Internet marketing: a content analysis of the research

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Abstract The amount of research related to Internet marketing has grown rapidly since the dawn of the Internet Age. A review of the literature base will help identify the topics that have been explored as well as identify topics for further research. This research project collects, synthesizes, and analyses both the research strategies (i.e., methodologies) and content (e.g., topics, focus, categories) of the current literature, and then discusses an agenda for future research efforts. We analyzed 411 articles published over the past eighteen years (1994-present) in thirty top Information Systems (IS) journals and 22 articles in the top 5 Marketing journals. The results indicate an increasing level of activity during the 18-year period, a biased distribution of Internet marketing articles focused on exploratory methodologies, and several research strategies that were either underrepresented or absent from the pool of Internet marketing research. We also identified several subject areas that need further exploration. The compilation of the methodologies used and Internet marketing topics being studied can serve to motivate researchers to strengthen current research and explore new areas of this research.

Keywords Internet marketing · Business models · Internet advertising · E-commerce · Literature review · Content analysis

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Introduction

In the early years of the Internet Age, the potential of using the Internet as a distribution channel excited business managers who believed this tool would boost sales and increase organizational performance (Hansen 1995; Westland and Au 1997). These believers suspected an online presence could offer advantages to their customers, while providing a shopping experience similar to the traditional bricks-and-mortar store (Jarvenpaa and Todd 1996). The advantages included providing around the clock access for customers, reducing geographic boundaries to provide access to new markets, and enabling immediate communication with customers.

The prediction of an explosion of online shopping became a marriage between information technology experts and marketing professionals. Most would believe the information technology researchers were studying the Internet technology and its advantages, while the marketers were focused on the consumer's use of the technology. As technology advanced, more marketing activities emerged to market goods and services via the Internet. Today, Internet marketing is defined as "the use of the Internet as a virtual storefront where products are sold directly to the customer" (Kiang et al. 2000, p. 383), or another view includes "the strategic process of creating, distributing, promoting, and pricing products for targeted customers in the virtual environment of the Internet" (Pride et al. 2007). This research attempts to categorize the various Internet marketing activities in a broad context including strategies such as customer relationship management (Hwang 2009), electronic marketplaces (Novak and Schwabe 2009), online auctions (Loebbecke et al. 2010), and electronic branding (Otim and Grover 2010) in tandem with unique IS issues including web site evaluation (Chiou et al. 2010), piracy (Smith and Telang 2009), security (Ransbotham and Mitra 2009), and technology architecture (Du et al. 2008).

With concepts as varied as this in one research domain, a periodic review is necessary to discover and explore new technologies such as mobile banking (Sripalawat et al. 2011), virtual worlds (Sutanto et al. 2011), and social media (de Valck et al. 2009) as they emerge on the Internet marketing landscape. The following sections of the paper will examine the current literature to determine what is known about the concept of Internet marketing. First, a description of the methodology for the analysis of the Internet marketing research is presented. This is followed by the results including an analysis of a smaller sample of the Internet marketing research in the top Marketing journals. Finally, the research is summarized with a discussion of the limitations of this project and suggestions for future research.

Methodology

The approach to this analysis of the Internet marketing research is to first identify trends in the Information System (IS) literature. Specifically, we wished to capture the trends pertaining to (1) the number and distribution of Internet marketing articles published in the leading journals, (2) methodologies employed in Internet marketing research, and (3) the research topics being published in this area of research. During the analysis of the literature, we attempted to identify gaps and needs in the research and therefore discuss a research agenda which allows for the progression of research (Webster and Watson 2002). In short, we hope to paint a representative landscape of the current Internet marketing literature base in IS in order to influence the direction of future research efforts in this important area of study.

In order to examine the current state of research on Internet marketing, the authors conducted a literature review and analysis in three phases: Phase 1 accumulated a representative pool of articles; Phase 2 classified the articles by research method; and, Phase 3 classified the research by research topic. Each of the three phases is discussed in the following paragraphs.

Phase 1: accumulation of article pool

We used the Thomson Reuters Web of Science (WoS) citation database and Google Scholar to search for research articles with a focus on Internet marketing. The search parameters were constrained based on (a) a list of top ranked journals, (b) a specific time range, and (c) key search terms.

First, the researchers chose to use the top 30 journals from Peffers and Tang's (2003) IS journals ranking (see Table 1). Peffers and Tang's (2003) ranking of 'pure' IS journals was adopted for this study because it was based on the responses of IS researchers who were asked to rank journals by their

"relative value to the researcher and the audience as an outlet for IS research." In Peffers and Tang's (2003) original ranking scheme two journals, 'Communications of the Association of Information Systems' and 'Information and Management,' tied for fifth place. Peffers and Tang resolved this issue by ranking both journals in the fifth position skipping the rank of the sixth position. As noted in Table 1, 7 of the top 30 journals were not listed in the WoS database. Consequently, all 30 journals were searched using Google Scholar and only 23 journals were searched using the WoS database. The search parameters were further constrained to a specific timeframe.

