



C2C (consumer-to-consumer (trading))

The term used to describe the practice of individuals *trading* with other individuals. While this has been common practice over the years (car-boot and yard sales, for example), the Internet has opened up whole new markets for individuals who wish to buy from or sell to other individuals. Auction sites such as eBay thrive on this trade (though for many product categories on eBay, the sellers are actually businesses), and it is this concept for which **Napster** became famous when it allowed individuals to sell, swap or give music files to other individuals.

C2B (consumer-to-business (trading))

Although it exists as an e-commerce model, the concept of C2B trading is rare in practice. In theory any individual can seek to sell products or services to a business. However, if that individual does so with any frequency, or seeks to make a profit from it, they would be deemed to be a business themselves – making the transaction **B2B**. Another facet to the C2B model that makes use of the **e-marketplace** is that of the customer posting a message on a web site that invites businesses to bid on products or services that the consumer needs. This has few practical applications in anything but very specialized markets, often where the consumer is buying something that is normally considered a B2B product or service – building services for a private house extension, for example.

Cache

A name given to temporary storage space on a computer. Web pages accessed previously are stored in the computer browser's cache directory (on the hard drive). When the user returns to a web site that has been recently accessed, the browser calls it up from the cache rather than the original **server**. Caches can also be held at **ISPs** and large organizations that operate their own servers.

34 Key Concepts in E-Commerce

Call to action

A word or phrase on a web site that invokes an action from the user. In a marketing context the action would be that desired by the marketer. Online, the call to action is an integral part of **conversion, navigation** and **information architecture**. A call to action could be to have the user:

- make a purchase online;
- complete an online order form;
- contact an organization by telephone;
- contact an organization by email;
- complete a contact form;
- subscribe to a newsletter;
- join an online forum;
- download a file, e.g. a White Paper;
- forward a viral marketing message;
- apply for the membership of a club or association.

The call to action is a part of the copy (see **content 2**) of a web site, and if it is to be effective, its development is best left to experts.

Campaign conversion

A **metric** that tracks all the **conversions** that have taken place in the period that a specific marketing or promotional campaign has run. For example, how many new customers were gained over the six weeks a **paid placement** ad was included on specific **keywords**.

CAN-SPAM Act 2003 (Controlling the Assault of Non-Solicited Pornography and Marketing Act)

A US law enforced by the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) which was intended to address the issue of **spam** on the Internet. Critics argue that it not only fails to prevent spam, but actually endorses its use. Non-US traders should be aware of the details of the Act as it can be applied to email *received* in America – no matter where it originates.

Cascading Style Sheets (CSS)

An application of **HTML** that gives web site developers more control over how web pages are displayed. CSS helps designers create sites where all pages conform to the same design principles. However, the use of CSS can, if not used judiciously, cause problems for **search engine optimization** of pages created using it.

Case sensitive

Where upper-case *CHARACTERS* are distinguished from lower-case *characters*.

Cashback shopping sites

Web sites that offer users small rewards for visiting online shops linked from them. The concept is a kind of amalgam of **affiliate marketing**, **pay per click** advertising and offline reward cards. The idea is that all parties gain. The cashback site host gets income from sending traffic to the shopping sites, the online shop gains in visitor numbers and the user can collect reward points or cash. More popular in the USA than Europe, two examples are rpoints.com and linemypocket.com.

Catalogue services

In an e-commerce context, these are web sites where a number of suppliers present their wares in an **e-marketplace**-type environment. The goods can be listed by supplier, but the more successful will list all associated products from all suppliers together on the same web pages. Complex software ensures the orders for the various products go to the right suppliers. The site's publisher will normally take a periodic fixed fee or percentage of any exchanges. Although the early days of the web saw a number of B2C catalogues appear online, the development and availability of easy-to-use online checkout facilities allowed vendors to sell goods on their own sites. The contemporary application is normally in **B2B** trading, where businesses (particularly **SMEs**) have the opportunity to promote their wares on a well-visited, normally industry-specific site. Such sites often serve as **portals** for industries or specific markets.

Cause-related marketing

An extension of ethical marketing, cause-related marketing is where the organization actively supports a chosen cause and seeks to gain competitive advantage from the show of support. Its significance in e-commerce is that the Internet provides a relatively inexpensive platform for individuals or micro-businesses to express their concern for a cause in a commercial environment.

Cc/bcc (carbon copy/blind carbon copy)

The facility on an email to send the same message to multiple recipients. If the email is *cc-ed* then all those who receive the message will be able

C

36 Key Concepts in E-Commerce

to see the email addresses of all intended recipients. In a closed environment this will not be a problem – for example, all members of a department within an organization. However, in a marketing environment this might not be acceptable. For example, a vendor sending an email promoting a special offer to six valued customers would be telling each of them which other customers are being offered the promotion. Or, perhaps worse, the email addresses of the *cc-ed* recipients might be used for **spam** purposes by third parties. In these cases the recipients should be *bcc-ed – blind* copied – so that other people on the address list cannot be seen by all recipients. Although it is a cheap method of **email marketing**, using the bcc facility is not considered good practice in that discipline.

ccTLD (country code Top Level Domain)

See DNS.

Cease and desist letter

Although not exclusive to e-commerce, many online entities have been sent these letters from lawyers (it is an American term). Essentially, the letter requests that a person or organization stop any activity mentioned in the letter to prevent legal action. Common reasons for receiving an e-commerce-related cease and desist letter are (a) the unauthorized use of copyrighted content, (b) use of a disputed domain name, (c) the use of a trademark in keyword advertising or (d) libellous content, particularly on sites containing **consumer-generated media**.

Cellular

Communications systems that divide a geographic region into sections, called cells – as in cellphones.

