

Preface

The rapid expansion and adoption of the Internet throughout the entire world, increased purchasing power and huge market of developing countries, and recent extensive movement of globalization create enormous opportunities for E-Commerce (EC) to diffuse throughout the whole world. From this perspective, it is a challenging and burning issue for market researchers to conceptualize the proliferation and globalization of Information and communication Technology (ICT) and EC, for both consumers and countries, and also from a global perspective. Diffusion of the Internet has made a revolutionary change in the methodology of operating business. Therefore, it is both an interesting and challenging issue to address, explore, and conceptualize proliferation of EC and also adoption, cultural resistance, and evolution for global consumers. This book is designed to conceptualize the functions, proliferation, diffusion, cultural resistance, and impact of EC on the global economy. The book is engaged in addressing the adoption of and cultural resistance to Business-to-Consumer (B2C) EC of global consumers. Therefore, mentioning E-Commerce (EC) will signify and mean B2C E-Commerce in this book unless it is mentioned otherwise. However, some significant relevance of Business-to-Business (B2B) E-Commerce and E-government (EG) will also be investigated and revealed in a comparative and comprehensive manner in this book. The overall mission of this book reflects the contemporary issues of EC in a comprehensive manner and is engaged in providing basic paradigms, concepts and understandings of EC proliferation and globalization, plausible resistances and barriers due to socio-economical and cultural differences, religious beliefs, availability of resources, education and training, and government controls between developed and developing countries, and their impact on the future international market economy. By nature, practice, and method of proliferation, EC is inherently global. Nevertheless, its present adoption, operation, and proliferation are basically limited in developed countries to highly technology-oriented people. Therefore, for true globalization of EC, its adoption, usage, proliferation, and barriers in economically, culturally, and technologically diverged countries need clear understanding. We aim to address these issues and develop sequentially the paradigms and theoretical framework of scope and barriers

of diffusion of Internet-based economy in different segmented markets, especially in the developing countries. We also provide an integrated view of EC diffusion from developed to developing countries and comprehensive concepts of the standardized market of globalized EC in this book. The book also organizes inference to understand differences in the adoption and usage criteria of EC between developed and developing countries in organizational, financial, market, and consumer aspects. To conceptualize the aforementioned concepts and ideas, the book shall fulfill the following objectives:

1. To address and discuss concepts and theories relevant to consumers' behavioral intentions, trust disposition attitude, purchase behavior, cultural differences, technology acceptance attitude, and adoption and proliferation of ICT
2. To provide an understanding of the necessity for EC proliferation from a globalization perspective
3. To identify the present condition, intentions, and fundamental capabilities of different segmented countries to adopt EC, possible barriers and resistance from socio-economical and cultural aspects, and its impact on the globalization of EC and the international market economy
4. To conceptualize multilevel factors affecting adoption, usage, and proliferation of EC among consumers of different segmented countries and to provide inference to understand the differences between developed and developing countries from this perspective
5. To explore, identify, and organize global issues and policies related to the diffusion of ICT and public and private organizational and market implications on both a macro and micro level for diffusion of ICT throughout the world through the emerging movement of globalization

These objectives are explored using ICT, marketing, service quality, organizational reformation, and globalization theories and related discourses. Addressing culture and its impact on certain apparently non-stoppable technology diffusion trends is always a challenging issue. This challenge imports more vulnerable debates when it is associated with international market economy, digital divide, and the burning issue of globalization. We, therefore, very much careful to address the debates, bypass them, and raise the debates in pertaining proliferation of EC and its semantic effect on pragmatic market economy.

The proliferation and globalization of EC throughout the world, the barriers due to socio-economical, cultural, and political factors, and the impact on future international market economy are recent areas for practitioners, researchers, and policymakers to address, investigate, and conceptualize. Only recently a few practitioners and researchers have started to explore this issue of EC diffusion in dif-

ferent segmented countries which is anticipated to provide enormous opportunities for the 21st Century. National and international policymakers are also starting to analyze different aspects of this issue through different globalization paradigms. As a result, only a few conference and journal papers as well as technical and policy recommendation reports have been published in this area. As far as it is known, there are no books yet published specifically related to this burning issue of the contemporary international market. As a result, at present, practitioners, academics, and policymakers who are searching for information in this issue, have to spend a lot of time and effort identifying, gathering, and synthesizing literature from different fields. Therefore, this book will have significant implications and will contribute potential advantages to the existing literature. We organize the book to impart to readers the necessary background information, concepts, and strategies to build the paradigms and fundamental discourses of globalization of EC. Then we discuss the principal issues of Internet economy related to scope and barriers for proliferation of EC globally and develop theoretical concepts of the pertaining effects of these diverged phenomena on the international market economy.