Electronic commerce and Internet marketing did not exist prior to the widespread adoption and dissemination of the public Internet and the Worldwide Web (WWW). Therefore, the search parameters were further constrained based on the historical timeframe in which technologies capable of facilitating the development of e-commerce were first introduced. The graphical user interface based browser known as Netscape Navigator was launched as a free download for public use in 1994. Many experts identify the launch of Netscape Navigator as the historical event leading to the global public's widespread adoption and use of the Internet and the World Wide Web (WWW) (Friedman 2006). Therefore, the search parameters for both WoS and Google Scholar were constrained to time period of 1994 through August of 2011.

The final constraint was based on the key search term "Internet Marketing." In both WoS and Google Scholar the search engine scanned for the term 'Internet Marketing' and close variations of this term found in the title, abstract, and keywords of articles published in the top 30 IS journals between January of 1994 and August of 2011 when the search was executed. There was considerable overlap in the pool of articles returned from the two search engines (WoS and Google Scholar). Once duplicate entries and non-research articles (book reviews, editorials, commentary, etc.) were removed 453 articles remained in the composite data pool. The researchers then reviewed each article and identified 42 articles that were unrelated to the topic of Internet marketing. These 42 articles represented false positives returned from the WoS and Google Scholar search engines and were subsequently removed leaving 411 articles in the final composite article data pool for analysis.

Phase 2: classification by research strategy

Once the researchers identified the articles for the final data pool, each article was examined and categorized according to its research strategy. Due to the subjective nature of research strategy classification, content analysis methods were used for the categorization process. Figure 1 illustrates steps in the content analysis process adapted from Neuendorf (2002) and

Table 1 Top 30 ranked IS journals and the number of articles

Rank	Journal abbreviation	Journal name	# of articles
1	MISQ	MIS Quarterly	15
2	ISR	Information Systems Research	27
3	JMIS	Journal of Management Information Systems	36
4	EJIS	European Journal of Information Systems	10
5	CAIS	Communications of the AIS ^a	1
5	I&M	Information and Management	55
7	DSS	Decision Support Systems	78
8	DB	Database	2
9	JAIS	Journal of the Association for Information Systems	6
10	ISJ	Information Systems Journal	8
11	IRMJ	Information Resources Management Journal ^a	2
12	IJEC	International Journal of Electronic Commerce	65
13	JCIS	Journal of Computer Information Systems	24
14	JDBM	Journal of Database Management	0
15	IT&P	Information Technology & People	4
16	JSIS	Journal of Strategic Information Systems	8
17	JACM	Journal of the ACM	0
18	ISF	Information Systems Frontiers	9
19	JGIM	Journal of Global Information Management	5
20	MISQD	MISQ Discovery ^a	0
21	IS	Information Systems	3
22	JOEUC	Journal of End-User Computing ^a	0
23	JGITM	Journal of Global Information Technology Management	1
24	InfoSci	Informing Science ^a	1
25	AJIS	Australian Journal of Information Systems ^a	0
26	JITTA	Journal of Information Technology Theory & Application ^a	4
27	IT&M	Information Technology & Management	4
28	I&O	Information and Organization	1
29	EM	Electronic Markets	37
30	BIT	Behaviour & Information Technology	5
			411

Peffer and Tang (2003)

^aOnly Google Scholar was used to search these journals because they were not included in the Web of Science Citation Database. All other journals were search using both Web of Science and Google Scholar

successfully employed by several similar research studies (Corley et al. 2011; Cumbie et al. 2005; Jourdan et al. 2008). First, the research categories were adopted from Scandura and Williams (2000) (see Table 2), who extended the research strategies initially described by McGrath (1982). Specifically, nine categories of research strategies were selected including: Formal theory/literature reviews, sample survey, laboratory experiment, experimental simulation, field study (primary data), field study (secondary data), field experiment, judgment task, and computer simulation.

