

Editorial Preface

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Research on Web Portals is wide and embraces a growing number of application domains. This issue of the International Journal of Web Portals includes three relevant contributions of Web Portals in CRM systems, Online-to-Offline commerce and Marketing with YouTube, in a wide geographical coverage, this time with authors from Spain, China, Australia, Sri Lanka, United Kingdom and Denmark.

Customer Relationship Management Systems, CRM, are technological assets that can help firms to develop the required managerial skills to promote an efficient market segmentation strategy. In “Segmenting Markets by Means of CRMs: An Application to Restaurants”, Carmen De Pablos and Cristina Gallego-Gomez offer an example of an outstanding application of Customer Relationship Management system CRM, to the restaurant industry. The VIPs group has developed through time a group of organizational routines that have helped the firm to reach success in the implementation and use of this tool. By properly using this technology, the company has been able to identify opportunities and threads in the market where it operates. This analysis has enabled the firm to develop mass-customized strategies facing its real and potential customers. This case proofs good practices in the use of CRMs in the restaurant industry, and the case provided has become a reference in this field.

With both the advantages in online and offline channels, Online-to-Offline commerce (O2O) has become one of the most popular business modes. Researching on the customers’ channel choice behavior has great value for multi-channel retailers. The study presented by Ting Dai, DeCheng Wen, Xiao Chen, in “An Empirical Study on the Customer Channel Choice Behavior in the Overall Process of Shopping under O2O Model”, divides the entire shopping process into three stages: pre-purchase, purchase and post-purchase, and analysis the customers’ channel choice behavior in each stage from the perspectives of product quality, customer and channel based on a survey answered by 395 multi-channel shoppers. The findings show that the product’s perceptibility and security, customers’ shopping motivations and network involvements are positively associated with the online channel during the pre-purchase and purchase stages, but the perceived risk are negatively associated with the online channel throughout the entire shopping experience. The channel’s usefulness has a significant and positive correlation with the online channel in all three stages of shopping, but the channels’ ease-of-use only has a significant and positive impact in the pre-purchase stage and weaker in the other two.

YouTube has now evolved into a powerful medium for social interaction. Utilizing YouTube for enhancing marketing endeavors is a strategy practiced by marketing professionals across several industries. The paper “Virtual Community based Destination Marketing with YouTube: Investigation of a Typology”, authored by Arunasalam Sambhanthan, Samantha Thelijagoda, Alice Good and Ada Scupola, rationalizes on the different strategies of leveraging YouTube-based platforms for effective destination marketing by the hospitality industry (hotels) and provides insights on the critical drivers and challenges embedded within YouTube-based community interactions for destination marketing. The comments made by YouTube users have been subjected to a content analysis and the results are reported under the five broad clusters of virtual communities. More broadly, the typology of virtual communities is adapted to evaluate the YouTube platform for effective destination marketing.

Before finishing this editorial preface, we would like to take this opportunity to express our gratitude to IGI Global for the excellent support of their team of professionals. We would like also to thank all the members of the Editorial Board for their commitment and for sharing their knowledge and experience in the support of the decision-making process. Finally, we would like to express our gratitude to all the authors who submitted their work, for their visions and excellent contributions.

We hope you will find here an interesting and a valuable source of knowledge and ideas. Enjoy your reading!

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