

ENHANCED ROLE OF PUBLIC RELATION STRATEGIES WITH AI INTERVENTIONS

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ABSTRACT

The problem statement of the researcher is “Enhanced role of Public Relation Strategies with AI interventions “. The research is based on secondary literature through external sources like several journals, articles, books etc. It explains the growing need of technological applications in every field, even in the fields like Public Relations, where traditional methods were prevalent even few years ago, is adapting to the need of the hour. AI has changed the face of Public Relation Strategies in the current Era. The researcher tries to establish the fact through various literature that, in the age of Information Technology, Public Relation departments are seen to be adapting AI technologies in their PR Strategies to derive information from the digital Medium and serve huge audiences and help industries to establish their brands. The research tries to study Garret’s theory on automation, acceleration, and accuracy, not going into the technical aspects but concentrating on the results of AI applications and how it had benefitted the PR departments and agencies by citing various case studies as example. The research aims at creating an active awareness among the industries to easy and speedy PR activities and their impact on audiences.

Keywords: Public relations, Artificial intelligence, Strategies.

Artificial intelligence is the simulation of human intelligence processes by machines, especially computer systems. Specific applications of AI include expert systems, natural language processing, speech recognition and machine vision. AI is now become part of our life, using it for which route to take during our morning commute to what Netflix shows we should watch next. Powerful AI that are predicted and which are shown in movies/series like the 'ALIE' from 'THE 100', and 'William' form 'Another life' are far to be achieved. These ideas are rapidly affecting the way we live as well how business are operating. Today we live in information age, which is transforming our economy.

According to the International Data Corporation, the global spending on AI systems will reach \$97.9 billion in 2023 (more than two and a half times the \$37.5 billion spent in 2019), and the compound annual growth rate for the 2018-2023 forecast period will be 28.4%. This rapid growth reflects the growing interest that organizations have in AI's ability to increase their revenue and reduce costs through intelligent automation and machine-powered predictions, which explains why investors, corporate directors, CEOs, managers, and policymakers are focusing their attention on this technology. **Public relations departments and agencies are starting to adopt AI technologies** to obtain important information from the digital world, improve their capacity to understand audiences more accurately and measure the impact of their communication efforts. Intelligent machine has not yet been fully implemented/or used in PR practices like content writing and pitching stories. But it improves the efficiency and accuracy of traditional methods of measuring public relations. There are certain areas of public relations that AI is rapidly transforming, like **Advertising Value Equivalency** using AI-POWERED monitoring tools, Using machine learning (a field of artificial intelligence) in influencer marketing, AI's growing need of monitoring breaking stories online and also the impact of AI in media relations. Illustrating further with the help of case studies. There are more areas of PR that are impacted by AI.

AI in PR: Emergence of new Era: Artificial intelligence is diverse fields like any other science field. Its future prediction is huge. Artificial intelligence has a diverse set of products, services and technology that can be applied to any industry. Regarding their creations, functionality and applications are complex and confusing. Further, historical development of artificial intelligence will also be discussed. Then analyzing the functions that AI is currently fulfilling in PR, including some of the risks and limitations that come with the deployment of this technology.

The concept of artificial intelligence (AI) is constantly evolving and does not have a unique definition. In the broadest sense, AI refers to machines that can learn, reason and act for themselves (Hao, “What is AI?”). Almost all AI systems are made by algorithms, which are essentially a set of instructions that tell a computer what steps to be taken to solve a problem.

Historical Inputs about AI.

The term “artificial intelligence” was officially coined in 1956 when a small group of computer scientists organized by John McCarthy gathered at a DARPA-sponsored 4 conference at Dartmouth College, New Hampshire. The conference was essentially an extended brainstorming session where McCarthy, Marvin Minsky, Claude Shannon, and other researchers discussed the possibility that machines could potentially replicate human intelligence (Daugherty & Wilson 40). The discussion led to the emergence of two schools of thought: The **Symbolists**, who believed that human intelligence is based on how much humans know; and the **Connectionists**, who thought intelligence is based on humans’ ability to learn. Connectionists wanted to build a machine that could learn on its own, which is why they started to think of ways to replicate the biological structure of the human brain.

Reasons behind the use of AI by PR Professionals.

PR professionals must identify specific areas of practice where this technology can create the most value for their organization’s business strategy.

AI marketing expert Christopher Penn argues that AI has brought **three main benefits** for public relations practitioners: **automation, acceleration and accuracy** (Garret). In other words, AI is making the practice of public relations cheaper, faster and better. Automation, helps to obtain insights in a matter of seconds. A few years ago, tracking media coverage was a time-consuming task. Now, PR professionals can leverage the power of AI to detect how many times their brand is being mentioned, where it is mentioned the most etc.

