

Emerging Markets Queries in Finance and Business

# The internet's impact on integrated marketing communication

Adelina Eugenia Ivanov<sup>a,\*</sup>

<sup>a</sup>*The Bucharest University of Economic Studies, 6, Piata Romana, District 1, Bucharest 010374, Romania*

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## Abstract

In recent years, important changes have had an impact on economic and social life. The Internet makes no exception, it provides a lot of opportunities, like interaction and customization, and it can be used by both consumers and organizations. Should not be overlooked the fact that organization is no longer the only source of information for consumers, Internet provides them an enormous potential of information and communication and the possibility of interaction with each other. The main objective of this article is to find an answer to the question: how can we integrate the Internet in organization's communication activities, so that we can obtain synergy?

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*Keywords:* Internet; integrated marketing communication; synergy; control; consumer

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## 1. Introduction: advantages of Internet communication

In the past 20 years, the importance of using the Internet as competitive marketing tool has been recognized by many practitioners and scholars. Whether we are talking about small or large organizations, who compete on a local, regional or international basis, the Internet is the bridge between the organization and its stakeholders. In 1995 companies such as GE, IBM, Ford, Kraft, and Proctor & Gamble had registered "domain" names, meanwhile other marketers were just waiting to see advantages and disadvantages of using the Internet for their

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\* Corresponding author: Tel.: +40 720 688 677

E-mail address: [ivanov\\_adelina@yahoo.com](mailto:ivanov_adelina@yahoo.com).

particular needs Herbig, 1997. Dutta, 1999 research looked at the ways commercial organizations were exploiting the Internet. Their results had indicated that most large corporations and multinationals are making little use of the Internet, treating it simply as a publishing medium. Traditional corporations were loath to take risks and were therefore vulnerable to flexible and fast-moving new entrants moving onto the Internet. Very few firms were actively using the Internet for launching new business models. It is now commonly accepted that the presence in the online environment is a necessity Kotler and Keller, 2008. Since 1969: Tugent, 1969; Kleinrock, 2003 was making known his vision of the Internet: “an invisible global infrastructure serving as a global nervous system for the peoples and processes of this planet”. In that release he described what the network would look like, and what would be a typical application:

“As of now, computer networks are still in their infancy, but as they grow up and become more sophisticated, we will probably see the spread of ‘computer utilities’ which, like present electric and telephone utilities, will service individual homes and offices across the country.”

His vision has five elements:

- The Internet technology will be everywhere.
- It will be always accessible.
- It will be always on.
- Anyone will be able to plug in from any location with any device at any time.
- It will be invisible.

However, Kleinrock, 2010 did not foresee the powerful social networking side of the Internet and its rapidly growing impact on our society. Online social networking websites such as Facebook have created a new generation of entrepreneurs, allowing their businesses to be set up and be promoted with a very low cost. On the one hand social networking websites help entrepreneurs to connect with one another, and on the other hand they help in connecting with prospects and customers, a very unique platform to gain competitive advantage Henari and Indrupati, 2012. Romania is one of the country where the development of Internet had a major impact. The romanian online environment is characterized by an increasing number of users. The Internet provides them a wider potential for interactivity, communication and information. According to data from the six providers of Internet services to mobile points (Cosmote Romanian Mobile Telecommunications S.A., Orange Romania S.A., RCS & RDS S.A., S.C. Romtelecom S.A, Telemobil S.A. and Vodafone Romania S.A.), the total number of connections reaches 7.47 million at the end of 2011, an increase of approx. 60 percent from the previous year. On the other hand, the number of connections for broadband Internet access provided at fixed locations reached 3.26 million in the second half of 2011, up 8.66 percent from the previous year. The number of subscribers-individuals experienced an upward trend, reaching 2.95 million. The number of connections of subscribers-businesses has increased slightly, but this may not exceed 0.33 million in the first half of 2010 ANCOM, 2012.

## **2. Integrated marketing communication**

The first formal conceptualization of integrated marketing communication (IMC) was introduced in Northwestern University in 1989. According to Schultz and Kitchen Schultz et al, 1993, this definition was used in a survey conducted in 1991 by Northwestern University in cooperation with the American Association of Advertising Agencies (4As) and the Association of National Advertisers in the United States. The conceptual definition of IMC used in this research was: “IMC is a concept of marketing communications planning that recognizes the added value of a comprehensive plan that evaluates the strategic roles of a variety of communications disciplines (for example, general advertising, direct response, sales promotion, and public relations) and combines these disciplines to provide clarity, consistency, and maximum communications impact”. The concept of IMC first entered the scene as a requirement of marketing communication, through the text *Integrated marketing communication: Pulling it together and making it work* Schultz et al, 2004. Schultz

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