

# **Self-Services in Customer Relationships: Balancing High-Tech and High-Touch Today and Tomorrow**

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## **ABSTRACT**

Self-services in customer relationships are becoming increasingly important – a development that has been boosted by customers’ increasing and diverse use of the Internet. Banks have, for example, created online-only products and airlines offer special discounts for passengers booking online. This paper approaches self-services from three directions. Firstly, a chronological review of the literature in this field is provided in order to get an idea of how scholars address the self-service phenomenon. Secondly, based on these theoretical foundations, we discuss today’s self-service activities by presenting the results of a study that we conducted. We identify the balancing of high-tech and high-touch as today’s key challenge to self-service systems. Finally, we propose three trends that we expect to be incorporated into the next generation of self-services. These trends are geared towards achieving a balance between high-tech and high-touch. They encompass the integration of self-services with traditional customer touchpoints, the use of voice-based technologies, and the deployment of persona design in the development of self-service applications.

**Keywords:** Self-service, Self-service technology, Customer interaction, Service management.