



Chapter II

Initial Exploratory Study

In this chapter, we discuss an initial exploratory study conducted via a survey that aimed to examine the extent of e-commerce adoption in Australia and New Zealand. First, the chapter discusses the respondents' profile followed by the key findings that pertained to potential versus achieved benefits, and potential versus perceived barriers and risks. Then we provide a comparison of the findings between Europe and Australia, and New Zealand. Finally, we conclude the chapter with characteristics of e-commerce adopters, namely leaders who have succeeded in e-commerce adoption versus followers who have not, leading to recommendations, lessons learned, and the future of e-commerce in Australia and New Zealand.

An exploratory survey that aimed to examine the extent of e-commerce adoption was mailed out to more than 1,000 Australian and New Zealand organizations. Respondents participating in the survey came from a wide range of organizations operating in Australia and New Zealand. Two hundred and eighty-nine completed questionnaires were received in October 1998 for an initial response rate of 28.9%. However, a number of organizations requested an extension of the survey return deadline via email. Consequently, a second round of the survey was carried out through a secure web site. The extension contributed another twenty responses.

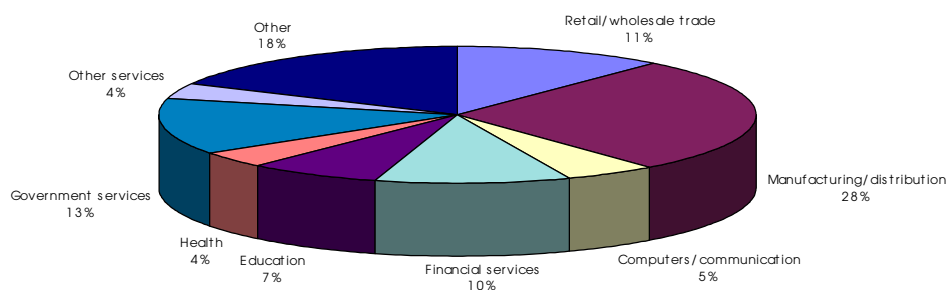
Of the 309 responses, 146 were from Australia, and 163 from New Zealand. The quantitative data set was used for statistical analysis, and comments from respondents led to pattern matching and explanation building.

RESPONDENT PROFILE

E-commerce is said to contribute to a ‘death of distance’, thereby leading to globalization. First, it is important to assess the geographical reach of the responding organizations. Thirty-five percent of the respondent organizations indicated they had a global reach, while 31% reported a national reach, 21% a regional reach, and 13% a local reach. Second, the nature of industry is likely to affect its propensity for adopting new ways of doing business. The two largest specific industry categories that participated in this survey were the manufacturing/distribution (28%) and the government services (13%).

The pie chart in Figure 1 provides a full breakdown of respondents by industry. Finally, the size of an organization may be an indicator of the resources it can bring to bear on the adoption of a new way of doing business and the level of potential inertia facing the business. The majority of the organizations surveyed (40%) had 100-500 full-time (or equivalent) employees. Nineteen percent had less than 100 employees, 14% had between 500-1000 full-time

Figure 1: Respondent by industry demographics



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