Book Review: E-Commerce 2009: Business, Technology, and Society

Aw Yoke Cheng
Sunway University College
No. 5, Jalan Universiti, Bandar Sunway, 46150 Petaling Jaya, Selangor, Malaysia
Tel: +60 3 7491 8622
Email: ycaw@sunway.edu.my

Teoh Ai Ping
Wawasan Open University
54, Jalan Sultan Ahmad Shah, 10050 Penang, Malaysia.
Tel: +60 4 228 9323
Email: apteoh@wou.edu.my

Eaw Hooi Cheng
Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman
Building PE, No. 1 Jalan 13/4, 46200 Petaling Jaya, Selangor, Malaysia.
Tel: +60 3 79551160
Email: eawhc@utar.edu.my

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BOOK REVIEW

This is the fifth edition of an e-commerce book authored by Laudon and Traver. This edition has included some new breeds in e-commerce services such as social networking and the proliferation of Web2.0 applications.

This book consists of four major parts with twelve chapters. The first part provides an introduction to e-commerce. It touches the concept and e-commerce, the different between e-commerce and e-business, and some e-commerce business and revenue models.

The second part discusses the technological infrastructure that lays the foundations of e-commerce. It starts by tracing the history of the Internet 1 up to the latest development of Web 2.0 applications. It also provides some key points in developing a commercial web site and the concerns on security and online payment systems.

The third part concentrates on business concepts and social-legal issues in the e-commerce perspective. It provides readers the insight of consumer behaviour in Internet business and marketing as well as online marketing communication. This part also covers the social and legal environment surrounding e-commerce. It describes the ethical and legal dimensions of e-commerce such as personal information privacy, intellectual property, public health and wealth issues, and others.

The final part provides readers total exploratory feel in the real e-commerce. Unlike the earlier parts, this part takes the sector approach rather than the conceptual approach. Real-life experiences by the dot-coms are presented from various e-commerce industries which cover online retail and services; online content and media; social networks, auctions, and portals; and business-to-business e-commerce – supply chain management, and collaborative commerce.

For a novice in e-commerce, this book is easy to read and informative. It gives a good overview of e-commerce and introduces the reader into business from a historical perspective up to successfully developing and hosting a commercial web site. The excellent print and illustrations certainly makes this book a valuable reading collection for the e-commerce beginners.

For the instructors, this book is suitable as the main text and/or essential reference for the undergraduate students who are learning the subject of e-commerce for the first time. It is also a good source of reference for anyone who would like to know more about the latest on e-commerce. The book is designed to provide a coherent exploration in the three major underlying themes in e-commerce namely business, technology and society, which readers may find it resourceful, informative and easy to understand. It provides strong conceptual foundation, real-world business focus and covers current as well as the future of e-commerce coupled with chapter-specific case studies.

At the end of each chapter, there are hands-on projects that require learners to apply the chapter-specific concepts and to use higher analytical skills to complete the project tasks. It makes a good assessment component as the mini project assignments to be given to students as part of their formative evaluations. This book could even serve as a surface reading for graduate students who are taking the Electronic Commerce or similar course in a MBA programme.

For working IT professionals, the authors managed to address the 3 underlying themes i.e. business, technology and social issues in about 900 pages. The chapters are carefully arranged to impart maximum knowledge on the key issues. For example, the key concepts, case studies and topics described under Chapter 2: E-commerce Business Models and Concepts, hits all the significant points. Also, for example, in Chapter 4: Building an E-commerce Web Site, is an invaluable industrial-relevance areas. These are topics business and IT professionals are struggling with and it's refreshing to see them elaborated in this book.

There are a few errata in this edition and the companion website has given the required corrections. The companion website also provides many resourceful links for those who need further research. The visitors of the companion website could also find it useful on the sections such as self-study quiz; projects and exercises; tech tutorials; business plans; and careers.

As the conclusion, the authors feel that this is one of the best e-commerce books written so far. It provides a good understanding of the evolving Internet technologies and e-commerce models, explores the business implications of these fascinating developments. It explores the technologies, business and implications of emergence of electronic commerce in the cyberspace. The book follows a logical sequence draws the reader into each chapter and enables the reader to learn the simplest concepts up to the complicated topics effectively. Most of the parts in this book are easy to read and very coherently organized.