Preface

With the advancement of the Internet, World Wide Web based transactions have opened up immense possibilities for businesses and consumers thereby expanding the popularity of electronic commerce technologies. It is crucial that academicians, researchers, practitioners, and professionals alike have a strong resource to provide ideas and information on the utilization of these new technologies and what possibilities e-commerce offers.

*Web Technologies for Commerce and Services Online* presents a wide range of the most innovative research in the adoption of e-commerce, e-business, and e-government. This publication provides a comprehensive coverage of social, cultural, organizational, human, and cognitive impacts of the electronic commerce technologies and advances in organizations around the world. Extensive research studies are incorporated covering topics ranging from mobile commerce to virtual enterprises, business-to-business applications, Web services, and enterprise methodologies.

Chapter I, entitled “SME B2B E-Commerce and Customer Loyalty Revisited,” by Assion Lawson-Body and Timothy P. O’Keefe, University of North Dakota (USA) examines the effect of Web tools on the inter-organizational relationships (IOR) between small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and their loyal customers. Data collected from 386 SMEs in North America (United States and Canada) and processed with partial least square (PLS) show that the use of Web tools (which include the level of Web content and the level of security on the Internet) has a positive effect on the relationship between cooperation and interdependence, and customer loyalty. However, the effect of Web tools on the relationship between trust and customer loyalty is different because the use of nonsecure Web tools reduces the effect of trust on customer loyalty, and surprisingly, the use of secure Web tools does not increase or decrease the effect of trust on customer loyalty. Additionally, this study suggests that one of the factors of the failure of the success of SMEs’ B2B e-commerce is the technical skills of the managers in the use of secure Web tools—high skill levels increase the positive effect of trust on customer loyalty.

Chapter II, entitled “Product Classifications Systems in E-Commerce Organizations,” by Sven Abels, Abelssoft Consulting & Services (Germany) and Axel Hahn, University of Oldenburg (Germany), introduces the results of an empirical study recently performed in e-commerce organizations. The study was conducted in order to figure out the usage of electronic product catalogs and especially their systems used for product classification, such as UNSPSC or eCl@ss. A survey was sent out to a selection of those product suppliers and manufacturers, where product catalogs are crucial for business. Presented within this study are the necessary fundamentals necessary for understanding the results of the survey. At the conclusion, the study presents the results and identifies problematic areas that should be improved. Furthermore, advice is given for e-commerce organizations, standardization committees as well as further research activities to foster the usage of modern classification systems in electronic product catalogs.

Chapter III, entitled “Product Complexity as a Determinant of Transaction Governance Structure: An Empirical Comparison of Web-Only and Traditional Banks,” by Aima Zhang and Han Reichgelt,
Georgia Southern University (USA) contends that TCE alone is not sufficient to explain the selection of a transaction governance structure (TGS). Product complexity also plays an important role in explaining why a particular TGS is selected for a particular product. The construct of product complexity originated in the field of industrial marketing and is an important factor in the study of purchase behaviors of buyers, decision-making processes of suppliers, and dynamic relations between buyers and suppliers. The authors integrate industrial marketing with TCE and examine the impact of product complexity on TGS in the context of banking.

Chapter IV, entitled “Factors Affecting Online E-Payment Adoption: A Company Perspective,” by Qile He, Middlesex University Business School (UK), Yangqing Duan, University Bedfordshire Business School (UK), Zetian Fu, China Agriculture University (P.R. China), and Daoliang Li, China Agriculture University (P.R. China), examines the online e-payment option which is playing an important role in the further development of e-commerce and e-business. Thus far, research has been conducted to analyze the acceptance of online e-payment from consumers’ point of view. However, no research has been carried out to examine the relationship between managers’ attitudes towards online e-payment and their influence on the company’s e-payment option. This study examines the adoption of online e-payment by business enterprises using Rogers’ relational model of perceived innovation attributes and the rate of adoption. The authors developed an online questionnaire survey in order to collect the data from a sample of Chinese companies. The overall findings of this study suggest that only perceived compatibility has significant influence on online e-payment adoption of Chinese companies.

