Electronic Commerce:

Electronic commerce, commonly known as E-commerce
is trading in products or services using computer networks, such as the Internet. Electronic commerce draws on technologies such as mobile commerce, electronic funds transfer, supply chain management, Internet marketing, online transaction processing,electronic data interchange (EDI), inventory management systems, and automated data collection systems. Modern electronic commerce typically uses the World Wide Web for at least one part of the transaction's life cycle, although it may also use other technologies such as e-mail.
Definition of E-commerce:
Sharing business information, maintaining business relationships and conducting business transactions using computers connected to telecommunication network is called E-Commerce. E-Commerce or Electronic Commerce means buying and selling of goods, products, or services over the internet. E-commerce is also known as electronic commerce or internet commerce. These services provided online over the internet network. Transaction of money, funds, and data are also considered as E-commerce. These business transactions can be done in four ways: Business to Business (B2B), Business to Customer (B2C), Customer to Customer (C2C), Customer to Business (C2B). The standard definition of E-commerce is a commercial transaction which is happened over the internet. Online stores like Amazon, Flipkart, Shopify, Myntra, Ebay, Quikr, Olx are examples of E-commerce websites.
There are 6 basic types of e-commerce:

1. Business-to-Business (B2B)
2. Business-to-Consumer (B2C)
3. Consumer-to-Consumer (C2C)
4. Consumer-to-Business (C2B).
5. Business-to-Administration (B2A)
6. Consumer-to-Administration (C2A)

1. Business-to-Business (B2B)

Business-to-Business (B2B) e-commerce encompasses all electronic transactions of goods or services conducted between companies. Producers and traditional commerce wholesalers typically operate with this type of electronic commerce.

2. Business-to-Consumer (B2C)

The Business-to-Consumer type of e-commerce is distinguished by the establishment of electronic business relationships between businesses and final consumers. It corresponds to the retail section of e-commerce, where traditional retail trade normally operates.

These types of relationships can be easier and more dynamic, but also more sporadic or discontinued. This type of commerce has developed greatly, due to the advent of the web, and there are already many virtual stores and malls on the Internet, which sell all kinds of consumer goods, such as computers, software, books, shoes, cars, food, financial products, digital publications, etc.

When compared to buying retail in traditional commerce, the consumer usually has more information available in terms of informative content and there is also a widespread idea that you'll be buying cheaper, without jeopardizing an equally personalized customer service, as well as ensuring quick processing and delivery of your order.

3. Consumer-to-Consumer (C2C)

Consumer-to-Consumer (C2C) type e-commerce encompasses all electronic transactions of goods or services conducted between consumers. Generally, these transactions are conducted through a third party, which provides the online platform where the transactions are actually carried out.

4. Consumer-to-Business (C2B)

In C2B there is a complete reversal of the traditional sense of exchanging goods. This type of e-commerce is very common in crowdsourcing based projects. A large number of individuals make their services or products available for purchase for companies seeking precisely these types of services or products.

Examples of such practices are the sites where designers present several proposals for a company logo and where only one of them is selected and effectively purchased. Another platform that is very common in this type of commerce are the markets that sell royalty-free photographs, images, media and design elements, such as iStockphoto.

5. Business-to-Administration (B2A)

This part of e-commerce encompasses all transactions conducted online between companies and public administration. This is an area that involves a large amount and a variety of services, particularly in areas such as fiscal, social security, employment, legal documents and registers, etc. These types of services have increased considerably in recent years with investments made in e-government.

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6. Consumer-to-Administration (C2A)

The Consumer-to-Administration model encompasses all electronic transactions conducted between individuals and public administration.

Examples of applications include:

- Education – disseminating information, distance learning, etc.
- Social Security – through the distribution of information, making payments, etc.
- Taxes – filing tax returns, payments, etc.
- Health – appointments, information about illnesses, payment of health services, etc.

Both models involving Public Administration (B2A and C2A) are strongly associated to the idea of efficiency and easy usability of the services provided to citizens by the government, with the support of information and communication technologies.

Advantages of e-commerce

The main advantage of e-commerce is its ability to reach a global market, without necessarily implying a large financial investment. The limits of this type of commerce are not defined geographically, which allows consumers to make a global choice, obtain the necessary information and compare offers from all potential suppliers, regardless of their locations.

By allowing direct interaction with the final consumer, e-commerce shortens the product distribution chain, sometimes even eliminating it completely. This way, a direct channel between the producer or service provider and the final user is created, enabling them to offer products and services that suit the individual preferences of the target market.

E-commerce allows suppliers to be closer to their customers, resulting in increased productivity and competitiveness for companies; as a result, the consumer is 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.

Cost reduction is another very important advantage normally associated with electronic commerce. The more trivial a particular business process is, the greater the likelihood of its success, resulting in a significant reduction of transaction costs and, of course, of the prices charged to customers.

Disadvantages of e-commerce

The main disadvantages associated with e-commerce are the following:

- Strong dependence on information and communication technologies (ICT);
- Lack of legislation that adequately regulates the new e-commerce activities, both nationally and internationally;
- Market culture is averse to electronic commerce (customers cannot touch or try the products);
- The users' loss of privacy, the loss of regions' and countries' cultural and economic identity;
- Insecurity in the conduct of online business transactions.

M-Commerce

Mobile commerce popularly known as m-commerce is actually just a subset of e-commerce.

Applications of M-commerce

Other than the straightforward m-commerce transactions of buying and selling of goods and services, they have so many applications. Let us take a look at a few examples,

- Mobile Banking: Using a mobile website or application to perform all your banking functions. It is one step ahead of online banking and has become commonplace these days. For example, in Nigeria, the majority of banking transactions happen on mobile phones.
- Mobile Ticketing and Booking: Making bookings and receiving your tickets on the mobile. The digital ticket or boarding pass is sent directly to your phone after you make the payment from it. Even in India now IRTC and other services provide m-ticketing services.
- E-bills: This includes mobile vouchers, mobile coupons to be redeemed and even loyalty points or cards system.
- Auctions: Online auctions having now been developed to be made available via mobile phones as well.
- Stock Market Reports and even stock market trading over mobile applications.

Advantages of M-commerce

- It provides a very convenient and easy to use the system to conduct business transactions.

- Mobile commerce has a very wide reach. A huge part of the world's population has a mobile phone in their pocket. So the sheer size of the market is tremendous.
- M-commerce also helps businesses target customers according to their location, service provider, the type of device they use and various other criteria. This can be a good marketing tool.
- The costs of the company also reduced. This is due to the streamlined processes, now transaction cost, low carrying cost and low order processing cost as well.

Disadvantages of M-commerce

- The existing technology to set up an m-commerce business is very expensive. It has great start-up costs and many complications arise.
- In developing countries, the networks and service providers are not reliable. It is not most suitable for data transfer.
- Then there is the issue of security. There are many concerns about the safety of the customer's private information. And the possibility of a data leak is very daunting.

What are the differences between e-commerce and m-commerce?

Ans: Some of the differences are as below,

- E-commerce came into existence in the 1970s. Whereas, M-commerce was invented later during the 1990s.
- Electronic commerce has a narrower reach than M-commerce, due to a large number of mobile users globally.
- E-commerce is generally a less costly method. The set up of the website and the use of the internet is both relatively cheaper methods. M-commerce, on the other hand, is more expensive due to the creation of the mobile app and the need to use cellular data (for the customers)