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## META ADS DIGITAL ADVERTISING IN SOCIAL NETWORKS

*A progressive tool for achieving the marketing goals of retail enterprises in digital advertising in social networks, taking into account the current situation in Ukraine, is Meta Ads. Advanced targeting parameters based on demographics, interests and own audience make Meta Ads a powerful tool for digital advertising professionals, allowing them to reach a wide audience with targeted messages. The study was conducted using the following methods: data analysis, synthesis and logical generalization of results; systemic, structural and statistical analysis with the use of graphical methods. The main sources of information are scientific papers, the results of marketing research, expert blogs in the field of digital advertising, and official statistical information from Internet resources. In the article there were considered the functions of generative artificial intelligence in Meta Ads, such as image enhancement, background generation, and ad text variations, which can reduce the time required to create advertising materials. Advantage+ tools that automate the process of creating advertising campaigns and targeting have been analysed, in*

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## ЦИФРОВА РЕКЛАМА META ADS У СОЦІАЛЬНИХ МЕРЕЖАХ

*Прогресивним інструментом для досягнення маркетингових цілей підприємств роздрібно-ї торгівлі в цифровій рекламі в соціальних мережах, з урахуванням поточної ситуації в Україні, є Meta Ads. Розширені параметри націлювання на основі демографічних показників, інтересів і власної аудиторії робить Meta Ads потужним інструментом для спеціалістів з цифрової реклами, дозволяючи охопити широку аудиторію шляхом цільових повідомлень. Дослідження проведено із застосуванням методів: аналізу даних, синтезу та логічного узагальнення результатів, системно-структурного та статистичного аналізу, а також графічних методів. Основними джерелами інформації є наукові праці, результати маркетингових досліджень, експертні блоги у галузі цифрової реклами та офіційна статистична інформація з інтернет-ресурсів. Розглянуто функції генеративного штучного інтелекту в Meta Ads, такі як розширення зображень, генерування фону та варіації текстів оголошень, що дає змогу скоротити час на створення рекламних матеріалів. Проаналізовано інструменти Advantage+, які автоматизують*



*particular Advantage+ Shopping Campaigns and Advantage+ Creative. The development trends of Meta Ads in the Ukrainian market, which will affect the results and efficiency of work with digital advertising, are substantiated. It was determined that the use of existing artificial intelligence technologies will allow enterprises to better find the target audience and work with advertisements.*

*Keywords:* advertising, digital marketing, digital advertising, social networks, Facebook, Instagram, Meta Ads, artificial intelligence, Advantage+.

JEL Classification: M31, M37.

## Introduction

Social networks are an important channel for the distribution of digital advertising to increase brand awareness, attract new audiences, increase sales, and increase profits. The leading social platforms in the world and in Ukraine are currently Facebook and Instagram, owned by Meta. Meta Ads, a universal advertising tool, is used to create and publish digital ads on these platforms.

Meta Ads in Ukraine is a relevant tool for achieving the business goals of retail trade enterprises (RTEs) in digital advertising in the war and post-war periods. It offers advanced targeting options that allow advertisers to find target audiences based on demographics, interests, own audience, artificial intelligence, locations, and placement platforms. This makes Meta Ads a powerful tool for digital advertising professionals, allowing them to reach large audiences through targeted messaging. This is especially relevant in times of war, when Ukrainian enterprises need to focus on the most effective digital channels for promoting their products in order to optimize costs and maximize profits.

The results of the analysis of the latest research and publications indicate active research in the direction of digital marketing (DM), artificial intelligence (AI) and advertising technologies by both domestic and foreign scientists. In particular, a significant contribution to the research of contextual and targeted advertising was made by Yarmoliuk et al. (2022), who highlighted the theoretical and methodological aspects of using targeted advertising in Internet marketing. Parfeniuk (2024) reviewed the ethical challenges and threats associated with personalized advertising in social networks, which is an important area of research in the context of user data protection.

Chernysh and Salimon (2023) emphasized contextual advertising as an important tool of Internet marketing, which helps to increase sales and increase brand recognition. Voloboiev (2024) explored innovative advertising tools based on artificial intelligence, which open up new opportunities for the automation of advertising campaigns.

*процес створення рекламних кампаній і таргетингу, зокрема Advantage+ Shopping Campaigns та Advantage+ Creative. Обґрунтовано тенденції розвитку Meta Ads на українському ринку, що будуть впливати на результати та ефективність роботи з цифровою рекламою. Визначено, що використання наявних технологій штучного інтелекту дозволить підприємствам краще знаходити цільову аудиторію та працювати з рекламними оголошеннями.*

*Ключові слова:* реклама, цифровий маркетинг, цифрова реклама, соціальні мережі, Facebook, Instagram, Meta Ads, штучний інтелект, Advantage+.

