

# Digital is a revolution, not a media type

By [Elaine Loeb](#), issued by [Dentsu](#)

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Being in the advertising industry, digital is often referred to as a media type: "Let's complement our above-the-line media with digital." I can't help but chuckle a little inside every time I hear this phrase. The whole concept of above-the-line, below-the-line and through-the-line is a little grey to me; consumers don't compartmentalise their decision-making journey and neither should we as marketers. That is an article on its own; [Google's Micro-Moments](#) is a good read but that aside, let us get into the point at hand.



Elaine Loeb

Digitalisation has fundamentally changed the way that we as human beings behave; from how we wake up in the morning, how we speak to our family and friends to how we make any decision or answer any question.

To unpack this a little; we have devices that remind us to go to bed and an automated alarm system set to weekdays only and this is set up in advance, based on the number of hours we need to sleep a night. This coupled with an electric toothbrush that informs the duration you brush your teeth as well as warns you if you are brushing too hard; even lets you know how long to brush each quadrant of your mouth for.

Going a step further; Alexa/Google/Siri has already informed you of the weather; your capsule wardrobe makes it far easier to get dressed as you pinned your outfit on Pinterest the night before and so your day can begin; but not before you check your route to work using Google Maps just in case there is an accident on the way, that you can avoid by taking an alternative route.

I am just scratching the surface here by outlining a handful of daily routine tasks but the broader point here is that we don't go online for any and all of the above; we live

online!

Consumers are driving this shift by simply adapting to life online without even giving it a second thought and brands need to adapt faster than ever. With China fast approaching a cash-less world and Amazon pay slowly starting to roll out in an offline environment; tap and pay; Snapscan etc. the way that we as a race have traded for hundreds of years has also now changed. With this in mind it is no surprise that some of the world's largest retailers are closing their doors and online shopping is taking centre stage. Everything in our daily routine is digitised and if brands don't keep up they will unfortunately fall out of our decisions trees.

Small businesses, start-ups and individuals are leap-frogging larger existing companies with larger amounts of hardware in place as there is no need for a transition; they can start fresh with next to no physical infrastructure. The same applies to third world countries leap-frogging first world countries, with mobile first having always been there as opposed to first world countries trying to change the mind sets of consumers. Which leaves South Africans in a very exciting place; we are more connected, mobile first and with our entrepreneurial spirit the sky is literally the limit.

Not to say that there aren't existing large companies that are getting this right; there certainly are! NBCnews has started producing a [twice daily bulletin for Snapchat](#); Fox is broadcasting a [beat Shazam game show](#) (aah sorry [Noot vir Noot](#)) & Volvo has announced that [every new car from 2019](#) will have an electric motor and MINI is [building a fully electric vehicle](#) next year too. But this still doesn't give a clear indication of how exactly to futureproof your brand nor what the next digital revolution will be, if it is digital at all?

So how do we prepare ourselves as people and as organisations? The reality is we can't, none of us have crystal balls nor can we envisage a world unlike any of us have ever known. But what we can do is embrace the revolution, utilise every tool it throws our way to save us time/automate our world so that we can consume content as much as possible in this age of information. Lastly, remember our history, learn from how humans have adapted to change so that we be more agile than ever and not get left behind.

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Baine Loeb is an Account Director for Vizeum Johannesburg.

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