

Global Perceptions of Journals Publishing E-Commerce Research

Researchers rate publications by perception, quality, and how these factors determine where they would prefer their own e-commerce work be published.



E-commerce encompasses all aspects of business and market processes enabled by Internet and Web technologies. E-commerce, like information systems, is interdisciplinary in nature, borrowing concepts and theories from computer science, psychology, economics, organizational theory, and the natural sciences, as well as from applied areas of study such as marketing, management, finance, accounting, engineering, and law.

Research findings in e-commerce can be disseminated to scientists and practitioners in the form of journal articles. But the interdisciplinary nature of e-commerce often makes it difficult to match the research being performed with the journals that currently exist in established disciplines and fields of study. While e-commerce articles are accepted in these traditional outlets, it can be a difficult process if they are perceived to be outside the scope of the journals. In an attempt to address this problem, multidisciplinary journals aimed specifically at e-commerce research have begun appearing over the last several years.

In academia, researchers strive to have their research published in top-quality journals, usually in those in which articles are refereed to the highest standards and have an excellent editorial board.

But how do journals get recognized as being top-quality? This is normally done through the gathering of opinions, sometimes through a formal survey where results are published. While there have been many studies investigating the perceptions of journals that publish research in information systems [1–6], there have been none to date that specifically look at journals that publish research pertaining to e-commerce.

To begin to fill this void, we present the results of a study examining the overall perceptions of academic journals, both new and traditional, that are used as outlets for research pertaining to e-commerce. The insights provided by this study should benefit researchers (and their institutions) who publish in this area. This study should also help those researchers trying to find outlets for their e-commerce research and begins to address the issue of the quality of the e-commerce research published in these various journals.

The study¹ was performed almost entirely by email correspondence using a questionnaire in the form of an Excel file attachment. Contact addresses were taken from the *ISWorld* faculty directory.² The survey was also available for down-

¹The questionnaire and full results of the study (and complete tables) can be found at www.ccs.neu.edu/faculty/home/tarasewich/e-commerce.

²The *ISWorld* faculty directory is available at webfoot.csom.umn.edu/isworld/facdir/default.htm.

Position		Responsibility		Research Area		Total Pubs		EC Pubs	
Lecturer	10%	Research	6%	Information Systems	76%	None	9%	None	40%
Assistant Professor	28	Research with some teaching	20	Operations Mgmt.	3	1-5	34	1-3	32
Associate Professor	26	Research and teaching	56	Information Science	5	6-10	18	4-6	14
Professor	23	Teaching with some research	16	Computer Science	4	11-20	11	7-9	6
Other	13	Teaching	2	Other	12	21-40	12	10-12	2
						41+	16	13+	6

Table 1. Respondent profile.

by regular mail). By region, there were 116 responses from North America, 67 from Europe, 53 from Australasia, and 13 from other areas. This response rate is encouraging given only a subset of all IS researchers are performing e-commerce research.

loading from our Web site, and notices about the study were posted to the *ISWorld* discussion list. About 3189 email requests for participation were successfully sent. Of these, a total of 249 usable surveys were returned (10 of these were returned

After answering several questions requesting demographic and academic information, respondents were asked to rate 62 journals according to whether they thought the publications were not appropriate, appropriate, significant, or outstanding as a publication outlet for e-commerce

Table 2. E-commerce journal perception rankings.

