

Optimizing campaign performance by utilizing Meta Pixel on micro and main websites

A case study on campaign design to retarget potential students at Tilburg University

Information System Science
Master's thesis

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Abstract

In today's highly competitive higher education landscape, institutions must adopt innovative digital marketing strategies to attract and engage prospective students effectively. This research investigates the implementation of Meta Pixel as a tool for bridging the gap between a primary institutional website and micro websites, with Tilburg University serving as the case study. The study addresses critical challenges such as understanding user behavior, optimizing digital campaigns, and ensuring compliance with GDPR regulations. By designing and evaluating targeted campaigns and incorporating expert insights, this research explores how Meta Pixel can enhance user tracking and retargeting to improve engagement and conversion rates. The campaigns focused on increasing awareness, guiding users through the enrollment funnel, and refining content strategies to deliver a personalized and seamless user experience. The findings underscore the value of integrating main and micro websites to create cohesive digital ecosystems that effectively support the prospective student journey. This research provides actionable recommendations for higher education institutions aiming to optimize their digital strategies, leveraging data-driven insights while maintaining compliance with privacy regulations.

Key words: Digital marketing, Meta Pixel, Cookie policy, GDPR, enrollment funnel, campaign design

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Aleksandra Đurić,

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1 Introduction

Competition in the digital age today is vast and fierce. Website owners always need to be on the lookout for tools that will improve their strategy and get more quality users to optimise ads and consequently - sales or leads.

Understanding your users and their behaviour has always been a complex task, but also slightly controversial due to the possibilities of privacy policy breaches once you truly get into how the data collection tools work. One of those tools is Facebook Meta Pixel, which was launched as an analytics tool to help a business measure the effectiveness of its paid advertisements by breaking down the actions visitors make on their website. Back when it was first used, the main goal of the Facebook Pixel was to track user actions on a website after they had interacted in any way with a Facebook ad.

Business owners with a website are always being tactical and strategic in looking for ways to increase ROI and maximise user experience. With that in mind, the primary function of Facebook Pixel was to help website owners collect data that will help them understand user behaviour better and optimise ads, building targeted audiences for future ads, and tailor remarketing campaigns to users who had already done something on the website (added a product to cart, made a purchase, downloaded an e-book, etc.).

An example of how Meta Pixel enables detailed conversion tracking could be the following: let's say Tilburg University launches a new campaign to promote a Master program in Data Science. By implementing Meta Pixel on the main website and the campaigns landing page, the university can track which ads will later lead to page visits, what content do users engage with and ultimately how many students apply to the program. With this data, adjustments could be made to the campaigns, for example targeting criteria to improve performance.

The art of remarketing with Facebook Pixel includes being very tactical in collecting and utilising all the collected data to optimise conversion rates in the future. This is a somewhat general approach to the use of Meta Pixel on websites, but what about bridging the gap between micro and main websites? The gap between micro and main websites refers to the challenge of integrating smaller, campaign-specific sites (micro websites) with the comprehensive, information-rich primary site (main website). Bridging this gap is necessary to ensure a seamless user journey that captures initial interest on micro websites and channels it effectively to main websites for deeper engagement or conversion, enhancing overall campaign effectiveness and user experience. This integration also allows better data tracking and retargeting through tools like Meta Pixel, improving campaign outcomes.

1.1 Background and Problem Overview

The research framework in this thesis focuses on the following aspects: understanding user behaviour, evaluating how effective retargeting strategies are, and addressing GDPR privacy concerns. Firstly, by using key metrics such as page views, time spent on pages, and conversion rates, we try to understand user behaviour and how students navigate these websites. While utilising tools like Meta Pixel and Google Analytics 4, we will set a foundation on understanding how to optimise user engagement. Secondly, retargeting strategies will be suggested to bridge the gap between micro websites and the main website. Multiple campaigns will be designed to be implemented, each with their own set of objectives and mechanisms of tracking. In this analysis, a solution will be provided that will showcase user engagement patterns and the value of personalised content. Lastly, privacy concerns will be addressed regarding the use of Meta Pixels in the light of GDPR regulations. This research will assess the alignment of strategies implemented with GDPR compliance.

We will showcase how Meta Pixel is utilised to retarget users who have visited the micro website as well as the main website. Mainly, the analysis will be focused on how these pixels are employed to track and retarget users through custom campaigns. These advertising campaigns aim to increase engagement and conversions on the main website.

With a qualitative method, we will provide a thorough understanding on the effectiveness of Meta Pixel in this context. Meta Pixel offers a potential solution by enhancing data integration and looking into user behaviour. However, the implementation of such technologies must be carefully managed according to data privacy regulations such as GDPR, which enforce explicit user consent and put on limits on data collection, complicating efforts to optimise engagement and conversion rates.

With the connection to micro and main websites, Meta Pixels allow for personalised retargeting that could transform the enrollment funnel. With digital advertisements' increased regulations, especially in Europe where the European Democracy Action Plan proposes new restrictions on micro-targeting, we must navigate the regulatory landscapes. Recent studies show that even though many small and large businesses use Facebook for targeted advertising, they recently switched more and more towards algorithmic-driven micro-targeting performed instead of direct advertiser-driven targeting. This shows broader reliance on platforms' optimization algorithms and gives a spotlight to problems relating to privacy concern matters while utilising Meta Pixel (Chouaki et al., 2022).

Various types of information were used in this research. Besides a comprehensive literature review that focuses on digital marketing, GDPR compliances, and retargeting in higher education, this thesis also draws on limited information from expert blogs, official documentation from Facebook and other online resources. Given the limited availability of professional literature on the subject, the solutions and proposed strategies

in this research are inspired by practical and contemporary sources. Meaning, while the literature used provided valuable insight, it did not directly influence the final campaign design. They were used as a foundation to develop an innovative solution tailored to the unique need of higher education marketing.

Validation of solutions is used to ensure feasibility and effectiveness of campaign designs, which were constructed after an extensive literature review and further refined through interviews with experts in their field. In this section, we will outline the methodologies used to validate the proposed campaigns, that will ensure that the solutions are practical and impactful.

1.2 Research Question

The primary research objective of this thesis is structuring customer journey to fit a digital marketing strategy. Our goal was to bridge the gap between the main and micro website while enhancing user engagement and conversion rates in the context of higher education marketing. The aim is to find the best strategies for implementing Meta Pixel while keeping in mind the constraints of GDPR. The primary question of this research is studied with a case study at the marketing department at Tilburg University, and is stated as:

“How can digital marketing strategies exploit user tracking, retargeting technologies in order to optimise retargeting campaigns across multiple web platforms?”

To support the main research question, we formulate a number of sub questions:

1. How can digital marketing strategies exploit user tracking, retargeting technologies in order to optimise retargeting campaigns across multiple web platforms?
2. What is digital marketing and how does Meta Pixel fit into it?
 - a. What are the technical aspects of Meta Pixel?
 - b. How can we track conversion with Meta Pixel?
 - c. Can we assess GDPR impact on the utilisation of Meta Pixels for retargeting and tracking?
 - d. What is an enrollment funnel and how can we utilise it for retargeting purposes?
 - e. How is the enrollment funnel evaluated?
3. How do we create a campaign for retargeting purposes with Meta Pixel?
 - a. How can we bridge the gap between Micro websites and main websites while utilising Meta Pixels for retargeting purposes *“in digital marketing”*?
 - b. With what research methods can we evaluate the effectiveness of Meta Pixel in online marketing campaigns?
 - c. What role does retargeting play in order to enhance conversion rates and user engagement within the campaigns?
4. How do we validate the effectiveness of Meta Pixel in online campaigns, e.g. with expert interviews?

1.3 Research Relevance

Understanding the relevance of advanced marketing tools such as Meta Pixel is crucial for business and academic purposes. In this research, we will give insight on actionable marketing strategies that could contribute to improving business outcomes for educational institutions, as well as address the gaps related to implementation and effectiveness of Meta Pixel. As educational institutions strive to adapt to the incoming student population that is increasingly diverse in the digital world, it is becoming imperative to enhance its digital marketing efforts to attract students and keep its enrollment and retention rates up. With this research, there will potentially be future improvement in user engagement, more optimised advertising spends and enhanced targeting and personalization. The scientific contribution of this research is to broaden academic discourse on digital marketing and data analytics. What would be shown is the advancement of data analytics in marketing, insights into GDPR compliance, contribution to digital marketing literature as well as bridging the research gaps regarding the use of Meta Pixel in a GDPR-compliant manner.

1.3.1 Scientific Relevance

This research makes a significant contribution to academic discourse by addressing critical gaps in the use of advanced digital marketing tools, particularly Meta Pixel, in the context of educational institutions. While existing studies have primarily explored Meta Pixel's effectiveness in tracking user behaviour and optimizing advertisements, there is limited research on its implementation in integrating micro and main websites in digital marketing campaigns. Moreover, the lack of attention to compliance with privacy regulations such as GDPR further highlights the need for this study. By focusing on these areas, this research broadens the scope of digital marketing literature, advances the understanding of data analytics in marketing, and demonstrates how personalization, user engagement, and ethical practices can coexist. The findings aim to bridge these gaps, providing a foundation for future studies to explore the intersection of advanced marketing tools, compliance, and educational outcomes.

1.3.1 Organizational Relevance

From a practical standpoint, this research holds immense value for educational institutions striving to remain competitive in an increasingly digital and diverse environment. By addressing the integration of micro and main websites, it offers actionable strategies to enhance user engagement, optimize advertising spend, and improve targeting and personalization. These strategies aim to streamline the enrollment funnel, attract prospective students, and boost retention rates. Furthermore, the study emphasizes compliance with privacy regulations, ensuring institutions can navigate the complexities of digital marketing ethically and effectively.

Through its proposed framework, this research equips educational institutions with tools to tackle marketing challenges, achieve better resource utilization, and maintain ethical data practices, ultimately contributing to their long-term success.

1.4 Research Design and Methodology

In this research, a systematic literature review was incorporated as well as targeted campaign design and expert validation through interviews, to explore the effectiveness of Meta Pixel in improving digital marketing efforts.

Firstly, a literature review was constructed to show the theoretical and practical use of Meta Pixel for the usage of digital marketing. To capture the existing knowledge and identify the gaps within them, the literature review is a necessity. Key sources were found in academic databases, with the focus of intersecting the world of digital marketing with data privacy. This review provides a great understanding of functionality of Meta Pixel within GDPR constraints, with addition of the impact on marketing strategies that later helped in the campaign design.

Secondly, an enrollment funnel was created and targeted digital marketing campaigns were designed using Meta Pixel. The enrollment funnel showed the lifecycle of a user from when they first come across the campaigns to when they become a consumer, showcasing where there are possibilities for retargeting. The campaigns were designed to track user interactions on both micro and main websites, while optimising engagement and increasing conversion rates. They were then evaluated using performance metrics that experts recommended in interviews, that will ensure the gained insights were contextually relevant and data driven.

Finally, semi-structured interviews will be conducted with professionals who are experts in their field of digital marketing or data analytics. In this section, the research will showcase how the findings aligned with industry practices and it is ensuring that there is consistent validation. The feedback helps refine campaign designs, and it also addresses real-world challenges as well as enhances the applicability of this research outcome. Additionally, ChatGPT was also used to evaluate campaigns.

With this research approach, we ensure that it is both theoretically sound and has practical applications. By integrating the literature review with funnel creation, campaign design, ChatGPT and expert validation, this research provides a comprehensive examination of the potential of Meta Pixel in the digital marketing landscape.

#	Question	Methodology	Chapter
1	What is digital marketing and how does Meta Pixel fit into it?	Literature review	2.1, 2.2
2	What are the technical aspects of Meta Pixel?	Literature review	2.2.1
2.1	How can we track conversion with Meta Pixel?	Literature review, expert interviews	2.2.2
2.2	Can we assess GDPR impact on the utilisation of Meta Pixels for retargeting and tracking?	Literature review, expert interviews	2.3
2.3	What is an enrollment funnel and how can we utilise it for retargeting purposes?	Literature review, expert interviews	2.4
2.4	How is the enrollment funnel evaluated?	Literature review	2.4
3	How do we create a campaign for retargeting purposes with Meta Pixel?	Literature review, expert interviews	2.5
3.1	How can we bridge the gap between Micro websites and main websites while utilising Meta Pixels for retargeting purposes “in digital marketing”?	Literature review, expert interviews	3, 4, 5
3.2	With what research methods can we evaluate the effectiveness of Meta Pixel in online marketing campaigns?	Expert interviews, Research design	3, 5, 6
3.3	What role does retargeting play in order to enhance conversion rates and user engagement within the campaigns?	Literature review, Expert interviews	2.1.1, 4, 6
4	How were the expert interviews carried out, and how do they validate the effectiveness of Meta Pixel in online campaigns?	Literature review, Expert interviews	6

Table 1 Research questions

1.5 Research Scope

The research gap addressed in this study revolves around the insufficient exploration of the integration between micro and main websites in digital marketing campaigns, particularly through the use of advanced tracking technologies like Meta Pixel. While existing literature has focused on the broader capabilities of Meta Pixel, such as tracking user behavior and optimizing advertisements, there is a lack of specific studies on how this tool can be effectively implemented to enhance the flow of user data and improve retargeting strategies between interconnected websites. Moreover, the challenges and requirements for connecting micro websites to main websites, along with the unique needs of such integrations, have not been adequately addressed.

Another significant gap lies in understanding the limitations imposed by privacy regulations like GDPR on the use of Meta Pixel in this context. While prior research has acknowledged privacy concerns, there is limited practical guidance on how institutions can navigate these challenges while maintaining compliance. This research aims to bridge these gaps by not only reviewing prior applications of Meta Pixel but also by identifying the technical, strategic, and regulatory requirements necessary for effective integration.

To address these gaps, this study will propose a campaign that enhances retargeting strategies, ensuring a more cohesive user experience and optimizing the enrollment funnel for educational institutions. By providing actionable insights into overcoming the challenges of website integration, data privacy compliance, and targeted marketing, this research will contribute both to academic literature and to practical applications in digital marketing.

1.6 Thesis Organisation

This thesis is structured as follows: Chapter 1 sets the stage by introducing the study's background, research questions, and significance, outlining the methodological and practical focus. It provides the foundational framework for understanding the role of Meta Pixel in digital marketing for higher education. Chapter 2 reviews the literature, discussing key concepts such as digital marketing strategies, the role of tracking technologies, GDPR compliance, and the evolution from Facebook to Meta Pixel. This chapter establishes a theoretical basis and offers insights that guide the campaign design. Chapter 3 goes into detail the effectiveness of Meta Pixel in retargeting and optimizing digital campaigns. Chapter 4 presents the case study on Tilburg University, detailing the integration of Meta Pixel across platforms and its alignment with the enrollment funnel. Chapter 5 focuses on the design of targeted digital marketing campaigns, showcasing strategies to optimize retargeting and audience engagement. Chapter 6 evaluates the designed campaigns through expert interviews and insights generated by ChatGPT, highlighting challenges, opportunities, and ethical considerations. Chapter 7 summarizes the study's findings, discusses implications for digital

marketing in higher education, and concludes with practical recommendations and suggestions for future research.

2 Digital marketing

This chapter takes a structured, funnel-based approach to exploring digital marketing. We begin by examining foundational strategies in digital and online marketing in Section 2.1, focusing on the marketing funnel and its role in guiding user journeys. Campaign design is discussed in detail, emphasizing how strategic planning influences outcomes at various stages of user engagement. Following this, we delve into the integration and functionality of analytics, considering how main and micro websites contribute to cohesive digital ecosystems. The chapter concludes by addressing critical tools and compliance considerations, including tracking technologies, cookies, user consent, and Meta Pixel, highlighting their role in modern digital marketing frameworks.

2.1 Digital Marketing and Online Marketing Strategies

Digital marketing, often referred to as online or internet marketing, is a strategic approach to leveraging digital channels such as search engines, social media platforms, and online content to engage with consumers and promote products or services. The growing importance of digital marketing stems from the shift in consumer behaviour, with most people now spending a significant amount of their time online. As technology continues to advance, consumer habits evolve, and businesses demand more cost-effective marketing solutions, digital marketing has emerged as a preferred alternative to traditional marketing. Its strategies encompass a wide range of techniques, including search engine optimization (SEO), content marketing, social media marketing, affiliate marketing, Pay-Per-Click (PPC) advertising, email marketing, and inbound marketing, among others. These tools collectively empower businesses to connect with their target audience more effectively and drive measurable results.

Businesses can create personalised marketing campaigns that show enhanced user engagement and high conversion rates. Social media platforms allow users to engage with businesses directly, which makes it easier to receive feedback and to build brand loyalty. Consequently, this makes it more impactful than traditional marketing, which is usually one-directional. Reach and effectiveness of digital marketing is only amplified by the further reliance on mobile devices amongst users.

The effectiveness of digital marketing lies fundamentally in the ability to perform real-time analysis and derive actionable insights. These capabilities empower experts to adjust campaigns quickly and efficiently. By leveraging data-driven strategies to refine marketing efforts, businesses can better target their audiences while reducing costs (Bala & Verma, 2018). Before delving deeper into the topic of this research, it is important to define key terms:

- *User Experience*: This refers to the interaction and satisfaction of users with a website, focusing on its user-friendliness and overall ease of use.
- *User Interaction Data*: Businesses analyse metrics such as clicks, time spent on pages, and bounce rates to identify trends and pinpoint areas for improving user experience.
- *Conversion*: A conversion occurs when a user completes a desired goal, such as making a purchase.
- *Conversion Rate*: This metric represents the percentage of visitors who complete a conversion. For example, if 1,500 users out of 100,000 visitors make a purchase, the conversion rate would be 1.5%. It is common for users to visit a website without converting, often forgetting the website's name afterward—for instance, when shopping for clothes online.
- *Retargeting*: To maximize advertising budgets, businesses use retargeting to reconnect with potential customers. This involves showing ads based on products the user previously viewed on websites or social media platforms (Sakas, 2023; Beasley, 2013).

2.2 Digital marketing funnel

Expanding on the previous discussion about the dynamic nature of digital marketing and its ability to connect with users across various online platforms, the next focus is on how these interactions can be guided effectively. This is where the concept of the digital marketing funnel comes into play, serving as a framework to navigate the customer journey and optimize engagement. The customer journey is a comprehensive view of how consumers interact with a brand, encompassing their emotional, cognitive, and behavioural experiences. It aligns closely with the marketing funnel, which organizes this journey into stages: awareness, consideration, conversion, and loyalty. By integrating the customer journey into the funnel, businesses can pinpoint opportunities to engage more meaningfully with their audience at each step, ensuring strategies are targeted and impactful. The marketing funnel complements the customer journey by addressing the evolving needs of users as they progress, with the ultimate goal of delivering a seamless and effective experience. The focus is on aligning business strategies with customer expectations, ensuring a consistent and engaging process from start to finish. (Lemon & Verhoef, 2016).

A digital marketing funnel is a powerful structured framework that navigates intricate online user behaviour. It shows a picture of the customer's journey from the initial stages of awareness to the final stages of loyalty. As such, the funnel highlights needs of customers on each stage and conversion. The objective of the funnel is to further enhance user experience and make sure to have the most retention and conversions in all stages of the funnel. The aim is to increase awareness, encourage engagement, drive conversions, etc. The funnel has a sequential process and can best showcase drop-off rates and conversion rates at each stage, making it

more suitable for real-time marketing solutions. The digital marketing funnel is composed out of the following stages (see Figure 1):

1. *Awareness Stage:* At this stage, the user becomes aware of a problem or need they want to address. This is often the first point of interaction with a brand, where the focus is on capturing attention and sparking curiosity. Businesses aim to position themselves as a potential solution through engaging content, advertisements, or social media posts that highlight the user's pain points. This is not the time to push for a sale but rather to create interest and establish a connection by offering value or insights into the problem.
2. *Consideration Stage:* Once the user identifies their problem, they begin actively searching for solutions. During this stage, they compare options, evaluate different products or services, and seek information that can guide their decision-making process. Businesses should focus on providing helpful, detailed, and relevant content, such as case studies, testimonials, or how-to guides, to build credibility. The goal here is to stand out as a trusted and viable option while addressing any questions or concerns the user might have.
3. *Conversion Stage:* This is a key moment when the user chooses a solution and acts, whether it's making a purchase, signing up for a service, or committing to an offer. Businesses must ensure that this process is as seamless as possible, with clear calls to action, simple navigation, and a frictionless user experience. Building trust is critical at this stage, so transparency, clear communication, and reassurance about the value of the decision can significantly influence outcomes.
4. *Loyalty Stage:* After the conversion, the focus shifts to building a lasting relationship with the user. This stage is all about creating trust and satisfaction by delivering on promises, providing excellent customer service, and continuing to engage through personalized content or loyalty programs. Happy customers are more likely to become repeat buyers and advocates for the brand, sharing their positive experiences with others. This stage is as much about retention as it is about creating ambassadors for your business.

As opposed to a traditional marketing funnel, digital marketing funnel is more dynamic and has immediate feedback. While breaking down the complex customer journey, the funnel optimizes marketing resources and allows for tailoring to the audience. The digital marketing funnel sometimes over relies on metrics, making it stuck on quantifiable stages instead of focusing on qualitative insights.