Chapter V, entitled “Internet Privacy Policies of the Largest International Companies in 2004 and 2006: A Review of U.S. and Non-U.S. Companies,” by Alan R. Peslak and Norbert Jurkiewicz, Penn State University (USA), reviews Internet privacy policies of the world’s largest companies. The primary goal of this study is to update and extend Internet privacy analysis by examining Web sites of the largest international companies (the Forbes International 100) for inclusion of fair information practices. Additionally, a collection of consumer centered practices is defined and studied. The initial study was completed back in 2004. In 2006, the companies were revisited for a second evaluation. Although there was some improvement in results over the two years, the general finding remains that within the Forbes International 100, fair information practices and consumer centered privacy policies are not being closely followed. Other findings, conclude that large U.S. firms are more likely to publish a privacy policy on their Web site than non-U.S. firms. Additionally, if a large international firm does publish a privacy policy on its Web site, the level of compliance with fair information practices and consumer centered policies is not significantly different between U.S. and non-U.S. firms.

Chapter VI, entitled “Strength of Privacy Policy Statements and Consumer Trust,” by Dane K. Peterson and David B. Meinert, Missouri State University (USA), John R. Criswell II, Columbia College (USA), and Martin D. Crossland, Oral Roberts University (USA), examines the willingness of individuals to provide various types of personal information given varying degrees of protection offered by privacy policy statements. The results of this study indicated that the willingness to provide information to Web merchants increased as the level of privacy guaranteed by the statement increased. The increasing levels of privacy promised by the statements also the greatest influence on those with prior familiarity with policy statements. Also demonstrated through the results was the issue that while most individuals are aware of privacy policy statements, less than half of the respondents have ever read a privacy statement.

Chapter VII, entitled “Seals on Retail Web Sites: A Signaling Theory Perspective on Third-Party Assurances,” by Kathryn M. Kimery, Saint Mary’s University (Canada) and Mary McCord, University of Central Missouri (USA), explores three research propositions: first, how reliable consumers are able to recall TPA (third-party assurances) seals on viewed retail Web sites; second, how familiar consumers are with major TPA seals; and third, how accurately consumers comprehend the assurances legitimately
Chapter VIII, entitled “The King is Naked: Discovering that Frequent Customers May Not Be Your Best Friend,” by Luiz Antonio Joia, Rio de Janeiro State University (Brazil) and Paulo Sergio Sanz, Brazilian School of Public and Business Administration (Brazil), explores the transaction profitability of frequent and sporadic buyers in the e-commerce arena. The authors analyze and present evidence in relationship marketing literature stressing the impact of purchase frequency on customer profitability as well as recent academic research challenging this approach and pointing out the importance of sporadic clients. For this chapter, a single case study research methodology was chosen due to the exploratory facets associated with the subject and the industry under investigation. In order to gather relevant input to carry out this research, one of the largest retailing groups in Brazil was investigated. The findings conclude that greater frequency of purchase does not necessarily translate into increased customer transaction profitability. This study will allow for practitioners and academics to take in the real value of customers, both frequent and sporadic buyers, in order to develop coherent approaches for dealing with them effectively.

Chapter IX, entitled “The Effect of Information Satisfaction and Relational Benefit on Consumer’s Online Shopping Site Commitment,” by Chung-Hoon Park, Samsung SDS (Korea) and Young-Gul Kim, Graduate School of Management, KAIST (Korea), investigate the relationship between information features and consumers’ loyalty to a Web site through two constructs affecting consumer’s commitment to online shopping sites. The first construct indicates the consumer’s overall evaluation of online site and the second is the relational benefit of psychological perception about an online site. Results of the online survey with 1,278 Korean customers of online bookstores and ticketing services indicate that information quality, user interface quality, and security perceptions affect information satisfaction and relational benefit. These, in turn, are significantly related to each consumer’s commitment to a site.

Chapter X, entitled “Online Shopping and Catalog Shopping: Exogenous and Endogenous Antecedents of Consumers’ Channel Choice,” by Maria Madlberger, Vienna University of Economics and Business Administration (Austria), examines the current issue of many mail-order companies seeking to use the Internet to attract new target groups to increase their typically small and narrow customer bases. Unfortunately, at this time they do not know enough about the antecedents of channel choices, especially in the mail-order sector. In this study, the authors address this issue and draw special attention to exogenous (i.e., independent of the retailer) factors influencing online shopping behavior. These variables include perceived convenience and perceived security of online shopping in general and consumers’ attitudes toward the catalog as the existing distribution channel.

Chapter XI, entitled “Digitizing Business Relationship: Some Practical and Theoretical Considerations,” by Jari Salo, University of Oulu (Finland), illustrates how relationships are digitized and what managers as well as academics should know about this emerging phenomenon. An extensive literature review is incorporated that provides an overview of basic features and types of digitized business relationships. The author outlines a model that tackles critical factors while digitizing business relationships.

