

## Highlighted PhD profile - Doga Istanbuluoglu

Posted on Tuesday 14th February 2012

I'm second year PhD researcher in the Birmingham Business School, Marketing Department, with my research being supervised by Prof. Isabelle Szmigin and Dr. Sheena Leek.

As an international student, I believe the University of Birmingham is great place to study. Birmingham is one of the most exciting cities in the UK with a great variety of cultures, opportunities and attractions. It is a 24 hour city and there is always something for everyone. UoB is also one of the most exciting universities in the UK; it offers not only a wide range of educational opportunities, but also sport facilities, variety of student clubs and societies and a lovely campus.



### Research Project:

#### Helping to understand how we behave online

In recent years, online Social Networking Sites have proved to be remarkably popular. Facebook in particular claims to have more than 500 million active users, and it is the second most visited site on the Internet. Right now, millions of people from all around the world use Facebook to interact with each other. As they do so, they engage in more and more activities related to the purchase and consumption of products. They update their status messages with positive or negative comments about brands, share photos of themselves using products, create groups to protest against unethical corporate activities and seek service support or advice on discussion pages. This novel and underexplored area of how today's consumers behave on Social Networking Sites needs a careful investigation to understand how our online lives will be shaped in the future.

My research is particularly trying to understand how and why consumers complain on Facebook by exploring the themes and features of online complaining behaviours. When consumers are unhappy, they take public action on Facebook through their status updates, companies' official pages and user-created groups. Until a few years ago, damage of consumer's negative comments was limited to their social circle of friends and family, but now, negative feedback can be read online by millions of people. Answering the crucial question as to how companies and organisations can and should react to these negative comments in order to preserve their business will only be possible if we carefully try to understand these behaviours.