# Ecommerce advancements signal a shift towards AI and automation



In the rapidly evolving landscape of ecommerce, several notable advancements in technology are reshaping business practices across various platforms as of late 2023. The focus on artificial intelligence (AI) and automation reveals significant trends aimed at enhancing efficiency and customer engagement. This week's updates highlight key developments that are poised to influence how businesses operate in both B2B and B2C sectors.

In a significant strategic move, Passport, an international ecommerce solutions provider, has recently acquired Brand Access, a leader in localized cross-border selling. This acquisition is set to empower merchants, offering them integrated services such as in-country logistics and marketplace management, particularly in major markets like Canada, the U.K., and the E.U. This initiative aims to facilitate direct-to-consumer brands in unlocking their global growth potential.

Amidst this backdrop, Amazon has introduced its Retail Ad Service, which allows online retailers to display targeted product ads across various sections of their website, including search and browse pages. This service tailors ads using real-time data related to product availability, pricing, and shoppers’ previous interactions. Retailers retain control over ad formats and placements, allowing for a bespoke advertising experience that aligns with shopper interests.

In similar strides, Microsoft Advertising has rolled out new tools aimed at enhancing retail engagement. Their offerings, "Curate for Commerce" and "Sponsored Promotions by Brands," provide retailers with the ability to monetise first-party data and create tailored advertisements. This move seeks to foster personalised shopping experiences across platforms like Microsoft Edge and Bing, connecting shoppers with relevant products.

BigCommerce has upgraded its Catalyst storefront technology, providing a simplified way for marketers to launch optimised online stores with just one click from the control panel. This update integrates essential features such as customizable checkouts and inventory management, streamlining both the setup process and ongoing store management.

Salesforce has also entered the AI arena by unveiling two innovative services tailored for the retail sector. "Agentforce for Retail" includes automated capabilities for various tasks, enabling efficient customer interactions, while "Retail Cloud with Modern POS" merges online and offline shopping data into a cohesive platform. These tools aim to enhance retail efficiency and drive customer satisfaction through deeper personalisation.

Algolia, on the other hand, has launched Shopping Guides, a generative AI tool designed to assist ecommerce websites in creating content that aids consumers in their shopping journey. By offering informative articles and comparisons, Shopping Guides looks to enhance the purchasing experience for users in both B2C and B2B contexts.

Commercetools has made its foray into physical retail with the launch of Commercetools InStore. This application facilitates a unified omnichannel commerce experience, allowing retailers to manage inventory and customer interactions seamlessly across both digital and physical environments. The move is expected to simplify retail management by providing real-time updates and personalised customer experiences.

Additionally, ParcelLab has introduced its post-purchase Copilot and AI Email Editor, tools that focus on improving customer communication after sales. With the capability to automate email communications in over 160 languages, these tools are designed to enhance customer satisfaction during the post-purchase phase.

In the automotive sector, eBay has announced its plan to acquire Caramel, which offers a secure platform for online automotive transactions. Caramel's service provides a digital environment for vehicle sales covering various transactional needs such as paperwork and financing.

Moreover, Genesy AI has successfully secured €5 million in seed funding to further develop AI agents aimed at revolutionising B2B sales processes. The initiative, led by the venture capital firm Samaipata, targets expansion into multiple European markets and the U.S.

Lastly, Amazon Ads has integrated generative AI capabilities into its Marketing Cloud, enabling advertisers to generate SQL queries through natural language processing. This innovation is expected to enhance audience targeting for campaigns spanning different channels, including digital and audio media.

The shifts towards AI and automation across ecommerce not only represent the adoption of innovative technologies but also indicate a broader trend towards creating more efficient business models focused on customer experience and engagement. The continued evolution of these tools is likely to have far-reaching implications for businesses striving to adapt to a digital-first marketplace.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

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