

Title of project: Understanding how the next wave of disruptive AI technology can drive brand growth through higher value consumer experiences.

Companies and partners involved: OMD, 2CV

Awards

- Digital Advertising and Marketing Industry Insights - Gold

Project Summary

AI is increasingly woven into our daily lives. New technology has changed the way we communicate and make purchase decisions. To understand how brands can maximise the opportunity of AI, we must move beyond simple technology trends and enhance our understanding of how consumers accept, and trust AI based services in their daily lives. Therefore, OMD created a global multi-phased research study to track AI perceptions, adoption and usage as the technology evolves. With novel insights, the research shows that AI technologies are reaching the tipping point of mass adoption and that consumers are beginning to expect more than a novelty experience. This provides opportunities for brands. Now, with a wealth of data from 21 markets, 30,000 consumers and 65 future retail scenarios, we have a better idea of how brands can create more valued and valuable brand experiences for consumers. This invaluable data asset allows us to build future-proof AI strategies and guide us towards creating a consumer-focused roadmap for action. To put insights into action, OMD has worked with its clients on understanding how their consumers use these technologies, how their brands can engage, and what is possible now.

Objectives

AI based technologies are driving the next wave of disruption, opening new opportunities for brands. To understand how these technologies are changing the way consumers behave and to help their clients capitalise on this opportunity, OMD created the global research initiative 'The Retail Revolution'. They wanted to provide empirical evidence to clients and CMOs to represent the voice of consumers in the board level conversations about the impact of AI on their business. The data is a strategic asset to make better decisions on acquiring the powerful opportunities driven by the developing capabilities of AI.

Methodology

A global multi-phased research project with three core elements:

1. Quantitative surveys in 2017 and 2019, tracking AI perception and adoption in 21 global markets, across 21 sectors and 9 smart technology categories;
2. Qualitative research in partnership with 2CV, exploring how people interact with Voice in their daily lives (In-home depths, mobile ethnographies, Go-pro Recordings) in three markets of interest;
3. A second quantitative survey, digging deeper into voice and image search behaviours across 12 global markets. Each stage of research was built on the previous research phases. In addition, client workshops and stakeholder interviews helped refine the scope of the research.

Key Results

- Most new technologies have surpassed the 20% penetration threshold – after which, adoption tends to accelerate.
- We now need to shift from adoption to frequency.
- Voice tech offers more valued ways for brands to engage with consumers – A respondent described it as 'action at the speed of thought'
- Trust is a key barrier, 65% of consumers are concerned about how much data is being collected – transparency and positive user experiences are key to building trust
- Retailers are the second most trusted brand to make decisions on consumers' behalf – there is an opportunity to leverage this advantage to deliver more valued services

Impact and Application

This study explores where AI technologies are, what they'll be capable of, and how people think and feel about AI. Enabling us to plan around new technologies and provide a roadmap for action to create experiences both valued by consumers and valuable to brands. The research findings have been shared at many industry events across the globe and OMD has published articles on trade publications, such as Business Insider and WARC. Through dedicated blogs, videos and social media posts, the insights have reached more than 15k people. The research has also been a great asset to clients, current and prospective. OMD partnered with Google to disseminate our findings at a launch event in November 2019. By advocating for consumers on topics such as data privacy and security, the findings have helped brands understand the importance of consumer trust and control. Throughout the project OMD partnered with different clients to shape the research agenda and dig deeper into innovation bottlenecks, for example:

- Almost two thirds of Voice Assistant users claim to access voice on a weekly basis, however, voice is still mostly used in basic and functional ways. The research highlighted that households with children are more experimental with Voice, inspiring new interactions for the entire family. OMD partnered with a global entertainment brand to investigate this segment further and to understand the opportunities of Voice and identified that the most valuable opportunities for family voice skills were around the themes of health and fun.
- Understanding how best to test a new digital technology can be daunting. In partnership with one of the largest companies in the beverage industry, OMD used their insights to pinpoint the best test market and develop a Voice skill prototype to capture current behaviours with a development plan to build on consumers' acceptance of future capabilities.