Chapter 1
From Integration to Social Media:
Understanding Electronic Marketplace

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ABSTRACT

EMs as trade tools have been the subject of several disruptive changes during the past few decades. The chapter discusses the importance of EM integration and market knowledge management as today's main concerns affecting the effectiveness and efficiency of EMs. After explaining the concerns regarding EM integration at intra- and inter-organizational levels, the chapter mentions the role of social media as an example of new technological tools that affect EMs. By highlighting the importance of understanding EMs this paper proposes a four level analytical tool for differentiating B2B EMs.

INFORMATION SYSTEMS: FROM INFRASTRUCTURE TO APPLICATIONS

In recent decades, with the advancements in communication technologies, EMs have been implemented in a more advanced communication platform and with more integration. EDI

systems introduced during the 1960s were the first electronic information platforms widely used in organizations. With advancements in the computation, communication, and data storage technologies, Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) systems were widely employed during the 1990s. It is important to mention that the new technologies in this evolution process do not replace the previous information platforms, rather the new technologies use the previous platforms to advance the organizational electronic networks (McNichols

and Brennan, 2006). During the 1990s, the organizational electronic networks expanded beyond organizational boundaries, and web-based trading exchanges started to be employed for promoting inter-organizational integration. During this time, internet-based collaborative systems – including EMs – attracted the attention of many businesses and scholars. Technology infrastructure and integration of information systems with organizational functions along with selection of suitable "service" models were the main concerns of businesses during the 20th century (Holzmuller and Schluchter, 2002). In the 21st century integration of EM participants' functions are important and more complex, however organizations may fail to realise how to gather and interpret the "market knowledge" in the new business world (Wiersema, 2013). These concerns of organizational information systems as related to EMs are displayed in Figure 1.

In the following section the concerns around integration and understanding the market knowledge are described.

CHALLENGE OF THE 21ST CENTURY: INTEGRATION AND MARKET KNOWLEDGE

Integration and access to the market knowledge are the two concerns of EMs in 21st century. While integration at intra- and inter-organizational levels has been extensively explored in the context of EM, new business environments call for rethinking and re-evaluating our understanding of integration mechanisms and requirements. On the other hand, the concerns about the market knowledge in light of new technological advancements and business environment in the context of EMs are more recent and less studied concerns. In the following these two concerns have been explored.

Integration

While the technical aspect of integration has been explored significantly, less attention has been paid to the "governance structures in industry networks" (Koch and Schultze, 2011), which seems to be a

Figure 1. Concerns of organizational information systems
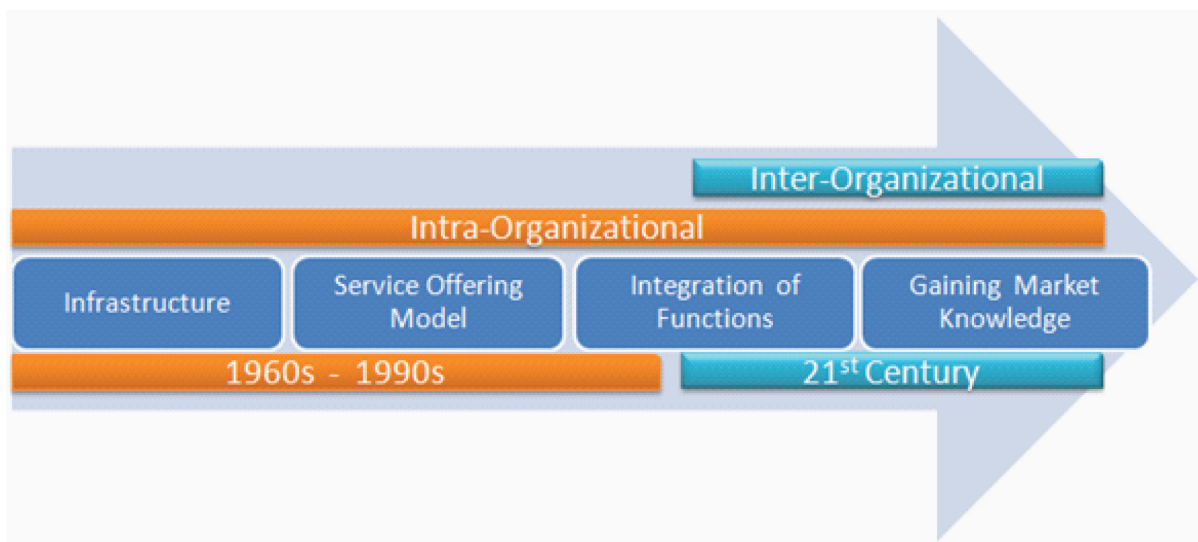
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