Second, to guard against the threats to reliability (Neuendorf 2002), we performed a pilot test on articles meeting the search parameters from other top journals. That is, the articles used in the pilot test (a) were not part of the data set generated in Phase 1, and (b) the data generated from the pilot test were not included in the final data analysis for this study. Researchers independently

categorized the articles in the pilot test based on the best fit among the nine research strategies. After all articles in the pilot test were categorized, the researchers compared their analyses. In instances where the independent categorizations did not match the researchers re-evaluated the article collaboratively by reviewing the research strategy definitions, discussing the disagreement thoroughly, and collaboratively assigning the article to a single category. This process allowed the researchers to develop a collaborative interpretation of the research strategy definitions. Simply stated, this pilot test served as a training session for accurately categorizing the articles for this study with respect to research strategy.

Each research strategy is defined by a specific design approach and each is also associated with certain tradeoffs that researchers must make when designing a study. These tradeoffs are inherent flaws that limit the conclusions that

Fig. 1 Overview of literature analysis

can be drawn from a particular research strategy. These tradeoffs refer to three aspects of a study that can vary depending on the research strategy employed. These variable aspects include: generalizability from the sample to the target population (external validity); precision in measurement and control of behavioural variables (internal and construct validity); and the issue of realism of context (Scandura and Williams 2000).

Cook and Campbell (1976) stated that a study has generalizability when the study has external validity across times, settings, and individuals. Formal theory/literature reviews and sample surveys have a high degree of generalizability by establishing the relationship between two constructs and illustrating that this relationship has external validity. A research strategy that has low external validity but high internal validity is the laboratory experiment. In the laboratory experiment, where the degree of measurement precision is high, cause and effect relationships may be determined, but these relationships may not be generalizable for other times, settings, and populations. While the formal theory/literature reviews and sample surveys have a high degree of generalizability and the laboratory experiment has a high degree of precision of measurement, these strategies

have low degree of contextual realism. The only two strategies that maximize degree of contextual realism are field studies that use either primary or secondary data because the data is collected in an organizational setting (Scandura and Williams 2000).

The other four strategies maximize neither generalizability, nor degree of precision in measurement, nor degree of contextual realism. This point illustrates the futility of using only one strategy when conducting Internet marketing research. Because no single strategy can maximize all types of validity, it is best for researchers to use a variety of research strategies. Table 2 contains an overview of the nine strategies and their ranking on the three strategy tradeoffs (Scandura and Williams 2000).

Two coders independently reviewed and classified each article according to research strategy. Only a few articles were reviewed at one sitting to minimize coder fatigue and thus protect intercoder reliability (Neuendorf 2002). Upon completion of the independent classification, a tabulation of agreements and disagreements were computed, intercoder crude agreement (percent of agreement) was 91.8 % percent, and intercoder reliability using Cohen's Kappa (Cohen 1960) was calculated ($k=0.847$). These two calculations

Table 2 Research strategies

Research strategy	Description	Strategy tradeoffs		
		Degree of precision measurement	Degree of realism of context	Generalizability to target population
Formal Theory/Literature Reviews	Summarization of the literature in an area of research in order to conceptualize models for empirical testing.	Low	Low	Maximizes
Sample Survey	The investigator tries to neutralize context by asking for behaviors that are unrelated to the context in which they are elicited.	Low	Low	Maximizes
Laboratory Experiment	Participants are brought into an artificial setting, usually one that will not significantly impact the results.	Maximizes	Low	Low
Experimental Simulation	A situation contrived by a researcher in which there is an attempt to retain some realism of context through use of simulated situations or scenarios.	Moderate	Moderate	Low
Field Study: Primary data	Investigates behavior in its natural setting. Involves collection of data by researchers.	Low	Maximizes	Low
Field Study: Secondary data	Involves studies that use secondary data (data collected by a person, agency, or organization other than the researchers).	Low	Maximizes	Low
Field Experiment	Collecting data in a field setting but manipulating behavior variables.	Moderately High	Moderately High	Low
Judgment Task	Participants judge or rate behaviors. Sampling is systematic vs. representative, and the setting is contrived.	Moderately High	Low	Moderately High
Computer Simulation	Involves artificial data creation or simulation of a process.	Low	Moderately High	Moderately High

Source (Scandura and Williams 2000)

were well within the acceptable ranges for intercoder crude agreement and intercoder reliability (Neuendorf 2002). The reliability measures were calculated prior to discussing disagreements as mandated by Weber (1990). If the original reviewers did not agree on how a particular article was coded, an additional reviewer arbitrated the discussion of how the disputed article was to be coded. This process resolved the disputes in all cases.

Phase 3: categorization by internet marketing research topic

Typically the process of categorizing research articles by a specific research topic involves an iterative cycle of brainstorming and discussion sessions among the researchers. This iterative process helps to identify common themes within the data pool of articles. Through the collaborative discussions during this process researchers can synthesize a hierarchical structure within the literature of overarching research topics and more granular level subtopics. The final outcome is a better understanding of the current state of a particular stream of research. This iterative process was modified for this specific study on the topic of Internet marketing.