C

CGI (Common Gateway Interface)

The rules that describe how a **web server** communicates with another piece of software on the same machine, and vice versa. A common application for CGI on web sites is that of online forms, where a CGI program can process the form's data once it is submitted by the user.

CGI-bin

The common name of a directory on a **web server** in which CGI programs are stored. The *bin* part of *cgi-bin* is a shorthand version of binary.

CGM

See **consumer-generated media**.

Channel conflict

In situations where a manufacturer has the option of different channels of distribution through which to reach the consumer there is the potential for conflict between those channels. In the early days of the Internet such conflict was touted as being a significant problem in two scenarios: (a) external to the organization, and (b) internal to the organization. In the first scenario the Internet was seen as being a way of taking intermediaries out of the distribution chain. The manufacturer would simply sell directly to the consumer through a web site. While this is true of a small minority of products, the value of the intermediary – developed over many years – was soon acknowledged and the web was adopted by manufactures for promotion, branding and the provision of after-sales services only. The second scenario saw many retailers being reluctant to use the web for online sales as they thought it would cannibalize their offline sales. Again, these fears were proved to be unfounded. Indeed, forward-thinking organizations soon realized that strategic use of the Internet can complement and improve, rather than harm, offline sales.

See also **disintermediation**.

Chat

The term used to describe a *real-time* keyboard conversation on the Internet. Chatting takes place in a *chat* room – a virtual meeting-place. The term originates from the definition of chat – informal conversation – and the first online chats were mainly **techies** seeking help or giving advice on computing matters. Now there is hardly a subject that doesn't have someone, somewhere, chatting about it.

See also **newsgroup** and **consumer-generated media**.

Chat room

See **chat**.

Check box (noun) or check a box (verb)

A small box that users can click their mouse in to confirm a choice. The boxes are normally square – with a click creating a *tick* in that box, as is

C

38 Key Concepts in E-Commerce

the practice for paper forms – or a circle that is filled by a dot to signify that it has been *checked*. Check boxes are used extensively online as a selector (for example, clicking the box for a required product, colour and size) or as a confirmation (for example, clicking the box to confirm **terms and conditions** have been read). Online market research questionnaires are also a common application, where their parameters of the form can make it so that only one, or multiple, boxes can be checked.

Check out

See shopping cart.

cHTML (compact HTML)

A reduced version of **HTML** for use on small devices such as mobile phones that have hardware restrictions such as small memory capacity.

Churn

A term used to describe the loss of customers over a period of time expressed as a percentage of lost customers out of total customers. It is normally seen as an element of e-commerce analytics.

Citizen cinema

A term accredited to the *Los Angeles Times* that describes online archives of short amateur video clips, ranging from a few seconds up to ten minutes in length. The clips – often filmed on mobile-phone cameras – are mainly a collection of the boring (someone eating a meal) or the funny (someone dancing badly) that are only of any real interest to friends and family of those in the clips. However, such is the nature of the Internet that surfers visit citizen-cinema sites in their thousands – particularly the one that was instrumental in launching the phenomenon, YouTube.com (motto: broadcast yourself). A third group of clips is that which features copyrighted material – both images and music. Although the owners of such content (mostly short extracts of shows copied from other media) sometimes threaten legal action, most realize that such sites were actually promoting the programmes or films from which the clips were taken and relented. Marketers have taken the concept to heart and use it as part of viral marketing campaigns, releasing *sneak peeks* of new shows or ads. Critics refer to those who film themselves as iVideots (video idiots). Citizen cinema is an aspect of **consumer-generated media**.

Citizen journalism/journalist (also known as civilian journalism/journalist)

The concept that citizens can play an active role in collecting, reporting, analyzing and disseminating news and information – activities that prior to the introduction of the web as a medium of communication were the domain of professional reporters only. Although there is a significant difference in the dictionary definition of journalist and publisher, in this context it is not unusual for citizen journalist and citizen publisher to be interchangeable.

See also **blog** and **consumer-generated media**.

Citizen publisher

See **citizen journalist**.

Classic logic/search

See **Boolean search**.

Clear GIF

See **web bug**.

Click (1) verb

Users *click* on a mouse button to instruct their computer to carry out a command.

Click (2) noun

As used in the phrase ‘competition is only a click away’, meaning that a customer need only make one click of the mouse to move from a web site to that of a competitor.

Click fraud

A general term applied to any **pay per click** campaign where a **click-through** is not made by a genuine customer. While all are not maliciously fraudulent – student-type pranks or genuine mistakes, for example – businesses are most worried by multiple clickthroughs that are deliberate attempts to defraud the advertiser.

C

40 Key Concepts in E-Commerce

In business models where the publisher of a web site that carries ads is paid for every click on those ads there is the opportunity for abuse. Annoying, but not a major problem, is where a competitor might click on another business's ads, so increasing that company's advertising costs. More serious, however, is the *pay per click scam*, which works in this way. In this scenario, Business A is either the site's publisher, or more likely, an agency that handles advertising accounts. Business B is the advertiser. Business A makes money every time a particular ad for business B is clicked because business B will pay business A for every clickthrough. For this example, the fee business B pays is 10p for every click on an ad that takes the user to their web site. The corrupt agency or publisher – business A – then hires surfers – so-called *paid to read rings* – to click on the ads, paying them 2p every time they do so (software can be used to make bogus clicks, but it is easier to detect). The result is 8p profit on every click for the unscrupulous business A. Not only does this mean a direct loss of money for business B – 10p per fraudulent click – but any metrics of that ad campaign will be flawed and so of no use for analysis. More sophisticated scammers will actually set up their own *bogus* sites, register with **AdSense** (for example), then have the phantom clickers visit the site and click on the links. Opportunists should note, however, that the search engines are constantly upgrading their software to detect and prevent such scams.

