

Consumer Search Behavior in Online Shopping Environments

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ABSTRACT

This paper explores search behavior of online shoppers. Information economics literature suggests that search cost in electronic markets has essentially been reduced to zero as consumers are able to use powerful search tools, free of charge, to easily find and compare product and shopping information on the Internet. In the present research, however, we present a research model proposing that users need to spend time and effort when completing search tasks, resulting in significant search cost and a trade-off between search cost and search performance. Preliminary findings from an Internet experiment indicate that search task complexity, search engine capability, search strategy, and user experience are important factors determining search cost and performance.

Keywords: Consumer search behavior, search cost, search engines, search strategies, online shopping.