Within the last years, the Mediterranean region has been attributed priority for the expansion of the European Research Area (ERA), as it is demonstrated by the European initiatives and the number of funded e-Infrastructure projects for the region. This special issue aims to: a) capture e-business and m-business studies that are relevant to the social, economic and cultural particularities of the Mediterranean region; b) raise the visibility of the e-business and m-business research practices, education and policy carried out in the Mediterranean region; and c) examine emerging research questions and issues raised by junior and more experienced members of the Mediterranean e-business and m-business community. This issue contains five papers that reflect the diversity of e-business and m-business research in the Mediterranean region.

The first paper, titled “Examining Behavioral Intention Toward Mobile Services: An Empirical Investigation in Greece” and authored by Theodora Zarmpou, Vaggelis Saprikis and Maro Vlachopoulou, presents a conceptual model for examining the effects of a number of variables on mobile services usage intention. The proposed model is empirically tested using data collected from a survey with questionnaires conducted in Greece. The findings show that individuals’ innovativeness, their educational level, and the relationship ties between the users and the mobile services are key factors to encourage m-services’ adoption. Prior studies in the area apply multiple behavioral theories suggesting conceptual models and recommending different influential factors for the mobile services’ usage. This paper adds a marketing perspective to the issue by including a new significant influential factor, called “relationship drivers”.

In the second paper, titled “Colored vs. Black Screens or How Color Can Favor Green e-Commerce”, Jean-Eric Pelet and Panagiota Papadopoulou present the results of an exploratory qualitative study on the use of computer screen savers. The ecological footprint becomes increasingly important in nowadays, making users more responsible than ever. This is true for commerce in general but also for e-commerce. Within this paper, the authors wish to help organizations to learn how to participate in the protection of the environment by adopting energy saving features in e-commerce websites. The potential value of features, such as the ‘curtain’ screen saver in e-commerce websites can be even higher in the Mediterranean region, where one needs to take into account the sun and the difficulty to read on screens when the
brightness is high. In this direction, the paper argues that this could be provided by the establishment of two elements - a browser and a website extension, which will be tested in a future online experiment.

In the next paper, titled “Identifying the Direct Effect of Experience and the Moderating Effect of Satisfaction in the Greek Online Market”, Michail N. Giannakos, Adamantia G. Pateli and Ilias O. Pappas examine the perceptions which induce the Greek customers to repurchase over the Internet. The implications of this study are interesting not only for the Greek but also for the Mediterranean researchers and e-retailers, since the Mediterranean e-business market shares several cultural similarities with the Greek market. More specifically, in this paper, the authors investigate the relationship between the Greek users’ online experience and the following key factors affecting their online shopping behavior; self-efficacy, effort expectancy, performance expectancy, trust and intention to repurchase. These key factors have stemmed from review of studies on the special features of the Greek online market as well as from dominant theoretical research in the area of technology acceptance (i.e. Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology, Expectation Confirmation Theory and Social Cognitive Theory). The paper concludes that the above factors are positively associated with users’ number of purchases and they are also indirectly affected by satisfaction that derives from previous experience.

Ioannis G. Krasonikolakis, Adam P. Vrechopoulos and Athanasia Pouloudi focus their research investigations in the area of virtual reality commerce in their paper “Defining, Applying and Customizing Store Atmosphere in Virtual Reality Commerce: Back to Basics?”. Their paper aims to provide an initial understanding of the nature of store atmosphere in this fast evolving e-commerce landscape. Their research argues that the available knowledge from Web 1.0 regarding GUI interface and customization effects on consumer behavior should be reconsidered in the Virtual e-commerce landscape. Managers should realize the importance of their stores’ atmosphere as a major consumer behavior influencing factor, thus, preventing the business failures that several web retail stores faced in the previous decade. Specifically, they should be both aware of the applicability and customization options of the available store atmosphere determinants (i.e. store image, crowding, store sound) and advised on how consumers perceive and group in their minds store atmosphere variables (i.e. store appeal, store layout, and innovative atmosphere).

The last paper of this issue, titled “Measuring Interoperability Readiness in South Eastern Europe and the Mediterranean: The Interoperability Observatory”, authored by Ourania Markaki, Yannis Charalabidis, University of the Aegean, and Dimitris Askounis investigates the issue of interoperability in national e-government implementation projects. The paper introduces the Interoperability Observatory, a research initiative for benchmarking interoperability at regional level, supported by the Greek Interoperability Centre. The paper stresses the absence of a standardized framework for monitoring interoperability developments and the unavailability of explicit statistic or empirical information with regard to the issue in question at country level. Being the outcome of an extensive literature review, the Interoperability Observatory is based on the establishment of a series of indicators that are associated with the dimension of interoperability governance and touch upon the policy, research and practice domains. The ultimate goal is the use of this observatory towards raising awareness on the countries’ interoperability status as well as towards promoting best practice cases and benchmarking.

As it is highlighted by the five papers presented in the special issue, there is an intense interest of researchers in the Mediterranean area for developing customized theoretical and empirical models on several key dimensions of the e-business and m-business fields. This special issue contributes to the above fields with studies on e-business and mobile adoption, on
development of green e-commerce practices, on design of virtual reality stores and on e-government integration.

Moreover, the issue contributes with a set of challenging research questions for e-business and M-business researchers in the Mediterranean region:

- How the special social and cultural features of the Mediterranean countries affect the adoption of e-commerce and m-commerce services?
- Which are the requirements of the Mediterranean consumers for using the new type of e-commerce, that is the virtual reality commerce? How the Mediterranean temperament can affect the design of future virtual stores?
- What is the level of use of ecological practices in e-commerce for the Mediterranean countries? How the weather, social and financial conditions of such countries can favor or hinder the development of an ecological behavior for both vendors and customers of e-commerce?
- How the use of an interoperability observatory can facilitate the integration of e-government systems and practices among the Mediterranean countries?

Future issues of the International Journal of E-Services and Mobile Applications could host relevant studies on these topics.

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