Other time-consuming tasks like curating journalist or influencer lists are being automated, not only saving PR practitioners a significant amount of time but also allowing them to find reporters and influencers they had not considered before. If automation is making repetitive tasks more efficient and less expensive, acceleration is enabling PR professionals to obtain information in real-time. Acceleration can be crucial during a crisis when time is the most valuable asset. For example, in 2017 the Uber was negatively impacted by #DeleteUber, a social media campaign that encouraged users to delete the app after the company was accused of profiting off of a protest against President Trump’s travel ban. In a matter of hours, thousands of American users had deleted their accounts. A social media monitoring platform built on machine learning and natural language processing algorithms called Converseon helped Uber’s communications team process massive volumes of online data and spot this crisis in real-time.

Measuring and analyzing People’s feelings and opinion toward a brand or a product has always been a challenge for account managers in settling their budgets. As a result organizations are increasingly asking their internal PR teams and agencies to operate under similar expectations.

With advanced AI technologies like natural language processing, PR practitioners can accurately quantify people’s feelings and opinions about a brand and measure that sentiment against other parameters like

engagement, stock price, or sales. AI are a means for building brand and sales, but not necessarily a business goal itself.

Automation, Acceleration, And Access to more accurate metrics like the scope of reach, sentiment, and engagement rates with the help of AI-powered platforms are transforming the public relations industry. On the one hand, new types of skills are being needed. On the other hand, having cheaper, faster, and better access to relevant information is giving PR practitioners the ability to focus on other activities such as creative thinking, strategic planning etc.

Transforming the Practice of Public Relations with AI interventions (with case study):

Even though intelligent machines are not writing and pitching stories just yet, they are improving the efficiency and accuracy of traditional measurement practices in public relations. For example, PR professionals that would traditionally measure the **Advertising Value Equivalency (AVE)** or the number of impressions of a news story to demonstrate the success of their earned media campaigns now have access to AI-powered monitoring tools that measure the sentiment of the coverage, the media outlet's level of influence, and the amount of traffic that the story drove to the brand's channels.

A **second area** of the public relations practice that is being transformed by the development of AI technologies is **influencer marketing**. Traditionally, PR practitioners who wanted to bring more visibility for their product or brand would partner with influencers with huge following. The belief was that the more followers an influencer had, the more products or services he/she would be able to sell. But this did not always prove true. For example, last year, the Instagram star @Arii failed to sell 36 t-shirts of her new clothing line to her 2.6 million followers, which demonstrates that the number of followers does not always equate to real customers. However, with technologies like machine learning—a field of AI that uses statistics to find patterns in massive amounts of data (Hao, “What Is Machine Learning”)—PR professionals can now identify influencers with a small following but with a higher level of influence than the most popular ones, increasing their chances of converting a PR effort into an increase in sales. This practice is known as “**micro-targeting**”

The **third area** of public relations being transformed by the power of AI monitoring tools is **crisis management**. Even though the 2019 USC Center for PR Global Communications Report showed that only 3% of in-house communicators and 1% of CEOs said they would use technological tools for crisis management purpose, the growing volume of online conversations is forcing companies to closely monitor social media platforms, blogs and news outlets to prevent or manage an online firestorm with real-life consequences. For example, the clothing retailer H&M, whose stores in South Africa were vandalized in 2018 after a Twitter user criticized a company's advertising featuring a young black boy wearing a sweatshirt that read “Coolest monkey in the jungle.” These online firestorms show that there is a growing need to monitor breaking stories, and AI is giving PR professionals the ability to do so in real-time.

The **fourth area of public relations** being impacted by the use of AI technologies is **media relations**. Even though it is still too soon to expect intelligent machines to write and pitch press releases, news outlets like Bloomberg, The Associated Press, The Guardian and The Washington Post are developing “robot reporters” that use AI technologies to cover financial reports, sports and natural disasters. This new practice is starting to transform the relationship between journalists and PR professionals, who are now adjusting their communication strategies to ensure that automated machines can read and report their companies' financials without much human intervention.

There is no doubt that there are more activities in the field of public relations that are currently being impacted by some form of artificial intelligence.

CONCLUSION

Artificial intelligence is going to take over the PR industries in the coming years, we can easily conclude that AI in PR industry has led to a huge impact from start. AI has also improved many companies' customers relationship management which help them to stand in the market for long run. We do believe everything has a disadvantage so do, AI has like security concern with data and technical errors, but when such errors and security risks happen in PR industry companies can suffer losses. So Artificial Intelligence programs and its tools should be used in most effective and efficient manner with daily check or running system diagnosis to get excellent outcome from such AI.

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