The World Wide Web (WWW, web) has evolved dramatically in its few years of existence, from a medium for sharing simple hypertext documents to a complex medium used for entertainment, education, research, and commerce. Its interactive nature makes the WWW the best current alternative to the physical world for commerce since it provides the benefits and conveniences of catalog shopping while providing an experience similar to physical-world shopping.

Companies that market and sell their products and services on the web share similar concerns with traditional companies: how to attract customers, how to get customers to buy their products, how to get customers to return to their stores, how to build a brand, how to track customer behavior and attitudes, and so on. The web, however, presents some unique challenges to the companies that use it for business.

The papers in this minitrack present some answers to these challenges for both companies and researchers. The topics they address are diverse and cover a number of issues in electronic marketing.

In “Price Comparison for Music CDs in Electronic and Physical Markets: Implications for Emergent Electronic Commerce,” Zoonky Lee and Sanjay Gosain, describe a field study where they collected and compared prices for music CDs on the web and in the physical world. Their results show some differences in pricing between the two domains and the authors propose some explanations for those differences.

Veith Koerner and Hans-Dieter Zimmermann describe a theoretical analysis of the relationship between suppliers and customers. In “Management of Customer Relationship in Business Media: The Case of the Financial Industry,” they use the financial industry as the context for their analysis and they present an approach for customer relationship management.

In their paper “Customer Delivered Value in a Web-based Supermarket,” Helena Ahola, Harri Oinas-Kukkonen and Timo Koivumäki describe a qualitative study of marketing and purchasing behavior in a web-based supermarket in Finland. The authors have some interesting and surprising results.

John D. Wells and William L. Fuerst present an experimental study on the significance of appropriate interface design in web-based commerce for better customer interaction. In their paper “Domain-Oriented Interface Metaphors: Designing Web Interfaces for Effective Customer Interaction,” the authors find that the mode of interface has a significant effect on customer interaction with the web site.

Mike Forbes, in his paper “Toward an Understanding of Consumer Experience on the Internet: Implications for Website Design,” proposes a schema that can be used to compare the Internet to both traditional ways of communicating information and marketplace mechanisms.

In “The Effect of Internet Experience on Consumer Expectations of Responsiveness and Control in Offline Services Marketing Interactions,” Linda F. Alwitt and Lawrence O. Hamer present a survey-based study where they attempt to understand how using the Internet changes consumers’ expectations of companies offline.

In “Messages in the Medium: An Experimental Investigation of Web Advertising Effectiveness and Attitudes toward Web Content,” Jeffrey Parsons, Katherine Gallagher, and K. Dale Foster present an experimental study about the effects of format, medium, and structure on advertising effectiveness on the web.