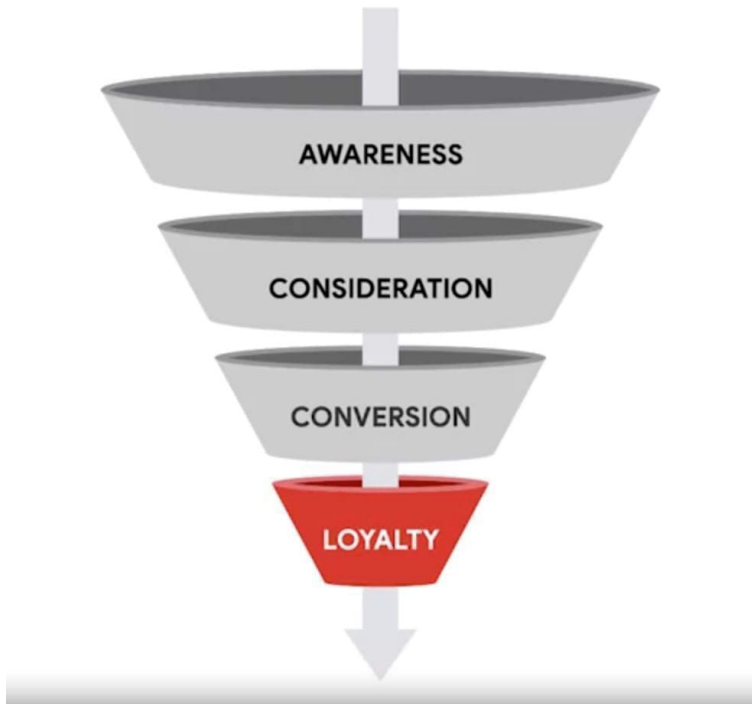


Figure 1 Digital marketing funnel composed out of 4 stages, (taken from source:<https://online-marketing-for-you.site/sales-funnel/>)

2.3 Campaigns in digital marketing

Online campaigns are a crucial element of digital marketing strategies, enabling businesses to engage with users in real time across multiple platforms. These campaigns leverage tools like email marketing, social media promotions, and search engine optimization to connect with users where they spend most of their time. For a campaign to be truly successful, it must effectively integrate a variety of digital channels—spanning owned, paid, and earned media. By utilizing this comprehensive approach, businesses can attract potential users and foster deeper engagement through personalized and relevant content that resonates with their audience. This tailored approach not only enhances user experience but also drives better outcomes for the campaign.

A digital marketing campaign is a coordinated effort to promote a product, service, or brand across various digital channels like social media, email, and websites. Its main objective is to connect with the target audience, build awareness, drive engagement, and ultimately achieve specific goals such as sales, lead generation, or increased brand visibility. For example, a university might promote a new master's program through targeted social media ads, a micro website (explained in 2.4) with program details, and follow-up retargeting emails. Tools like Meta Pixel and Google Analytics, further explained in 2.5.1, track user interactions enabling adjustments to improve effectiveness and drive better results.

Online campaigns offer a significant advantage by providing immediate feedback, enabling businesses to optimize their strategies using real-time data. Tools such as Meta Pixel and Google Analytics empower

marketers to monitor key metrics like conversion rates, engagement levels, and user behaviour across various touchpoints. With these insights, businesses can quickly adapt their approaches, target specific audience segments more effectively, and fine-tune their messaging. This iterative process not only enhances return on investment (ROI) but also leads to higher conversion rates, as highlighted by Mocanu and Szakal (2023).

2.4 Platforms

To run successful campaigns, it's crucial to understand how different websites, such as the main website, target website, target landing pages and social media platforms work together in the customer journey. Each serves a unique purpose, and their integration ensures users are guided effectively through their journey. This section explores how these platforms align to enhance digital marketing efforts. The integration of digital marketing campaigns relies heavily on cohesive platforms that guide users seamlessly through the customer journey. Each type of website serves a distinct purpose within the broader strategy. The *main websites*: act as the central hub of information, representing the brand's identity and offerings. They provide comprehensive details and serve as the primary touchpoint for users seeking to understand the brand (Gillin, n.d.). *Micro websites* function as standalone, focused digital experiences that complement a main website, often used for specific campaigns or product launches. They allow for targeted messaging and can enhance user engagement by concentrating on aspects of a brand or product (Webstacks, n.d.). *Targeted Landing Pages*: Designed to facilitate specific actions, such as signing up, purchasing, or downloading, often positioned at the conversion stage of the journey. They streamline the user experience towards a particular goal, increasing the likelihood of conversion (Webociti, n.d.). Finally, *Social Media Platforms*: Websites that enable users to create and share content or participate in social networking, ultimately where the ads will be placed.

Understanding how these websites complement each other is crucial for maximizing user engagement. By aligning each type of website with specific stages of the customer journey, businesses can create a seamless experience that moves users effectively from initial awareness to conversion, enhancing the overall effectiveness of their campaigns. This transition often involves leveraging both main and micro websites, each serving distinct purposes within a broader strategy. These websites complement each other and as such are maximizing user engagement, driving conversions, and enhancing overall campaign effectiveness.

A company's website often serves as the first point of contact with customers, making it essential to align its design and content with the company's objectives. The *main website* represents the company's identity and is frequently a user's initial interaction with the business. These websites are designed to cater to a broad audience and provide comprehensive information such as the company's history, services, products, and more.

In contrast, a *micro website* serves a specific purpose, such as promoting a product, project, or event. These smaller, targeted websites function as online marketing tools, are typically less extensive than main websites, and operate under their own unique web address. Some key advantages of micro websites include lower development and operational costs, simplified navigation for visitors, faster access to specific information, and the ability to enhance traffic through contextual advertising, email campaigns, and social media promotions. Micro websites can be categorized into three types based on their content:

1. Product Micro Websites: Focused on promoting a single service or product to users.
2. Brand-Promoting Micro Websites: Designed to create a positive image of the brand and engage users emotionally.
3. Advisory Service Micro Websites: Aimed at providing useful information to users, often becoming a popular choice for their practicality and value.

A *target website* differs from both main and micro websites by serving as the destination for users who are ready to complete a specific action. Unlike a landing page, which is typically the first touchpoint for a campaign, a target website is designed for users further down the funnel who have shown interest and are close to conversion. Target websites are optimized for minimal distractions and are built to deliver a seamless experience for actions like purchasing a product, subscribing to a service, or downloading premium content. For example, a target website might feature a streamlined checkout process, trust-building elements like testimonials, and clear calls-to-action that guide the user to complete their journey. These sites are often simplistic, avoiding unnecessary navigation options to ensure that users stay focused on their goal. An example of a customer journey through the platforms to the targeted page is represented in Figure 2.

Figure 3 represents the relationship between a main website and micro websites. The main website serves as the central hub, offering comprehensive information and acting as the starting point of a user's journey. In contrast, micro websites are smaller, focused platforms designed to highlight specific campaigns, products, or services. They complement the main website by providing tailored content and engaging users at different stages of their journey, often guiding them back to the main site for further exploration or conversion. This setup creates a seamless flow between platforms, ensuring an integrated and effective digital marketing strategy.



Figure 2 Customer journey across websites

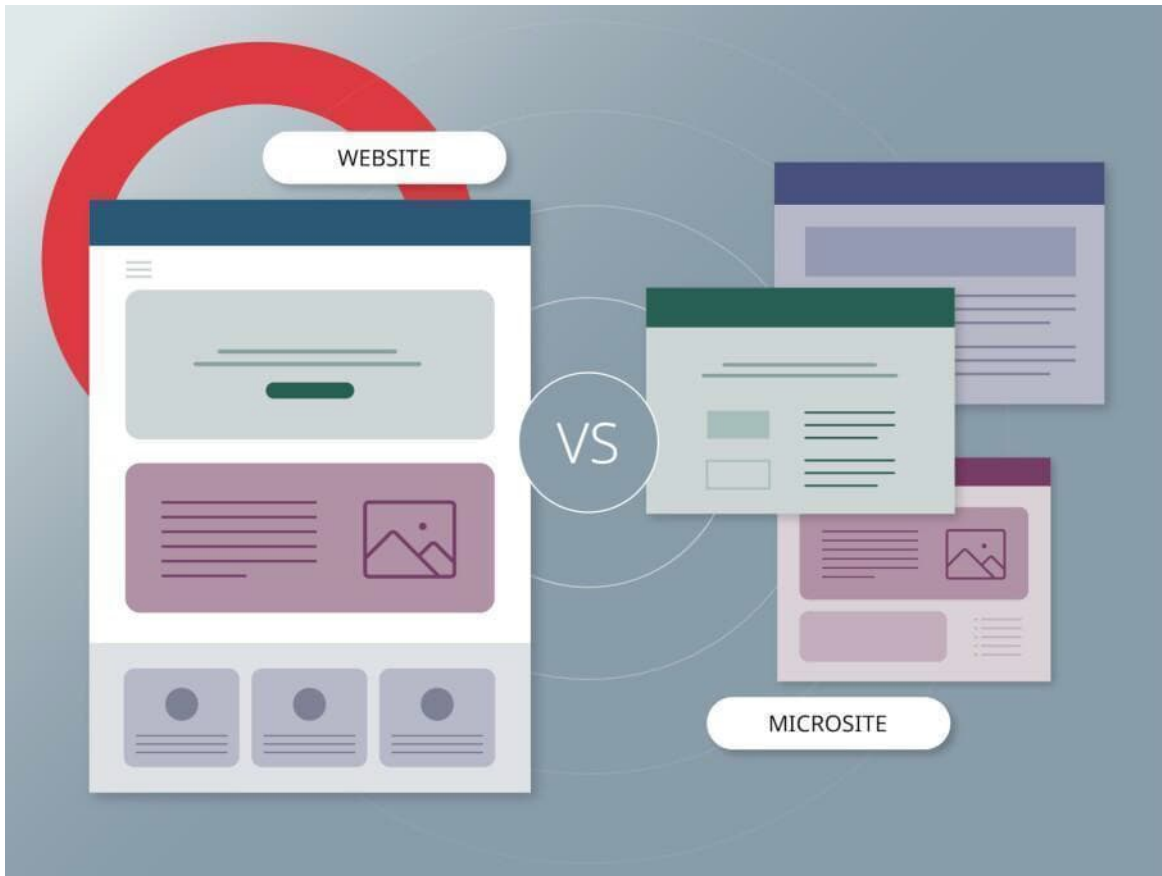


Figure 3 Visual comparison of main and micro website, (taken from source: <https://www.brightspot.com/cms-use-cases/microsites/difference-between-website-and-microsite>)

In the following chapters, the emphasis will be on advisory service micro websites, as discussed by Sula and Banyár (2021). These platforms are particularly effective in delivering relevant and helpful content to users.

2.5 Digital marketing systems and tracking technologies

Building on the distinction between main and micro websites, digital marketing systems and technologies play a critical role in connecting these websites and optimizing their effectiveness. Digital marketing systems like Meta Pixel support the customer journey by providing data-driven insights that enhance targeting and personalization. These systems ensure a seamless flow of user engagement across different stages, optimizing interactions and boosting conversion rates. By integrating tools like Meta Pixel, Google Analytics, and other tracking technologies, businesses can gain valuable insights into user behaviour, enhance targeting, and create personalized experiences. This section explores how these systems drive data-driven marketing strategies and improve conversion rates.

Digital marketing is an essential part of business strategies. It allows businesses to interact with users across different platforms, offering more precise tools for tracking, personalisation and targeting. Digital marketing

systems take advantage of technologies like social media platforms, search engines and analytics tools to enhance user experience and interact with consumers to improve their conversion rates.

Digital marketing systems could be defined as technologies that enable businesses to acquire and analyse user behaviour. To do so, they utilise tools like Meta Pixel, Google Analytics, and email marketing software, that collect data on clicks, page views, time spent on the website etc. With such data, we get a clearer picture of what the audience looks like, allowing us to segment customers and target them with personalised content. Ability of digital marketing technologies to give real-time insights and allow for adjustment is one of the biggest strengths.

We can see the integration between paid, owned and earned media. Paid media, or rather online advertisement, is strategically placed and aligned with insights from tools like Meta Pixel to reach the right user at the right time. Owned media, such as blogs and companies' websites, can use SEO and content strategies to boost visibility and engagement. Earned media includes reviews, shares and mentions to add credibility for the brand and enforce its presence. With the combination of these three, businesses have a better chance of reaching their goal and engaging with their target audience. Continuing the evolution of digital technologies, we see a need for businesses to adapt marketing strategies to stay relevant in the digital landscape. While integrating these systems, we create a data-driven marketing approach that enhances user engagement and drives higher conversion rates (Mocanu & Szakal, 2023).

After discussing digital marketing systems, we see that tracking tools play a vital role in bridging the gap between understanding user behaviour and implementing effective marketing strategies. Tracking tools are essential software applications used to monitor and record user activity on digital platforms, providing businesses with actionable insights into consumer behaviour. These tools operate through a set of interconnected components that work together to collect, process, and present data in a meaningful way. Their general components include:

1. *Data Collection Mechanisms*: Tracking tools gather user activity data such as page views, clicks, and purchases through various methods, including cookies, embedded scripts, or server-side tracking. These mechanisms act as the foundation of data collection, ensuring a consistent flow of information from user interactions to the system.
2. *Analytics Dashboards*: Once data is collected, it is processed and displayed in a user-friendly interface where businesses can analyse it. Dashboards are often customizable, allowing users to create specific reports or visualizations to match their objectives, such as identifying trends or tracking campaign performance.

3. *Integration Features*: Modern tracking tools often integrate seamlessly with other digital marketing platforms, such as ad networks, content management systems, and email marketing software. These integrations streamline workflows by enabling data to flow across systems, enhancing the efficiency and effectiveness of marketing campaigns.
4. *Privacy Controls*: To comply with regulations like GDPR, tracking tools include mechanisms for user consent management, data anonymization, and compliance monitoring. These controls ensure that businesses can collect and use data responsibly without violating privacy laws.

Tracking tools work by embedding a small piece of code into a website or application, which then captures user interactions. This data is processed and stored in the system's database, where it can be analysed and visualized through the analytics dashboard. The insights derived from this process help businesses optimize their strategies, measure campaign effectiveness, and refine the customer experience.

As López and Rodríguez (2015) explain, "Tracking tools help businesses develop a competitive advantage by offering insights into customer behaviour and optimizing service delivery." By providing a clear understanding of user journeys, these tools empower marketers to make data-driven decisions, refine campaigns, and personalize user experiences, ultimately improving overall performance and engagement.

These tools, when used effectively, help businesses analyse interactions, refine strategies, and optimize their digital marketing efforts while staying compliant with privacy laws. This section explores the functionalities of popular tracking tools, their components, and their impact on data-driven decision-making.

Beyond performance analysis, tracking tools assist in measuring advertising campaign effectiveness, segmenting audiences, and personalizing user experiences. The following section introduces several popular tracking tools, highlighting their features and how they cater to different business needs.

Some well-known examples of tracking tools are:

- Google Analytics: Tracks website traffic and user behaviour, including new and returning users, engagement, and demographics, with advanced features like predictive insights in GA4.¹
- Hotjar: Provides visual heatmaps and session recordings to analyse user interaction and optimize user experience.²
- Matomo: An open-source platform focused on data privacy, offering features like goal tracking and segmentation analysis.³

¹ <https://developers.google.com/analytics/devguides/collection/ga4?authuser=1>

² <https://www.hotjar.com>

³ <https://matomo.org>

- Meta Pixel: Tracks user actions on websites and integrates with Facebook and Instagram for precise ad targeting and retargeting.⁴

These tools, with their distinct capabilities, enable businesses to refine strategies, enhance engagement, and achieve better outcomes while navigating the complex landscape of digital marketing (Hotjar, n.d.).

2.5.1 Google Analytics

Google Analytics is one of the most widely used tracking tools for understanding website performance and user behaviour. Its latest version, GA4 (See Figure 4), offers advanced features like tracking both new and returning users, monitoring engagement metrics, revenue trends, and retention rates. GA4 also integrates machine learning to provide predictive insights and streamline cross-device tracking, offering businesses a more holistic view of their audience. Additionally, it tracks demographic information, such as age, location, and interests, helping businesses better segment their audiences and tailor their strategies. By providing real-time data and customizable reports, Google Analytics empowers businesses to make data-driven decisions effectively.

Meta Pixel and Google Analytics, including GA4, are both tracking tools, but they serve distinct purposes. While Google Analytics provides a comprehensive overview of user behaviour across your website and all traffic sources, Meta Pixel is specifically designed to enhance advertising efforts within Meta's platforms, such as Facebook and Instagram.

Google Analytics offers a broader analysis of overall website performance, such as traffic sources, session duration, and audience demographics, across all platforms—not just Meta. While Meta Pixel focuses on specific ad-related insights, both tools can work together effectively to give a full picture of user behaviour and help improve both advertising and website performance.

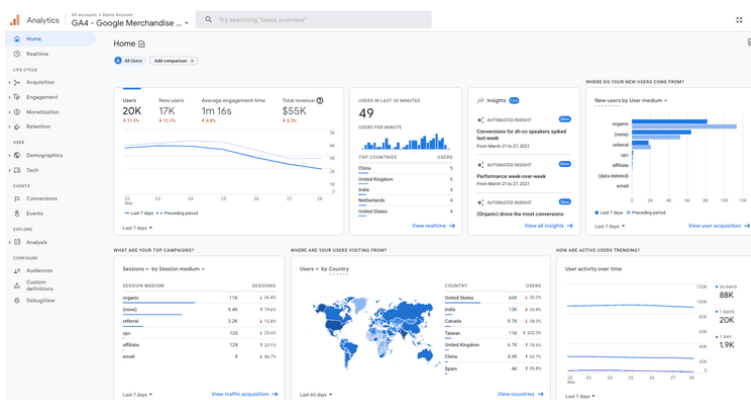


Figure 4 GA4

⁴ <https://www.facebook.com/business/tools/meta-pixel>

2.5.2 Hotjar

Hotjar specializes in visualizing how users interact with a website through tools like heatmaps, which show where users click, scroll, and spend the most time. This kind of visualization is particularly useful for identifying bottlenecks in user experience, such as confusing navigation or underperforming calls-to-action. In addition to heatmaps, Hotjar (See Figure 5) provides session recordings that let businesses replay user interactions, offering deeper insights into behaviours. By highlighting specific pain points, Hotjar helps businesses optimize their websites, improve user experience, and boost conversion rates.

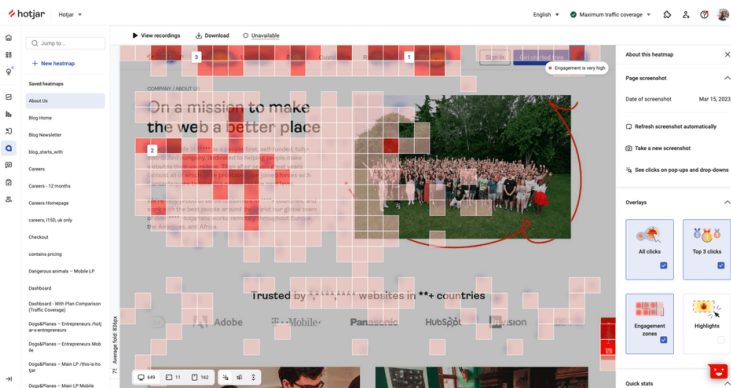


Figure 5 Hotjar

2.5.3 Matomo

Previously known as Piwik, Matomo (See Figure 6) is an open-source analytics platform that provides robust website performance tracking with a strong focus on data privacy. Unlike Google Analytics, Matomo gives users full ownership of their data, making it particularly appealing for organizations concerned with GDPR compliance. Matomo offers features such as e-commerce tracking, event tracking, goal setting, and segmentation analysis, making it a versatile tool for understanding user journeys. It can also be self-hosted, ensuring that sensitive data remains within the organization's control.

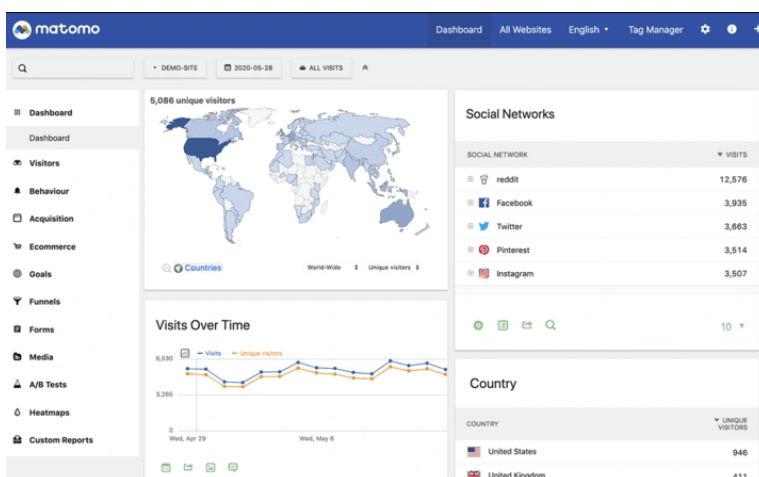


Figure 6 Matomo

2.5.4 Meta Pixel

Meta Pixel, formerly known as Facebook Pixel, is a small piece of JavaScript code embedded in the header of a website. It enables businesses to track user interactions like page views, purchases, and sign-ups, providing critical data for optimizing ads and improving conversion rates. One of its standout features is the ability to create lookalike audiences based on user behaviour, allowing businesses to reach potential customers who are like their existing audience. The Meta event manager (Figure 7) is an integral part of the Meta advertising ecosystem and works in conjunction with Meta Pixel. It serves as a centralized dashboard within Meta Business Suite where businesses can track, configure, and analyse events collected by the Meta Pixel. Essentially, it allows advertisers to monitor the user interactions that are captured by the Meta Pixel and translate these interactions into actionable insights for campaign optimization. Meta Pixel is also effective for retargeting campaigns, helping businesses re-engage users who have interacted with their website but didn't complete a desired action. It integrates seamlessly with the Meta advertising ecosystem, including Facebook and Instagram, to maximize ad performance.

