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## MEDIA RELEASE

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### **Brock research shows how the Internet influences offline shopping**

Reminding in-store consumers that information is available online makes them more likely to purchase products, new research from Brock University shows.

Antonia Mantonakis, an associate professor of marketing at Brock's Goodman School of Business and a Fellow at Brock's Cool Climate Oenology and Viticulture Institute, recently co-authored a paper that will be published in an upcoming edition of the *Journal of Marketing Research* about the consumer behaviour theory behind consumers' offline purchasing decisions.

The research shows that reminders of the Internet influence offline purchasing behaviours in a somewhat unexpected way. The simple presence of a product website can affect in-store purchasing decisions even when the website is not actually visited by the consumer.

Mantonakis says this is particularly true of complicated or little-known products where there is an overwhelming amount of information to absorb. Consumers' confidence in a product is increased when they are reminded that product details are easily accessible to them.

"Imagine you go into a winery and do a tasting of a Sauvignon Blanc. The staff tell you the aromas and flavours, what it pairs with, and the price of a bottle. Simply being told by the staff that 'this information is also available online' might make you more confident about the product details, leading to purchase," she says.

In research experiments involving products such as wine and melatonin sleep aids, Mantonakis and colleagues Rajesh Bhargave from University of Texas, San

Antonio, and Katherine White from the University of British Columbia's Sauder School of Business found that by simply including reminders of website information on in-store signage and labels, managers saw an increase in sales.

In a field study at Riverview Cellars, managers saw an increase in sales whenever customers were reminded that the product, pairing and winery information was all online.

This reminder, that product data is available online, is referred to as a "cue-of-the-cloud" and is in line with other research that shows people use their smartphones as an extension of their own memory.

"You don't have to remember phone numbers anymore. You don't have to remember directions or product-related information. Virtually everything is stored in your phone or on Google. Previous research has shown that people think this is like a memory partner," said Mantonakis.

Consumers' heavy reliance on the Internet and their ability to quickly access an array of data at any point in time works to the advantage of product managers who can use subtle reminders of this, especially when selling complicated or little-known products.

Other research findings by Mantonakis and colleagues include additional subtle signage and label changes that influence consumers' behaviour and decisions, including the impact of winemakers' signatures on wine labels, and purposefully choosing to feature wine awards versus reviews.

[Video of a podcast about the research, as well as a downloadable audio version can be found on The Brock News.](#)

For more information or for assistance arranging interviews:

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