During the initial stages of the current project the researchers began investigating tentative outlets for publishing a literature review on the topic of Internet marketing. A special call for papers (CFP) on the topic of Internet marketing from the journal 'Electronic Marketing' was identified as a potential target journal by one of the authors. Further investigation revealed that the editors had outlined six specific research topic categories for the special CFP including: Business Models of Online Marketing, The Future of Search Strategies, The Internet Advertising Landscape, Commercial Exploitation of Web 2.0 in Consumer Marketing and in an Organizational Context, Evaluation of Online Performance, and Other Topics. Each of these six research topics was accompanied by a general definition and a few examples. The researchers adopted these six research topics to categorize the articles in the data pool.

A second pilot study was performed mirroring the first pilot test as a means of training for categorizing articles by research topic. Researchers independently categorized the articles in the pilot test based on the best fit among the six research topics. After all articles in the pilot test were categorized, the researchers compared their analyses. In instances where the independent categorizations did not match, the researchers re-evaluated the article collaboratively by reviewing the research category definitions, discussing the disagreement thoroughly, and collaboratively assigning the article to a single category. This process allowed the researchers to develop a collaborative interpretation of the research topic definitions (see Table 3).

Once we established the category definitions, we independently placed each article in one Internet marketing category. As before, we categorized only a few articles at a time to minimize coder fatigue and thus protect intercoder reliability (Neuendorf 2002). Upon completion of the classification process, we tabulated agreements and disagreements, intercoder crude agreement (percent of agreement) was 86.2 %, and intercoder reliability using Cohen's Kappa (Cohen 1960) for each category was calculated ($k=.08137$). Again, the latter two calculations were well within the acceptable ranges (Neuendorf 2002). We again calculated the reliability measures prior to discussing disagreements as mandated by Weber (1990). If the original reviewers did not agree on how a particular article was coded, a third reviewer arbitrated the discussion of how the disputed article was to be coded. This process also resolved the disputes in all cases.

Results

In order to identify gaps and needs in the research (Webster and Watson 2002), we hope to paint a representative landscape of the current Internet marketing literature base in order to influence the direction of future research efforts in this important area of study. In order to examine the current state of this research, the authors conducted a literature review and analysis in three phases. Phase 1 accumulated a representative pool of Internet marketing articles, and the articles were then analyzed with respect to year of publication and journal. Phase 2 contains a short discussion of the research strategies set forth by Scandura and Williams (2000) and the results of the classification of the articles by those research strategies. Phase 3

involved the creation and use of six Internet marketing research topics, a short discussion of each topic, and the results of the classification of each article within the research topics. These results are discussed in the following paragraphs.

Results of phase 1

Using the described search criteria within the selected journals, we collected a total of 411 articles (For the complete list of articles in our sample, see Appendix A.) In phase 1, we further analyzed the articles' year of publication and journal. Figure 2 shows the number of articles per year in our sample. Please note that 2011 only represents articles acquired using WoS and Google Scholar search engines which were available at the time (August 2011) the search was conducted. There is a general increasing trend over the 18 year period, but no articles were found to be published in 1994 & 1996. The year 2010 shows the most activity with 52 articles (12.7 %). With Internet marketing issues becoming ever more important to researchers and practitioners, this comes as no surprise. Understanding 2011 was only a partial year in our sample, we were not concerned by the difference in quantity of publications over time.

In order to identify the research strategies used by Internet marketing research articles in the top 30 Information Systems (IS) journals in our sample, Table 4 was created to show the number of Internet marketing articles in each journal broken down by research strategy. This table illustrates the high level of Internet marketing publications that use the Formal Theory/Literature Review, Sample Survey, Field Study – Primary, and Field Study – Secondary research strategies. This indicates a body of research that is still in the exploratory stages. This

Table 3 Internet marketing topics

Research topics	Key concepts ^a	Internet marketing articles
1 - Business Models of Internet Marketing	Business models of pure Internet and multi-channel businesses	169
2 - The Future of Search Strategies	The use of search as a component of an Internet marketing strategy	17
3 - The Internet Advertising Landscape	The use of various Internet-enabled marketing strategies	92
4 - Commercial Exploitation of Web 2.0	Using Web 2.0 technologies such as wikis, blogging, and social media as a component of the Internet marketing strategy	24
5 - Evaluation of Online Performance	Evaluation of the success of online marketing strategies in attracting customers and measuring their buying behaviours	68
6 - Other Topics	Security/Privacy issues in Internet marketing	41
	Online ethics, auction fraud, piracy	
	Customer Relationship Management (CRM) systems	
	Financial performance of companies due to marketing initiatives	
	Technology architectures deployed to market on the Internet	
	Economics of the Internet	
Total		411

^a These categories and definitions were taken directly from the *Electronic Markets* editors' call for papers for this special issue on Internet Marketing

Fig. 2 Number of Internet Marketing Articles Published Per Year

table also illustrates the proclivity of some journals to accept certain research strategies over others. For example, the journals *Decision Support Systems*, *International Journal of Electronic Commerce*, and *Journal of Management Information Systems* had articles in this data set using seven

of the nine research strategies. With this information, researchers that favour certain research strategies can target their research papers to journals that favour these strategies.

