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## Revisiting the Impact of Integrated Internet Marketing on Firms' Online Performance: European Evidences

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### Abstract

This research attempts to unveil some of the impacts on internet marketing and firms' online performance driven from the adoption and integration of Enterprise Information subsystems. To accomplish this goal a framework is set and test in a sample of 9.192 European firms using Structural Equation Model estimation. This project contributes to the research on this topic with new evidence in a broad sample, and advances knowledge on the nature of the relative importance of different technological subsystems on Internet Marketing as drivers of e-business performance, applied to the European reality.

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### 1. Introduction

Back in 2000, Avlonitis & Karaynni [1] said that “The Internet has been the favorable theme for numerous studies and reports during the last decade. Yet, there is a lack of systematic empirical evidence regarding the marketing activities that are affected by the use of the Internet, and their consequent performance outcomes.”

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Nowadays, their statement is still an unquestionable true. Internet adoption and use is still growing and impacting business activities, but the assessment of Internet marketing activities needs to be updated.

Deighton [2] suggested that the web launched a set of tools that could revolutionize and optimize marketing activities, driven from the high degree of innovation that goes with it. The passageway from passive to interactive marketing is the reason cited by many as the major driving force for a paradigm change [3-6]. However, despite the growth of the Internet in most developed or developing countries, the systematic research still has some gaps and few empirical outcomes have been produced in the last five years [7-11].

Therefore, this work aims to contribute to the reduction of this gap and update the fundamental understanding of Internet Marketing integrating different EIS subsystems. In this line of research, the present paper discusses the results of an exploratory survey conducted among a large sample of European companies. Using a structural equation analysis, this work explores the relationship between e-business performance and Internet Marketing initiatives, when enclosing a set of well known and adopted EIS subsystems.

This paper has four sections, organized as follows. Section 1 contains a brief background of this research. Section 2 presents some evidences related to Internet Marketing, its advantages and its differences from traditional marketing, and also presents some benefits of employing the EIS subsystems. An evaluation framework is developed in section 3. In the last two sections, the results and conclusions of this study are presented; the major points are reiterated and for further investigation paths are suggested.

## 2. Literature Background

To attain a more in-depth analysis of the Internet Marketing concept evolution and integration with other technology-based components, it's necessary to research outside the marketing field. At a first glance, we can find different references to this concept in the literature, such as interactive marketing [2, 12, 13], digital marketing [14], Internet Marketing [7-11, 15, 16], e-marketing and online marketing [17]. All these terms have at least one common characteristic: the use of information technology tools to interact with consumers, enabling strategies oriented to the client and simultaneously minimizing transaction costs.

The digital era allow firms to develop new action approaches at the marketing level [18]. In this light, Biswas and Krishnan [19] reported that, in the earlier years of the new millennium, substantive changes occurred in the way companies and individuals exploit the Internet. But among the various researchers, who focus on this issue, there is no consensus in relation to the existence of an evolving paradigm [20, 21].

Some believe that the Internet led to a rupture process based on a proactive stance and there is a strong link between traditional marketing and marketing applied to the Internet. Others suggest the existence of an evolutionary process and the current paradigm result of the evolution of marketing in order to adapt to the changing environment.

It appears that the impact of Internet Marketing can be perceived as the use of new technologies to improve traditional processes and new forms to replace the traditional methods, and are creating new tools at the marketing level [22-24].

Existing research around IM still has some limitations and is not as developed as in other areas of marketing (e.g., consumer behavior and international marketing), in part because the vast majority of studies in this area are conceptual in nature, such that some authors still question the real impact of the Internet Marketing bases [25].

However, there seems to be common agreement that concrete action needs to be taken into account by organizations in order to exploit the full marketing potential [26-28]. Therefore, understanding technology-driven change in marketing is of critical importance to marketers, as it bears new customers, new brands, new markets, and new market leaders.

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