An in-depth study of digital technologies in marketing by Pascucci et al. (2023), as well as the analysis of analytical and AI technologies by I. Ponomarenko and D. Ponomarenko (2024), point to global trends in the digital transformation of advertising and marketing, in particular the use of data and automation to increase the effectiveness of advertising campaigns. The actualization of the digital advertising market in social networks, the study of advantages and disadvantages, and the study of prospects for the development of Meta Ads digital advertising tools require further research.

The purpose of the article is to evaluate the tool of digital advertising in social networks Meta Ads and determine the prospects for the development of its application for retail trade enterprises.

The conducted research is based on the hypothesis that the widespread and effective use of the digital advertising tool in social networks Meta Ads will contribute to the recovery and scaling of business activities of RTE in Ukraine in the war and post-war periods.

The scientific works that highlight the issue of DM, in particular, advertising in social networks, the results of marketing research, expert articles of specialists on digital advertising in online publications, statistical data became the information base of the study.

The research used methods of data analysis, synthesis and logical generalization of the results – a step-by-step plan for creating and placing advertising in Meta Ads was summarized, as well as ways to optimize it; statistical methods and methods of graphical representation are applied, demonstrating the state of use of digital advertising in social networks in the world and the possibilities of its development in Ukraine.

In the main part of the article, an overview of the world market of advertising in social networks was carried out and trends affecting its growth were identified: digital transformation based on the development of digital technologies, orientation on historical data and analytics. The advantages of digital advertising in social networks using the advertising tool Meta Ads have been revealed: a wide selection and setting of the audience; variety of formats and places of advertising; extended functionality for retail trade. Taking into account the change in consumer behavior and the spread of technological innovations, the use of artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning for digital solutions in Meta Ads is justified, in particular, generative AI functions for ads and Advantage+ AI tools. The functions of generative AI in Meta Ads include image expansion, background generation and ad text variations, which allows you to reduce the time for creating advertising materials. The functionality of AI tools of Advantage+ includes trade companies, advertising materials and audiences, which allows you to save time and change focus in favor of strategic tasks by automating the process of creating advertising campaigns and targeting. The positive influence of the development of social networks and the personalization trend on the effectiveness of digital advertising of retail trade enterprises was revealed.

## 1. Overview of the advertising market in social networks

Social networks have become an integral part of people’s everyday life. In recent years, the audience of social networks in the world has increased to 5 billion users (DataReportal, 2024), which is a convincing argument for enterprises to actively conduct advertising and business activities in social networks.

Social media advertising is one of the key tools of digital advertising that works on the basis of data obtained when tracking users’ online activity, search history and personal information from profiles on Facebook, Instagram and other social networks. It allows you to focus on an audience with specific interests and preferences (Yankovets, 2024).

The global market for digital advertising in social networks, according to Statista for 2023, amounts USD 314 billion and has a tendency to increase according to cost forecasts until 2028 (Figure 1).

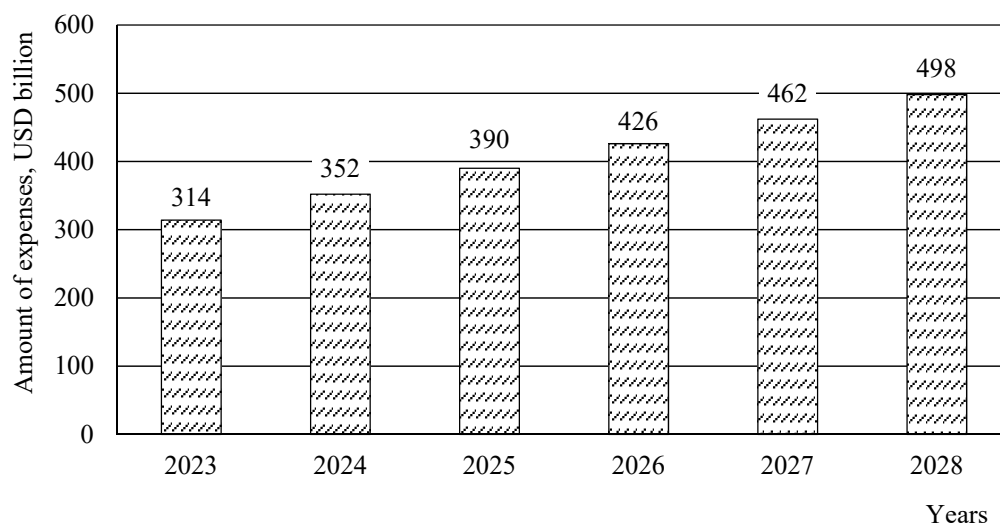


Figure 1. Forecast of advertising costs in social networks

Source: systematized by the authors according to the data (Statista, 2024).

