In the time of ceaseless technological reform, e-commerce has materialized as an indispensable element for contemporary educators, researchers, and professionals. In order to remain the vanguard of the information era, a source of the latest research regarding e-commerce, e-business, and e-government has emerged to provide the most recent discoveries, advancements, and implementations. Utilizing and Managing Commerce and Services Online, part of the Advances in Electronic Commerce Series, uncovers the rewarding prospects associated with the adaptation of e-technologies for business, academic circles, and global organizations, while exposing the most effective strategies in employing them worldwide.

Chapter I, Managing Online Customer Service Operations, by David Barnes, Royal Holloway, University of London (UK) and Matthew Hinton, Open University Business School (UK), investigates the implications of moving customer service operations online. Many organizations believe that e-business can provide opportunities to improve customer service operations by enabling them to get closer to the customer and enhance the customer contact experience. However, use of the Internet fundamentally changes the nature of a customer’s interaction with an organization, as the customer interacts with a computer screen rather than a human being. The online customer service encounter within the business processes of ordering and delivering was investigated in eight companies. It was concluded that an enhanced experience was only likely if the emotional aspects of customer service are considered alongside the functional.

Chapter II, Firm Value Effects of Web Site Redesign, by Raquel Benbunan-Fich, Baruch College, CUNY (USA) and Eliezer M. Fich, Drexel University (USA) uses the event study methodology on a sample of Web site redesigns from 1995 to 1999 to investigate the types of commercial organizations that announce changes to their Web presence and to study whether such redesign initiatives affect the value of pub-
licly traded firms. Our findings indicate that, on average, refining a Web presence does not produce significant firm valuation adjustments. However, cross-sectional analyses reveal that Web site redesign increases firm value in service companies.

Chapter III, Jurisdiction in B2C E-Commerce Dispute within the European Union, by Ong Chin Eang, Monash University (Malaysia), discusses how e-commerce jurisdiction has always been an issue because e-commerce exists in a borderless environment, and this e-environment diminishes the importance of physical location and locality. The current jurisdictions by the European Commission (EC) within the European Union (EU), The E-Commerce Directive—Country of Origin and Rome II are still in the drafting process. These legislations are not the total solution. This paper reviews the issue of current jurisdiction, whether there is a need to call for a single jurisdiction, and what complications arise when seeking redress in this borderless e-environment. This paper also raises important issues that relate to the gaps and loopholes that exist in Country of Origin and Rome II.

Chapter IV, Failures of B2C Retailing: A Services Industry View, by Anil Pandya, Northeastern Illinois University (USA) and Nikhilesh Dholakia, University of Rhode Island (USA), discusses how conceptualizing B2C businesses as an innovative class of technology-infused services yield insights into the factors that may lead to success or failure of such businesses. Drawing from services’ marketing literature and recent thinking on Internet service metrics, this paper presents a framework for analyzing B2C businesses.

Chapter V, Inducing Online Trust in E-Commerce: Empirical Investigations on Web Design Factors, by Ye Diana Wang, George Mason University (USA) and Henry H. Emurian, University of Maryland, Baltimore County (UMBC) (USA), describes how two studies were undertaken to investigate interface design features that might impact customers’ trust in an e-commerce vendor’s Web site. In a first quantitative survey study, experienced Internet users rated 14 features of a synthetic e-commerce interface for their trust-inducing effectiveness. Users’ reports from interviews generally supported the importance of socially rich Web sites in promoting online trust, and they deepened our understanding of the functionalities and suitability of various communication media for the adoption of virtual re-embedding strategies. The complementary outcomes from both quantitative and qualitative sources of information are anticipated to contribute to future applications and research in e-commerce interface design considerations affecting online trust.

Chapter VI, Public Perception—A Newspaper Medium Perspective: E-Commerce in Australian Manufacturing (Revisited), by Jing Gao, University of South Australia (Australia), describes how major Australian newspapers were examined for public discussions about e-commerce in manufacturing industries. The political-legal, economic, social, and technological (PEST) framework was used as a lens to subdivide issues, problems, and opportunities identified in the academic e-commerce literature. This lens was then used to examine 103 newspaper articles identified using the keywords “Australian manufacturing” and “e-commerce” in what was believed to be all the major Australian newspapers. It was found that some
articles merely report vendors’ promises of potential cost savings while overlooking the need for investment in technology, training, and maintenance costs, while other discussions focused on “users as victims” issues such as security and privacy. In-depth issues such as reliability, communication protocols, bandwidth availability, and integration problems were overlooked. In particular, the problem of business strategies was ignored.

