
Editorial

Y. Melanthiou

Marketing Department,
School of Business,
University of Nicosia,
46 Makedonitissas Avenue,
P.O. Box 24005, 1700 Nicosia, Cyprus
E-mail: melanthiou.y@unic.ac.cy

The internet may safely be regarded as one of the most important technological tools today. It has enabled companies to come closer to their consumers; consumers have benefited from the internet since they are now able to purchase from home, gather information with the click of a button, and engage in social behaviour. However, moving from just a 'buzz word', internet marketing calls for careful consideration, strategic planning, and hence research in order to live up to its expected benefits. The articles in this special issue have been chosen from accepted papers presented during the 3rd Euromed Conference held in Cyprus in 2010. This special issue consists of five papers (four empirical and one conceptual) and findings from Portugal, Korea, Turkey, USA, Cyprus, Portugal and India are presented.

The first article by Kip Becker, Jung-Wan Lee, and Helena Nobre mainly focused on consumer online behaviour and compared the behaviour of consumers in four countries: Portugal, Korea, Turkey and the USA. The main focus was to determine where individuals obtain product information and where individuals buy. They found that the amount of time spent on computers and the manner in which consumers seek information differs. Specifically, Americans and Koreans use computers much more than Portuguese and Turks, and Portuguese and US consumers rate stores highly for items costing less than \$500, while in Korea and Turkey consumers rate search engines highest. The only commonality between these four countries appears to be product purchase locations since stores remained the purchase location of choice in all nations studied. The authors finally suggest that the internet has provided not only 'freeloaders' but all consumers with a location for purchasing goods and services as well as a source of relatively free information.

The second article by Yioula Melanthiou and Sophia Fantis, aimed to address the proposition of how higher education institutions could use social networks as an effective promotional tool. A research which examined the relationship that students have with social networks was carried out, and some suggestions have been provided as to how higher education institutions can use social networks to communicate with prospective as well as existing students. The results of the study showed that students are heavy users of social networks, with a preference towards the use of Facebook. Prospective students also look for information of universities on social networks. Moreover, prospective students appear to use social networks for different reasons than existing students.

Ana Prego de Faria, Elisabete Sampaio de Sá and Faranak Abbaspuli Mamaghani, with their article attempt to raise awareness for the benefits of the use of web marketing

techniques within the public sector. Although their paper was conceptual, it explained how public and web marketing can be related and further explored the adoption of the internet by Portuguese Public Institutions. The authors postulated that despite the fact that public managers are now more aware of the advantages of web marketing, the key message is that there is still plenty of room for the development of the application of web marketing techniques within the Portuguese public sector.

The fourth article by M. Hakan Altintas, N. Gursakal, Hans Ruediger Kaufmann, Demetris Vrontis, and Feride Bahar Isin investigated the antecedents of addictive-based mobile phone behaviour: a new phenomenon in mobile phone consumption. Specifically, it examined the effects of impulsive behaviour and post-modern consumer behaviour on the addiction of young consumers to mobile phones. This addiction, according to the authors, is reflected in the fact that young consumers tend to leave their cell phones switched on for 24-hours per day. The study carried out included the responses of 450-consumers from the cities of Bursa and Istanbul, Turkey. The results imply that post-modern consumer behaviour has a positive effect on all aspects of the addictive pattern of always-on behaviour, whereas impulsive behaviour has only a partial effect. Unreal world dimensions of postmodern consumer behaviour have a positive effect on addictive behaviour. Also, sensation-seeking, which is a part of the impulsive behaviour dimension, was assessed to have an effect on continuous connectivity. The findings of the study are suggested to inform, besides other marketing-related studies, also sociological and psychological studies on the identity and roles of young citizens in the society.

Finally, the article by Sukanya Kundu and Saroj K. Datta focused on investigating Internet Banking. The paper attempted to identify the features which are affecting the experience of customers of Indian PSBs regarding payment systems of online banking. The authors have also provided insight into the recent growth rate of payment systems of online banking. Furthermore, the paper point out that banking payment system are making a shift towards paperless systems from paper-based systems and also highlights the fact that reliable network connection, improved privacy and security features and standardised process of online payment procedures are the crux to making internet banking more customer-centric.

I hope that the articles put together in this special issue have provided useful insights regarding online marketing and perhaps even encourage readers to further research this area. Moreover, I would like to thank the reviewers and of course the editors of the *International Journal of Technology Marketing* for inviting me to put together this special issue. Finally, I would like to invite readers to submit a paper and participate in the next Euromed Conference to be held in Crete, Greece in 2011 (<http://www.emrbi.com>).