Rotterdam School of Management
Erasmus University

BMME129

Digital Footprints of Consumer Preferences

Lecturer(s)	Dr. Ana Martinovici
Course coordinator	Dr. Ana Martinovici
Structure (e.g. lectures, tutorials, etc.)	Lectures, Workshops
Assessment	Individual assignment (60%) Group assignment (40%)
Conditions for access to tests (yes/no)	No
Teaching block	5
EC	6
Entry requirements or required background knowledge, if applicable	No entry requirements. See "Pre-requisites" for required background knowledge.
Course schedule	Please visit https://courses.eur.nl

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Welcome message

Dear students,

Welcome to "Digital Footprints of Consumer Preferences"! I am looking forward to teaching you and promise you exciting materials that will keep you engaged.

Because I strongly believe in the added value of lectures and active discussions, and I trust your commitment to stay motivated (and physically present), there are no strict attendance rules. A substantial part of your final grade (40%) is based on teamwork. Working in teams fosters your research skills, your understanding of the methods used, and helps you apply these techniques in your future careers.

Finally, I ask you to actively give feedback during the course. Obviously, there are always things that can be improved, and I want to know about them as soon as possible. This way, I might be able to make adjustments to the course that will improve your learning experience and outcomes. Otherwise (i.e., if you wait to give feedback until the final course evaluation form), your suggestions will only benefit students who take the course next year.

Have a great learning experience!
Dr. Ana Martinovici

Course Overview

Consumers use various technologies in their everyday life, such as mobile applications, internet browsers, social networks, and wearables. In doing so, consumers leave a digital footprint - a stream of data that describes their online activities. Sometimes, they explicitly share content with other people (e.g. social networks, forums) or have direct communication with a company (e.g. online customer service). Data that consumers intentionally submit online is defined as active digital footprint. At the same time, consumers also leave a passive digital footprint: their search history, the news they read online, the location and time when they use a device. Both active and passive digital footprints can reveal consumer attitudes, interests, and preferences. This brings numerous opportunities and challenges for companies, consumers, and public policy makers.

This course discusses the benefits and risks associated with the use of digital footprints for marketeers, consumers, and policy makers. Brand managers can use detailed consumer level data to gain better insights about their target group and to adapt their communication and branding strategies accordingly. At the same time, consumers and policy makers are becoming more concerned about how digital footprints are collected and used. This course will help you develop

an in-depth understanding of potential ethical issues related to digital footprints and measures that can mitigate such risks (e.g. the EU General Data Protection Regulation).

There will be 9 lectures (2h long) and 2 workshops (3h long). The workshops are a mix between a lecture and a lab tutorial. The lecturer shows examples in class and then students work on their own application - in groups of 5-6. The sessions are not taught in a traditional way – I will not spend 2-3h to show you step by step exactly what you need to do. Instead, you are required to thoroughly study the materials before coming to the session, and then ask questions. In other words, individual study before the sessions is necessary in order to fully participate in these activities. If you do not study beforehand, you won't be able to ask the right questions in class, which limits your progress on the assignments.

Learning Goals

Students who actively participate in all sessions and successfully complete their assignments will be able to:

- Understand and explain the importance of digital footprints for consumers, policy, and businesses.
- Identify strengths and weaknesses in how companies handle consumer data.
- Recognize potential ethical issues related to digital footprints.
- Understand and explain implications of the GDPR for the EU marketplace.
- Provide managerial and policy recommendations.

Course Materials

This course will use a mix of:
- Pre-recorded videos (distributed via Canvas, as interactive videos)
- Reading materials (slides, articles) (distributed via Canvas, as interactive documents)

All materials are mandatory unless otherwise indicated (in writing) in the syllabus or in the lecture slides. All materials (i.e., pre-recorded videos, interactive documents on Canvas) need to be completed before the scheduled synchronous sessions. Details will be made available via Canvas on what materials need to be completed before which sessions.

Finally, additional readings might be posted from time to time on Canvas or might be mentioned in class. These additional readings are intended to broaden your perspective and are not mandatory.

