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ABSTRACT

AI, robotics, and machine learning are impacting the field of sales and marketing in an unprecedented way. A perfect storm is brewing! On one hand, online retail stores like Amazon are crushing the bricks and mortar stores. Sales and marketing professionals in bricks and mortar stores are facing a grim future. On the other hand, AI, robotics, and machine learning are replacing sales and marketing professionals in online stores. In fact, salespersons and marketers are predicted to be among the first to be replaced by robots. In a face-to-face environment, human may still prefer to interact with another human. In a virtual environment or a non-face-to-face context, human would care less about who or what is on the other end of the line or responding to his/her online queries. This research will be a longitudinal case study to analyze the evolving nature of sales and marketing field.

Keywords: Artificial intelligence, Robotics, Machine learning, Deep Learning, Automation, Sales, Marketing.

SUMMARY OF RESEARCH

Artificial Intelligence (AI) refers to human Intelligence exhibited by machines. AI can be classified into Strong and Weak AI. Strong AI (or artificial general intelligence) is a machine with consciousness, sentience, and mind, and this machine has intelligence in more than one specific area. Weak AI (or artificial narrow intelligence) focuses on specific narrow tasks (e.g., self-driving car). Machine learning is an approach to achieve artificial intelligence, and deep learning is a branch of machine learning and a technique for realizing machine learning. Deep learning focuses on algorithms inspired by the structure and function of the human brain. Robotics deals with the design, development, operation, and application of robots.

The field of sales and marketing has been impacted by advanced technologies and this impact will magnify significantly in the near future. AI, robotics, and machine learning will undoubtedly accelerate the impact. Robots will replace sales people and marketers in the near future (if not already). Websites can update automatically based on the usage and website pages can be reformatted automatically based on eye-tracking data. With AI and machine learning, segment-of-one marketing will be possible. This longitudinal case study research will investigate the impact of AI, robotics, automation, and machine learning on the field of sales and marketing.

What are the impact of AI, robotics, and machine learning on marketing academics? Clearly, the marketing research topics will shift as some topics may become inconsequential because some of the sales and marketing jobs will be taken over by robots and machines, and these robots and machines will outperform humans. The age of artificial general intelligence is still a few decades away (hopefully). In the meantime, AI, robotics, and machine learning will replace some sales and marketing professionals, new jobs will be created, and man-machine may need to work hand-in-hand. New sales and marketing strategies in the machine age will need to be formulated. With big data, AI, and machine learning, sales and marketing will be individualized. The impact of these issues needs to be studied.

What are the impact of AI, robotics, and machine learning on marketing professionals? The marketing field is changing rapidly with the advancement of AI, robotics, and machine learning. The pace of change is expected to accelerate and the marketing landscape will evolve very rapidly. For marketing professionals, they will have to continuously be retrained and constantly monitor the progress of the field. Working with AI and robots is no longer science fiction but fast becoming a reality (and may be a necessity for survival). Sales and marketing professionals have to learn to supplement and complement AI and robots (rather than the other way around). They need to do things that they can do better than robots (e.g., creativity, design, and innovation) and these things will become less and less over time. We are living in an interesting yet challenging and frightening time!