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DIGITAL MEDIA ADOPTION IN REAL ESTATE MARKETING IN ANAMBRA STATE: A FOCUSED ANALYSIS OF PREVALENT TOOLS AND EXTENT OF ADOPTION

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ABSTRACT

This paper examines the digital media tools used by real estate firms in Anambra State and the extent of their adoption for real estate marketing. It focuses on the first and second objectives of the study, which identify the prevalent digital media tools and determine their extent of adoption in estate marketing operations. A descriptive survey design was used, involving 46 registered estate firms, from which 44 valid questionnaires were retrieved, representing a 95.65% response rate. Data were analysed using descriptive statistics and repeated-measures analysis of variance. The findings show that WhatsApp Business was the most commonly used tool, followed by Facebook and Instagram, while websites, email marketing, YouTube/video-sharing platforms, and online property listing platforms recorded comparatively lower or moderate levels of use. WhatsApp and other instant-messaging platforms recorded the highest adoption level under the second objective, with an overall grand mean of 3.48, indicating a moderate-to-high extent of adoption. However, firms relied more on accessible social and messaging platforms than on more specialised technologies such as search engine optimisation (SEO), virtual property tours, and customer relationship management (CRM) systems. The repeated-measures ANOVA also showed a statistically significant difference in adoption ratings across the seven tools considered under the first objective, $F(4.061, 174.622) = 14.264$, $p < 0.001$. The study concludes that digital media has become an important part of real estate marketing in Anambra State, although adoption remains uneven across tools and levels of sophistication. The findings point to the need for stronger digital marketing capacity, professional training, and gradual integration of more specialised digital technologies into routine real estate marketing practice.

Keywords: digital media; real estate marketing; WhatsApp Business; social media; technology adoption; Anambra State

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Digital technology has changed the manner in which businesses communicate with customers, present products, develop markets and maintain professional relationships. In the real estate industry, this change is particularly important because property marketing depends heavily on the timely presentation of information, visual representation, communication with prospective clients and the ability to connect properties with geographically dispersed markets. Traditional real estate marketing in Nigeria has historically depended on newspapers, radio, television, billboards, flyers, personal networks, referrals and physical interaction. These channels continue to have a place in professional practice, but the growth of digital media has created additional ways through which real estate firms can present property information and maintain contact with clients.

Digital media provides online environments in which individuals and organisations can create, distribute, receive and respond to information. Its interactive character distinguishes it from many traditional forms of mass communication. Rather than simply transmitting an advertisement to an audience, digital platforms permit businesses to receive immediate enquiries, publish photographs and videos, respond to comments, share documents and develop continuing relationships with clients. In marketing, these characteristics make digital media relevant to awareness creation, customer engagement and the dissemination of property information.

The real estate industry is increasingly participating in this transformation. Platforms such as WhatsApp, Facebook, Instagram, websites, online property portals, email and video-sharing services can be used to display properties, communicate with buyers and tenants, distribute property details and generate leads.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

The real estate industry in Anambra State has grown due to urbanization, economic activities, and increasing demand for properties. However, real estate professionals still face challenges in marketing and customer engagement. Traditional methods such as newspapers, billboards, and referrals are becoming less effective in reaching technology-oriented clients and provide limited opportunities for targeted advertising and real-time interaction.

Digital media offers real estate professionals opportunities for wider market reach, targeted advertising, virtual property tours, and instant communication. However, its adoption in Anambra State remains inconsistent due to inadequate digital skills, online fraud, distrust of digital transactions, and poor content creation.

Despite the growing importance of digital media, limited research exists on its specific impact on real estate marketing in Anambra State. This study therefore examines its role, benefits, and challenges in improving real estate marketing and customer engagement.

1.2 Aim and Objectives of the Study

The aim of this study is to examine the adoption of digital media tools for the real estate marketing operations in Anambra State, with a focus on its effectiveness in marketing, customer engagement, and business growth.

The objectives of the study are as follows:

i. To identify the prevalent digital media tools most commonly used by real estate firms for marketing operations in Anambra State.
ii. To determine the extent to which digital media tools have been adopted for estate marketing operations in Anambra State.

