



**EXPLORING THE CURRENT AND EMERGING TRENDS IN  
DIGITAL MARKETING WITHIN THE UK MARKET: AN  
ANALYSIS OF ASOS PLC.**

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## Introduction

The business environment has changed completely with the emergence of a new dynamic business model due to market globalisation and the rapid development of technology. This has made the business market highly competitive, uncertain and volatile. This led to the growth of the digital marketing trends in the current world. The term digital marketing started to become popular in 1990 with the adoption of the Internet. According to Sundaram *et al* (2020), digital marketing also called online marketing focuses on promoting brands among the target customers using different types of digital communication. Digital marketing can range from the application of email to the creation of content on the websites of companies. Digital marketing focuses on the 7C's which include "customers, context, content, community, conversion, cohesion and convenience (Times of India, 2023). The content of digital marketing needs to be tailored as per the customer preference. It is important for a digital marketing strategy to provide high-quality, knowledgeable and original content.

With the growth in the competition in the digital marketing space in the UK, businesses are investing more amount in their specific marketing department and the demand for skilled professionals in digital marketing is gradually increasing. As per the survey report obtained from Statista (2022), the spending on digital marketing for "profit companies was expected to enhance by 28.29% for the following 12 months". This means that the digital marketing is gaining popularity within the UK market.

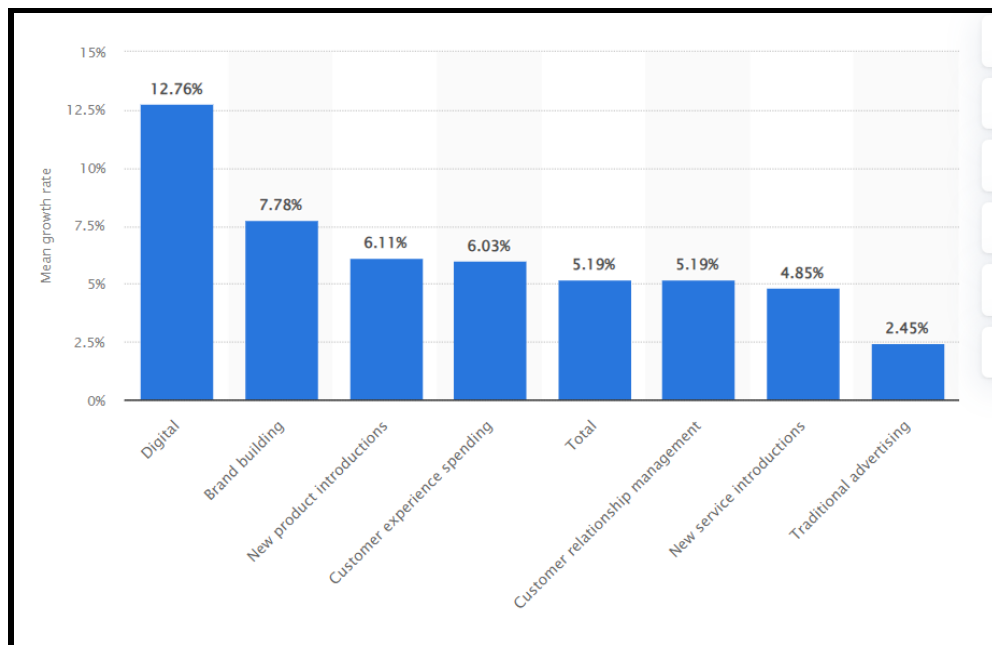


**Figure: Growth of digital marketing in the UK**

(Source- Statista, 2023)

The proposed topic has been selected for research as digital marketing is a booming topic in the current scenario and as per the above chart it has high prospects within the UK market. There is limited study on how the digital marketing strategies used by ASOS plc are giving the company a competitive advantage within the UK market. This study will help to explore more knowledge regarding the tools and techniques of digital marketing. It will also help to know what challenges can be faced by companies in adopting all these tools and techniques.

