

EDITORIAL PREFACE

Janice Burn, Guest Editor

This special edition of JGITM is devoted to Global e-commerce. Much has been written about e-commerce and the impact that this will have for globalisation in the 21st Century but much that is written is hype rather than practical and informed guidance for the businesses who want to take advantage of the new electronic market. The priorities and activities required to encourage e-business to grow in a global context are: establishing the environment conducive to the widespread adoption of e-commerce, demonstrating the business case to both businesses and consumers worldwide, targeting barriers to the development of global e-commerce, and maximizing the efficiency dividend from e-commerce for the economy at large. To achieve these aims Governments worldwide need to collaborate, legislate and stimulate to raise awareness of online business systems and promote the rapid diffusion of online technologies into all levels of society. This will not, however, be sufficient to ensure effective e-commerce developments on a global scale. There are other issues related to cultural changes, disparate levels of technical maturity and different forms of business and transactions which all impact on the effective take up of this new business environment. This special edition considers some of these issues and in so doing suggests a framework that can be applied to future research in the global e-business arena.

ARTICLES

CONCEPTUALISING THE DYNAMICS OF GLOBALISATION AND CULTURE IN ELECTRONIC COMMERCE

AUTHORS: MELISSA COLE and ROBERT M. O'KEEFE of Brunel University, UK.

ABSTRACT: Electronic commerce implies global reach, increased connectivity and interdependence, and technological advancement across cultural boundaries.

Development of these aspects, however, has not occurred in an even manner. Online consumers, at different levels of technical maturity and cultural homogeneity, interact to create new cultural forms or "zones". These zones occur simultaneously in different directions, with different densities and at different speeds with largely unpredictable consequences. This paper produces a unique framework based upon this concept. We use this to understand the actions of the online consumer, analyse some previous thinking on EC, and develop some potential business responses to this concept.

EMERGING VIRTUAL MODELS FOR GLOBAL E-COMMERCE - WORLD WIDE RETAILING IN THE E-GROCERY BUSINESS

AUTHORS: Janice Burn and Martin Barnett, School of MIS, Edith Cowan University, Australia

ABSTRACT: This paper looks at emerging models for world wide retailing in an electronic market environment. The authors begin by providing some definitions of virtual cultures and a set of models of virtuality which can describe an electronic market. This is then explored within the context of electronic grocery retailing to describe avenues to global expansion. Available virtual forms are determined both by pre-defined communication links and the extent to which these can be substituted by virtual ones, but also by the intensity of virtual links supporting the virtual form adopted. It is argued that seven models suffice to provide and describe a comprehensive dynamic framework of change. It is suggested that for strategic advantage virtual e-groceries must align their management models and communication processes with their virtual culture.

GLOBAL ELECTRONIC COMMERCE VIRTUAL OFFERS AND VIRTUAL TRANSACTIONS

AUTHORS: Ashok Ranchhod, Southampton Business School, UK; Ray Hackney, Manchester Metropolitan University, UK; Calin Gurau, Southampton Business School, UK

ABSTRACT: The paper investigates the influence of how differing factors affecting transactions affect the global dimension of virtual offers. A virtual offer is defined as any commercial proposition designed to conclude in a transaction which can be accepted on-line. The paper attempts to determine the level of globalisation of these offers and to identify and analyse the factors that influence their transnational dimension. Electronic commerce eliminates the limits of space and time as on-line transactions are made between companies located anywhere in the world. However each company has to abide by specific cultural, economic and legal characteristics within the national context. These need to be carefully considered by companies attempting virtual global transactions. The paper considers the principle of the characteristics of the virtual market which determine the high level of globalisation for the virtual offers. A number of hypotheses were formulated and tested through an analysis of 500 company web sites. It is concluded that the specificity of each transaction will impact on the global dimension (explicitly or implicitly) of the offer.

THE EXPERT OPINION

An interview with Ian White: Western Australia Location Manager, Oracle Corporation Australia Pty Limited Perth, Australia.

The interview was conducted by **Peter Marshall**, Edith Cowan University, Perth, Australia. The interview focused on how Oracle can help businesses participate in Global e-commerce.

THE BOOK REVIEW

Written by **Peter Marshall** of Edith Cowan University, Western Australia.

He reviews "DOING BUSINESS ON THE INTERNET: OPPORTUNITIES AND PITFALLS" edited by Fay Sudweeks and Celia T. Romm. Publisher of the book: Springer-Verlag London Limited 1999. ISBN 1-85233-030-9

Amid a welter of journalistic exaggeration and over-optimistic hype, it is a welcome thing to open a book of readings on electronic commerce and find a collection of considered and reflective chapters, a good many of which are grounded in empirical fact. The book "Doing Business on the Internet" edited by Fay Sudweeks and Celia Romm is such a book, and while at times this book seems to search for a coherent and unifying theme, it does offer a set of expositions on a variety of aspects of the broad topic of electronic commerce.