

E-Marketing and Digital Marketing Developments

When Digital Marketing arose in the '90s it was a new promising environment. The audience was limited and the potential that was emerging was unknown. Nowadays, digital media offers a more complex environment. The successive introduction of new applications and methods increases the challenge to identify what is the most appropriate digital method to apply according to your marketing strategy.

This issue includes substantially extended versions of selected papers, presented at the International Conference on Contemporary Marketing Issues (ICMI) 2012 as well as papers of researchers, who had not been able to participate to the conference. A considerable number of papers have been submitted coming from academic researchers of many countries. The manuscripts were selected and then peer reviewed through a two-round blind review process. Tourism Marketing, Hospitality Marketing, and Branding and Destination Imaging were covered by many submissions to ICMI 2012. Hence, many papers submitted to the special issue of Marketing Vistas focused on innovations in digital marketing in these special streams of tourism, hospitality and branding.

The first paper focuses on marketing as a core activity of an enterprise. The paper's aim was to classify the corporate websites of rural enterprises, using cluster analysis, in groups according to their marketing and digital functions in their corporate websites. According to the findings, the rural enterprises are distinguished in two groups "more organized" enterprises and "less organized" enterprises. The paper finally determines the optimum group of rural agribusiness to be used as a model with enhanced marketing and digital functions.

The second paper discusses about social media, as a cheap and instant way of communication to a target audience, on both a local and international scale. Specifically, the objective of the paper is to investigate the extent, purpose and use of Facebook and Twitter in the Victorian wine tourism industry of Australia. In doing so, a content analysis was applied to analyze Victorian winery websites, assess their commonalities and ascertain their level of involvement in embracing social network tools. Content analysis confirmed the emerging trend of using social media in the wine tourism industry in Victoria. Moreover, the perceived benefits that social media provide to boost visitation in the Victorian wine region are also discussed and recommendations in their future use of social media as an e-marketing strategy are suggested.

The third paper proposes two methods applied on primary survey data and reveal the strengths and weaknesses of each method for marketing decision support. The problem considered was to improve the positioning and the perceived quality of hotels, by relating tourist characteristics with their perceptions and satisfaction attributes. The aim was to extract hidden knowledge from standard service quality surveys and to provide it in the form of rules to support the marketer in his decision making. Association rules for data mining and decision tree methods to the same dataset, resulting in a new set of rules. It was found that the two proposed methods produced complementary knowledge, which revealed different aspects of the underlying trends that could be consolidated and increase the effectiveness of marketing decisions.

The fourth paper discusses about current trends in global tourism and more specifically explore more innovative marketing strategies, towards achieving a competitive advantage. The authors propose social media, as a cost effective marketing tool with high returns. They investigated the use of social media among 325 municipalities in Greece for destination marketing purposes. Greece is one of the greatest tourism destinations world-wide. Findings of this study are useful to industry practitioners and academic researchers interested in the use of emerging technologies and applications for destination marketing purposes. Finally, this paper elaborates on the implications of the findings which are effectively discussed, as well as on directions for future research.

There is no doubt that digital marketing is the future as tools, applications and techniques are being rapidly introduced. Hence, in the near future e-marketing and digital tools will be so closely tight together that someone could not regard the one separately from the other. We do hope that the papers presented in this special issue contribute with useful implications to professionals.

Guest Editors

Dr Christos Sarmaniotis
Dr Christos K Georgiadis
Dr Costas Assimakopoulos

Guest Editors' Profiles

Dr Christos Sarmaniotis

Dr Christos Sarmaniotis is a Professor in the Department of Business Administration (Marketing Program) at the Alexander Technological Educational Institute of Thessaloniki. He graduated from the University of Macedonia and continued his studies in Canada, where he received his Master's degree in Business Administration (MBA) from Concordia University. In 1991 he received his PhD in Marketing from the Department of Economics of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki. His fields of interest are various topics of Management and Marketing. He has authored many papers in scientific journals and in proceedings of national and international conferences. His work has received a lot of citations in the related scientific literature. He is also a reviewer in various scientific journals and conferences. He is Co-Chair of ICCMI 2012 and ICCMI 2014.

Dr Christos K Georgiadis

Dr Christos Georgiadis received his B.Sc. in Mathematics (1987) and his PhD in Information Systems Security-Access Control for Web Data Bases (2002) from the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Greece. His research interests include the areas of e-commerce and m-commerce technologies, e-security and Web Services supporting technologies. His research productivity is summarized in various articles in cooperation with other researchers in international journals and international conferences proceedings. He is a professional member of ACM and SIGEcom. He has held a variety of administrative posts and has undertaken important academic duties, such as acting as guest journal editor, being a member of journal editorial board, being member of program committees of international conferences and acting as reviewer for a number of journals. He works as an Assistant Professor (2009) in the University of Macedonia, Department of Applied Informatics, Thessaloniki, Greece.

Dr Costas Assimakopoulos

Dr Costa Assimakopoulos received his Diploma in Electrical & Computer Engineering from the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Greece in 2000 and PhD degree from the same department in 2006. His research interests are, among others, databases, CRM, Electronic Commerce and coding. He was a member of the Scientific Committee of the International Conference on Contemporary Marketing Issues (ICCM) 2012 that was held in Thessaloniki, Greece and simultaneously acted as the Scientific Secretary of the Conference. He took part in several European and National projects as a researcher. He is also a reviewer in several international journals. He is currently a Lecturer at the Department of Business Administration (Marketing Program) of the Alexander Technological Educational Institute of Thessaloniki, Greece.

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