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Global Perceptions of Journals Publishing E-Commerce Research

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ECommerce encompasses all aspects of business and market processes enabled by the Internet and World Wide Web technologies[1]. ECommerce, like Information Systems (IS), is interdisciplinary in nature, borrowing concepts and theories from computer science, psychology, economics, organizational theory, and the natural sciences, as well as from applied areas of study such as marketing, management, finance, accounting, engineering, and law.

Research findings in eCommerce can be disseminated to scientists and practitioners in the form of journal articles. But the interdisciplinary nature of eCommerce often makes it difficult to match the research being performed with the journals that currently exist in established disciplines and fields of study. While eCommerce papers do get accepted in these traditional outlets, it can be a difficult process if they are perceived to be outside the scope of the journals. In an attempt to address this problem, multidisciplinary journals aimed specifically at electronic commerce research have begun appearing over the last several years.

In academia, researchers strive to have their research published in top-quality journals, usually in those whose papers are refereed to the highest standards and have an excellent editorial board. But how do journals get recognized as being top quality? This is normally done through the gathering of opinions, sometimes through a formal survey whose results are published. While there have been many studies that have investigated the perceptions of journals that publish research in information systems [e.g., 1-6], there have been none to date that specifically look at journals that publish research pertaining to electronic commerce.

[1] Definition from the Center for Research in Electronic Commerce, University of Texas, Austin. (http://cism.bus.utexas.edu/)

To begin to fill this void, we present the results of a study that looks at the overall perceptions of academic journals, both new and traditional, which are used as outlets for research pertaining to eCommerce. The insights provided by this study should benefit researchers (and their institutions) who publish in this area. This study should also help those researchers trying to find outlets for their eCommerce research and begins to address the issue of the quality of the eCommerce research that is published in the various journals.

The study[2] was performed almost entirely by email using a questionnaire in the form of an Excel file attachment. Contact addresses were taken from the ISWorld faculty directory[3]. The survey was also available for downloading from our website, and notices about the study were posted to the ISWorld discussion list. 3189 email requests for participation were successfully sent. Out of this, a total of 249 useable surveys were returned (ten of these were returned by regular mail). By region, there were 116 responses from North America, 67 from Europe, 53 from Australasia, and 13 from other areas. This response rate is encouraging given that only a subset of all IS researchers are performing eCommerce research.

After answering several questions requesting demographic and academic information, respondents were asked to rate a list of 62 journals according to whether they thought the publications were not appropriate, appropriate, significant, or outstanding as a publication outlet for eCommerce research. The publication list was created from a recent global study of IS journal preferences [4] and from a list of

[2] Interested readers can find the questionnaire, as well as full results of the study, at www.ccs.neu.edu/home/tarase/ecommerce.html.
[3] The ISWorld Faculty Directly is available at http://webfoot.csom.umn.edu/isworld/facdir/default.htm

eCommerce journals that resulted from a query to the ISWorld Listserv[4]. Rating categories were consistent with previous studies of IS journal preferences [2,3,5]. Participants were allowed to add and rate any journals not on the list, and could skip those journals for which they had no opinion.

Table 1 summarizes respondent demographic information. Most (28%) of the sample were assistant professors or equivalent, and these were followed closely by associate professors (26%) and full professors (23%). Responsibilities for most (56%) respondents included both research and teaching. In terms of geography, 47% work in North America, 27% in Europe, 22% in Australasia, and 4% elsewhere. 48% listed their institutions as being AACSB accredited. In terms of research areas, 76% listed information systems, followed by information science (5%), computer science (4%), and operations management (3%). Many respondents (12%) listed their research areas as "other," and some wrote in descriptors including economics, management, marketing, e-commerce, and e-business. 79% of respondents have conducted eCommerce research. Most respondents (34%) have published 1-5 journal articles total, while 16% have published more than 40. Of the total respondents, 40% have not published a journal article in eCommerce, while 32% have published 1-3 articles. 55% of respondents think that there are enough outlets in which to publish eCommerce research, 13% think there are not enough, and 33% are not sure.

