

## Making real meat of data

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### IBM Watson's Data-Crunching Gains Traction with Marketing Firms

More marketers are putting **Watson** to work.

Employing [IBM](#)'s artificial intelligence technology has become a popular move for **brands** seeking to make better use of data in their **marketing** efforts.

[Havas](#) Group this week is officially unveiling **Havas** Cognitive, a new practice in partnership with **IBM Watson**, to help clients develop tailored **marketing** campaigns and products.

Separately, startup Equals 3 on Wednesday is launching a new software product dubbed Lucy that utilizes **Watson**'s cognitive computing capabilities to make the media planning process more efficient for marketers and agencies.

That follows earlier announcements by Turner Broadcasting, which [earlier this year signed a deal to incorporate \*\*Watson\*\* into its ad sales efforts](#), and [Kia Motors](#), which [used \*\*Watson\*\* to select \*\*social\*\* media influencers for its Super Bowl ad campaign](#).

**Watson**, which gained fame after beating top human competitors on "Jeopardy" five years ago, analyzes troves of data to uncover patterns that humans might miss. The computing platform is **designed** to understand and reason like humans and is "constantly evolving and constantly adapting" based on use and new pieces of data, said **IBM Watson Vice President Stephen Gold**.

**Watson** is particularly adept at [analyzing "unstructured" data](#) such as **social** media posts, videos and images that exist outside of traditional data warehouses and which now account for the majority of data within an organization.

"In that data is locked away a tremendous amount of insight into what we as individuals are looking to do, how we expect to be treated and the interaction, communication and engagement

that we prefer,” Mr. **Gold** said.

More than 550 different organizations across 17 industries have partnered with **IBM Watson** to use the technology to develop commercial products, apps and services. About 20% of these partners are working within the “consumer space,” including partners focused on **marketing**, Mr. **Gold** said. For marketers, **IBM Watson**’s data-crunching capabilities can help them create personalized campaigns and messages for target audiences.

“The holy grail for **marketing** is really to be able to target a market of one,” Mr. Gold said.

**Havas** Cognitive has been operating in beta for six months, with a core team of about 60 employees that has completed 10 projects so far. The venture uses what it calls “Make” prototyping sessions to help clients test and build AI-powered products.

**Havas** and **IBM Watson** last fall teamed up for a **digital marketing** program for [TD Ameritrade](#) around the brokerage’s sponsorship with the National Football League. To boost online **brand** engagement for TD Ameritrade, **IBM Watson** used a custom algorithm to analyze **social** media posts from football fans to measure the level of confidence around fans’ favorite teams in real time. (Posts using a campaign hashtag were picked up.) The data was used to rank and reward the most confident football fans and the algorithm was able to accurately predict the winner of Super Bowl 50, the Denver Broncos, before the game, **said Jason Jercinovic**, **Havas**’ global head of **marketing innovation**

“It’s about finding insights at scale and how do you find the needle in the haystack of big data,” Mr. **Jercinovic** said of **Havas** Cognitive’s mandate. **Havas** and **IBM** have been working together for 20 years.

**Equals 3**, a startup founded last year that is also a developer partner of **IBM Watson**, **designed** its Lucy software to help Fortune 1000 **brands** and agencies quickly comb through all of an organization’s data to answer **marketing** questions through one interface. The software’s confidence in answering a **marketing** question strengthens the more data it ingests.

A user, for example, can ask **Lucy** a question about the type of consumer who buys a particular car **brand** and the software will generate the best response within seconds based on its reading of structured and unstructured information available.

The software is powered by eight of **IBM Watson**’s services and is **designed** to help users conduct deep market and customer research and analyze data to inform **brands**’ media buys. (**Havas** Media was a beta tester of the Lucy product, but **Lucy** is not affiliated with the **Havas** Cognitive practice.)

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