The book contains four divisions to provide, address, and explore four broad fields of issues of EC proliferation. The first division discusses background and general concepts related to EC as a global phenomenon. The second division explains perceived service qualities and the strategic quality management practice of EC for globalization. The third division conceptualizes EC adoption criteria, the effect of diffusion and resistance, and the impact of ICT proliferation with particular attention to developing countries. In this connection, this division also provides a precise description of E-Government to conceptualize one of the major applications of online systems in the public sector to encapsulate the digital divide as the irresistible and undeniable force of ICT proliferation in developing countries. The fourth division illustrates explicit paradigms of EC globalization and cultural adaptation in developed and developing countries. This division also includes conclusion, future trends, and detailed implications of the revealed paradigms. The four divisions are again divided into 13 independent but sequential parts, called chapters. Each chapter consists of a few sections and sub-sections. Excluding these regular sections and sub-sections, abstract and a list of references are also included in each chapter. In this book, we sequentially address the main issues and concepts of technology diffusion, E-Commerce present status in developed countries and proliferation in developing countries, socio-economic and cultural aspects as scope and barriers for this proliferation and its impact on the international market economy and globalization. This book intertwines different issues, as mentioned before, as a comprehensive concept to present a holistic perspective of the future Internet market economy. A brief description of each division, chapter, and section is provided below.

To conceptualize functions, proliferation, diffusion, cultural resistance, and impact on the global economy of EC, we would like to address and explain some related issues, concepts, and paradigms of EC as a global phenomenon at the beginning. The first division of this book presents a general introduction and the related concepts of E-Commerce. This division has two chapters to integrate those issues.

The first chapter is the general introduction part of this book. It addresses the background of the topic, its origin and global aspects. It has three sections to deal with the above-mentioned ideas.

Chapter II deals with the concepts of EC and its related issues in a global context. This chapter consists of three sections with sub-sections. It includes an introduction to EC and describes the evolution of one of its basic components, that is, the Internet. Then this chapter sheds light on the definition, classification, distinct characteristics, proliferation, adoption, globalization, and management issues related to EC. This chapter also briefly explains the concepts of M-Commerce, an emerging issue of the present market which is a subset of EC and E-Government (EG) which is conceptually very close to EC.

The second division explains the distinct characteristics of EC to conceptualize service quality of EC for global consumers and expands its scope to illustrate strategic quality management practice. This division has two chapters.

When we conjecture that EC is inherently global, global consumers' perception of service quality, grounded on cultural and social diversity, is a potential criterion to be addressed and analyzed. Chapter III of the book is designed to impart some general ideas about expectation and performance of different service quality attributes for B2C EC, as revealed by different researchers. This chapter is divided into five sections with Section II further split into subsections.

Implementation of quality management practice in EC is a relatively new and challenging area to researchers and management authorities. The proliferation of EC provides an opportunity for quality management practitioners to conceptualize quality dimensions suitable for globalization of EC. Chapter IV focuses on the quality dimensions required for launching a successful global EC. Implementation of quality management principles and practice in an EC context is a new theme which needs extensive research in the future. This chapter is divided into five sections with Section III divided into subsections.

The success of technology acceptance and successive diffusion is heavily dependent on the adoption capability, the way it is diffused in private and public sectors, and how it is adopted by the adopters. Diffusion of EC has multi-dimensional aspects, and the process of diffusion is controlled by cultural diversity. Division III is concentrated on the issues related to diffusion and adoption of EC and the impact and resistance of proliferation globally. This division has five chapters.

Chapter V addresses, reveals, and reshapes different aspects of diffusion of EC. The whole chapter is divided into six sections. Our fundamental efforts in this chapter are designated to developing epistemological and ontological paradigms of diffusion of EC which would contribute to form the desired framework of critical factors of EC diffusion.

Drawing inference from the proposed EC diffusion framework in Chapter V, we aim to investigate, identify, and illustrate the overall condition of some developed and developing countries in terms of diffusion of EC in Chapter VI. In this chapter, we have viewed some cases of diffusion of EC in the light of the theoretical framework as revealed in Chapter V. We have divided this chapter into two sections with Section II further divided into subsections.

