The Online Market

Hari Osias C. Banaag

San Joaquin Valley College

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Benjamin Andrews

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More and more people are using the internet to make many of their shopping decisions. With websites like Amazon.com, Ebay and Google it is easier than ever to find just what you are looking for. Everyone knows how to do it. All you have to do is type what you are looking for into a search bar, like Yahoo! or Google and whatever you are looking for pops up in a nice list. Everything you can look for can be found. Try it. Regular stores even market their online shopping pages in their real locations because they know they have to compete. Online stores make shopping easier with people being able to search for exactly what they want, getting special deals and treatment on the web-pages themselves, and the ease of using their electronic payments from home without ever having to leave their chair.

Here is something that is easy to do. Search in any internet search-engine the words “online shopping.” A mall full of stores comes up on the first page alone. “In 2012, [U.S. e-commerce sales](http://www.statista.com/statistics/172682/us-e-commerce-sales-since-2000/) amounted to 289 billion U.S. dollars, up from 256 billion U.S. dollars in 2011” (Kril). Billions and billions of dollars are spent online every year so there has to be a reason. We all know that shopping itself is expensive and when you buy online you often have to pay for shipping too. So why buy online? “First of all it’s important to note that convenience is the primary motivation for online shoppers. Price is secondary” (Schlosberg). There is convenience is being able to search for a raccoon-tail hat or a white and green sports coat and finding several dozen online stores ready to provide their services to you. When it comes to saving time people often will spend a little bit more of it means they don’t have to travel to the store, or another city, to find what they are looking for. If you need a computer better than the one you have all you have to do is go to a site like BestBuy.com, Gateway.com, Dell.com or many others and they will “help” you find what you need without having to go to the store. Conveniences like those are what hurts the regular stores.

After convenience comes price. We all know that convenience alone is no way to keep a customer coming back for more. So retailers have to offer special deals. “The Monday after Thanksgiving has become the most important online shopping day in the United States. Taking the concept of Black Friday to the internet, e-retailers lure consumers with special Cyber Monday deals” (Kril). Now retail stores are extending in-house deals so that buyers are influenced to do more business over the internet. Cyber Monday deals offer free shipping, no interest for certain time periods for credit purchases and even huge discounts over in-store prices. Then there are online coupons. “Online coupon codes offer consumers a chance to save money on their online purchases, just as paper coupons do inside traditional stores” (Good Morning America, 2013). These online coupons are just code numbers that can be entered into the website at the checkout screen so that a discount is given. Just like paper coupons they can only be used once, but the added benefit of using them with the convenience of shopping from home is adding to why people are staying online for their shopping.

People used to be afraid that if they used their credit cards online then the information would be stolen. Even though the threat is still there people are not so scared anymore. “The number of online shoppers who pay for their purchases with credit cards has almost tripled since 1997. It’s up to 70 percent now, compared to 59 percent in 1999 and 34 percent back in 1997” (Schlosberg). This means that as people get used to dealing with their credit cards online more and more people feel it is just a natural thing to use their credit card to buy things online. And really, it is very simple. Most sites now offer you a chance to sign up with them, store your information and target you every time you log on to their page with things they think you might like due to your past purchases. Did you buy a new book? Now your email, and your shopping experiences show nothing but the kinds of books you bought so that you are more likely to spend with them again.

With more and more people shopping online real-world stores are not going away. This was proved when online giant, and huge retailer, Borders Books went out of business due to failed online marketing. While small stores that cannot compete still go out of business others remain in the game by adapting to the new market with making online orders-in store pick up a reality, and by hosting special events and deal days in house. Still, billions are spent online making the online market a real one.

People shop online because it is easy. You can find what you want, when you want for the price you like and never have to leave your office chair. You can book hotels, buy airline tickets, rent a car and even set up in-store purchases for your vacation all before getting out of your bath robe at the beginning of the day. Convenience and time are the main reasons we shop online, but we are also doing it because it has become just what we do. Like driving, once you get used to it then it becomes second nature.

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