Results of phase 2

The results of the categorization of the 411 articles according to the nine research strategies described by Scandura and Williams (2000) are summarized in Fig. 3 and Table 5. Of the 411 articles, 110 articles (26.8 %) were classified as Formal Theory/Literature review making it the most prevalent research strategy. This was followed by Sample Survey with 94 articles (or 22.9 %), Field Study – Secondary Data with 91 articles (22.1 %), Field Study – Primary Data with 66 articles (16.1 %), and Computer Simulation with 25 articles (6.1 %). These five research strategies composed 94 % of the articles in the sample. No articles were classified as a Judgment Task. So, the remaining three research strategies represented the

Table 4 Top 30 IS journals vs. research strategy

vs. research strategy	Research strategy									Journal Total	%
	Journal	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	9		
	BIT		4	1						5	1.2
	CAIS		1							1	0.2
	DB	1	1							2	0.5
	DSS	25	8	3		8	16	4	14	78	19.0
	EJIS	1	4		1	1	2	1		10	2.4
	EM	8	9	2	1	9	8			37	9.0
	I&M	10	22	1		13	9			55	13.4
	I&O						1			1	0.2
	IJEC	18	10	2		9	19	5	2	65	15.8
	InfoSci	1								1	0.2
	IRMJ		1			1				2	0.5
	IS	1				1			1	3	0.7
	ISF	3	4				1		1	9	2.2
	ISJ	1	4			2	1			8	1.9
	ISR	7	2			4	10		4	27	6.6
	IT&M	2	1					1		4	1.0
	IT&P		1			3				4	1.0
*The numbers represent research strategies as follows:	JAIS	2	2			1	1			6	1.5
1=Formal Theory / Lit Review	JCIS	6	11			3	3		1	24	5.8
2=Sample Survey	JGIM		4				1			5	1.2
3=Lab Experiment	JGITM		1							1	0.2
4=Experimental Simulation	JITTA	3				1				4	1.0
5=Field Study - Primary	JMIS	18	2	1	1	2	10		2	36	8.8
6=Field Study - Secondary	JSIS	3	1			4				8	1.9
7=Field Experiment	MISQ		1	1		4	9			15	3.6
8=Judgment Task	RS Total	110	94	11	3	66	91	11	25	411	100.0
9=Computer Simulation	%	26.8	22.9	2.7	0.7	16.1	22.1	2.7	6.1	100.0	

*The numbers represent research strategies as follows:

1=Formal Theory / Lit Review

2=Sample Survey

3=Lab Experiment

4=Experimental Simulation

5=Field Study - Primary

6=Field Study - Secondary

7=Field Experiment

8=Judgment Task

9=Computer Simulation

Fig. 3 Number of Internet Marketing Articles Published in Each Research Strategy Category

remaining six percent of the sample which included Lab Experiment with 11 articles (2.7 %), Field Experiment with 11 articles (2.7 %), and Experimental Simulation with 3 articles (0.7 %).

Further analysis showing the research strategies over the 18 year period from 1994 to August 2011 (Table 6) illustrates that Formal Theory/Literature Review, Sample Survey, Field Study – Secondary Data, and Field Study – Primary Data are represented in almost every year of the timeframe. No articles were found in the years 1994 & 1996, and only one article was found in 1995. These four strategies are exploratory in nature and indicate the beginnings of a body of research (Scandura and Williams 2000). Further categorization and analysis of the articles with respect to Internet marketing topic categories was conducted in the third phase of this research project.