Clicker's remorse

Perhaps rather self-explanatory, this term describes a user's state of mind when they follow a certain online route (by clicking on links) only to find that resulting web sites do not meet their needs. The relevance for e-commerce is that if the user follows a link from a web page and the result is clicker's remorse, then they lose faith in not only the advertiser, but the web site that hosts the link or ad. Examples might include (a) clicking on a link on a **search engine results page** only to find the resulting page does not match the search query, or (b) an ad that turns out to be a form **bait and switch**.

Clickpath

See **clickstream**.

Clicks-and-bricks

See **clicks-and-mortar**.

Clicks-and-mortar

Businesses that trade both online and offline. The term derives from the concept that the business uses *clicks* (of the mouse) and *mortar* (referring to physical buildings) in its methods of trading in both consumer and industrial markets. Clicks-and-mortar businesses must have e-commerce-enabled web sites so that sales and/or orders can be completed online. A business that uses the web only as a medium for promotion or customer service is not considered to be such.

See also **bricks and mortar**, **pure online business** and **virtual business**.

Clicks-and-mortar retailers

See **clicks-and-mortar**.

Clickstream

Also known as a *clickpath*, this is the route a visitor takes through a web site. Such information is used in **web site analytics** and also to assess **persuasion architecture**. The term is sometimes used in a wider context to represent a user's path through the web itself – that is, multiple web sites rather than just one – sometimes referred to as being a user's digital footprint.

Clickstream-based email marketing

An email message or campaign based on users' **clickstream** data. Although many organizations will email customers with messages or offers based on a customer's purchase history – because you bought A, we think you will like B – clickstream-based emails feature offers based on the web pages a user has visited recently – but from which they have not made a purchase. On a holiday web site, for example, a customer might have spent time looking at hotels in, and flights to, Paris – so any email offer will feature that city.

Clickthrough

The term used to describe the action of clicking on a **link**, that is, you *click through* to the next web page. Although it refers to any link, click-through is most commonly used in assessing online advertising.

See **clickthrough rate**.

42 Key Concepts in E-Commerce

Clickthrough rate (CTR)

The percentage of **clickthroughs** to the total number of times the **link** is **downloaded**. For example, if a banner ad has 100 **impressions** and 20 users click on that banner, the clickthrough rate is 20 per cent. The clickthrough rate is often the **metric** by which an ad campaign is judged. Practitioners in both **online advertising** and **email marketing** will use recognized industry-specific clickthrough rates as a guide. These rates will vary, but for many email campaigns a clickthrough rate of single percentage figures is the norm, for some industries less than one percent being acceptable. This is compatible to offline direct marketing, where promotional messages sent by post – *junk mail* – have traditionally had a poor response rate.

Click to call

The technology that facilitates **pay per call** advertising, click to call – as the name suggests – is when a user clicks on an ad (or web site link) in order to have the advertiser ring the user. Naturally the user must enter their telephone number on a form, and it is also normal for the user to stipulate when they expect the call – immediately, in ten minutes or in an hour, for example. The main advantage of the system is that each click to call response represents genuine **lead generation**. Although the main application is to have users respond to an online ad, the technology can be used as part of **persuasive momentum** or part of the sales conversion process. For example, if **web site analytics** show that users might leave a purchase process at a certain point – perhaps an issue of size of the product – then they can be prompted to click to call, so allowing the telesales staff to close the deal. Note, however, that offering global coverage for click to call is problematic not only with regard to time zones, but also that the organization must employ multi-lingual sales staff.

C

Click-wrap

Also known as *shrink wrap*, this is where a customer must complete an action before they can continue with an online process – usually filling in a form or confirming terms and/or conditions in order to continue with a transaction. The phrase comes from the original practice where the user would have to scroll down the click-wrapped content to get to the **link** to the next page, so continuing the process. More recently, however, the scrolling has been replaced by simply **checking a box** to confirm (whatever), the user being prevented from moving on to the

next page in the process until a box is checked. It is the online method of having people agree that they have read the small print (even if they haven't actually done so), and is most commonly used for **terms and conditions** or **disclaimers**. It can also be used outside actual transactions, but this is not common as it might hinder any **persuasion architecture** of the site.

Client

A software program that is used to contact and obtain data from a server software program on another computer; in layperson's terms, a computer that is connected to the **server** on a **network**. A **web browser** is commonly referred to as a client.

Cloaking

See search engine cloaking.

Closed-loop reporting

An **e-metric** that measures the effectiveness of an online ad by tracking users who have viewed a specific ad to see if they responded to the objective of the ad – make a purchase, for example – that is, the loop is closed from first view to final response.

Clustering

A search engine's practice of grouping pages from a web site into one entry on the **search engine results page** (SERP) rather than having one organization fill the SERP with a multitude of pages from the same site. This is generally useful to the search engine user – in early searches the first twenty or more returns would commonly all be different pages from the same web site.

CMS

See content management software.

Collaborative filtering

With close associations to **contextual targeting**, and based on the concept of **segmentation**, collaborative filtering is the term used to describe a technical aspect of that concept. Software is used to analyse

44 Key Concepts in E-Commerce

customer data, apply formulas acquired from behavioural sciences and then predict the products or services that customer might purchase to satisfy their needs. Any predictions made based on individual customers' profiles can then be applied to groups of customers – *segments* – with similar profiles.

Collaborative web site

Sometimes known as a cooperative web site, this is a site that is developed and published by more than one entity – though more than two is rare. An extension of the concept of co-branding, the idea is that by combining the offering of two businesses customer needs will be better met. An example might be two small businesses that manufacturer and/or supply specialist equipment aimed at a specific market segment, where one product will complement the other. A collaborative web site could be developed as a **portal** in order to attract more visitors.

