The take-over of augmented and the future possibilities

The vast potential to create, interact and educate with augmented reality (AR) is quickly gaining popularity. In the past, AR gained media attention for simply existing, but recently, companies have been applying the strategy to their marketing campaigns and reaping the rewards.

As we move further into the digital world, the benefits of implementing AR are staggering. For instance, AR has an average dwell time of 75 seconds – affording companies an unprecedented chance to appeal to their consumers. Flow Digital, a Newcastle-based digital marketing company, are sharing why 2018 is the takeover of the media channel, and what it means for the future.

The statistics driving AR

In the past 2 years, the AR industry has experienced unprecedented growth. We can largely attribute the early success to the pioneers of AR, Pokémon Go which became the most downloaded app in 2016 with over 750 million to date.

By 2020, the number of AR users is expected to surpass one billion and by 2021, the market for AR, and VR, is estimated to reach $215bn. The benefits of implementing AR are reason enough in these statistics – particularly for ecommerce, marketing and automotive brands which are the industries that experience the largest growth with the communication tool.

Ecommerce uses

Ikea Place demonstrated the potential for the natural partnership of AR and retail. Since launching in 2017 – using Apple's ARKit tech – the Ikea Place has been downloaded two

million times. The potential for allowing users to actually see what items look like in their home will significantly boost revenue.

Similarly, AR provides companies with the opportunity to target impulse shoppers. If you can showcase how their life can vastly improve with this cactus plant on their new coffee table (no doubt that it will), you can catch them before they even realised the need for such a product.

Estée Lauder recently rolled out AR into their marketing campaign – adopting the 'try before you buy' method. Users could 'try' various makeup products using their Facebook messenger chatbot, with the company experiencing a rise in social media engagement.

However, it's important to note the limitations in an AR world for both ecommerce and marketing. While we can certainly appeal to more consumers and provide the 'wow factor' so many prospects look for, we must take into account the lack of adverts. Marketing ads and header bidding do not have a place in augmented reality, so companies will have to get creative.

Take the example of Pepsi, turning the average bus shelter into a fake window. Relying on a camera to capture people and vehicles in the street, they showcased images of crashing comets, a rogue cheetah and a man flying away while holding onto balloons. While it may not have been your 'typical' advertisement for the drink, the ad certainly proved engaging.

Future of video content

Video content has certainly seen a boom – particularly because of an increasing number of Facebook, Twitter, Snapchat and Instagram users. Today, there are more than 22m daily views on Facebook, Snapchat and YouTube, with the number continuing to grow.

360-degree views are universally appealing, enabling users to go behind-the-scenes with the brand. If there’s anything we can guarantee, it’s that consumers love a nosy. Typically, videos afford companies 2.5 seconds to catch the attention of their prospects. However, AR provides brands with an average of 75 seconds dwell time, offering a staggering amount of time to share relevant content.

Implementing AR

We have touched on implementing AR above, and the reasons for doing so are almost endless. Essentially, you are bringing your products and services to life. A static digital advert becomes an interactive catalogue or brochure. In doing so, you are improving the experience of communicating with your brand, leaving more information at their disposal and helping them to make informed decisions. In return, you should see a substantial lift in consumers trusting your company, word-of-mouth sales and potentially ROI.

Social media will only benefit from AR. It’s likely that consumers will share their interactions with your brand on their social platforms – particularly with a specific hashtag – and thus build your following. There is also the opportunity for partnerships with social media platforms. For example, Fanta partnered with Snapchat for their Halloween campaign, offering users a unique Snapchat filter if they scan their limited edition cans.

In simple terms, using AR helps to build transparency. All successful relationships start with trust, and you can even take your customer behind-the-scenes with this communication channel. Share how the product was made, guide them through the delivery process and we can guarantee you will see an increase in interaction.

Partnership of AR and PR

There is a natural partnership between AR and the PR industry, for which we could see an increase in the use of the marketing channel for events. Something as small as including a QR code to your event invite – producing a unique illustration or even animated brand logo – creates a layer of interest. Similarly, product launches can experience the benefit. If you can take your audience into the augmented world, highlighting the key features of your product, you will likely see results. Perhaps, rather than share the product in detail, you could leave a trail of breadcrumbs. Each time a QR code is scanned, more is revealed about the product.

AR transforming other industries

Ecommerce and marketing are industries experiencing a boom due to AR, but the medical sector is also seeing the technological advancements. Go Surgery, the brainchild behind Touch Surgery, offers step-by-step guides to performing surgical procedures, as if in real time. The procedure is holographically projected onto a screen. Likewise, the Microsoft HoloLens AR glasses have been used to aid in reconstructive surgery.

One industry in particular which should reap the benefits from the rise of video content is hospitality. For example, guests can explore the rooms before booking and companies can even go so far as to allow guests to review the room when using the app. Likewise, restaurants can share the experience of dining with the through AR.

Companies, such as WayRay, are offering Navion, a system that directs you while you drive. Basically, it’s like Google Maps on the road, but you don’t have to keep looking at the Sat Nav. Navion shows exactly where you want to go, continually adjusting to anything in front of the car.

Ultimately, AR spells the dawn of a different age. Those companies that embrace and adapt will certainly see the rewards, especially when labelled pioneers of the channel.

https://searchenginewatch.com/2018/06/19/the-take-over-of-augmented-and-the-future-possibilities/