1.3 Research Questions

To guide the study, the following research questions have been formulated:

i. Which digital media tools are most commonly used by real estate firms in Anambra State?
ii. To what extent have digital media tools been adopted for estate marketing operations in Anambra State?

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2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 CONCEPTUAL REVIEW

Digital media refers broadly to forms of content that are created, transmitted and consumed through digital devices and electronic communication channels. It includes text, images, audio and video distributed through the Internet, mobile networks and related systems. Lister et al. (2009) describe digital media as a major shift from traditional analogue media because of its interactive and networked character. McQuail (2010) similarly places digital communication within a wider transformation of how information is produced and consumed. Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) emphasise the participatory nature of Internet-based applications and the creation and exchange of user-generated content.

For marketing purposes, the importance of digital media lies in its ability to combine communication, content distribution, interaction and measurement. Chaffey and Ellis-Chadwick (2019) explain that digital media enables organisations to reach broad audiences, collect feedback and personalise communication. Tiago and Veríssimo (2014) likewise identify digital media as an important part of contemporary marketing because firms can develop direct relationships with consumers and use information generated through digital interaction to improve marketing activities.

The real estate industry is especially suited to several characteristics of digital media. Property is a highly visual product, so photographs, video, virtual presentations and detailed descriptions can provide potential clients with information before physical inspection. At the same time, real estate transactions require communication, follow-up and relationship building. Instant messaging platforms, email and social-networking services provide mechanisms through which firms can answer questions, arrange inspections and maintain contact.

Digital media tools used in real estate marketing can be grouped into several categories. Social networking platforms include Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn and X. Instant messaging includes WhatsApp Business and related services. Websites provide firms with a controlled online information centre, while property portals provide specialised environments for listing and searching for properties. Email marketing supports direct communication with prospective clients and existing contacts. Video-sharing platforms such as YouTube permit firms to display property walkthroughs and other visual material. Search Engine Optimisation and Search Engine Marketing

are designed to improve online visibility and attract users who are searching for property-related information. Customer Relationship Management systems provide a more structured way to manage leads, enquiries, follow-up and customer information.

Facebook is a major social-media tool because firms can establish business pages, advertise properties, participate in groups and communicate with prospects. Instagram is important because of its visual orientation and its capacity to display photographs, videos, stories and reels. WhatsApp Business supports instant communication, voice and video calls, automated responses, catalogues and broadcast messages. Company websites can provide property descriptions, photographs, prices, location information, contact details and corporate information. Online property portals permit users to search and compare properties using filters such as location, price and property type. YouTube provides an avenue for detailed video presentation and virtual property tours, while email marketing supports newsletters, property updates and follow-up communication. The real estate profession itself includes property acquisition, development, marketing, management, valuation, sales and leasing. The traditional model relies strongly on interpersonal relationships, referrals and physical inspection. Digital media does not necessarily remove these professional activities; rather, it provides additional channels through which information and communication can take place before and alongside physical professional processes. A property in Awka, for example, can be presented online to someone located in another Nigerian city or outside the country. This potentially expands the audience for a property beyond the immediate geographical market.

Within marketing operations, digital media can therefore be understood as an interconnected set of tools rather than a single technology. A firm may use WhatsApp to answer enquiries, Instagram to display photographs, Facebook to reach a broad audience, a property portal to list several properties, and a website to provide formal corporate information. The extent of adoption depends on whether these tools are merely available or have become integrated into routine marketing work.

The distinction between prevalence and extent is central to this paper. Prevalence asks which tools are most commonly used relative to others. Extent asks how strongly or frequently the tools have been incorporated into marketing operations. A firm may report using a platform but use it only

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occasionally. Conversely, another firm may use the same platform intensively for daily property promotion and client engagement. Objective one captures the comparative pattern of tool use, while objective two examines the broader intensity of adoption across several digital marketing dimensions.

