Editorial

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Biographical notes: Yioula Melanthiou is an Assistant Professor at the University of Nicosia, holds a BA in Business Administration (Marketing Major), MSc in Marketing from the University of Salford, UK, PhD in Marketing from the University of Manchester, UK, and is a Chartered Marketer. She has worked in the industry as a Research Executive, Research Account Manager, and Marketing Consultant prior to joining the University of Nicosia in 2004, where she has since then been teaching several marketing courses at an undergraduate and postgraduate level. She has published several papers in peer reviewed journals and presented her work at various international conferences. Her primary research interests are in the areas of social media marketing, marketing of higher education, and consumer behaviour.

Social media had, for a few years, been quite the laughing stock for some companies: a tool, an app, for youngsters to fiddle with. Those companies who were quick to realise the numerous opportunities social media had to offer are now reaping the benefits. It is no longer a laughing stock but a serious management tool considered vital for many companies' marketing strategy. The ease of use, the reach, the influence, the cost (or almost no cost), and the flexibility of it has politely forced many companies to invest in utilising it to the best of its abilities. With more people behind screens nowadays, companies want to find ways to have more contact with their customers and publics who do not show up in person. So what better way to engage with them than together with them, from behind the screens? So let us engage with our customers 'socially'!

The first article by Iazzi, Trio and Gravili analyse the features of the relations between hotels and online travel agencies, particularly with regards to the issue of trust, which is widely recognised as a key factor for fostering customer-vendor relations and sustaining market share in socially distant relationships, such as online hotel booking. A multiple case study approach was chosen, with in-depth and semi-structured interviews to Italian hotel managers. Results showed that there are four different kinds of relationships depending on how information as a resource and contractual power may be balanced.

Along the same topic, Högberg's study focused on social media marketing implementation, with the aim to develop an increased understanding of the challenges concerning how hotels adapt social media to their marketing activities by investigating social media marketing usage in hotels. The results suggested that most hotels are reactive in their social media usage and do not actively seek interaction, and that individual knowledge needs to be spread throughout organisations to a greater extent in order to achieve interaction with customers in social media channels.

Social networking sites, such as Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn or Google+, allow organisations to create profiles and become active members. Small organisations have started incorporating these strategies into their public relations strategy, and large organisations have used these sites to engage more with their consumers and strengthen their existing brands; however, little is known about how small organisations are taking advantage of the social networking popularity. Komodromos attempted to examine this by studying small organisations in Cyprus and Greece qualitatively. The results revealed the importance of social networking as a platform to engage and connect with consumers and companies indeed consider it as a vital management tool.

The fourth paper by Pantano and Verteramo investigates the impact of the innovations held by the introduction of advanced technologies at points of sale. Specifically, it explores the sense of sociality emerging while integrating social networks, with emphasis on the quality of social interactions while shopping. Based on a quantitative analysis involving young consumers, findings showed the significant extent to which these technological innovations are able to replace traditional face-to-face interactions in terms of consumer-to-consumer and consumer-to-vendor ones.

The next paper undertakes a conceptual examination of the emergence of digital marketing in recent decades and identifies a number of key trends in consumer behaviour and manners in which the medium is evolving. The team of researchers, P. Scott, T. Scott, Stokes, Moore, Smith, Rowland and Ward examine and challenge predominant conceptualisations of the buyer behaviour process and consider how these have been recast in the advent of digital technologies. A novel diagrammatic representation of digital marketing buyer behaviour processes is presented and suggestions are made for the continued development, modelling and empirical testing of the evolving world of digital buyer behaviour.

Finally, Tuan and Moretti through their research sought to show how corporate social responsibility (CSR) communication on social media is actually implemented and managed in business practice. By employing a case study approach, the investigation revealed that even if a company is CSR-oriented, communication on social media does not focus on social and environmental issues solely.

The articles chosen for this special issue were presented, in earlier versions, at the 9th Euromed Annual Conference which was held in Verona, Italy in 2015. I hope that the articles put together in this special issue have provided useful insights regarding social media as a new tool for engagement and have inspired readers to research this area even further. 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.