- *Embedding the Meta Pixel:* The Meta Pixel JavaScript code is added to a website's header. This code automatically starts tracking user interactions as defined by the business (e.g., page views, button clicks).
- *Data Collection:* When a user visits the website and takes specific actions, the Pixel sends event data back to Meta's servers. This data includes details like event type, time, and other relevant parameters.
- *Event Visualization in Meta Event Manager:* Once the data is collected, it appears in the Meta Event Manager. Here, businesses can see a real-time view of user activity and events, enabling them to monitor key metrics such as conversion rates, drop-offs, or high-performing interactions.
- *Customization:* Advertisers can create custom events or use standard events, depending on their campaign requirements. For example, an e-commerce site might define events like "View Product," "Add to Cart," and "Purchase."
- *Optimization:* Using the insights from the Event Manager, businesses can refine their advertising campaigns by creating tailored audiences (e.g., lookalike audiences) or retargeting users who have abandoned their shopping carts.

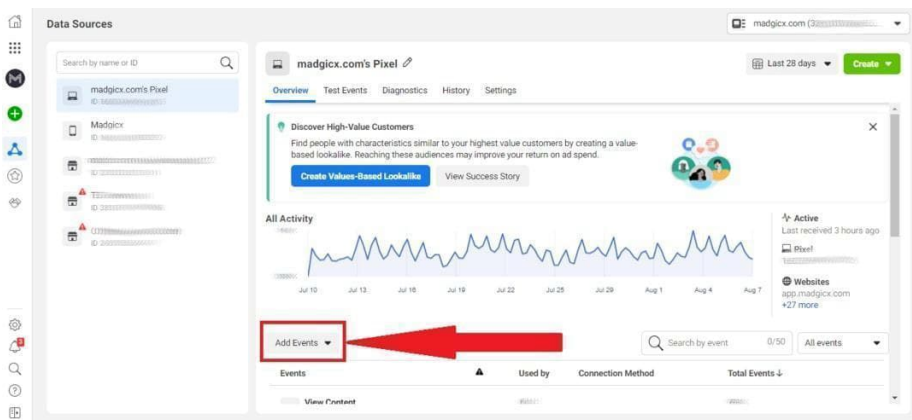


Figure 7 Meta event manager

Each of these tools has its own strengths and can be strategically implemented depending on the business's specific needs, from understanding user needs to optimizing advertising strategies. By leveraging the insights they provide, businesses can refine their marketing efforts, enhance user experience, and drive measurable results. In the following chapter we will delve more into Meta Pixel.

2.6 Cookies, consent and GDPR

Understanding the role of tracking tools and their impact on user behaviour naturally leads to the critical issue of privacy and compliance. The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) is a comprehensive privacy law implemented by the European Union in 2018, aimed at protecting the personal data of individuals and ensuring transparency in how it is collected, stored, and used. GDPR mandates that organizations obtain user consent before collecting data, provide clear information about its use, and uphold users' rights to control their personal information. These regulations play a pivotal role in shaping how businesses navigate the balance between effective data tracking and respecting user privacy in a rapidly evolving digital landscape (Voigt & Von dem Bussche, 2017).

Regarding consent requirements, under GDPR, explicit consent is required before any cookies can be set on a user's device for tracking and advertising purposes. This means that Meta Pixel can only activate and start collecting data after obtaining explicit permission from users, which may reduce the volume of data collected due to users opting out.

Also, GDPR emphasises the principle of data minimization, which means that only the data necessary for the specific purposes it is collected for should be processed. This impacts Meta Pixel's ability to collect wide-ranging data unless it is strictly necessary for the declared purpose, potentially limiting the qualitative and quantitative bandwidth of data collected. An example that illustrates this can be found on the ICO

website (Information Commissioner's Office, n.d.) that explains the UK GDPR guidance and principles as an example.

The following hypothetical situation is an example of a real-world scenario:

After landing at the Tilburg university website or Francesco Lelli's website, we will be asked to accept cookies for improving the experience. From the user's side, we want to retarget potential students and to do so, our campaigns would include targeting students that want to learn more about the master's program of their interest. Information that would be relevant is which content they were interacting with for how long so we would know which emails to send them.

The regulation requires that users must be informed about what data is being collected, how it is being used, and for what purpose. This means websites using Meta Pixel need to provide clear and comprehensive information about the tracking activities, which can lead some users to decline tracking, affecting data collection efforts. The article addresses that data minimization should be applied for gathering only information that is relevant to our purpose and the users have the right to delete any data that isn't aligned with our purpose (Information Commissioner's Office, n.d.) since users have enhanced rights under GDPR. This is why organisations have increased transparency.

In studies examining the role of first-party cookies, it was found that the inclusion of the "Facebook Browser ID" (fbp) in events transmitted by server-side trackers does not enhance tracking effectiveness. Conversely, the addition of the "Facebook Click ID" (fbc) does appear to slightly improve tracking accuracy and effectiveness. Additionally, it was observed that both fbp and fbc cookies help in linking data from various tracking events, which aids in assembling diverse user fingerprints for subsequent matching (Amieur, 2024).

Below is an example of cookie usage on the main website exemplified in this study (see Figure 8) -Tilburg University website (Tilburg University, n.d.) which explains why cookies are needed and options to choose which cookies they will consent to, to accept all or not accept. In the last case, if the user declined, we would still get data from their session which, as stated in the study, would not give the most efficiency to our data gathering to give the Meta Pixel enough to work with.



Figure 8 Tilburg University uses cookies (taken from source: <https://www.tilburguniversity.edu/>)

After clicking on “set yourself” we will be able to choose from a list of cookies that can be used on the website (see Figure 9).

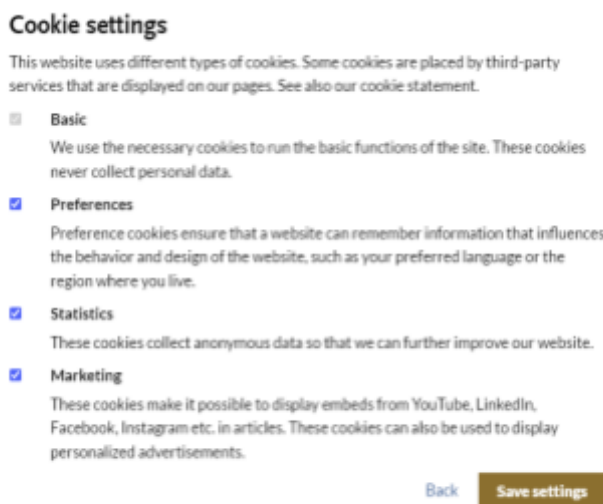


Figure 9 Cookie settings on Tilburg University website(taken from source: <https://www.tilburguniversity.edu/>)

The “basic” cookies are essential for websites to function properly, necessary to establish communication between a user and the server which the website is on, otherwise the content or browsing wouldn’t be available to visitors. Essential cookies are placed on the user’s computer or device upon website access, due to the fact they are exempt from requirement of consent from GDPR and the ePrivacy Directive (CookieYes, n.d.).

After the phase-out of third-party cookies, an increase in user privacy was anticipated (Amieur, 2024). Nonetheless, the research indicates that IP addresses and device fingerprinting have taken on prominent roles as advertising identifiers. Notably, using just device data facilitates the creation of unique user profiles across numerous internet users. Although many tracking restrictions reduce the efficacy of client-side tracking, moving towards server-side tracking provides advertisers with a potential method to bypass these constraints (Amieur, 2024). In conclusion, it’s notably more difficult to detect the use of Meta’s server-side tracking to discern the effectiveness of the data collected.

2.7 Cookie policies

As businesses navigate the challenges of data privacy and compliance, cookie policies have become a focal point in digital marketing. These policies govern how user data is collected and managed, balancing personalization with transparency and trust. This section delves into the evolution of cookie policies and their implications for modern marketing strategies.

A *cookie* is a small text file stored on a user's device by a website. It helps the website remember information about the user's visit, such as preferences, login details, or activity. Cookies are essential for providing a smoother browsing experience, like keeping a user logged in or personalizing content, but they also play a big role in tracking user behaviour for analytics and advertising purposes. Ads were getting more personalised way before Facebook became Meta. When it was Facebook, the tracking capabilities of the machine were already starting to raise concern amongst its users which ultimately led to the platform implementing new ways to track users with each update.

The entire transition from Facebook to the ultimate “Metaverse” as its founder Mark Zuckerberg calls it, has happened solely because of a concerning number of controversies regarding the company's distribution and usage of user data and how it's being exploited - or even sold. This led to the infamous congress hearing in 2018 which started the conversation around Cambridge Analytica's neuroscientist selling the Facebook data to a third party (The Guardian, 2018). This is just one of numerous examples that testify about concerns that led to data sharing policy changes which are still controversial even though users need to give consent that their data will be used with the help of cookies for improving the content being shared with them.

A 2019 study focused on Facebook users in the United States revealed widespread dissatisfaction with how the platform collects data to curate its "ad preferences" page. Users expressed concerns about the accuracy and ethical implications of the platform's data collection practices. Key findings included:

1. Reactions to the "Ad Preferences" Page:

- 88% of users discovered Facebook-generated categories based on their online activity.
- 59% felt these categories accurately reflected their real-life interests, while 27% considered them inaccurate.

2. Discomfort with Classification:

- 51% of users were uneasy with Facebook creating such detailed classifications about their preferences.

Another significant issue arose from the platform's classification of users based on political and racial attributes, which were used in part to target voters for political campaigns. This sparked further concerns about privacy and the ethical use of user data. The same study, involving a nationally representative sample of 963 Facebook users aged 18 and older, highlighted the following insights in Table 2.

Political Affinity Categorization	Multicultural Affinity Categorization
About 51% of users were assigned a political category by Facebook.	Around 21% of users were categorized by Facebook as having a "multicultural affinity," reflecting their perceived connection to specific racial or ethnic groups.
Of these, 73% believed the classification was somewhat or very accurate, while 27% found it not very or not at all accurate.	Among these, 60% agreed they had a strong affinity for the group assigned, while 37% did not feel aligned with the group.
Overall, 37% of all surveyed users agreed their assigned political category accurately described them, while 14% disagreed.	Additionally, 57% of those categorized considered themselves actual members of the racial or ethnic group assigned by Facebook.

Table 2 classification of users based on political attributes

These findings underscore the complexity and controversy surrounding Facebook’s data classification practices, particularly the ethical challenges posed by its methods for assigning political and racial categories. Such practices have fuelled public and governmental scrutiny, raising questions about transparency and consent in user data collection (Hitlin, 2019).

Facebook has made it very transparent to users how it tracks them with the “Off Facebook Activity ” tracker after Zuckerberg’s congress hearing in 2018. In summary, this tracker showed that Facebook who partners with various institutions and businesses knows exactly when users log in, make searches, or purchases even if the user’s phone is off because the businesses, institutions, services, and anyone who is an advertiser on the platform can upload information about any of these activities at any time (Fowler, 2020). Any user can see their ad preferences, adjust them, and see what ads they’ve interacted with and saved them.

These above-mentioned issues bring the complex challenges that come with user consent to use their data. Even though many users agree with the usage of cookies to access the content they want to see, the problems that arose have impacted the changes in GDPR that have impacted the effectiveness of Meta Pixel, and Meta Pixel developing an ability to avoid using third-party cookies for tracking.

3 Website performance and user behaviour with Meta Pixel

In the fast-paced world of digital marketing, data tracking and user behaviour analysis are essential for driving effective strategies and achieving measurable results. This chapter delves into Meta Pixel, an advanced tracking tool developed by Meta, and its critical role in optimizing advertising campaigns. This chapter explores how Meta Pixel functions, its origins as Facebook Pixel, and the evolution of its capabilities to meet the demands of a privacy-conscious digital environment. The interconnected issues of cookies, user consent, and GDPR regulations were also examined, which significantly influence how Meta Pixel operates today. Through technical insights and practical examples, this chapter sheds light on how businesses can leverage Meta Pixel to understand user actions, improve targeting, and enhance conversion rates while staying compliant with privacy laws. It lays the foundation for understanding the challenges and opportunities of implementing Meta Pixel within modern digital marketing frameworks.

3.1 Introduction to Meta Pixel

Understanding user behavior is challenging, especially with privacy concerns surrounding data collection tools like Facebook Meta Pixel. Initially designed to measure ad effectiveness by tracking user actions post-Facebook ad interaction, the tool has evolved to support website owners in refining ads, targeting audiences, and crafting remarketing campaigns for actions such as purchases or downloads. By collecting user data, Meta Pixel empowers businesses to improve ROI, tailor user experiences, and re-engage visitors, making it a valuable asset in strategic digital marketing efforts.

When embedded into a website, the Pixel code tracks user actions like visits and purchases. This data allows businesses to measure conversions, improve sales by refining strategies, and create custom audiences for targeted advertising, ensuring more effective and personalized campaigns (see Figure 10).

The art of remarketing with Facebook Pixel includes being very tactical in collecting and utilising all the collected data to optimise conversion rates in the future. This is a somewhat general approach to the use of Meta Pixel on websites, but what about bridging the gap between micro and main websites?

To do so, this research will offer a look into the challenges and limitations of cookies and cookie policy that has impacted how the Meta Pixel (formerly Facebook Pixel) has evolved.

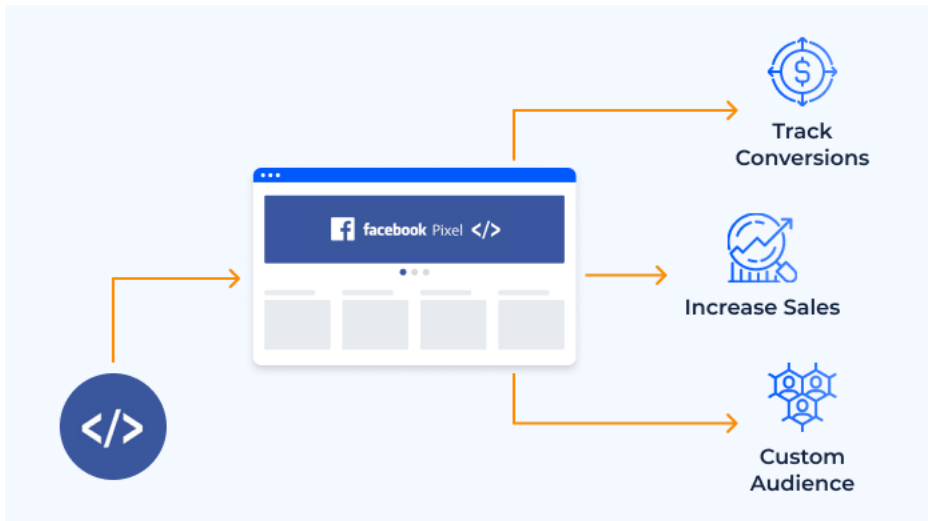


Figure 10 visual aid for Meta Pixel, (taken from source: <https://sitechecker.pro/what-is-facebook-pixel/>)

3.2 Meta Pixels technical aspects

As mentioned, in its core, Meta Pixel is essentially an analytics tool. Facebook Pixel used to have only one small piece of a code that needed to be included in the header of the page of which you want to track users and see which pages they visited, but today it works differently. Today, the Meta Pixel is a small chunk of JavaScript code that needs to be embedded onto your website and works as a universal pixel because it needs to exist for every page you want to track (Meta, n.b.d). Once it's installed, it's like a key that unlocks a library of different functions you can choose from to track different kinds of user actions. This allows Meta Ads to focus on user identification for every account opened on their platform and behavioural patterns from their users on Facebook, Instagram, and other Meta applications (Semerádová, 2023).

This is done through the usage of the technology known as cookies, which has become essential for the functioning of various tracking, analytical, and advertising systems across the Internet (Thomas, 2018).

As previously stated, its task is to collect valuable data from Meta and Instagram Ads, create and over time build custom audiences for future campaigns to make sure you get the right users to take a desired action, ultimately resulting in a higher conversion rate and a satisfying ROI.

In the domain of data collection, Meta offers a dual approach that covers information gathered from audiences and events.

Audiences outline user segments established through predetermined criteria, considering factors like demographic information or age, as the “Meta machine” learned from their interactions with websites and content. The data gathered with Facebook Pixel would help create a set of distinctive audience profiles that automatically turn into a tool for optimising ad targets for more effectiveness. A part of this audience would be ones that needed to be retargeted since they've made some kind of action on the website but still hadn't converted with a desired action.

Events collect the diverse selection of actions that users took by engaging with a website. Some of these actions include subscribing to newsletters and adding items to their carts, navigating to landing pages, downloading e-books, and submitting forms (Semerádová,2023). Figure 12 shows an example of how a page view event is represented in Meta Event Manager. After a user visits a website, the Pixel code would send insight on their actions to Facebook. It would tell them what web pages they landed on, device they browsed with, and all other interactions with Facebook advertisements in connection to what used to be the Facebook ecosystem (Meta, n.b.d). Events are tracked using fbq ('track') function shown in Figure 11.

```
fbq('track', 'Purchase', {currency: "USD", value: 30.00});
```

Figure 11 Event track function, (taken from source: <https://developers.facebook.com/docs/meta-pixel/implementation/conversion-tracking/>)



Figure 12 Meta Event Manager, page view, (taken from source: <https://developers.facebook.com/docs/meta-pixel/implementation/conversion-tracking/>)

In conclusion, Meta Pixel was made and is still used as an advanced analytics tool for finding specific audiences for unique businesses and their needs. This suggests that it can be a viable tool for finding various audiences amongst students seeking higher education and optimising content to feed their curiosity enough to engage them with content outside and inside Meta platforms. Ultimately, by constantly improving the quality of audiences and content being served to them, educational institutions have a better chance in doing just that: educating their audiences to interest them enough for applying. In the next few chapters, I will attempt to show the potentials of this implementation, its challenges, benefits, and flaws.

3.3 Conversion tracking with Meta Pixel

Since facing the changes in GDPR, Meta has been encouraging advertisers to use their Conversions API. This is a server-side tracking technology and a tool that makes it possible for advertisers to send first-party events and data to Meta servers. The role of Conversions API can help marketers assign conversions to ad clicks and follow registrations, content downloads and other behaviours, allowing a deeper understanding of the funnel conversions (CustomerLabs, n.d.). This API allows advertisers to send tracking data directly to Meta's advertising tools from their servers, bypassing the need for connections from users' browsers.

Unlike the Pixel, which relies on third-party cookies with unique identifiers, the Conversions API uses personal identifiers like emails, phone numbers, or full names collected from website visitors. Additionally, it utilises fingerprinting information such as IP addresses and user agents available to advertisers during each website visit. Basically, it means that the servers are communicating with each other and it is impossible to stop any information coming from the user interacting with the website.

Because of changes to third-party tracking in iOS 14.5, in an article done by Hootsuite, it's stated that some Facebook pixel functionality will be disabled for updated Apple devices. Only 14,7% (Hootsuite, n.d.) of mobile Facebook users access the social network using iOS devices. Still, changes to accommodate the iOS 14.5 requirements will impact all advertisers (Hootsuite, 2023). One major change is that advertisers can only set up a maximum of eight standard events and custom conversions. Additionally, the Facebook Pixel facilitates sophisticated ad strategies such as retargeting and the creation of lookalike audiences. Retargeting allows businesses to show ads to users who have previously interacted with their site, such as those who added items to a cart but did not make a purchase. Lookalike audiences, meanwhile, are generated based on the characteristics of existing site users, helping to expand the potential customer base.

To counteract the potential data losses from updates like iOS 14.5, Meta introduced the Conversions API, which collects data directly from servers instead of relying solely on browser-based cookies. This means that Meta facilitates cross-device insights, illustrating how users may engage with ads on one device but switch to another to complete actions. This information is crucial for tailoring advertising strategies to align more closely with user behaviours. However, the introduction of privacy updates like iOS 14.5 has affected the Pixel's data collection capabilities, leading to the development of the Aggregated Event Measurement protocol to sustain some tracking activities (Hootsuite, 2023).

One of the main practices while doing so is to verify your website domains and focus pixel tracking within a single domain to comply with the new privacy constraints and continue effective conversion tracking. These measures are essential for adapting to the evolving privacy landscape while maintaining robust digital marketing effectiveness.

Installing the Facebook Pixel on a website is a strategic decision that enhances the efficacy of Facebook advertising efforts by ensuring ads are displayed to users most likely to engage positively. This targeted approach significantly improves conversion rates and optimises the return on investment from ad spend. Even for those not currently using Facebook or Instagram ads, installing the Pixel is advantageous as it begins to collect valuable user interaction data immediately. This data collection is essential for crafting effective advertising strategies when the business is ready to launch campaigns.

