

Chapter 13

The State of Internet Marketing Research (2005–2012): A Systematic Review Using Classification and Relationship Analysis

Thamaraiselvan Natarajan
National Institute of Technology, India

Senthilarasu Balasubramanian
National Institute of Technology, India

Janarthanan Balakrishnan
National Institute of Technology, India

Jeevananthan Manickavasagam
National Institute of Technology, India

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to quantitatively review pertinent research activities that have been performed between 2005 and 2012 (July) in the area of internet marketing. In addition the paper identifies the central topic in the internet marketing literature and provides expected topical areas of interest. 2158 research article abstract citations were analysed from 460 refereed academic journals collected from six databases. The articles were further categorised under specific topics and network analysis was performed using GEPHI 0.8.1 to know the central topic in the last seven years. Consumer behaviour was found to be the most frequently studied topic in the area of internet marketing research with 472 articles (21.87% of total) followed by 'services' with 280 articles (12.97% of total) and 'business strategy' with 267 articles (12.37% of total). It was also found that topics; purchase intention and social media hold high centrality degree among the examined topics that evolved in the last seven years. This study provides both academics and practitioners with an extensive quantitative review of the internet marketing literature along with an insight of how internet marketing research is emerging.

1. INTRODUCTION

Internet is not as novel a concept as it was fifteen years ago, but exploration and application of the medium continues to be as important as ever, from both industrial and academic standpoints. It is

now a versatile platform worldwide, and caters to applications ranging from business operations to consumer services. The internet has grown beyond its originally envisaged application of defence-related communication, to cater to a wide variety of commercial activities (Leiner *et al.*, 1997, Weis,

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2010). The rapid growth in internet technology has made the internet and its applications unpredictable in the long run (Floyd & Paxson, 2001). As a broad generalization, Schwartz compressed the definition of the internet into six words: infrastructure, organisation, commerce, governance, linking and interface (Schwartz, 2010). Despite the multidimensional growth of internet in various strata of research and industry, at no point of time, it has shown any indication of deterioration.

The growth of internet has been spurred to a great extent in recent years by the emergence of social media. According to “internetworldstats.com,” the number of internet users has grown by 566.4% in the period of 2000-2012 (internetworldstats.com, 2012). Further, the website reported that 2.5 billion people comprising 34.3% of world population use the internet now. Asia has the most number of users followed by Europe as of June, 2012. Such statistics justify the growth of e-commerce activities. Accordingly, “internetretailer.com” predicted that global ecommerce sales will increase by 1.25 trillion dollars by the end of 2013 (internetretailer.com, 2012). Such statistics offer insight into the accretion of the internet in the past two decades and possible exponential future growth. The perception of internet has consequentially traversed different phases in the last few years starting from “communication in electronic medium” towards “communication among social media network.” Such growth has naturally elicited attention among academicians globally. Various sophisticated tools and techniques have been introduced and tested in different environments and these tools have transformed the way the internet is designed (Wilson & Laskey, 2003).

Since the advent of e-commerce, marketers have acknowledged the internet to be a perfect platform for marketing, thus heralding internet-based marketing as a separate business domain (Rayport & Jaworski, 2001). Studies on internet marketing have crossed various paradigms in the last ten years. Studies during the early 2000’s focused on emails and general internet patterns, but

later in the decade, the focus of research shifted to social media fields. Now, studies are centred on specific social media websites. A survey of literature in the area of internet marketing research shows a variety of studies in the area in the last twenty years. Ngai and Wat (2002), Ngai (2003), and Schibrowsky *et al* (2007) discussed academic participation in studies on internet marketing and its distinct functions. These reviews provide a broad outlook of topics involved in internet marketing research until 2004. In general, academicians review internet functions rather than the internet itself as a macro domain. Some literature research in specific topics in internet research are summarised in Table 1.

The reviews of internet marketing research stop at 2004 and there have been no updates since then. Various topics have emerged in the last seven years in the house of web 2.0 like; social media, online marketing metrics, mobile internet, viral marketing, etc. But little is known about these

Table 1. Literature reviews in specific topics

Topics	Literature
Business to Business	Klein & Quelch (1997)
Cross cultural behaviour	Park & Jun (2003)
Distribution value chain	Wynne <i>et al</i> (2001)
E-learning	Wutoh <i>et al</i> (2004)
Exporting	Samiee (2004)
International marketing	Hamill (1997)
Internet addiction	Chou <i>et al</i> (2005)
Internet intervention	Ritterband <i>et al</i> (2003)
Marketing	Kiang <i>et al</i> (2000)
Online healthcare information	Morahan-Martin (2004), Risk & Dzenowagis (2001), Griffiths <i>et al</i> (2006), Bessell (2004).
Product information	Zhang <i>et al</i> (2004)
Search engine optimization	Chen <i>et al</i> (2011)
Sexuality	Doring (2009)
Social media	Okazaki & Taylor (2013)
Supply chain management	Overby & Min (2001)
Trust	Urban <i>et al</i> (2000)

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