1. In what ways does IT contribute to the growth of Wal-Mart?

***Answer: Wal-Mart has grown to be the world’s largest corporation in terms of revenue. And Wal-Mart was named as the “most admired” company in 2003. The article said how Wall-Mart grew like that much with the information technology as below.***

***Today, every retailer eventually uses information technology like Wall-Mart. Then why Wall-Mart grew like current position. Wall-Mart not only used innovational technology such as computer-supported operations, POS(Point-Of-Sale) terminals, a satellite network to link stores to headquarters and bar codes to indicate prices at the checkout terminal earlier than others but also applied innovatively the information technologies to their business. It led to lower prices for consumers and augmentation of the efficiency.***

1. How is Wal-Mart using IT to share data and information with suppliers? Why does this lead to lower prices for consumers?

***Answer: Wal-Mart was very different to other retailers in the terms of sharing data and information with suppliers. Other retailers also eventually used same technology as Wal-Mart, but Wal-Mart applied it innovatively. For example, rather than hoard or sell the data that bar codes and POS systems generated, Wal-Mart shared it freely with its suppliers as a way of improving its incoming logistics. Then the suppliers obtained the data necessary to replenish Wal-Mart’s products without waiting for the retailer to order them. This process resulted in an average savings of 20 cents per shipping case for both Wal-Mart and the supplier.***

***In 1991, Wal-Mart took this sharing process one step further. It formalized sharing with an information system named Retail Link, which enabled suppliers to look up sales and prices of their products in any Wal-Mart store. This information helps the supplier plan its production and distribution to Wal-Mart, leading to better and cheaper products.***

1. What are Wal-Mart’s recent innovations, and how will they lead to lower costs?

***Answer: Wal-Mart has done a lot of innovation in their area, and I can say the recent two innovations are as below.***

***Recently Wal-Mart has been a leader in pushing the adoption of radio frequency identification tags(RFIDs) in products coming into its distribution centers. These RFIDs are tiny tags that are aimed at replacing bar codes as a way of identifying products. They have the advantage that they do not require direct contact or line-of-sight scanning to identify the product, and make it possible for retailers to know exactly what is in a pallet coming into the loading dock without having to be near it.***

***Wal-Mart also uses information technology for competitive advantage in product distribution. For example, Wal-Mart uses its POS data to minimize warehouse inventory. By using the warehouse as a “pass-through” point, where goods come in from the supplier at one side and go out to the store on the other side the same day over miles of conveyor belts, Wal-Mart saves time and money. To improve this process further, Wal-Mart was also an early member of UCCnet, the data synchronization and registry service of the Uniform Code Council that sets the codes used in bar code systems. This avoids problems with pallets with bar codes that fail to match the purchase order listing, which delays processing at the loading dock. If this pallet has a high-demand product on it, the result of the delay could mean lost revenue and unhappy customers.***

1. Search for more Wal-Mart’s technology-innovation used today.

***Answer: I will introduce 4 technology-innovations about e-commerce of Wall-Mart today.***

***First, online shopping with free pickup. Today, people are busier than ever. Customers can order the essentials that they need from wherever’s most convenient for them, then they can pick up their items at store for free as soon as today. It can make customers save money on shipping costs and enjoy even more value with discounts on items they pick up in store, because when Wal-Mart saves on shipping costs and they pass the savings on to customers.***

***Second, mobile apps. Twenty-four million people are actively using Wal-Mart’s app each month and according to Wal-Mart, it ranks among the top three retail apps. The Wal-Mart app solves problems rapidly, it makes the customers can save their time.***

***Third, Wal-Mart’s new global technology platform, Pangaea. It gives the company the ability to radically scale its assortment. And they created smart pricing algorithms that they have now applied to nearly their all items this year. Pangea helps merchants manage a lot more items than they could under traditional pricing management methods.***

***Forth, website improvement. <Walmart.com> has also moved to a responsive design, which adapts to whatever device consumers use. Wal-Mart’s data shows that almost 15 percent of transactions on Walmar.com occur across multiple devices.***

***Wal-Mart plans to invest at least $1.2 billion in its digital and ecommerce business the year ahead. They will continue to innovate constantly.***