

Homework 1

6. Many customers who use mobile devices prefer to make purchases using a mobile app instead of their devices' Web browser. It is less clear that these customers search for and select specific products using only the merchant's dedicated mobile app. In about 200 words, outline the advantages and disadvantages of using a specific merchant's mobile app to select and purchase products.

I think before we discuss what this homework assignment is, it may be best to describe what this homework assignment is not. This assignment is not a comparison (compare and contrast) using a website for research and purchasing of products versus using a mobile application for research and purchasing of products. Further, this assignment is not an exercise in the SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) of any activity related to web commerce. Finally, this exercise is also not an analysis of 3 of the categories related to web commerce (business to business, business to government, nor consumer to consumer). This assignment is an analysis of the advantages and disadvantages of using a mobile application in business to consumer activity only.

To this end, the mechanism I used for this analysis was my "Best Buy" mobile phone application. I should indicate that I am a Best Buy "preferred customer" or whatever the flavor of the day is called for the name is for my use that the retail chain of store locations. This makes me a "Geek Squad" preferred user, or whatever they happen to call it, although with my computer and network and other electronics knowledge, I very rarely exercise this service from Best Buy. The reason I am a Best Buy preferred customer is the large number of appliance purchases carried out at the retail locations, due to the demise of the Sears retail chain of stores. Being a Best Buy preferred customer makes my purchases and any future purchases at Best Buy automatically covered by extended warranty coverage from an annual membership without needing to purchase any additional coverages.

Therefore, let's talk about some of the advantages of the Best Buy mobile application on my smart phone. Which I include, 1 time login (my application remembers me), online wallet, control of the user experience, search is focused, incentives and promotions are displayed immediately on screen, purchase history, immediate connection to my extended warranty coverage. There are other less important advantages, like font sizes, familiarity with the

application, product placement and interactive screens. These are cosmetic items, but they are still important. I could elaborate on each of these advantages, but I don't think this is necessary here.

Now, let's discuss disadvantages of using the Best Buy application on my mobile phone for business to consumer retail product purchases. Probably the largest item has to do with the competition to get me as a preferred retail customer in the first place. Finding the application in the Google Play online application store. Getting me to install it over the hundreds or thousands of other applications and retail choices available. Getting me to install and use the application over using a web browser on my phone. The application on my phone must be easy to use and work well on all mobile operating systems and device types and sizes. The application must incorporate search capability for it to be a useful application. The Best Buy mobile application does provide these capabilities, but it must come at considerable effort by the retail chain. The Best Buy mobile application does not provide customer reviews, but it does contain a Question-and-Answer section where FAQs about the product are provided. Considering the questionable nature of online reviews available by paid responses, this is not seen as much of a disadvantage. The Best Buy mobile application may not contain certain comparison-shopping capabilities that web search and consumer information sites may contain. Finally, the Best Buy application does not provide choices of products which Best Buy does not sell to consumers. This is not surprising, but it does come at a disadvantage to me

Since getting the Best Buy coverage, I find that I use the Best Buy app on my phone for most shopping of electronics, appliances and accessories since it just seems easier.

Greg Buchmann