

**THE IMPACT OF ELECTRONIC COMMERCE
ENVIRONMENT ON USER BEHAVIOR: THE CASE OF A
COMPLEX PRODUCT**

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ABSTRACT

There is no doubt that growth of electronic commerce (EC) on the Internet/Web is only going to accelerate even more. However, as the EC technology matures and attracts a larger number of mainstream consumers the virtuality of the EC environment will become an important issue. Many consumers feel uncomfortable with this virtuality. A compelling issue facing the designer/developer of an EC environment is how the EC environments can be made more acceptable to consumers by approximating their real-world physical store purchase experience. Drawing upon previous literature, this study uses the theme of “fit” between EC environment and the product type. Four different prototype systems depicting different EC environments for a complex product were developed. Using laboratory-based experiments, the influence of “fit” between EC environment and product type on user outcomes was examined. Significant support to the “fit” theory in the context of a complex product is obtained.

Key Words: Electronic Commerce, EC, e-commerce Environmental Richness, Consumer Behavior, Business-to-Consumer, e-commerce Site Design