

Why Marketers Struggle to Define Artificial Intelligence

Imprecise buzzwords create confusion

ARTICLE | JULY 11, 2018

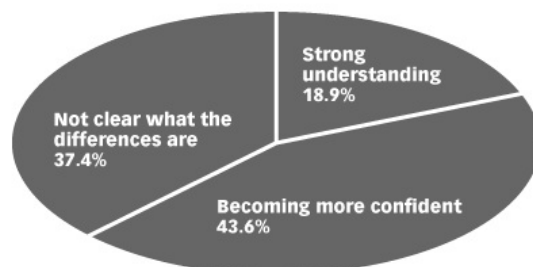
Ross Benes

What exactly is the difference between artificial intelligence and machine learning? If you're unsure, don't worry—you're not alone.

In June, [EverString](#) and [Heinz Marketing](#) surveyed about [300 business-to-business \(B2B\) marketers from North America](#) and found that less than one-fifth of them had a strong understanding of the differences between AI, machine learning and predictive modeling. About four in 10 admitted they were not clear what the differences are.

Extent to Which B2B Marketers in North America Understand the Differences Between Artificial Intelligence, Machine Learning and Predictive Modeling, Q1 2018

% of respondents



Note: numbers may not add up to 100% due to rounding
Source: EverString and Heinz Marketing, "The State of Artificial Intelligence in B2B Marketing," June 28, 2018

239442

www.eMarketer.com

The confusion over these terms is unlikely to go away anytime soon. Part of this confusion likely comes from how marketing tech vendors and advertisers use these terms in all sorts of ways to pitch products they're peddling. Sometimes AI and machine learning are used interchangeably. Sometimes they're not.

These buzzwords have become a go-to for companies seeking press. InsightSquared found that press releases from marketing automation vendors **typically mention AI and machine learning**, but rarely mention analytics features even though **marketers prioritize analytics and reporting** features when shopping for vendors. And GlobalData concluded that AI gets mentioned much more during discussions on Twitter **than other emerging technologies** like blockchain and augmented reality do.

The **amorphous use of AI** by marketers creates confusion, **even among AI experts**. In a **Digiday Research survey** of 37 marketers, about half of the respondents gave themselves a "C" rating when it comes to their understanding of AI.