To close off this year and this Volume of *EM – Electronic Markets*, we have looked at one of the most exciting and contentious areas of electronic commerce – namely the developments in the entertainment and media sector.

Key questions of the positioning of online versus traditional offerings in the area of print media, television and the gaming industry are raised in the new issue. The Preface to the focus theme section, by our guest editor for this issue, Robert G. Picard, presents a broader introduction to the relevant issues.

Ian MacInnes, Janusz Moneta, Julio Caraballo, and Dominic Sarni, in their article ‘Business Models for Mobile Content: The Case of M-Games’, suggest that mobile games applications could be a way for new media content providers to find a sustainable business model. The gatekeeper function of the wireless network providers should make possible revenue generation, but would also require some form of partnership between the content provider and the network. The authors go on to analyse the possible new value chain structures for the emergent mobile games industry, as well as looking at some of the critical issues, such as common standards, which will need to be addressed before the industry can reach its full potential.

The article entitled ‘Revenues for Online Newspapers: Owner and User Perceptions’ by Carina Ihlström and Jonathan Palmer examines the possibilities for successful business models in the area of online newspapers, with a presentation of empirical research in the Swedish local newspaper market. The findings indicate that on the one hand the online newspaper business remains a difficult place to generate any profit, but also, that the areas of online search archives, enhanced news feeds and content personalization have seen user perception of willingness to pay. Finally, a role of the newspaper as intermediary may also prove viable in the medium term.

Louisa Ha and Sylvia Chan-Olmsted’s article, entitled ‘Consumers’ Use of Enhanced TV Features and Interest in E-Commerce on Cable Network Websites’ looks at the e-commerce implications of enhanced TV, i.e., the use of Internet features to provide added value to the TV experience. The authors of the article were interested in exploring the connection between specific enhanced TV features and e-commerce interest for Internet users. Their results show that the success of enhanced TV in directly promoting e-commerce over the channel’s own website was limited, and in some cases possibly counterproductive. They suggest that an affiliate model strategy with a number of linked sites could prove to be a more successful approach.

The focus theme section of this issue is closed by ‘The Problem of Excludability for Media and Entertainment Products in New Electronic Market Channels’ written by Terje Gaustad. In this article, the author analyses the current regulatory situation of the new electronic market channels for media and entertainment products with a view to their public and private goods aspects, and connects to this the concepts of rivalry in consumption and excludability. The author argues that it is a (sufficient) degree to which the digital media or entertainment product can be excluded from non-payers, rather than a theoretical ideal of perfect exclusion, which must be a target for entertainment and media producers.

Teodoro Cocca opens the research section of this issue with his article ‘Transaction Costs and Investment Behaviour of Online Investors—Empirical Evidence from the Swiss Market’. The focus of the article is first, how investors use the Internet to trade shares, and second, what sort of effect of Internet use on transaction costs (especially information processing costs) this may imply. Based on the results of the empirical study, investors are typified into several categories, and a number of trends are identified. The findings support the theory that higher information processing costs partially negate the benefits of lower online transaction commission rates. The article also indicates the risk of an information illusion for active Internet investors.

The next article, ‘A Model of Web Use in Direct and Online Marketing Strategy’ by Stewart Adam, provides an overview of three conceptualizations, which are used in the development of a model of Web use in marketing strategy, namely the spectrum of Web use in business, strategic alignment in one-to-one marketing, and direct and online database use. Based on these three factors, a model which tries to draws together the various aspects of both on- and off-line marketing approaches is proposed, which equally strives to distinguish the conceptually integrated direct and online marketing approaches from the mass marketing paradigm.

In Simpson Poon and Xueli Huang’s ‘Success at E-Governing: A Case Study of ESDLife in Hong Kong’, customer-centric marketing and private-sector involvement are identified as possible success factors for a Hong Kong e-government services platform. Another key issue is the achievement of a critical mass of users, which in turn can be fostered by customer-centric design, which gives potential users a clear reason for choosing the e-government services offered.

In Efthimios Tambouris and Elias Spanos’ contribution, ‘An Architecture for Integrated Public Service Delivery based on Life-events’, a proposed e-government framework consisting of three distinct layers is outlined. The three layers serve to pragmatize the technical approach: to present public services in a customer-centric, life-event based format at the first (user-interface) level, to correlate these services with core processes at the second layer, and to actually perform
the core processes at the third level. This separation promises to make possible both a user-friendly presentation and an efficient handling of the actual processes.

The final research section article, ‘An M-Commerce Environment Based on Software Agents’ by Zakaria Maamar, presents a project that aims at using software agents to design and develop an m-commerce environment. In the environment, user- and provider-agents interact in an environment designed to take on certain operations from the users’ devices, which also provides the required security standards for trustworthy mobile commerce.

The final section of this issue is devoted to a series of book reviews arranged to focus on the issue of international perspectives on global e-commerce. The section is edited by Robert Kauffman of the Carlson School of Management, University of Minnesota and Baba Prasad, of University of North Carolina Charlotte. The books reviewed are: E-Commerce and V-Business, Business Models for Global Success edited by S. Barnes and B. Hunt [reviewed by Kelly Slaughter]; Strategies for e-Business Success edited by Erik Brynjolfsson and Glen Urban [reviewed by Nicholas Ball]; Information Technology and Tourism: A Challenging Relationship by H. Werthner and S. Klein [reviewed by Nelson Granados]; and as the final contribution, Global Electronic Commerce: Theory and Case Studies by J. Christopher Westland and Theodore H. K. Clark [reviewed by Angsana A. Techatassanasoontorn].

We hope you enjoy this issue, and would like to express our warmest gratitude to Robert G. Picard for his generous help and advice in putting together the issue.

Best regards

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