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# Guest editorial: Digital marketing trends

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85

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This special issue is partly an outcome of the IUU NASMEI International E-Conference on “The Age of Digital Transformation: Impact of Emerging Technologies in Marketing” held on December 18–19, 2020, at the School of Management, IMS Unison University, Dehradun, India.

The tremendous progress of technology is creating a huge transformation of the marketplace, both on the supply side as well as the demand side. It is hard to imagine that the iPhone first came out less than 15 years back. Today, mobile phones are like an appendage to consumers, and are the collection agents and repository of invaluable consumer information, accessible by sellers using cookies. Wifi has helped countries leapfrog the landline constraints and contributed to the rapid development of countries by reducing the infrastructure needed. The multitude of research in this area is vast and continuing, as evidenced by recent special issues in other journals too (Grewal *et al.*, 2020; Hoffman *et al.*, 2022).

Growth strategies include market and product development, and increasingly co-creation with the customer. Big data has become the mantra for firms to formulate strategy, and the amount of data for collection/acquisition is growing exponentially. Change in technology availability and use does not invalidate the established concepts such as trust, of course. Cloud-based data analytics and collaborative crowdsourcing are becoming common, attributable to decreased costs and also increasing willingness on the part of the consumer to participate. The use of blockchain-centric logic, a vital and rapidly developing technology, for market innovation is illustrated in Erevelles *et al.* (2022). More importantly, they show that it can transform how a customer co-creates value, by enhancing key pre-requisites, such as trust, security, transparency, identity and immutability.

Promotional budgets are increasingly moving from traditional media to mobile devices. Technologies that started out wanting to build communities (like Facebook’s WhatsApp) are now increasingly being used for e-commerce. Lately, celebrity influencers and consumer participation in media like TikTok attest to the increasing engagement with the customer made possible by technology. It provides entertainment simultaneously while spreading informational messages. What an evolution for infomercials.

Sharma *et al.* (2022a) show that entertainment and credibility are the main factors impacting mobile advertising value. Using two independent and different approaches (relative to an identified distribution [RIDIT] and grey relational analysis [GRA]) to the significant issue of advertising value on mobile devices, they show robustness in studying the antecedents of advertising value. RIDIT is a distribution-free technique and GRA addresses limited information and sample size. Five factors emerged in the factor analysis: entertainment, credibility, informativeness, irritation and message relevance. RIDIT and GRA provide corroboration of the antecedents of advertising value, particularly the importance of entertainment and credibility.

If targeting/customization is done right, the role of promotion using social media in increasing purchase intention should be significant, which is the objective of another study in this special issue. The important role of social media marketing on purchase intention is shown by Sharma *et al.* (2022b), with the United Arab Emirates as the setting. The elaboration of social media marketing as a reflective-formative higher order construct is noteworthy. Besides, social media marketing has a significant impact on purchase intention and is mediated by brand equity and a motivational construct called inspiration.



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In a theoretical paper on the dynamic and controllable issue of price, [Kalyanaraman et al. \(2022\)](#) use an inter-disciplinary review to examine the underpinnings of fairness/unfairness perception in pricing and secondly the response to price increases/decreases, and then relate the two to online pricing strategy. The integrative review draws from behavioral science, economics, marketing and operations research. The role of reference price (value), latitude of price acceptance (noticeable difference) and the asymmetric price changes by sellers in a transparent online media has an immediate impact on consumers. The role of technology in the quick dissemination of price information, making price comparison and adjustment dynamic, and the constant vigilance needed to maintain loyalty and profitability will become more important in the future.

Talking of the plethora of information without uncertainty about veracity, how would the ratings and comments by review writers be understood by review readers? [Jagiripu et al. \(2022\)](#) examine this issue using uncertainty reduction theory in a computer mediated context. A Web crawler is used to extract data from Amazon website for reviews on a highly popular book, followed by reviews on YouTube, Facebook and Quora. Findings show that similar locations and time frame converge, whereas differing locations and time frames are dissimilar, using sentiment analysis.

Examining a substantive domain of food waste behavior, using an extensive literature review, [Poonia et al. \(2022\)](#) apply total interpretive structural modeling and cross-impact matrix multiplication applied to classification analysis in their study. Community campaigns, symbolism, societal role modeling and the use of technology are said to be effective interventions in the anti-food waste behavior.

### Directions for future research

While plenty of ground is covered in the selected papers, a lot remains unexplored, for future research. Given our current knowledge and observations, we suggest four main areas for future scholars to explore:

- We are becoming an experience society. Augmented reality and virtual reality enrich customer experiences, and these are still in their nascent stages and will grow tremendously in the future and have a huge impact on the use of technology in marketing. Emotionally connected customers are more valuable than satisfied customers and become opinion leaders ([Zorofas and Leemon, 2016](#)).
- Personalization of commercials makes them more effective because the algorithms for targeting have massive amounts of data to fine-tune connecting consumers with their devices, purchases and browsing history ([Pettijohn, 2019](#)), particularly in a weak privacy environment.
- The pandemic has increased our comfort and reliance on technology, driving digital solutions that deepen connections with others and also businesses, as seen in the 2022 Global Marketing Trends world survey by Deloitte, including the rising importance of diversity, equity and inclusion.
- Omnichannel marketing will become pervasive (Digital Marketing Institute 2020). So, research involving multiple platforms, apps, social media blogs, voice interaction and increasingly sophisticated chatbots will be a rich area for future research.
- In the fast-growing Indian context, the rapid implementation of dynamic technological changes in various sectors, including manufacturing, retail, education and gaming is changing the marketing landscape. Multiple languages, consumer adoption of technology and the immense potential of market growth opens a variety of research

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areas. For instance, studying augmented/virtual reality, Thomas (2021) has identified technology barriers to include privacy/security concerns, difficulty of use and time/cost concerns, which over time will need to be addressed.

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