Course materials will be organized in Modules on Canvas. For the most part, the modules have the following structure:

1. Learning materials (prior to live sessions)

a. First, you read the assigned materials. I will use interactive videos and interactive documents on Canvas which might include questions for you to answer.
b. If anything is unclear, you can post a question within the interactive materials (videos or documents). You are encouraged to answer questions that your colleagues add and thus have interact with each other.
2. Slides and Recordings (of the live sessions)
a. During the live session we review the material covered by the assigned reading, but our focus in on the material that was the least clear to the most students. The session is not designed to be a lecture, but rather an interactive learning environment.
b. We work through examples, applying what was in the text. We do this either as a class or in small groups.

After the live sessions:
a. You review what you've learned so far.
b. If anything is still unclear, let me know.

Course Information

Pre-requisites

It is expected that that you have completed the core courses in the MSc in Marketing Management program. If you are taking this course and are enrolled in another program (and thus have not taken the marketing core courses), be aware that I assume a common base of background marketing knowledge, and that you may need to obtain this knowledge on your own, outside of this course.

Students who successfully follow this course have:
- Strong interest in learning about companies' responsibly use of consumer data
- Willingness to engage in self-study
- Willingness to work in teams
- Willingness to work hard and receive critical feedback

Live Sessions

Following the Recommendations on privacy during remote online education by the Dutch Data Protection Authority (https://autoriteitpersoonsgegevens.nl/en/news/recommendations-privacy-during-remote-online-education), I want to inform you that:
- Some sessions (or parts of sessions) will be recorded and made available on Canvas.
- I will always notify you before the recording starts, and I will only make local recordings (i.e., on my own device, not in the Zoom cloud).

- I will make video content available on Canvas if and only if it serves at least one of these purposes:
  - to improve the learning experience of students,
  - to allow students to review learning materials at their own pace,
  - to mitigate the negative impact of unstable internet connections on learning outcomes.
- I will record sessions in full, for these two reasons: (1) during lectures and workshops I want to be fully focused on the content and not have part of my attention constantly allocated to "should I pause/resume the recording now?", and (2) it is not always possible to decide if what we are about to discuss in the next X minutes should be recorded or not (e.g., if a student interrupts with a question I want to focus on answering the question, not on deciding if to record it or not). However, recording sessions in full doesn't mean that I will post the full recording on Canvas. After the session ends, I will edit the recording and remove the parts that contain:
  - students discussing group projects or the individual assignment,
  - students working in breakout rooms,
  - students asking questions,
  - unnecessary personal information about students (e.g., pictures, videos, questions in chat),
  - any other content that doesn't serve at least on one of the three purposes above.
- This means you can expect that video recordings made available on Canvas include this type of content:
  - the lecturer explaining teaching materials,
  - the lecturer providing examples,
  - the lecturer discussing suggestions for your assignments.
- Full recordings will be stored in my Erasmus University Rotterdam OneDrive account.
- Videos shared on Canvas will be removed at the end of the course.

I chose this policy on recordings in order to balance: (1) your benefit of having access to recordings and being able to learn whenever is more convenient for you, and (2) your fundamental right to privacy and data protection considerations. I hope this encourages you to openly participate in lectures, as you don't have to worry that everything you say will be shared on Canvas. At the same time, this also shows the importance of attending the sessions to fully benefit of the learning experience, as not all video content can be shared on Canvas.

Course attendance

Attendance to online lectures is strongly encouraged, but is not factored directly into your grade. I assume you take responsibility for your own learning trajectory and check Canvas regularly for up-to-date information. If you must miss class for some reason, please send me an email, before the absence if that is possible. If you do not send me an email, I will simply assume you have decided not to attend.

Important note: ALL times (e.g. for lectures, assignment deadlines) refer to Rotterdam time. Make sure you take this into account if you are now located in a different time zone!

Examination

There will be no written exam, which hopefully makes it easier for you to manage the approaching thesis deadline. However, assignments (individual and group) have to be completed. All assignments are due strictly on time. Detailed information about the individual assignment and group project will be communicated in due time on Canvas.

If your score on the individual assignment falls below 6.0, you have the option to revise and resubmit your work. The revised submission will be evaluated again and can receive a maximum score of 6.0. The deadline for submitting the revised assignment is one week after the initial grade has been posted.

If there are personal circumstances that affect your study progress and prevent you from handing in assignments on time or giving the presentation during the lectures, I recommend you contact one of the student advisers (https://www.rsm.nl/study-advice/master/personal-circumstances/). They can assess your personal circumstances, offer advice, and if necessary, take action to minimize the study delay.