The Facebook Pixel also enables conversion tracking, allowing businesses to observe how individuals interact with their website after seeing a Facebook ad. This tracking extends across devices, revealing whether a potential customer viewed an ad on one device but completed a purchase on another, which is critical for understanding consumer behaviour and refining marketing strategies.

On Meta's website, the following explanations illustrate the significance in implementing both Meta Pixel and Conversions API together to get the best possible data:

The Conversions API serves to establish a link between an advertiser's marketing data—encompassing website events, app events, business messaging events, and offline conversions—derived from various sources such as the advertiser's server, website platform, mobile app, or CRM, and Meta's systems. This connection facilitates ad targeting optimization, reduces cost per result, and enables outcome measurement. Instead of managing individual connection points for each data source, advertisers can utilise the Conversions API to transmit multiple event types, thereby streamlining their technology infrastructure. Direct integrations involve establishing a linkage between the advertiser's server and Meta's Conversions API endpoint.

- Server events, identified by a dataset ID, undergo processing akin to events dispatched via the Meta Pixel, Facebook SDK for iOS or Android, mobile measurement partner SDK, offline event set, or .csv upload. Consequently, server events can be harnessed for measurement, reporting, or optimization purposes, akin to other connection channels.
- Offline events, on the other hand, facilitate the measurement of attributed offline events, creation of offline custom audiences, or offline event measurement.

The integration of Facebook Pixel and Conversions API provides a robust framework for tracking and enhancing digital advertising efforts, ensuring educational facilities can adapt to evolving technological and regulatory landscapes while maximising their advertising impact.

3.4 Transition from Facebook to Meta Pixel

Meta, from the time it went from Facebook to its current brand, has drastically expanded its ecosystem. One of the most meaningful expansions was including Instagram in the machine and expanding not just the

audience, but the playing field for advertisers, and ultimately shifting their focus from social media to AI and its many potentials. Some of the basic technical aspects of Meta Pixel and their benefits have stayed the same since the name change from Facebook to Meta. The Meta Pixel is still a piece of code that goes into the header of the website, tracking user interactions through cookies, helping to optimise ads to fit a very specific and unified interest. It's safe to state that its core functionality has stayed the same. The digital marketing universe is prone to constant updates. Professionals who work in the platform every day are typically challenged with regular novelties that manifest because of their implementations and optimization tactics, but also by the rich nature of the Meta universe whose technicalities are prone to optimization in their own sense of the word.

From a technical perspective, Facebook and Meta Pixel don't have any crucial differences in functionality. The usage of cookies is present on both and is triggered and set up the same way, staying a crucial part of any digital marketing strategy. From this standpoint, the transition mainly involved updating the branding and APIs which Meta wants to align.

3.5 Cookie vs Meta Pixel

While both Meta Pixel and cookies are tracking tools, they serve different purposes and can complement each other when used effectively across main and micro websites. To maximize their potential, it's essential to understand their differences. Cookies primarily store user data locally on a browser to track preferences and activity, while Meta Pixel gathers event-based data and sends it to Meta's servers for ad optimization and audience targeting. By integrating both, businesses can enhance user experiences while also refining their advertising strategies, ensuring seamless functionality across all website platforms.

Meta Pixel sends data directly to the server, while Cookies store the information on the browser (Vinogradov, 2024). There are first party cookies which can't be excluded from tracking on the website, they are in the "roots" of it and browsing wouldn't be possible without them, while third party cookies send data to a different website from the one the user is browsing. Furthermore, pixels can send the cookie to the server when a user completes a desired action set in tracking since they are a link between the website and platform (Learn Web Analytics, n.d.). For example, when installed on the main website, the Meta Pixel can send cookies to the server when a prospecting student performs a desired action on the website.

The Meta Pixel is also embedded in content, sends data to the server when the content is accessed and is commonly used for retargeting campaigns, while cookies can be deleted, rejected, stored on a user's device, and can track behaviour through different pages and websites (Vinogradov, 2024). Strategically used together, they can build personalised user profiles and better targeting strategies for future campaigns.

This research will propose six campaigns that will utilise Meta Pixel installed on micro websites to bridge the gap between it and the main website as the main destination for conversions and user acquisition.

3.6 Meta Consent Mode

There are different ways to obtain consent from users for data collection. Businesses could put cookie consent banners that lets the users know that tracking tools are used, and how. They can reject or accept the use of these technologies and in that case the pixel will not fire. Another way is to allow users to change their privacy settings. They could block the usage of cookies completely in the browser. Privacy statements are placed on a website. They are detailed and clear statements that inform users how the data is used.

Meta consent Mode is a feature that allows for websites and apps to make sure the users privacy settings are in alignment with Meta Pixel data collection. It is a simple code adjustment that gives levels to data sharing taking into consideration user consent. Meta Pixel stops data transmission to Meta servers if the consent is not granted. If consent is partial, analytics may be shared but full consent gives optimal data collection. With this tool, GDPR compliance is supported, data collection is controlled, and functionality is preserved. Integrating this piece of code with Consent Management Platform, manages the data while giving the user option for consent to data usage in the form of a banner.

4 Case Study: Meta Pixel for Retargeting Potential Students at Tilburg University

In today's competitive higher education market, reaching and engaging prospective students requires more than traditional outreach methods. The campaigns in this chapter aim to bridge the gap between discovery and enrollment by strategically leveraging digital tools, particularly Meta Pixel, across multiple platforms. The objective is clear: to guide potential students through a seamless journey that moves them from initial interest to active engagement, and ultimately, enrollment. Series of campaigns were designed to address specific challenges and achieve targeted goals for the client. These campaigns are not just about promoting a product or service; they are about creating meaningful connections with the audience. The purpose behind these efforts is clear: to drive engagement, improve brand visibility, and achieve measurable outcomes that align with Tilburg University's objectives. Designed with the intention of addressing gaps in user engagement, these campaigns enhance brand awareness, and boost conversions. By implementing these strategies, the goal is to overcome hurdles such as low interaction rates, fragmented customer journeys, and insufficient targeting. Each campaign is tailored to provide actionable insights, engage the right audience, and create a seamless user experience across digital platforms. The value of these campaigns goes beyond immediate results. They provide Tilburg University with data-driven strategies that not only solve current challenges but also pave the way for long-term growth. By addressing pain points like underperformance in digital outreach and ineffective audience segmentation, these campaigns ensure a stronger, more connected presence in the digital space. This chapter delves into how these efforts are structured, their purpose, and the impact they aim to deliver.

The problem lies in the complexity of reaching and retaining the attention of prospective students in an oversaturated digital space. Universities face challenges in identifying and targeting qualified leads while also ensuring their outreach efforts remain personalized and effective. This is where Meta Pixel and a well-coordinated use of main and micro websites become essential. The primary problem holders in this context are higher education institutions like Tilburg University, which need to improve how they connect with potential students in a meaningful way. The campaigns designed for this research use the Tilburg University main website and Francesco Lelli's micro website to address these challenges. The main website acts as a comprehensive source of information, while the micro website serves as an engaging entry point to capture initial interest. By incorporating Meta Pixel, these platforms work together to track user behaviour, retarget users who drop off, and optimize content strategies to meet prospective students where they are in their decision-making process.

The marketing objective in this case is to effectively capture, engage, and guide prospective students through the decision-making process, addressing the unique challenges universities face in a competitive digital environment. The goal is to turn interest into action—whether that’s an application, a request for more information, or a campus visit—by creating a personalized and data-driven journey. The journey starts by generating awareness through the main website, which acts as the central hub for the university’s branding and general information. From there, prospective students are funnelled into tailored micro websites or landing pages that focus on specific programs, events, or offerings, providing a more personalized experience. Meta Pixel tracks user behaviour at every stage—logging actions like page visits, content interactions, and sign-ups. This data allows for precise retargeting and optimization of messaging, ensuring that prospective students are re-engaged with content that speaks directly to their interests.

By coordinating these efforts, the university can not only reach the right audience but also nurture their journey in a meaningful way, ultimately solving the problem of fragmented outreach and low conversion rates. This approach ensures that campaigns are effective in driving measurable results, enhancing engagement, and building a strong connection with future students. Through these campaigns, this research aims to demonstrate how a data-driven approach can resolve existing gaps in digital engagement, creating a stronger, more effective pathway for prospective students to explore and commit to their higher education journey.

4.1 Introduction to the Tilburg University platforms

This research explores how Meta Pixel can retarget users through two platforms: the Tilburg University main website and Francesco Lelli’s micro website. The main website provides detailed information about programs like Information Management, guiding users toward enrollment. Meanwhile, the micro website captures initial interest with relevant blog posts, directing users to the main website for more details. By tracking user behaviour on both platforms, Meta Pixel enables personalized retargeting campaigns to re-engage users and improve conversions. The following chapters examine how these platforms work together to optimize the user journey and drive enrollment.

4.1.1 Tilburg University- Main website

Main website that contains the information on programs such as Information Management, which we are referencing in campaign design. The Information Management (IM) page can be seen in Figure 13, serves a purpose of attracting and informing prospective students in higher education as well as gives more in-depth resources for users that are further along on their application journey. With our campaigns, we aim to direct future students in the right direction from the micro website to the main website where they can access data about enrollment, program specifications and application process. By using Meta Pixel on the main Tilburg

University website, we can gather information about user engagement, and in turn optimise content, improve conversion rates etc.

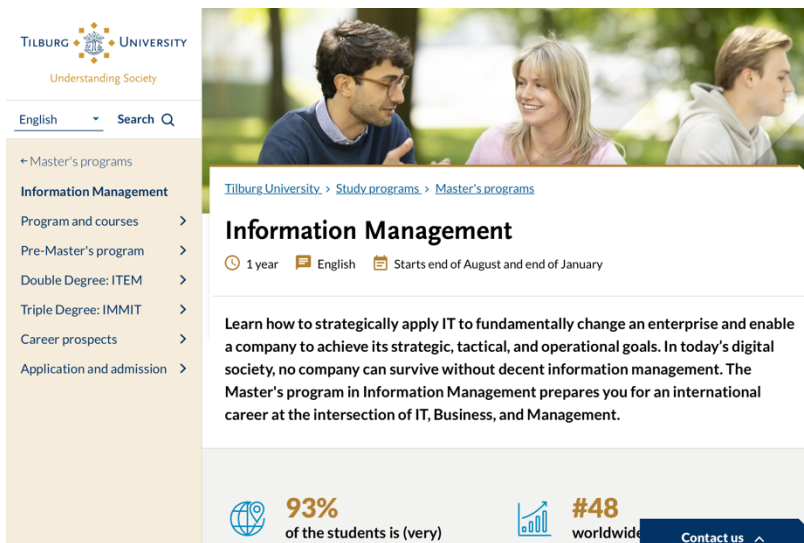
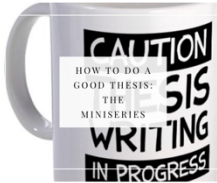


Figure 13 IM page, (taken from source: <https://www.tilburguniversity.edu/education/masters-programs/information-management>)

4.1.2 Francesco Lelli's blog- Micro website

The micro website (see Figure 14) is more of an introductory point with the aim to capture the initial interest of a potential student and guide it to the main website. The blog posts are relevant to the topic of Information Management. Implemented Meta Pixel monitors user behaviour, time spent on the page, user engagement and other relevant actions. With clear interest in such blog articles that are closely related to IM, the campaign can target these users with retargeting ads and guide them to the main university website.

In this case, the micro website plays a key role in the customer journey by serving as the starting point for capturing the attention of prospective students. It introduces users to relevant topics through blog posts designed to engage and spark curiosity. Those posts are relevant if they relate to the IM page by topic, such as posts about knowledge graphs and artificial intelligence, introduction to generative AI etc. By aligning its content with the interests of potential students, the micro website draws them into the university's ecosystem and acts as a gateway to the main website. Within the customer journey, the micro website corresponds to the awareness stage, where users become familiar with the university's offerings through engaging and informative content. The implemented Meta Pixel tracks user behaviour, such as time spent on the page and interactions with blog posts, providing insights into their interests and level of engagement. As users show clear interest in topics related to IM, the journey progresses to the consideration stage, facilitated by retargeting ads that direct them to the main university website. Here, users are provided with more in-depth information, such as program details, admission processes, and campus resources, guiding them closer to conversion. In this way, the micro website is strategically integrated into the customer journey, acting as a bridge that connects initial interest with deeper exploration and eventual action on the main website.



Home

This website uses cookies to improve your experience. We'll assume you're ok with this, but you can opt-out if you wish. [Accept](#) [Read More](#)

Figure 14 Francesco Lelli micro website, (taken from source: francescolelli.info)

4.2 Previous effectiveness of Facebook advertising

To illustrate the integration and interplay of cookies, Facebook usage tactics, and the tracking capabilities of Google Analytics 4 (GA4), an example of previous campaign analytics are provided to serve as a reference. This example highlights how these tools collectively function to gather and analyse user data within the boundaries of user consent and GDPR compliance. Specifically, it demonstrates how cookies facilitate data collection by storing user preferences and tracking behaviour across sessions, while Facebook’s Meta Pixel enhances this process by monitoring specific interactions and enabling retargeting strategies. Additionally, the example showcases how Google Analytics 4 builds upon this data by offering insights into user behaviour, engagement patterns, and conversion metrics, all contingent on the level of user consent obtained. Together, these tools create a cohesive framework for understanding user journeys, optimizing digital campaigns, and ensuring compliance with privacy regulations. The example underscores the practical applications of these technologies in crafting personalized, data-driven marketing strategies while respecting user privacy.

Geographic information based on IP address - (/education/masters-programs...)

Country - GA4	New users - GA4...	% Δ	Views - GA4	% Δ	Region - GA4	New users - G...	% Δ	Views - GA4	% Δ
1. Netherlands	64	814.3% ↑	257	310.8% ↑	1. South Holland	21	950.0% ↑	73	461.5% ↑
2. Poland	8	300.0% ↑	21	-50.0% ↓	2. North Holland	15	-	51	537.5% ↑
3. United States	7	-50.0% ↓	16	14.3% ↑	3. North Brabant	13	550.0% ↑	45	55.2% ↑
4. Vietnam	6	-40.0% ↓	24	-47.6% ↓	4. (not set)	7	250.0% ↑	35	20.7% ↑
5. Greece	5	-64.3% ↓	41	-56.8% ↓	5. Montserrat	5	25.0% ↑	17	-45.2% ↓
6. Liberia	5	25.0% ↑	17	-45.2% ↓	6. Attica	4	-55.6% ↓	35	-22.2% ↓
7. Spain	4	-	8	-	7. Hanoi	4	-33.3% ↓	8	-74.2% ↓
8. France	2	100.0% ↑	13	116.7% ↑	8. Virginia	3	0.0%	5	66.7% ↑
9. Philippines	2	-	2	100.0% ↑	9. Limburg	3	-	11	1,800.0% ↑
10. Pakistan	2	-	8	60.0% ↑	10. Gelderland	2	-	28	-
Grand total	111	30.6% ↑	547	-15.8% ↓	Grand total	111	30.6% ↑	547	-15.8% ↓

Figure 15 GA4 geographical information

The looker studio report highlights advertising, categorised by geo information based on IP address as shown in the above Figure 15. The data is divided into two main sections: one for users with a G4A education level and another one for users who don't use G4A. Each section is divided into columns: Country, Number of users, % of users, Views, CTR (%), CVA (\$).

Relevant parameters to consider:

1. User Engagement: for insights into user engagement “Views” and “CTR” columns. The higher number of views and a higher CTR indicate that users are interacting with the ad.
2. Conversion Value Added (CVA): this is the monetary value added through conversions. A higher CVA suggests that they are both attracting prospective users who take valuable actions.
3. User Demographics: The “Country” and “Number of Users” allow insight into demographic data about users who interact with ads. This information about the users helps advertisers to understand which locations drive the most conversions.
4. Education Level: The data is divided based on the education level. This allows comparison of engagement and conversion metrics across different user education levels.

Also relevant to the campaigns proposed in the following chapters, here is website analytics data for various subpages under the category “Education/Masters Programs.” The table provides several key metrics such as page views, unique page views, average time on page, entrances, bounce rate, % exit, and the number of new users.

Subpages under the category “Education/Masters Programs data analysis”: The data is divided into two main sections: education (Table 3) and new users (Table 4). Secondly, as an example for page view engagement, the following data is provided in Figure 16.

Country	GA4 Users	GA4 % Users	GA4 Views	GA4 % Views
Netherlands	64	814.3%	267	310.8%
Poland	8	300.0%	21	-50.0%
United States	7	-40.0%	16	-67.6%
Vietnam	6	-40.0%	24	-50.0%
Greece	5	-64.3%	41	-56.8%
Liberia	5	25.0%	17	-45.2%
Spain	4	-55.6%	8	-60.0%
Philippines	2	100.0%	8	60.0%
Pakistan	2	-	8	-
France	2	100.0%	13	116.7%

Table 3: Geographic information based on IP address – Education.

Region	GA4 Users	% Total Users	GA4 Views	% Total Views
Morocco	5	25.0%	17	-45.2%
Antioquia	4	-33.3%	28	-22.2%
North Holland	15	-	51	-
Gelderland	2	-	28	-

Table 4: Geographic information based on IP address - New users.[1]

Page views - (/education/masters-programs...)

Page URL	Views - GA4	% Δ	New users - GA4	% Δ
1. www.tfbuuniversity.edu/education/masters-programs/strategic-management/semaster	39	-	9	-
2. www.tfbuuniversity.edu/education/masters-programs/international-management/semaster	30	500.0% ↑	10	-
3. www.tfbuuniversity.edu/education/masters-programs/finance	29	-19.4% ↓	10	11.1% ↑
4. www.tfbuuniversity.edu/education/masters-programs/marketing-analytics/semaster	25	2,400.0% ↑	5	-
5. www.tfbuuniversity.edu/education/masters-programs/research-master-economics	24	0.0%	5	400.0% ↑
6. www.tfbuuniversity.edu/education/masters-programs/economics/semaster	22	-	5	-
7. www.tfbuuniversity.edu/education/masters-programs/marketing-management	20	-28.6% ↓	2	-33.3% ↓
8. www.tfbuuniversity.edu/education/masters-programs/econometrics-and-mathematical-economics/semaster	20	400.0% ↑	3	-
9. www.tfbuuniversity.edu/education/masters-programs/strategic-management-entrepreneurship/semaster	18	-	7	-
10. www.tfbuuniversity.edu/education/masters-programs/marketing-management/semaster	16	1,500.0% ↑	7	-
Grand total	547	-15.8% ↓	111	30.6% ↑

Figure 16 GA4 page views

For Page Popularity: The Page Views including Unique Page Views give insights into the popularity of each subpage. Unique page views indicate that the subpage is attracting more visitors. In the User Engagement column: The “Average Time on Page” column provides an indication of user engagement. The longer

average time spent on the page suggests that users are spending more time on the subpage, indicating higher education.

In this example, most page views can be accredited to the Strategic Management Master’s Program, while most new users landed on the “International Management Premaster”. On the topic of User Retention, a lower bounce rate and % exit suggest that users are more likely to stay on the subpage than explore other pages on the website. As for User Acquisition (see Figure 17), this column tells how successful acquisition efforts in the chosen period were. A higher number of new users indicates successful efforts. The following example in the chosen period from September 1, 2023, to June 3rd, shows the number of new users that came through different referral campaigns.

User acquisition - (/education/masters-programs...)

	First user medium - GA4	First user source - GA4	New users - GA4 ▾	% Δ	Views - GA4	% Δ
1.	referral	m.facebook.com	46	9.5% ↑	142	-22.0% ↓
2.	referral	lm.facebook.com	42	950.0% ↑	179	588.5% ↑
3.	referral	l.facebook.com	23	-11.5% ↓	220	-47.9% ↓
4.	referral	facebook.com	0	-100.0% ↓	6	-70.0% ↓

Figure 17 GA4 User acquisition.

- Campaign 3 recorded 220 views tracked by Google Analytics 4, but only 23 of these were from new users.
- Campaign 1 showed a smaller disparity between views and new users, with a 9.95% growth in new users during this period, despite a -22% decrease in views.
- The most notable success was seen in Campaign 2, which achieved a remarkable 950% increase in new users.

Since the most successful campaigns running appear to be referral campaigns with higher conversion rates, containing a user base which advocates for Tilburg University’s brand, it’s crucial to keep nurturing this base and gain more high-value leads harnessing the power of existing users.

One way to do this is with retargeting campaigns focused on a specific program - Information Management, discussed in the next chapter with proposed examples for strategy refinement which aims to gather new users and turn them into quality leads utilised in email marketing campaigns.

4.3 Case study Design

This research design aims to comprehend the application and effectiveness of Meta Pixel in a digital marketing context. Literature review was conducted to understand the current body of knowledge. Qualitative methods were used to ensure a complete and strong analysis. This approach allows for a broader view, integrating expert opinions and insights. Through semi-structured interviews with experts, qualitative research was conducted. Choosing this approach, we aim to gain deeper insights into practical applications and validate the theoretical solutions proposed in this research. By having discussions with professionals who have hands-on experience with Meta Pixel, the research explores perspectives and practical challenges that may not be evident in the literature (Pandey, 2020).

