



CRITICAL THEMES IN ELECTRONIC COMMERCE RESEARCH: A META-ANALYSIS

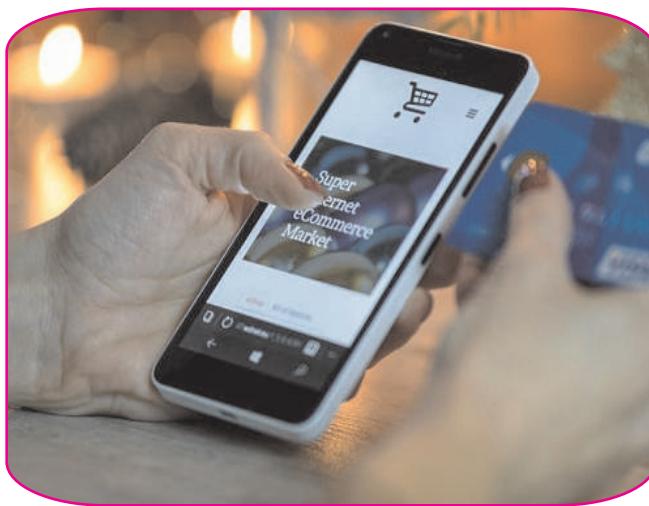
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ABSTRACT

This paper profiles the E-Commerce research of the previous 7 years. Drawing on an example of 582 articles in both scholarly and expert diaries, we highlight the real areas and investigate the most remarkable subjects in every territory. Our investigation finds that the interdisciplinary idea of E-Commerce inquire about has prompted incredible differences in the themes investigated. Also, E-Commerce specialists have been assorted in their utilization of both research methodologies and strategies. Our examination outlines a few ranges that remain underserved, highlighting various research open doors for the IS people group as E-Commerce keeps on advancing

KEYWORDS: E-Commerce; e-Business , meta-analysis, research survey.



INTRODUCTION

There has been substantial media and trade press attention accorded to electronic commerce in the past 7 years. Concurrent with this interest has been a heavy emphasis on the electronic commerce phenomenon in academic research. Whereas the level of media focus on electronic commerce seems to rise and fall with the dot.com boom and crash around the turn of the millennium, academic research has been less cyclical. Indeed, in our opinion, the steady growth in ecommerce literature more accurately tracks the actual evolution of the ecommerce phenomenon.

Given the sheer volume of ecommerce research publications, it seemed obvious that a surveying of the literature, and an interpretation of this literature a` la meta-analysis, was in order. To this aim, we were especially interested in the evolution of the discourse over the last 7 years, that is, the underlying themes, domains, technologies, results and contributions of ecommerce research. Moreover, it is our goal that this kind of survey will enable us to identify trends, gaps or weaknesses in the research that will guide future investigation into this important phenomenon.

If we assume that professional journals are closer to the current needs of practitioners, then it may be of interest to track the divergences between these two groups to identify lags and oversights by the academic community.

TECHNOLOGY ARCHITECTURE:-

While IS journals are not as technology focused as engineering-oriented journals such as ACM Transactions or IEEE Transactions, purely

technology-based topics do appear on occasion at the intersection of ecommerce and technology. There is an active stream of literature concerned with site design, including tools for developing and measuring the ease and usefulness of transactional websites (Krishnan 2001; Aladwani 2002). However, much of this literature blends into the marketing-oriented research and has a stronger interest in user acceptance than purely technical design matters.

Agents :-

The design and application of electronic agents to search and negotiate electronic transactions has also commanded attention from IS scholars. Some research is positioned at a strategic level, discussing the effects of agents on the changing nature of business models. It is curious that most research in agents is predominantly design oriented. It is feasible that there would be a great interest in empirical or experimental research, leaving many opportunities for researchers interested in the actual application of electronic agents in specific contexts.

Auctions :-

Research on ecommerce auctions spans three broad themes: the optimal design of online auctions, the behavior of bidders and the analytical design of auction mechanisms. The analytical design of auction mechanisms has a long tradition in economics, and this tendency is also reflected in the IS discipline. For example, authors have developed analytical models that characterize the revenue generation processes (Bapna et al., 2002), as well as the relationship between Internet auctions and real auctions. There is also a strong stream of empirical work in the field, predominantly concerned with consumer bidding behavior on Internet auction sites.

CRM:-

Whereas the use of CRM Systems has spawned a large body of literature on its own, several articles solely concerned with the role of CRM in ecommerce are present in our sample. This literature generally confirms the idea that ecommerce can be improved by giving customers the impression that they have special customer status through CRM systems.

Education :-

A smaller number of articles profile a variety of ecommerce education initiatives in several regions, including the United States. In addition to the managerial issues, the pedagogical challenges of on-line educational delivery are also of interest.

E-Services :-

e-Services are broadly defined as the provision of services that are substantially differentiated from traditional retailing, such as professional services like legal, medical or accounting services, entertainment or education.

Government, policy and regulation:-

Examples of research on government and policy focus on issues of privacy, taxation and the provision of public services through ecommerce channels. The literature on privacy is copious. Zwick and Dholakia (2001) offer a review of the regulatory philosophies underlying the debates on privacy in ecommerce in the European Union and the United States, providing an understanding of the cultural differences that underpin this continually evolving area.

Mobile commerce :-

Mobile commerce has seen a significant expansion in the volume of research in the last 4 years. This stream of literature can be broadly divided into general management and strategy topics, as well as design and user adoption issues. For an early review of applications such as mobile inventory management, product location and search, and proactive service management

Security:-

The security literature can also be classified into two broad streams. The first examines policy measures that can be deployed to improve e-business security (Rees et al., 2003). This is consistent with the overall security literature emphasizing appropriate managerial policy to address security related issues

Supply chain:-

The supply chain literature with an ecommerce focus replicates the common theme that increased visibility in electronically integrated procurement practices confers operational and strategic benefits

Social issues:-

There is a varied stream of research that explores the socioeconomic consequences of ecommerce. For example, Malone and Laubacher (1998) argue that the rise of outsourcing and telecommuting will lead to a proliferation of freelance and temporary workers. This trend points to the devolution of large, permanent corporations into flexible, temporary networks of individuals. Brynjolfsson et al. (2003) suggest that the increased product variety of on-line bookstores has enhanced consumer welfare substantially in the year of their study-2000.

Geographic focus :-

The vast majority of research on electronic commerce is implicitly and explicitly based on North American content. However, ecommerce has been gaining an international and global focus in recent years. A good number of articles in our sample contained research that was explicitly based on regional status and environments outside of North America. Of these regions, Europe was the most highly represented, with the United Kingdom and Scandinavian countries registering most frequently.

CONCLUSION :-

Despite the recent demise of the dot.com boom, ecommerce is thriving. All the recent statistics from North America and Europe indicate that ecommerce is experiencing stable, upward growth, providing numerous benefits for firms, customers and society at large. It was heartening to find that ecommerce researchers have been diverse in their use of research approaches and methods. And while the scope of ecommerce research has been broad, the good news is that many research opportunities are emerging in the coming evolution of ecommerce, where firms and consumers continue to innovate and adopt ecommerce in surprisingly novel ways.

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