The given forecast of the development of social networks and the growth of expenses until 2028 is based on general trends.

*The impact of digital transformation.* The positive trend in digital advertising spending indicates a global shift of business to the online environment. At the same time, changing behaviour in the way consumers interact with media and content encourages businesses to invest in social networks to promote products (Dergachova & Kolieshnia, 2020).

*Focus on historical data and analytics.* The role of data collection and analytics is being strengthened. The number of enterprises that will use advertising in social networks is increasing, since this type of digital advertising is based on data analysis and increasing their effectiveness (Kupchenko, 2023).

*Development of digital technologies.* The development of technologies, in particular artificial intelligence, automation and the development of advertising technologies within the social network allow to create more effective advertising and encourage more advertisers to use digital advertising in social networks and/or increase budgets for it (Pascucci et al., 2023). At the same time, in Ukraine, according to the systematized data of SimilarWeb, Dataportal for 2024, the most popular social network is TikTok, which has more than 16 million users (*Figure 2*).

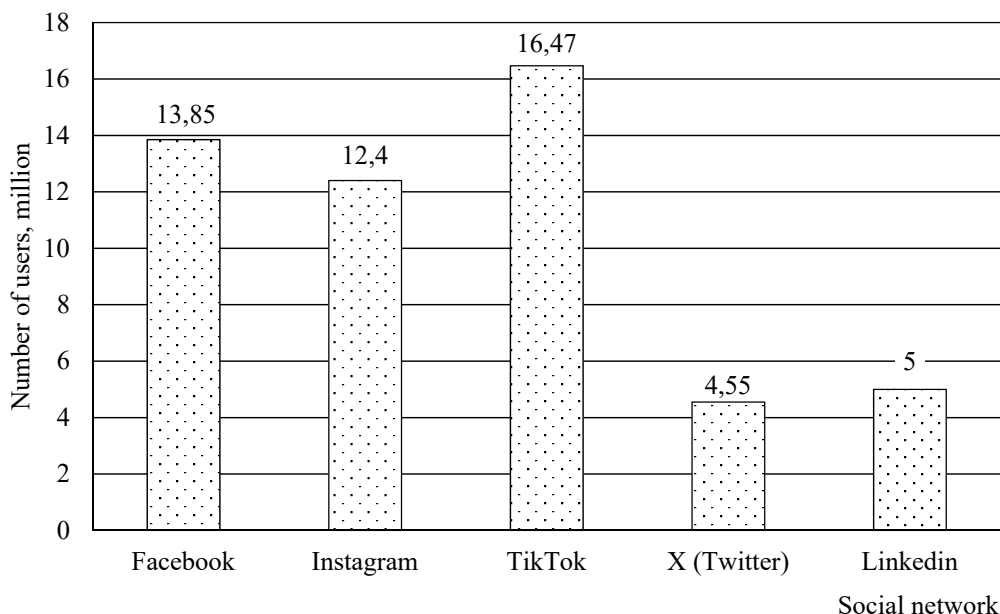


Figure 2. Number of users in social networks

*Source:* systematized by the authors according to the data (SimilarWeb, 2024; DataReportal, 2024).

In connection with the full-scale war, the TikTok network disabled the function of setting up advertisements in Ukraine, therefore, for the most part, the specified platform is not relevant for RTE. In turn, the advertising platform Meta Ads is available for targeting ads and has two powerful social networks: Facebook and Instagram with 13.85 and 12.4 million users, respectively. Other social networks have a much smaller number of users: X (Twitter) 4.55 million and LinkedIn 5 million (SimilarWeb, DataReportal, 2024).

Because Facebook and Instagram have the largest audiences available for targeting, it makes sense for RTEs to primarily focus marketing and advertising efforts on these networks. Therefore, we will further analyse the Facebook and Instagram networks from the point of view of demographic indicators (*Figure 3*).

