



Intro to e-Commerce

Doing business online requires a website that provides quality information about products, connects consumers to a company's social media platforms, provides customers with a positive online shopping experience, and much more.

How can business owners assess if their websites are e-commerce ready?

The e-Commerce Ready Tool assists business owners in an important task:

- Evaluating if their websites are e-commerce ready

Things to Know

- **Don't be fooled, building an e-commerce business takes time**
 - Amazon launched in 1995, but didn't make a profit until 2003
 - Pizza Hut began offering online ordering on its website in 1994
 - Competition is intense; after the introduction of Netflix and Redbox, Blockbuster eventually went bankrupt
- **Mobile Matters**
 - According to Google, 72% of tablet owners make purchase from their devices on a weekly basis
 - 30% of mobile shoppers abandon a transaction if the experience is not mobile friendly

Getting Started

Business owners should consider these key industry trends, especially those related to mobile usage:

- In 2013, U.S. consumers spent between \$1,200 and \$1,300 per year online; by 2016, the annual online purchases made by U.S. consumers will increase to \$1,728, a projected 44% increase totaling \$327 billion in online sales
- India has the fastest growing e-commerce market; France has the slowest
- By 2016, 192 million people in the U.S. will transact online
- PayPal manages \$382 million in online transactions each day
- Because of forced account registration, 26% of online shoppers abandon their shopping carts
- Approximately 71% of shoppers believe they will get a better deal online
- By 2016, the value of mobile payments in the U.S. will be worth more than \$62 billion
- Online sales from social networks is projected to grow 93% each year for the next four years, (2012-2016)
- Approximately 46% of online users count on social media when making a purchase

Quick Tip

To help improve the ability for your website customers to share & learn more about your products:

1. "Incorporate Social Sharing Icons"
2. "Suggest Related Products"
3. "Use the Facebook Commenting Plugin"

See more at: <http://www.zeekeinteractive.com/how-do-you-help-happy-customers-spread-the-word-and-increase-sales-in-your-ecommerce-store.php#sthash.CjvJMnUa.dpuf>

Is your business e-commerce ready? Find out by answering these 25 questions ranging over seven different website functions and appeal categories provide a snap shot of e-commerce readiness. Score your business on a scale of 1-10 with one being the lowest and 10 being the highest, then add up your score to determine your grade.

e-Commerce Ready Tool

A Guide to Analyzing Business Websites for e-Commerce Readiness

		Score (1-10)	
Category	Question	Possible	Score
Domain name	Does the domain name represent the company?	1-10	
	How well does the page load? Slow?	1-10	
Visual appeal/Mobile	Does the site look to be appealing on an iPhone?	1-10	
	Does the site look to be appealing on an iPad?	1-10	
	Does the website have plenty of white space, clarity?	1-10	
	Is the use of color appropriate?	1-10	
	Is the text used appealing and easy to read?	1-10	
	How easy is it to find the 'Contact Us' section?	1-10	
Photos	Are the pictures clear and of high quality?	1-10	
	Do the pictures presented represent the company's products or services? Are there any mismatches?	1-10	
Branding	Is the logo for the business presented clearly?	1-10	
	Is the logo high resolution?	1-10	
	Is the logo used consistently throughout the site?	1-10	
	Is the company's vision or mission presented clearly?	1-10	
	Is the company address linked to Google Maps or Mapquest?	1-10	
Social Media	Are social buttons presented clearly on the site?	1-10	
	Do the links take a potential customer to the page or simply to a like or share button?	1-10	
	Do Facebook pages, Twitter accounts etc. match the company name?	1-10	
Products/Services	How easily are the products/services to find on the site?	1-10	
Customers	Does the site feature any customer testimonials?	1-10	
	Is there a place where customers can leave comments?	1-10	
e-Commerce	Is the e-commerce platform easy to use?	1-10	
	Does the platform present a searchable option to find products?	1-10	
	Does the platform provide clear information about product attributes including prices and shipping?	1-10	
TOTAL		240	

Grades		Analysis	Advice
A	216	On the path	Tweak
B	192	Near the path	Work the category scores
C	168	Barely on the path	Try a revamped look possibly
D	144	Can't find the path	Remodel

Resources

- <http://www.census.gov/econ/estats/>
- <http://mashable.com/2012/11/06/ecommerce-statistics/>
- <http://mashable.com/2012/09/04/ecommerce-infographic/>
- <http://mashable.com/2012/08/22/mobile-trends-ecommerce/>
- <http://visual.ly/e-commerce-statistics-infographic>

About the Author

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Dr. James Barnes joined the Department of Agricultural Economics at Mississippi State University after serving for seven years as an Extension economist with the Louisiana State University Agricultural Center and Director of the Louisiana Center for Rural Initiatives. Dr. Barnes' Extension and research work focuses on the economics and management of social media in business, broadband technology adoption in rural places, rural health care, and regional economic development. Since joining MSU, Dr. Barnes has launched the **Mississippi Bricks to Clicks Entrepreneurship Extension Program** aimed at helping business owners understand how to leverage a Facebook network for business profits .

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