Electronic commerce has become a billion dollar industry and an essential component for any organization interested in achieving or maintaining a competitive advantage in the 21st century. Although much has been written about the technological issues of electronic commerce and the business side of establishing an Internet presence, there is a need for discussion on how electronic commerce and the associated technologies are affecting organizations practices internally and externally, their strategic plans, and their relationships with customers. It is essential for organizations to understand and optimize the human component of successful electronic commerce endeavors. From hiring the right people to design and run an electronic business, to capturing and retaining a loyal online customer following, organizations must know how to maximize their organizational human and knowledge resources.

How electronic commerce (e-commerce) affects organizations is a complex and multifaceted question. In the early stages of e-commerce implementation in organizations, the impacts are mostly internal such as staffing decisions dealing with the overall culture of the business in how to integrate e-commerce into the existing organizational structure, coping with the issue of privacy and security, and how to protect the assets and rights of the organizations.

As the integration of e-commerce becomes more mature in organizations, the firm leadership will face additional challenges such as dealing with the decisions of e-commerce at the strategic level, or adjusting the strategic plan to include e-commerce aspect of the organization to make sure that e-commerce strategy is aligned with the firm’s strategic posture. In this ever increasingly competitive business environment, for many organizations incorporating e-commerce planning and practices is no longer a choice but rather a strategically vital decision to either simply market a brick-and-mortar company through e-commerce or to start new business opportunities for the organization. As organizations begin their e-commerce adventure or simply seek to maintain an existing electronic enterprise, some of the most important and on-going challenges are the determination about which technology to utilize and how to measure returns on investments. These decisions are complicated by the challenges of the human elements of this technology use both internally and externally.

The new Journal of Electronic Commerce in Organizations’ mission is to provide comprehensive coverage and understanding of the social, cultural, organizational, human, cognitive and ethical impacts of electronic commerce technologies and advances on organizations throughout the world. Specifically, the articles published in this innovative new journal will examine the impacts of electronic commerce on consumer behavior, organizational behavior, development and management. Furthermore, this journal seeks to broaden the overall body of knowledge about the human aspects of electronic commerce technologies.

The articles in this inaugural issue address the most pertinent facets of electronic commerce in modern organizations. Our first article written by Professor Chuan-Feng Chiu and Timothy Shih of Tamkang University and Hui-huang Hsu of Chinese Culture University entitled,
“An Agent-Based Multi-Issue Negotiation System” describes an agent-based system used as a negotiation agent system to help buyers make decisions about purchases. The system described in this article utilizes a multi-attribute utility theory. Agent technologies can benefit consumers who want to find the best deals for Internet purchases and organizations can utilize agent technology in setting up their Internet Web sites.

The second article by Pauline Ratnasingam of University of Vermont and Paul Pavlou of the University of Southern California entitled, “Technology Trust in Internet-Based Interorganizational Electronic Commerce” contributes an excellent discussion about the role that trust of technology plays in B2B e-commerce. Professors Ratnasingam and Pavlou present a discussion of technology trust and relationship trust as they relate to business value. This article proposes a theoretical model, which measures and evaluates the effect of technology trust on organizational performance. The results presented in this article validate the importance of technology trust on organizational success in B2B e-commerce.

The third article by Victor Perotti, Patricia Sorce and Stanley Widrick of Rochester Institute of Technology entitled, “An Exploratory Study of Operant Conditioning Theory as a Predictor of Online Product Selection” discusses an essential component of electronic commerce: the consumer. Professors Perotti, Sorce and Widrick present an intriguing article that applies operant conditioning theory to the question of what products and services consumers will shop for and buy online. The results presented in this important work suggest that online shoppers are more likely to shop for items online that provide them positive experiences rather than helping them alleviate negative experiences. These results lay the groundwork for future work on negative and positive reinforcement as a predictor of Internet shopping behavior.

“Financial Impact of E-Business Initiatives” written by Luvai Motiwalla, M. Riaz Khan of the University of Massachusetts-Lowell, examines the financial impact electronic commerce has on organizations. The research presented examines the financial performance of 73 publicly held United States corporations in order to determine whether or not electronic business initiatives have been financially beneficial to these organizations. The results suggest that companies involved in electronic business initiatives did perform better in some areas than those businesses not involved in electronic business.

The articles presented in this inaugural issue of the Journal of Electronic Commerce in Organizations highlight the diverse impact e-commerce can have on organizations. These articles present the most current research into the influence electronic commerce is having on organizations and address the essential components of electronic commerce: technology, the consumer, business partners, trust and the financial impact of electronic business. It is our hope that this new journal will benefit business people seeking to optimize their electronic commerce investments by understanding how e-business affects their organization internally and externally. Academics and researchers will benefit from the discussions of the current theory and best practices in e-commerce endeavors. This new journal will benefit all those who participate in electronic business endeavors as investors, designers, researchers and consumers.

Mehdi Khosrow-Pour, D.B.A.
Editor-in-Chief
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