According to the indicators of the *Facebook* network, the largest age cluster of the audience is between 25 and 44 years old. *Instagram* has an advantage among the younger audience – 18–34 years old. It can be noted that the 35–44 cluster is practically the same for both social networks.

Therefore, a business targeting this age group can run digital advertising on both platforms. For RTEs, which have a target audience over 45 years old, the more relevant social network in terms of the number of potential consumers will be Facebook (NapoleonCat, 2024a; NapoleonCat, 2024b).

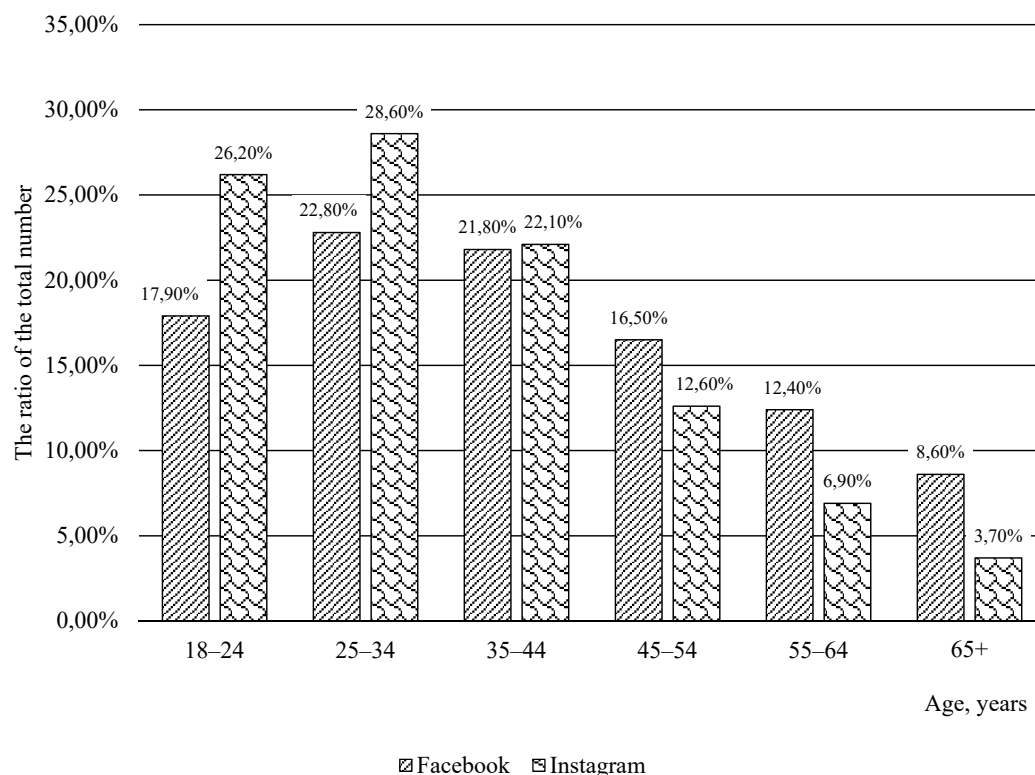


Figure 3. Demographic structure of Facebook and Instagram social networks by age  
 Source: systematized by the authors according to the data (NapoleonCat, 2024a; 2024b).

In terms of gender, women predominate in both networks: Instagram (63.4% vs. 36.6%) is the most prevalent, while Facebook is slightly more prevalent (58.7% vs. 41.3%) (NapoleonCat, 2024a, 2024b). Therefore, for RTEs that focus, for example, on selling products for women, it makes sense to focus on digital advertising on Instagram.

Therefore, retail trade enterprises using Meta company’s Facebook and Instagram social networks, which have a large enough audience, can create effective digital advertising and increase their overall effectiveness.

## 2. Meta Ads: advantages and disadvantages for retail businesses

Digital advertising in social networks using the Meta Ads advertising tool has significant advantages for RTE.

*Firstly, broad selection and audience preparing.* The Facebook and Instagram platforms have a large audience – more than 12 million users each (SimilarWeb, DataReportal, 2024), which opens up various opportunities for

## MARKETING

audience segmentation by demographics, interests and behavioural characteristics. This allows you to target ads to specific audience clusters. For example, for an online store selling cosmetic products, it is relevant to adjust advertising to women who live in Ukraine and have "beauty and health" interests. Also, the platform provides an opportunity to target the audience based on data from the website or customer list.

