inventory ads pave the way for Retail and eCommerce purchases from local businesses

By: **Justin Emig**, Vice President of Marketing and Innovation

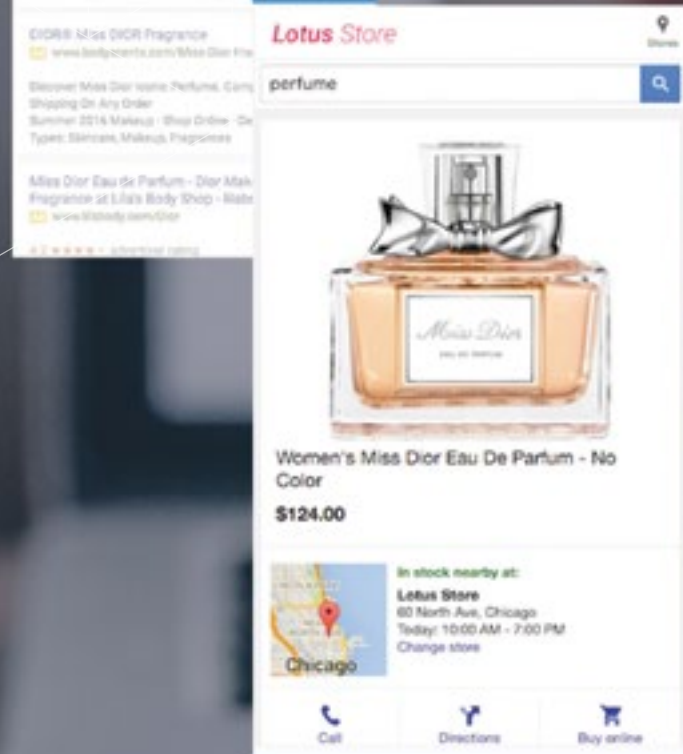
2017 surely brought a significant amount of changes to Search Advertising, both within the Adwords platform, as well as the offerings of both Google and Bing's search products. One of those innovations was Local Inventory Ads, which provide marketers the ability to upload a store feed within Google Merchant Center and serve ads for products available in a store local to consumers who are searching for those products.

These powerful ads allow marketers to provide omnichannel solutions for organizations with both an online and retail presence. Generally, the organizations that benefited the most for this were larger big box organizations, with a proper feed, and eCommerce expertise.

Another innovation in 2017 was the inception of Google Express. This initiative partners Google's powerful search platform with retailers, such as Walmart, to allow users to make purchases directly from the search engine results page, without actually visiting the retailer. Again, the winner here happens to be larger organizations.

However, I predict that Google is using these initial connections and campaigns with larger organizations as tests, to prepare the platform to help bring smaller and medium size organizations to Google, the same way that Amazon provides a venue for organizations of all sizes.

Google Express, in my opinion, will be the marketplace in which consumers purchase from, with brands building store pages, reminiscent of microsites. Google provides the payment gateway, the consumer purchases with one click, and brands are paid by Google, similar to a eBay/Paypal interaction. This initiative takes Amazon's mindset of providing a place for retailers of all sizes to sell and brings it to a local level, something Google does better than anyone else, to provide eCommerce and retail transactions to the largest subset of organizations.



