Editorial

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It is an honour I have thoroughly enjoyed to guest edit an edition of this journal. To be honest, I would have preferred it to not be enhanced in importance by being the very last edition. It indicates the longevity of my own career that I recall the very first publication and indeed still own a paper copy. Somehow I doubt, this first edition won't increase in value like some other first editions that became much more famous. Sadly, the paper version was lost a while ago, and even the digital process is too slow to fit in with the faster moving developments that are occurring nowadays. Rightly, the form of delivery moves on as content proliferates.

So, when setting up the material for this edition, I was keen to look to the future and invited contributions that provide a perspective on how the data landscape might develop in the short to medium term. In amongst all the technological advances, consumers themselves are unlikely to change quite so dynamically. I recently read an excellent review of twentieth century advertising, *An Anatomy of Humbug*, by Paul Feltwick, he makes some great points, most forcefully advocating that we can still have much to learn from early practioneers. He demonstrates that insights identified back in the 1920's and applied to communication channels then are still relevant today, even though today's delivery mechanisms were inconceivable back then. So, it can be a mistake to think that consumers priorities and behaviours have changed quite so dramatically even when there are vast and increasing changes in both media, channels and data availability. However these changes do provide us with lots of new ways to respond and develop a more detailed understanding of the underlying behaviour of consumers. These behaviours have probably gone on for many a year, without us marketing practioneers being able to observe it. So, there are still things to learn from that very first edition of the journal, which I will briefly review later on.

Firstly, we can see the new developments that are currently in play. We have significant changes to accommodate in the regulatory framework that will be driven by the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). Whilst BREXIT will ensure that the UK will need to interpret the regulations and instigate this within its own laws, it is thought unlikely to make much difference as many organisations will still want to trade with the rest of Europe. Mitchell looks at the need for organisations to change their approach to consumers in order to work within the new regulations and the attitudes to data held by individuals themselves. Mayfield also outlines how to accommodate within GDPR, the flexibility of working with anonymised data. Dugmore and Vij both introduce opportunities for new data, particularly through closer commercial collaboration with government and academia. Masnaghetti and Abbott, both offer some detailed business intelligence to help develop further the interpretation of existing data. The review of Leventhal's description of current perspectives on geo-demographics and the application of Socio-physics show that with new interpretations, even more traditional data sources are still able to identify distinctive characteristics of populations alongside all the novel data that keeps coming.

Now a nostalgic overview of the material present within the first edition of the journal. Back in 1997 change was in the air, and the original remit was designed to indicate that within a context of rapid developments, many issues remain the same. The first editorial proves the point by opening with the statement that marketing sits on a threshold. The change then, as now, was being driven by developments in IT that, still as now, are changing the nature and expectations of the relationships between customers and businesses. As evidence, take a direct quote below.

“Through the 1990s, the marketing discipline has been experiencing a mid-life crisis of identity and direction. New themes and new concepts have increasingly added new dimensions to marketing

strategy and policy – customer relationship marketing (CRM) being just one. Many marketers still cling to the stability of the “4Ps”... But the influence and changes IT is bringing to traditional marketing communications and distribution channels cannot be ignored.

IT will enable marketers to have one-to-one relationships with their customers. We as direct marketers do not hold the exclusive right to that privilege. If our skills, honed as direct marketers, are to be fully exploited in the interactive age, we need to understand and embrace new technologies and their applications to marketing practice.”

Apart from changing the date and perhaps the acronym, these comments could be written today. It is perhaps now more obvious that many other participants, besides direct marketers, have access to relationships. Witness the growth and focus on customer experience, a much more refined and nuanced activity nowadays, back then it would probably have been labelled fulfilment. Indeed this immediate access to consumers is so prevalent that nowadays it is often claimed that all marketing has become, is becoming or should become direct.

Starting with the journal’s original title, *Interactive Marketing* and the discussion of its aims, it can be seen how prescient the original editors, Derek Holder and Roger Fairlie were. They sought to develop marketing based upon data generated from the consumer rather than data about the consumer. This was a full 7 years before Facebook was conceived of by Mark Zuckerberg and his colleagues at Harvard. Who could have thought that by now, global advertising spend was being so thoroughly dominated by the Facebook social media context and Google search. Both of them gaining their commercial advantage by closely analysing, managing and monetising in various ways customer-volunteered data.

So much for the first editorial, the articles spanned a range of issues. The first article, from Webber and Sleight, reviewed the development of marketing products based upon the fusion of data to generate comprehensive modelled datasets, nowadays this is being overtaken both by the more hostile attitude both from consumers and regulation to uses of third party data and also the widespread availability of comprehensive behavioural information. Tyrell looks to the future, and the issues remain pertinent particularly the prediction that markets will become experience based rather than product based. Although the suggested timing in this article demonstrate once again our natural tendencies to underestimate short-term changes within a year, but overestimate the rate of medium- and long-term changes over 5–10 years. Schultz and Hayman discuss the different sides of consumer Loyalty particularly whether this is attributable to the brand. Shaw reviews ways to measure the performance and effectiveness of CRM. Jenkinson bemoans the shortage of skills and talent within the direct sector. These articles all indicate how much the same issues arise as each new development in technology unfolds. We as marketers, must continue to struggle to make the conflicting pressures of customer experience, brand loyalty, campaign performance and personal skills development balance out. I for one find this ongoing interchange part of the great fascination of a career in this sector.

To end on a dramatic indication of the scale of change, between the start of the journal and its current demise. A change that is also clearly one of the drivers behind the journal coming to a close. The business intelligence article, in the first edition, estimates the global Internet population in 1999 as 159 m, what a stark contrast to the numbers currently claimed by Facebook alone, as of July 2016, Facebook claim that they globally have 1.7B monthly active users and 1.13B daily active users. As the original editors conceived, each time these daily users, open up their Facebook screen, probably on a mobile device, they generate a new clutch of consumer-generated information, and it behoves us all to deliver to consumers extra value, without usurping the privilege of access.

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