*Secondly, the variety of formats and placements of advertising.* The Meta ecosystem offers four platforms for advertising (Facebook, Instagram, Messenger, Audience network). Platforms, in turn, have various placements for targeted impact on a potential consumer. Generalization and description of placements is presented in the *Table 1* (Meta Help Centre for Business, n. d.; Rakovic, 2024; Tkachenko, 2024, June 18).

*Table 1*

Placements of the Meta Ads advertising system

Placement	Showing ads	Platform			
		Facebook	Instagram	Messenger	Audience network
Feeds	In the news feed	Facebook Feed Facebook profile feed Facebook Marketplace Facebook video feeds Facebook right column Facebook Business Explore	Instagram feed Instagram profile feed Instagram Explore Instagram Explore home	Messenger inbox	-
Stories and Reels	In the feed of stories or Reels	Facebook Stories Facebook Reels	Instagram Stories Instagram Reels Instagram profile reels	Messenger Stories	
Search results	In the search results	Facebook search results	Instagram search results		
In-stream Ads for Videos and Reels	In the middle or after the main video	Facebook in-stream videos Ads on Facebook Reels		-	
Messages	In the form of a direct message in the messenger			Messenger sponsored messages	
Apps and sites	In applications and websites that are part of the Meta ecosystem	-	-	-	
				Audience Network native, banner and interstitial Audience Network rewarded videos	

*Source:* systematized and adapted by the authors based on (Meta Help Centre for Business, n. d.; Rakovic, 2024; Tkachenko, 2024).

*Thirdly, extended functionality for retail trade.* First of all, it is an opportunity to display advertisements of all available products on the basis of the website without the need to create separate advertisements; in addition, dynamic remarketing, which also does not require the creation of ads, since it uses images and texts from the website and shows only viewed products according to each user.

At the same time, with a significant number of advantages and opportunities, digital advertising in Meta Ads also has disadvantages (Tkachenko, 2024):

*high competition.* Companies need to pay enough attention to competitors, their own value proposition and the quality of advertising materials in order to successfully compete with other advertisers for consumer attention;

*blocking risk.* Meta Ads has strict rules regarding advertising, non-compliance with which may result in banning of the advertising account and the account. Ads may also get blocked due to user appeals caused by behavioural factors;

*low level of trust in technical support.* According to advertisers' feedback, Meta Ads technical support often does not solve problems that arise when setting up or running ads. That is, the problem remains unresolved, so the advertiser needs to find a solution independently, which can negatively affect the financial results of the enterprise depending on the size of the problem and the duration of its solution (Trustpilot, 2024).

Therefore, the analysis of advantages and disadvantages showed that the customization options and diversity in the choice of placements will allow the RTEs to achieve its own marketing goals through digital advertising in Meta Ads. At the same time, in order to reduce the risks of the impact of existing flaws, companies need to cooperate with Meta Ads advertising experts. These can be digital agencies or individual specialists in the status of an employee or freelancer who have the necessary experience in working with the tool and a portfolio of successful advertising cases on the specified platform. The right choice of a contractor or employee is the key to the success of advertising in Meta Ads.

### **3. Meta Ads: development prospects in Ukraine**

Meta Ads continues to evolve, integrating new technologies and approaches to remain a key digital advertising tool. Through changes in consumer behavior and technological innovations, Meta Ads adapts to the demands and potential needs of advertisers to achieve their own business goals. The integration of AI and machine learning will play an increasingly significant role in all digital solutions, including Meta Ads. These technologies will increase targeting accuracy, allowing advertisers to reach the most relevant audiences with personalized content (Pascucci et al., 2023; I. Ponomarenko & D. Ponomarenko, 2024).



Currently, Meta Ads has generative AI functions for ads and Advantage+ AI tools (Shtyrlov, 2022; Ad Strategy, 2023; Voloboiev, 2024).

Generative AI allows you to save time and resources while increasing productivity when customizing digital ads.

According to a survey of advertisers participating in early AI testing of Meta, most expect to save 5 or more hours per week and be able to create multiple variations of creatives with the click of a button, reducing the time spent between creative and media teams on time-consuming editing tasks, in order to redistribute labor resources to more strategic tasks (Ad Strategy, 2023).

AI generative functions for ads include:

*image expansion*: the ability to change the image or video format according to the placement, which eliminates the need to create separate advertising materials for each placement;

*background generation*: the possibility of creating a series of backgrounds to complement the existing image;

*text variations*: the possibility of creating additional versions of ad texts based on the advertiser's original text in order to better reach the audience.

During the testing of these functions, it became possible to increase the reach of digital advertising by 9% and improve advertising indicators by 32% (Ad Strategy, 2023).