Chapter XII, entitled “Understanding the Impact of Wireless Local Area Networks on Users and Assessing User Satisfaction with Wireless Local Area Networks,” by Leida Chen, Ravi Nath, and Jonathan Cowin, Creighton University (USA), investigates the impact of wireless area networks (WLAN) on users and their work. User satisfaction is assessed and recommendations are made to researchers, managers, WLAN technology providers, and equipment manufacturers.

Chapter XIII, entitled “An Exploratory Study of ‘Killer Applications’ and Critical Success Factors in M-Commerce,” by Gordon Xu and Jairo A. Gutiérrez, University of Auckland (New Zealand), examines “killer applications” and critical success factors, two aspects of mobile commerce (m-commerce). After represented by the TPA seals. This study examines three major TPA seals (TRUSTe, BBBOnLine Reliability, and VeriSign).
compiling significant information from the related literature, a Delphi panel was assembled by selecting a group of experts who have significant knowledge about m-commerce and wireless communications. The panel was requested to comment on a number of m-commerce issues and scenarios gleaned from the literature review and members of the panel were also asked to indicate which issues were more important and which of the presented scenarios were more likely. The final results of the survey indicated that the short message service (SMS) and a “killer” portfolio were the two most likely “killer applications” of m-commerce. Additionally, four factors: convenience, ease of use, trust, and ubiquity were identified as the most important to m-commerce success. According to the Delphi result and the experts’ comments, the highlight features of the “killer applications” were found to match the most significant critical success factors as voted by the panel.

Chapter XIV, entitled “E-Commerce and Sales Taxes in the United States: Adequacy, Fairness, and Management,” by Christopher G. Reddick, The University of San Antonio (USA), examines the relationship between electronic commerce and the U.S. state sales and use tax system. The author uses a framework of a high-quality tax system, and it is applied to taxing electronic commerce sales. Nine principles of an effective tax system are analyzed and each of these principles are divided into the categories adequacy of revenue, fairness of revenue, and management of revenue. These principles were then tested to determine what impact electronic commerce taxation has on an effective revenue system. The findings from these initial tests suggest that taxation of electronic commerce was associated with fairness in the tax system. In particular, the results suggested that states that had fairer tax systems were more likely to rely on a sales tax and more on taxing Internet access.

Chapter XV, entitled “Gender and E-Commerce Adoption Barriers: A Comparison of Small Businesses in Sweden and Australia,” by Robert MacGregor, University of Wollongong (Australia) and Lejla Vrazalic, University of Wollongong in Dubai (UAE), examines whether differences exist in how male and female owners/managers of small business in regional areas in Sweden and Australia perceived e-commerce adoption barriers. The authors present results of a survey of more than 450 small businesses and there are indications that although both male and female owners/managers agree on the key reasons for not adopting e-commerce, they assign different priorities these reasons.

Chapter XVI, entitled “Personas of E-Commerce Adoption in Small Businesses in New Zealand,” by Nabeel Al-Qirim, United Arab Emirates University (UAE) introduces focus group methodology as one appropriate methodology to study the impact of technological innovation factors on e-commerce (EC) adoption in small businesses (SMEs) in New Zealand. The findings suggest two emerging issues pertaining to EC adoption in SMEs. First, SMEs would not invest their scant resources on perceived risky advanced EC initiatives. Second, the SMEs retained a particular view about advancing their simple EC initiatives. In this research, implications arising with respect to theory and to practice are discussed.

Chapter XVII, entitled “Motivators for IOS Adoption in Denmark,” by Helle Zinner Henriksen, Copenhagen Business School (Denmark) operationalizes the Tornatzky and Fleischer (1990) model for organizational adoption in order to investigate reasons for adoption and non-adoption among businesses in the Danish steel and machinery industry. This particular industry segment had been subject to massive information campaigns focusing on the benefits of IOS in the form of EDI from business associations. This study suggests that environmental and organizational attributes rather than technological attributes are the main determining forces for adoption of EDI.

This manuscript provides a collection of the latest research related to the effective implementation of e-technologies into the daily lives of professors, researchers, scholars, professionals, and all individuals in general. This innovative volume is a must-read for anyone interested in gaining a more thorough understanding of how to successfully execute e-commerce strategies and how to best adopt the various elements into their own classrooms, workplaces, and organizations.