Results of phase 3

Table 7 shows the number of articles per Internet marketing research topic category. These six categories provided a topic area classification for all of the 411 articles in our research sample. Of the 411 articles, 41.1 % were classified as ‘Business

Table 5 Articles per research strategy

Research strategy	Total	%
Formal Theory / Lit Review	110	26.8
Sample Survey	94	22.9
Lab Experiment	11	2.7
Experimental Simulation	3	0.7
Field Study - Primary	66	16.1
Field Study - Secondary	91	22.1
Field Experiment	11	2.7
Judgment Task	0	0.0
Computer Simulation	25	6.1
Total	411	100.0

Models of Online Marketing’ making it the most prevalent Internet marketing topic category. This category was followed by ‘The Internet Advertising Landscape’ (22.4 %), ‘Evaluation of Online Performance’ (16.5 %), and ‘Other’ (10.0 %). These four research strategies accounted for 90 % of the articles in the sample. The topic categories titled ‘Commercial Exploitation of Web 2.0 in Consumer Marketing and in an Organizational Context’ and ‘The Future of Search Strategies’ represented the remaining six per cent (5.8 %) and four percent (4.1 %) of the articles. This illustration of the share of Internet marketing research that is represented by each category reveals the amount of attention topic categories of Internet marketing research have historically received among the top 30 IS journals.

By plotting Internet marketing research topics against research strategies (Table 8), many of the gaps in Internet marketing research are exposed. The gaps are at the intersection of less used methodologies (Judgement Task, Experimental Simulation, Lab Experiment) and less studied domains in Internet marketing (Search Strategies and Web 2.0). We believe these gaps exist for two reasons. First, some of these research strategies are not prevalent in IS research, and some top IS journals do not accept papers that use unusual research strategies. So, researchers avoid unorthodox strategies. The reason some of these categories have not been studied is because they represent relatively new phenomena, and the research has not caught up with the business reality. The great news for researchers interested in Internet marketing is that this domain should provide research opportunities for years to come. To better illustrate the categorization process, Table 9 presents a sample of articles noting their corresponding research strategy and research topic. These articles were randomly selected as typical examples and are not meant to serve as hallmarks of a particular research strategy or research topic within Internet marketing research.

About half (49 %) of the journal articles in this study use the Formal Theory/Literature Review and Sample Survey research strategies indicating the exploratory nature of the current research. We speculate the strategies used to study these topics were prevalent for several reasons. First, these strategies are the most appropriate for the early stages of research. In these exploratory years of Internet marketing research, formal theory/literature reviews are appropriate in order to determine what other strategies are being used in the research, define the topics under investigation, and find research in reference disciplines that are conducting similar research. Second, many researchers in business schools may prefer to administer sample surveys and field studies instead of laboratory experiment, experimental simulation, judgment task, and computer simulation because of the preferences for certain research strategies in the top journals in Information Systems and Marketing. Finally, organizations are less likely to commit to certain strategies (i.e. primary & secondary field studies and field experiments) because these strategies are more expensive for the organizations. These types

Table 6 Research strategy vs. year

Year	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Year total	%
1994										0	0.0
1995	1									1	0.2
1996										0	0.0
1997	5					2	1			8	1.9
1998	1	2				1				4	1.0
1999	3	1			5	2			1	12	2.9
2000	13	3			3	4	1		1	25	6.1
2001	12	7			6	3			4	32	7.8
2002	9	9		1	6	4	1			30	7.3
2003	8	4			9	7	1		3	32	7.8
2004	9	9			2	7	1		2	30	7.3
2005	2	7			5	7	1		3	25	6.1
2006	6	15	2	1	9	9			2	44	10.7
2007	10	5	2			6			1	24	5.8
2008	10	8	2		7	8	2		5	42	10.2
2009	5	9	1	1	5	11	1			33	8.0
2010	14	10	3		6	16	1		2	52	12.7
2011	2	5	1		3	4	1		1	17	4.1
RS Total	110	94	11	3	66	91	11	0	25	411	100.0
%	26.8	22.9	2.7	0.7	16.1	22.1	2.7	0.0	6.1	100.0	

* The numbers represent research strategies as follows:
 1=Formal Theory / Lit Review
 2=Sample Survey
 3=Lab Experiment
 4=Experimental Simulation
 5=Field Study - Primary
 6=Field Study - Secondary
 7=Field Experiment
 8=Judgment Task
 9=Computer Simulation

of research strategies are very labour intensive to the organization being studied because records will need to be examined, personnel will need to be interviewed, and senior managers will be required to devote large amounts of their expensive time to help facilitate the research project. It is interesting to note that many of the articles coded as Field Study – Secondary and Computer Simulation used historical auction and pricing data freely available from the World Wide Web to avoid this issue.

