The Future Of Search In An AI-Powered World

Search has changed dramatically, and there's plenty more to come.

This will be a defining year for search marketing. A new wave of channels, apps and technology is already sending shockwaves through a market where **Google**'s crown is slipping, **Bing** suddenly became relevant, and Chat GPT is creating more questions than it answers.

Generative AI, the type used for text generation, art and music dominated the news in November 2022 with the release of **Chat GPT.** This chatbot, built using the **GPT 3** large language model, is trained on 175 billion parameters and gives human-like answers to users prompts, questions and requests.

The implications were immense. It wasn't long before developers integrated the power of Large Language Models into search engine experiences. Microsoft **Bing's AI-powered search experience** was the first to emerge in February 2023, with Google also announcing **Bard** the same month.

The AI Revolution

With so much uncertainty, one thing is for sure - **the AI-powered search revolution has further blurred the lines** of why, how and where search marketing is carried out.

Marketers now use AI for **data collection, trend analysis and content creation** and companies like Google use AI to **analyse and rank content in the SERPs** with algorithms like BERT and MUM.

So **what is the impact of AI for marketers** on the ground? Does your strategy need to change, and should you be investing in tools, analysts and content teams?

In this eBook, we'll explain **how search is changing**, what this means for your business and how to innovate and grow in a world of AI-powered search marketing.

> **"Technology should do the hard work so people can do the things that make them the happiest in life."**
>
> **Larry Page**
> **Co-Founder, Google**

A DCMS report estimates that by 2030 the majority of UK businesses will be using some form of AI in their day-to-day work.

37% of companies are developing an AI strategy and 28% already have a holistic strategy in place.

Writers using the AI writing assistant Japer generated over 14 billion words on the app in 2022. By comparison, there are 4.1 billion words on Wikipedia's website.

26 percent of marketing professionals are already using AI and ML to help them improve or optimise content.

There are plenty of reasons to be optimistic about the future of search in an AI-powered world.

AI makes it easier and quicker to gather and analyse data from multiple platforms and create **content at scale to meet the new demand for AI-driven SERPs**.

Despite the changes in the SERPs with the introduction of AI, there are still ample **opportunities for generating traffic and revenue from organic results**.

Many consumers will always want to validate the source of information and **eCommerce searches in particular will still be important** as product imagery and the ability to browse is integral to our online shopping behaviour.

85% of online shoppers say product information and pictures are important to them when deciding which brand or retailer to buy from.

Think With Google
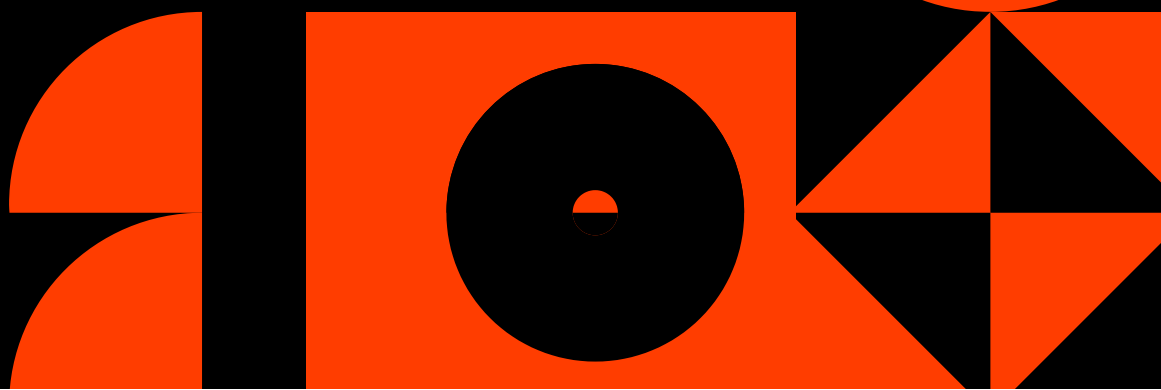
So, if Google uses AI for SERPs, can marketers leverage AI in their search marketing strategies?

