**IMPACT OF E-COMMERCE WEBSITE TO THE SOCIETY**

**BY**

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**ABSTRACT**

*In less than a decade since the advent of the World Wide Web the technology has started to become an integral part of modern society. Possibly quicker than any other technology before it (such as the car or the telephone) the Web has begun to impinge on everyday life for a vast majority of citizens in a very short space of time.*

**INTRODUCTION**

According to Mohammed (2004) E-commerce, short for electronic commerce is trading in products or services using computer networks, such as the internet. Electronic commerce draw on technologies such as mobile commerce, electronic fund transfer, internet marketing, online transaction processing, electronic data interchange (EDI). Modern e-commerce typically uses the World Wide Web for at least one part of the transaction life cycle.

It is known globally that in today's market, it is extremely difficult to start a new small scale business and its sustenance with competition from the well-established and settled/brand owners. Most often even if the quality of product is really good, due to lack of advertisements or business at the small scale, it just becomes another face in the sea, and the product does not reach a larger group of customers.

Logistically, a customer finds a product more interesting and attractive when they find it on a website of a retailer directly and are able to see items details online. The customers of today are not only attracted because online shopping is convenient but also because they have broader selections, highly competitive prices, better information about the product (including people's review) and extremely simplified navigation for searching, regarding the options at low rates because the overhead expenses in opening and running a physical store are higher. Furthermore, with online shopping their products have access to a worldwide market.

Because of the emergence of e-commerce, the traditional business model and management concept will change greatly by creating enormous benefits and opportunities, the virtual dimensions of market together will make logistics, cash flow, information flow into a loop which is open and a vicious circle.

The development of e-commerce will not only promote the development of the internet effectively, but also make far reaching influence on the progress of the society and economy.

E-commerce refers to the use of communication technology particularly the internet to buy, sell and market goods and services to the customers. The internet has brought about a fundamental shift in national economies that are isolated from each other by barriers to cross-border trade and investment; isolated by distance, time zones, and language. Isolated by national difference in government regulations, culture and business systems (Mohammed, 2004).

E-commerce offers a level playing ground for large businesses as well as small and medium-scaled enterprises (SMEs) to operate in the global market place, and for regional businesses and communities to participate in social, economic and cultural networks seamlessly across international boundaries (Mary-Anne, 1998).

It equally fosters direct access to distant markets and promotes globalization of commercial activities, and blurs many of the current distinctions between domestic and foreign companies to an extent that it becomes practically impossible to determine the origin of products (Georges, 1997). Hitherto, multinationals that operated in a number of countries had to adjust their products and services to accommodate the diverse operating environments at a relatively high cost, which the virtual market place has reduced.

However, with the paradigm shift in the mode of operation occasioned by the advent of the internet, global corporations now operate with much consistency and at reduced cost of transactions as if the entire world were a single entity. The internet has changed the face of businesses and is providing consumers with the ability to bank, invest, purchase, distribute, communicate, explore and research from virtually everywhere, anytime there is internet access (Anup, 1997).

If the internet has made it vulnerable they will be a lot of security threats. Thus, it requires a systematic approach to guarantee its security on the fronts of 312`2aweb clients, data transmission, web server, network server operating system. Similarly, moving businesses online requires efficient and effective management of operations in the context of security, confidence and control (Larry, 1998).

**HISTORY OF E-COMMERCE**

The history of e-commerce shopping carts began immediately after the World Wide Web (WWW) became a major medium to communicate information around the world. An E-commerce shopping carts application allows consumers to buy goods and services directly over the internet using a web browser. This online shopping evokes the business to consumers (B2C) process where a consumer buys directly from the business.

The next stage of e-commerce according to Turban et al (2008) was the development of the electronic data interchange (EDI) which started in 1960's in form of corporative efforts at producing a common electronic data formats between industry groups. This format were used only for purchasing, transportation and intra-industry transactions and it was not until the 1970's that work started on National Electronic Data Interchange standards that eventually created a platform for Electronic Fund Transfer (EFT).

At present, most users of online shopping cart application are people who have higher level of education, have exposure to technological advancements, and are in a better income group, such users develop a positive attitude towards these convenient shopping techniques(Mary-Anne, 1998).

**THE SHOPPING CART**

In online marketing, a shopping cart is a piece of e-commerce software on a web server that allows visitors to an internet site to select items for eventual purchase (Cumming, 1999).

The software allows online shopping cart customers to accumulate a list of items for purchase, described metaphorically as placing “placing items in the cart” or “add to cart”. Upon checkout the software typically calculates a total for the order, including shipping and handling (I.e. postage and packing) charges and the associated taxes, as applicable(Zorzini, 2014).

These applications typically provide a means of capturing a client’s payment information, but in the case of a credit card they rely on the software module of the secure gateway providers in conjunction with the secure payment gateway in order to conduct secure credit card transactions online (Ostermann, 2011).