4.4 Overview of Campaign Requirements

As a primary goal, the campaigns leverage Meta Pixel to connect user engagement from Tilburg University main website to the micro website of Francesco Lelli. A prospective student would be a user that is not currently enrolled in the IM master's program at Tilburg University but could be. Guiding potential students through the stages of the enrollment funnel requires a structured approach to targeting, tracking, privacy compliance and content. The campaigns must meet strategic objectives while also sticking to regulatory requirements. Some of the key requirements based on the input from personnel at marketing department at Tilburg University are:

1. User tracking and Data collection
 - Meta pixel needs to be installed on micro and main websites to monitor potential students' interactions. Possible interactions are page views, duration on the page, conversion events. These evaluate user interest and guide them through the enrollment funnel (Semerádová, 2023).
 - Events that need to be tracked are clicking on the ad, viewing program details, accessing the course catalogue, and filling out an inquiry. Such metrics give information on user behaviour and patterns (Meta, n.d).
2. Targeted content
 - The content of the Facebook ad used for the campaigns needs to be tailored to resonate with the needs and interests of potential students. Users encounter information that is consistent and follows their journey through the funnel on both main and micro websites.
3. Retargeting
 - If the users engage but do not complete the funnel, retargeting is used to re-engage potential students through email marketing and personalised ads. By showing specific content based

on previous information, these ads can be tailored calls to actions to encourage users to complete the enrollment funnel.

4. Integration across platforms

- The design of campaigns took into consideration the cohesive user experience across both Tilburg University main website and micro website of Francesco Lelli. The content should be synchronised to guide potential students from one platform to the other while keeping a clear picture.

5. Privacy compliance

- With the constraints of GDPR, the following campaigns are designed to prioritize user consent. This consent is needed even before tracking begins, for obtaining data through cookies and Meta Pixel. Cookie management options can be found on both websites, and it allows the user to choose their preference (Vinogradov, 2024).
- With the compliance to GDPR guidelines, only the necessary data is collected, and the users are informed on the use of this data. To enhance user trust and reduce opt-out rates, transparency is a must (Information Commissioner's Office, n.d.).

4.5 Solution Design: Campaign Creation

Following the literature review (see Chapter 2 and Chapter 3), with the help of AI and experts from the field of marketing working at Tilburg University, six digital marketing campaigns were strategically designed. They targeted different aspects of bridging the gap between micro and main websites. Meta Pixel was conceptually implemented in each campaign to track user interactions, providing a theoretical basis for understanding their potential impact. Each campaign was designed to address specific aspects of user engagement and conversion optimization. Objectives and key performance indicators were clearly defined. This planning phase involved identifying target audiences, setting measurable goals, and designing creative strategies to improve targeting and enhance retargeting efforts (Pandey, 2020).

The main goals of all campaigns proposed is to understand user behaviour, improve targeting, enhance retargeting efforts, and ultimately optimise the content strategy relevant for the prospecting students that showed up on the page. Implementing Meta Pixel tracking in this campaign strategy is expected to push visitors on both websites further down the funnel to what was previously described as “deposits and enrols”.

In this research the campaigns were designed with the example of using a micro website of Francesco Lelli and the main Tilburg University website. A brief overview of these campaigns is represented in Table 5.

Campaign Summaries				
Campaigns	Objectives	Overview	Relation to the funnel	Differences
<i>1: FB ad to Micro website and IM page</i>	Measure interest in information management and establish pathways between micro and IM websites.	Tracks multiple points including Francesco Lelli's Micro website and IM page using Meta Pixel.	Addresses awareness and consideration stages, establishing user pathways.	Campaign 1 targets broad audiences through multiple tracking points.
<i>2: FB ad to IM page</i>	Engage directly with users interested in the IM page from targeted ads.	Focuses on users already interested in specific IM-related content from Francesco Lelli's ads.	Focuses on users further in the consideration stage, refining engagement.	Campaigns 2 focuses on direct engagement with IM page ads.
<i>3: University FB to IM page</i>	Leverage a wider university audience for better engagement and retargeting.	University-led campaign targeting a broader audience for tracking engagement and retargeting.	Expands awareness to a broader audience for retargeting opportunities.	Campaign 3 expands awareness to a broader audience for retargeting opportunities.
<i>4: Professor email retargeting</i>	Track engagement across articles and IM page via email campaigns.	Targets engagement with IM page and articles through professor email campaigns.	Aligns with consideration and decision stages via direct email engagement.	Campaign 4 aligns with consideration and decision stages via direct email engagement.
<i>5: University email retargeting</i>	Assess effectiveness of email retargeting for IM page engagement.	Uses email retargeting to measure direct engagement with IM page content.	Tests decision-stage effectiveness through email content.	Campaign 5 tests decision-stage effectiveness through email content.
<i>6: Professor email retargeting</i>	Optimize email content for retargeting by analysing user engagement.	Tracks user interactions (page views, clicks) to enhance retargeting effectiveness.	Completes the funnel by targeting decision and loyalty stages.	Campaign 6 ensures post-engagement optimization, targeting decision and loyalty stages.

Table 5 Campaign 1-6 summaries

5 Campaign design with Meta Pixel

In this chapter, we propose a detailed campaign design strategy to attempt and reach these objectives. The campaigns use Francesco Lelli's blog as an example for a micro website and Tilburg University website as the main website. This chapter outlines the design and structure of digital marketing campaigns developed to evaluate the effectiveness of Meta Pixel in retargeting potential students. The campaigns are crafted to address specific goals within the enrollment funnel, from raising awareness to driving conversions. By leveraging Meta Pixel, the campaigns aim to bridge the gap between Tilburg University's main and micro websites, optimizing user engagement and enhancing the decision-making journey for prospective students.

The campaigns are designed to align with distinct stages of the digital marketing funnel, ensuring a structured approach to capturing, engaging, and converting users. Each campaign incorporates Meta Pixel to track user interactions, enabling precise retargeting based on user behaviour. By tailoring the campaigns to specific objectives, such as increasing website visits, boosting interaction with targeted content, or guiding users toward enrollment, the designs prioritize a seamless user experience while maximizing data-driven insights.

5.1 Campaign 1: FB ad to Micro website and IM page

While diving into the campaign design, some of the general benefits of such endeavour can be seen by breaking down the funnel into certain stages. One of those benefits comes down to enhancing the number of course views. With the help of Meta Pixel, universities can track prospective students' interactions across both their main and microsites. The collected data can help create targeted ads that have a better chance at appealing to the interests of potential students based on their engagement with specific content such as accessing a list of courses.

To illustrate this, a conversion funnel was created (see Figure 19) that can be utilised for retargeting a potential student as the main goal of implementing Meta Pixel while bridging the gap between two websites. Firstly, a description of what can be referred to as an "enrollment Funnel" with an attempt to simplify its stages to main six which are proposed and presented within an exemplary campaign design. The funnel for which a campaign will be proposed is called the enrollment Funnel. The enrollment marketing funnel, modelled by a classic sales funnel (awareness, interest, evaluation, negotiation, sale, repurchase) is a tool used by educational institutions to map out the steps a prospective student takes from first learning about the institution to enrolling. It guides schools, colleges, and universities in crafting effective marketing and communication strategies at each stage.

To drive prospective students from Facebook ads to micro websites and the Information Management page, and ultimately to course overview, the first campaign would have provided awareness about the topic from Francesco's Lelli's account. The post is related to the topic of Information Management which indirectly sparks interest of prospective students who will want to study the subject themselves and learn about the described topic (see Figure 18).

In the case for Tilburg University-Francesco Lelli-website-gap, prospects can be described as individuals expressing interest in a specific institution or program, which may manifest through actions like visiting dedicated pages for the website after clicking on the previously attached post. This marks the second destination users will land on by clicking on the previous post: Micro Website Article (linked Information Management page beneath the article). Actions to be tracked:

- Action: Stay on the page for more than 1 minute
- Action: Scroll down to the end of the article
- Action: Click on the link to IM page

Moving forward, inquiries represent prospects who have advanced their interest by actively seeking information about the institution or program, whether by completing forms, requesting details, or initiating direct contact. This would be the third destination in an exemplary campaign.

After going through the IM page and completing the desired action: the user would access the course description and get to the fourth destination which is the course description page. With that, the user will have completed the cycle intended for Campaign 1 and we have completed the top of the funnel journey which was broken down into four proposed stages.

Next, applicants signify individuals who have formally decided to apply to the institution or program. After completing the application review, those admitted or accepted are "Admits". Among admitted students, those who confirm their intention to enrol by submitting an enrollment deposit are classified as Deposits.

The culmination of this journey ends at the Enrols stage, where individuals officially enrol and begin their academic year within the institution or program.

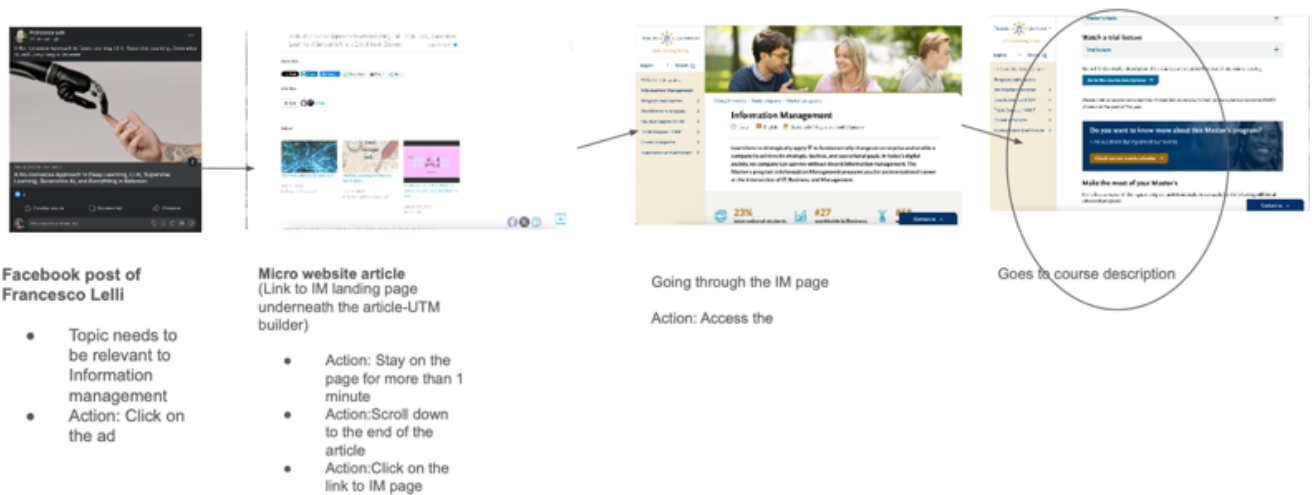


Figure 18 Campaign 1 walkthrough

To summarise the described examples, an ad should be posted from Francesco Lelli’s Facebook account. As proposed in example 1, it should cover the topic relevant to the page - Information Management. Afterwards, we will track the View content event, that will show us how many users clicked on the ad posted on this Facebook account. Secondly, events that should be tracked on the micro website are:

- View content that shows which users land on the article from the ad.
- Lead, shows users that stay on the page for longer than 1 minute.
- Search shows users that scrolled to the end of the page.
- View content, if the user clicks on the IM page.
- Lastly, events that are relevant on the IM website:
- View content, when users view the IM page.
- Lead, if the user accesses the course overview.

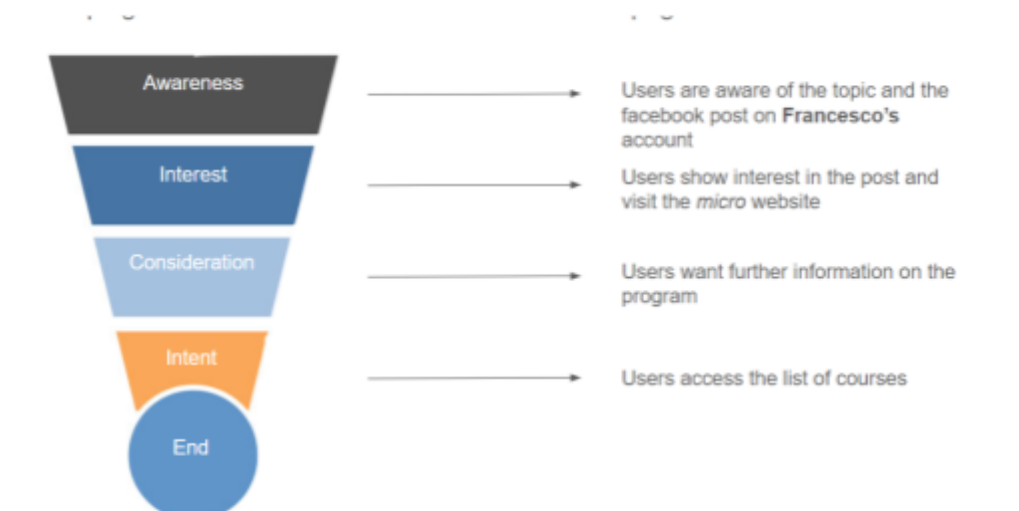


Figure 19 Campaign 1 funnel

Now it's possible to break down this funnel refinement initiative to four main stages as seen:

- Awareness stage would be when the user becomes aware of the topic, we would like them to consider. This would be a Facebook post about a relevant topic.
- Interest stage would in this case be when the topic interests the user and they further their interest on the micro website.
- Consideration stage would be, after showing interest in the article we provided, and we see the user going to the relevant page. In this case the relevant page is the Information management page.
- Intent stage is where we see the users interact on the page and access the course overview page. In this case that would show valid intent and that the user is in fact looking into the program.

The first campaign is designed to measure broad interest across micro websites and IM pages of a targeted group interested in topics related to Information Management. It is anticipated that this campaign will help us track how users move through the funnel from awareness to intent.

5.2 Campaign 2: FB ad to IM Page

The goal of Campaign 1 is to take users through the journey of three destinations: from Facebook/Meta Ad, micro website article, and to lastly the Information Management page (see Figure 20) - to accessing the course description. With that, the path between the four was successfully created to get through the top-of-the-funnel stage of awareness (see Figure 21). This campaign will help differentiate leads that have moved from the first stage of the funnel to inquiries stage which have the potential to become enrolled students and move further down the funnel.



Figure 20 Campaign 2 walkthrough

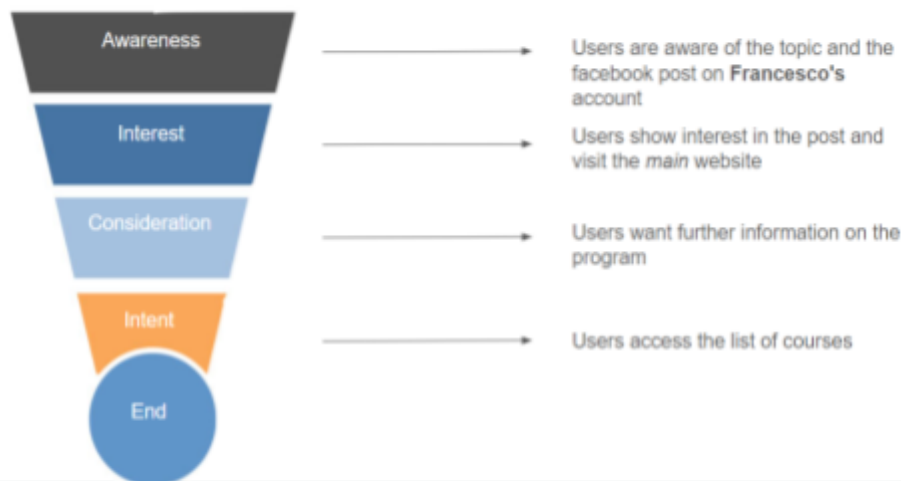


Figure 21 Campaign 2 funnel

Now, in Campaign 2, the goal is to retarget the users and lead them from the Facebook Ad to the Information Management page directly for them to access the course while measuring how much they stayed on the page with the direct focus on IM Page only. This campaign will include simplified tracking to measure direct interest in IM content, page engagement from Francesco Lelli's ads, and analyse users who show interest from Francesco's FB page to IM page. First, an ad should be posted from Francesco Lelli's Facebook account, like in Campaign 1. The topic should also be relevant to Information management. The second destination in this campaign differs, as users wouldn't land on the micro website page, but directly on the Information Management page on Tilburg university's website. Actions to be tracked are:

- Action: stay on the page for longer than 1 minute
- Action: access the course overview

Once on the IM page, users will be guided to the course description through a clear call-to-action button. This action signifies a transition to the inquiries stage of the funnel, where prospects show active interest in course details. Tracking metrics for this campaign include:

- View Content: Captures the number of users who clicked on the ad and visited the IM page.
- Lead: Triggers when users access the course overview.
- Lead: Triggers when users stay on the IM page for more than 60 seconds.

These metrics provide a clear picture of user engagement, helping refine strategies to optimize the campaign and guide leads further down the funnel.

5.3 Campaign 3: University FB ad to IM website

Similarly to Campaign 2, the goal of this campaign is to focus the Information Page Engagement but with the Tilburg University-led ad campaign. This attempt aims to collect users from the Tilburg University Facebook/Meta page, engage and lead them to the Information Management page in the same manner as the users from Francesco’s page were put on this pathway (see Figure 22).

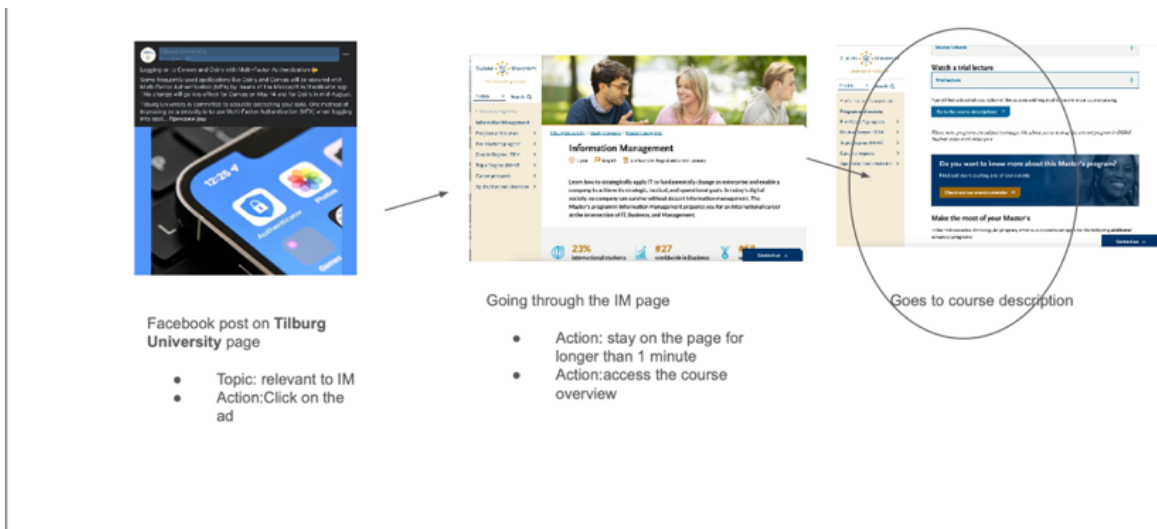


Figure 22 Campaign 3 walkthrough

To bridge the gap between the two sites, it is most crucial to engage users from both sides at the same time and put them in the same funnel (see Figure 23). Even though their starting points were different, their destination remains the same as the goal. This way, all the users required for a retargeting campaign later will be in the same data pool, making it easier for Meta Pixel to build precise user profiles.

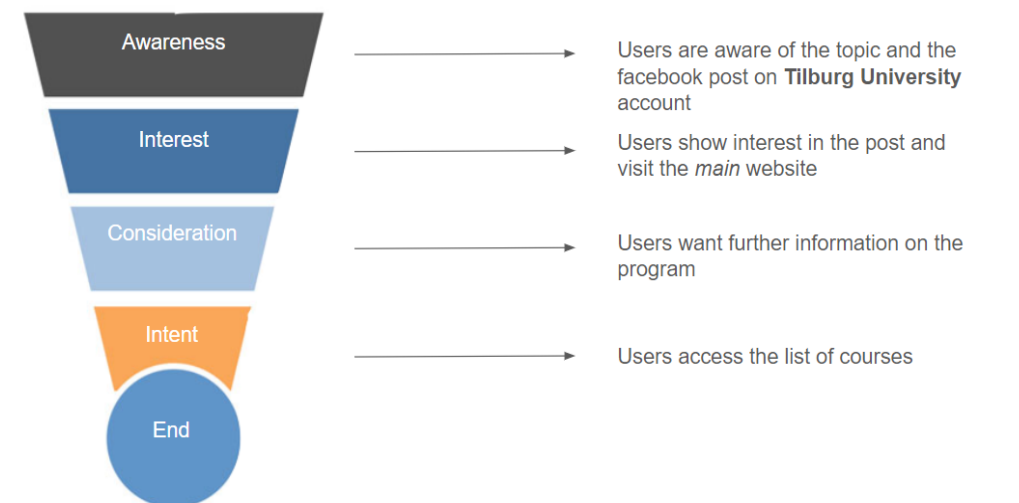


Figure 23: Campaign 3 funnel.

To ensure consistency and relevance, the ad content must closely align with the theme of the page it leads to. By publishing the ad through Tilburg University's Facebook page, we can gather valuable data on user behaviour, helping us refine the campaign and funnel while offering targeted content at later stages.