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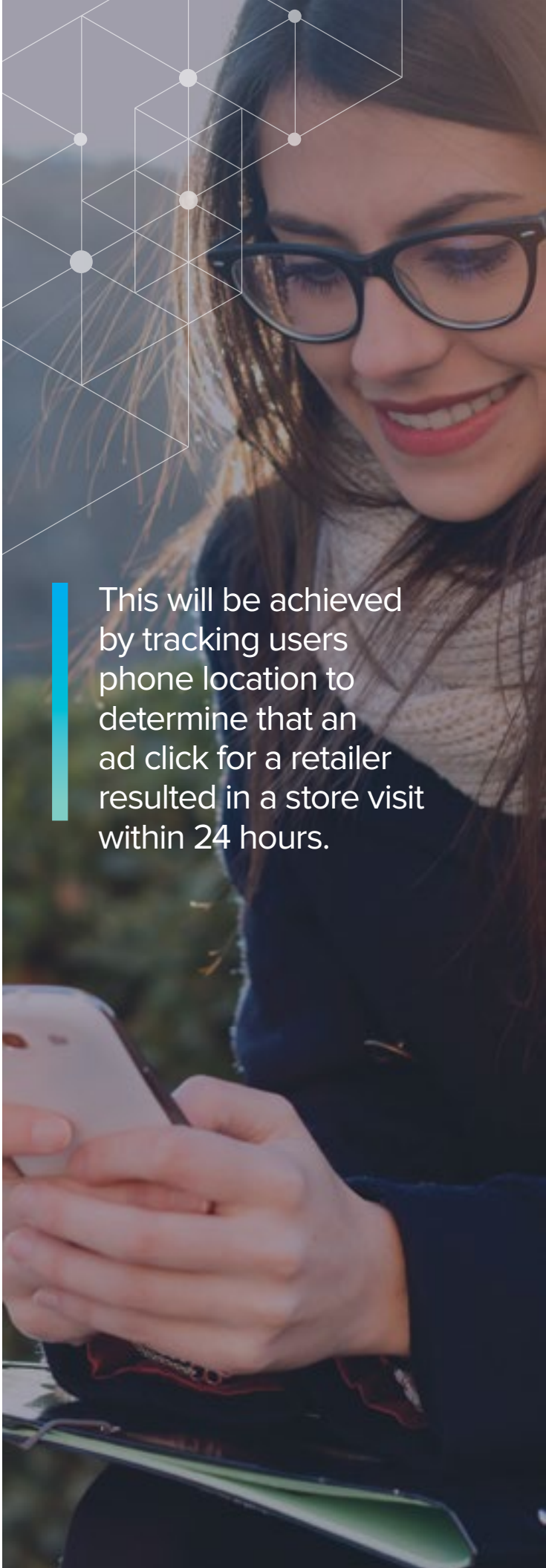
PREDICTION:

In store visit conversions will be available to all advertisers with a Google My Business account, and included in cross-device conversions

By: Bill Hartz, Sr. Paid Marketing Specialist

In today's "I want/need it now" world, a percentage of users are searching for products online, then immediately seeking them out in stores. For ecommerce retailers, this means that advertisers miss out on that in-store conversion value, bringing down overall ROI, despite the fact that the click did result in a sale. Coming soon, possibly in 2018, we think we will see "in-store visit" appear as a conversion type in Adwords. This will allow advertisers to associate a cost with actual store visits that their ad might have affected.

This will be achieved by tracking users phone location to determine that an ad click for a retailer resulted in a store visit within 24 hours. For example, a click on an ad for a home water filter might not result in an online sale, but could result in a visit to the home improvement store for a purchase of a water filter. In 2018, advertisers could start connecting those to actions.



This will be achieved by tracking users phone location to determine that an ad click for a retailer resulted in a store visit within 24 hours.

PREDICTION:

More transparency will be demanded for marketing metrics for social. Major advertisers will back out of FB to accomplish this

By: **Bill Hartz**, Sr. Paid Marketing Specialist

A high percentage of social clicks are still accidental, and result in very low quality traffic. Current reporting methods depend entirely on the social media companies tracking being honest and not mis-

leading. We predict that advertisers with large budgets will demand more clarity from Facebook, and they will accomplish this by pulling ad dollars from that medium.



‘Smart listening’ devices will growth an additional 30% in 2018. This includes Google homes, amazon echos, and smart phones with always on listening.

PREDICTION:

Smart home listening device growth will increase 30% over last year

By: **Bill Hartz**, Sr. Paid Marketing Specialist

According to reports, 25 million smart speakers were sold in 2017, triple that of 2016. I predict that ‘smart listening’ devices will growth an additional 30% in 2018. This includes Google homes, amazon echos, and smart phones with always on listening. Phones have no doubt been doing this for years, but 2017 was the year phone makers began trumpeting always listening devices as a “feature” (Pixel 2’s

ability to always identify background songs, etc.). This data is being collected and used to add people to affinity or in market audiences. Within 2 more years, Google will openly admit that this is what they are doing without fear of public backlash as the public’s opinion on privacy shifts.

There you have it, the inaugural *no fluff* Web Talent Digital Marketing Predictions for 2018. As mentioned previously, we will check back in 2 additional times throughout the year to grade how we did. If you have any questions or comments about the predictions and want to discuss further, our team is available at 717-283-4045 or info@webtalentmarketing.com.

Sources:

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<http://clark.com/shopping-retail/major-retailers-closing-2018/>



Social media advertising is a blank slate of possibilities, but social media advertising is also a way to waste all of your marketing budget in a weekend. Lucky for you, we're here to help.



Here is to
a great **2018!**



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