

IMResearchConference.org

Cass Business School, London, UK
March 27-28, 2020

**Call for Papers for a Special Issue of the *Journal of Interactive Marketing*® and
the Interactive Marketing Research Conference**

on

Examining the Unanticipated Consequences of Interactive Marketing

An increasingly digital world economy has become stunningly unpredictable. We can only hope, as Merton put it in his classic essay on the unanticipated consequences of purposeful social action, that “undesired effects are not always undesirable effects” (1936, p. 895). In 2009, Deighton and Kornfeld published an optimistic article in the *Journal of Interactive Marketing*® about consumer empowerment as a positive unanticipated consequence of interactivity. Ten years later, in 2020, it is time to take another look and re-examine unanticipated consequences of interactive marketing.

In today’s world of rapid technological innovation, artificial intelligence, and the Internet of Things, the potential for unanticipated consequences of interactive marketing is higher than ever. Unanticipated consequences are often an outcome of the type (and lack) of knowledge necessary to predict possible scenarios and a singular focus on the original intended effect of the action to the detriment of thinking about unintended effects (e.g., Facebook’s “move fast and break things” motto) (Merton 1936). Marketing academics are particularly well placed to discover and draw attention to these unanticipated consequences, and to provide thought leadership as to how consumers, firms, and/or policy makers should respond.

Here are just some examples of headline-grabbing unintended effects of interactive platforms and interactive marketing, desirable and otherwise:

- Social networks that bring us together also create echo chambers and facilitate the spreading of fake news, potentially threatening public health (e.g., anti-vaxxers) and even democracy.
- Social media metrics developed by platforms to increase, measure and monetize engagement become addictive for consumers increasingly craving instant gratification.
- Moral outrage spreads through rapid social media firestorms that engulf brands and individuals who crossed an (in)visible line, damaging brands and ending careers.
- User-unfriendly T&Cs, the promise of increased personalisation, and network effects make consumers give up their own data and even their friends’ data, eroding the possibility of privacy.
- Charity campaigns like ALS’ famous Ice Bucket Challenge go viral and raise huge amounts of awareness and money while many others complain about consumers’ slacktivism.

- Annoying ads lead to rapid adoption of ad blockers, threatening the entire digital content ecosystem.
- Algorithms meant to be neutral and unbiased nevertheless produce biased outcomes.
- Product review platforms create opportunities for fake reviews while some 'influencers' buy armies of robot followers to monetize this fake influence.
- Pokémon Go's augmented reality game creates a huge commercial success but also leads to so much immersion that some players experienced serious accidents.
- Using self-tracking devices does not always produce the desired outcome, e.g., wearing a fitness tracker makes some people move less and lose less weight than not wearing one.
- Clever use of block chain logic created Bitcoin, which now burns as much energy as the Republic of Ireland.
- Platforms like Amazon and Google are accused of sucking the life out of entire sectors of the economy (e.g., main street retailers, local news organisations) in a winner-takes-all fashion.

And the list goes on.

Perhaps we should not be surprised that only some of these topics have received academic research attention to date, leaving in doubt the evidence for the causal effects interactive marketing has been implicated in.

As interactive marketing researchers, we do not often pause to question and challenge the potential unintended effects of digital marketing – whether they may be positive or negative.

Thus, with this special issue and conference theme, we challenge you to examine your research from the perspective of unexpected effects, to make them the object of your research, and to think about their implications.

Welcome to a world of unanticipated consequences. Welcome to IMRC 2020!

Key Dates for the Conference

- Submission deadline: **October 21, 2019**
- Acceptance notification: November 4, 2019
- Event: March 27-28, 2020

Submission Format

Submission will be in the form of slide decks. Submissions are restricted to a maximum of 20 slides but can be shorter if your research project is still in an earlier stage.

We welcome empirical, theoretical, and conceptual papers and are open to all methodological approaches. See the event website for full information on submission guidelines.

Key Dates for the Special Issue

There will be a special issue of the *Journal of Interactive Marketing*® on the topic of “Examining the Unanticipated Consequences of Interactive Marketing.”

Presenting at the conference does not guarantee acceptance to the special issue but is a good opportunity to receive feedback from the special issue editors and thought leaders in the field. Equally, submission to the special issue is not a requirement to participate in the conference **nor is participation in the conference a requirement for submission to the special issue**. Conference submission and special issue submission are two separate activities.

Submissions to the special issue will open on April 15, 2020 with a final submission deadline for the special issue on **July 15, 2020**. Papers targeting the special issue should be submitted through the *Journal of Interactive Marketing*® submission system (<https://ees.elsevier.com/intmar/default.asp>) and will undergo a similar review process as regularly submitted papers.

See the event website and the *Journal of Interactive Marketing* website for full information about the special issue and call for papers.

About the Conference

Founded by Marketing EDGE, the Interactive Marketing Research Conference aims to be the premier conference for digital and direct marketing and a unique event of interest to all researchers in this field. The conference is further intended to support the *Journal of Interactive Marketing*®, and to promote high-quality research in interactive marketing. Toward these ends, the event will feature selected research papers by leading academics together with key leading digital thinkers and marketing practitioners working at the frontiers of interactive marketing.

Confirmed Keynote Speakers to Date

- Prof Anja Lambrecht
Professor of Marketing at London Business School
- Dr David Stillwell
Academic Director of The Psychometrics Centre at the University of Cambridge,
Lecturer in Big Data Analytics and Quantitative Social Science
- Prof Luciano Floridi
Director of the Digital Ethics Lab at the Oxford Internet Institute, Professor of
Philosophy and Ethics of Information

Conference Co-Chairs

- Caroline Wiertz, Cass Business School
- Charles Hofacker, Florida State University

Venue

Cass Business School, London, UK

Cass Business School is part of City, University of London, and located in the “cool” part of town, at the intersection of the city’s financial, tech, and design districts. Cass is part of London’s Knowledge Quarter, a partnership of 73 knowledge-based institutions in a mile-wide neighbourhood around King’s Cross. Within this mile alone, there are 8 higher education institutions, 22 museums and galleries, and 34 libraries and archives, 580 research centres, 13,700 academics, and 98,500 students.

London is one of the world’s true cosmopolitan cities and Europe’s leading marketing capital, creative capital, tech capital, and AI capital. In short, it is a perfect location for the IMRConference. Also, we have great pubs, Afternoon Tea, Harry Potter, and the Brexit drama. What could stop you from visiting?

We look forward to welcoming you and to giving you a taste of the vibrancy of our wonderful hometown.

Sponsorship

- Marketing EDGE
- *Journal of Interactive Marketing*
- Cass Business School

For additional sponsorship opportunities, contact Marie Adolphe at MAdolphe@marketingEDGE.org

Event Web Site

IMResearchConference.org

Marketing EDGE Web Site

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References

Deighton, John, and Leora Kornfeld (2009), “Interactivity’s Unanticipated Consequences for Marketers and Marketing,” *Journal of Interactive Marketing*, 23, pp. 4-10.

Merton, Robert K. (1936), “The Unanticipated Consequences of Purposeful Social Action,” *American Sociological Review*, 1 (6), pp. 894-904.