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## Editorial

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**Biographical notes:** Gorazd Justinek is the Dean of Faculty for Governmental and European Studies, New University and a former diplomat. His research interests include international business, particularly the internationalisation of small businesses, economic and commercial diplomacy and the competitiveness of economies and attracting foreign direct investment. He is the Founder and an editor of the *International Journal of Diplomacy and Economy*.

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## 1 Introduction

Dear readers, you have in front of you the long awaited inaugural issue of *IJETrade*, a journal, which tackles multidisciplinary discussion and research on electronic commerce and trade for businesses, consumers, governments and society, in local and global contexts. Given the extraordinary interest in services for the support of fast-growing world trade and for the design, implementation and management of e-commerce/e-trade services, *IJETrade* concentrates on the proposition of sound theoretical models, methodologies and practices, aiming to provide consultation and promotion of the discipline in an era where the traditional agenda of electronic commerce has been refocused.

*IJETrade* aims to establish value-adding knowledge transfer and personal development channels in three distinctive areas: academia, industry and government, which summarise the three pillars in which a new scientific publication can play a significant role.

The whole world is going digital; some even say we have now ‘digital on steroids’ or as Mr. Nadela said just at the beginning of the COVID-19 crisis “we have seen two years of digitalisation in two months” (Microsoft, 2020). Electronic commerce, electronic trade is taking over the classical ways of trading which was going on for centuries (especially in international trade). Even in traditional activities like Diplomacy digitalisation is taking over. Globalisation has changed our lives beyond recognition and, with the development of new technologies, no working practice or job will ever be quite the same again. Regardless of whether you are a plumber, construction worker, CEO, bureaucrat, athlete, logger, pilot or a diplomat, the internet and ‘the app<sup>1</sup> revolution’ have had a huge impact on our daily routines (Justinek, 2018). This day and age is very much defined by the prevalence of previously unimaginable technological change. One area which is the focus of rapid, almost daily, development is the social media phenomenon. It ‘took off’ just after the millennium and so could be defined, in entrepreneurial terms, as a ‘gazelle’ among other media. Social media tools are therefore no longer used simply for fun and

recreation, nor do they merely serve as a useful way of reaching customers and the rest of the public. They are also becoming an increasingly important method of communicating with the internal audience of companies and institutions.

Yet the world is nowadays very much defined by instability and huge changes. Approaching the year of 2024 we can thus notice that we have more or less the same instability as in the years before (Justinek, 2021b, 2021a, 2022). We will see, what the year 2024 will bring us?

From this point onwards Professor Troise from University of Turin, Italy is taking over the journal as an Editor-in-Chief, whom I on this occasion wish all the best and express my thankfulness for the provided support until now.

## 2 The papers

The inaugural issue includes five papers from all around the world, yet all dealing with digital and e-commerce issues.

The first paper comes from Italy. The study examines the opportunities resulting from online interactions, by shedding light on the most prominent topic in the field of online marketing. A systematic review of academic studies published in the past 15 years (2005–2020). Results systematised according to the reach > act > convert > engage (RACE), revealed useful insights, challenges and opportunities in terms of digital strategies, online business approaches, knowledge exploitation, product customisation and differences in online product purchasing (low-touch, high-touch and ‘embarrassing products’). Moreover, the study also highlights how consumers’ engagement strategies should consider recent threats such as web effects (pathological internet usage sometimes falling into the category of internet addiction) by managing consumers’ online presence, ethical and privacy concerns, and finally online behaviour monitoring in terms of expected response time in customer services, and negative word-of-mouth containment.

The second paper comes from Germany and tackles the digital transformation of transaction processes, which is often studied for end-customer commerce. However, studies show that in the B2B environment, many opportunities for digitisation remain unused. Based on a qualitative comparison of 80 real and successful company cases, this study derives eight patterns of how companies can shape digital transformation. These approaches, such as the meaningful expansion of channels, the reduction of transaction costs or the shift of transactions to markets, can serve practitioners as guidance for their own transformation projects. Academics can use this database for further analyses of success patterns.

The third paper comes from authors from Austria and Slovenia. The control of data by a selected few digital platforms and their ability to analyse and action the insights therein fuels more profound rivalries in the ecosystem. While developed countries are better equipped to deal with the challenges of digital platforms, compared with the developing ones, this paper analyses critical factors of growing economies riding on the success of its platform businesses – US, EU, China, and India. How do they cope with the surge in sophisticated and interconnected digital innovation across businesses? Is India future-ready to pose a serious competition to the business superpowers of the world? The paper studies the cause and effect of the above questions through some of the prominent influences in the nation, such as the status of its platform economy, tax policies, political power, data protectionism, and regulatory framework, that are contributing to creating a comprehensive framework for digital platforms to compete at par with the global players.

The fourth paper is titled ‘The efficiency of e-commerce in the EU logistics sector’. Advanced technologies help optimise product movement through supply chains, where electronic administration of logistics commerce is available. It represents an essential player in the development of logistics and distribution networks. Based on the average added value in the logistics sector in EU countries in 2021, the efficiency of e-commerce in the logistics sector by using a data envelopment analysis (DEA) can be calculated. The DEA calculation is based on the available statistical IT-oriented variables for each country as the input to the calculation and the logistics sector turnover in total enterprise turnover as the output. To better understand how countries are efficient, cluster analysis was used to classify the countries into three clusters according to the added value in the logistics sector in the year 2021. The results show more significant variation in the efficiency of e-commerce in the logistics sector between countries, despite similar IT input indicators between them.

The final paper comes from Vietnam and the authors analyse how consumers now have an intriguing approach to obtain information about products and services, known as e-WOM. Due to its rapid spread, e-WOM is both an excellent promotional tool and a burden for organisations not properly controlling this information channel. The study’s goal was to highlight how e-WOM elements influence online booking intention and measure their impact in order to provide recommendations to help OTAs grow their business. The poll was based on 466 people living in Vietnam who used e-WOM as a source of information to refer to an online booking service via an OTA. SPSS 26 and AMOS 24 are used to analyse the information. According to the findings, online booking intention is influenced indirectly by six factors: tie strength, source credibility, e-WOM quality, e-WOM quantity, expertise, and participation, and is influenced directly by e-WOM acceptance. In fact, there are several other factors that make up e-WOM. Further research is recommended to measure the impact of more e-WOM factors on customers’ booking intention at online travel agencies (OTAs) with an expanded research scale in different Asian countries famous for tourism industry.

## References

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## Notes

- 1 Applications for smart devices.