2.2 THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE

The paper is informed by the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) and Diffusion of Innovations (DOI) Theory, both of which provide relevant theoretical perspectives for this study. Davis (1989) developed TAM around perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use. Perceived usefulness concerns the extent to which an individual believes that a technology will improve performance, while perceived ease of use concerns the degree to which the technology is perceived as requiring little effort. In the context of real estate marketing, a practitioner who considers WhatsApp, Facebook or another tool useful for reaching clients and presenting properties may be more willing to incorporate that tool into routine work.

TAM is relevant to the first objective because the popularity of particular platforms may partly reflect their perceived usefulness and ease of use. A platform that is familiar, accessible through smartphones and convenient for direct communication can become more deeply embedded in everyday marketing than a specialised system requiring additional training or investment. The objective-two results provide a descriptive indication of this pattern: instant messaging and social-media platforms record higher means than SEO and CRM systems. The data themselves do not establish that ease of use caused the differences, but TAM provides a theoretical lens through which the pattern can be understood.

Diffusion of Innovations Theory, developed by Rogers (2003), explains how innovations spread through social systems. It identifies relative advantage, compatibility, complexity, trialability and observability as factors influencing adoption. The theory is useful for understanding why digital tools do not necessarily diffuse at the same speed. A technology that is compatible with existing business practices and whose benefits are easy to observe may be adopted more readily than one that requires substantial organisational change.

The results from Anambra State are consistent with a diffusion pattern in which familiar and accessible technologies have become more widely integrated than specialised technologies. Tools

such as WhatsApp Business and social-media platforms can be incorporated into existing communication practices without requiring a complete restructuring of the firm. SEO, CRM and virtual tours, by contrast, may require additional skills, planning, content development and organisational systems. The study does not test DOI variables directly, but the theory helps explain the observed difference in adoption levels.

2.3 EMPIRICAL AND CONTEXTUAL REVIEW

Nwogu and Ifekanandu (2021) examined online marketing and real estate disposal in the Nigerian property market. Their study identified online marketing platforms used by real estate firms and reported the use of social and messaging platforms for property marketing. This provides relevant Nigerian contextual evidence for the present study, while the present research focuses specifically on the prevalence and extent of digital media adoption among registered real estate firms in Anambra State.

Related evidence outside the immediate real estate context also suggests that digital marketing adoption can be multidimensional. Nganga (2022), in a study of small and medium enterprises in Nairobi Central Business District, examined social-media marketing, search-engine marketing and content marketing and reported positive relationships between these digital marketing activities and business performance. Although that study is not specific to real estate, it supports the broader view that digital marketing can involve several distinct technologies whose adoption and effects may vary across business settings.

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The literature also identifies a shift from basic online presence toward broader digital transformation. Modern digital marketing may involve social media, property portals, websites,

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SEO, analytics, CRM, virtual tours and other technologies. This distinction is important for interpreting the present findings. A firm can be described as digitally active because it communicates with clients through WhatsApp and posts properties on Facebook, yet still have limited adoption of technologies that support search visibility, systematic customer management or immersive property presentation.

This paper therefore treats digital adoption as multidimensional. The two objectives under consideration are not simply asking whether real estate firms have entered the digital environment. They examine the structure of that entry: which platforms are used most and the extent to which different forms of digital media have been incorporated into marketing operations.

3.0 METHODOLOGY

The parent study adopted a descriptive survey research design. This design was considered appropriate because the purpose was to obtain information about existing practices and perceptions without manipulating the study environment. A descriptive approach allows researchers to collect standardised information from a defined population and summarise the responses using quantitative techniques.

The study was conducted in Anambra State, Nigeria, with attention to real estate practice in the state's major urban and commercial areas. The study covers Awka, Onitsha, Nnewi and Ekwulobia as major urban centres and notes the significance of Awka as the state capital. The real estate environment includes residential and commercial property activity, making it relevant for examining how digital channels are used to present properties and communicate with clients.

The population comprised 46 identifiable registered estate firms in Anambra State. Because the population was considered small and manageable, questionnaires were distributed to all 46 firms. The study records 44 successfully retrieved questionnaires, giving a response rate of 95.65 percent. The analysis relevant to this paper is therefore based on 44 usable responses. The questionnaire was structured to obtain information on digital media platforms, their use in marketing, and the extent to which specific digital tools had been adopted.