Chapter VII, Netrepreneur Simulation—The Development of Realism in Virtual E-Entrepreneurship Learning, by Salim Jiwa, The Manchester Metropolitan University (UK) and Dawn Lavelle and Arjun Rose, University of the Arts London (UK), reviews the pedagogic requirements of entrepreneurial education within one specific context of e-commerce. Netrepreneur simulates the initial start-up phases of e-business creation and, through the modeling and electronic simulation of the e-commerce environment, it aims to create a holistic understanding of the entrepreneurial process as well as encouraging participants to learn by doing. This paper documents the underpinning objectives of design conceptualization and the integration of the real and virtual worlds within system development. The latter section of the paper reports on the user survey responses to Netrepreneur, which demonstrates a strong sense of presence experienced by participants. The sense of presence experienced by learners in a virtual environment can be considered to be a key feature in ensuring the efficacy of learning and the following transfer of knowledge and skills from the learning context to the “real world.”

Chapter VIII, Conceptualizing Failed B2C Dotcoms as Innovation Failures, by Anil M. Pandya, Northeastern Illinois University (USA) and Nikhilesh Dholakia, University of Rhode Island (USA), covers how the 1998 to 2003 “dotcom bust,” had many Internet-based Business-to-Consumer (B2C) companies failing to fulfill their initial and alluring promises. Concepts derived from the investigation of product and services innovation failures can provide a valuable strategic market framework to understand why so many dotcom B2C ventures crashed so fast. Early B2C ventures represented an entirely new class of technology-driven services. These B2C dotcoms sought to inform, promote, sell, and deliver consumer items in radically unfamiliar ways. In doing so, many B2C firms did not follow time-tested business precepts. In particular, the failed B2C firms did not realize they were marketing innovative services. Our framework uses the continuum of need-solution context in conjunction with the notion that seller/buyer perceptions about the scope of innovations are not necessarily concordant. Matched or “concordant” perceptions lead to success, and mismatched or “discordant” perceptions often breed failures. Using short cases and historical data, this chapter illustrates the explanatory power of the framework.

Chapter IX, Implementation of Privacy Protection Policies: An Empirical Perspective, by Noushin Ashrafi and Jean-Pierre Kuilboer, University of Massachusetts (USA), attempts to examine privacy issues in the context of fair information practices and how they are perceived and practiced by the top 500 interactive companies in the United States. Our results confirm that most companies ask for consumer trust
by claiming benevolence. However, they fall short when it comes to costly implementations of comprehensive privacy protection policies.

**Chapter X, Design Considerations in the Development of an Online Course in E-Business,** by Wing Lam, U21 Global (Singapore), describes how U21 Global (U21G), an e-university formed by a consortium of traditional brick-and-mortar universities, approached the design of MBA650, its online course in e-business. MBA650 is a core course in U21G’s MBA program. Gagne’s theory, a pedagogical framework taken from the literature, is used to frame and explain the rationale for the design of MBA650. Gagne’s theory identifies a number of instructional events including the identification of learning objectives, presentation of content, provision of learner guidance, feedback, and performance assessment. An evaluation of MBA650 based on student feedback is presented. Finally, several key design considerations in the development of e-business courses are discussed, such as including attention-to-learning outcomes, the student audience, syllabus, key messages, theory versus practice, team working, and the use of case studies.

**Chapter XI, E-Recruiting System Development and Architecture,** by In Lee, Western Illinois University (USA), proposes six categories of e-recruiting sources and presents the architecture of the next-generation, holistic e-recruiting system. This architecture consists of eight distinct yet interrelated subsystems: (1) applicant tracking management subsystem; (2) job requisition management subsystem; (3) job agent management subsystem; (4) prescreening/self-assessment management subsystem; (5) e-recruiting performance analysis subsystem; (6) candidate relationship management subsystem; (7) workflow management subsystem; and (8) database management subsystem.

