

Getting started with the certificate program

What are digital marketing and e-commerce?

Careers in digital marketing and e-commerce

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Video: Launching your digital marketing or e-commerce career
4 min
- ▶

Video: Agency roles vs. in-house roles
2 min
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Reading: Roles and responsibilities in digital marketing and e-commerce
20 min
- ▶

Video: Zuri - A day in the life of an entry-level digital marketer
3 min
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Video: Jebb - A day in the life of an entry-level e-commerce account manager
3 min
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Reading: E-commerce, ecommerce, or eCommerce?
20 min
- 📝

Practice Quiz: Test your knowledge: Careers in digital marketing and e-commerce
5 questions
- 🗣️

Discussion Prompt: Reflect on jobs that interest you
10 min

Review: Introduction to foundations of digital marketing and e-commerce

E-commerce, ecommerce, or eCommerce?

Which is the correct term: e-commerce, ecommerce, eCommerce, or just ecomm for short? The name and spelling of **e-commerce** has evolved over the last 30 years, and so have the technologies and job skills required to work in this field. This reading provides a summary of e-commerce's evolution by describing the history of the term and by laying out the four distinct models within e-commerce that have emerged over the years.

Like most everything on the internet, e-commerce — although it hasn't been around that long — has evolved and changed a lot. What started as electronic commerce, quickly progressed into e-commerce, ecommerce, or eCommerce. But how can you know which one to use? In this course, you'll see e-commerce used. That's, in part, because Google Trends — a website that analyzes popularity of top search queries in Google Search — shows most people prefer using **e-commerce**, as opposed to **ecommerce** or **eCommerce**. Since the word is a combination of two words, the use of the hyphen makes that more clear. Now, let's talk about the four distinct models within e-commerce:

- Business-to-consumer (B2C)
- Consumer-to-consumer (C2C)
- Business-to-business (B2B)
- Consumer-to-business (C2B)

Note: When a government entity does business online, substituting *business* with *administration* results in additional e-commerce models like business-to-administration (B2A) and consumer-to-administration (C2A). An example of B2A is a company selling software solutions for a government entity that does permitting. An example of C2A is a company that allows consumers to interact directly with a government service, such as paying their utility bills.

Business-to-consumer (B2C) e-commerce

Business-to-consumer (B2C) is the most common form of e-commerce. This is the online process of businesses selling products or services directly to consumers. Some credit the U.S. company Pizza Hut for the first e-commerce transaction (selling a pizza online). However, historians also recognize that before that pizza sale, Dan Kohn sold a CD album to a friend in Philadelphia on August 11, 1994. That friend sent his credit card information to pay for the album and shipping costs using encryption technology. Others couldn't steal his credit card information because it was encrypted!

Today, B2C e-commerce generates billions of dollars in revenue annually, with encrypted transactions as everyday occurrences. With B2C marketing, you have opportunities to apply your digital marketing skills in very specific ways. For example, you can become a specialist in experiential marketing or social media marketing, or even a subset of social media marketing called influencer marketing.

- **Experiential marketing**, also known as engagement marketing, encourages consumers to not only purchase a brand or product but to *experience* it. Experiential marketing campaigns draw out emotional responses from their audiences.
- **Social media marketing** creates content for different social media platforms to drive engagement and promote a business or product.
- **Influencer marketing** enlists influential people to endorse or mention a brand or product to their followers on social media.

Consumer-to-consumer (C2C) e-commerce

With consumer-to-consumer (C2C) e-commerce, individuals sell products or services to other individuals. In other words, consumers buy items from each other. Boston Computer Exchange created the first platform for C2C e-commerce in 1982. An online community of people used this platform to sell their used computers to other users. However, the best-known early C2C e-commerce platform is eBay, founded in 1995.

Today, C2C e-commerce still occurs on platforms like eBay and Etsy. Business-to-consumer platforms like Amazon also host C2C sales. Social media platforms like Facebook also entered C2C e-commerce with Facebook Marketplace. Digital marketing for a C2C business prioritizes skills in search engine optimization (SEO), content creation, and social media since most C2C consumers find each other through blogs and social media posts. Their shared interests lead to C2C transactions to buy and sell items.

Business-to-business (B2B) e-commerce

Business-to-business (B2B) e-commerce enables businesses to sell products and services to other businesses. The rise of services, particularly software services, accelerated B2B e-commerce. This type of service is known as Software-as-a-Service (SaaS). One example of a SaaS company is Salesforce, founded in 1999. SaaS companies, like Salesforce, provide other companies subscription access to business-critical services over the internet. For example, Salesforce provides customer relationship management (CRM) software that unifies sales, marketing, and services for a personalized customer journey.

Today, digital marketers for B2B companies use many of the same skills as digital marketers for B2C companies. However, B2B marketing campaigns require more precise identification of their target audiences. Selling to businesses requires a focus on communicating an immediate value to potential customers. Therefore, digital marketing for B2B companies tends to be more strategic. There may be fewer opportunities to specialize in one type of marketing, like social media marketing, and a greater emphasis on marketing analytics and data.

Consumer-to-business (C2B) e-commerce

The popularity of small business ownership helped establish another model for e-commerce, C2B. With C2B e-commerce, consumers sell their products or services to businesses. Specialized platforms also fill a need for these online transactions. For example, Upwork, founded in 2015, connects freelancers to businesses that may need their skills and services.

Consumers who are influencers may also fall into this category of e-commerce because they may sell their services to promote a company's products. With social media continuing to expand its influence on consumer decisions, the C2B e-commerce model will likely grow as well.

Key takeaway

This exploration of e-commerce models demonstrates that e-commerce has evolved and will continue to change rapidly. Knowing how to apply and gain new digital marketing skills is vital in advancing your career in this industry.

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