Call for papers for the special issue:

Digital and sustainability: how can technological innovation impact the marketing's transition?

Deadline for Submission: November 30, 2025

Guest Editors:
Prof. Mohamed Akli Achabou
IPAG B.S, Paris (France)
ma.achabou@ipag.fr

Prof. Sihem Dekhili
ESSCA School of management, Strasbourg (France)
sihem.dekhili@essca.fr

Prof. Virginie Thevenin
IPAG B.S, Paris (France)
v.thevenin@ipag.fr

Purpose of the special issue

For a long time, marketing has been accused of being a source of wasted resources and over-consumption, by encouraging materialistic values and responding to short-lived individual desires. This is why, in view of climate change urgency, doubts have been raised about the ability of marketing to contribute to a better world (Chandy et al., 2021).
Marketing occupies a privileged position between supply and demand and may play a key role in guiding organizations and consumers towards sustainable practices (Kemper and Ballantine, 2019). Thus, the field of "sustainable marketing" has been developed the last years. It assumes that the influence of marketing and its tools can be used to promote market and business models that are aligned with environmental and social issues (Dekhili, 2021).
Dekhili et al. (2024) argued that a 'true' sustainable marketing, prioritizing the extended value and anchored in an overall corporate strategy, is possible. To achieve this, sustainable marketing should, on the one hand, change radically the offer, and, on the other hand, support consumers towards more sustainable practices, mainly by encouraging sobriety and developing new compatible imaginaries.

To ensure radical changes and accelerate the marketing transformation, digitalization seems an important ally. Bekele et al. (2024) believe that the sustainability issue is increasingly closely linked to that of digital transformation. In fact, the European Union has set itself the goal of coupling digital technologies with sustainable development as part of what is called "the double transition" (European Commission, 2022). Also, it is suggested that the stronger a company's digital capabilities (blockchain, digital twin, Internet of Things, artificial intelligence 'AI', big data analytics, etc.), the more likely they are to foster sustainable innovation and facilitate business model transformation (Luo et al. 2024). Digital capabilities also enable greater transparency in stakeholder relations by providing real-time information and thus

fostering closer collaboration to achieve common goals (Farinloye and Mogaji, 2024). In this sense, some prior studies confirmed the positive impact of digital tools on the integration of sustainability in marketing. For instance, it was showed that AI helps to extending the lifespan of products (Sauerwein et al., 2019) and enhancing ecological consumption (Tseng et al. 2018). Also, augmented information may improve ecolabels' credibility (Dekhili and Ertz, 2024).

However, one of the main criticisms of "sustainable marketing" is its reliance on technological progress or "technosolutionism" to meet sustainability challenges. Green growth relies on high-tech solutions to promote new eco-products and so-called sustainable practices (e.g. anti-waste apps, connected cars, smart cities, etc.). The myth of "green IT" ignoring the rise in greenhouse gas emissions due to the digital world and the persistent exploitation of rare metals essential to digital products remains an ongoing debate (Breyer et al. 2017).
Digital transformation is a complex process that can involve several company components and different players in an industry. Yet, there is a lack of attention to the main difficulties behind the use of the digital tools (Myshko et al. 2024) in marketing strategies, and their impacts are very often ignored (Elgaaied-Gambier et al. 2020). Innovative technologies and the development of apps in favor of sustainability are neither carbon-neutral nor devoid of social consequences. In this way, digital sobriety aims to reduce the ecological footprint of information and communication technologies.
In addition, digital tools tend to favor rebound effects and neutralize the sustainability benefits. It is for example the case of P2P second-hand platforms which encourage over-consumption and produce pollution due to transportation, limiting thus the positive effect of circularity (Dekhili et al. 2025).

Crossing "technology" and "sustainability" could present opportunities, but at the same time this poses significant challenges and questions. How can companies take advantage of digitalization to make a successful marketing transition to sustainability while avoiding rebound effects? Accordingly, the purpose of this special issue is to explore how digital technologies could facilitate the integration of sustainability in marketing, by considering the dark ecological side and limitations of these tools.

We aim to answer the following questions, without exclusivity or exhaustivity:

- How can digitalization contribute to the design of more environmentally and socially responsible products and services?
- How can digital tools impact the price judgement of sustainable offerings? How could technology favor the acceptance of fair prices by consumers? For example, could the use of QR codes to guarantee greater transparency be a solution?
- How digital platforms and AI could be used to disseminate information about enterprises' responsible initiatives, raise consumer awareness and decrease consumer skepticism toward ecological claims? How can technology help to produce effective responsible communication?