The instrument used a combination of response formats. For the first objective, respondents rated statements concerning the use of Facebook, WhatsApp Business, Instagram, company websites,

online property listing platforms, email marketing and YouTube/video-sharing platforms. For the second objective, respondents indicated the extent of adoption using a five-point scale: Very High Extent, High Extent, Moderate Extent, Low Extent and Very Low Extent. The second objective included social-media platforms, websites, property listing platforms, email marketing, instant messaging, digital advertising, virtual tours, SEO and CRM systems. The study used mean scores to summarise the responses. For objective one, the mean scores provide a comparative indication of the prevalence of each tool. For objective two, the mean scores show the reported extent of adoption across the different digital marketing technologies. The study also used repeated-measures ANOVA to test whether adoption ratings for the seven tools under the first objective differed significantly. The statistical result is reported in the findings section because it supports the descriptive conclusion that the tools were not adopted at identical levels.

The methodology provides a basis for a focused examination of objectives one and two. It is important, however, to distinguish descriptive evidence from causal explanation. The mean scores show the pattern reported by respondents; they do not by themselves establish why a particular platform is more popular. The theoretical discussion above is therefore used to interpret, rather than to replace, the empirical evidence.

4.0 RESULTS

Table 1: Prevalent Digital Media Tools Used by Real Estate Firms

Rank	Digital media tool	Mean
1	WhatsApp Business	4.34
2	Facebook	4.09
3	Instagram	4.02
4	Online property listing platforms	3.59
5	Company websites	3.39
6	Email marketing	3.25
7	YouTube/video-sharing platforms	3.05

Source: Field Survey, 2026.

Table 2: Extent of Adoption of Digital Media Tools for Real Estate Marketing Operations

No.	Adoption dimension	Mean

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1	Social media platforms (Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn and X)	4.14
2	WhatsApp and other instant messaging platforms	4.30
3	Online property listing platforms	3.68
4	Digital advertising tools (Google Ads/Facebook Ads)	3.59
5	Company websites	3.43
6	Email marketing	3.25
7	Virtual property tours	3.14
8	Search Engine Optimisation (SEO)	2.95
9	Customer Relationship Management (CRM) systems	2.80

Source: Field Survey, 2026.

4.1 Objective One: Prevalent Digital Media Tools

The first objective was to identify the prevalent digital media tools most commonly used by real estate firms for marketing operations in Anambra State. The study reports seven principal tools and their mean scores. The results show that WhatsApp Business recorded the highest mean score of 4.34, followed by Facebook with 4.09 and Instagram with 4.02. Online property listing platforms recorded 3.59, company websites 3.39, email marketing 3.25, and YouTube or other video-sharing platforms 3.05. The grand mean was 3.68.

The findings indicate that WhatsApp Business is the most prevalent tool among the firms surveyed. Its leading position is consistent with its communication-oriented functions. It can be used for direct messaging, sharing property images and descriptions, responding to enquiries, arranging inspections and maintaining contact with clients. The result suggests that immediate communication is a central feature of digital real estate marketing in Anambra State.

Facebook recorded the second-highest mean. Its use can include business pages, property posts, real estate groups, direct communication and paid advertising. The relatively high score indicates that Facebook is an important broad-reach platform for firms seeking to make properties visible to potential clients.

Instagram recorded a mean of 4.02. The result is particularly relevant to property marketing because real estate is visually oriented. Photographs, short videos, stories and reels can communicate the appearance and features of a property. Instagram can also connect visual presentation with direct messaging and audience interaction.

Online property listing platforms, with a mean of 3.59, occupied a middle position. These platforms are specifically designed for property search and can provide structured information about location, property type, price and other features. Their adoption indicates that firms use specialised property channels alongside general social media.

Company websites recorded 3.39, while email marketing recorded 3.25. These results indicate moderate use relative to the leading social and messaging platforms. Websites can provide formal company and property information, while email can support follow-up and direct communication. Their lower means suggest that they are less central to everyday marketing activity than WhatsApp, Facebook and Instagram.

