

Juryrapport
Internetscriptieprijs 2016
Internet & Economie

This is the second year that the KHMW (Royal Holland Society for Sciences and Humanities) has given out the Google prize for the best Master's thesis in 'internet and economics'. This prize is one of four KHMW prizes in different disciplines that honour research into interactions between the field of study and the broad phenomenon of internet. In economics and business, much has changed in the past 25 years as internet has grown and become ubiquitous. Not only is the share of GDP that is transacted or intermediated through internet continuing to increase, but also the nature of markets and the methods of doing business are continually changing.

Nowadays, internet plays an important role in many stages of the value chain, from original design all the way to delivery and aftersales support of finished products and services. One of these stages is the area under study in the prize winning submission: 'What makes a credible and helpful online video review'. In this thesis, David Galitzki conducts research into factors that influence perceptions of trustworthiness of product reviews.

David Galitzki received a Masters degree from Maastricht University in two areas of specialization, namely Information Management & Business Intelligence as well as Strategic Marketing. In his thesis, entitled *What Makes a Credible and Helpful Online Video Review? Examining the Effects of Reviewer Disclosure*, he combines insights from both tracks, to study the usefulness of online video reviews for consumers learning about a product they may decide to purchase. The online video reviews are the internet counterpart of old-fashioned mouth-to-mouth marketing. However, the anonymity of online reviews brings about the problem of perceptions about trustworthiness of the reviewer. In a very carefully designed and executed experimental study, Galitzki tests whether or not showing the face of the reviewer in the review increases trust. Next, he manipulates the experiment and finds that the image helps more if the reviewer and the consumer share characteristics. The characteristic of the product, either experience good or search good, makes little difference for the result.

The very readable thesis not only sheds light on the direct question under study, but the findings likely can be usable to any organization that needs to inform the public on an issue. This could be for commercial marketing purposes, but also public issues in areas of social importance, as traffic safety or public health. For the author, having gained experience in conducting state-of-the-art online experiments likely will allow him to function well in any field of evidence based decision making.

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De jury vergaderde op 8 maart 2017 onder leiding van Prof. dr. L.J. Gunning-Schepers, voorzitter KHMW; daarnaast namen deel aan de vergadering Prof. mr. A. Soeteman, secretaris geestes- en maatschappijwetenschappen en Drs. S. van Manen, secretaris (notulen).