

Digital Marketing Trends 2018



2 INTRODUCTION »

3 DIGITAL DISPLAY TRENDS »

5 CONTENT MARKETING TRENDS »


7 VIDEO MARKETING TRENDS »

10 ABOUT US »

What's buzzworthy in 2018? Get on board with these 2018 digital marketing trends

The dawn of a new year brings with it the newest trends proclaimed to make marketing work at maximum efficiency. Projection mapping, VR and chatbots are a few buzz words we have begun to see taking off this past year and will continue to hear about moving into 2018. We'll touch on these futuristic trends but also realize they are unrealistic for most small to mid-size businesses.

Here's our take on actionable insights you can (and should) incorporate into your 2018 marketing strategy, including advances in online display targeting, content marketing and video.



**WHO IS YOUR MOST
VALUABLE AUDIENCE?
YOUR DIGITAL STRATEGY
SHOULD LEAD THEM
DIRECTLY TO YOU.**



Digital Display Trends – Where did all the cookies go?

Since the mid 90's, using cookies to target audiences has been a staple in **online advertising**. As you kick off your New Year's resolutions, not only will your diet see fewer cookies, but so will your advertising. While the nature of cookies and how they're used is changing, marketers will still be able to put your brand in front of the right audience – with more accuracy and better results than ever before.

BESIDES SNACKING, WHAT ARE COOKIES FOR?

Cookies are small text files that are downloaded on your browser as you visit different websites. Cookies remember your preferences on websites, like what local news you read on AL.com or which city's weather you check on Weather.com. They also track when and where you saw an ad and whether you clicked. Cookies revolutionized digital advertising by allowing advertisers to take advantage of online data to reach individuals based on location, demographics, and behaviors.

WHY ARE COOKIES CHANGING?

Cookies work differently depending on the device, app, and mobile web browser. Because mobile apps can't share information with each other or with a mobile web browser, cookies are less effective on mobile than with traditional web browsing. As technology increasingly becomes dominated by smartphones and tablets, traditional cookies are becoming less relevant and the rise of other targeting technologies will become more widespread in 2018.

What to expect in 2018 and beyond

1. UNIQUE DEVICE ID TARGETING

This type of cookieless targeting is standard practice for location-based targeting like geo-fencing. Expect Unique Device ID targeting to grow in use and capability and adopt more sophisticated targeting options. Due to their hyper-local relevance, unique device ID targeted ads often receive higher response rates than traditional display ads. If you're next to a coffee shop and receive an ad about a new beverage, wouldn't you be more likely to visit the coffee shop than if you received the ad while at home?

2. ENVIRONMENT TARGETING

Where will you find sports fans? In the sports section. This type of logic has remained relevant for events, newspapers, websites, and most recently, apps. With or without traditional cookies, classic advertising methods aren't going anywhere. App and Devicespecific targeting, as well as fixed ad units on specific site pages will increase in 2018.

3. DATA'S REIGN AS KING CONTINUES

Data is currency, so information that is uniquely collected by websites (First-Party Data) will remain invaluable. In 2018, expect an increase in targeting based on a universal login (like how you log in to Spotify or Snapchat using Facebook). Also expect selfidentifying data to have a resurgence. Though you may not realize it, when you visit websites like AL.com, you often set your location, and read articles, and take actions to identify location and interests.

As we venture into 2018 and beyond, your body and your advertising will be healthier with fewer cookies. Advances in precision targeting will make ads more relevant for customers, contributing to higher engagement and response rates for advertisers. The future is bright, so go have a cookie... while you still can.



The background of the slide is a dark green wall with numerous horizontal lines of varying lengths and colors, primarily green and blue, creating a digital or data-like effect. In the foreground, the silhouettes of several people are visible, standing and looking towards the wall, suggesting an interactive or exhibition space.

Content Marketing Trends

Content Marketing is going to be as strong as ever in 2018 – but with a twist. Strong content principles still apply: targeted, compelling, relevant content written for each persona at each different stage of the buying cycle.

That said, how we get the content TO our consumers is going to be the major shift from 2017. No more "if you write it, they will come" SEO strategies. Today's consumer is being pulled in more directions than ever, and even the most cleverly-crafted thought leadership piece is fighting for attention with about a million other marketing tactics. Preparing a strong campaign focused on HOW content will be consumed should be at the forefront of your 2018 marketing strategy.