Yes, tools that incorporate **AI can be used to help with digital marketing tasks.** Tools have a wide range of uses from identifying the type of content your target market is searching for to generating content ideas and suggestions.

AI assistance with these tasks **promotes greater efficiency**, so more time can be spent developing and implementing campaigns.

Similarly, **producing large amounts of content** for websites and blogs can be challenging for small teams, and AI-powered applications can be used to **speed up content creation** and help marketers **deliver quality content at scale** across all search channels.

Channels

When people talk about search marketing, they're often referring to Google search, which is the primary search channel used by SEMs. However, even before AI became a talking point, we believe **search had evolved** to incorporate platforms like Pinterest, Youtube and TikTok.

97% of top Pinterest searches are unbranded, which makes it an ideal platform for marketers to gain visibility and reach new audiences. Similarly, **YouTube is the second biggest search engine in the world** and should be a top priority for any brand with video content.

TikTok, on the other hand, is starting to become the search platform of choice for Gen Z and reached **100 million users in 9 months**.

Once you think of search as an **activity and not a platform** like Google, it opens a range of opportunities and channels to explore. **AI can help marketers gather data** and identify which channels are best suited to their target audience, as well as **suggest what content they should be creating** and when.
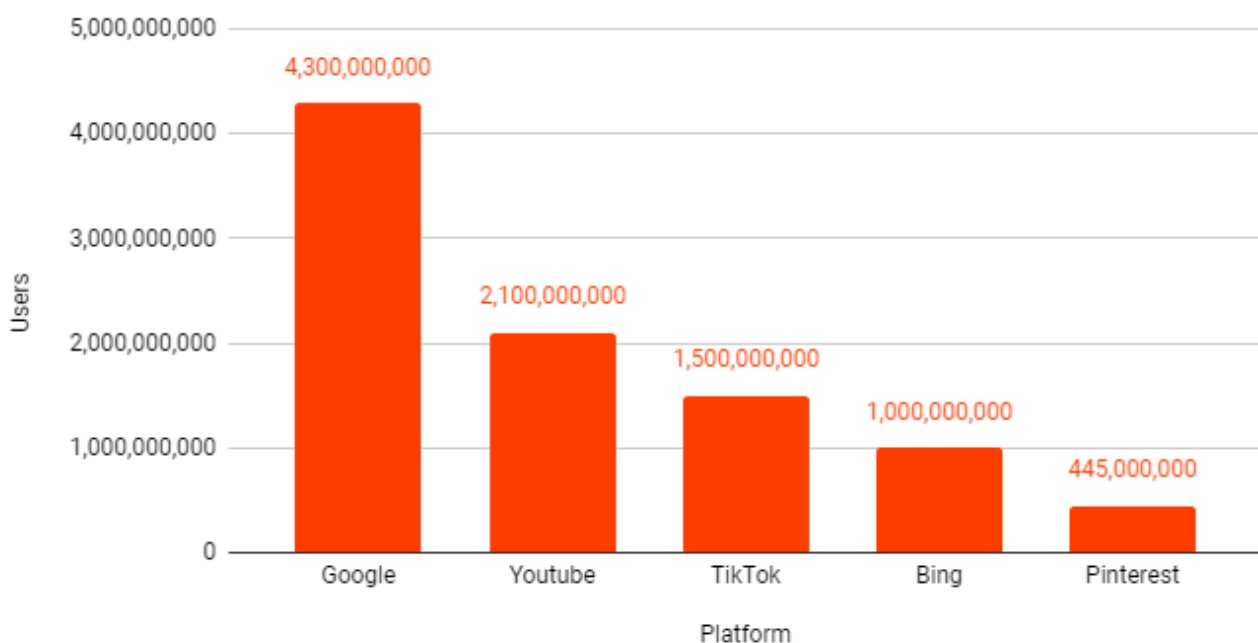
Tools

Investing in the right AI toolset can be the difference between success and failure in search marketing. AI tools can help with data gathering, analysis, content creation, automation and more, and range from **under £100 per month to over £5,000 per month**.

