

## Big Data and Consumer Behavior: The Imminent Cultural Clash

Fareena Sultan, Northeastern University; Charles Hofacker, Florida State University;  
Edward Malthouse, Northwestern University

In recent years, digital media and new devices have increasingly facilitated the growth of Big Data. Social media, mobile devices, wearable technology, and the Internet of Things (IOT) are some of the phenomena that have increasingly affected the 3 V's of Big Data, Volume, Velocity and Variety. The question arises, what approaches and techniques do we need in marketing to undertake Big Data research, particularly as it relates to the study of consumer behavior?

The field of study known as consumer behavior has traditionally moved forward using *a priori* theory followed by experimentation. It now seems that the nature of the feedback loop between theory and results is shifting under the weight of Big Data.

A new data culture is now represented in marketing. The new group advocates a theoretical data mining and A/B testing rather than human intuition. The group brings with it interest in numerous secondary data sources. In this research we describe the consumer decision-making process with respect to the new Big Data sources. We then look at the implications for theory, and for practice.