[4] List of EC Journals compiled by the Information Systems and Qualitative Sciences Department at Texas Tech University is available at http://ta.ba.ttu.edu/onlid/research/ecjournals.htm.

Table 1. Respondent profile.									
Position		Responsibility		Research Area		Total Pubs		EC Pubs	
Lecturer	10%	Research	6%	Information Systems	76%	None	9%	None	40%
Assistant Professor	28	Research with some teaching	20	Operations Mgmt.	3	1-5	34	1-3	32
Associate Professor	26	Research and teaching	56	Information Science	5	6-10	18	4-6	14
Professor	23	Teaching with some research	16	Computer Science	4	11-20	11	7-9	6
Other	13	Teaching	2	Other	12	21-40	12	10-12	2
						41+	16	13+	6

Perceptions of Journals Publishing ECommerce Research

The perceptions of journals publishing eCommerce research were first analyzed using measures of appropriateness and popularity. The first column of Table 2 lists the rank of the “top 50” journals based on the number of respondents who perceived the journal as an appropriate outlet for eCommerce research. A journal was considered an appropriate outlet if a respondent rated it as either appropriate, significant, or outstanding as an eCommerce publication outlet. Popularity rankings give the total number of respondents who rated the journal, including those who rated it as not appropriate. Popularity is a measure of overall journal recognition. The following columns display the rankings based on what region of the world the academic institution of the respondent is located. Finally, the eCommerce rankings are compared with a recently published study for IS journals [4].

The most appropriate outlet for eCommerce research, based on the data collected, is Communications of the ACM, followed closely by MIS Quarterly and then by Information Systems Research. These are well-established journals that are highly regarded as outlets for IS research. The next two highest ranked journals in terms of appropriateness are “dedicated” eCommerce journals, which as their names suggest

exist to publish only eCommerce research. These are the International Journal of Electronic Commerce and Electronic Commerce Research. In the top ten, there are two additional dedicated eCommerce journals, Electronic Markets and the Journal of Electronic Commerce Research. Harvard Business Review, the Journal of Management Information Systems, and the European Journal of IS are the more traditional journals that also made the top ten. Other dedicated eCommerce journals that are ranked highly (top 20) are the Journal of Organizational Computing and Electronic Commerce, the International Journal of Electronic Business, eCommerce Research Forum, and the Quarterly Journal of Electronic Commerce. Overall, the appropriateness rankings show a varied mix of traditional IS journals and newer journals dedicated solely to eCommerce research.

The five journals that received the highest number of ratings (the “most popular”) journals are IS journals, plus Communications of the ACM and the Harvard Business Review. However, the four dedicated eCommerce journals that were rated most appropriate for eCommerce research still appear in the top ten most popular journals. There is a downward trend for most of the dedicated eCommerce journals while the well known IS journals move upward when popularity rankings are compared with the appropriateness rankings. For example, Management Science moved up to 13th in popularity from 29th in appropriateness, and Decision Support Systems moved up to 24th from 34th. This suggests that certain journals, while well known as outlets for other kinds of research, are not necessarily perceived as the most appropriate for eCommerce research. This statement is also supported if we compare our popularity rankings to those of a recently published survey on global IS journal popularity [4].

Some IS journals that were rated highly in [4] dropped dramatically in our survey popularity rankings. For example, Decision Sciences dropped from 8th to 28th, and Decision Support Systems dropped from 9th to 24th.

Appropriateness rankings were then further divided into global regions – Europe, Australasia, and North America. In the European rankings, some of the European journals moved up in the rankings, like the European Journal of IS which moved from 10th to 6th and Information Systems Journal which went from 15th to 11th. Other journals dropped, such as the Journal of MIS, which went from 8th to the 21st. In the case of dedicated eCommerce journals, most of the European appropriateness rankings did not seem to change significantly as compared to worldwide appropriateness, except for Journal of Organizational Computing and EC, which dropped from 13th to 20th. Respondents in Australasia do not consider Communications of the ACM as the top outlet for eCommerce research as its ranking dropped to 12th. Communications of the AIS also dropped from 11th to 21st. Similar to European respondents, Australasians also perceive of the European Journal of IS and Information Systems Journal as very appropriate outlets for eCommerce research publications. As compared to the worldwide appropriateness rankings, the International Journal of Electronic Business and eCommerce Research Forum are both more highly regarded in Australasia, rising to 6th and 9th, respectively. North American based respondents do not perceive the International Journal of Electronic Commerce or the International Journal of Electronic Business as highly when compared to the worldwide rankings. However, the Journal of MIS (ranked 3rd in North America) and Communications of the AIS (ranked 6th) are regarded more as appropriate outlets in North America than worldwide.

