Electronic marketing is an established and fast growing research stream within electronic commerce that continues to evolve. New methods, lessons and best practices continue to be tested, discovered, refined and advanced. Our minitrack, now in its sixth year, highlights several interesting studies done in this area. We have accepted papers in two areas: 1) quantitative, empirical research with strong theoretical underpinnings, and 2) novel methods and approaches for envisioning and creating effective online/Internet marketing theory development or managerial best practice.

The optimal launch timing, by online portal providers, of new software functionality additions/services, such as geographic mapping or mass-storage email, is addressed with mathematical modeling in the paper by Robert J. Kauffmann and Ping Wu. The decision to lead or follow with a new service depends on its launch costs and the latency of benefits flow. A high-cost portal provider may choose to lead if it believes that its new service will be accepted rapidly, while a low-cost portal provider may decide to follow if revenues will be sufficiently slow to accrue.

Eric K. Clemons, Guodong (Gordon) Gao and Loren Hitt study the relationship between online reviews and the success of a new product launch. They analyzed 288,868 consumer ratings of craft beer and sales data. They found a positive correlation between product sales growth and the variance of the consumer ratings, and between product sales growth and the top (quartile) consumer ratings, as well as a nonsignificant relationship between product sales growth and the bottom (quartile) consumer ratings. Managerially, these findings illustrate, under certain market conditions, that it may be best to introduce products which are loved by at least some consumers, rather than neither loved nor hated (i.e., extreme or “end of tail” dispositions), as well as the potential value of a hyperdifferentiation strategy and of resonance marketing.

The paper by Hsiangchu Lai, Her-Sen Doong and Chen-Yuan Yang details an investigation into the effect of price dispersion in an electronic market on a consumer's likelihood to participate in group buying, where the final price decreases as more consumers "group" together to buy. Based on an experiment with 114 management school students, they report, overall, that a consumer’s intent to join group-buying was higher in a market with narrow (as opposed to wide) price-dispersion, and that the percentage of consumers who joined group-buying was greater in a market with narrow price-dispersion.

The paper by Donald L. Amoroso and Yi (Maggie) Guo uses and builds on TAM in looking at music consumers acceptance of file sharing technology. A survey of 396 university students was conducted and structural equation modeling was used in testing hypothesized relationships. Findings support the validity of TAM in this context, and that consumer experience, as well as consumer music-buying patterns, are related to perceived ease of use and the intent to download music using P2P technology.

Clayton A. Looney, Asli Y. Akbulut and Robin S. Poston build a model based on social cognitive theory to predict and explain channel preference with a study of online investing. A survey design was used and data for nearly 400 undergraduate and graduate students were analyzed using structural equation modeling. The results suggest that task specific self-efficacy beliefs, ultimately, impact channel choice. Consumers are more likely to conduct business activities online, the more they perceive themselves as capable and the more credible they perceive online sources.

The social influence of positive information on a consumer’s internet shopping is explored by Matthew K.O. Lee, Christy M.K. Cheung, Choon Ling Sia and Kai H. Lim. In an experiment, with 104 student subjects, they report that the availability of positive information from a social source (e.g., discussion forum) can moderate (strengthen) the relationship between an online shopper’s perceived ease of use and attitude toward online shopping; and, in turn, a stronger relationship between an online shopper’s attitude toward online shopping and intent to shop online. These findings suggest that managers should more seriously consider the impact of social influence when designing or developing online shopping systems or components.