YouTube and other video-sharing platforms recorded the lowest mean at 3.05. Video has significant potential for property presentation, but its lower adoption suggests that video-based marketing is not as deeply embedded as social and messaging activities. Quality video production may require additional content-development skills, equipment, time and data.

The study also reports a statistically significant repeated-measures ANOVA result for the seven tools: $F(4.061, 174.622) = 14.264$, $p < 0.001$. This means that the adoption ratings differed significantly across the tools. The firms therefore did not report using all platforms at the same level.

The overall pattern can be described as platform-selective adoption. The firms favour tools that combine direct communication, social interaction, visual presentation and relatively accessible content sharing. This does not mean that lower-rated platforms are absent. Instead, their mean

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scores indicate that they are less prevalent than WhatsApp Business, Facebook and Instagram within the surveyed population.

4.2 Objective Two: Extent of Digital Media Adoption

The second objective was to determine the extent to which digital media tools have been adopted for real estate marketing operations in Anambra State. The results cover nine dimensions of digital adoption. The grand mean is 3.48, indicating a moderate-to-high overall extent of adoption.

WhatsApp and other instant messaging platforms recorded the highest mean of 4.30. Social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn and X followed with 4.14. Online property listing platforms recorded 3.68, while digital advertising tools recorded 3.59. Company websites recorded 3.43 and email marketing 3.25. Virtual property tours recorded 3.14, SEO 2.95 and CRM systems 2.80.

The highest result for instant messaging confirms the first objective. WhatsApp is not simply a commonly recognised platform; it is also incorporated into marketing operations to a relatively high extent. This suggests that direct client communication is a routine part of digital marketing among the surveyed firms.

The social-media mean of 4.14 also indicates substantial adoption. The result shows that social networking is embedded in property marketing, allowing firms to disseminate information, display properties and interact with potential clients.

Online property listing platforms recorded 3.68, showing meaningful adoption. Digital advertising recorded 3.59, indicating that firms also employ paid or targeted online promotional tools. These two results suggest that adoption extends beyond simple social-media posting into specialised property and advertising environments.

Company websites and email marketing recorded moderate means of 3.43 and 3.25. Their adoption is significant but lower than instant messaging and social media. Websites can function as formal information centres, while email supports direct communication and follow-up.

Virtual property tours recorded 3.14. The score indicates that virtual presentation has been introduced but is less extensively adopted than social and messaging tools. SEO recorded 2.95,

and CRM systems recorded 2.80, the lowest mean. These results suggest that more specialised forms of digital marketing and customer-management technology are not yet as deeply incorporated into routine practice.

The pattern demonstrates an adoption gradient. At the upper end are accessible technologies associated with communication and social interaction. In the middle are websites, property portals, email and digital advertising. At the lower end are virtual tours, SEO and CRM systems. This indicates that digital transformation has progressed further in communication and promotion than in specialised digital management.

The finding is important because it prevents the grand mean from being interpreted as evidence that every digital technology is adopted equally. The grand mean of 3.48 summarises the overall level, but the individual scores reveal significant variation among the tools. Digital adoption in Anambra State is therefore multidimensional and uneven.

5.0 DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The two objectives provide a consistent picture of digital media adoption among real estate firms in Anambra State. Objective one identifies WhatsApp Business, Facebook and Instagram as the leading tools, while objective two shows that instant messaging and social media also have the highest reported extent of adoption. The agreement between the two sets of findings strengthens the conclusion that social and messaging technologies occupy a central place in current real estate marketing practice.

WhatsApp Business is the clearest example. Its mean of 4.34 for prevalence and the 4.30 mean for instant-messaging adoption indicate that it is both widely used and relatively deeply integrated. The platform's usefulness for rapid client interaction makes it suitable for a market where prospective buyers and tenants may require immediate information about availability, location, price and inspection arrangements.

Facebook and Instagram also show strong adoption. Their results demonstrate the importance of social media for property visibility. Facebook provides broad communication and advertising functions, while Instagram is especially suited to visual presentation. Together, they allow firms to combine property information with interaction and audience reach.