Some setup must be done in the HTML code of the website and the shopping cart software must be installed on the server which host the site, or on the secure server which access sensitive ordering information. In most server based implementations however, data related to the shopping cart is kept in the session object and is accessed and manipulated on the fly, as the user selects different items from the cart. Later at the processes of finalizing the transactions, the information is accessed and order is generated against the selected item thus clearing the shopping cart (Zorzini, 2014).

**COMPONENTS OF A SHOPPING CART**

The components of a shopping cart are;

1. **STOREFRONT:** The area of the web store that is accessed by visitors to the online shop. Category, products, and the other pages are dynamically generated by the software based on the information saved in the store database. The look of the store front can normally be changed by the store owner so that it merges with the rest of the website
2. **ADMINISTRATION:** The area of the web store that is accessed by the merchant to manage the online shop. The amount of store management features changes depending on the sophistication of the shopping cart software chosen by the merchant, but in general a store manager is able to add, edit products, cat the information load, complexity, and novelty. A designer must also consider the consumers’ needs an expectation (Falk et al, 2005).

**ADVANTAGES E-COMMERCE TO CUSTOMERS**

1. The shopping carts act as a mediator between the payment processors and websites as well as a janitor helping customers find the amenities provided.
2. A shopping cart that’s easy to navigate and flexible enough to cater for the personal needs of the customers improves the site’s usability and makes online shopping a pleasant experience for the customers. In the absence of an E-shopping cart, the customers wouldn’t have a place to store and manage multiple items and would have to order separately for every item they wish to purchase, which means repeating the buying process twice, thrice, or even more times.
3. Paying is easy with shopping cart. Customers will not require to pay for every single item they select, but the software will easily calculate the amount for all the selected items and make an automatic order for them.

ADVANTAGES TO THE E-COMMERCE BUSINESS

1. The shopping cart software can organize the information for successful transactions and ensure that the things run orderly and smoothly. It enables the employer to handle the customers more easily. Without shopping cart integration, it would really be hard for the business operators to manage their clients if every person would have to order every time he chooses a product.
2. Search engine optimization (SEO) is a crucial aspect of any online business site. A good shopping cart can enhance a site’s SEO by automatically creating keyword-rich URL’s for its products or services.

iii. A good-quality shopping cart offers rich functional capabilities to the Ecommerce business, such as a concise catalogue management and a simplified business management by producing a wide array of reports to manage the finances better, monitor sales, and provide improved customer service.

E-commerce allows suppliers to be close to their customers, resulting in increased productivity and competitiveness for companies, as a result, the customer benefited with an improvement in quality service, resulting in greater proximity, as well as a more efficient pre and post-sales support. With these new forms of electronic commerce, consumers now have virtual stores that are open 24 hours a day.

The above points make it very clear that an Ecommerce shopping cart certainly removes any obstacles in the way of the online customers and the growth of an online business. So, if you are overlooking the criticality of shopping cart inclusion and shopping cart development for your internet business, you are drastically reducing the chances of converting traffic into sales.

**CONCLUSION**

E-Commerce dominance has been on the increase and the growth worldwide has been a phenomenon. While it may not be impossible to completely eliminate brick and mortar business, the reality is that E-Commerce is the future of commerce globally and developing nations been part of a world that has been reduced to a global village have no option than to flow in the direction of the tide or they will be left behind. It is also imperative the consumers who are the end users of the E-Commerce products are continually encouraged so as to ensure attitudinal changes so that they can become more disposed to using these products and platforms. The developing nations are not immune from the fact that E-commerce rightly rides on a technology that causes boundaries of nations to collapse, a platform that has made distance no much of an issue in trade and commerce. It is high time that the developing nations embraced this phenomenon holistically.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

The absolute fact of the issues and challenges associated with E-Commerce in developing countries is a great reality; this is mainly because of the environment, these challenges however should not be a reason to jettison this game changing platform but rather business and firms should devise appropriate strategies that will help in overcoming these challenges which will in turn make consumers more open to using these platforms to transact business.

In the light of the above, may I make the f following recommendations:

1. A lot of attention should be paid to infrastructural issues that will culminate in its rapid development as that is the very foundation of E- Commerce.
2. The issue of epileptic internet coverage, bandwidth and appropriate technology that can help overcome the limitations of the local environment should be given a lot of priority.
3. Increase Internet Penetration:Strategies must be put in place to further increase access to the Internet and draw investments into the telecommunications industry, to not only fuel the success of e-commerce, but also to boost the Nigerian economy.
4. Improve Marketing Campaigns: Online retailers must be persistent in the efforts to create effective and relevant advertising campaigns that appeal to the Nigerian populace. These marketing initiatives must explicitly detail the benefits of shopping online, and highlight the experience as a positive alternative to brick and mortar shopping.
5. Implementation of a robust regulatory framework to guide processes and protect both the retailers and consumers;

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