After clicking on the ad, the user's second destination is the Information Management Page. The desired actions from the users are:

- Stayed on the page longer than 1 minute.
- Accessed the course overview.
- Ended up on the course description page.

We will use the "View Content" event to track visits to the IM page from the Facebook ad, providing insights into how effectively the ad drives traffic. Additional engagement metrics will be tracked on the IM page:

- The "View Content" event will log initial interest in the IM page.
- The "Lead" event will trigger under two conditions: if the user views the course overview, indicating deeper interest, or stays on the page for over 60 seconds, showing higher engagement and potential intent.

Campaign 3 is designed to move users from Tilburg University's Facebook ad to the Information Management page, focusing on advancing them to the inquiry stage of the funnel. The Facebook Pixel will be integrated into the IM page to track user paths and engagement originating from the ad, ensuring we capture valuable data for campaign optimization.

5.4 Campaign 4: Professor email retargeting

After launching the three crucial campaigns in a dual-sided approach that included creating different campaign pathways from which they will land on the Information Management page, enough data should be available to conduct an email retargeting campaign. Campaign 4 takes the user from the email list to IM page and blog articles on micro website (see Figure 24).

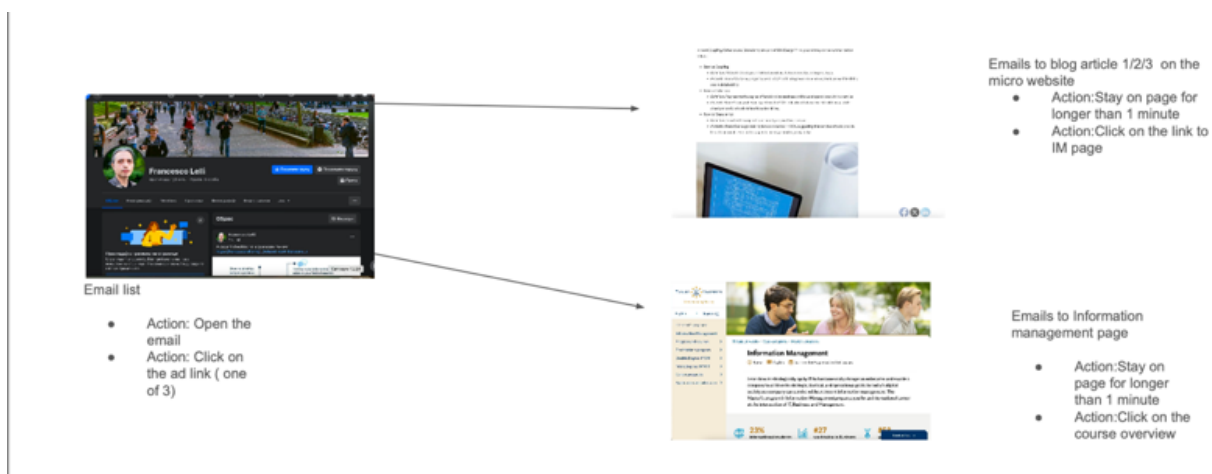


Figure 24 Campaign 4 walkthrough

This research underscores the dual-edged nature of retargeting: while it can enhance engagement and conversions, marketers still must carefully balance personalization and privacy concerns to maintain consumer trust and maximise the long-term effectiveness of their campaigns. For the explained reasons, a careful, personalised, and yet user-friendly approach that requires their consent and gives them true informational value such as blog content through email marketing, while collecting their emails, we have designed a retargeting campaign which utilises Meta Pixel to gather leads. Actions to be tracked are:

- Open the email;
- Click on the ad link.

Then, the email would lead to 3 blog articles with different content relevant to the Information Management program. Emails to blog article 1,2,3 on the micro website actions to be tracked:

- Action: Stay on page for longer than 1 minute
- Action: Click on the link to IM page

Next, the following events that are relevant on the campaign 4 would be subjected to examination:

- *View content*: Shows which users land on the article from the email.
- *Lead*: Shows users that stay on the page for longer than 1 minute.
- *Search*: Shows users that scrolled to the end of the page.
- *View content*: If the user clicks on the IM page.

Alternatively, the email would directly lead to the Information Management page. Where actions tracked are:

- Action: Stay on page for longer than 1 minute
- Action: Click on the course overview

Lastly, these events are relevant when going from emails to Information management page.

- *View content*: When users view the IM page.
- *Lead*: If the user accesses the course overview.
- *Lead*: If the user stays on the page for longer than 60 seconds.

5.5 Campaign 5: University email retargeting

Like the previous campaign, the objective of the fifth campaign is to attract users through the Tilburg Facebook/Meta account. Additionally, emails should be sent from the email list to direct recipients to the Information Management (IM) Page. The user path is the same as in campaign 4 (see Figure 25).

Several key events should be tracked from these leads:

- View content: Triggered when users visit the IM page via the email link.
- Lead: Recorded if users access the course overview.
- Search: Indicates users who scroll to the end of the page.
- Lead Recorded if users remain on the page for longer than 60 seconds.
- View content: Triggered if users click on any relevant links within the page.



Figure 25 Campaign 5 walkthrough

An important event to track is "View content," which shows when users open the email and click on the ad. Afterwards, they'll be directed to the Information Management page where the Pixel was added. The desired action from the user is to track engagement with the content that turns them into a lead.

5.6 Campaign 6: Professor email retargeting

The goal of the sixth and final campaign is to gather leads from Facebook using Francesco Lelli's Facebook Account. Grabbing names from the email list, they should be sent out to lead to the following web pages (see Figure 26):

1) Article 1-3 Page

- View content: Shows which users land on the article from the email.
- Lead: Shows users that stay on the page for longer than 1 minute.
- Search: Shows users that scrolled to the end of the page.

2) Information Management Page

- View content: When users view the IM page.
- Lead: If the user accesses the course overview.
- Lead: If the user stays on the page for longer than 60 seconds.
- Search: Shows users that scrolled to the end of the page.

An important event that needs to be tracked is View content, which shows when users open the email and click on the ad. This is only possible if the user knows beforehand that we are going to retarget them with these articles. Also, we need to know whether they opt in or out, identify the sender, with what purpose did they visit the site, and then track: unsubscribing, opt outs, opened emails, link clicks. Actions to be tracked:

- Open the email.
- Click on the ad link.

Then, the email would lead to 3 blog articles with different content relevant to the Information Management program. Emails to blog article 1,2,3 on the micro website actions to be tracked:

- Action: Stay on page for longer than 1 minute
- Action: Click on the link to IM page

Next, the following events that are relevant on the campaign 4 would be subjected to examination:

- *View content*: Shows which users land on the article from the email.
- *Lead*: Shows users that stay on the page for longer than 1 minute.
- *Search*: Shows users that scrolled to the end of the page.

Alternatively, the email would directly lead to the Information Management page. Actions to be tracked:

- Action: Stay on page for longer than 1 minute
- Action: Click on the course overview

Lastly, these events are relevant when going from emails to Information management page.

- *View content*: When users view the IM page.
- *Lead*: If the user accesses the course overview.
- *Lead*: If the user stays on the page for longer than 60 seconds.

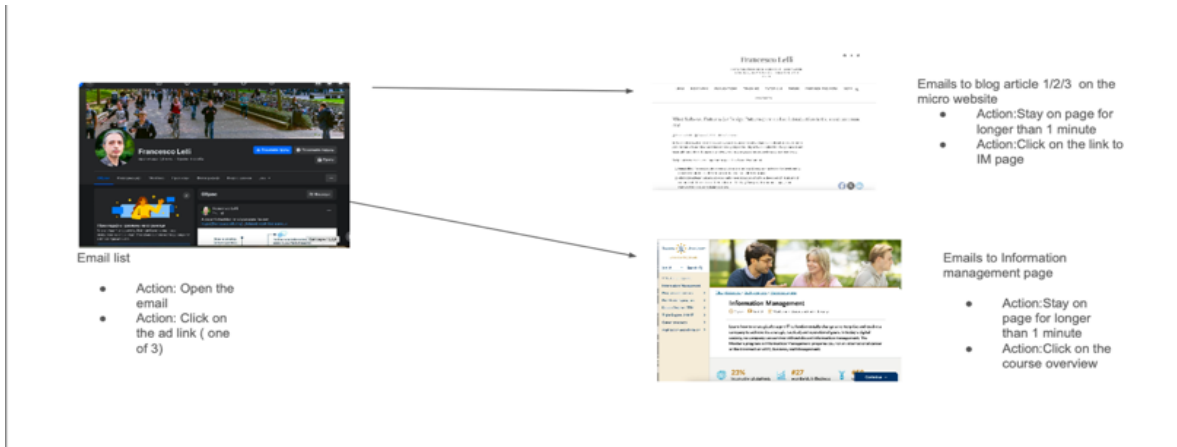


Figure 26 Campaign 6 walkthrough

It is noticeable that this campaign is similar to campaign 4; though, in this case, Francesco Lelli’s account is utilised to generate leads by directing targeted emails to users. These email funnel recipients towards three specific article pages and an Information Management Page. The overall effectiveness of this campaign can be measured by tracking the following engagement metrics:

- Page views
- Visit duration.
- Scrolling activity and depth
- Email interactions (opens, clicks on ads within the emails and opt-out rates).

The overarching aim of this campaign is to deliver content that resonates with a better targeted audience due to the data extracted from the previous campaigns, as well as keeping them informed about the nature of retargeting efforts. Ultimately, these efforts come down to making a more engaged user base to improve all retargeting campaigns that will follow.

6 Evaluation of the campaigns

The findings from the expert interviews showcased answers to the research questions posed in this study. The research questions explored how Meta Pixel can bridge the gap between micro and main websites. The interviews confirmed the potential the Meta Pixel has for this purpose through its tracking and retargeting capabilities. Experts stated that using Meta Pixel can make the user journey from micro sites to the main site seamless and can enhance user engagement and conversion rates. The sub-questions regarding the challenges and metrics were addressed through detailed insights on technical feasibility, privacy concerns, and the key performance indicators that are essential for campaign success measurement. The interviews highlighted the significance of integrating these solutions with current marketing efforts and continuously developing them based on performance data. While the interviews did not evaluate individual campaigns 1-6 since they are quite similar, but reflect on the generic elements of them and the funnel design.

6.1 Evaluation with expert interviews

To validate the campaign design, semi-structured interviews were conducted with experts in digital marketing and web analytics within the university. These interviewees were:

1. Person in charge of online campaigns at Tilburg University,
2. Head of marketing and communications department at Tilburg University,
3. IT functional manager at Tilburg University,
4. Professor that has a micro website.

These interviews were essential for comprehending industry perspectives. Interview process was the following::

1. Participant Selection: Selected experts were chosen based on their extensive experience and success in utilising and implementing Meta Pixel in digital marketing campaigns as well as utilising micro websites. This ensured that the interviewees had a diverse range of experiences and could provide valuable insights into different aspects of the research question.
2. Interview Structure: Interviews allowed for in-depth discussions while providing flexibility to explore unanticipated insights. Core questions focused on the interviewees expert domain, efficacy of Meta Pixel, challenges encountered, and optimization strategies. After, a set of questions was asked related to the digital marketing campaigns designed for this research. With this structure a balance was created between guided and open-ended questions, making sure that experts could share their views and recommendations freely.
3. Data Recording and Transcription: Interviews were recorded with participants' consent and transcribed using AssemblyAI transcribe function. Transcripts were then reviewed to ensure accuracy and reliability. This process ensured that the collected data was precise and reflective of the experts' views.

6.2 Data Analysis and Ethical Considerations

This research identifies the recurring themes and patterns from expert interviews. Qualitative data from said interviews was analysed using inductive coding (Gioia et al., 2013).

Coding Scheme

1. Initial Coding: Transcripts were initially reviewed to identify recurring themes and keywords. This helped to structure the data and highlight the main areas of interest.
2. Thematic Analysis: Themes were categorised into a coding scheme that showcased insights from the expert interviews. This step involved grouping related codes into broader themes, thus making a more organised and insightful analysis.
3. Iterative Refinement: The coding scheme was iteratively refined to ensure that it accurately captured the details of the data. This iterative process ensured that the final coding scheme was comprehensive and reflective of the data's complexity.

Participants were informed about the research purpose, and their consent was obtained for recording and transcription. To protect participants' identities and maintain confidentiality, all data was anonymized. The research followed ethical guidelines to ensure the privacy and rights of all participants were respected. These transcripts were then used for analysis to prevent any potential biases and to uphold the integrity of the research. Full transcripts of the interviews are available upon request.

6.3 Topic 1: Current Use of Meta Pixel and Challenges

Current utilisation of Meta Pixel within digital marketing strategies was discussed with experts in the field, showing both its advantages and the obstacle.

The experts said that Meta Pixel is currently being employed primarily for basic tracking, such as page views and simple conversion actions. They stated that the full potential of Meta Pixel, especially for retargeting and comprehensive tracking across different platforms, remains largely underutilised, this is often attributed to both technical constraints and organisational inaction.

“Currently, we run the basic Meta Pixel on the page view. So Facebook knows if people visit the pages of our website when they have given marketing consent specifically. But now we’re working on the server-side implementation” (Interview with IT Functional Manager at Tilburg University).

While they have started to explore server-side implementations, experts said that there is still more work to be done to fully integrate Meta Pixel's capabilities. Pointing out that the transition from client-side to

server-side tracking could offer more detailed insights and control over data, and as such enhancing the precision of their marketing efforts. The implementation of Meta Pixel is laced with challenges, such as: privacy concerns and technical integration. Restrictions on the extent to which user data can be tracked and utilised is imposed by The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) in Europe. This regulation requires obtaining consent from users, which often results in lower data availability and challenges in maintaining compliance.

“One challenge is protecting the privacy of people who we approach through an online campaign. If they accept the cookies, then whatever they do on our website is being sent back to Meta” (Interview with Employee in Charge of Online Campaigns at Tilburg University).

Technical integration of Meta Pixel across multiple platforms and websites is complex. While being essential, ensuring the same pixel is applied and that the data flows seamlessly across digital touchpoints is challenging.

6.4 Topic 2: Potential of Meta Pixel for Retargeting

While considering Meta Pixels role in bridging the gap between micro and main websites, experts had views on the effectiveness of the proposed strategies.

With an optimistic view about the potential of Meta Pixel for effective retargeting, experts stressed that a well-structured funnel, as proposed, could significantly enhance the tracking of users' journeys from micro websites to the main university website. This would allow for more personalised and targeted marketing efforts, while potentially increasing conversion rates.

“If Meta Pixel gives me a funnel and if you can then track persons going from one step in the funnel to the next, that would be greatly beneficial” (Interview with a Professor that Utilises a Micro Website).

The funnel design proposed was seen as a major advantage by experts. They state that having a clear picture of the student journey would enable them to identify drop-off points and optimise each stage of the funnel to improve overall effectiveness.

From a technical standpoint, it is possible to track users across different websites using Meta Pixel, experts said. They stressed the relevance of implementing the same pixel across all websites to ensure data consistency and an integrated view of user behaviour.

“You would need the same pixel on all those websites. Else it's never the same. Basically, the data packets only Facebook could know if it's not the exact same pixel” (Interview with IT Functional Manager at Tilburg University).

This approach would allow for a more cohesive tracking system, while enabling more accurate measurement of campaign performance and better retargeting strategies.

6.5 Topic 3: Metrics and Success Indicators

In the interviews, we explored the metrics that would be most useful to track and how we would define success within the context of the proposed campaigns.

Experts proposed several key metrics that could be tracked, measuring effectiveness of the campaigns, including page views, conversion rates, and user engagement. They stated the importance of these metrics in providing insights into user behaviour and the performance of the campaigns.

“For the main conversion, if people apply in Studielink and then return to our website, we see it as a very important action. This is crucial for us” (Interview with IT Functional Manager at Tilburg University).

Marketing team would better understand how users interact with the content and identify areas for improvement, while tracking these user metrics. These insights would help in improving the campaigns to enhance their effectiveness and achieve better outcomes.

Success for these campaigns was defined as increased engagement and conversions. Experts agreed that a successful campaign would have a higher number of students following through the funnel to the course overview page, even if the final application completion could not be directly tracked.

“We define success as seeing an increase in students going to the end of the funnel. More students at the course overview page because we can’t track if they actually applied to the university” (Interview with a Professor that Utilises a Micro Website).

6.6 Topic 4: Strategic Recommendations

Strategic recommendations were provided for the implementation of the proposed campaigns, stating that there is a need for integrated efforts and continuous optimization.

In the interviews we saw the importance of integrating the proposed campaigns with existing marketing and organisational processes. They highlighted that a coordinated approach is crucial for the success of these campaigns, and it involves various departments and stakeholders.

“You want to be more proactive in writing blogs and telling the world about the impact we have with our education and research. The success of this funnel is directly connected to how we work” (Interview with a Professor that Utilises a Micro Website).

To ensure consistency and alignment with broader organisational goals, integration with current processes is crucial in enhancing the overall effectiveness of the campaigns.

There was a consensus that the campaigns should be part of a continuous process of improvement and refinement. Regular monitoring and analysis of campaign performance to identify areas for optimization is recommended.

“If you can bring this to the departments more like a standardised work process and inform them about the results, it would be beneficial. Over time, you can see that we have more exposure and better conversion rates” (Interview with a Professor that Utilises a Micro Website).

To ensure sustained success over time, this approach would enable the marketing team to adapt to changing conditions and continuously improve the campaigns.

Validating the proposed solution designs, experts highlighted both the potential and challenges of using Meta Pixel for bridging the gap between micro and main websites. Current use of Meta Pixel, the effectiveness of retargeting, metrics for success, and strategic recommendations were stated, providing valuable insights for the successful implementation of the proposed campaigns. To achieve the desired outcomes in digital marketing for higher education institutions, the findings list the need for integrated efforts, continuous optimization, and adherence to privacy regulations.

6.7 Evaluation with ChatGPT

Building on the foundational evaluation of the campaigns, ChatGPT was used as a tool to further analyse the design, implementation, and outcomes of the proposed marketing strategies. By exploring the campaigns through a conversational and analytical lens, this chapter aims to uncover deeper insights into their strengths, weaknesses, and potential for improvement.

ChatGPT's ability to simulate user behaviour, predict responses, and provide suggestions adds a unique perspective to the evaluation process. This exploration focuses on the campaigns' alignment with the enrollment funnel, their capacity to engage prospective students, and their adherence to ethical data practices. Additionally, we investigate how ChatGPT's insights can inform refinements to the campaigns and inspire innovative strategies for future digital marketing efforts.

Through this collaborative and analytical approach, the chapter connects theoretical concepts with practical applications, enhancing the overall understanding of how advanced technologies like ChatGPT can contribute to campaign optimization and educational marketing success. Series of specific questions were introduced to ChatGPT alongside the campaigns. Such questions are :

1. What are the strong points in the campaigns?
2. What are the weak points in campaigns?
3. What are the possible outcomes?
4. What recommendations would you give for further research?
5. Will these campaigns be possible to realize?

Since the campaigns were not executed, we used this tool to evaluate campaigns that were proposed in Chapter 4. The results were then evaluated to prevent any mistakes made by ChatGPT. Next, we will showcase strengths, weaknesses, possible negative and positive outcomes, and suggestions for further research that were generated by ChatGPT. Finally, a comparison was made between ChatGPT output and expert interviews (see Table 6).

6.7.1 Strengths

1. **Clear Funnel Design:** Each campaign effectively maps onto the stages of the enrollment funnel (awareness, interest, consideration, intent), ensuring a logical and methodical progression. This clarity allows marketers to pinpoint where users drop off and implement targeted interventions. For example, if users abandon the process at the "interest" stage, additional content or CTAs can be deployed to re-engage them. This systematic approach simplifies campaign analysis and fosters consistent optimization.
2. **Integration of Meta Pixel:** By embedding Meta Pixel throughout the campaigns, user actions like page views, clicks, and time spent on pages are meticulously tracked. This data offers real-time insights, enabling the adjustment of targeting criteria or content strategies. For instance, identifying a high bounce rate on the IM page may prompt immediate content enhancements. Moreover, Meta Pixel's ability to build custom and lookalike audiences allows for precision targeting, increasing campaign ROI.
3. **Data-Driven Personalization:** Personalized experiences are central to the campaign design, where data insights are used to serve relevant content to prospective students. For instance, users engaging with a blog about data management could be shown follow-up ads highlighting specialized courses in Information Management. Personalization increases user satisfaction and likelihood of conversion, fostering deeper connections with the institution.
4. **Dual-Sided Approach:** Campaigns 1 and 3 integrate Francesco Lelli's micro website and Tilburg University's main website, bridging gaps between initial discovery and deeper exploration. The micro website attracts users with topic-specific content, while the main website provides comprehensive program details, creating a cohesive user journey that spans multiple platforms.

5. Retargeting Strategy: Campaigns 4 through 6 excel in re-engaging users who have shown prior interest. By employing email retargeting with personalized content, these campaigns address user-specific needs and preferences. For example, users who visited the IM page but did not access the course overview can receive tailored emails with direct links to relevant content, increasing the chances of conversion.

6. Focus on GDPR Compliance: The campaigns prioritize user consent and transparency, ensuring adherence to GDPR regulations. This builds trust with prospective students by respecting their privacy while still collecting valuable data. Clear cookie banners, opt-in mechanisms, and privacy notices reinforce the ethical foundation of the campaigns.