- Can digitalization reduce the ecological impact of distribution chains? Challenges are for example related to transport, storage and used-product collections. How can digitalization increase the accessibility and attractiveness of sustainable products in stores? In which manner do online commerce and platforms facilitate the distribution of sustainable offerings, and what are the limitations of such kinds of channels on a societal side?
- How can digital tools encourage consumers to adopt more responsible practices and guide them in their sustainable decision-making process? Could technology favor sober behaviors? What are the societal risks of digital tools on consumers (addiction, intrusiveness, privacy, …)?
- How does the negative impact of technology tools lead to a limited net ecological impact of sustainable offerings? Which levers to use digitalization in a responsible way?

To explore all those themes, we invite proposals– with either qualitative or quantitative approaches. Also, submissions may be conceptual or empirical.

Submission Instructions

Authors are invited to submit their complete papers through ScholarOne (https:// mc.manuscriptcentral.com/rjsm) by November 30, 2025. Submitted manuscripts will go through a double-blind peer-reviewed process as indicated in JSM's submission guidelines.

Should you have any questions about the special issue, please contact the guest editors:
Prof. M.A. Achabou (ma.achabou@ipag.fr), Prof. S. Dekhili (sihem.dekhili@essca.fr),
Prof. V. Thevenin (v.thevenin@ipag.fr)

References

Bekele, H., Raj, S., Singh, A., Joshi, M., & Kajla, T. (2024). Digital transformation and environmental sustainability in the hospitality industry: A three-wave time-lagged examination. *Journal of Cleaner Production*, 484, 144263. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jclepro.2023.144263

Breyer, C., Heinonen, S., & Ruotsalainen, J. (2017). New consciousness: A societal and energetic vision for rebalancing humankind within the limits of planet Earth. *Technological Forecasting & Social Change*, 114, 7-15.

Chandy, R.K, Johar, G.V, Moorman, C, & Roberts J.H. [editorial] (2021). Better marketing for a better World. *Journal of Marketing*, 85(3): 1-9.

Dekhili, S. [dir.] (2021). *Marketing for sustainable development, rethinking consumption models*. ISTE-WILEY Editions, 301p.

Dekhili, S., Achabou, M. A., & Nguyen, T. P. (2025). When the pro-ecological intentions of second-hand platforms backfire: An application in the case of Vinted. *Journal of Cleaner Production*, 486, 144399. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jclepro.2024.144399

Dekhili, S., Merle, A., & Ochs, A. (2024). Commentary on “Look up! Five research proposals for rethinking marketing in a post-growth society”: Marketing must reflect on its own evolution in the Anthropocene epoch. *Recherche et Applications en Marketing*, 39(2), 113-127. https://doi.org/10.1177/20515707241253369

Elgaaied-Gambier, L., Bertrandias, L., & Bernard, Y. (2020). Cutting the Internet's Environmental Footprint: An Analysis of Consumers' Self-Attribution of Responsibility, *Journal of Interactive Marketing,* 50, 120-135.

European Commission. (2022). 2022 Strategic Foresight Report. *Publications Office of the European Union*.

Farinloye, T., & Mogaji, E. (2024). Strategic marketing for sustainable sports travel experiences. *Journal of Strategic Marketing*. Advance online publication. https://doi.org/10.1080/0965254X.2024.2443418

Kemper, J. A., & Ballantine, P. W. (2019). What do we mean by sustainability marketing? *Journal of Marketing Management*, 35(3–4), 277–309. https://doi.org/10.1080/0267257X.2019.1573845

Luo, X., Qian, W., Liu, M., Yu, X., & Liu, Y. (2024). Towards sustainability: Digital capability, sustainable business model innovation, and corporate environmental responsibility of high-performing enterprises in an emerging market. *Business Strategy and the Environment*, 33(6), 5606–5623. https://doi.org/10.1002/bse.3502

Myshko, A., Checchinato, F., Colapinto, C., Finotto, V., & Mauracher, C. (2024). Towards the twin transition in the agri-food sector? Framing the current debate on sustainability and digitalisation. *Journal of Cleaner Production*, 452, 142063. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jclepro.2023.142063

Sauerwein, M., Doubrovski, E., Balkenende, R., & Bakker, C. (2019). Exploring the potential of additive manufacturing of a product design in a circular economy. *Journal of Cleaner Production*, 226, 1138-1149.

Tseng, M.L., Tan, R.R.A., Chiu, S.F., Chien, C.F., & Kuo, T.C. (2018), Circular economy meets industry 4.0: can big data drive industrial symbiosis? *Resources, Conservation and Recycling*, 131,146-147.