Another direction of AI Advantage+ focuses on simplifying the process of creating digital advertising as a whole, namely: independent creation of the structure of advertising campaigns, automatic selection of the audience for targeting, and automatic display of necessary advertising materials depending on the target audience and product. That is, as in the case of generative AI, it makes it possible to save time and change the focus in favor of strategic tasks.

The functionality of Advantage+ AI tools includes:

*Advantage+ Shopping Campaigns*: eliminate the need to run a large number of advertising campaigns with different targeting and ad settings;

*Advantage+ Creative*: the ability to improve advertising materials by adding additional music, 3D animation, changing image contrasts, using the functionality of generative AI;

*Advantage+ Audience*: the ability to automate audience targeting through AI. In this case, artificial intelligence analyses the website audience, data of current consumers, previous advertising activities of a certain advertiser and selects an audience that will meet the advertiser's request. So, AI technology is built on learning, so the audience will improve during digital advertising.

According to internal tests, the Meta company notes that the average price for attracting a client decreased by 28% (Ad Strategy, 2023).

Among the prospects for the development of AI in Meta Ads, we note the development of social networks. Instagram and Facebook are constantly evolving, adding various innovations to the functionality, which primarily

creates new advertising opportunities, such as content placements. For example, the introduction of the Reels platform for hosting short videos, similar to the TikTok or YouTube Shorts formats, has contributed to the emergence of new advertising formats.

The trend of personalization of advertising continues as one of the key prospects of this area: 94% of advertisers determine that personalized ads increase sales; at the same time, the trend towards privacy and data protection is gaining popularity among users of social platforms, which reduces the possibilities of personalization (Yankovets, 2023; HubSpot, 2024). This is because personalization is based on user data that Meta Ads collects through tracking systems on advertisers' websites. Prohibiting the tracking of user sessions on a website will affect statistical performance in the short term, and in the long term, it will reduce the effectiveness of the digital advertising tool in social networks. Therefore, in the perspective of the coming years, advertisers and social networks need to learn how to combine personalization and personal data protection (Parfeniuk, 2024). To do this, Meta Ads needs to create a solution based on machine learning. For example, specialists from Google LLC in this context presented Behavioural Modeling, which will model the behaviour of visitors who refuse to provide personal information (Google, n. d.).

Therefore, generative functions are not yet sufficiently developed to meet the expectations of advertisers. But as the leaders of Meta assure, "this is only the beginning" (Ad Strategy, 2023) and the company plans to continue developing in this direction, offering more possibilities of generative AI to meet the needs of advertisers. Therefore, for the future period, it is possible to expect more useful functions that will have a positive impact on the effectiveness of digital advertising. Unlike the functions of generative AI, the functionality of Advantage+ is more advanced, as it satisfies most of the key needs when setting up digital advertising, for example, creating an audience, optimizing advertising materials and simplifying the structure of digital advertising campaigns. This is especially relevant for RTEs that have more than 1 000 products, various categories and subcategories, and previously required significant labour resources to create digital advertising. Prospects for the development of social networks and the trend of personalization also have a positive impact on the effectiveness of digital advertising of RTEs. At the same time, adapting to new user privacy requirements will be an important task for advertisers in the coming years.

Thus, for Ukrainian RTEs, such development trends can improve results and maximize efficiency when working with Meta Ads digital advertising tools. This is especially relevant in the conditions of the war and post-war period, when companies not only need to focus on marketing or the product, but also take care of the safety of workers, energy supply and perform an active social role.

### Conclusions

As the digital advertising landscape continues to evolve, RTEs that take full advantage of Meta Ads will likely stay ahead of the competition and can not only resume digital advertising activity, but also significantly improve it. Further developments in artificial intelligence, machine learning and privacy regulations will undoubtedly shape the future of Meta Ads, creating a more powerful tool for advertisers.

Meta Ads offers businesses in general and retail businesses in particular unique opportunities to increase brand awareness and attract new customers through social networks and, accordingly, increase sales. With the predicted growth of marketing budgets from Meta Ads, it is important to keep up with technological changes and continue to improve digital marketing and advertising strategies.

The conducted research confirms the hypothesis about the prevalence and effectiveness of the Meta Ads digital advertising tool in social networks. Its use will contribute to the restoration and scaling of business activities of RTEs in Ukraine in the war and post-war periods.

Further research will be devoted to the study and systematization of existing digital advertising tools with the aim of adapting them for the implementation of RTE digital marketing strategies.

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