

ecommerce 2006/7

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Level 3

School of Computing, Information Systems and Mathematics, Kingston University

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Goals of the Module

- To provide students with an overview of the impact of and trends in electronic commerce in differing business, retail and leisure environments.
- To introduce students to issues from across the industry in companies large and small, traditional businesses and start-ups
- To provide opportunities for students to consider their own ecommerce business ideas
- To discuss how the IT industry is changing and the roles for information systems designers and computer scientists in the ecommerce industries
- To explore the link between business strategy and electronic commerce and the importance of customer service
- To examine the emerging business models in e-business in terms of efficiency, effectiveness and innovation.

By the end of the module each student should be able to

- Describe current trends in the ecommerce marketplace
- Describe designing and building of ecommerce solutions
- Discuss some the technical options for implementing and running web based ecommerce
- Discuss the importance of online marketing, customer relationships and search engine optimisation
- Identify key business, legal and regulatory issues which may impact on electronic business.
- Relate the development and implementation of electronic business systems (including training, Intranet, customer service, monitoring and entertainment systems) to wider social and business trends.
- Critically assess how the technical and non-technical aspects can best be managed to ensure the successful implementation of electronic business systems.
- Develop a case to justify the expenditure on electronic commerce in terms of business benefits.
- Apply appropriate tools and techniques to identify opportunities for implementing e-business

Teaching and learning approach

The module will be run as a series of lectures with accompanying online discussions and activities.

For this course I will be using www.jonathanbriggs.com to disseminate information and support discussion. I prefer this to Blackboard but would welcome comments and feedback.

All lecture notes will be posted to www.jonathanbriggs.com before each session. Please ask questions by commenting on the appropriate document or lecture.

Online activities

We will also be using online surveys for four purposes:

1. To register all the students taking to module to improve communication
2. To help me monitor progress and improve communication

3. To involve each student in examining the state of UK e-commerce
4. To provide feedback on the running of the module

It is essential that you participate in all the online activity. In previous years students have felt they are following the course only to be disappointed by their exam results. Many have clearly misunderstood key concepts.

The online components of this course should allow us to test this understanding earlier and help each student improve their performance. This year I am able to award up to 10% of the exam mark for your contribution to these activities.

Indicative lecture topics

Introduction to ecommerce	Web pages versus web applications
Making money: business models	Designing customer journeys
Inside an e-business	Payment
Designing effective e-commerce	Running an e-business company
Technologies to support e-commerce	Lessons from traditional business
Building an ecommerce store using	Reflections on ecommerce
Open Source components	Search engine optimisation, analytics
Web services	and web marketing

Podcasts

Summaries of selected lectures will be made available as MP3 podcasts on jonathanbriggs.com after the lectures themselves. These are not a replacement for the lectures but provided as an additional experimental resource. Comments and questions would be welcome.

Assessment

The module will be assessed by examination only (single 2 hour exam). The exam will consist of two parts: one multiple-choice paper plus one short answer paper.

The short answer paper will be based on an activity that you must complete during the semester. You will take a report produced during the semester into the exam and hand it in along with your exam answers.

You will NOT be expected to memorise or to copy large sections of your report onto the exam paper but re-present key ideas in answer to specific questions.

You will work in a small group to complete the activity (Groups must not be larger than 4 people). If you choose to work alone then you should still complete all the deliverables as outlined below.

The work will involve the creation of a proposal for the improvement of an existing electronic business. Criteria for selecting a suitable business will be distributed in week 3 of the course.

Activity deliverables

Create an outline proposal suitable for presentation to the company or organisation

Please note that you must complete this activity in order to answer the examination questions!

It will not be possible to invent a case study for yourself inside the examination room! This should propose detailed improvements to the existing business.

The case study can be written as a series of bulleted notes and diagrams rather than extensive prose. You may annotate your case study with highlights or written notes (but not Post-Its).

The following headings are indicative of what should be included and provide a guideline of the maximum length (10 pages – strict limit):

- a. Clear identification of client with background notes on their business (1)
- b. Recommendations for improvement (1)
- c. Discussion of their audience, market and identification of demand (1)
- d. Review against competitors / similar businesses within their market (1)
- e. Technology Plan – what hardware and software would you use to develop the solution? (1)
- f. Promotion and Analytics plan – how will your business gain customers (1)
- g. Top-level implementation plan – what steps would you take to implement the project(1)
- h. Estimates for costs of implementation at industry rates
- i. Budget& revenue – what would be your expected revenues from the improvements suggested?

Examination

The multiple-choice part of the paper (40%) is likely to test

- Basic understanding of the ecommerce marketplace
- Demonstrate that you understand the terminology and technologies involved

Marks will be deducted for wrong answers (to discourage guesswork)

The short answer questions (50%) are likely to

- Provide you with a opportunity to prioritise your ideas (probably in a form suitable for presentation to a specific audience)
- Require you to reflect on the strengths and weaknesses of your ideas
- Ask you to discuss the costs and benefits of your ideas
- Ask you to review your technology plans
- Allow you to review your proposals in the context of broader developments in your client industry

Please note that you may take a proposal document of up to 10 sides of A4 (Minimum text size 10pt) into your examination. All proposals must be handed in alongside the exam answers. No other notes may be brought into the exam room.

Exam answers will be expected to be short and to the point and will focus on drawing out key ideas from the business proposal. Long essays are not expected.

If you are working in a group then it is expected that you will use roughly the same proposal as other members of the same group – this is OK!

Marks will be deducted if more pages are taken into the exam or if more than 4 students use the same basic proposal!

Marks will be awarded for answering the examination questions with direct reference to the proposal that you have prepared.

Mock versions of both parts of the paper will be provided during the module.

Examination dates

Dates will be advised. I do not have control over the dates as these are set centrally. There are likely to be early in the January exam period.

Indicative reading

The focus of this module is on the ecommerce business marketplace.

You should try and read some of the following books

- *Search Engine Marketing Inc.*, Mike Moran and Bill Hunt, IBM Press (2006), ISBN: 013185292-2
- *The Perfect Store: inside eBay*, Adam Cohen, Piatkus (2002), ISBN: 0749924039
- *Why we buy, the science of shopping*, Paco Underhill, Texere Publishing (2000), ISBN 158799044X
- *Right Side Up*, Alan Mitchell, Harper Collins Business (2001), ISBN: 0002571528
- *Dot Con*, John Cassidy, Allen Lane Publishing (2002), ISBN: 071399598X
- *Amazon.com: Get Big Fast*, Robert Spector, Random House (2000), ISBN: 0712669671
- *Futurize Your Enterprise: Business Strategy in the Age of the E-customer*, David Seigal, Hardcover - 318 pages (September 1999) John Wiley & Sons; ISBN: 0471357634
- *Net Success : 24 Leaders in Web Commerce Show You How to Put the Web to Work for Your Business*, Ford, Haylock, Len Muscarella, Hardcover - 320 pages (April 1999) Adams Media Corporation; ISBN: 1580621147
- *The E-Commerce Book: Building the E-Empire*, Steffano Korper, Juanita Ellis Hardcover - 284 pages (15 August, 1999) Academic Press Inc; ISBN: 0124211607
- *Customers.com*, Patricia Seybold, Hardcover - 380 pages (November 1998), Business (Century/Arrow); ISBN: 0712680713

Contact details

Initially address questions and comments through the website www.jonathanbriggs.com.

I prefer to be contacted by phone than to receive email:

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Please make sure that ALL of your emails have telephone contact details and a proper subject line. Emails without a subject line are likely to be rejected by my spam filters.