AI-powered SEO and search tools provide marketers with **valuable insights into customer behaviour and search trends** that would otherwise be almost impossible to find out manually.

This means you're not just reacting to changes; you can anticipate them and stay one step ahead of the competition.

One example of an AI tool is **Chat GPT** which suddenly made AI available to everyone, and the race is on to figure out how to make the most of it.

Low-cost tools like these can help you get so far, but it's the **specialised AI applications** that have been trained with specific outputs in mind that give marketers the biggest advantage.

We've built our stack with **tools specialised in search marketing** activities from research to content creation.

"UK Expenditure on AI technologies could increase to between £27.2 billion and £35.6 billion by 2025"

AI Activity in UK Businesses Report
DCMS & Office For AI
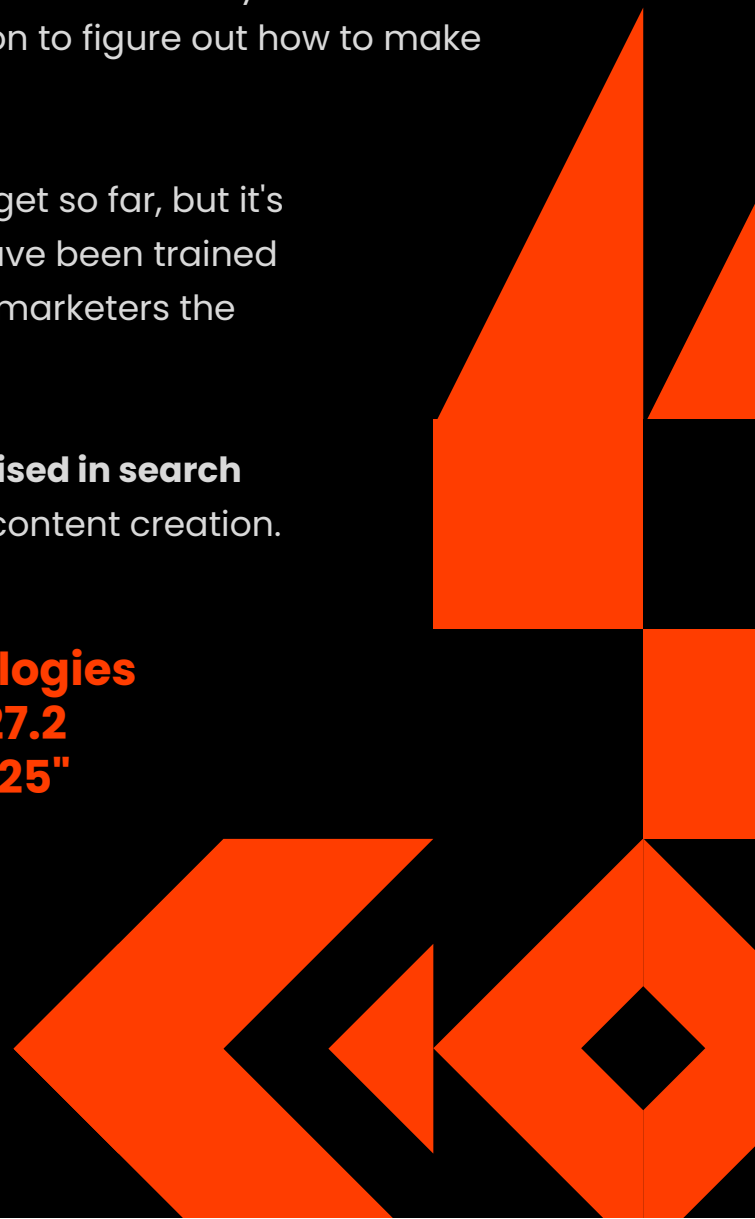
Content Creation

Generative AI tools like Jasper have been trained to write content and are successfully being used to create website content and blog posts. And, the reality is that **AI content performs as well as, if not better** than, human-written content in the SERPs.

