

## Exploring E-TCR – TRACK 1

**Track Chairs: Ekant Veer, Maja Golf-Papez & Joachim Scholz**

### *Short Abstract*

This track seeks to understand the application and efficacy of digital technologies in a Transformative Consumer Research context. Specifically, we seek to investigate the role that online technologies and new media are currently used to promote consumer wellbeing as well as the issues and ethicality of carrying out Transformative Consumer Research online. The track chairs ideally seek to attract participants with a background in both digital research methodologies and TCR from both a marketing and non-marketing background. Participants should identify any specific areas of expertise (e.g. health, environmentalism, equity issues etc) when contacting the track chairs.

### *Promoting Consumer Wellbeing Online*

The use of digital technologies to promote consumer or societal wellbeing is not novel. Public Health advocates have utilised social media, online resources and discussion forums; various governments have drawn on digital media as a means of communicating a variety of PSAs, and charitable organisations have been shown to favour digital technologies to connect with their support networks in an effort to drive behavioural change (e.g. Bradford, Grier, and Henderson 2017). In addition, many digital technologies are used in disaster settings before, during and after catastrophic events (Bird, Ling, and Haynes 2012; Houston et al. 2015; Veer, Ozanne, and Hall 2016). In academia the use of digital technologies to engage in TCR is shown in a number of cases, including the use of online communities to promote wellbeing (Moisio and Beruchashvili 2010), understand anti-social behaviour online (Golf-Papez and Veer 2017) or increase impact of academic work (Ozanne et al. 2016). However, despite its use there is little formative or summative research that helps understand the efficacy of digital technologies in achieving TCR goals. Secondly, there is little assistance for Transformative Consumer Researchers looking to collect and analyse data online. Although much research has been carried out on digital-ethnographies (Murthy 2008), netnographic methodologies (Kozinets 1999, 2002, 2015), and the use of online research panels (Huff and Tingley 2015; Smith et al. 2016) we are left with little understanding of the ethicality and specific nuances associated with online research in a TCR context.

### *Specific Track Goals and Contributions*

The track will focus on achieving three key research aims. **Firstly**, to collate as many examples of TCR style research in marketing and other fields that draw on digital technologies to enable behavioural change. This will be completed *in advance* of attendance and it is an expectation that all participants will play a role in collating this data. **Secondly**, the group will seek to understand the efficacy and any best practice models from the collated material. **Finally**, the track's participants will assess the ways in which TCR can be carried out in digital realms and some key examples of excellent online TCR. Specifically, how can emerging technologies, such as Augmented Reality, Virtual Reality and integrated technological systems be utilised in TCR? This third aim will also seek to understand the ethicality of carrying out TCR online and ways in which to engage with ethics panels/IRB/funders to promote research in an ethical manner. The outcome from these three aims will be create a single all-encompassing piece of work or two, more focused

manuscripts. The track will present findings on the assessment of the impact and efficacy of digital tools in enabling substantive behavioural change to benefit consumer wellbeing. Secondly, it will offer methodological contributions to carry out TCR online and assessing the impact of online interventions. This secondary contribution will specifically seek to understand the nuances of online research in a TCR context where ethicality and consumer vulnerability need to be at the forefront of the research, which is not as pertinent in other online research projects.

### *Track Timeline and Expectation of Contribution*

**Prior to the conference** all track members will be asked to engage in a digital group where discussions, works in progress and timelines can be managed (e.g. Google group or Slack group). Each member will introduce themselves and their areas of expertise. Each member will be assigned an area, based on their expertise, and asked to provide examples of digital technologies used to address the issue they are assigned (e.g. how are digital technologies being used to combat public health issues; how are digital technologies being used to tackle environmental issues etc). A key reading list will be provided to the online group. Track members will also be asked to recommend key papers from the literature that they feel the group will benefit from. A total of at least 8-10 days should be set aside to complete this pre-conference preparation.

Based on the online discussions and evidence of progress decisions will be made regarding any data collection that may be required prior to the conference. Participants should be ready to collect data, if needed.

**During the conference** the focus will be on building from the online discussions and begin the framing of the track outcomes and contributions including, but not restricted to, a conceptual paper to be submitted by the end of 2019 to an appropriate marketing journal. During the conference all participants will be asked to engage in constructive dialogue, conceptualisation of the contributions being made by the track and determining a timeline for writing up a paper submission. Decisions will be made regarding the need for further data collection and appropriate allocation of task specific sub-groups will be determined. The conference time will be invaluable for fine-tuning the prior discussions and will be purposefully flexible to adapt to the progress of the group. Writing leaders will also be determined to ensure that timelines are met and the final written product is crafted in an effective manner.

**Post conference** the task specific sub-groups will continue to interact digitally and (if possible) in person to complete their assigned tasks. Writing leaders will guide the task specific sub-groups and keep in constant contact with the whole group to ensure progress is made. Participants who regularly fail to meet deadlines without prior warning will be asked to leave the group and may not be credited in any future publications that emerge from this track. Based on the success of the group decisions will be made regarding whether additional papers will be written for audiences beyond academia and the marketing discipline. It is hoped that group members will continue to work together on projects as needed.

### *Chair Biographies*

**Ekant Veer** ([ekant.veer@canterbury.ac.nz](mailto:ekant.veer@canterbury.ac.nz)) is an Associate Professor of Marketing at the University of Canterbury Business School, New Zealand. His primary areas of interest include the use of marketing technologies & advertising to encourage social change and the role that consumption patterns play in developing consumer identity. His work has been published in a number of international journals, including *Journal of Public Policy and Marketing*, *European Journal of Marketing*, *Journal of Consumer Behaviour*, and *Journal of Marketing Management*. Ekant has been involved in projects to improve healthy living in conjunction with the WHO and various NGOs and Government bodies.

**Maja Golf-Papez** ([maja.golf@gmail.com](mailto:maja.golf@gmail.com)) is a doctoral student in Marketing at the University of Canterbury, New Zealand. Her research interests lie in exploring the consumption of technology; specifically, Maja's thesis research seeks to understand online trolling as a form of consumer misbehaviour. Maja's work has been published in *Journal of Marketing Management* and *Advances in Consumer Research* and has been presented at several international conferences. Prior to her doctoral studies, Maja worked as the Chief Marketing Officer for a charity dedicated to alleviating child poverty in Slovenia.

**Joachim Scholz** ([jscholz@calpoly.edu](mailto:jscholz@calpoly.edu)) is an assistant professor of marketing at Cal Poly, SLO. His research explores digital technologies in a variety of consumer and marketing contexts: He explores how companies can build their brands through fanning the flames of social media firestorms and examines how augmented reality can lead to stronger consumer-brand relationships, more confident consumers, better food choices, and novel forms of consumer emancipation. During TCR 2017, Joachim participated in a track that explored how popular culture, often conveyed via online and digital media, provides new possibilities for social change.

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