

Chapter 93

An Examination of the Factors Influencing Consumers' Visit of C2C Websites

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ABSTRACT

Few research studies have tackled the topic of commercial C2C (Consumer-to-consumer) Websites while online C2C exchange are having huge success and attract ever-increasing Internet users. Organisations need to understand the critical success factors for attracting the Internet user's attention. This article sheds the light on the usage background of Tunisian C2C websites. The main outcome of this work results from a netnographic study followed by twenty three semi-structured interviews with C2C websites' users. Contrary to the results of other researches which connect the use of C2C Websites to electronic factors, this research provides a framework to add "offline" determinants related to perceptions that are acquired prior to or following the C2C websites' visit. The factors influencing consumers' visit of C2C Websites were classified into three major categories: before, while and after visiting the C2C Website. Each category includes factors that were discussed to make managerial recommendations. The authors also expose the major personal and situation factors that may characterize C2C Websites' users.

INTRODUCTION

The functionalities of the Web are evolving as new features are appearing daily. The power of Internet users is increasing and, with the interactivity of the Web, so are their requirements. Websites' visitors are in real control of their exposure (Karson & Fisher, 2003). A B2C website

(Business-to-Consumer), where the company describes the technical and functional characteristics of products offered, may certainly shorten the consumers' process of information research (Florès *et al.*, 2008).

Recent years have witnessed the birth of several concepts which have so swiftly grabbed the Internet user's attention: virtual communities, blogs, social

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networks, online auctions, classified ads...etc. Despite modest financial means, they are having huge success and attract ever-increasing Internet users. For example, in 2011, eBay.co.uk accounted for about 22,224,000 Unique Visitors per month, while maintaining a steady yearly growth of 1.3% (Szalák, 2011). Online auctions may reduce potential demand of new goods, which can affect the sales of online retailers (Pathak, 2009) while some years ago, B2C model was the dominant model for electronic commerce (Leung & Knottenbelt, 2011).

In this research, we try to explore the specificities of the online sale between consumers as a new form of exchange using the Internet in Tunisia. We will also try to understand the current perceptions that Internet users have of online classified ads as well as their profile. To reach these goals, we adopted an exploratory approach using two qualitative methods: netnography and semi-structured interviews.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The large scale diffusion of the ICT has clearly revolutionized consumers' lifestyle. With the development of the Internet, consumers can control the exchange process better. Internet users set the rules by choosing the information to which they have access and the offers they may opt to consult. By insuring a perfect combination between information, shopping and entertainment (Hammond *et al.*, 1998; Joines *et al.*, 2003; Close & Kukar-Kinney, 2009), the Web allows Internet users to collect, analyze and check a wide quantity of information. This would facilitate the comparison between the offered products. Electronic commerce remains a resultant which cannot be neglected.

Consumer-to-Consumer E-Commerce

Internet can be used to inform customers, collect their reactions, build statistical or personal data-

bases, and provoke purchase decision. "Indirect e-commerce" refers to the business initialized on the Web; however, it is followed by a purchase in another distribution channel (Currie, 2000). E-commerce activities can be classified into four main activities B2B, B2C, C2B and C2C. The remainder of the article will be focused on C2C.

Consumer-to-consumer (C2C) includes online auctions, third party consumer listings, communities and chat rooms (Jones & Leonard, 2008). "Consumer online resale" can be defined as "an online resale in which the products being resold were purchased mainly for self-use, not for resale" (Chu & Liao, 2007). Exchange between consumers can be transactional or relational (Gruen *et al.*, 2005). The informational and relational C2C exchanges have been widely examined by researchers especially exchanges between virtual communities' members (Bagozzi & Dholakia, 2002).

C2C exchange may be transactional or informational (Pathak, 2009). C2C exchange is considered as a category of the e-commerce if the visit of the website could engender a later trade activity or still attract potential buyers (Isaac *et al.*, 2008).

To know more about the antecedents of visiting C2C websites, it is important to begin by elaborating on the reason behind visiting a website in general: the electronic service quality.

Antecedents of Websites' Visit

An Electronic Service Quality More and More Required

Customer perceived e-service quality is considered as one of the critical determinants of the success of an online business (Yang *et al.*, 2004). Researchers focused on the service quality as a major determinant of websites' visit (Parasuraman *et al.*, 1998, 2005; Bressolles & Nantel, 2008). Service quality of brick-and-mortar retailers gave birth to a great deal of research studies. Parasuraman *et al.* (2005) defined the electronic service quality as

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