Commercial blog

This is a **blog** that is developed by an organization rather than an individual, normally as part of a branding strategy. Done properly, such an undertaking can be a definite advantage in developing consumer relationships. Done badly, the contrary will be true. False blogging (**flog-ging**) is easily spotted, and the results can be the absolute opposite of what is desired.

See also boss blog.

Commercial network

See networks (commercial and social).

Commodity content

Web site **content** that is generic in nature and freely available to anyone who might wish to use it. Such content is normally found on non-commercial sites and is often advisory in nature – it is common on non-commercial **portals** and in **consumer-generated media**.

Common Gateway Interface

See CGI.

Common short codes (CSCs)

Sometimes referred to as simply *short codes*, these are mobile phone numbers that are made up of significantly fewer numbers – usually four or five – than normal. CSC numbers are frequently used in after-sales promotions or applications such as charity donations, competition entries or voting in association with a TV programme. CSC is included here as the numbers can be used in association with e-commerce promotions or initiatives, particularly to the **MySpace generation**.

Community web site

See **virtual community**.

Comparison advertising

Not as common in Europe as in the USA, comparison advertising can appear online in **paid placement** advertising on search engines. This is where an advertiser selects **keywords** that are synonymous with their competitors, so that when users search on those keywords with the objective of finding the web site of the company associated with that phrase, they get the ad for the company practising comparison advertising. For example, company A is known for its tag line ‘the best yagahit there is’. Company B, a competitor, buys the keyword listing for the phrase line ‘the best yagahit there is’. The opportunity for comparison advertising now arises for company B. Having achieved high listings in the **search engine results page** (SERP), company B can make the descriptive text in the **ad listing** either non-complimentary to company B, or outright derogatory (ours is smaller/bigger/slower/faster than theirs). There is an additional consideration, however. Search engines do not accept bids on **branded keywords**. As well as there being legal constraints where trademarks are involved, it would not go down too well with major ad revenue spenders if, when their product was entered as a search term, a derogatory web site was listed top of the SERP.

Comparison search

See **shopping comparison site**.

Comparison site

Whereas **shopping comparison sites** seek out and compare prices for specified products, comparison sites make purchase comparisons for

C

46 Key Concepts in E-Commerce

users based on personal data inputted by those users. Common applications include utility supply. For example, the customer inputs details of their gas and electricity use over a calendar year and the comparison site calculates which supplier would provide best value for money in those circumstances. The comparison site generates income from the businesses to which it refers customers.

Compatibility

In computing terms, compatibility refers to the ability of **hardware** or **software** to work with versions that are older (backwards compatibility) or newer (forwards compatibility).

Compression

The reduction of a file that takes up a lot of **memory** to one that takes up much less. It is used to reduce the size of files being sent by email. Compressed files are commonly known as **zip files**.

Conceptual search

A search for documents based on the concept of the search term rather than the specific words in the term. Rather than simply matching key words or phrases, conceptual search attempts to analyse a document for *meaning*. Entering a phrase (or even an entire document) will return all documents that address related topics – even if they do not share the keywords with the query. For example, if the search is for a key *legal* phrase, the conceptual search will return all documents that refer to legal cases that pertain to the search term.

C

Confirmation page

At the end of a purchase transaction or an online registration the user should be presented with a page confirming the completion of the process – the confirmation page. Like many utilitarian web pages, the confirmation page – like the **autoresponder** – is an excellent vehicle for a marketing message, though the opportunity is often ignored.

Consumer-controlled advertising

A concept which suggests that, using contemporary technology, the advertising that consumers actually see can be decided by those

Consumer-generated media (CGM) 47

consumers – rather than being *pushed* at them, as with traditional media. The forerunner of this concept is online search, where the user decides the keywords on which they are going to search and so, effectively, dictates the ads they will be presented with on the **search engine results page**. Naturally, the marketer has matched ads with keywords in preparation for searchers using those terms, but nevertheless the delivery of those ads is determined by the consumer.

Consumer-generated media (CGM)

Also sometimes referred to as **user-generated content (UGC)**, this is the contemporary, and online, version of **conversational media**. In an e-commerce context, CGM refers to web sites that exist for, and thrive on, the public's comments. For some users, it is such content that makes the web attractive. Research from the Edelman Trust Barometer (www.edelman.com) published in January 2006 found that in the US 'a person like me' was considered to be a more credible source of information about a company than doctors and academic experts. In this case, 'a person like me' is someone who completes a product review – or similar – online. CGM is arguably the most significant effect the Internet has on marketing, it being a key element in the concept of **helping the buyer to buy**. The online manifestation of CGM comes in a number of public comment sites. Concentrating on how they impact on e-commerce, these include:

- Consumer protection sites – although normally published or promoted by a consumer protection organization, there may be elements of CGM on those sites. Any consumer input is likely, however, to be used as an example (of complaints, or a case study that is then followed up by the publishing organization), and so will be vetted before publication.
- Consumer review sites – sites set up as consumer review forums where consumers are encouraged to comment on goods and services they have purchased. Review sites are very popular in the travel, computing and electrical goods industries. Some consumer review sites actually advocate that companies use the sites for consumer research and invite replies to customer complaints. It is common for these sites to include other content on the subject covered and so be considered to be **portals**.
- **Chat rooms** – although chat rooms may seem to be simply that – chitchat – the participants frequently chat about a product or service they have used or experienced. Even 'social' chat can be useful to marketers; comments about a movie or TV show, for example.

