Chapter VIII

Trust in B2C E-Commerce: The New Zealand Māori Internet Shopper

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INTRODUCTION

This chapter aims to report what issues of trust apply to the Māori Internet shopper. Māori arrived in New Zealand from the Pacific about a thousand years ago, and have since become a minority in New Zealand (Belich, 1996). Although it is difficult to define an ethnic group, the definition of Māori includes “all those who identify themselves as belonging to the New Zealand Māori ethnic group, either alone or in combination with any other ethnic group” (Statistics New Zealand, 1998, p. 94). Their culture, language and values have become secondary to those of the dominant European culture (Liu, Wilson, McClure & Higgins, 1999).

This chapter will also help the reader to understand trust and Internet shopping from a Maori New Zealander’s perspective. As a result, this chapter will reveal the key trust issues for Māori that either hinder or assist them to purchase via the Internet.
BACKGROUND

The following subsections review the current literature in regards to the nature of e-commerce and business-to-consumer e-commerce before developing a picture of the Internet customer.

The Nature of Electronic Commerce

There is currently little consensus as to what exactly constitutes e-commerce (Jones, Wilkens, Morries & Masera, 2000; Riggins & Rhee, 1998). For example, Zwass (1996) loosely defines e-commerce as “the sharing of business information, maintaining business relationships, and conducting business transactions by means of telecommunications networks.” Applegate, Holsapple, Kalakota, Radermacher and Whinston (1996) view e-commerce as more than simply buying and selling goods electronically, pointing out that e-commerce involves using network communications technology to engage in a wide range of activities up and down the value-added chain both within and outside the organization. However, Wilkins, Swatman, and Castleman (2000) suggest that the sheer number of definitions is in itself problematic and reflects the variety of research and thought being described as e-commerce.

Four types of information technology are converging to create the discipline of e-commerce (Kalakota & Whinston, 1996). These include electronic messaging in the form of fax and e-mail; sharing a corporate digital library to promote collaborative work; electronic document interchange using EDI and electronic funds transfer; and electronic publishing to promote marketing, advertising, sales and customer support (Riggins & Rhee, 1998; Ah-Wong, Gandhi, Patel, Shah, Tran & Targett, 2001). This supports the notion that e-commerce not only includes buying and selling goods and services, but also includes the background processes within that organization.

Because the definition of e-commerce is broad, a focus is needed. Therefore, I believe that e-commerce focuses on the trading and transactional relationship between an organization’s web site and an end user (Dedhia, 2001; Lawrence, Corbitt, Fisher, Lawrence, & Tidwell, 2000; Riggins and Rhee, 1998). This is also known as business-to-consumer (B2C) e-commerce. The relationship begins when a consumer logs onto the organization’s web site to purchase a good or service. Once the consumer has selected the product, they move into a trading and transactional relationship with the organization, paying for that product via credit card, check or mail order. The good or service is then delivered to the consumer, concluding the trading relationship.
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