Chapter X
A Proposed Theoretical Framework for Assessing Quality of E-Commerce Systems

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ABSTRACT

Companies and institutions in the light of globalization and competitiveness are seeking to improve their services, particularly electronic access to excellence. With the tremendous growth in the global digital transactions, the entry of electronic commerce strongly in global business dealings under acceleration, heated competition in the provision of electronic services, the companies are keen on achieving the principle of comprehensive quality and special electronic sites and services on the Internet. Thus, those sites become electronic firms, so it must give good impression about the company from the outset. The significance of the study is that it addresses one of the vital issues of our time, which is the current enormous revolution in information technology and communications, it provides a framework to evaluate the quality of sites and electronic services are comprehensive, objective and flexible to reach the ideal site. The proposed framework can be used to compare the quality of E-Commerce systems, or to improve the image and performance of a particular E-Commerce systems or to provide reference guide for designers of the sites where their determination to new sites. This chapter examined and analyzed previous research studies that interrelated with the quality of sites and electronic services, and then developed an inclusive theoretical framework. This framework consisted of new indicators that are clear, measurable, and flexible to the possibility of its application on all sites and services, regardless of the nature of the company or institution. Consequently, the proposed framework can be applied easily to evaluate the quality of any system.

INTRODUCTION

Past years have seen widespread of the Internet, huge number of Websites and attendant dissemination of vast quantities of information, so we are suffering from new phenomenon inflation information, and many sites without attention to quality and their services (*Sean Quan Lau, 2006).* The number of sites has grown since the start of first electronic trading mid-nineties of the last century. This explosion of knowledge of the number of sites led to the need for standards to ensure the quality of E-Commerce systems and the services they offer. The main objective behind this number of sites is the continuous improvement of the performance of companies and the level of services they provide to the customers in the world of knowledge and the digital economy. The company's electronic site on the Internet, has a major impact on the company's performance, it has become in the world of e-business the core of the work of the companies and institutions that adopt the principle of electronic services. Therefore, firms and institutions are eager to make their best picture of the highest quality, with the aim of improving service, which contributes to the rosy picture given by the company will be reflected positively on its Performance.

E-Commerce is considered an excellent alternative for companies to reach new customers. However, many E-Commerce Websites have a short life because they don't meet the minimal software quality requirements *(Albuquerque et al. 2002).* The tendency of major companies towards electronic commerce over the last decade, and the tremendous growth in the volume of electronic commerce based on the principle of electronic services, has led to concern in recent years the quality of E-Commerce systems and the services they offer.

Ensuring the quality of E-Commerce systems is not easy, standards which can determine that vary according to location and the nature of services provided. On this basis, we find many of the studies of the quality improvement Websites on the service provided. Some researchers have gone to evaluate the quality of Web sites for business and commercial companies, while others went to evaluate the quality of Web sites for e-government sites (*Ma and Zaphiris, 2003*; *Choudrie et al, 2004*), while the others evaluated quality of banks and financial companies, as a number of researchers evaluated the quality of universities and educational institutions sites *(singh and Sook, 2002).* In addition, Other Websites provide other types of services, such as Web sites for auction, or e-shopping, and so on (*Barnes and Vidgen*, 2001) . We have a variety of studies and researches based upon the diversity of Web sites, the nature of services provided and the differences in the criteria used in the evaluation process, but what characterizes most of these studies is the use of descriptive style inalienable measure, and not to rely on quantitative style. In addition to previous studies that characterized most valuable improvement, particular type of E-Commerce systems have provided a unified and comprehensive standards for all E-Commerce systems and the services they offer.

Based on the foregoing, this study aims to analysis previous research studies, which dealt with evaluating the quality of E-Commerce systems, and reaching a framework for evaluating the quality of E-Commerce systems, regardless of the nature of the service provided by the electronic site, the framework contains all the key elements of inclusiveness , clarity and objectivity by the possibility of using the numerical values of the indicators for measuring process, and flexibility through the possibility of its application to all E-Commerce systems, regardless of the nature of the service provided .

WHY WE NEED A THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

With the direction of major companies to online transactions and the growth of electronic com-

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