Chapter VII is aimed at providing a fundamental conceptual framework for adoption of EC by the consumers of developing countries. This chapter is divided into five sections. After the introduction section, Chapter VII addresses and discusses the existing literature to get a deep insight into the adoption criteria of EC. Then it explains the adoption process and develops a theoretical framework for factors enabling adoption of EC among consumers of developing countries. Finally, a conclusion is drawn.

Chapter VIII is also designed to reveal adoption factors of Internet and EC technologies. However, it is focused on Maritime Canada's SMEs (small- and medium-sized enterprises). This study intends to examine the impact of relevant factors on the acceptance of Internet and E-business technologies in SMEs based in a region of the country with relatively poor indicators. The study draws upon a theoretical framework in the information system (IS) literature and other relevant insights in discussing the topic. Based on the research hypotheses, an empirical study is conducted. Then through proper statistical analysis, the discussions and conclusion of the study are presented with managerial implications. The chapter has six sections with subsections.

Chapter IX of the book explores and illustrates the overall impact of the Internet economy among developing countries. We have not focused on developed countries, because the positive effect of ICT on developed countries is quite obvious, and developed countries have already utilized and are also capitalizing on full features of ICT in the Internet economy by launching E-Government (EG) in the public sector and also guiding EC in the private sector. However, developing countries are at the preliminary stage in this context, so it is a challenging issue to address and evaluate the impact of proliferation of the Internet economy on the developing countries for the sake of globalization. This chapter is divided into six sections to conceptualize the purpose of proliferation of the Internet economy, possible barriers, different outcomes of the effect of this proliferation and barriers, and theoretical paradigms of the impact of the Internet economy.

Division IV is designed to provide detailed theoretical explanations of issues related to globalization of EC both for developed and developing countries by shedding in-depth light on cultural adaptation capability. Evidences of findings are also provided by some case studies. This division has four chapters including a conclusive chapter which precisely comprehends the theoretical light of this book with anticipating future trends and implications of the findings.

As one of the most topical issues, proliferation of EC and globalization has substantially captured the attention of practitioners, academicians, policy makers, and readers, and this has led to the development of a new theoretical framework to encompass the globalization strategies of EC. In Chapter IX, we provide a theoretical framework as the globalization strategy for EC. This chapter is divided into six sections to explain the related concepts of EC globalization, issues of globalization, existing literature of globalization of Internet economy, and globalization framework with a conclusion.

The continuing growth in global online markets necessitates companies to attract international consumers and motivate online transactions. Marketers are faced with the question of whether to culturally adapt their web sites or launch standardized global web sites. To conceptualize this issue, Chapter XI provides an insight as to whether the Web is a culturally neutral medium of communication or a medium impregnated with cultural values. Most marketers equate their ability to tap into the global online market by simply creating multilingual international Web sites. This chapter shows that effective international web presence is not just about translating a Web site into a local language. A truly localized Web site is one that is linguistically, technically and, most importantly, culturally customized to locale-specific requirements. This chapter has six sections which sequentially describe localization and cultural customization of Web sites with conclusive remarks.

The aim of Chapter XII is to provide deep insights into the cultural adaptation of EC Web sites. This chapter deals with the same issues as Chapter XI; however, it includes a more rigorous view of the cultural impact on globalization of EC. This chapter has six sections with sub-sections to discuss the introduction to the issue, literature review, and development of a theoretical framework, examples of good and bad practices in Web site localization, conclusion, and marketing implications.

Chapter XIII is designed to comprehend and integrate the epistemological and ontological paradigms of EC developed in this book through an extensive literature review, case studies, and the theoretical concepts of psychology, sociology, service, organization, marketing, international business, culture, and information technology as the conclusion. Then this chapter explains the implications of the findings of this book and anticipates future trends of EC as a global phenomenon. This chapter is divided into four sections to present the introduction, conclusion, implications, and future trends with a research direction.

This book provides exhaustive coverage on EC proliferation and globalization issues as well as cultural adoption and barriers in this connection. The authors hope that this will provide a significant contribution to the area of online systems proliferation in general and, specifically, to the adoption, diffusion, and cultural resistance of EC amongst global consumers.

However, in order to make further research progress and improvements in the area of adoption, diffusion, resistance, and cultural evolution of EC, we would like to welcome feedback and comments about this book from the readers. Comments and constructive suggestions can be sent to us care of IGI Global at the address provided at the beginning of the book.