The study will be conducted through primary data and so one of the potential challenges can be to obtain response from the research participants on time.

## **Aims and objectives**

### ***Aims***

The proposed research will focus on “analysing the current and emerging trends of digital marketing used by ASOS plc in operating business in the UK market”. In this regard, the research will focus on exploring the different digital marketing tools that ASOS plc. is using and how far it is helping ASOS Plc. to have a competitive advantage in the market of UK.

### **Objective**

- To recognise the different “tools and techniques of digital marketing” that are used by fashion retailers to survive in the competitive business environment in the UK.
- To explore how far the digital marketing strategies used by ASOS plc is giving the company a competitive advantage in the UK market.
- To identify the challenges faced by ASOS plc in adopting digital marketing strategies within the UK market.
- To recommend measures so that the challenges can be effectively handled.

### **Research questions**

- What are the different “tools and techniques of digital marketing” that are used by fashion retailers to survive in the competitive business environment in the UK?
- How far the digital marketing strategies used by ASOS plc is giving the company a competitive advantage in the UK market?
- What are the challenges faced by ASOS plc in adopting digital marketing strategies within the UK market?
- What measures can be recommended so that the challenges can be handled efficiently?

### **Literature review**

#### **Digital marketing tactics**

This are the specific digital marketing strategy plan that are used by companies so that an online presence of the company can be maintained to achieve specific goals. There are different strategies that companies can use to enhance their presence on the digital platform.

First is the strategy of **content marketing** that focuses on distributing and creating consistent, valuable and relevant content to retain and attract specific audiences to drive customers toward positive actions (Olson *et al.*, 2021). Second, **SEO** (Search Engine Optimisation) which focuses on optimising and structuring the pages of a company’s websites so that it can deliver the best possible results on the Google Search Engine. The third one, **paid advertising** where companies pay so that their ads get displayed to the target audience. Fourth **email marketing** where products and service information are sent to customers through personalised email

**Affiliate marketing** is another form of digital marketing tactic where an affiliate earns a commission from the organisation to market their products. According to Peter and Dalla Vecchia (2021), the main aim of affiliate marketing is to enhance the coverage of an organisation and its number of channels through strategic partnerships with other websites/organisations. **Mobile marketing** is also a type of digital marketing tactic where exciting offers are sent to customers via mobile devices. **Social media marketing** is one of the most famous techniques of digital marketing that is gaining popularity in the current business market. In this process, a business contacts its target audience through different social media platforms like Instagram, YouTube, Facebook, and many others.

