Editorial

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Biographical notes: Neil Frederick Hair is an Associate Professor of Marketing from the E. Philip Saunders College of Business at Rochester Institute of Technology, New York in the USA. He holds a Chartered Marketer Status from the Chartered Institute of Marketing, a PhD from Cranfield as well as degrees from Sheffield and Cardiff Business Schools. His research and consulting activities include understanding perceptions of advertising and customer value in popular online social networks like Myspace and Facebook, personal branding in virtual space, virtual ethnography in popular worlds such as Second Life, and most recently a Cisco sponsored global study on social media use for collaboration and innovation looking at over 100 of the world's thought leaders operating in this space. Most recently, his teaching interests involve developing the world's first programme on the commercialisation of Second Life.

This special edition of the *International Journal of Internet Marketing and Advertising* draws together contemporary research and understanding to help illustrate the issues facing the marketing and advertising industry in an increasingly digital, socially connected world.

The advent of social media including hugely popular micro blogging services such as twitter, online social networks such as Facebook and LinkedIn, has had a profound impact on the world of marketing and advertising. Professionals are struggling to make sense of the business case for social media, the impact that viral user generated content has on wider consumer perceptions, and how to proactively engage stakeholders. This impact has affected many types of business including business-to-business, business-to-consumer, and consumer-to-consumer. Accordingly, this special issue is extremely timely, relevant, and of use to both academics and practitioners. It includes five research papers.

Mary K. Foster, Anthony Francescucci and Bettina C. West, in their study 'Different strokes for different folks: why different user groups participate in online social media' examine the motivations and barriers towards participation of online social media users in the important 18 to 30 age bracket. It proposes a number of distinct segments in relation to information and participative needs of this group and offers important insights for marketers wanting to enhance customer relationships online.

Research into motivation research continues with 'Changing user motivations for social networking site usage: implications for internet advertisers' as presented by Harshavardhan Gangadharbatla, Tobias Hopp and Kim Sheehan. It explores the evolution of motivations of users of social networks and finds that the need for social integration

out weights initial incentives of acquiring and processing information about network members. They offer insights into the evolution of customer experience and consider implications on advertising campaigns that target these communities.

In their paper 'Segmenting the social networking sites users: an empirical study' Carlota Lorenzo-Romero, Efthymios Constantinides and María-del-Carmen Alarcón-del-Amo offer additional insights into the issue of profiling users of social networking sites. Four key segments are identified from a national study of users from the Netherlands. The research shows that social-demographic characteristics alone are not a sufficient basis for segmentation. Behavioural characteristics and motivations are explored and their implications on practitioners discussed.

Julie Z. Sneath, in her paper 'Status and influence in virtual communities: an examination of interactions between followers of a video blog', explores motivations and features of differentiation between users of a specific community. It offers in-depth insights into users activities, social role and status through content analysis of blog posts. It compliments earlier papers in the special edition that explore more macro level findings.

Our final paper crosses the boundary of consumer research to explore social customer relationship management in a business-to-business context. Michael Rodriguez and Robert M. Peterson in their paper 'The role of social CRM and its potential impact on lead generation in business-to-business marketing' propose a range of opportunities, best practice examples, and areas for further research as they relate to prospecting and engaging customers in this important context.

Acknowledgements