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Commercial Scenarios for the Web: Opportunities and Challenges FREE

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Abstract

The potential of the World Wide Web on the Internet as a commercial medium and market has been widely documented in a variety of media. However, a critical examination of its commercial development has received little attention. Therefore, in this paper we propose a structural framework for examining the explosion in commercial activity on the Web. First, we explore the role of the Web as a distribution channel and a medium for marketing communications. Second, we examine the factors that have led to the development of the Web as a commercial medium, evaluating the benefits it provides to both consumers and firms and its attractive size and demographic characteristics. Third, we discuss the barriers to commercial growth of the Web from both the supply and demand side perspectives. This analysis leads to a new classification of commercialization efforts that categorizes commercial Web sites into six distinct types including 1) Online Storefront, 2) Internet Presence, 3) Content, 4) Mall, 5) Incentive Site, and, 6) Search Agent. The first three comprise the “Integrated Destination Site,” and the latter three represent forms of “Web Traffic Control.” Our framework, argued in the context of integrated marketing, facilitates greater understanding of the Web as a commercial medium, and allows examination of commercial Web sites in terms of the opportunities and challenges firms face in the rush towards commercialization.

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