Economic Environment

The Impact of Ecommerce on Alcohol Trading

It is wine that has best harnessed the selling power of the online retail environment. Last year as much as 3.6% of all wine value sales stemmed from ecommerce outlets, a figure that translates into nearly US$8bn of sales. The rapid expansion of wine sales online has even threatened the viability of independent “bricks and mortar” wine stores.

Comment: According to industry sources, Ecommerce in South Africa is less than 2%.

Natural / Physical Resources

Trade should stop bottling it on carbon emissions

Bottling and packaging play by far the largest role in the green house gas (GHG) emissions generated by the production and distribution of a wine, contributing 42% of the total carbon footprint, delivering a clear ‘innovation challenge’ for the trade if it is to fully join the march towards greater sustainability. The continued reliance on heavy glass containers to bottle and ship wine produces over double the GHG emissions delivered by growing and harvesting the grapes (20%), vinification (18%) and distribution by land, sea and flight transport (20%).

Technology

AI Poised to Ruin Internet Using “Massive Tsunami” of Fake News

New tools can recreate a human’s face and or writer’s voice to frightening levels of accuracy. Among the most concerning of these is the deceivingly-adorably-named GROVER a fake news-writing bot that people have used the tool to make blogs and even entire subreddits illustrate the problems AI-written news can pose to the world. Do not let the adorable blue namesake puppet on the first page of the white paper fool you — this thing is freaky.

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A New Measurement Tool for Vineyard Irrigation Management

A promising new sensor tool to measure grapevine water status to efficiently manage vineyard irrigation is being beta tested this year in California vineyards and if trials are successful, a commercial sensor product will be introduced to the in 2020. The sensor is a micro-tensiometer that is installed into the trunk of a grapevine to provide continuous measurement of stem water potential with data automatically transmitted to the grower to evaluate for irrigation decisions

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