Here are just a couple of examples of how marketers will need to focus their investments in 2018 toward making sure people read their content:

TRADITIONAL DIGITAL DISPLAY

Using digital display creative to drive traffic toward an article as opposed to driving it toward a quick call-to-action ("call now") has become the latest trend in digital display advertising that effectively drives traffic to your well-crafted content. Our research is showing that digital display ads pointed at content »

**45% OF MARKETERS
SAY BLOGGING IS THEIR
#1 MOST IMPORTANT
CONTENT STRATEGY.**

» [SOCIAL MEDIA EXAMINER](#)

versus pointed at quick calls-to-action drive almost twice as many clicks, confirming the fact that today's consumer wants to be educated, nurtured, and wooed by their advertisers.

SPONSORED CONTENT

Leveraging the "halo effect" of respected publishers by promoting your content on their sites usually ensures a higher click-thru-rate, and a longer engagement with your content.

FACEBOOK ADVERTISING

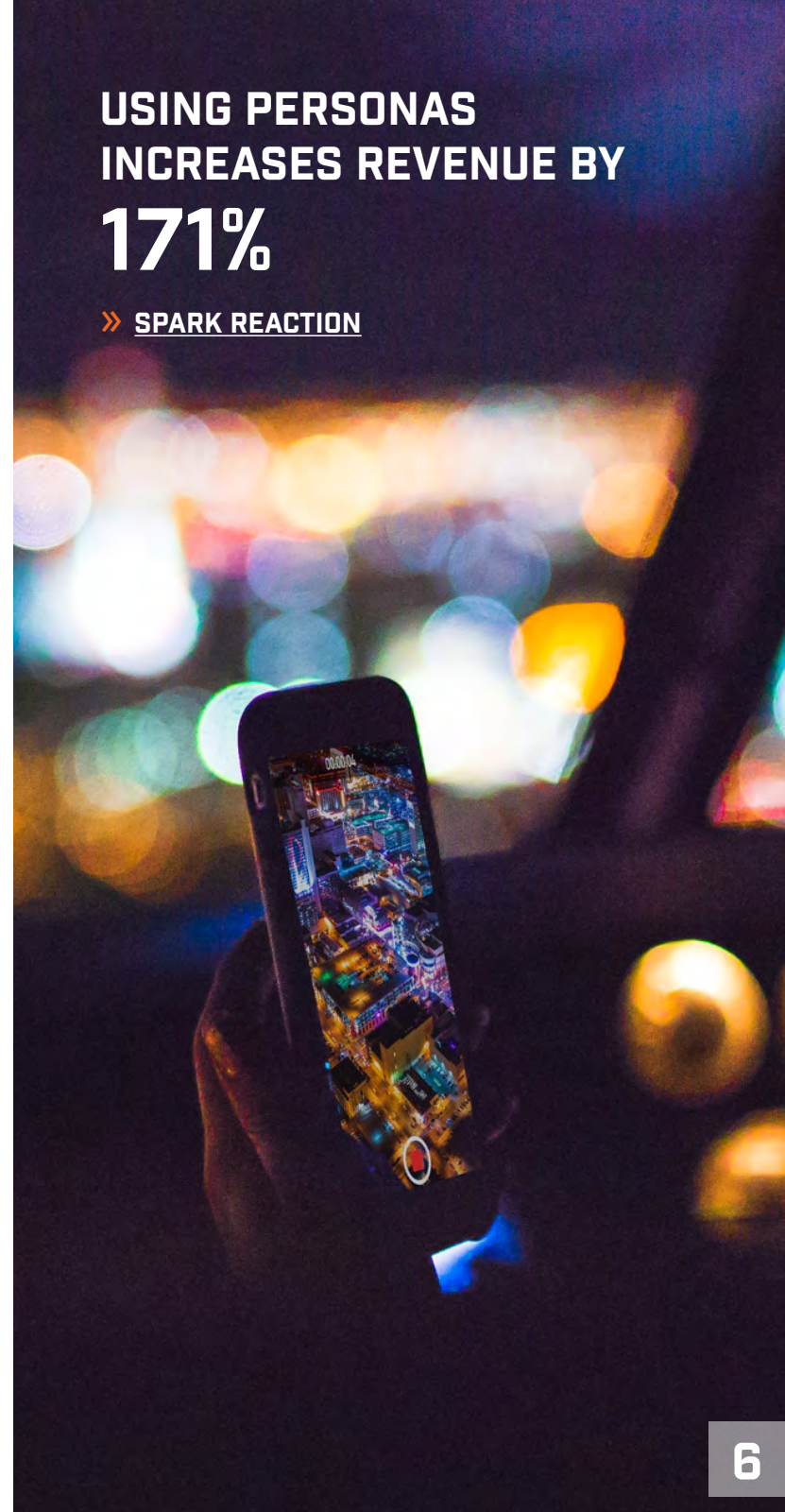
Facebook ads targeting prospects who will read your content is an attractive option for many reasons. First of all, it's – well – FACEBOOK. 214 million users in the U.S. confirms that the audience is there. And its many different demographic targeting capabilities ensures that you can get your content in front of virtually anyone.

