

Changes in Perceptions of the Internet's Influence on Marketing in South Africa since the Late-1990s

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ABSTRACT The present paper reports on a study that compared senior marketers' perceptions of the Internet's influence on marketing in South Africa in 1997 with their perceptions nearly two decades later in 2011. In South Africa, the predicted value of the Internet economy is expected to rise from R59 billion at the end of 2013 to R100 billion in 2016, thereby accounting for 2.5% of the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP). A cross-industry survey of the marketing practitioners at the Johannesburg Stock Exchange's top 100 companies was conducted using a self-administered questionnaire. Ranked means were used to compare senior marketers' perceptions concerning the Internet's influence on the conceptualisation of marketing activities, market definition and value creation between the 1997 and 2011 studies. In addition, a two independent-samples t-test was used to compute whether there were statistically significant differences between the 1997 and 2011 perceptions. The findings of the research suggest that in 2011, marketers perceived the Internet to have a statistically significant lower influence on doing a better job selling, expanding the size of a target market, targeting new customers in current markets and adding new segments than those in the 1997 study.