48 Key Concepts in E-Commerce

- **Bulletin boards** – rather like chat rooms, the comments left on bulletin boards may not be overtly about products, services or brands, but that does not mean that those messages might not provide information useful to commercial organizations.
- **Blogs** – almost by definition, people who write blogs are outgoing by nature. Blogs could be specifically about products or services, or it could just be that the blogger has had a good or bad experience with a product or service and wants to tell the world about it. Blogs are particularly significant because many are picked up by search engines for their indexes. This means that a customer's rant about a brand on their own rather obscure blog could be picked up by the search engines and appear in their listings when someone searches on that brand name.
- **Cyberbashing** sites – by their very nature these sites are made up of criticism from unsatisfied customers – some of them very inflammatory, even libellous.
- **Virtual community** web sites – where, on part of the site, members might comment on a particular product or service that is relevant to that community's shared interest.
- **Online social shopping** – where like-minded individuals give opinions and tips to fellow shoppers.

Such is the nature of the web that one site – perhaps a **portal** – could address more than one of those features listed above.

Organizations should constantly monitor CGM sites both as part of an **online reputation management** strategy and as market research – perhaps as part of a marketing information system. Also significant for the online marketer is the use of CGM sites for hosting advertising. That many sites – or pages within them – are subject-specific makes them excellent for targeted advertising.

See also citizen cinema.

Consumer Protection (Distance Selling) Regulations 2000 (DSRs)

Significant to e-commerce because these EU regulations apply to any organization that sells goods or services to consumers through an organized distance-selling scheme where there is no face-to-face contact between the business and the consumer – which includes the Internet. Although online auctions are not covered by the DSRs, fixed-price sales through 'buy-now' features on auction sites (as used on eBay) are not

exempt because the sale is not concluded by process of auction. The DSRs applies only to B2C transactions, and B2B trading is not covered.

See also Electronic Commerce (EC Directive) regulations 2002 (ECRs).

Consumer protection sites

See consumer-generated media.

Consumer review sites

See consumer-generated media.

Content (1)

All the text, pictures, sound and other data on a web site.

Content (2)

Specifically, the textual content of a web site – as opposed to **graphics**. There is an important difference between textual *content* and *copy*, and for that reason the two are addressed together in this section. The textual content of a web site is that part of the site that the publisher wishes the user to read. Content would include such things as contact details, articles, **FAQ** lists, company details (about us), shipping details and privacy policies. Content should answer customers' questions and solve problems. Copy, on the other hand, is text that persuades the reader to do something that will meet the objectives of the site – place an order, for example. That it is often called *sales copy* betrays its origins. The most obvious copy is the **call to action**, but this could encourage users to go and read (more) content – privacy or company details, for example – that will add to the user's confidence in the web site. However, the line between content and copy is often blurred, and the distinction may vary from site to site. For example, a product description could be part content (description), part copy (order now, few in stock). That many web site developers do not recognize where the distinction lies is a clear indication that both content and copy writing are specialist occupations. In the early days of the web, content and copy were largely ignored as an important element of e-commerce – and for many sites this is still the case, though successful e-commerce practitioners assigning significance to both is prompting many web site publishers to give them more credence. Note that an email that is part of an **email marketing** campaign will also contain both content and copy,

C

50 Key Concepts in E-Commerce

though because of its nature – direct marketing – it is likely to contain more of the latter.

See also content contextualization, fascinations and false logic.

Content aggregation services

See content aggregator.

Content aggregator

A software application that retrieves content from web sites for publication on another. Web site publishers can run the software themselves or employ *aggregation services* to undertake the task. Note that this is not theft of copyrighted work because the supplier will have authorized its syndication – a fee might be involved. The most common type of information to be aggregated is news, so allowing a web site to have up-to-date news reports on its web pages without having to gather and report that news. **Blogs** are another common source of content.

Content contextualization

In an e-commerce environment this refers to the writing (or rewriting) of content so that it is in context with the media in which it will be read – that is, online. It is common practice, though not *good* practice, for a web site's content to be taken *verbatim* from literature prepared for another medium. The content in printed brochures, for example, is not written in a way that readers can interact with it – as is possible using **links** online. Grammatical differences also exist. For example, web sites exist in the present and so content in the present tense is in context as the customer reads it. Printed brochures can be in circulation for months (even years), therefore talking about *now* is not appropriate.

See also content (2).

Content management

In printed publications the job title of someone who undertakes the duties of content management is the *editor*. The *offline* editor's job is to ensure that the right content is getting to the right reader, at the right time, at the right cost. This is, effectively, the same job that the web site content manager performs.

Content management software (CMS)

A term that is something of a misnomer in that the software doesn't manage content, it only simplifies the process of accessing web sites and changing the content – but that content must still be managed by a human being.

See also content management.

Content rich

A search engine term that relates to the fact that **algorithms** give higher ranking to pages which contain the keyword or term for which a user is searching – that is, it is *rich* in content. **Search engine optimizers** should beware, however. To cram a page with keywords simply to attract search engines might make the content unintelligible to human readers, so negating the efforts of getting the web page high in **search engine rankings** in the first place.

Content targeting

See contextual and behavioural targeting

Contextual and behavioural targeting

An offline concept that has transferred – and is practised extensively – online. Applications like Google's **AdSense** are built around the concept – which is sometimes called **collaborative filtering**. The *targeting* element refers to the targeting of potential customers with promotions that will (hopefully) be relevant, and so appealing to that segment of the market. Online, that promotion is invariably advertising. Contextually targeted adverts are placed where the adverts are in *context* with the content of the host web site or page. This is an extension of content targeting, though the two are related. With *content* targeting the ads *match* the content – tools being advertised on a gardening-advice web site, for example. Although the tools and gardening mix could still be applied to *contextual* targeting, this model can go further. Ads for creams that alleviate back pain on a gardening web site, perhaps. In both content and contextual advertising the same adverts are presented for all visitors. This is in contrast to *behavioural targeting*, where the presented ads take into account the online behaviour of the user and so are *personalized*. Behavioural segmentation might be based on such things as usage frequency (for example, occasional or frequent), usage status (that is, non-user, user, lapsed user), occasion for purchase (a gift,

52 Key Concepts in E-Commerce

for example), or benefits sought (for example, convenience or status). Whereas contextual targeting is relatively simple (requiring knowledge only of the web sites' content), successful behavioural targeting demands more information about the user before they can be truly targeted either individually or as part of a segment. The data cannot be collected ad hoc; they must be gathered in a formal, structured manner and must then be stored in such a way that they are easily extracted and analysed. This practice is a very close relative of **database marketing** – though that discipline is normally associated with **direct marketing** rather than advertising. The gathering of information required for accurate behavioural targeting can be overt (personal data on a subscription form, for example), covert (for example, using **adware**) or something between the two (**cookies**, for example).