Google has clarified on a couple of occasions now that **content generated by AI will not automatically be punished.** This makes sense because Google wants to give users the most **relevant and accurate results** possible, regardless of who or what created it.

This is great news for you and us because it means it's **only the quality content that will be rewarded**. So, working with AI enables us to **retain our creativity and SEO best practices** while AI helps us with the words.

"82% of marketers agree that AI or ML generated content is just as good or better than human-generated content."

Capterra 2022 Global Marketing Survey

Barriers To AI

According to Semrush, the **top three most significant challenges** companies face when considering the implementation of AI are staff skills (56%), the fear of the unknown (42%), and finding a starting point (26%).

AI is not a silver bullet; it still needs to be managed and monitored, so it's likely you'll need to **invest in training staff and developing skills in this area as well as new marketing tools.**

Defining a clear use case internally is also an essential step. Without it, you'll struggle to measure the success of your efforts and may even end up with more questions than answers, having spent thousands already.

Good questions to ask before investing in AI tools include:

- What part of the process will this improve or enhance?
- How much time or effort will it save?
- Will this help us reach our target audience more effectively?
- Is the data it produces accurate?
- Will this integrate with other search tools?
- Do I have an employee who can use this tool?

A 2022 Capterra study found that companies need significant time to get the tools off the ground. About 44% said it took 6-12 months to implement AI and ML tools. About 22% said it took about 1-2 years to implement. The time taken to also increases with the company size.

Will I Be Worse Off If I Don't Use AI?

The use of **AI augments parts of the search marketing process**, and although it's not an absolute necessity, it's becoming increasingly important as the technology improves and its use becomes more widespread.
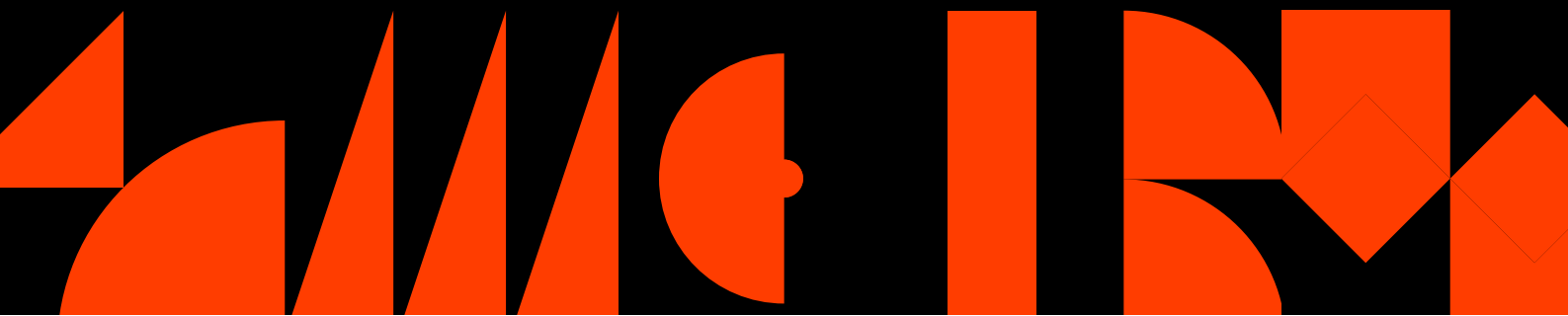
If you don't invest in AI-powered search marketing now, then you may find yourself playing catch-up later on. This could mean a loss of market share, lost customers and ultimately, a drop in sales.