The data was then analyzed based on the perceived quality of journals publishing research in eCommerce (Table 3). The average provided is the overall weighted average of the ratings given, where a value of 1 was assigned for not appropriate, 2 for appropriate, 3 for significant, and 4 for outstanding (consistent with [2, 3, 5]). Appropriateness values from Table 2 are also shown on Table 3 for comparison purposes. The metric we used for quality was the number of respondents who rated the publication as either a significant or outstanding publication outlet for eCommerce research. Looking at the journal rankings from this viewpoint of quality provides some interesting observations. The top four outlets for eCommerce research in terms of quality are all dedicated eCommerce journals, with the International Journal of Electronic Commerce coming out solidly on top. Furthermore, out of the top twenty quality outlets, nine are dedicated eCommerce journals. Quite a few eCommerce journals were ranked much higher when looked at from a quality perspective versus just appropriateness. For example, e-Services Journal moved up from 24th in appropriateness to 14th in quality, and the Journal of Internet Research went from 28th to 17th. On the other hand, many of the traditional IS outlets moved downward, such as Information Systems Research which dropped from 3rd to 10th. The overall average values are fairly consistent with the quality rankings for the journals. In general, journals with higher overall averages are ranked higher in terms of the quality metric.

Respondents were also allowed to write in additional journals not on the questionnaire, and to rank these journals. 74 respondents chose to do this. A complete listing of these journals is available on the Web site. While none of these journals made the top fifty in terms of appropriateness, popularity, or quality, many were listed by

multiple respondents. Those journals recognized as appropriate for eCommerce research by at least 6 respondents were Logistics Information Management, Journal of Global Information Management, Journal of Database Management, Journal of Global Information Technology Management, and Journal of Information Technology Cases and Applications. A few marketing journals (e.g., Marketing Science) were also listed several times.

Conclusion

This study has begun to shed some light on the preferences of journals for eCommerce research. The current research supports the notion that the perceptions of journals as being appropriate outlets for eCommerce research differ from those for IS research. This is evident from the rankings of IS journals and dedicated eCommerce journals as well as the comparison of these rankings with that of a previously conducted global IS journal study [4]. While eCommerce as a research area is still in its infancy, researchers are forming their opinions about new and traditional outlets in which to publish eCommerce research. The analysis also presented some insights into the quality of these outlets. Overall, many of the newer eCommerce journals compare favorably in terms of appropriateness and quality against traditional IS journals.

While this study has answered some basic questions about outlets for eCommerce research, it leaves many unanswered, shown in part by the comments that were received during the data collection process. One major concern that needs to be addressed is whether or not eCommerce will become (or remain) a distinct field of research, or simply be absorbed into current disciplines such as computer science

and/or fields such as information systems. While the results of this survey show preferences by eCommerce researchers for dedicated journals such as International Journal of Electronic Commerce and Electronic Commerce Research, there is definitely a place for eCommerce research in traditional IS journals.

Another concern is that while electronic commerce is interdisciplinary in nature, this study approached outlets for eCommerce research only from the IS researchers' perspective. There are certainly many high-quality journals in areas such as marketing, management, and computer science that have and will publish papers pertaining to eCommerce. This study is limited in that it does not poll preferences from other disciplines, nor does it include journals from other fields. There may also be some bias towards the traditional IS journals because of their existing reputations and previous ranking studies. Conference proceedings, where research ideas are often first presented, were also not included in this study. It may be beneficial to conduct a larger study at some point in the future that addresses these issues.