This definition is based on, or cites, content by the author in R. Gay, A. Charlesworth and R. Esen, *Online Marketing: A Customer-Led Approach*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007.

Conversational media

The offline forerunner of **consumer-generated media** (CGM), conversational media has been around for as long as the printed media – though always as a minor sideline to publishing. Newspapers, for example, have always invited comment in *reader's letters*-type forums. However, due to advances in ICT it is now not only more accessible, but easier than ever to participate in. The popularity of its contemporary manifestation – consumer-generated media – has resulted in it becoming the main event (rather than a sideline) for many web sites.

Conversion

The term used to describe the action when a web site visitor completes whatever the objective of the web site is, that is, they *convert* from being a *potential* customer to being an *actual* customer. For example, a visitor ordering a product or subscribing to a newsletter would be a conversion.

Conversion by acquisition

A **web site analytic**, part of a **conversion path analysis** where the ad campaign or source that a customer used to first visit a web site is recorded so that any subsequent purchase might be credited to that source. For example, a TV ad might feature a specific URL – **landing page** – where the customer can gain more information or place an

order. If the customer then visits the site and makes a purchase, the TV ad is identified, and credited, as providing the lead – even if the purchase is made some time after the TV ad aired.

Conversion funnel

An online extension of the **sales funnel** – where many potential customers enter the funnel (at its widest end), but most drop out as they pass through the funnel (to its narrowest point), with only a few making a purchase. The conversion funnel is, by its very nature, linear, with customers having a single path to follow from entering until their exit. As a result, the conversion funnel can be used to help with the performance analysis of the web site. The conversion funnel is made up of a series of stages that together equal the desired result – because the user follows a path down the funnel, the concept is also referred to as *conversion path analysis*. At each stage the prospect chooses to either continue to the next stage, or leave the process – the analogy of losing customers to a pipe losing water has led to the concept sometimes being called *the leaking pipe*. By analysing the actions of users at each stage, the web site publisher can assess user behaviour and address problems where they are identified. As with the sales funnel, a successful segmentation strategy would help to increase the ratio of buyers to prospects by putting only genuine **prospects** in the top of the funnel. Targeted advertising, both offline and online, should drive only those users who have a real interest in the product or service on offer. The conversion funnel is the vendor-side view of the **purchase funnel**. Note, however, that the conversion funnel differs from **persuasion architecture**, which considers the conversion to be a more fluid process, with customers requiring continuous persuasion as they engage in the purchase process.

Conversion path analysis

See conversion funnel.

Conversion Process

See persuasion architecture.

Conversion rate

An element of **web site analytics**, conversion rate calculates the ratio of total numbers of site visitors to the total number of **conversions**.

54 Key Concepts in E-Commerce

Cookies

These are electronic calling-cards that are left on the hard drive of the user's computer when they visit a web site. Essentially, a cookie facilitates the recording of data about the user and their visit(s) to the web site that issued that cookie. They have a number of valid reasons for existing. *Login* cookies record details of user's personal login details – facilitating sites such as Amazon to deliver personalized welcome pages when a registered user returns to the site (using the same computer). *Advertising* cookies are left on web sites by downloaded ads. These allow future ads to be served based on the user's previous online behaviour – so improving **clickthrough rates**. *Analytic* cookies help companies understand traffic patterns on web sites. Note that cookie is also used as a verb, for example to *cookie* a site's visitors.

Cooperative web site

See **collaborative web site**.

Copy

See **content (2)**.

Copyright

An exclusive grant from the government that gives the owner the right to reproduce a work, in whole or in part, and to distribute, perform or display it to the public in any form or manner – including the Internet. The owner also has the right to control ways in which their material can be used. Copyright is an unregistered right (unlike **trademarks**), coming into effect as soon as something that can be protected is created on paper, on film, via sound recording or as an electronic record on the internet. While it is not legally necessary in the UK, it is advisable to warn others against copying any work by marking it with the copyright symbol – © – followed by the owner's name and the date. Online, copyright covers all web site content, including text and images, as well as the **source code** of the web site.

Co-registration

A tactic used in an **opt-in** email marketing strategy, co-registration is a way of having users opt-in to receiving emails, or subscribing to **e-newsletters**, that are in addition to the one they have originally

agreed. The concept is relatively easy to implement. When a visitor arrives at the page in which they are agreeing to receive email or subscribe to a newsletter, they are also offered the option to sign up for other emails or newsletters as well, normally simply having to check the relevant boxes to indicate which they agree to receive.

Corporate cyberstalking

See cyberstalking.

Corporate email servers

While most Internet users will send their email through an **Internet service provider** (ISP), larger organizations, corporations and institutions – universities, for example – may have their own email servers. Although they do take resources to maintain, they can be more easily adapted for the specific uses required by the owner organization (**spam filters** can be more specific, for example).

Cost per –

It is worth noting that in many elements of **e-metrics** *cost per –* and *pay per –* (for example *cost per order*, *pay per click*) are used almost at random. Effectively the two terms mean the same – that is, how much the advertiser pays per click or how much each click costs the advertiser. Quite why *pay* or *cost* are applied to different terms can only be down to custom and practice. Perhaps the future will see finite definitions for these terms, but in the meantime they are interchangeable.