Investigating the marketing literature

In order to investigate the Internet marketing research being conducted in the top Marketing Journals, we also performed a smaller literature review using the top five ranked marketing

research journals following the same methodology previously described for the top 30 ranked IS journals. This list was compiled from three recent marketing journal rankings (Hofacker et al. 2009; Moussa and Touzani 2010; and Polonsky and Whitelaw 2006). The data pool included 24 articles, and after screening out irrelevant articles (book reviews, opinion pieces, etc.) the remaining 22 articles were categorized by research strategy and research topic (see Appendix B). Upon completion of the categorization process, we tabulated agreements and disagreements. Intercode crude agreement (percent of agreement) was 95.4 % for research strategy and 90.9 % for research topic. Cohen's Kappa could not be calculated because the sample size was too small. These two calculations were well within the acceptable ranges (Neuendorf 2002). The results of the literature review of the top five marketing journals are displayed in Tables 10 and 11.

The number of articles published on the topic of Internet marketing in each of the top five ranked marketing journals is presented in Table 10. It is interesting to note that no articles were found in *Journal of Consumer Research* while 16 of the 22 (72.7 %) articles in the data pool were published in *Marketing Science*. This could indicate (a) *Marketing Science* is a top outlet for Internet marketing research or (b) the other Marketing journals use keywords other than "Internet marketing" to classify this area of research. The number of articles categorized based on both research strategy and research topic is presented in Table 11. The three research strategies with the largest number of articles among the top five marketing journals were "Formal Theory / Lit Review" (45.5 %), "Field

Table 7 Articles per research topic

Research topic	Total	%
1 – Business Models of Online Marketing	169	41.1
2 – The Future of Search Strategies	17	4.1
3 – The Internet Advertising Landscape	92	22.4
4 – Commercial Exploitation of Web 2.0 in Consumer Marketing and in an Organizational Context	24	5.8
5 – Evaluation of Online Performance	68	16.5
6 – Other	41	10.0
Total	411	100.0

Table 8 Internet marketing topic vs. research strategy

Research strategy	1	2	3	4	5	6	Total ^a	%
Formal Theory / Lit Review	47	4	28	6	11	14	110	26.8
Sample Survey	37	2	16	6	25	8	94	22.9
Lab Experiment	7	0	2	0	1	1	11	2.7
Experimental Simulation	2	0	0	1	0	0	3	0.7
Field Study - Primary	36	1	12	2	9	6	66	16.1
Field Study - Secondary	29	7	25	8	15	7	91	22.1
Field Experiment	2	1	3	0	3	2	11	2.7
Judgment Task	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.0
Computer Simulation	9	2	6	1	4	3	25	6.1
Total	169	17	92	24	68	41	411	100.0
Percentage	41.1	4.1	22.4	5.8	16.5	10.0	100.0	

^a The numbers representing Internet marketing topics is as follows:

- 1=Business Models of Online Marketing
- 2=The Future of Search Strategies
- 3=The Internet Advertising Landscape
- 4=Commercial Exploitation of Web 2.0
- 5=Evaluation of Online Performance
- 6=Other Topics

Study - Secondary” (27.3 %), and “Field Study – Primary” (18.2 %). This indicates, like the research published in the top IS journals, the Internet marketing research published in the top marketing journals is also still in the exploratory stages.

Fourteen of the twenty-two articles (63.6 %) were categorized within the research topic labelled “the Internet Advertising Landscape” while no articles were categorized

within the research topics “Commercial Exploitation of Web 2.0” or “Evaluation of Online Performance.” In contrast to the analysis of the top thirty ranked IS journals in which the top three research topics were “Business Models of Online Marketing” (41.1 %), “the Internet Advertising Landscape” (22.4 %), and Evaluation of Online Performance (16.5 %); the top three research topics within the top five marketing

Table 9 Sample of articles

Authors	Year ^a	Research strategy	Research topics
Lee et al.	2000	1 - Formal Theory / Lit Review	5 - Evaluation of Online Performance
Saban	2001	1 - Formal Theory / Lit Review	5 - Evaluation of Online Performance
Clemons	2009-DSS	1 - Formal Theory / Lit Review	4 - Commercial Exploitation of Web 2.0
Lu & Hsiao	2010-I&M	2 - Sample Survey	4 - Commercial Exploitation of Web 2.0
Wakefield et al.	2010-EJIS	2 - Sample Survey	5 - Evaluation of Online Performance
Hwang	2009	3 - Lab Experiment	6 - Other-eCRM
Park et al.	2007-IJEC	3 - Lab Experiment	3 - The Internet Advertising Landscape
Gorman et al.	2009	4 - Exp. Simulation	1 - Business Models of Online Marketing
Lee & Kwon	2006-JMIS	4 - Exp. Simulation	1 - Business Models of Online Marketing
Dou et al.	2010-MISQ	5 - Field Primary	2 - The Future of Search Strategies
Novak & Schwabe	2009	5 - Field Primary	1 - Business Models of Online Marketing
Rossignoli et al.	2009	5 - Field Primary	1 - Business Models of Online Marketing
Komiak et al.	2008	6 - Field - Secondary	1 - Business Models of Online Marketing
Tang & Lu	2001	6 - Field - Secondary	3 - The Internet Advertising Landscape
Oorni	2003-EJIS	7 - Field Experiment	2 - The Future of Search Strategies
Bampo et al.	2008-ISR	9 - Computer Simulation	4 - Commercial Exploitation of Web 2.0
Dutta	2001-ISR	9 - Computer Simulation	5 - Evaluation of Online Performance

