

E-commerce: The Roles of Trust, Security, and Type of E-commerce Involvement

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Abstract

This paper examines e-commerce and the role of trust and security in different types of e-commerce relationships. While the role of trust in e-commerce has been studied from a customer's perspective, the influence of trust from the perspective of the organization is largely unexplored. An initial survey was conducted that found trust was important in an organization's success with e-commerce involving transactions and identifiable partners (EDI), but not in other e-commerce relationships. The ability to secure the website was important in both implementation and success of all e-commerce regardless of purpose. Therefore a follow-up longitudinal case study explored these relationships further by comparing the nature of website purposes, types/functionality, and desired relationships.

Four organizations and their websites were examined based on the framework proposed. Under this framework, the desired relationship between customer and organization determines the functionality and the level of security or trust required. The evolution of the relationships and functionality of the websites over a two-year period was followed in these organizations to understand the role of trust and security in website implementation. Changing technology and sophistication of the organizations' resources for security played a key role in the evolution of specific websites. In sum, depending on the type of relationship desired and the level of the website's risk, trust and security play differential roles in the successful implementation of e-commerce.

The findings from the survey study, as well as the follow-up case study, are used to suggest a framework of the factors that impact the implementation and perceived success of e-commerce websites from an organizational perspective. An e-commerce framework that includes trust and security is proposed.

Key words: e-commerce, trust, security, EDI