Cost per acquisition

The total marketing expenses divided by the total number of new customers acquired. In an e-commerce environment, expenses are normally those incurred online only, though they could incorporate offline costs as well.

Cost per order

The total marketing expenses divided by the total value of orders. In an e-commerce environment, expenses are normally those incurred online only, though they could incorporate offline costs as well.

C

56 Key Concepts in E-Commerce

Cost per visit

The total marketing expenses divided by total number of visits to a web site. In an e-commerce environment, expenses are normally those incurred online only, though they could incorporate offline costs as well.

CPA (cost per action)

See pay per click.

CPC (cost per click)

See pay per click.

CPM (cost per thousand impressions)

A method of charging for **pay per impression** advertising. The 'M' – the abbreviation of the Latin word for one thousand (*mille*) – is used because **ad impressions** are sold in blocks of a thousand.

Crawler

See spider.

Creatives

A term that has been used in advertising for some time, this has been adopted for e-commerce when referring to web site development. Creatives are the people who come up with the ideas (they *create*) that make a web site different, normally in an aesthetic context. They will work alongside **techies** who will handle the technical aspects of the site's development. Pushing the grammar envelope still further, any work completed by *creatives* is covered by the noun *creative*, as in 'that image is a creative'.

CRM (customer relationship management)

Customer relationship management is based on the assumption that there is a relationship between the business or the brand and the customer. This is a relationship that needs to be managed both through the individual buying stages and in the longer term. CRM is very much related to fostering customer loyalty and, in the longer term, customer retention.

CRM can be used in call-centre support and direct marketing operations; software systems assist in the support of customer service representatives and give customers alternative means by which they can communicate with the business (such as mail, email, telephone, etc.). Some sophisticated CRM software programs have email response systems which process incoming emails and determine whether they warrant a personal response or an automated response. Recent figures indicate that systems such as this can handle around 50 per cent of the requests from customers (typically requests for additional information, **passwords** and responses to **email marketing**).

Other CRM software systems incorporate the facility for customer representatives to take part in live **chat** rooms or co-browsing, offering the business a less formal environment in which to make contact with customers. CRM software can also queue customers on the basis of their profiles, by requesting that the customer logs in to the web site. It is then possible to pass the customer on to individuals in the customer service team, who may be better suited to dealing with customers who share similar profiles. CRM software also provides the facility to maintain and update a database of information about each customer (in other words, a case history).

CRM is included here because the impact of e-technology on the practice is significant, improving both communications with customers and collection of data.

Sutherland, J. and Canwell, D. *Key Concepts in Marketing*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004.

See also **E-CRM**.

Cross-linking

Linking to content on a web site from pages within that site. An example would be to have a link to the site's home page on each page of the site. It should help the user to navigate the site and so increase the chances of the objectives for the site being met.

Cross platform

See **platform**.

Cross-selling

A close relative of **up-selling**, cross-selling has been around offline for as long as sales have been made. Cross-selling involves the sales person

58 Key Concepts in E-Commerce

offering related or associated products to increase sales. Done properly, the practice is seen by the buyer as being part of good service – it is annoying for the customer to arrive home with their purchase only to find they need a particular **yagahit** to make it work properly. Had the salesperson advised of the necessity for the yagahit the customer would have been grateful. Naturally, loading the customer with useless accessories has the reverse effect. Online, carefully prepared software programs can take the place of the attentive salesperson, with an automated notice of the need for an accessory appearing when a purchase is made. Amazon take the online application further with their ‘customers who bought this book also bought this one . . . ’ facility.

Crowdsourcing

A play on the business term *outsourcing*, this is the practice of having members of public perform work for an organization, often for little or no financial reward. Although the practice existed previously (some argue that it is a derivative of **open source**), the term *crowdsourcing* – and its subsequent popularity – is credited to a *Wired* magazine article published in June 2006. Often cited as one of the first proponents of crowdsourcing, image provider iStockphoto (www.istockphoto.com) invites contributions from amateur photographers, indexes them, and make those images available to others for a fee. Although each contributor receives a royalty, it is a pittance compared to that which professional photographers and publishers would expect.

CSS

See *cascading style sheets*.

Cue words

Also known as *atomic phrases*, these are words, terms or phrases that alert search engines to the context of a searcher’s submission. ‘Biography’, for example, added to a person’s name in a search box prompts the search engine to look for anything **tagged** as being biographical about the person, rather than simply returning every web page that has that person’s name in it. For example, searching on ‘David Beckham’ would return every web page that contains a report of any game he has played in as well as every article published about his personal life. Adding ‘biography’ will put pages relative to his biography at the top of the millions of returns that his name produces.

Customer evangelists

In a word-of-mouth context, customer evangelists are those individuals who not only spread the message the widest, but are also the ones who can exert most influence on their friends and associates. Although they are targeted at the beginning of **viral marketing** campaigns, evangelists exist outside any endeavours of marketers. When customers act as evangelists, it is because they have received excellent service from the organization (or brand) and are willing to put their own reputations on the line when they recommend that service. Customer evangelists are often early adopters (in the product life cycle) and considered to be influencers of others in their buyer behaviour. Although they can be solicited for **testimonials**, evangelists normally *preach* in their own social circles, though in an e-commerce environment, it is often such individuals who are inclined towards **blogs** and **consumer-generated media**. Businesses should also be aware that while offline the customer evangelist is expected to deliver only a positive endorsement, online they may preach a negative message – see **cyberbashing**.

See also social proof.

Customer relationship management

See CRM.