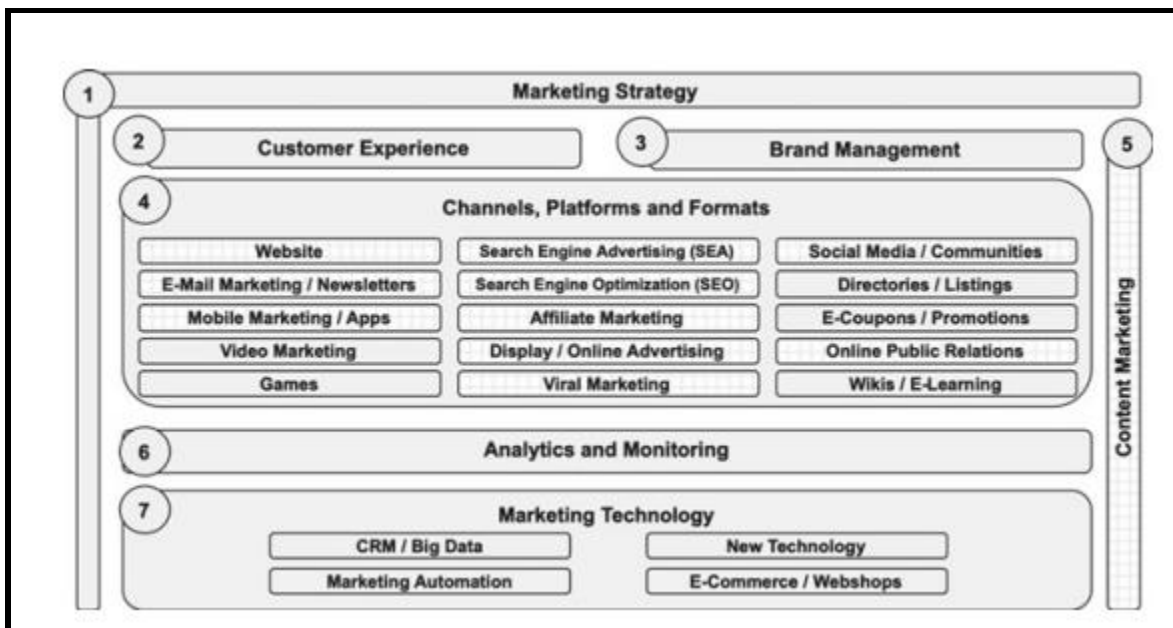


**Figure 3: Toolkit of digital marketing**

(Source-Peter and Dalla Vecchia (2021))

### Opportunities and challenges of digital marketing

Digital marketing has a wider reach in comparison to traditional promoting marketing tactics. A company can showcase their product among different customers dispersed through a wide area with its digital marketing strategy. According to Veleva and Tsvetanova (2021), digital marketing help to ensure that business of all sizes can compete on a global scale. It is highly cost-effective also as it can help the company to send their offers or products with minimum investment. One of the crucial advantages of online or digital marketing is that a company can access real-time analytics and data. According to Cioffi (2019), data analytics help a company to

properly understand the effectiveness of its marketing strategies and allow it to optimise and adjust its marketing budget so that accurate marketing channels and campaigns can be designed. Apart from the above-mentioned advantages, marketers adopting digital marketing need to face different challenges. Small companies can face difficulty in surviving the competition within digital platforms in comparison to big companies when they have a good follower base on digital platforms. Companies can face issues related to privacy concerns in digital marketing. According to Wieringa *et al* (2021), companies using digital marketing heavily depend on collecting which can raise their privacy concern. The strict regulation of CCPA and GDPR allow companies to carefully collect data as there is a huge concern about how customer data are stored, collected and used by different companies. As the consumer market is evolving continuously it is an important and challenging task for digital marketers to deliver strategies and content that can meet the evolving needs of the consumers. According to Veleva and Tsvetanova (2021), audiences can consider the digital marketing campaign of companies as a casual approach if the content is not properly designed. So, this is a challenging task for the company to create engaging and relevant content so that it can build faith among customers and increase their level of engagement.

### ***Current digital marketing technologies used by ASOS Plc.***

As a prominent online fashion retailer in the global retail sector, ASOS Plc. has utilized a wide range of digital technologies to enhance or improve its operations, supply chain management, and inventory management. The fast fashion retail company has signed a new agreement with Microsoft which will investigate the business continue to use the “**Microsoft Cloud**” as ASOS Plc. has preferred to use the platform for the next five years (Asosplc, 2023). By utilising the technology, the fast fashion company has brought together moreover 900 brands for fashion-loving consumers by using **AI** and **Microsoft Azure** to power the digital platform and support innovative or data-led work streams.

