

Chapter 33

E-Business: Concepts and Context with Illustrative Examples of E-Business and E-Commerce in Education

Raid Al Dabbagh
Mosul University, Iraq

ABSTRACT

This chapter outlines the important of e-business in today's world and how one thinks it affects decision making. In today's world e-business is extremely important for many reasons, some of which are due to the fact that it can speed up the whole process of ordering. This means that the lead time can be decreased because the ordering of products can be done much more quickly because the Internet is a fast running wide area network. This chapter shows how better procurement and supply chains make sales teams more effective. The ability to outsource functions such as, accounting, remote access to systems, linking management teams in different locations, being able to locate the lowest cost supplier improve customer services, improved collection of customer information for databases and more effective management of remote manufacturing sites.

INTRODUCTION

The daily growth of the internet and e-commerce has changed the way of marketing and selling products and services. As a result of development in electronic information resources and the evolution of the “digital age” product sellers and information service providers face many new challenges. Internet is changing the way corporations conduct business with their consumers who are

increasingly expecting higher services, becoming time saved, and wanting more convenience. In addition e-service quality is an essential strategy to gain success, according to the results of previous literatures, probably more important than a low price for online companies. Since one of the main duties of the internet as a communication channel is how to manage service quality, which holds a significant importance to customer satisfaction, the purpose of this research is to gain a better understanding of the impact of web site quality factors on customer satisfaction.

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On the above idea, we explore the theoretical foundations of value creation in e-business, *Electronic Business*, commonly referred to as “*eBusiness*” or “*e-Business*”, may be defined as the utilization of information and communication technologies (ICT) in support of all the activities of business. Commerce constitutes the exchange of products and services between businesses, groups and individuals and hence can be seen as one of the essential activities of any business. Hence, electronic commerce or eCommerce focuses on the use of ICT to enable the external activities and relationships of the business with individuals, groups and other businesses.

Electronic business methods enable companies to link their internal and external data processing systems more efficiently and flexibly, to work more closely with suppliers and partners, and to better satisfy the needs and expectations of their customers.

Information Technology and Business

When computer and communications technologies are combined, the result is information technology, or “infotech”. Information Technology (IT) is a general term that describes any technology that helps to produce, manipulate, store, communicate, and/or disseminate information. Presumably, when speaking of Information Technology (IT) as a whole, it is noted that the use of computers and information are associated.

This has been contributed to make all business process available to all beneficiaries possible. As such, The United States Census Bureau defines e-business as “any process that a business organization conducts over a computer mediated network. Business organizations include any for profit, governmental, non-profit entity. Their processes include production-, customer-, and internal or management-focused business processes.” In a shorter broader sense, e-business is the process of conducting business electronically or over

the internet. Electronic mail is e-mail, electronic commerce is e-commerce, and following this formula, electronic business is e-business. Every time business is conducted over the internet, e-business takes place and as the internet grows, so grows e-business.

Considerations in Defining E-Business and E-Commerce

As discussed in the sections above, contemporary definitions of e-business and e-commerce are problematic. They create confusions and hinder advancements in the discipline. Porter (2001) and Tapscott (2001) presented two different views on impacts of the Internet on business. Porter (2001) suggested that organizations should integrate the application of the Internet to their traditional business process while Tapscott (2001) advocated changes to business process based on applications of the Internet. Porter focused on existing organizations that use technologies to enhance business processes while Tapscott was concerned about new organizations that use technologies to create value in new ways. They provided valuable insight on impacts of the Internet from different perspectives. However, under contemporary definitions of e-business and e-commerce, all organizations using the Internet to perform similar functions are considered the same irrespective of their strategies of Internet usage. Porter and Tapscott would be considered as discussing e-business (or e-commerce) in the same context and confusion might arise from the apparently contradictory conclusions.

Creating another set of definitions using the perception-based approach does not help to improve the situation. Individual perceptions cannot provide a solid ground in explaining the rationale of the definitions. A more rigorous approach should be adopted in defining ebusiness and e-commerce. Definitions should be derived through logical reasoning rather than individual perceptions.

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