Cyber (as a prefix)

Although the word cyber doesn't exist in its own right, the term as a prefix indicates a relationship to computers. More recently, and probably owing much to the use of the term **cyberspace**, prefixing any word with *cyber* gives that word an association with cyberspace, the Internet or being online. For example, a cybercafé is a café that has Internet access available to its customers and *cyber-law* deals with those laws that are specific to the Internet.

See also online (as a prefix) and e (as a prefix).

Cyberattack

See cyberbashing.

Cyberbashing

Also known as a *cyberattack* or a *cybersmear* campaign, this is the application of Internet technology in expressing a poor opinion of an organi-

C

60 Key Concepts in E-Commerce

zation, brand or product. An element of **consumer-generated media**, cyberbashing can range from fairly mild comments of frustration to libellous statements. Cyberbashing is practised by setting up a web site – commonly using a **domain name** that ends in *sucks*, for example, *companynamesucks.com*, and sometimes called a *gripesite* – and filling it with content that criticizes the target organization. More elaborate cyberbashing sites include forums to allow fellow disappointed customers to add their comments. While legal action can be taken against outright untruths, genuine accounts of actual events are far more difficult to censor. Because of the nature of the cyberbashing sites – pure textual content which feature the company/brand/product name frequently that appeals to their **algorithms** – it is not unusual for cybersmears to appear high in **search engine results pages**. More proactive companies will monitor cyberbashing sites as part of **online reputation management** and move to diffuse potential situations by either contacting the complaining individual, responding in the forums or setting up response sites.

Cybercheck

As the term suggests, this is using the web to find information about individuals, a search engine being an obvious starting point for any kind of *online* check. However, there are numerous other sites that will reveal personal information, from the rather innocent Friends Reunited-type sites (www.friendsreunited.com) to those that offer the online service of tracking personal details of potential dates or business partners.

See also cyber stalking, MySpace generation and vanity search.

Cybercrime

The generic term for any crime perpetrated using Internet technology. However, it is often more closely related to online credit-card fraud and the theft of card holder's details – which is sometimes referred to as *cyberfraud*.

Cyberfraud

See cybercrime.

Cyberjockey (cyber-jockey)

A term from the early days of the web when cyber was commonly used as a prefix to describe any Internet-related activity. A cyberjockey –

jockey being more likely related to *disc-jockey* than a horse rider – is someone who spends long periods of time in **chat** rooms, discussion forums or **newsgroups** and addresses issues raised by other users by answering questions or providing assistance in subjects on which they are knowledgeable or even expert.

Cyberloafing

Also called *cyberslacking*, this is a term used to describe an employee who is on the Internet – surfing the web or sending personal emails – when they should be working.

Cyber Monday

Also known as Black Monday, this is a US nickname for the Monday after Thanksgiving (the last Thursday in November). The term stems from the long tradition in America of the day after Thanksgiving being one of, if not *the*, busiest shopping day of the year – historically the day when high sales pushed money-losing stores into the black. The day has been traditionally dubbed Black Friday. However, research has shown it is the Monday after Thanksgiving that is the peak day for *online* transactions – hence Black Monday (piggybacking on the Black Friday theme), and more recently Cyber Monday. Many online retailers gear up for the day by running specific promotions on and around the day. While it is an American tradition, any online store – no matter where it is based – which hopes to do business with customers in the US should look to maximize sales at this time of the year.

Cybersmear campaign

See *cyberbashing*.

Cyberspace

A term coined by author William Gibson in his 1984 novel *Neuromancer*, the word is often used to describe the whole range of information resources available through computer networks in general and the Internet in particular. It was very popular in the early days of the commercial Internet, but its use has declined in recent years.

Cybersquatting

The practice of registering a domain name with the aim of selling it at a profit, normally to the organization that has some stake in the name.

62 Key Concepts in E-Commerce

Although domain names can still be *squatted*, the fact that few names remain unregistered means that new examples are limited to new products, brands or companies. This is in contrast to the early days of the web when the early bird really did catch the domain name worm. Before businesses had even become aware of the Internet, let alone domain names, unscrupulous individuals saw the opportunity to extort money from organizations by registering the names of companies, brands and products. Although existing and new laws gave organizations legal recourse to recover the names, many simply paid up to avoid protracted, and expensive, lawsuits. One such law is the US Anti-cybersquatting Consumer Protection Act of 1999, which covers **dotcom** names. In other parts of the word, however, there is no such law and action has to be taken on the use of a domain name rather than the actual registering of it. One way that cybersquatters can pick up new names is **drop catching** domain names whose registrations have lapsed. A close relative of the cybersquatter is the **typosquatter**. Although the typosquatter will normally have a different purpose, they may take advantage of the general population's poor typing ability (see **fat-finger typos**) and look to sell to organizations domain names of misspellings of their brand or products.

See also **domain name parking (2)**, a practice sometimes incorrectly referred to as cybersquatting.

Cyberstalking

Although Google often takes the blame in this concept, a commonly used term being *Google-stalking*, the ubiquitous search engine is far from being the only guilty party in this practice. Cyberstalking takes the **cybercheck** to the next, more sinister, level. An excellent definition of the practice comes from Bocij and McFarlane: 'A group of behaviours in which an individual, group of individuals or organization uses information and communications technology (ICT) to harass one or more individuals. Such behaviours may include, but are not limited to, the transmission of threats and false accusations, identity theft, data theft, damage to data or equipment, computer monitoring, the solicitation of minors for sexual purposes and confrontation. Harassment is defined as a course of action that a reasonable person, in possession of the same information, would think causes another reasonable person to suffer emotional distress.' As this definition intimates, cyberstalking can be against an entity – an organization or corporation, for example – as well as an individual.

Bocij, P. and McFarlane, L. 'Online Harassment: Towards a Definition of Cyberstalking', *Prison Service Journal*, 139 (February), HM Prison Service, London, 2002.