
Editorial

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Biographical notes: Irene Tilikidou works for the Department of Marketing with the Alexander Technological Educational Institute in Thessaloniki, Greece for 30 years now. She teaches marketing research and marketing strategy. She has published in journals and conferences proceedings, being also the author of four textbooks. During a long period of time, her main research interest has been the ecologically conscious consumer behaviour. She has also published research papers on other relevant topics like fair trade, ethical consumption and ethical tourism. As she strongly believes that marketing is rapidly being transformed to e- (electronic) marketing, she has recently added to her research interests the topics of e-surveys, social media and internet marketing.

This special issue on ‘Emerging issues in internet, social media and e-marketing’ aims to provide a forum for publishing original research, covering various contemporary electronic and social media marketing issues and their links to technological products, services and facilities.

This issue includes substantially extended versions of selected papers, presented at the International Conference on Contemporary Marketing Issues (ICCM) 2012 as well as papers of researchers, who had not been able to participate to the conference. Out of a considerable number of papers that have been submitted coming from academic researchers of many countries, we selected half of the manuscripts and we narrowed the selection through a two-round blind review process in order to select the best articles.

In the first paper, ‘Factors affecting attitudes towards smart phones: user’s profile and proposed research model’ Greek and Armenian students’ attitudes and intentions to adopt smart phones are presented. The paper relies on the technology acceptance model (TAM) methodology and provides fascinating insight on the topic.

In the second paper, ‘Social media marketing: exploring the user typology in Turkey’ the results of a survey conducted among Turkish consumers are presented concluding in a consumers’ classification based on their usage preferences of social media in combination to their demographic affinities. To the best of our knowledge this typology is one of the first to be documented in an academic journal.

The third paper, ‘Marketing and organisational evaluation of rural firms in the internet’ appraises and categorises the marketing and organisational functions in corporate websites of the agri-food sector in Greece on the basis of six marketing and organisational criteria. The methodological design and the relevant statistical analysis ended in a three-factor model which is a significant contribution for the development in websites.

The fourth paper, 'User goals in technology-based self-service systems' comes from young and promising researchers in Taiwan who are exploring the value of using self-service technology (SST). The authors come with a sophisticated methodology for this study as they are combining content analysis, hierarchical value map (HVM), the theory of means-end chain (MEC) as a basis and the application of the soft-laddering method to understand the perceived value of SST through in depth participants' interviews. The paper proves to be of remarkable content both for academics and practitioners.

The fifth paper, 'Attracting and retaining customers on Facebook business pages: a content analysis of an online discussion forum' investigates the content of online discussions of business owners as well as social networking sites (SNSs) experts and gurus in Australia. A key element of interest and value from this intriguing paper is the analysis of how web-based social media can be used more effectively and efficiently in order not only to attract but more importantly to retain customers.

The sixth paper, 'An empirical investigation of 3D-based information systems success for online retailers' investigates the success of 3D product presentations of laptops in Jordan. From a methodological standpoint, the research merges the theory of information systems (TIS) with the theory of planned behaviour (TPB). A hypothetical retailer website, which presents a variety of laptops, was designed and tested through a rather experimental approach.

The seventh paper, 'Factors affecting customer switching behaviour in the mobile phone market: the case of Egypt' focuses on the factors that might affect consumers' choice of mobile phones with reference to their potential decisions to switch from one brand to another. The methodology relies on the conceptual model of the antecedents of customer switching behaviour (CSB). The paper offers a unique perspective on this important but underestimated market that is the Egyptian mobile phone market, at a time where the African continent looks quite promising for the development of technology-based products and services.

There is no doubt that we are living in an era during which marketing methods, tools and techniques are being rapidly transformed to e- (electronic). Consequently, in a close future e-commerce, internet and all the associated technologies will not be considered as new, distinct topic of academic research and managerial interests. They are going to be integrated in the mainstream of marketing products and services. Until then, we all need to gain knowledge from pioneer research and relevant publications, like this special issue of the *IJTMkt*. Hopefully, the papers presented here will contribute with the addition of original knowledge to existing theories as well as with useful implications to professionals.

As for me, I would like to say that the experience to communicate with authors, reviewers and the editors in chief has been more than a pleasant one. I should say that, when my dear colleague and friend Professor Christos Sarmaniotis (President of ICCMI) introduced me to act as a guest editor in this special issue, I would not and could not have possibly guessed if and how I might get along with Eric Viardot and Alexander Brem, editors of *IJTMkt*. We did not get along. We went amazing. So much, that Alex Brem came up with a private joke: "Irene, let's continue the traditional German-Greek friendship in the future". I still wonder what the French (Eric Viardot) would have to say about that. However, what I have to say about Eric is that even if he is probably even busier than me, he has been always there for me, whatever I might need during this long period. Thanking all three of them as well as my co-guest editor Prof. George Giaglis,

I am crossing my fingers for this severe economic crisis to pass as quickly as possible, so that research results and managerial implications do find their true meaning and application in favour of people's needs and wants.