CONTENT RECOMMENDATION ENGINES

Tools like Taboola and Outbrain partner with major online content publishers to suggest content they think their readers will want to consume. These tools are by and large CPM based, so you're essentially bidding on contextual consumption to drive your rate toward getting qualified prospects to click on and consume your content.

**USING PERSONAS
INCREASES REVENUE BY
171%**

» SPARK REACTION



Video Marketing Trends

The demand for video is higher than ever. In fact, 52% of marketing professionals across the globe feel that video is the type of content with the best ROI. With the younger demographic viewing video on a wider range of devices than ever before, 2018 will be an important year for brands to capitalize on video advertising to market their products and services.

As we turn the page to 2018, we see livestreaming become even more dominant in the video landscape.

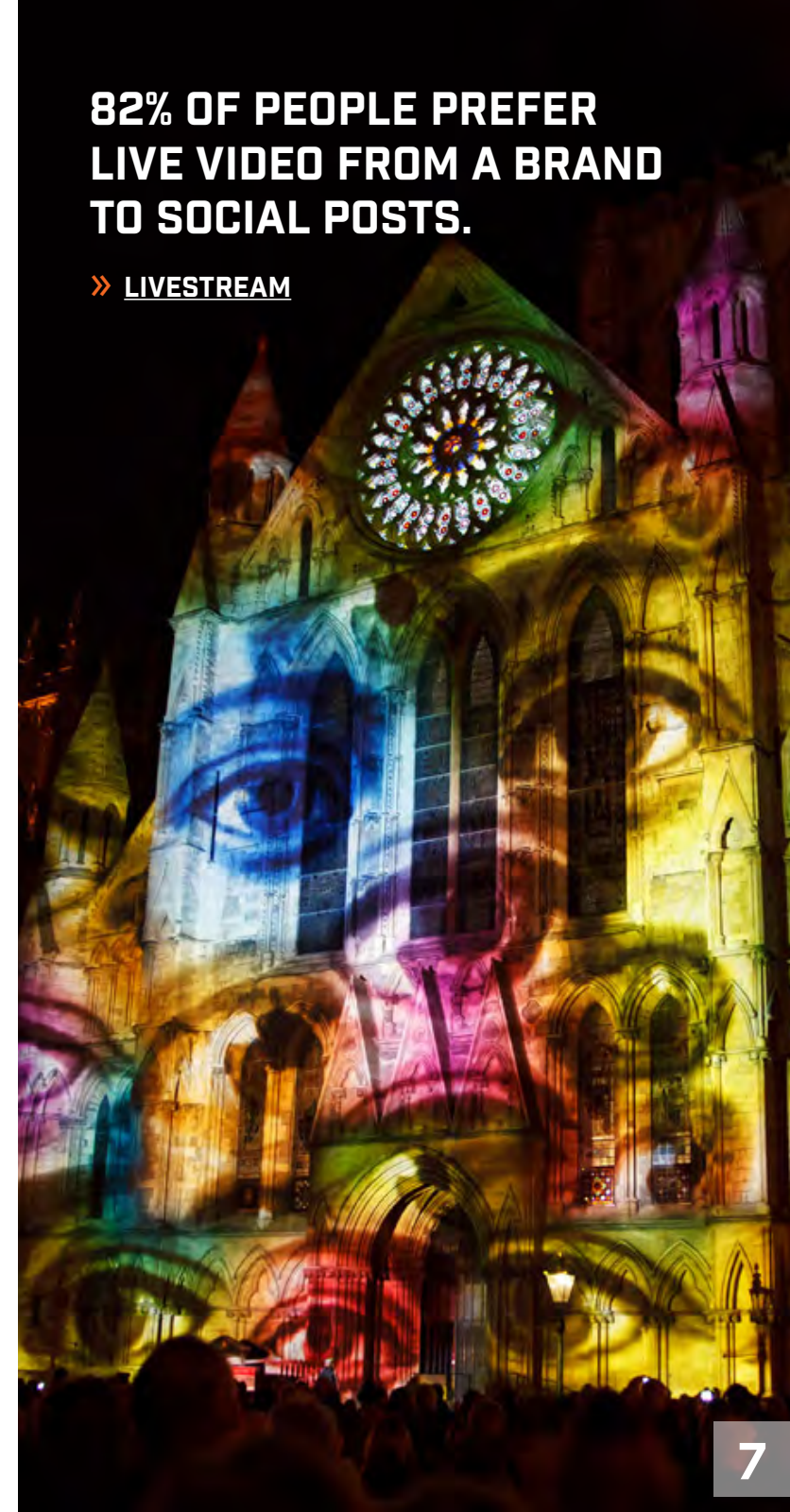
Live streaming is nothing new but has gained immense popularity in 2017. Anyone who uses live streaming can show their followers what they're doing in real time. Public figures often use live streaming to crowdsource content and ideas from their fans.