There are other possibilities to expand upon the current study as well. It may be useful to look at eCommerce research and journal preferences in terms of subcategories such as technology, strategy, marketing, economics, web design, and wireless applications. There may be different opinions about journals based on the specific type of eCommerce research being considered. When similar studies are conducted in other fields and disciplines, a comparative inter-disciplinary study will provide insight into the difference of perceptions amongst researchers.

This is the first study that investigates what IS researchers perceive as the most appropriate and best quality journals for eCommerce research. The top ten journals

appropriate for eCommerce research include four dedicated to eCommerce, although the top three remain traditional IS journals, namely Communications of the ACM, MIS Quarterly, and Information Systems Research. The top four quality outlets for eCommerce research are International Journal of Electronic Commerce, Electronic Commerce Research, Electronic Markets, and Journal of Electronic Commerce Research, all of which are dedicated eCommerce journals. Overall, this study shows that perceptions of journal appropriateness and quality differ for eCommerce research when compared to more mainstream IS research.

Table 2 ECommerce Journal Perception Rankings											
Appropriateness (n=249)			Popularity (n=249)		Appropriateness Europe (n=67)		Appropriateness Australasia (n=53)		Appropriateness North America (n=116)		Comparison with Global CACM Study [4]
Ranking	Journal Name	Count	Ranking	Count	Ranking	Count	Ranking	Count	Ranking	Count	Ranking
1	Communications of the ACM	204	2	217	1	56	12	38	1	102	2
2	MIS Quarterly	201	1	218	2	54	3	41	2	97	1
3	Information Systems Research	190	4	199	7	48	4	41	4	92	3
4	International Journal of Electronic Commerce	188	6	189	3	53	1	42	10	82	23
5	Electronic Commerce Research	186	7	187	9	46	2	42	5	88	-
6	Harvard Business Review	183	3	204	8	48	7	40	7	86	7
7	Electronic Markets	182	8	184	4	51	10	38	8	83	40
8	Journal of Management Information Systems	180	5	190	21	38	13	37	3	94	4
9	Journal of Electronic Commerce Research	177	10	178	10	46	11	38	11	82	-
10	European Journal of IS	171	11	177	6	49	5	41	21	71	11
11	Communications of the AIS	169	12	177	13	42	21	33	6	88	18
12	Sloan Management Review	167	9	183	5	50	18	35	13	75	12
13	Journal of Organizational Computing and EC	166	19	169	20	38	17	36	9	83	31
14	International Journal of Electronic Business	165	20	169	12	44	6	40	19	71	-
15	Information Systems Journal	163	14	176	11	46	8	40	26	67	16
16	Information and Management	162	17	173	14	42	22	33	12	79	10
17	eCommerce Research Forum	159	26	162	17	40	9	39	20	71	-
18	Information Systems Management	154	23	165	16	41	14	37	27	67	33
19	Quarterly Journal of Electronic Commerce	147	41	150	23	36	19	33	22	70	-
20	IEEE Transactions (various subjects)	145	15	175	18	39	34	27	14	73	6
21	Journal of Information Systems	145	27	162	32	32	15	37	28	67	35
22	ACM Transactions (various subjects)	145	18	170	24	36	26	31	17	72	13
23	Journal of Strategic Information Systems	144	30	158	15	41	25	31	34	65	20
24	e-Services Journal	143	37	152	30	32	24	31	16	72	-
25	ACM Special Interest Group publications	143	21	169	22	38	23	32	25	68	26
26	Journal of the AIS	139	35	154	27	34	27	30	23	70	30
27	Computer (IEEE)	139	16	174	19	39	32	28	31	66	19
28	Journal of Internet Research	138	45	142	31	32	20	33	33	65	-
29	Management Science	138	13	177	28	33	31	28	15	73	5
30	Information Resources Management Journal	130	36	153	37	30	30	29	36	61	38
31	ACM Computing Surveys	130	22	169	35	32	33	28	32	66	24
32	Human-Computer Interaction	128	31	158	25	36	28	30	42	56	32
33	Journal of Computer Information Systems	127	33	157	55	22	36	27	18	72	41
34	Decision Support Systems	126	24	163	33	32	45	23	29	67	9
35	Interfaces	125	40	151	42	28	41	25	35	65	39
36	Decision Sciences	122	28	162	48	25	46	23	24	70	8
37	The Information Society	121	49	138	29	33	39	25	41	56	36
38	Information and Organization	121	50	136	34	32	37	27	40	57	38
39	Journal of Interactive Marketing	120	51	135	40	29	35	27	37	58	-
40	Journal of Comp.-Mediated Communication	120	42	147	26	35	42	24	44	55	-
41	Data Base	120	29	160	45	27	47	23	30	67	14
42	Australian Journal of IS	119	52	135	43	27	16	37	51	48	46
43	Journal of the ACM	117	38	152	36	31	40	25	39	57	45
44	IBM Systems Journal	117	34	157	38	30	44	24	38	58	28
45	Journal of End User Computing	110	46	140	46	26	43	24	43	56	37
46	World Wide Web	108	58	125	47	25	29	29	49	48	-
47	Intl Journal of Human-Computer Studies	106	47	140	44	27	53	20	46	51	44
48	Academy of Management Journal	104	25	163	39	30	52	22	48	49	17
49	IT and People	101	54	131	50	24	55	19	45	53	27
50	WebNet Journal	99	61	118	58	19	38	26	50	48	-

