Social Shopping: The Good The Bad and The Ugly

Gabrielle Peko
University of Auckland
g.peko@auckland.ac.nz

Valeria Sadovykh
University of Auckland
ahlerka@hotmail.com

David Sundaram
University of Auckland
d.sundaram@auckland.ac.nz

The use of online social networks (OSN) is rapidly changing our e-commerce society from transaction-based to relationship-based. OSN are increasingly being used to obtain information, opinions, recommendations, and comparisons and to view discussions to make shopping decisions. Often consumers are faced with purchase dilemmas and there are many questions in one's mind that could potentially affect the outcome of the purchase decision.

With the ubiquity of recommender and comparison systems in Online Social Shopping engines and multi-sided platforms like Amazon, Alibaba, eBuy, Buy.com, and Facebook, more studies are appearing with regard to online information search fueling the purchasing power of shoppers. Online social media such as blogs, wikis, forums, and social networks are significantly impacting the shopping behaviors in all demographics.

How shopping decisions are taken with the support of OSN and how these networks influence purchase behavior has not been explored sufficiently in research. Although the usage of OSN is growing rapidly, there is a poor understanding of how OSN can provide support and influence purchase decisions in general.

The objective of this mini-track is to obtain insights and develop theoretical and practical understanding on topics and issues related to the influence of OSN on consumption orientated shopping decisions.

We welcome conceptual, theoretical, and empirical papers that enrich our understanding of OSN and its design and how they support, influence and manipulate shopping decisions. All methodological approaches are welcome.

Topics of interest in the context of social shopping include but are not limited to:

- Shopping Decision Making and Decision Support
- Co-creation of value on multisided platforms
- Group shopping sites, communities and marketplaces
- Influence, persuasion, and peer pressure
- Market manipulation and incentives
- Advertising, marketing and recommender systems
- e-commerce, mobile commerce, and social commerce
- Shopping gamification and shopping games
- Consumerism, compulsive and addictive shopping
- Fraud, deception, governance, risk, compliance, security and privacy
- Gen-X, Y, Z, millennial shopping
- Age, gender, and demographics
- OSN post purchase cognitive dissonance
- Processes, systems, tools and technologies to support social shopping

The mini track continues to attract an eclectic mix of interesting papers. This year

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there are several papers of note. Of these, three papers in particular investigate cutting edge topics in the research area.

The first paper, *Oiling the 'Tireless Selling-Machine' – Exploring Requirements for the Deployment of Social Bot in Social Commerce* focuses on the technological, organizational, and environmental requirements for organizations to adopt social bots for social commerce activities. Social media have become major platforms of commerce and changed the way people communicate and consume. Phenomena such as social bots add new dynamics to discussions and the spreading of information with the possible aim to influence or shape opinions and decisions. In this research context the requirements under which organizations would use social bots for commercial purposes are explored. Interviews with relevant experts from various organizations indicated that the term social bot is not well known. Furthermore, a list of certain limitations and ethical considerations for the deployment of social bots were also identified besides possible uses in marketing, social commerce and customer service. It was concluded that using social bots can be beneficial for organizations, but that there is still a need for clarification of legalities.

The second paper, *Let me Entertain You – the Influence of Augmented Reality on Purchasing Intention in E-Commerce* broaches a growing body of academic research that explores how Augmented reality (AR) in e-commerce helps consumers to envision products in their respective surroundings and enrich customer experience. An online experiment was conducted to elicit the influence of AR on customer decision making and the effect on their purchasing intention. Consumers viewed products in an AR enabled online shop and rated perceived usefulness, entertainment and perceived ease of use (PEOU) significantly higher than the control group viewing the non-AR-enabled online shop. Performing mediation analysis, it was found that AR significantly influences purchase intention, which is mediated by perceived entertainment. These findings add to the understanding of the interplay of the motivational variables perceived usefulness, entertainment and PEOU as well as the impact of AR on customer decision making. From a managerial point of view, the findings suggest that in the current stage of the technology, AR is perceived as a playful add-on to online shopping, positively impacting purchase intention.

The third paper, *Data Trading Similarity Signature: An Extended Data Trading Framework for Human and Non-Human Actors* contributes to a stream of emerging research on data trading and data marketplace design. Fair and secure data trading is one of the most prominent challenges of the 21st century. This paper is a second iteration of an approach for checking consumer requirements in a data marketplace. The research extends the existing framework of a data marketplace and bridges the current limitations, as well as takes into account non-human actors as stakeholders. The main problem identified was data quality, which is defined as meeting consumer requirements, and how a data consumer can check the quality of a dataset. The design science research methodology was utilized to develop a novel approach based on machine learning techniques to identify similarities between datasets and consumer requirements to verify whether the requirements were met. This approach forms a unique, fingerprint-like similarity signature for each dataset, which can be interpreted by both human and non-human actors. Finally, an extended data trading framework based on autoencoding and clustering is proposed.