6.7.2 Weaknesses

1. High Dependence on User Consent: GDPR regulations limit the ability to track users who do not explicitly consent to cookies or other tracking methods. As a result, the pool of actionable data may shrink, reducing campaign effectiveness. Addressing this limitation requires investing in first-party data collection and enhancing the value proposition for user consent.

2. Risk of Over-Saturation: Retargeting campaigns can become intrusive if users are repeatedly shown similar ads or contacted too frequently. This overexposure may lead to negative brand perception or ad fatigue. Managing ad frequency caps and diversifying content formats can mitigate this risk.

3. Limited Content Variety: While the campaigns focus heavily on Information Management, other program areas may remain underrepresented. This narrow scope could alienate prospective students interested in different fields. Expanding content topics to cater to broader interests would enhance the campaigns' inclusivity.

4. Reliance on Meta Ecosystem: The campaigns are heavily reliant on Meta platforms like Facebook and Instagram. This dependency limits outreach to users who are not active on these platforms, missing potential leads from other digital ecosystems like LinkedIn or Google Ads.

5. Technical Challenges: Implementing precise tracking across multiple platforms and managing data pipelines require significant technical expertise. Ensuring accurate data collection and avoiding tracking errors may necessitate additional resources and specialized skills.

6.7.3 Possible Positive Outcomes

- **Enhanced Awareness and Engagement:** The campaigns could increase visibility for Tilburg University's programs, attracting a diverse pool of prospective students. Blog posts and social media ads, when combined with tracking data, help create compelling narratives that capture attention.
- **Improved Conversion Rates:** By guiding users through a well-structured funnel, the campaigns are likely to convert more leads into enrolled students. Metrics like time on page, page views, and course description accesses provide indicators of campaign success.
- **Data-Driven Decision Making:** Insights from Meta Pixel tracking allow for data-informed refinements to targeting, content, and engagement strategies, ensuring campaigns evolve with user behaviour trends.

6.7.4 Possible negative outcomes

- **Data Limitations:** GDPR restrictions and low user consent rates could hamper the ability to track and retarget effectively, limiting campaign insights and success rates.
- **Ad Fatigue and Disengagement:** Users may feel overwhelmed or annoyed by repeated retargeting attempts, leading to lower engagement and a potential loss of trust in the institution's brand.
- **Limited Scalability:** High dependence on Meta platforms and technical complexities may reduce the scalability of the campaigns across other regions or demographic groups.

6.7.5 Suggestions for Further Research

1. **Expand Audience Segmentation:** Investigate additional demographic, psychographic, and behavioural segments to understand diverse user preferences. This could include international students, non-traditional learners, or prospective students interested in part-time programs.
2. **A/B Testing:** Conduct experiments to compare the performance of different ad formats, CTA designs, and email content. For instance, testing variations in headline wording or imagery could yield actionable insights to enhance engagement.
3. **Long-Term Impact Assessment:** Extend the analysis period to evaluate how campaigns influence enrollment rates and retention over multiple academic cycles. This approach will highlight the campaigns' sustainability and effectiveness.

4. Diversify Digital Platforms: Explore opportunities on other platforms, such as LinkedIn for professional program targeting or YouTube for video-based storytelling. Expanding beyond Meta would increase reach and diversify the audience.
5. Ethical Data Collection Practices: Study consumer attitudes toward privacy-friendly marketing techniques to better balance personalization with user trust. Develop innovative solutions to collect meaningful data while minimizing privacy concerns.
6. Integration of Advanced Analytics: Use machine learning and predictive analytics to optimize retargeting efforts. For example, algorithms could identify high-value leads based on behaviour patterns, allowing for more targeted outreach.
7. Cultural Sensitivity in Campaigns: Examine how cultural differences impact campaign engagement. Tailoring content to specific cultural contexts could improve appeal and relevance, particularly for international audiences.

Aspect	Expert Interviews	ChatGPT output
Campaign strengths	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Strong alignment with the enrollment funnel (awareness, interest, consideration, intent). ● Integration of Meta Pixel would be helpful for precise tracking and improved retargeting capabilities. ● Recognized the importance of bridging micro and main websites for a seamless user journey. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Clear funnel design that maps directly onto user behavior and stages, allowing for targeted interventions. ● Data-driven personalization using Meta Pixel to tailor content to user preferences. ● Bridging micro and main websites enhances user experience and increases conversion rates.
Campaign weaknesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Challenges in obtaining user consent due to GDPR, impacting data collection and tracking accuracy. ● Technical complexity in implementing server-side tracking and integrating Meta Pixel across platforms. ● Limited focus on diverse content and program areas beyond Information Management. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● High dependence on user consent under GDPR reduces the pool of actionable data. ● Over-saturation risk in retargeting campaigns could lead to ad fatigue and reduced engagement. ● Reliance on Meta platforms restricts outreach to users outside those ecosystems.
Metrics for success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Metrics include page views, engagement duration, conversions on Studielink, and progression through the enrollment funnel. ● Success defined as increased student engagement and progression to the course overview page. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Proposed metrics align with expert suggestions, focusing on engagement rates, time on page, and conversion tracking. ● Success framed as higher funnel completion rates and increased enrollment activity.
Recommendations for improvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Integration of campaigns with broader organizational processes for consistency. ● Continuous optimization based on performance data and evolving privacy regulations. ● Inclusion of more diverse content formats (e.g., video, reels) for better engagement. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Expanding to additional digital platforms (e.g., LinkedIn, Google Ads) for greater reach. ● Conducting A/B testing and longitudinal studies to refine strategies and validate effectiveness. ● Incorporating machine learning and predictive analytics for improved targeting and personalization.

Table 6 Expert interview and ChatGPT output comparison

7 Discussion and Conclusion

In this chapter, the findings of the research are meticulously analyzed and contextualized in relation to existing theories and literature. A critical evaluation sheds light on how this study contributes to the academic discourse on digital marketing, specifically focusing on the integration of micro and main websites using Meta Pixel. Furthermore, this chapter addresses the inherent limitations encountered during the research process, such as technological constraints, privacy considerations, and methodological challenges. These limitations are discussed to provide transparency and to frame the scope of the study's contributions. Finally, this chapter offers actionable recommendations for future research, aiming to guide subsequent inquiries into more comprehensive strategies for digital marketing in higher education and beyond. By reflecting on the successes and constraints of this research, this chapter underscores its relevance and sets the stage for advancing this field of study.

7.1 Findings vs. Literature

Considering the existing body of knowledge on the use of Meta Pixel in digital marketing strategies, the findings of this research align with the literature. The said review identified key benefits of Meta Pixel like enhanced tracking capabilities, improved retargeting strategies, and the ability to create more personalised marketing experiences (Rippé, Weisfeld-Spolter, Yurova, Dubinsky, & Hale, 2020). The expert interviews confirmed these advantages, putting an emphasis on Meta Pixel's potential to bridge the gap between micro and main websites by tracking user interactions and creating a seamless user journey.

The theoretical benefits of Meta Pixel for retargeting were supported by the experts who participated in the interviews. They highlighted its effectiveness in tracking user journeys and enhancing conversion rates. The technical feasibility of implementing Meta Pixel across multiple platforms, as seen in interviews, supports the theoretical assumption concerning its versatility and scalability. This aligns with the literature.

However, the findings revealed practical challenges which were not covered in the literature. Privacy concerns, particularly GDPR, turned out to be a significant obstacle to the full utilisation of Meta Pixel. While the literature acknowledges the importance of compliance with privacy regulations, the insights provided by interviews showcased the practical difficulties in obtaining user consent and ensuring data protection.

The need for continuous adaptation and integration with existing processes highlights the dynamic nature of digital marketing. The literature supports the notion that digital marketing strategies must be adaptive and continuously bettered to stay effective. The recommendations for regular monitoring and improvements by experts who were interviewed, and ChatGPT, reflect this theoretical understanding. It provides practical guidance for the implementation of Meta Pixel-based campaigns.

7.2 Limitations of the Research

This research was based on a limited number of expert interviews, and the proposed marketing campaigns were not executed, while relying on theoretical analysis and expert opinions rather than empirical data. The focus on GDPR might limit the generalizability of the findings to other regulatory environments. While the findings provide valuable knowledge of Meta Pixel for bridging the gap between micro and main websites, these limitations should be addressed.

7.2.1 Sample size and scope

This research was conducted based on a limited number of expert interviews. While the findings are valuable, a bigger and more diverse sample would offer a more comprehensive understanding of challenges associated with Meta Pixel implementation.

7.2.2 Non-execution of the campaigns

The proposed campaigns were not executed and therefore the findings are based on theoretical analysis and expert opinions rather than empirical data. This was due to lack of funding and time needed to execute successfully and correctly said campaigns. In doing so, it would have provided further evidence of the effectiveness of the proposed solutions.

7.2.3 Focus on GDPR

While this research focused more on compliance with GDPR, future research could benefit from exploring other regulatory environments. It could provide a better examination of privacy regulations across different regions as well as their effect on Meta Pixel implementation.

7.2.4 Technological Limitations

Detailed technological challenges and solutions were not deeply explored, with the study focusing on the high-level feasibility of implementing Meta Pixel. Specific hurdles like server-side tracking integration and GDPR compliance were acknowledged but not addressed in detail, leaving room for further technical investigation.

7.3 Conclusion

This research dived into the potential of Meta Pixel to bridge the gap between micro and main websites, aiming to enhance digital marketing strategies in higher education institutions. With a comprehensive

literature review, designing of theoretical marketing campaigns, and in-depth interviews with industry experts, as well as evaluation of the campaigns with ChatGPT, this research showcased valuable insights into the practical application, benefits, and challenges of utilising Meta Pixel. The research identified several key findings(see Table 7).

The research questions were addressed through a systematic exploration of Meta Pixel's application in digital marketing. The study demonstrated how digital marketing strategies could leverage user tracking and retargeting technologies, particularly Meta Pixel, to optimize campaigns across platforms by bridging the gap between micro and main websites. A detailed examination of Meta Pixel's technical aspects revealed its capabilities in tracking user actions and enhancing ad targeting while complying with GDPR regulations, such as using Meta Consent Mode and server-side tracking to ensure data privacy. Conversion tracking with Meta Pixel was extensively explored, showcasing its ability to measure key actions like page views, form submissions, and purchases, which are critical for campaign evaluation. The concept of the enrollment funnel was central to the research, illustrating how Meta Pixel could guide prospective students through stages of awareness, consideration, and conversion, with retargeting strategies tailored to address drop-offs and enhance engagement. The effectiveness of these strategies was validated through expert interviews, which provided industry-aligned insights into real-world applications. Furthermore, the integration of micro and main websites was highlighted as a pivotal strategy, using Meta Pixel to create a cohesive user journey that drives conversions. The study adopted mixed research methods, combining a literature review with expert interviews and data-driven campaign evaluations, emphasizing the importance of metrics such as engagement rates and conversion rates. By addressing these research questions, the findings underscore the transformative role of Meta Pixel in creating targeted, GDPR-compliant, and effective digital marketing campaigns for higher education institutions.

Key Findings			
Current Utilization and challenges	Effectiveness of retargeting	Metrics for Success	Strategic Recommendations
Meta Pixel is currently employed for basic tracking and conversion actions. Full potential for advanced retargeting and comprehensive tracking remains underutilised. This is because of technical and organisational constraints, as well as privacy concerns such as those in GDPR.	Experts that participated in the interviews confirmed theoretical benefits of Meta Pixel for effective retargeting. They highlighted that a well-structured funnel which was proposed, enabled by Meta Pixel, can significantly enhance user engagement and conversion rates by tracking users' journeys from micro websites to the main university website.	By validating theoretical insights through practical expert opinions, this study contributes to the existing body of knowledge, while highlighting the alignment between the theoretical benefits of Meta Pixel and practical applications and revealing challenges that need to be addressed. The findings provide actionable recommendations for higher education institutions that seek to enhance their digital marketing strategies while utilising Meta Pixel.	Factors critical for the success of Meta Pixel-based campaigns are integration with existing marketing processes and continuous optimization. Experts highlighted the importance of a coordinated approach involving various departments, stakeholders, regular monitoring, and iterative improvements.

Table 7 Key Findings

7.4 Recommendations for Future Research

With a focus on implementing and testing the proposed marketing campaigns, future research should provide empirical data on their effectiveness. Expanding the sample size and thus including a broader range of experts from different industries and regions would be beneficial. Another recommendation is conducting a comparative study examining the impact of different privacy regulations on Meta Pixel utilisation, in-depth technical analyses, and longitudinal studies tracking campaign performance over time.

Future research could explore several areas, considering the findings and limitations of this research.

1. Empirical Testing of the Campaigns: to provide empirical data and practical insight, the campaigns should be tested in real life.
2. Broader Sample of Experts: expand the sample size to include more experts from different industries and regions, thus providing a diverse set of perspectives.

3. Regulatory Comparisons: comparative research studies that explore different privacy regulations and their effects on Meta Pixel utilisation.
4. In-Depth Technical Analysis: include detailed technical analysis that covers server-side tracking and integration with various digital platforms.

For Tilburg University, the recommendations extend beyond merely implementing the proposed campaigns. To take this research to the next level, the university should prioritize empirical testing by launching pilot campaigns based on the proposed designs. These campaigns should be executed in real-world scenarios, capturing key metrics such as user engagement, conversion rates, and the effectiveness of retargeting strategies. Starting with smaller-scale experiments to test individual campaign components and gradually scaling up based on initial results. To ensure robustness, the university should utilize A/B testing to compare different campaign strategies and configurations, which would allow for data-driven refinements.

Moreover, the inclusion of longitudinal studies to track user engagement and conversions over time is critical. By monitoring campaign performance over several months, insights can be gathered on trends and long-term effectiveness. Collaborating with industry experts and expanding the sample size to include diverse user demographics would provide a broader perspective and increase the generalizability of the findings. Additionally, in-depth technical analyses, including the use of server-side tracking and advanced data analytics tools, should be conducted to explore how different configurations of Meta Pixel and other tracking technologies can optimize campaign outcomes.

For future researchers, building on this work would require a detailed experimental framework. This includes defining control and experimental groups to isolate the impact of Meta Pixel on specific user behaviors. Data collection should be structured to comply with GDPR and other privacy regulations while maintaining high granularity to allow nuanced analyses. Furthermore, comparing campaigns across different regulatory environments and industries could uncover best practices for ethical and effective digital marketing strategies. Such efforts would provide Tilburg University with actionable insights and a replicable model to maximize their digital marketing initiatives in higher education.

7.5 Final Thoughts

The research done shows a significant potential for utilisation of Meta Pixel in the context of retargeting as well as bridging the gap between micro and main websites. To fully realise the benefits, practical challenges must be addressed, especially those concerning privacy and technical integration. By doing so, Meta Pixel can be used to create personalised and effective digital marketing strategies, inversely attracting, and retaining more potential students.

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Appendices

Appendix 1 Interview questions

Participants were informed about the research purpose, and their consent was obtained for recording and transcription. To protect participants' identities and maintain confidentiality, all data was anonymized. The research followed ethical guidelines to ensure the privacy and rights of all participants were respected. These transcripts were then used for analysis to prevent any potential biases and to uphold the integrity of the research. Full transcripts of the interviews are available upon request.

	Interviewee	Duration	Date	In person
1	Person in charge of online campaigns at Tilburg University	38:06	4.7.2024.	No
2	Head of marketing and communications department at Tilburg University	35:19	30.5.2024.	Yes
3	IT functional manager at Tilburg University	1:06:45	3.6.2024	No
4	Professor that has a micro website	52:25	3.6.2024.	No

Interview questions for the person in charge of online campaigns at Tilburg University:

1. What are the primary goals and responsibilities associated with your position?
2. How do you integrate digital marketing strategies with Tilburg University's overall marketing goals?
3. Can you describe the process and challenges of implementing Meta pixels on Tilburg University's websites? How are they currently used?
4. What are your thoughts on the strategies and goals of campaigns presented?
5. Do you think the tracking metrics proposed (View Content, Lead, Search) are appropriate for measuring user engagement and conversion? Why or why not?
6. What potential challenges do you foresee in implementing these campaigns, and how might they be addressed?
7. How would you improve the proposed campaigns to better achieve their goals?
8. What metrics do you currently use to track user engagement and the effectiveness of your digital marketing campaigns? Can you provide examples of successful digital marketing campaigns that have significantly increased student engagement or conversion rates?
9. How do you use the data collected from Meta pixels to optimize your marketing strategies?

10. How does Tilburg University ensure compliance with data privacy regulations such as GDPR when using Meta pixels? What measures are in place to protect user data and maintain transparency with website visitors?
11. How do you allocate your budget for digital marketing campaigns, particularly for initiatives involving Meta pixels and retargeting?
12. Can you discuss any budget constraints or considerations that impact the planning and execution of your digital marketing campaigns?
13. How do you measure the return on investment (ROI) for digital marketing campaigns involving Meta pixels and retargeting?
14. Based on your experience, what future improvements do you see for Tilburg University's digital marketing strategy?
15. What are your recommendations for optimizing digital marketing campaigns to enhance student engagement and conversion rates from a strategic perspective?
16. Is there anything else you would like to add about the role of digital marketing and Meta pixels at Tilburg University?

Interview questions for the head of marketing and communications department at Tilburg University:

1. Are you familiar with the concept of meta pixels and how they can be used in digital marketing? Do you utilize meta pixels currently?
2. Are you familiar with these retargeting strategies yourself?
3. Do you typically implement meta pixels for the purpose of retargeting?
4. What strategies have you found most effective in engaging prospective students through digital marketing?
5. How would you measure success in these engagement strategies?
6. How do you integrate meta retargeting with other marketing channels like SEO or social media or LinkedIn? How would you integrate them?
7. How do you allocate your digital marketing budget across different platforms and strategies? Do you have that information?
8. What percentage of your budget is typically allocated to retargeting campaigns?
9. How would you create custom audiences for targeting purposes?
10. How do you personalize content for different segments of your target audiences?
11. What role does data from meta pixels play in content personalization?
12. What key performance indicators do they use to evaluate the success of retargeting campaigns?
13. How do you track and report these metrics?

14. And what are the most significant challenges you face in implementing and optimizing Facebook retargeting campaigns?
15. How would you address them? Who would you, who would you present these challenges to?
16. How do you think the proposed campaign aligns with the current marketing goals?
17. Do you think it will match well with the current marketing goals that you have?
18. What are your initial impressions of the campaigns? Are there any aspects that need improving or that seem promising or concerning to you? Do you see any faults that you would point out?
19. What do you perceive as main challenges or inhibitors in implementing these digital retargeting campaigns using meta pixels?
20. Are there any technical or organizational barriers you foresee that might hinder the successful deployment of these strategies?
21. If there are any more challenges, how do you think they should be mitigated?
22. Are there any existing tools or platforms you use that could complement or conflict with the use of meta pixels?
23. Based on your experience, which target audiences do you think would benefit most from retargeting campaigns described?
24. Are there any specific demographics or behavioural segments you believe we should focus on?
25. What types of online campaigns have historically performed well in your department, and why do you think they were successful?
26. Do you have any additional insights or any additional data that you think would be necessary to optimize the proposed campaign?
27. What is your long-term vision for digital marketing at Tilburg University, and how do you see digital remarketing fitting into that vision?
28. Do you have any other remarks or feedback on the proposed campaigns that we haven't covered? Or do you have anything that you would like to share that you think would be relevant to the success of the initiative?
29. How do you find any latest trends, any trends on digital marketing? Do you do Internet searches? Do you go to conferences, perhaps?

Interview questions for IT functional manager at Tilburg University:

1. Can you share your background and role as an IT functional manager at Tilburg University?
2. And how does your role intersect with digital marketing and retargeting efforts at university?
3. Can you describe the process of implementing meta pixels on Tilburg University's main website?
4. What are some challenges that you have encountered while doing this?
5. How have you bridged these challenges so far? How have you addressed them so far?
6. What are your thoughts on suggested campaigns? Do you think they are feasible?

7. Do you have any suggestions on how to overcome these issues?
8. What do you think about the proposed tracking metrics, the view content and the search and the leads that I already mentioned?
9. What potential technical challenges do you foresee in implementation of these campaigns and how might they be addressed?
10. How do you ensure data accuracy and reliability when using meta pixels for tracking user engagement?
11. How does Tilburg University handle the data privacy and compliance issues related to meta pixels?
12. What measures are in place to ensure that the use of meta pixels complies with the GDPR and other relevant regulations?
13. What tools and metrics do you currently use to track user engagement on Tilburg University websites?
14. How do you measure the effectiveness of digital marketing campaigns in terms of user engagement and conversions?
15. Based on your experience, what improvements do you see in the future with technical implementation of meta pixels at Tilburg University?
16. What are your recommendations for optimizing digital marketing campaigns from a technical perspective to enhance student engagement and conversion rates as well?
17. Do you have any long-term visions for digital marketing at Tilburg University?
18. Are there any future trends or technologies in digital marketing that you're excited about? And if so, how do you stay up to date with current trends?
19. Is there anything else that you would like to add about the technical aspects of implementing and managing digital marketing campaigns and the campaign that I showed as well?
20. What are your final thoughts on leveraging meta pixels and digital campaigns for academic purposes from a technical standpoint?

