
Editorial

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Biographical notes: Michael Howley worked for a brief period as an Economist in the UK Dairy Industry after graduating in Economics in the late 1960s. He then made the transition to the discipline of market research, a subject with which he has been associated ever since. In 1973, he completed the first ever study of the market for wine in British hotels and restaurants, a study for which he was awarded a Master of Philosophy degree by the University of Surrey. He then entered the wine and spirit trade and in the late 1970's was responsible for the UK re-launch of Jack Daniel's Tennessee Whiskey through its newly appointed Agent, Percy Fox and Co. In the 1980s, he resumed an academic career, teaching Marketing Management, Market Research and Business Policy. Based in the School of Management at the University of Surrey he is probably best-known, currently, as the Editor of the *International Journal of Wine Marketing*.

Panos Louvieris is Senior Lecturer in Information Systems in the School of Management (SOM) at the University of Surrey (UniS). He has held directorial posts in information systems and management in the private sector. His research interests and publications are in the areas of eBusiness management, information and knowledge management, and information systems. He is involved in both private sector and government research contracts concerned with decision support systems, business performance management, impact of digitisation on organisational structures, eBusiness channel management and decision support systems.

Len Tiu Wright is Professor of Marketing and Research Professor at De Montfort University, Leicester and Visiting Professor at the University of Keele. She has held full time appointments at the universities of Keele, Birmingham and Loughborough and visiting lecturing positions with institutions in the UK, e.g., Cambridge University and overseas. Wright has consultancy and industrial experience and has researched in the Far East, Europe and North America. Her writings have appeared in books, in US and European academic journals, and at conferences where some have gained best paper awards. She has performed various guest editor's roles for leading marketing journals. She is the Founding Editor of the *Qualitative Market Research – An International Journal*, an Emerald publication.

We are pleased to introduce this original collection of papers on eBusiness topics for *IJITM*. The papers had their origin in the IBM-sponsored conference on eBusiness which was organised by the first two coauthors at the Management School of the University of Surrey.

The papers selected for this issue from the *4th IBM eBusiness Conference* are concerned with 'Marketing in the eSOCIETY'. In particular, the papers focus on an embedded market space where the combination between online and offline marketing creates its own unique set of issues and challenges for responsible and effective marketing in the emerging eSociety.

In keeping with the theme of the issue, the first paper by Simons and Bouwman considers from a service perspective how a multi-channel mix that integrates both physical and IT-enabled channels should be designed based on an understanding of their strengths and weaknesses. Useful insights are provided in terms of the differences in support of the sales cycle that each channel within a mix can provide.

Jones *et al.* make the case for the need of a comparative framework for validating the effectiveness of eBusiness Stages of Growth Models (SoGMs) and highlight the inadequacies and pitfalls of existing frameworks based on a review of 65 SoGMs.

Using six focus groups, Quinton and Harridge-March explore the link between risk and trust for online wine purchasing. In particular, they found that trust was more likely to be instilled when a variety of channels had been used, emphasising the importance of combining offline and online channels for striking an appropriate balance between risk and trust.

Cuthbertson and Bridson's paper examines how e-tailers design and implement their loyalty marketing strategies, where successful online retailing appears to be based on integration, communication and measurement. The main finding of their research is that a loyalty marketing strategy online depends on the fundamental structure of the retailer-customer relationship. Moreover, customer acquisition and retention online depends on how long the retailer has been operating offline, too.

Referring to the UK online banking sector, Liu and Louvieris investigate the factors that affect customers' continued usage of online banking services. They augment the technology acceptance model (Davis, 1989) to reflect the importance of the affective variables, trust and commitment, for ensuring the continuance of habitual usage behaviour. In addition, a multiple regression model is presented to inform managers about their customer retention practices including online/offline channel switching.

The issue finishes off with a paper by Seltsikas and Brown which takes a Business to Business (B2B) perspective. With reference to nine case studies, the paper explores the degree to which Application Service Provision (ASP) technologies and services are being taken up for eBusiness transformation in the Small- and Medium-sized Enterprise (SME) sector. While it is claimed that ASPs may facilitate SME business benefits, the majority of SMEs do not take up the option to support customer/supplier transactions online.

Reference

- Davis, F.D. (1989) 'Perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use and user acceptance of information technology', *MIS Quarterly*, Vol. 13, No. 3, pp.319-340.