
Editorial: Considering marketing of technology solutions from a dual perspective

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Biographical notes: Alexander Brem received his Diploma in Business Administration and PhD degree from the University of Erlangen-Nuremberg in 2004 and 2007, respectively. From 2004 to 2007, he was a Senior Researcher and Teaching Assistant at the Chair of Industrial Management, University of Erlangen-Nuremberg, where he currently works as a Professor of Idea and Innovation Management. Moreover, he is the Founder and Partner of VEND Consulting GmbH, Nuremberg. His current research interests include technology and innovation management as well as entrepreneurship. He is a Reviewer and editorial board member of various international journals such as *Technovation* and *International Journal of Innovation Management*.

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From a business and economic viewpoint, one of the most interesting features of technology is its capacity to impact both the supply side and the demand side of the markets. This characteristic drives significant consequences for academics and practitioners alike as reflected in this edition of the *International Journal of Technology Marketing*. The first three articles that we have selected examines how technology may influence consumers in term of choice, use, and post-sale evaluation of products and services while the two following articles consider the effect of technology on the offering of technology solutions.

The first paper is about ‘The impact of the emergence of internet hospital rating sites on patients’ choice: a quality evaluation and examination of the patterns of approach’. It provides a fascinating analysis of how today internet healthcare rating has become a

viable tool for guiding patients in making health decisions especially as it has recently been extended to hospitals after having already been established for medical practitioners.

The article describes the main features of internet healthcare rating sites. It ponders about their different approaches and their implementation. It also stressed the potential issues caused by the emergence of internet ranking in the medical sector, especially legal problems, technical difficulties, and the possibility of manipulation. This article is an interdisciplinary work of medical and management researchers, which offers interesting insights from different perspectives.

The second paper, entitled 'Effect of card and internet banking on users', provides a vivid analysis of consumers use of all the telecommunication and internet-based services which are offered today in India: though there are already a steady amount of research about the 'e-banking', there are relatively few articles about the situation of the Indian market, one of the fastest growing market among emergent countries at a worldwide level. The paper describes the main use patterns of various customer segments and analyse their degree of satisfaction vis-à-vis those new technology-based services. One interesting outcome of the research is that those services are still underused and not completely appreciated by the Indian market. This creates room for more investigation at academic level and for some practical recommendation to the banks for increasing the acceptance rate of those innovative services in a market which is far from being mature.

The third article, entitled 'Post-purchase cognitive dissonance – evidence from the mobile phone market', investigates how the phenomenon of cognitive dissonance does apply to a high tech consumer product. Though the importance of cognitive dissonance have been identified and researched for quite a long time for traditional products, there are very few articles which have considered it for technology-based solutions. The research evaluates if mobile phone users are fully satisfied with their acquisition while they are usually overloaded with abundant information after their purchasing period. The results provide interesting insights about the relative importance of other people's opinions, the difficulty in searching information, the product involvement, and the satisfaction with mobile phone operators. The findings reveal also that there is ample room for improvements and provides some practical recommendations to marketers.

The fourth paper, entitled 'Old fashioned or enlightened? Small retailers' practices in e-procurement' considers how and why SME retailers use the internet in their procurement processes. One of the key findings is that they believe that a personalised approach to purchasing is necessary to maintain their competitive advantage and that they cannot count on technology alone. For them, contrary to the situation with large firms, effectiveness in purchasing takes priority over efficiency. The authors challenge the assumption that one size fits all in technology driven procurement. Because small firms lack economies of scale, they adopt different competitive strategies employing their uniqueness. From a theoretical perspective, this implies a need to modify the conventional models of technology acceptance in order to take account of these characteristics. At a more practical level, the papers conclude that if technology is to deliver its promise, it must take account of smallness.

The last paper, 'Software upgrade, consumer behaviour and software vendor's choice', investigates how two different offer structures, either a new version of a product or the simultaneous availability of the new version with the previous version, affect the behaviours of existing and new users. The authors are studying the software industry but this is a situation that is quite common in other technology driven industries. One important finding is that keeping the old version in the market contributes to stimulation

of the demand for software upgrade. Also, the paper shows how the ‘cannibalisation’ effect between the old version and new version, is different for existing users, compared to new users. The research is also analysing how software vendors may utilise price discriminations between existing users and new users as a method to reap higher profit. The results may provide food for thought to marketers in other industries who are facing the same situation.

Enjoy your reading and do not hesitate to send us your thoughts about those papers as well as your own research paper in the exciting field of technology and innovation marketing. As you may read in this edition, we encourage authors to submit more interdisciplinary work which always offers a fresh perspective on assumed well-known issues.

We look forward to hearing from you soon!