

Chapter 8

An E-Support Firm's Response to Local E-Readiness and the Global E-Business Environment

John Effah

University of Ghana Business School, Ghana

Ben Light

University of Salford, UK

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this study is to understand a small e-support firm's response to the local e-readiness and the global e-business environment in a developing context. E-Support firms provide Web development and consultancy services to user organizations, assisting them in their uptake and maintenance of their Internet applications. Within the e-readiness research area, little is known about e-support firms, particularly in connection with their interaction with their local and the global e-business environment. As yet the emphasis on e-readiness studies has been at the national level. Nevertheless, the e-support sector is very significant in the successful adoption and diffusion of the Internet and related applications in any economy. It is thus important to understand how such firms relate to their e-business environments.

DOI: 10.4018/978-1-61350-311-9.ch008

That said, this study draws on the interpretive case study of a small e-support firm in Ghana, a developing context, to investigate the firm's response to the e-readiness level of the local and the global e-business environment. Findings show that the firm could employ resources from the global environment to address most of the infrastructural challenges posed by a relatively poor local e-readiness context. However, its attempt to transfer advanced e-business technologies from the global e-business environment to the local e-business context did not succeed. This chapter offers implications for practice and research concerning the notion of reconciling local and global e-business environments in the small e-support sector.

INTRODUCTION

It is widely accepted that the Internet and the World-Wide-Web have become important technologies across our social and economic lives. They are now widely available in our workplaces as well as in our homes. For these technologies to successfully play their significant role in society and organizations, a strong e-support sector that can provide the necessary technical support for user organizations and individuals who cannot develop, implement and maintain their own systems is indispensable. Molla and Licker (2005) underscores the significance of such e-support sector for the successful adoption and diffusion of e-business/e-commerce, particularly in developing countries where ICT infrastructure and skills are relatively poor and limited. With a strong e-support sector, user organizations can concentrate on their core businesses and outsource their technical needs to specialist ICT firms.

Despite the significance of e-support firms in the both mature and emerging digital economies, research on them within the e-readiness literature is limited. As yet, the dominant focus on e-readiness research has on the national level (e.g, Bui, Sankaran, & Sebastian, 2003; Ifinedo, 2005). The e-support area with its relationship to local and global e-business environment is significantly under explored. Given its significance in the adoption and diffusion of Internet and Web-based technologies in organizations and society, it is important that the sector receives adequate research attention as an important component of e-readiness research in every country. Moreover, given their supportive role, e-support firms need to understand not only their local e-business environment but also developments in the dynamic global e-business context. To do this, they need to be guided by appropriate research findings that can provide relevant information on the e-readiness of the local business environment and situations in the global e-business context. That said, this study draws on the interpretive case study approach (Klein & Myers, 1999; G. Walsham, 1995; 2006) involving a small e-support firm in Ghana, an emerging digital economy in a de-

13 more pages are available in the full version of this document, which may be purchased using the "Add to Cart" button on the publisher's webpage: www.igi-global.com/chapter/support-firm-response-local-readiness/61101

Related Content

View Selection in DW and OLAP: A Theoretical Review

Alfredo Cuzzocrea (2009). *Encyclopedia of Data Warehousing and Mining, Second Edition* (pp. 2048-2055).

www.irma-international.org/chapter/view-selection-olap/11101

Evaluation of Decision Rules by Qualities for Decision-Making Systems

Ivan Bruha (2009). *Encyclopedia of Data Warehousing and Mining, Second Edition* (pp. 795-801).

www.irma-international.org/chapter/evaluation-decision-rules-qualities-decision/10911

Constrained Data Mining

Brad Morantz (2009). *Encyclopedia of Data Warehousing and Mining, Second Edition* (pp. 301-306).

www.irma-international.org/chapter/constrained-data-mining/10836

Quality of Association Rules by Chi-Squared Test

Wen-Chi Hou (2009). *Encyclopedia of Data Warehousing and Mining, Second Edition* (pp. 1639-1645).

www.irma-international.org/chapter/quality-association-rules-chi-squared/11038

Evolutionary Development of ANNs for Data Mining

Daniel Rivero (2009). *Encyclopedia of Data Warehousing and Mining, Second Edition* (pp. 829-835).

www.irma-international.org/chapter/evolutionary-development-anns-data-mining/10916