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The findings are broadly consistent with Nigerian evidence from earlier research. Nwogu and Ifeakandu (2021) identified Facebook, WhatsApp and Instagram among online marketing platforms used by Nigerian real estate firms. The similarity provides contextual support for the present findings, while the present study contributes specific evidence from Anambra State.

The difference between basic and advanced tools is particularly important. WhatsApp, Facebook and Instagram can be used through common mobile devices and can be incorporated into existing communication routines. SEO, CRM and virtual tours require more specialised processes. The lower means for those technologies suggest that digital adoption has progressed more rapidly in everyday communication and promotion than in integrated digital marketing management.

This pattern can be interpreted through TAM. Perceived usefulness and ease of use may help explain why simple and familiar platforms become more deeply embedded. However, the present survey did not directly measure these perceptions, so it would be inappropriate to treat TAM as proof of causation. It is more accurate to say that the observed adoption pattern is compatible with the theoretical expectations of TAM.

The same pattern can be considered through Diffusion of Innovations Theory. Technologies that offer visible advantages and are compatible with established practices may spread more readily. Instant messaging and social media can be added to existing marketing routines, whereas CRM and SEO may require more substantial changes in skills and organisation. Again, the theory provides an interpretive framework rather than a direct statistical test in this paper.

Objective two adds an important qualification to the strong digital presence observed under objective one. The sector cannot be described simply as fully digital or non-digital. Instead, firms appear to occupy different positions across a continuum. They have adopted some technologies strongly while using others moderately or to a lower extent.

The grand means of 3.68 for objective one and 3.48 for objective two indicate that digital media is a substantial part of real estate marketing among the surveyed firms. Yet the lower means for SEO, CRM and virtual tours demonstrate that there remains a distinction between basic digital presence and deeper digital transformation.

The results therefore suggest that the digital marketing environment in Anambra State is characterised by strong adoption of accessible social and communication tools and comparatively lower adoption of specialised technologies. This is the central finding arising from objectives one and two.

6.0 CONCLUSION

This paper examined the first two objectives of the study on digital media adoption for real estate marketing operations in Anambra State. Objective one identified the prevalent digital media tools, while objective two determined the extent of adoption across a wider set of digital marketing technologies.

The first objective showed that WhatsApp Business was the most commonly used tool, with a mean of 4.34, followed by Facebook at 4.09 and Instagram at 4.02. Online property listing platforms, company websites, email marketing and YouTube/video-sharing platforms recorded lower means. The grand mean was 3.68, and the repeated-measures ANOVA showed a statistically significant difference in adoption ratings across the seven tools.

The second objective showed that WhatsApp and other instant messaging platforms had the highest adoption mean of 4.30, followed by social-media platforms at 4.14 and online property listing platforms at 3.68. Digital advertising recorded 3.59, company websites 3.43, email marketing 3.25, virtual property tours 3.14, SEO 2.95 and CRM 2.80. The grand mean of 3.48 indicates a moderate-to-high overall extent of adoption.

Taken together, the two objectives demonstrate that digital media has become an important part of real estate marketing operations among the surveyed firms, but adoption is uneven across technologies. Social and messaging platforms are more deeply embedded than specialised tools. The evidence therefore points to an active but incomplete pattern of digital transformation.

The contribution of the two objectives lies in showing not only that firms use digital media, but also which technologies are central to their practice and how extensively different forms of digital media have been incorporated. This distinction is important for understanding the present stage of digital development within the Anambra State real estate sector.

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6.1 RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Real estate firms should maintain consistent and professional use of WhatsApp Business, Facebook and Instagram, given their high reported prevalence.
2. Firms should connect social-media activity with company websites and online property listing platforms so that clients can move easily between awareness, detailed information and direct communication.
3. Practitioners should gradually strengthen the use of digital advertising where it is appropriate for particular properties and target audiences.
4. Firms should develop their visual-content capacity, including high-quality photographs and suitable video presentations, to support property marketing.
5. Professional bodies and educational institutions should provide practical training in SEO, digital advertising, content management, virtual property presentation and CRM systems because these areas recorded comparatively lower adoption.
6. Firms should consider CRM systems where they are appropriate for organising enquiries, leads, follow-up activities and client information.

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