ChatGPT plug-ins will transform how consumers interact with brands online

Article

On Tuesday, Microsoft announced it would use the same plug-in standards as OpenAI, meaning plug-ins can work across ChatGPT, Bing Chat, and Microsoft 365 Copilot. Microsoft

is focusing on plug-ins as the future of its OpenAI partnership, and for good reason.

"It's like day one of the Apple App Store," said Mike Kaput, chief content officer of the Marketing AI Institute. "Like the iPhone, [ChatGPT plug-ins are] going to be this window into a lot of services and other functions online."

What's already happening?

OpenAI announced ChatGPT plug-ins for select businesses in March.

- **Instacart**'s plug-in allows users to ask ChatGPT to plan a meal with specific instructions. The integration then generates a shopping list, which can be purchased via Instacart.
- **Kayak** works with users to plan trips using natural language questions and offers recommendations for flights, hotels, and more.
- **Klarna** has a plug-in for shopping, which gives consumers recommendations based on their product preferences and budget.

That's just a limited selection of what will become a massive library of ChatGPT plug-ins as the tech transforms from a chat portal into something that looks more like a platform.

The ad potential

While Bing Chat and Google's Bard will serve ads within queries, plug-ins could take the ability to reach consumers a step further. Advertisers will need to pay attention to where it makes sense to run ads—whether that be within AI chat search queries or via Instacart and Kayak.

The seamless integration has the potential to push more users to these third-party sites, but it also means they won't start searching directly on those sites, which could eat into advertising.

Brands should experiment with plug-ins now

"It would be shocking to me if you're a major brand and you are not trying to create a plug-in," said Kaput.

Kaput is bullish on plug-in potential, even in the near future. "I think there's a very solid chance that much like today when you interact with all the major online products and services, you'll be doing so via ChatGPT."

What should brands watch out for?

In their current state, plug-ins seem to work as intended, "but they break often," said Kaput, who attributes this to a rush to get them out the door. Some tech errors are to be expected, but make sure innovation does not come at the expense of customer experience.

In the case of Instacart, functional AI can actually make native tech issues stand out even more. Tech critic Ryan Broderick tried the plug-in and wrote, "the whole process took about 30 minutes and most of that was spent trying to use Instacart's actually very terrible interface. So the AI part is fairly solid."

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