^a Sample articles from Electronic Markets unless otherwise noted

Table 10 Internet marketing – top marketing journals

Rank	Journal name	Abbr	Article count
1	Journal of Marketing	JM	2
2	Journal of Marketing Research	JMR	3
3	Journal of Consumer Research	JCR	0
4	Marketing Science	MS	16
5	Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science	JAMS	1
	Total		22

journals were “the Internet marketing Landscape” (63.6 %), “Business Models of Online Marketing” (13.6 %), and “Other Topics” (13.6 %). Due to the small number of articles in the sample, it is difficult to make any statements regarding trends in the Internet marketing research in the top Marketing journals.

Limitations and directions for future research

The current analysis of the Internet marketing literature is not without limitations and should be offset with future efforts. In summary, this literature review highlights the upward trend of Internet marketing research but also the limitations of both the research strategies employed and the topics investigated. The authors would suggest future literature reviews should expand article searches to full article text searches, search a broader domain of research outlets, and include other Internet marketing related search

Table 11 Internet marketing topic vs. research strategy (marketing journals)

Research strategy	1	2	3	4	5	6	Total ^a
Formal Theory / Lit Review	2	2	5	0	0	1	10
Sample Survey	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Lab Experiment	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Experimental Simulation	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Field Study - Primary	0	0	3	0	0	1	4
Field Study - Secondary	1	0	4	0	0	1	6
Field Experiment	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Judgment Task	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Computer Simulation	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Total	3	2	14	0	0	3	22

^a The numbers representing Internet marketing topics is as follows:

- 1=Business Models of Online Marketing
- 2=The Future of Search Strategies
- 3=The Internet Advertising Landscape
- 4=Commercial Exploitation of Web 2.0
- 5=Evaluation of Online Performance
- 6=Other Topics

terms. Our literature analysis is meant to serve as a representative sample of articles and not a comprehensive or exhaustive analysis of the entire population of articles published on the topic of ‘Internet marketing.’ To further investigate this body of research, future research studies could explore the diversity of the Internet marketing research domain (Lee et al. 2007) or revisit Ngai and Wat’s (2002) electronic commerce literature review to assess the progress of that research stream. Other studies could take a more in depth look at the various business models or Internet advertising strategies associated with Internet marketing by reviewing the literature in areas such as electronic auctions, search strategies, social media, e-tailing, and various other research domains.

As Internet marketing continues to grow, future studies should consider the role of research relative to generalizability, precision of measure, and realism of context. Future research efforts should adopt more precise measures of what is occurring in this domain. Much of the research in our sample reports the new technologies and issues in Internet marketing without attempting to explain the fundamental issues of IS research. This is to be expected as this research domain appears to still be in the exploratory stages. For researchers to continue to attempt to answer the important questions in Internet marketing, future studies need to employ a wider variety of research strategies to investigate these important issues. Scandura and Williams (2000) stated that looking at research strategies employed over time by triangulation in a given subject area can provide useful insights into how theories are developing. In addition to the lack of variety in research strategy, very little triangulation has occurred during the timeframe used to conduct this literature review. This absence of coordinated theory development causes the research in Internet marketing to appear haphazard and unfocused.

However, the good news is that many of the research strategies and topics in this research are available for future research efforts. Of particular interest to researchers and practitioners would be studies observing consumer behaviour in real time using lab and field experiments or measuring purchasing behaviour from using stored click stream data in a secondary field study. We encourage researchers in fields of IS and Marketing to continue developing the body of research on this important topic using cross-disciplinary teams composed of researchers from business and the behavioural sciences. In addition, future studies could consider the six Internet marketing categories with respect to the research strategies. More specifically, each ‘zero’ appearing in Tables 8 and 11 represent gaps in the literature which provide countless opportunities for researchers to build upon the current body of published research. With this in mind, we hope this research analysis lays a foundation for developing a more complete body of knowledge relative to Internet marketing research within the fields of Information Systems and Marketing.

Appendix A – data sample (411 information systems articles)

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Appendix B – data sample (22 marketing articles)

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