Editorial 22/3

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Dear readers of Electronic Markets,

We are happy to present the first general research issue in 2012. It includes five contributions which investigate various aspects in customer interaction, an area receiving increased attention with the upcoming Social Media and mobile technologies. In fact, we observe that these innovations shape the picture of the ‘empowered’ customer who has the opportunity to obtain information from a variety of sources via multiple channels. The ability to compare between providers has been recognized as a key characteristic of electronic markets and acknowledged to shift negotiation power towards the buyer. We believe that this revolution is only at the beginning and we will see profound changes in many industries driven by the emerging consumer-oriented solutions. Some insights towards a deeper understanding of online consumer behavior are included in this issue’s research articles.

The first presents a framework for mining product reviews that customers post on electronic commerce sites. Using a combination of text mining and econometrics the authors Weijia You, Mu Xia, Lu Liu and Dan Liu suggest an automated approach to extract knowledge on customer satisfaction from online communities. Their paper on “Customer knowledge discovery from online reviews” shows the application of

this solution with a Chinese online store and how insights on product features as well as on customer satisfaction were efficiently obtained from these reviews.

A second contribution towards understanding customer behavior in electronic commerce environments is offered in the paper titled “Mood and social presence on customer purchase behavior in C2C e-commerce Chinese cultures”. In particular, the authors Hanpeng Zhang, Yong Lu, Xiaoli Shi, Zongming Tang and Zhijian Zhao discuss the influence of mood and social presence on consumer purchases in Consumer-to-Consumer (C2C) e-commerce in China. They report that the overall mood has a positive influence on purchase decisions and provide some insights on how it may be influenced. A major factor is solutions which increase the feeling of social presence and create a “warm” environment, such as virtual communities, forums or chats. Further factors reported in the paper are individualization and customization of offerings and communication.

An established means for customers to express their opinion are rating systems. As shown in the third contribution by Xianfeng Zhang, Jifeng Luo and Qi Li various rating systems exist which provide a reliable and consistent way for customers to express their satisfaction with a product and/or seller. Their research design is based on a canonical correlation analysis and examines data from rating systems used in the electronic commerce platforms of Taobao (China) and Ebay (US). The paper scrutinizes how reputation signals correlate in the systems, the precision of negative and neutral ratings in reference to dissatisfaction as well as the relative importance of positive and negative ratings. It offers interesting insights for interpreting customer feedback and for designing reputation feedback systems.

Another aspect in customer interaction which is driven by the diffusion of mobile technologies applies to the benefits of mobile advertising. Titled “Mobile advertising avoidance: Exploring the role of ubiquity” the authors Shintaro Okazaki,

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Francisco José Molina and Morikazu Hirose present a study from Japan aiming at understanding how customers value the provision of ads on their mobile devices. Surprisingly, they reveal that under certain conditions consumers are inclined to provide some of their personal data and are open to receive ads from trusted providers.

Finally, our fifth paper addresses the relevance of a customer's gender on pricing. As reflected in the title "Does the internet level the playing field? Gender and online car quotes", the authors Jill L. Robinson and Jenna R. LeCompte-Hinely compare the prices attained by female and male customers in online as well as offline markets. Based on a study of Californian car dealers they show that price advantages obtained by male customers in offline markets were leveled in the online environment and that under certain preconditions women even achieved to strike better deals online.

We hope you enjoy reading these articles and are grateful to all editors and reviewers involved in this issue. The achievements of Electronic Markets would not have been possible without the contribution of all board members at Electronic Markets. We are proud that after two

years of waiting, Electronic Markets now has an official Impact Factor (IF). The Journal Citation Report 2011 now lists Electronic Markets with an IF of 0.784 for 2011. While this represents a good start, we aim at increasing the IF as well as Electronic Markets' position in journal rankings. Last but not least, we are happy that three new editorial board members were appointed at our Annual Editorial Board Meeting in Barcelona. We welcome Markus Bick from ESCP Europe Campus Berlin in Germany, Luba Torlina from Deakin University in Australia, and Frank Ulbrich from Northumbria University in the United Kingdom, and appreciate their enthusiasm for Electronic Markets.

Best regards from Leipzig and St. Gallen,

Your editorial team

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