Interview questions for a professor that has a micro website:

1. What motivated you to create a micro website? I mean, especially because you're involved with information management in your background.
2. Can you tell me what are the main goals of your micro website?
3. Do you post any articles on specific topics?
4. Do you see yourself doing content like that in the future?
5. Who is the target audience for your micro website and how do you engage with them?
6. Have you ever used digital marketing campaigns on your micro websites, or have you ever encountered them in general?

7. How effective do you think meta pixel would be for retargeting users from your micro website to the main university website?
8. What metrics do they currently use to track your engagement on your micro website? If you do so.
9. Can you share any example of successful strategy that you use so far to retain visitors, if you ever, if you ever use such strategies?
10. What challenges do you see in implementing and optimizing these retargeting campaigns on your micro website?
11. How do you think these challenges should be addressed effectively?
12. What are your initial impressions of the campaign? Is there any aspect that you find promising? Do you see any challenges that could be created in the future?
13. Based on your experience, what improvements or adjustments would you suggest making in these campaigns so as to make them more effective?
14. How do you think that the proposed retargeting campaign aligns with your academic and outreach goals, like on your micro website?
15. Do you see any barriers like either technical or organizational that you predicted that would hinder the success of the campaigns?
16. How do you think that these proposed campaigns compare to your current efforts to engage students through your micro website?
17. Are there any existing tools or platforms that you use that could complement or conflict with the use of meta pixels?
18. In what ways might this approach substitute or enhance what you're currently doing?
19. Do you have any other comments or suggestions or anything that you want to add about the campaigns?
20. What future improvements do you envision for your micro website?
21. Would you be open for collaboration between Tilburg University and your micro website in this form of creating a campaign?
22. Any final thoughts on leveraging digital campaigns and meta pixels for academic purposes, for educational institutions? Do you have any comments on that or anything to add?

Appendix 2 AI Usage

For this research, two AI tools were used, Chat GPT and Assembly AI. Assembly AI was used as a tool to transcribe expert interviews to make the whole process efficient. Chat GPT was used broadly in an indirect way.

Throughout, sentences were reviewed by Chat GPT to ensure fluency, grammar, and general sentence structure. With the help of search engines, literature and expert opinions, Chat GPT helped construct the overall process of the research. Within the literature review, it was utilized to find relevant references, as well as help summarize some articles to further help efficiency. No output from Chat GPT was copied in this research. In the methodology chapter, this tool was used to help further develop a strategy and it served as creative assistance. After transcribing the interviews, these tools were used to further summarize the interviews to stay on timeline. The discussion and conclusion were supported by AI as a suggestion for sentence structure, grammar, and overall improvement. ChatGpt was also used as a tool to evaluate campaigns. All 6 campaigns were fed into it and a series of questions was asked related to the topic so it would give out strengths, weaknesses, possible outcomes etc. Examples of questions asked:

1. What are the strong points in the campaigns?
2. What are the weak points in campaigns?
3. What are the possible outcomes?
4. What recommendations would you give for further research?
5. Will these campaigns be possible to realize?

Appendix 3 Campaign design

In this appendix, the researcher provided a view of the slides used to showcase the campaign design to interviewees.

Campaign design

Aleksandra Đurić

Conversion funnel

To further understand how we can utilize meta pixels with the objective of retargeting potential student, a funnel would be implemented that shows the user cycle to our end goal.

In different stages of the funnel, users show awareness, interest, consideration and intent.

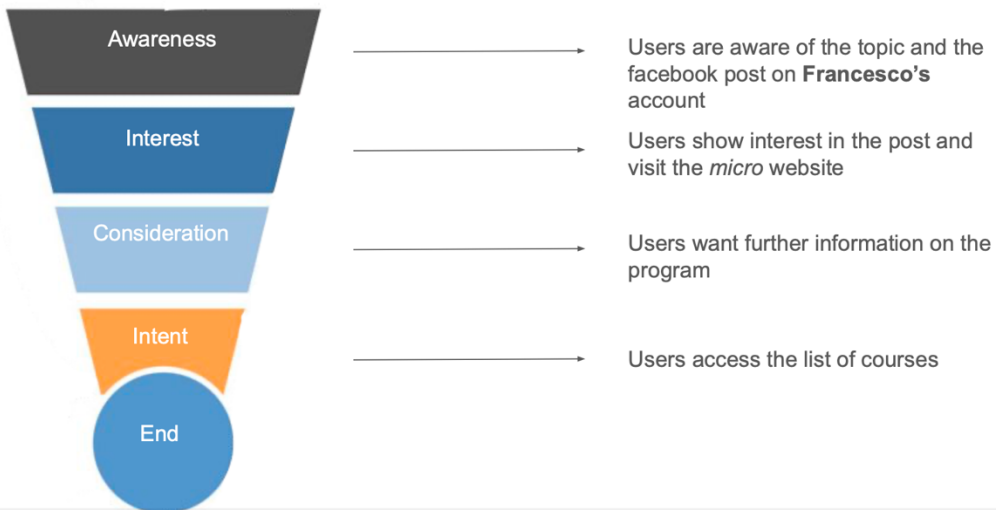
Awareness stage would be when the user becomes aware of the topic we would like them to consider. This would be a facebook post about a relevant topic.

Interest stage would in this case be when the topic interest the user and they further their interest on the micro website.

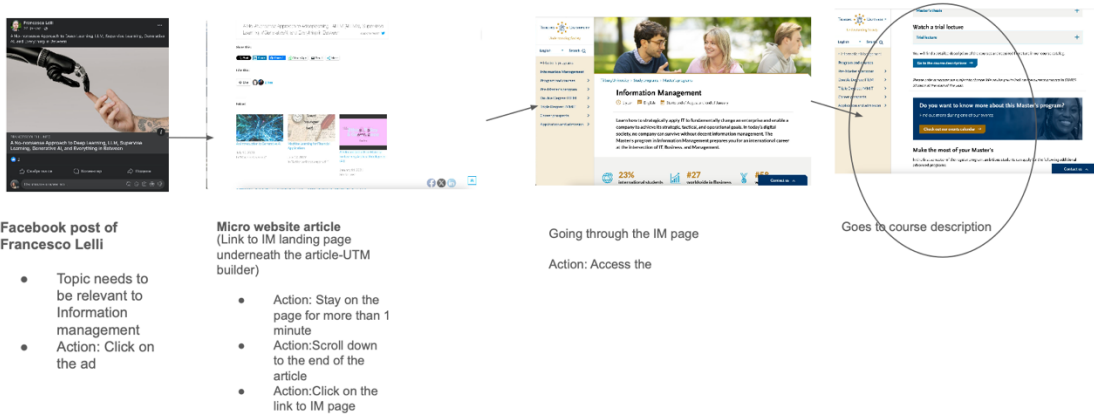
Consideration stage would be, after showing interest in the article we provided and we see the user going to the relevant page. In this case the relevant page is the Information management page.

Intent stage is where we see the users interact on the page and access the course overview page. In this case that would show valid intent and that the user is in fact looking into the program.

Campaign 1: Facebook Ad to Micro website and IM page



Campaign 1: Facebook ad to micro website and IM page



Campaign 1: Facebook ad to micro website and IM page

First, an ad should be posted from Francesco Lelli's Facebook account. The topic should be relevant to Information management. Here we will track *View content* event, that will show us how many users clicked on the ad posted on this Facebook account. On the micro website we will see who follows the link by utilizing UTM builder.

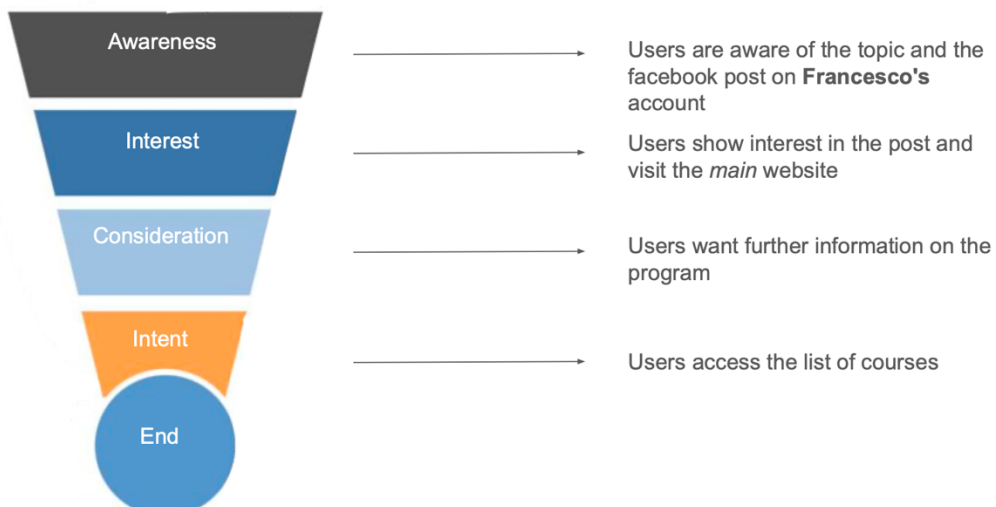
Secondly, events that should be tracked on the micro website are:

- *View content*, that shows which users land on the article from the ad;
- *Lead*, shows users that stay on the page for longer than 1 minute
- *Search*, shows users that scrolled to the end of the page
- *View content*, if the user clicks on the IM page

Lastly, events that are relevant on the IM website:

- *View content*, when users view the IM page
- *Lead*, if the user accesses the course overview

Campaign 2: Facebook ad to IM website



Campaign 2: Facebook ad to IM website



Campaign 2: Facebook ad to IM website

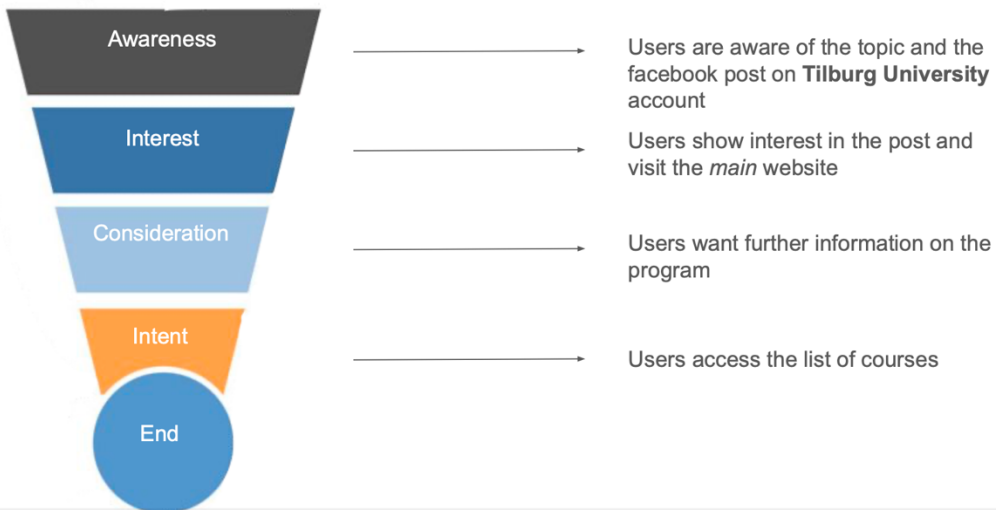
First, an ad should be posted from Francesco Lelli's Facebook account. The topic should be relevant to Information management.

Here we will track *View content* event, that will show us how many users clicked on the ad posted on this Facebook account and that lead them to IM page.

Lastly, events that are relevant on the IM website:

- *View content*, when users view the IM page
- *Lead*, if the user accesses the course overview
- *Lead*, if the user stays on the page for longer than 60 seconds

Campaign 3: University Facebook ad to IM website



Campaign 3: University Facebook ad to IM website



Facebook post on Tilburg University page

- Topic: relevant to IM
- Action: Click on the ad

Going through the IM page

- Action: stay on the page for longer than 1 minute
- Action: access the course overview

Goes to course description

Campaign 3: University Facebook ad to IM website

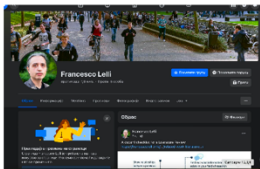
First, an ad should be posted from Tilburg University Facebook account. The topic should be relevant to Information management.

Here we will track *View content* event, that will show us how many users clicked on the ad posted on this Facebook account and that lead them to IM page.

Next, events that are relevant on the IM website:

- *View content*, when users view the IM page
- *Lead*, if the user accesses the course overview
- *Lead*, if the user stays on the page for longer than 60 seconds

Campaign 4: Professor Email retargeting campaign



Email list

- Action: Open the email
- Action: Click on the ad link (one of 3)



Emails to blog article 1/2/3 on the micro website

- Action: Stay on page for longer than 1 minute
- Action: Click on the link to IM page



Emails to Information management page

- Action: Stay on page for longer than 1 minute
- Action: Click on the course overview

Campaign 4: Professor Email retargeting campaign

Gather leads from Facebook using the Francesco Lellis account. From the email list, emails should be sent out that lead to the following webpages:

- | | |
|---|--|
| <p>1) Article 1 Page</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>View content</i>: Shows which users land on the article from the email. • <i>Lead</i>: Shows users that stay on the page for longer than 1 minute. • <i>Search</i>: Shows users that scrolled to the end of the page. • <i>View content</i>: If the user clicks on the IM page. <p>2) Article 2 Page</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>View content</i>: Shows which users land on the article from the email. • <i>Lead</i>: Shows users that stay on the page for longer than 1 minute. • <i>Search</i>: Shows users that scrolled to the end of the page. • <i>View content</i>: If the user clicks on the IM page. | <p>3) Article 3 Page</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>View content</i>: Shows which users land on the article from the email. • <i>Lead</i>: Shows users that stay on the page for longer than 1 minute. • <i>Search</i>: Shows users that scrolled to the end of the page. • <i>View content</i>: If the user clicks on the IM page. <p>4) Information Management Page</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>View content</i>: When users view the IM page. • <i>Lead</i>: If the user accesses the course overview. • <i>Lead</i>: If the user stays on the page for longer than 60 seconds. • <i>Search</i>: Shows users that scrolled to the end of the page. |
|---|--|

An event that needs to be tracked is *View content*, which shows when users open the email and click on the ad. Only possible if the user knows beforehand that we are going to retarget them with these articles. (Opt in or out)

Campaign 5: Tilburg University Email retargeting campaign



Email list

- Action: Open the email
- Action: Click on the ad link (one of 3)



Emails to Information management page

- Action: Stay on page for longer than 1 minute
- Action: Click on the course overview

Campaign 5: Tilburg University Email retargeting campaign

Acquire leads from Facebook using the Tilburg University account. From the email list, emails should be sent out that lead to the Information Management Page with these leads:

- *View content*: When users view the IM page from the email
- *Lead*: If the user accesses the course overview
- *Search*: Shows users that scrolled to the end of the page.
- *Lead*: If the user stays on the page for longer than 60 seconds.
- *View content*: If the user clicks on any relevant links within the page.

An event that needs to be tracked is *View content*, which shows when users open the email and click on the ad.

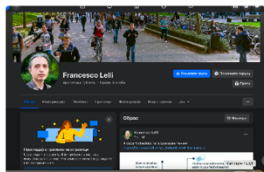
Campaign 6: Professor Email retargeting campaign to article

Gather leads from Facebook using the Francesco Lellis account. From the email list, emails should be sent out that lead to the following webpages:

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1) Article 1 Page | 3) Article 3 Page |
| ● <i>View content</i> : Shows which users land on the article from the email. | ● <i>View content</i> : Shows which users land on the article from the email. |
| ● <i>Lead</i> : Shows users that stay on the page for longer than 1 minute. | ● <i>Lead</i> : Shows users that stay on the page for longer than 1 minute. |
| ● <i>Search</i> : Shows users that scrolled to the end of the page. | ● <i>Search</i> : Shows users that scrolled to the end of the page. |
| 2) Article 2 Page | 4) Information Management Page |
| ● <i>View content</i> : Shows which users land on the article from the email. | ● <i>View content</i> : When users view the IM page. |
| ● <i>Lead</i> : Shows users that stay on the page for longer than 1 minute. | ● <i>Lead</i> : If the user accesses the course overview. |
| ● <i>Search</i> : Shows users that scrolled to the end of the page. | ● <i>Lead</i> : If the user stays on the page for longer than 60 seconds. |
| | ● <i>Search</i> : Shows users that scrolled to the end of the page. |

An event that needs to be tracked is *View content*, which shows when users open the email and click on the ad
Only possible if the user knows beforehand that we are going to retarget them with these articles. (Opt in or out)

Campaign 6: Professor Email retargeting campaign to article



Email list

- Action: Open the email
- Action: Click on the ad link (one of 3)



Emails to blog article 1/2/3 on the micro website

- Action: Stay on page for longer than 1 minute
- Action: Click on the link to IM page



Emails to Information management page

- Action: Stay on page for longer than 1 minute
- Action: Click on the course overview

Campaign 6: Professor Email retargeting campaign to article

Gather leads from Facebook using the Francesco Lelli account. From the email list, emails should be sent out that lead to the following webpages:

- 1) Article 1 Page
 - *View content*: Shows which users land on the article from the email.
 - *Lead*: Shows users that stay on the page for longer than 1 minute.
 - *Search*: Shows users that scrolled to the end of the page.
- 2) Article 2 Page
 - *View content*: Shows which users land on the article from the email.
 - *Lead*: Shows users that stay on the page for longer than 1 minute.
 - *Search*: Shows users that scrolled to the end of the page.
- 3) Article 3 Page
 - *View content*: Shows which users land on the article from the email.
 - *Lead*: Shows users that stay on the page for longer than 1 minute.
 - *Search*: Shows users that scrolled to the end of the page.
- 4) Information Management Page
 - *View content*: When users view the IM page.
 - *Lead*: If the user accesses the course overview.
 - *Lead*: If the user stays on the page for longer than 60 seconds.
 - *Search*: Shows users that scrolled to the end of the page.

An event that needs to be tracked is *View content*, which shows when users open the email and click on the ad
Only possible if the user knows beforehand that we are going to retarget them with these articles. (Opt in or out)

Summaries 1,2,3

Campaign 1

- This campaign starts with an ad on Information Management posted from Francesco Lelli's Facebook account, tracking how many users click the ad using View Content. A UTM builder monitors link clicks to the micro website. On the micro website, we track users landing on the page (View Content), staying over one minute (Lead), scrolling to the end (Search), and clicking on the IM page. On the Information Management (IM) page, we track views (View Content) and course overview access (Lead). The goal is to measure engagement, see interest for Information Management topics and complete the funnel.

Campaign 2

- This campaign starts with an ad on Information Management posted from Francesco Lelli's Facebook account. We track View Content to see how many users click the ad and are led to the Information Management (IM) page. On the IM page, we monitor users viewing the page (View Content), accessing the course overview (Lead), and staying on the page for more than 60 seconds (Lead). The aim is to see if landing on the micro website entices student more to complete the funnel, or not..

Campaign 3

- This campaign starts with an ad on Information Management posted from Tilburg University's Facebook account. We track View Content to see how many users click the ad and are led to the Information Management (IM) page. On the IM page, we monitor users viewing the page (View Content), accessing the course overview (Lead), and staying on the page for more than 60 seconds (Lead). The goal is to compare if the account that posts the Facebook ad makes a difference in conversions later on..

Summaries 4,5,6

Campaign 4

- This campaign gathers leads from Facebook using Francesco Lellis's account and sends targeted emails. The emails direct users to three article pages and an Information Management (IM) page. Engagement is tracked on the article pages by monitoring page views, time spent, scrolling behavior, and clicks to the IM page. On the IM page, we track views, course overview access, time spent, and scrolling behavior. Email interactions, including opens, ad clicks, and opt-outs, are also monitored, ensuring users are aware of retargeting. The purpose is to engage with potential students in order for them to later come back and finish the funnel.

Campaign 5

- This campaign gathers leads from Facebook using Tilburg University's account and sends targeted emails. The emails direct users to the Information Management (IM) page. Engagement is tracked by monitoring page views, course overview access, time spent on the page, and scrolling behavior. Additionally, interactions such as users clicking on relevant links within the IM page are tracked. Email interactions, including opens and ad clicks, are also monitored to measure engagement. The goal is to acquire and engage leads with relevant information for retargeting.

Campaign 6

- This campaign uses Francesco Lellis's Facebook account to gather leads and send targeted emails. The emails direct users to three article pages and an Information Management (IM) page. Engagement is tracked by monitoring page views, time spent, and scrolling behavior on both the articles and the IM page. Email interactions, including opens, ad clicks, and opt-outs, are also tracked, with users informed about retargeting. Similar to campaign 4, but not with the aim to complete the funnel, rather have potential student circle back to the IM relevant topics.

Goals

The main goals of all campaigns proposed is to understand user behavior, improve targeting, enhance retargeting efforts and ultimately optimize the content strategy relevant for the prospecting students that showed up on the page. Implementing Meta Pixel tracking in this campaign strategy is expected to push visitors on both websites further down the enrollment funnel presented earlier

The expected outcomes of these campaigns include a better understanding of which content resonates most with users and how effectively different Facebook accounts can drive traffic to Information Management resources. By analyzing detailed tracking data, the campaigns will identify the most engaging content and user behaviors that indicate strong interest in Information Management throughout the funnel. This will help future marketing strategies, enhance content targeting, and improve the overall effectiveness of lead generation efforts.