Table 3 ECommerce Journal Quality Rankings					
Quality (n=249)			Overall Average	Appropriateness (from Table 2)	
Ranking	Journal Name	Count		Ranking	Count
1	International Journal of Electronic Commerce	169	3.55	4	188
2	Electronic Commerce Research	162	3.36	5	186
3	Electronic Markets	158	3.41	7	182
4	Journal of Electronic Commerce Research	150	3.33	9	177
5	MIS Quarterly	142	2.95	2	201
6	Communications of the ACM	140	2.88	1	204
7	Journal of Organizational Computing and EC	140	3.31	13	166
8	International Journal of Electronic Business	128	3.15	14	165
9	Journal of Management Information Systems	127	2.87	8	180
10	Information Systems Research	123	2.92	3	190
11	eCommerce Research Forum	122	3.12	17	159
12	Quarterly Journal of Electronic Commerce	116	3.22	19	147
13	Harvard Business Review	110	2.68	6	183
14	e-Services Journal	104	2.97	24	143
15	Communications of the AIS	97	2.67	11	169
16	European Journal of IS	95	2.66	10	171
17	Journal of Internet Research	91	2.89	28	138
18	Information and Management	90	2.60	16	162
19	Sloan Management Review	89	2.59	12	167
20	IEEE Transactions (various subjects)	81	2.45	20	145
21	Information Systems Journal	78	2.48	15	163
22	Journal of Strategic Information Systems	73	2.46	23	144
23	Management Science	71	2.37	29	138
24	Computer (IEEE)	69	2.36	27	139
25	Journal of the AIS	68	2.49	26	139
26	ACM Transactions (various subjects)	65	2.34	22	145
27	Information Systems Management	65	2.42	18	154
28	Journal of Information Systems	65	2.38	21	145
29	ACM Special Interest Group publications	63	2.30	25	143
30	Decision Support Systems	62	2.27	34	126
31	Journal of Interactive Marketing	58	2.44	39	120
32	World Wide Web	57	2.51	46	108
33	Journal of the ACM	54	2.20	43	117
34	Decision Sciences	53	2.17	36	122
35	The Information Society	52	2.36	37	121
36	WebNet Journal	51	2.46	50	99
37	Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication	47	2.24	40	120
38	Human-Computer Interaction	46	2.13	32	128
39	Interfaces	46	2.20	35	125
40	Journal of Computer Information Systems	45	2.16	33	127
41	Information Resources Management Journal	45	2.21	30	130
42	Journal of Internet Cataloging	43	2.23	53	93
43	International Journal of Human-Computer Studies	41	2.14	47	106
44	ACM Computing Surveys	39	2.04	31	130
45	Data Base	39	2.03	41	120
46	IBM Systems Journal	39	2.06	44	117
47	Journal of End User Computing	37	2.09	45	110
48	IT and People	37	2.10	49	101
49	Australian Journal of IS	36	2.19	42	119
50	International Journal of Man-Machine Studies	31	1.93	57	86

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