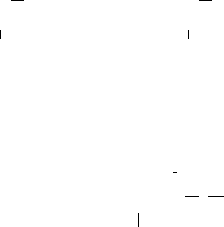
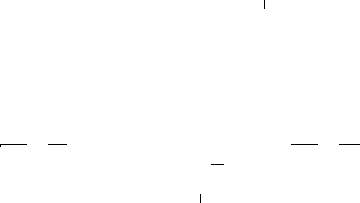
**1999-Text 2**

In the first year or so of Web business, most of the action has **revolved** around efforts to **tap** the consumer market. More recently, as the Web proved to be more than a fashion, companies have started to buy and sell products and services with one another. Such business to business sales **make sense** because business people typically know what product they're looking for.

Nonetheless, many companies still **hesitate** to use the Web because of doubts about its **reliability**. "Businesses need to feel they can trust the pathway between them and the supplier," says senior analyst Blane Erwin of Forrester Research. Some companies are **limiting** the risk by conducting online **transactions** only with established business partners who are given **access** to the company's private intranet.

Another major shift in the model for Internet commerce **concerns** the technology available for marketing. Until recently, Internet marketing activities have focused on strategies to "pull" customers into sites. In the past year, however, software companies have developed tools that allow companies to "push" information directly out to consumers, **transmitting** marketing messages directly to **targeted** customers. Most **notably**, the Pointcast Network uses a screen saver to deliver a continually updated stream of news and advertisements to subscribers' computer monitors. Subscribers can customize the information they want to receive and proceed directly to a company's Web site. Companies such as Virtual Vineyards are already starting to use similar technologies to push messages to customers about special sales, product offerings, or other events. But push technology has earned the **contempt** of many Web users. Online culture thinks highly of the notion that the information flowing onto the screen comes there by **specific** **request**. Once commercial promotion begins to fill the screen **uninvited**, the distinction between the Web and television fades. That's a prospect that horrifies Net purists.

But it is hardly **inevitable** that companies on the Web will need to **resort to** push strategies to make money. The examples of Virtual Vineyards, Amazon .corn, and other **pioneers** show that a Web site selling the right kind of products with the right mix of interactivity, hospitality, and **security** will attract online customers. And the cost of computing power continues to free fall, which is a good sign for any enterprise setting up shop in silicon. People looking back 5 or 10 years from now may well wonder why so few companies took the online **plunge**.