

CTV consolidation, signal loss, and AI are the top marketing themes of 2025

Article

In 2025, [digital advertising](#) will be shaped by [connected \(CTV\)](#) consolidation, stricter data privacy measures, and AI-driven marketing. CTV growth may spark mergers, while privacy

regulations push brands to rely on first-party data. [AI](#) will continue to enhance campaign performance and creativity, transforming how marketers engage audiences.

We asked industry experts to give us their top marketing themes of 2025. Let's dig in.

1. CTV consolidation

In 2025, CTV will solidify its role as a “cornerstone of modern media strategy,” according to Brian Mandelbaum, CEO of Attain, as it combines the massive audience of TV with more precise targeting techniques of digital advertising.

- US CTV ad spend will climb 15.8% this year to reach \$33.35 billion, per our November 2024 forecast.
- CTV viewership in the US will also rise, approaching nearly 70% of the population (238.0 million users).

[YouTube](#) and [Amazon](#) dominate the US CTV landscape, raking in \$3.99 billion and \$3.15 billion, respectively, in CTV ad revenues this year, per our forecast. However, there are countless other platforms competing for advertiser dollars.

- This could lead to a wave of consolidation among CTV providers, with smaller players integrating into larger ones like Amazon Prime or Apple TV, said Dan Larkman, CEO of Keynes Digital.
- Increasing customer acquisition costs may lead to consolidation of CTV inventory and a rise in performance-driven CTV ads, said Sambit Patnaik, vice president of product management at Yieldmo.

This trend doesn't just apply to CTV, according to Lucy Markowitz, senior vice president, general manager US Marketplace at Vistar Media.

“Between economic shifts and a changing political landscape, the [digital advertising] industry is primed for deal-making and consolidation,” she said.

2. Data privacy and signal loss

Data privacy will be a “hot button topic” this year, as regulation debates and consumer demand for transparency shape marketing campaigns, said Larkman.

- Over a third of US states have passed comprehensive data privacy laws, according to our “[US Privacy Trends 2024](#)” report, eight of which are going into effect in 2025.
- Google may roll out its new consent-based cookie model this year, severely limiting advertisers’ access to third-party cookies.

In response, marketers will continue to strengthen their first-party data strategies.

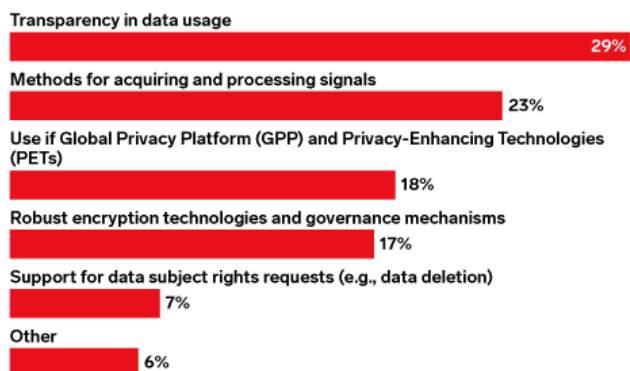
- “As third-party cookies phase out, marketers are increasingly turning to first-party data for audience targeting,” said Ben Skinazi, CMO of Sharethrough, an Equativ company. “This shift necessitates a focus on building direct relationships with consumers and leveraging their data for personalized marketing efforts.”
- This will lead brands to invest more in tools for collecting and analyzing first-party data to enhance targeting precision.
- Marketers may use this data to drive more creative storytelling, said Markowitz.
- “Brands and [agencies](#) alike are recognizing that data isn't just a tool for targeting—it’s the backbone of smarter, more impactful creative strategies,” she said.

To navigate fragmentation and signal loss, advertisers will seek solutions that can provide performance, compliance, and elevated user [experiences](#), said Eric Shiffman, vice president of product marketing at Yieldmo.

- Nearly two-thirds (63%) of marketing professionals worldwide have adopted one or more [identity solutions](#) to address cookieless traffic, per August 2024 data from ID5.
- The most important characteristics of an identity solution include transparency in data usage, methods for acquiring and processing signals, and the use of Global Privacy Platform (GPP) and privacy-enhancing technologies (PETs), per ID5.

Characteristic That Matters the Most to Marketing Professionals Worldwide When Evaluating an Identity Solution From a Privacy Standpoint, Aug 2024

% of respondents



Source: ID5, "The State of Digital Identity 2024," Oct 31, 2024

288245

EM | EMARKETER

3. AI as an end-to-end marketing tool

Marketers will develop “performance-focused AI strategies” in 2025, said Skinazi.

“AI is at the forefront of marketing innovation, enabling more efficient data analysis, personalized customer experiences, and optimized campaign management,” he said. “This will transform how brands connect with consumers and measure campaign effectiveness, making it a critical component of performance marketing strategies.

But AI can also help on the creative side, too.

“AI will continue to revolutionize workflows, but the real transformation will come from how it amplifies the creativity and expertise of skilled professionals, ensuring that marketing remains authentic and human,” said Lance Wolder, head of strategy at PadSquad.

In 2025, AI will be used across every step of the campaign journey, from ideation and creation to execution and measurement.

- Campaign optimization will be the top AI use case in 2025, according to 43% of US brand and agency marketers, per October 2024 data from InMarket.
- Other ways brands will leverage AI include audience targeting (41%), data analysis (30%) and ad creative brainstorming (26%).

This was originally featured in the EMARKETER Daily newsletter. For more marketing insights, statistics, and trends, subscribe [here](#).