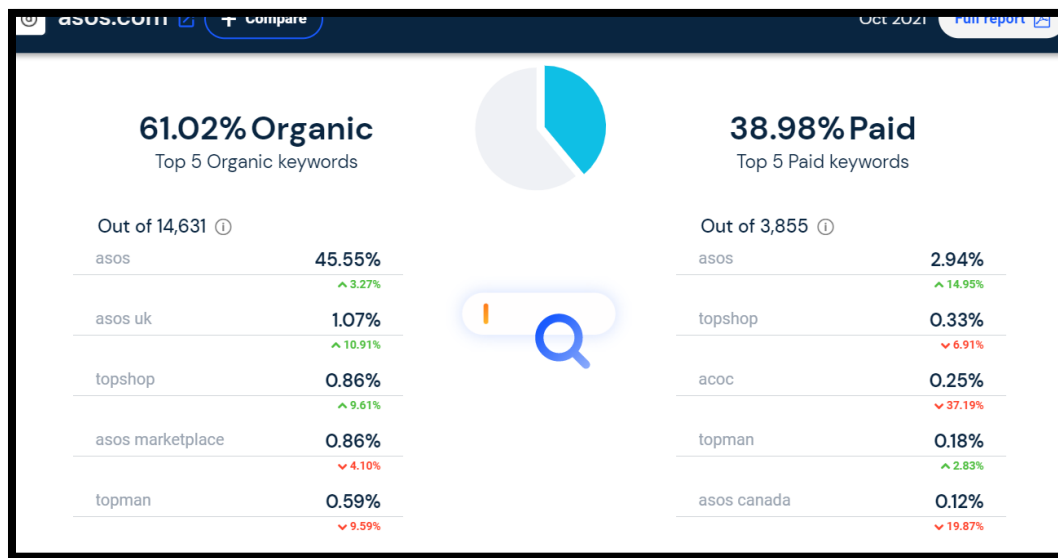


**Figure 4: Traffic overview of ASOS Plc**

(Source: Chaffey and Ellis-Chadwick, 2019)

As per Figure 1, the digital marketing strategy of the company is entirely focused on direct marketing 45.02% of traffic comes from phone calls, email marketing, direct mail, SMS, and coupons, following 43.38% of searches (Chaffey and Ellis-Chadwick, 2019). ASOS Plc. has utilized 7 types of digital marketing strategies to reach its global consumers focusing on advertisements by using SEO or Search Engine Optimisation.

According to Ologunebi and Taiwo (2023), effective digital marketing trends of ASOS Plc have helped to sell thousands of products and its own range of accessories and clothing to over 200 countries. ASOS plc has started to use social media platforms and digital channels to gather consumer data and promote its brand from a global perspective. ASOS has maintained a strong presence on the social media platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, TikTok, and Twitter by regularly sharing user-generated content (Parker and Alexander, 2022). Some major digital marketing channels utilised by ASOS Plc are the **Online Loyalty Scheme, Google+, Pinterest, Facebook, AdWords, and SEO.**

## Methodology

Research methodology is significant for the research regarding the “analysis of the current and emerging trends in digital marketing within the UK market: An analysis of ASOS Plc.” as research methodology will provide scientific findings and legitimacy. The section will describe the reasoning behind the chosen research approaches. However, in order to identify the different types of digital marketing trends and tools used by ASOS, primary research will be significant. Moreover, the exploration of digital marketing strategies used by ASOS Plc. whether competitive or not can also be evaluated by the real-time discussions or statements of internal employees of staff of the fast fashion company. The real challenges that the company is facing currently can also be known by gathering primary data collection. The Saunders Research Onion can be considered in this context as it will help in organising the research proposal effectively. 6 layers of this model are “Research philosophy, Research approach, Research strategy, Choices, Time horizon, Techniques and procedures” (Orth and Macada, 2021). Therefore, the data collection and data analysis will be conducted with primary data. Positivism research philosophy will be followed along with quantitative research.

Therefore, the research will be based on the **Primary data collection** as the gathered data by using it will be more reliable and accurate as it will come from direct sources; primary data is more accurate and efficient than secondary data collection. In the context of analysing the current and emerging digital marketing trends of ASOS Plc., primary data will be specific based on the research objective as researchers will be able to tailor their data collection to provide specific results. On the other hand, the primary database in the research context will be collected in real-time and it will make it relevant to monitor processes (Kowalski and Jenkins, 2021). However, everyone can get access to secondary data collection and primary data cannot be gathered by others rather than participants or researchers; therefore, there will be security and ethics within the primary data collection. The data collection will provide detailed and direct insights into the target audience within the fast fashion company in the UK.