As more and more social channels have begun to adopt this form of video as well as developers who have begun to create apps solely dedicated to live streaming, we predict it to take off even more in 2018.

Where are people going to watch videos online? It's no surprise that 45% of people watch more than an hour of Facebook or YouTube videos a week. »

**82% OF PEOPLE PREFER
LIVE VIDEO FROM A BRAND
TO SOCIAL POSTS.**

» **LIVESTREAM**



**THERE ARE 1.65 BILLION
ACTIVE USERS ON
FACEBOOK ALONE WHO
WATCH ABOUT 8 BILLION
VIDEOS DAILY.**

» SMART INSIGHTS



Companies must be using Facebook and YouTube for video marketing, but other channels should be considered as well. In effort to increase usage and drive social engagement, Snapchat and Twitter are also setting their sights on optimizing video content.

For brands to stand out among the fierce competition and build meaningful relationships with consumers in 2018, they must learn to utilize video marketing across many channels to grab the attention of their target audiences.

Key Takeaways

CONTENT IS STILL KING.

It all starts with your story. Discovering what makes your company unique, what your story is and who it speaks to is an essential starting point in delivering relevant content. Effective content marketing is based on relevant, interesting information that the audience will resonate with.

VISUALIZE THE PRIZE.

If you don't have a video strategy, you're missing out on core audiences. In today's oversaturated digital landscape, most of us don't possess the dedicated attention span to read lengthy articles and posts. Digital video is now a crucial tool for marketers simply because it is quickly becoming the new norm.


HOW THE COOKIE CRUMBLES.

As cookies become less prevalent, targeting becomes more accurate and therefore display ads become more effective. Display advertising will be as important as ever in the new year for companies who wish to gain exposure and visibility to the right audience. That strategy is going to the top of the funnel: the people who didn't know you exist. The number one goal in display campaigns is visibility.



KYLE STICHTENOTH

*Director of Digital Sales
and Strategy
Alabama Media Group*



We hope these topics allow you to cut through the noise and stay focused on supporting your business goals with an integrated marketing approach in 2018. Interested in learning more? We'd love to collaborate with you to develop a successful marketing plan.

Contact an Alabama Media Group marketing specialist at advertise@al.com

ALABAMA
MEDIA GROUP

ABOUT ALABAMA MEDIA GROUP

Alabama Media Group is a digital media company that operates AL.com, one of the country's largest local websites, produces television and video programming, and publishes Alabama's three most prominent newspapers: The Birmingham News, The Huntsville Times and Mobile's Press-Register, as well as Birmingham magazine and The Mississippi Press. The company also offers digital marketing solutions — including audience targeting, content marketing, custom video, search engine marketing and social media advertising.

Alabama Media Group is part of Advance Local Media, a leading media company comprised of 12 local affiliated news and information websites that rank #1 among local media in their respective markets and more than 30 affiliated newspapers known for their award-winning journalism. Advance Local Media is part of Advance Publications, along with Condé Nast and American City Business Journals.