

---

## Guest editorial

---

---

### About the Guest Editors

**Julie Abbott** has worked in marketing for IBM for over eight years and her current role includes IBM's Business Intelligence solutions across EMEA. She previously worked as an IT consultant both for IBM and previous employers. Julie holds an MA in marketing from Manchester Business School, the CIM Postgraduate Diploma, is a Chartered Marketer, a full member of CIM, and Honorary Visiting Research Fellow for Bristol Business School and is about to embark on a doctorate in CRM. She regularly guest lectures at various business schools on CRM and Data Warehousing and has had various papers published.

**Merlin Stone** is the IBM Professor of Relationship Marketing at Bristol Business School, Business Research Leader with IBM's Business Innovation Services, and a Director of QCL Ltd, Swallow Information Systems Ltd and ViewsCast Ltd. His consulting experience covers many sectors. He is the author of many articles and 20 books on marketing and customer service, including *Up Close and Personal – CRM @ Work*, *Customer Relationship Marketing*, *Successful Customer Relationship Marketing*, and *CRM in Financial Services*. He is a Founder Member of the Institute of Direct Marketing, a Fellow of the Chartered Institute of Marketing and on the editorial advisory boards of many journals. He has a first class honours degree and doctorate in economics.

### SME and consumer e-business research

We inhabit a world where communications and information technology are now an accepted part of our lives. The technology is improving faster and faster with product life cycles becoming much shorter. How is that affecting life for the consumer – especially younger people? Many small and medium companies want to achieve more using current technologies – especially those that allow the collection and manipulation of the enormous amounts of data available today. In the past, this type of technology was available only to the larger enterprises with deeper pockets but is now ubiquitous across all business sectors, and company sizes.

This special edition of *QMRIJ* "SME and consumer e-business research" encompasses both practitioner and academic views of research in the world of the Internet. The result is an interesting mix that was certainly enjoyable and informative to the audience at the business intelligence and e-marketing workshop held at IBM Warwick in December 2001. The workshop, which was chaired by Professor Merlin Stone, was again run by Professor Len Tiu Wright and co-hosted by IBM, who are pleased to be associated with this prestigious annual academic/practitioner exchange of views in the area of e-business.

Taking the area of SME first, how can the Internet increase the competitiveness of smaller businesses, enabling them to take advantage of their market position and utilise the technology to best meet their particular needs? Schlenker and Crocker have worked on an SME Gateway project in CEMA financed by IBM, that encouraged the close liaison between business, consultants and academia over two years in order to build sustainable revenue streams via the use of Internet technologies. Their paper discusses their early findings. Here in the UK, Martin and Matlay have researched the take up of Internet technologies in the SME community, understanding how the new knowledge gained from its use has allowed new marketing strategies to emerge.

Customer relationship marketing (CRM) is an important aspect of marketing today with the data collected using the Internet and other technologies enabling firms to really understand their customer needs and from that develop new products and marketing strategies to gain competitive edge.

Integrating Web and e-mail to form a push-pull strategy forms the core of Sands' discussion as he examines exactly which individual technologies are likely to dominate in the future. Multi channel management is an increasingly important area of CRM and this is the focus of Wootten's research in the EMEA Motor Industry as he looks at channel conflict now that on-line shopping for cars has had an enormous negative impact on traditional retailers.

The pervasiveness of the Web and other communications technology allowing the crossing of international boundaries and enabling consumers and businesses alike to have far more choice in their purchases has changed the face of business as we knew it. But how is it actually affecting the consumer? Grant and Waite specifically looked at lifestyles of teenagers as they begin their move to adulthood to understand just how much the technology has affected them – do the realities match the hype? The new technologies have brought with them a whole new glossary of terms, with acronyms such as CRM, ICT (Internet Communications

Technology) and BI (Business Intelligence) abound. Enormous numbers of new communications products have hit the market, allowing everyone access to the Internet if they wish. Are all of these understood? Jayawardhena, Wright and Masterson investigate this and the implications of actually using these technologies to both increase profitability and sustain it.

These papers are a selection of those presented at the business intelligence and e-marketing workshop. A previous issue of *QMRIJ* contained an earlier selection. The editors wish to wholeheartedly thank the authors, the reviewers, the editor of *QMRIJ*, Professor Len Tiu Wright and, of course, the participants of the workshop for their input and support of this special issue. Abstracts of earlier versions of the papers were published in *Business Intelligence and e-Marketing Proceedings of the IBM Workshop*, 6 December 2001.

**Julie Abbott (abbotjl@uk.ibm.com)  
and Professor Merlin Stone  
(merlin\_stone@uk.ibm.com)**

*Guest Editors*