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E-commerce: the role of familiarity and trust

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Abstract

Familiarity is a precondition for trust, claims Luhmann [28: Luhmann N. Trust and power. Chichester UK: Wiley, 1979. (translation from German)], and trust is a prerequisite of social behavior, especially regarding important decisions. This study examines this intriguing idea in the context of the E-commerce involved in inquiring about and purchasing books on the Internet. Survey data from 217 potential users support and extend this hypothesis. The data show that both familiarity with an Internet vendor and its processes and trust in the vendor influenced the respondents' intentions to inquire about books, and their intentions to purchase them. Additionally, the data show that while familiarity indeed builds trust, it is primarily people's disposition to trust that affected their trust in the vendor. Implications for research and practice are discussed.



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Keywords

E-commerce; Trust; Familiarity; Internet; Motivation

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