The use of AI in search marketing platforms and our own search marketing strategies are here to stay, and **it's only going to get bigger and more widespread** over time.

The sooner you can get on board, the better, and Investing in AI now will help ensure your business **stays one step ahead** of the competition when it comes to brand awareness, online sales and recruiting.

"44% of organizations are working to embed AI into current applications and processes. "

IBM Global AI Adoption Index 2022

Solutions

Investing in AI to support your search marketing is certainly a good option for businesses that have the resource and capacity.

Typically it might cost **over £100k per year to research, build and implement an AI-powered search marketing team**. Testing multiple tools is a must to find the ones trained in the right way that give you the right data and outputs for the tasks you need to automate.

Another option for those who don't want to invest in creating their own AI team is to **work with an agency that's proficient in the use of AI and data** for search marketing. Neural Edge specialises in AI-powered search and has developed a specialised AI stack that covers every stage of the search marketing process.

From data collection to keyword analysis and content optimisation, the **Neural Edge process is enhanced by powerful AI solutions** that support data-driven decision-making to reach your search marketing goals with greater efficiency and results.
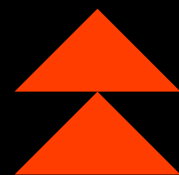
If you're looking for a **cost-effective way to use AI in your search marketing**, partnering with Neural Edge is a great way to get started.

54% of companies use combined in-house and outsourced SEO and search services
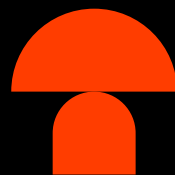
57% of markters say limited in-house SEO skills is their biggest challenge

Marketers say that creating quality content is the most effective and hardest tactic

12-Month Outlook

We recently visited Gen AI in San Francisco to hear speakers from AI innovators, including Open AI, Jasper, Stability.AI and others.

The consensus was that at the current pace, we would see **significant advances in Q2 and Q3 2023**, and the 12-month opportunities are unquantifiable.

Many more businesses will get on board with AI over the next 12-months and specialised applications will come to market that fit specific needs and industries.

We can also expect **more partnerships between companies, universities, and research labs** as they share their resources and collaborate on some of the biggest challenges in Generative AI.

For search, the changing digital landscape will give marketers the ability to **understand and target audiences** in new ways and deliver more holistic shopping experiences.

Marketers' use of AI soared between 2018 and 2020, jumping from 29% in 2018 to 84% in 2020, according to Salesforce Research's most recent State of Marketing Study.

About Us – The Team

Since 2019 Neural Edge has followed a **data-first approach** to help clients make the most of search. Our team has over **20 years of hands-on and strategic marketing experience** and a proven track record of increasing traffic and sales for businesses selling online using AI tools.

Ben Barnes
CO-FOUNDER & MD

John Shirley
CO-FOUNDER & OPS

Leah Russell
CONTENT MANAGER

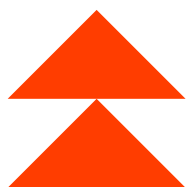**Alice Wakelam**
CONTENT SPECIALIST

Craig Townley
HEAD OF TECH

About Us – Achievements

We're quickly proving ourselves as an emerging **industry leader** in our sector. Our data-driven approach, powered by AI gained **global recognition** from leaders at Google, Microsoft and Deloitte when we won **small business of the year** at the AI Journal Awards.
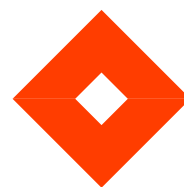
69%

Average increase in organic traffic across all clients

25%

Average increase in sales from organic across all clients

6.5k+

keywords ranking in position 1-10 in the SERPs

*We used YoY data where available

Get In Touch

Interested in exploring the opporptunties of **AI in search and how you can stay ahead?**

We help growing eCommerce brands run **data-driven search campaigns** using our innovative AI tech stack.

Get in touch to book a **discovery call** and to find out more about how we can help.

Ben Barnes

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