Assessment Matrix

Educational goals per course (After following this course, the student is able to:)	Assessment formats		
	Individual Assignment	Group Project	
Understand and explain the importance of digital footprints for consumers, policy, and businesses.	x	x	
Identify strengths and weaknesses in how companies handle consumer data.		x	
Recognize potential ethical issues related to digital footprints.	x		
Understand and explain implications of the GDPR for the EU marketplace.	x		
Provide managerial and policy recommendations.	x	x	
			Total
Weight	60%	40%	100%
Minimum grade required	5.5	N/A	5.5
Opportunity to resit within the academic year	Yes	No	
Form of examination (e.g. MC, Open ended questions, open-book, etc.)	Assignment	Project	
Group / Individual	Individual	Group	

Very important grading rule!

In line with RSM regulations, it is not possible to pass this course by compensating between individual work and group-based work. This means that the grade for the group project will only be taken into account when the grade for your individual assignment is above 5.5. The figure in Appendix A at the end of this document describes this process.

Feedback on Assignments/Perusal

If you believe an obvious mistake was made when assessing your work, such as forgetting to assess part of it or incorrectly adding the number of points, you can ask me to check your grade. In such a case, please submit your request in writing (via email to dfcp@rsm.nl) and explain why you think your written assignment should receive a different grade, and what that grade should be. A difference of opinion about (the application of) the answer indication, for example the number of points awarded to one or more (sub) questions, is not regarded as an obvious error. A perusal is not an opportunity to negotiate your grade.

To prevent that students are surprised by the final evaluation of their work, there are plenty of moments when you can ask questions about the content of the course and the assignments you need to complete. This guarantees that the evaluation criteria and expectations are clear. More specifically, the last 15 minutes of each lecture will be devoted to discussing any problems and/or questions that you may have related to the assignments or the course content. You are encouraged to make use of these feedback moments and submit your questions 24h before the lecture (via email to dfcp@rsm.nl). I will then incorporate these questions in the slides and make sure that the student(s) receive satisfactory feedback for their questions.

Plagiarism and other forms of fraud

Students are expected to take individual tests to the best of their own ability, without seeking or accepting the help of others or use resources that are not explicitly allowed nor to help others. In teamwork, students are not allowed to collaborate outside their own group. Sharing solutions with other teams is also considered a fraudulent action.

Make sure to follow the RSM code of conduct and regulations related to plagiarism. For more details on this, please consult:

https://www.rsm.nl/examination-manual/fraudplagiarism/

https://my.eur.nl/en/eur/practical-matters-0/cheating-and-plagiarism

All group members carry a degree of responsibility in case of fraudulent activities during a group assignment. Exceptions to this rule may be made only if the Examination Board has deemed that there are irrefutable grounds to dismiss the other team members.

All members of an assignment group are responsible for how tasks are assigned and completed by individual members. Make sure you all contribute and collaborate in a way that is fair for all members and mutually agreed upon. If you experience problems that you can't manage

yourselves, let me know as soon as possible - free-riding is regarded as a form of fraud and needs to be reported to the Examination Board. Don't wait until the assignment deadline to indicate that one or more members have not contributed to the final report.

Final remarks

I am interested in your feedback. Don't wait until the final course evaluation to let me know if you have suggestions on how to improve the course. There are many topics related to "Digital Footprints". However, we only have 6 weeks to go through them, so a selection has to be made. If you think this course should cover some topics/methods that are currently not included, let me know. To the extent that more students share your interest, I will try to accommodate that topic. Depending on how much time is available, we can discuss the topic in class or at a minimum, I can recommend suggested readings to those who are interested. Such additional suggested readings are completely optional and do not count in any way towards your grade in this course. But they can help you acquire knowledge and build skills relevant for your career/thesis/personal interests.

Appendix A Very important grading rule

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┌─────────────────────┐
│ Grade for Individual │
│   Assignment (GIA)   │
└─────────────────────┘
           │
           ▼
        ◇ GIA ≥ 5.5 ◇ ──── NO ───▶ [ FAIL ]
           │
          YES
           │
           ▼
┌─────────────────────┐
│ Calculate the final  │
│   grade (FG) as a    │
│  weighted average    │
│ between GIA and the  │
│  grade for the group │
│      project         │
└─────────────────────┘
           │
           ▼
        ◇ FG ≥ 5.5 ◇ ──── NO ───▶ [ FAIL ]
           │
          YES
           │
           ▼
        [ PASS ]
```