**Chapter XII, Lessons Learned from EDI and Its Impact on Institutional Trust in Electronic Marketplaces,** by Pauline Ratnasingam, Central Missouri State University (USA), David Gefen, Drexel University (USA) and Paul A. Pavlou, University of California, Riverside (USA), examines the role of institutional trust, which has been viewed as a key facilitator of electronic marketplaces (Pavlou, Tan, & Gefen, 2003). In doing so, we draw upon the principles of research on traditional EDI via Value-Added Networks to develop a set of theory-driven, institutional trust-building, facilitating conditions, namely IT connectivity, standards, security and, uniform product descriptions. This study has implications for (1) the nature and role of institutional trust in e-marketplaces, (2) the strategic design of trust-building mechanisms in e-marketplaces, and (3) an extension of the literature on institutional trust.

**Chapter XIII, Digital Watermarking and Its Impact on Intellectual Property Limitation for the Digital Age,** by Tino Jahnke and Juergen Seitz, University of Cooperative Education Heidenheim (Germany), gives an overview about the basic ideas of watermarking, application for e-business, problems, and limitations. Digital media like audio and video images and other multimedia documents can be protected against copyright infringements with invisible, integrated patterns. Such methods based on steganography and digital watermarking techniques. Most watermarks are inserted as a plain-bit or adjusted digital signal using a key-based embedding
algorithm. The embedded information is hidden (in low-value bits or least significant bits of picture pixels, frequency, or other value domains) and linked inseparably with the source data structure. For the optimal watermarking application a trade-off between competing criteria like robustness, nonperceptibility, nondetectability, and security have to be made. Most watermarking algorithms are not resistant against all attacks, and even friendly attacks like file and data modifications can destroy the watermark very easily.

**Chapter XIV, Framework for User Perception of Effective E-Tail Web Sites**, by Sang M. Lee, University of Nebraska–Lincoln (USA), Pairin Katerattanakul, Western Michigan University (USA) and Soongoo Hong, Dong-A University (Korea), presents the development of an empirically validated framework for users’ perception of effective Web sites for retail e-commerce (Etail). In particular, we attempted to answer the main research questions: What are the major designs determining Etail Web site effectiveness? How do these designs support Web users’ objectives in using the Web? Based on the concept of “fitness for use” and the reasons that consumers use the Web, we proposed that “effective designs for Etail Web sites should support Web customers for their: information search, pleasure, and business transactions.” Then, data were collected from a survey on 427 potential Web customers. An exploratory analysis was conducted to refine the proposed framework and to provide structure of the constructs in the framework to be validated by a following confirmatory analysis.

**Chapter XV, E-Commerce Education in China: Driving Forces, Status, and Strategies**, by Xianfeng Zhang and Qi Li, Xi’an Jiaotong University (China) and Zhangxi Lin, Texas Tech University (USA), investigates whether the education system in China well accords with the market demand and the status of e-commerce programs in China, so as to seek for the strategies for China to cope with the challenges from the global e-commerce empowered by fast updated information technologies. First, we construct a four-layer conceptual model to describe the relevant factors influencing e-commerce and e-commerce education. We then present the status of China’s e-commerce education in different educational categories. Although we find that current problems in China’s e-commerce education can be resorted in quantity and quality aspects, it is generally on the right track. Finally, we propose several main strategies for promoting the development of e-commerce education, in which the education system reformation is of the top priority and the government will play a critical role.

The prevalence and magnitude of e-commerce continues to accelerate, and its developing importance in the information age persists. The utilization of e-technologies has secured itself as a front-runner for adoption by all competitive modern organizations, researchers, and educators. The foremost contributors to information technology will find that the *Advanced Topics in Electronic Commerce* series provides the mechanism essential for adaptation and insight into the growing e-commerce field. As an exemplary compilation of the most recently discovered tools associated with e-commerce, e-business, and e-government, *Utilizing and Managing Commerce and
*Services Online* serves as a pertinent resource for the most up-to-date examination of e-technologies and their rapidly intensifying function in the technological era of today.

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## References