

Chapter 17

E-Business in Education: The Case of Delta State University

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ABSTRACT

This chapter is anchored on previous research to examine e-business in education, with emphasis on the Delta State University Abraka, Delta State, Nigeria. The study focused on the concept of e-business, e-business in education, and explored the various educational routines, such as e-learning, tele-learning, research, and administration. The study examined classification of e-business, e-business tools, such as e-mail, Websites, message boards, online catalogs, and telephone and e-business activities in education. It also focused on e-payment of fees, students' registration, checking of results, and online application as part of e-business routines in administration. Finally, the study looked at the barriers to e-business adoption in education using diffusion theory of innovation. A conclusion and recommendations are then made.

INTRODUCTION

Universities and other tertiary institutions all over the world are already developing new technologies for educational and administrative support, with the emergence of virtual learning environments (Ford, 2008). Thus according to Buller (2008) there is no doubt that advances in information and communication technologies have been huge over

the last few years and that they continue to accelerate. Information and communication technologies (ICTs) have become an essential part of our lives. In the past decade, the use of ICT throughout society really took off with the emergence of the Internet. The Internet started mainly as a network for researchers that gave the opportunity to share information and ideas. An important step in the commercialization of the Internet was the an-

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nouncement of the World Wide Web (WWW) in 1991 by Tim Berners-Lee of CERN (Kalakota & Whinston, 1996; & Amamuah-Mensah, 2009).

In today's contemporary society, there is hardly any form of transaction either in business (i.e. buying, selling, financial transaction) or education (i.e. administration, registration, purchase of form, checking of result, examination, teaching and learning) that is done without ICT. This use of ICT in almost all aspects of human transaction occasioned by the World Wide Web (www) has introduced the concept of e-business, e-commerce, e-learning, e-registration, e-transaction, e-banking, which of course are covered by e-business. One of the factors that have promoted e-business is the Internet. According to Azumah, Koh and Maguire (2006). The Internet has gone from being a communication tool, used by a small sector of professional society (academics and military) to something that has permeated much of the business, corporate, and consumer world. Some of the largest and most technological and information consuming organizations have seen this as an opportunity to create a totally new market for their product and services. Furthermore, in the 21st century and beyond the Internet is one area of technological development that has and will continue to revolutionize modern organizations and the communication world like nothing before. It is also a medium of collaboration and interaction between individuals, their computers and many business and non-business organizations without regard for geographical location.

From the above, it is clear that the emergence of Internet is a catalyst to the development of e-business (Azumah, Koh and Maguire, 2006). In Nigeria and particularly higher Institutions, e-business is now the alternative and convenient way of conducting all types of business. Akin-tola, Akinyede and Agbonifo (2011) note that Nigeria being the giant of Africa is not only in numerical strength but also an economic power and intellectualism. According to *business times* cited in Akintola, Akinyede and Agbonifo (2011),

there were just a small number of dial-up e-mail providers in Nigeria before the year 1998, today, well over 400 ISPs have been licensed. The present ISPs and often users with online advertising chances as well as Internet banking security and very small aperture terminal (VSAT) services which help to promote e-learning, e-registration and distance learning programs. The use of mobile phones is also another means of promoting e-business education within and out of the Universities and other tertiary institutions. Many youths and adults who are versatile with the mobile phones are getting Internet connections from their WAP-enabled mobile phones, PDA's, smart phones and from their personal computers (PCs). All these education activities carried out online make education e-service oriented, the objective of this study therefore is to examine e-business in education, with focused on Delta State University, Abraka Nigeria.

CONCEPT OF E-BUSINESS

The concept of e-business followed the emergence of the Internet by the U.S. Government, which was initially used by technical audience of government agencies, academic researchers and scientists. By the 1970s, innovations like electronic fund transfer (ETF) fund routed electronically from one organization to another began to emerge, though it was limited to large corporations then. Although in the 60s electronic data interchange (EDI) which is the act of transferring documents electronically was introduced. This also followed the introduction of inter-organizational system (IOS) which includes travel reservation systems and stock trading was introduced. By the 1990s the Internet was commercialized and users flocked to participate in the form of dot-coms, or Internet start-ups. Innovative applications ranging from online direct sales to e-learning experiences also evolved. This led most organizations to have a Web site, while others that are large have comprehensive portals. Since the

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