GENERATIVE AI FOR CONTENT MARKETING: HELPFUL OR HARMFUL?

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ABSTRACT

Generative artificial intelligence (AI) tools such as ChatGPT, Dall-E, and Steve AI can facilitate instant content creation. As an illustration, a fashion brand can simply command ChatGPT to: *"Write an Instagram caption about the importance of good clothes during winter in two hundred words"*. In seconds, ChatGPT generates the output. This minimum effort and short production time in the usage of generative AI may enhance content marketing outcomes. However—as warned by scholars (Bruyn et al., 2020)—not only is it advantageous for businesses, AI can also be disastrous. Underpinned by this, and the fact that generative AI and content marketing are nonexistent in the pertinent literature (see streams of research on AI in marketing e.g., Eriksson et al., 2020; Huang & Rust, 2021, 2022; Vlačić et al., 2022), this research aims to explore the potential benefits and drawbacks of generative AI for content marketing.

In achieving our goal, we conducted a netnography study (Kozinet, 2020) on YouTube. We searched our sample using the "AI-generated content" term. We selected three videos, where two educate content marketers about generative AI and one showcases the wonder of AI-generated content. The videos had 999 comments altogether. The results reveal that the advantages of generative AI for content marketing include higher efficiency and impressive digital content quality—as if the texts, images, and videos are created by humans, not machines. In addition to this, we discovered several interconnected negative aspects of generative AI. In particular, AI-generated texts are likely to be incorrect and unhelpful. This content then is considered spammy, and AI detectors can detect it. Eventually, AI-generated textual content can adversely affect a brand's search engine optimization. On a general level, AI-generated texts, images, and videos are perceived as less authentic. Content marketers applying generative AI also are deemed lazy and unethical because they trick customers into believing that their content is a product of their own thoughts and works. There is also this feeling of eerieness when viewing AI-generated images and videos.

We have demonstrated that generative AI can be both helpful and harmful for content marketing. The decision whether to deploy or neglect generative AI for content marketing is dependent on firms' own conditions (e.g., firms' customers' characteristics, firms' technological and human resources, and firms' product types). As a guideline for opportunities and risk assessment, firms can refer to the value creation and value

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destruction framework of AI implementation in businesses constructed by Canhoto and Clear (2020). All in all, our novel insights offer significant contributions to the literature on content marketing and AI in marketing.

Keywords: ChatGPT, Generative AI, Content marketing, Digital marketing

References available upon request