In the context of primary data collection, a collection source is pivotal to be selected. Therefore, in order to analyse the current and emerging trends in digital marketing of ASOS Plc. within the UK, an **online survey** can be conducted to gather real-time and authentic data with the **digital**

**marketing content creators** of the fast fashion retail company. Online surveys have become the most effective process of primary data collection and it can reach the maximum number of individuals in comparison to other methods (Kara, 2023). Moreover, the performance of these surveys is more widespread than the other data collection. In this research, it will not be possible to ask questions to the digital marketing content creators directly, therefore, the researchers can prefer conducting online surveys rather than telephonic surveys or traditional face-to-face surveys. The online survey will be conducted by the **researchers** of this topic itself for more accurate and relevant data collection.

50 digital marketing content creators will be selected within the ASOS Plc. of the UK. They will be provided with the online survey form. The online survey form will be effective in this research as it will require branching technologies and computational logic for an accurate survey data collection (Gunawan *et al.* 2022). The online survey will be filled up by the 50 digital marketing content creators through **Google forms** as it will help in the graphical section of the research. As a student, I will have to convince the 50 digital content makers of ASOS which can be conducted through personalized outreach such as tailoring the interested approach. Highlighting mutual benefits will also be beneficial as gaining knowledge regarding digital marketing of the global retail company, ASOS. The approach will be transparent in the implementation and will take very little time for the 50 respondents. However, the investment required for survey data collection using online surveys will also be negotiable. On the other hand, the results will be collected in real-time for the researchers to decide and analyse corrective measures. Online surveys in this research will be secure and safe to conduct as they will not disrupt organisational safety or privacy policies of ASOS Plc.

Research philosophy is another significant factor in research methodology that should be approached in this research as it will involve formulation and awareness. Therefore, the research will be based on the **Positivism research philosophy** as it is highly structured with large samples and it will help the research to be measured through quantitative data collection (Mazhar *et al.* 2021). The research approach is another pivotal factor in this research which will help in exploratory studies; therefore, the research will be conducted based on an **Inductive research approach** as it will be beneficial to collect and analyse data to develop concepts and theories

based on the observations and patterns in data findings (Dreyer *et al.* 2019). It will enable flexibility by supporting the utilisation of new theories. The purpose of using the research approach is to establish clear links between the research objectives or evaluation and summary findings derived from real-time data gathered from the online survey.

## **Timeframe**



| Sl. No | Task                                 | Duration        | Predecessors   |
|--------|--------------------------------------|-----------------|----------------|
| 1      | Initiation                           | Week 1-2        | -              |
| 2      | <b>Aim and objectives</b>            | <b>Week 2-3</b> | -              |
| 3      | Research questions                   | Week 3-4        | 2              |
| 4      | <b>Literature review</b>             | <b>Week 4-5</b> | <b>3</b>       |
| 5      | Theoretical and conceptual framework | Week 5-6        | 2,4            |
| 6      | <b>Selection of databases</b>        | <b>Week 6</b>   | <b>3,4</b>     |
| 7      | Methodology                          | Week 7-8        | 5              |
| 9      | <b>Data-based study</b>              | <b>Week 8</b>   | <b>5,6,7</b>   |
| 10     | Collection of primary data           | Week 9          | 8,9            |
| 11     | <b>Findings</b>                      | <b>Week 9</b>   | <b>9</b>       |
| 12     | Discussion                           | Week 10         | 10,11          |
| 13     | <b>Linking with objectives</b>       | <b>Week 11</b>  | <b>9,11,12</b> |
| 14     | Justifying research outcomes         | Week 11         | 13             |
| 15     | <b>Submission</b>                    | <b>Week 12</b>  | <b>14</b>      |

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