Research Vacation Scholarships 2012

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How different are online grocery websites? A content analysis and literature review.
Online is currently the fastest growing grocery outlet, which makes understanding the buying behaviour patterns in that channel extremely important. It's easy to say that because it looks different, it'll be different to behaviour in a brick and mortar store. But is it really?
This project will involve a content analysis of retailers’ websites in the UK. The main question is, how much variance is there in the way retailers design their websites, offer search options and sell their private label brands.
The second part of the project will be a literature review of search behaviour and how the different characteristics of a website may possibly impact on shoppers search behaviour and choice.

**If you are interested in this project please contact:**
Magda Nenycz-Thiel and John Dawes
Email: Magda.Nenycz-Thiel@MarketingScience.info or John.Dawes@marketingscience.info

How do online retailers frame price promotions?
Two of the biggest concerns for marketers today are the rapid growth of online retailing and wide spread use of price promotions. This topic brings together these two areas. It aims to provide a greater understanding of the price promotion practices used in the online environment. Research indicates that consumers do not always react 'rationally' when it comes to price. The same price can be responded to differently depending on how it is 'framed'. For instance, presenting a reference price (e.g., WAS $100), deal savings (e.g., '% off' or '$ off'), words (e.g., Special, Great Value, Low Price), and even images can influence sales. This project will involve a systematic audit of a wide range of online retailer websites (e.g., supermarkets, book stores, clothing stores), documenting the various price framing strategies online retailers use to attract sales and creating a comprehensive typology. The candidate should have an interest in pricing and promotions research and have a keen eye for details. The project could result in an academic conference paper written in co-authorship with the supervisors.

**If you are interested in this project please contact:**
Svetlana Bogomolova
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Creating a set of brand attributes: does technique matter?
This project examines brand associations held in consumer memory about brands that inform perceptions and aid purchase decisions. When tracking brand health, marketers and research companies create a list of attributes that they believe are relevant to the brand. This vacation scholarship replicates and extends a prior project by examining the attributes people link to durables (cars, mobile phones and computers are examples of durable products).
The successful vacation scholar will receive training in qualitative techniques and will play a key role in administering each technique with consumers and interpreting results. We expect the research will be done both face-to-face and online. Further skill development is offered through analysis of results across techniques, environments and making comparisons with the other product categories. This topic is ideal for someone considering a higher degree in research.

**If you are interested in this project please contact:**
Margaret Faulkner or Jenni Romaniuk
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Does social media make my brand look fat? When brands sacrifice distinctive assets to suit new media.

Research shows that having prominent distinctive brand assets can act as mental triggers and aid consumer memory at the time of purchase. (Hartnett and Romaniuk 2008; Romaniuk and Hartnett 2010; Hartnett 2011, Keller 2001; Keller 2005). Distinctive brand elements are typically symbols, logos, slogans, characters etc. But with the advent of new media, are brands paring back or changing their established distinctive assets to suit the modality of the media platform? This project involves the consideration of up to 100 big brands with established distinctive assets (i.e. Nike swoosh, McDonalds Arches). The student will undertake a content analysis across social media platforms (and devices) to document the brand’s use of distinctive assets and to document any change to the already established asset. Social sites that will be monitored include Pin Interest, Twitter, Facebook, Google+, YouTube, Tumblr and Linkedin. These will be monitored in both PC and mobile form.

Research questions will likely include:

1. To what degree do brands change their distinctive assets in the social media setting?
2. Does one social media site show a greater propensity for brands to display amended distinctive assets?
3. Does one device show a greater propensity for brands to display amended distinctive assets?

The candidate should have an interest in social media research and be proficient in the use of many social media platforms. The project could result in an academic conference paper written in co-authorship with the supervisor.

If you are interested in this project please contact:
Karen Nelson-Field
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Do brand users really pay more attention to advertising?

Past research has found that users are systematically more likely to recall advertising for their brand than non-users (Hammer & Riebe, 2006; Romaniuk & Wight, 2009; Sharp, Beal, & Romaniuk, 2001). However there are many different methods to measure advertising recall. It can involve cuing respondents the brand, the category, the media, the advertising generally or via specific executions. The aim of this thesis is to examine whether the usage bias extends qualitatively and quantitatively across different forms of advertising recall methods. It will draw on the large bank of existing data we have in this area, but also may be supplemented by some experimental data should the need arise.

It will involve quantitative analysis, in both SPSS and excel. The aim is to determine if users really to pay more attention to their brand’s advertising or if this bias is methodologically based. It will improve our understanding of ad recall methods.
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Some initial reading:

If you are interested in this project please contact:
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