Ranking	Journal Name	Appropriateness (n=249)		Popularity (n=249)		Appropriateness Europe (n=67)		Appropriateness Australasia (n=53)		Appropriateness North America (n=116)		Comparison with Global CACM Study [4]
		Count	Ranking	Count	Ranking	Count	Ranking	Count	Ranking	Count	Ranking	
1	Communications of the ACM	204	2	217	1	56	12	38	1	102	2	
2	MIS Quarterly	201	1	218	2	54	3	41	2	97	1	
3	Information Systems Research	190	4	199	7	48	4	41	4	92	3	
4	International Journal of Electronic Commerce	188	6	189	3	53	1	42	10	82	23	
5	Electronic Commerce Research	186	7	187	9	48	2	42	5	88	-	
6	Harvard Business Review	183	3	204	8	48	7	40	7	86	7	
7	Electronic Markets	182	8	184	4	51	10	38	8	83	40	
8	Journal of Management Information Systems	180	5	190	21	38	13	37	3	94	4	
9	Journal of Electronic Commerce Research	177	10	178	10	46	11	38	11	82	-	
10	European Journal of IS	171	11	177	6	49	5	41	21	71	11	
11	Communications of the AIS	169	12	177	13	42	21	33	6	88	18	
12	Sloan Management Review	167	9	183	5	50	18	35	13	75	12	
13	Journal of Organizational Computing and EC	166	19	169	20	38	17	35	9	83	31	
14	International Journal of Electronic Business	165	20	169	12	44	6	40	19	71	-	
15	Information Systems Journal	163	14	176	11	46	8	40	26	67	16	
16	Information and Management	162	17	173	14	42	22	33	12	79	10	
17	eCommerce Research Forum	159	26	162	17	40	9	39	20	71	-	
18	Information Systems Management	154	23	165	16	41	14	37	27	67	33	
19	Quarterly Journal of Electronic Commerce	147	41	150	23	36	19	33	22	70	-	
20	IEEE Transactions (various subjects)	145	15	175	18	39	34	27	14	73	6	
21	Journal of Information Systems	145	27	162	32	32	15	37	28	67	35	
22	ACM Transactions (various subjects)	145	18	170	24	36	26	31	17	72	13	
23	Journal of Strategic Information Systems	144	30	158	15	41	25	31	34	65	20	
24	e-Services Journal	143	37	152	30	32	24	31	16	72	-	
25	ACM Special Interest Group Publications	143	21	169	22	38	23	32	25	68	26	

Quality (n=249)			Overall Exposure	Appropriateness (from Table 2)	
Ranking	Journal Name	Count		Ranking	Count
1	International Journal of Electronic Commerce	169	3.55	4	188
2	Electronic Commerce Research	162	3.36	5	186
3	Electronic Markets	158	3.41	7	182
4	Journal of Electronic Commerce Research	150	3.33	9	177
5	MIS Quarterly	142	2.95	2	201
6	Communications of the ACM	140	2.88	1	204
7	Journal of Organizational Computing and EC	140	3.31	13	166
8	International Journal of Electronic Business	128	3.15	14	165
9	Journal of Management Information Systems	127	2.87	8	180
10	Information Systems Research	123	2.92	3	190
11	eCommerce Research Forum	122	3.12	17	159
12	Quarterly Journal of Electronic Commerce	116	3.22	19	147
13	Harvard Business Review	110	2.68	6	183
14	e-Services Journal	104	2.97	24	143
15	Communications of the AIS	97	2.67	11	169
16	European Journal of IS	95	2.66	10	171
17	Journal of Internet Research	91	2.89	28	138
18	Information and Management	90	2.60	16	162
19	Sloan Management Review	89	2.59	12	167
20	IEEE Transactions (various subjects)	81	2.45	20	145
21	Information Systems Journal	78	2.48	15	183
22	Journal of Strategic Information Systems	73	2.46	23	144
23	Management Science	71	2.37	29	138
24	Computer (IEEE)	69	2.36	27	139
25	Journal of the AIS	68	2.49	26	139

Table 3. E-commerce journal quality rankings.

research. The publication list was created from a recent global study of IS journal preferences [4] and from a list of e-commerce journals that resulted from a query to the *ISWorld* listserv.³ Rating categories were consistent with previous studies of IS journal preferences [2, 3, 5]. Participants were allowed to add and rate any journals not on the list, and could skip those journals for which they had no opinion.

Table 1 summarizes respondent demographic information. Most (28%) of the sample was made up of assistant professors or equivalent; and these were followed closely by associate professors (26%)

³The list of e-commerce publications compiled by the Information Systems and Qualitative Sciences Department at Texas Tech University is available at ta.ba.ttu.edu/onlid/research/ecjournals.htm.

and full professors (23%). Responsibilities for most (56%) respondents included both research and teaching. In terms of geography, 47% work in North America, 27% in Europe, 22% in Australasia, and 4% elsewhere. Approximately 48% listed their institutions as being AACSB accredited. In terms of research areas, 76% listed information systems, followed by information science (5%), computer science (4%), and operations management (3%). Many respondents (12%) listed their research areas as “other,” and some wrote in descriptors including economics, management, marketing, e-commerce, and e-business. About 79% of respondents have conducted e-commerce research. Most respondents (34%) have published a total of 1–5 journal articles, while 16% have published more than 40. Of the total respondents, 40% have not published an e-commerce journal article, while 32% have published 1–3 articles. Some 55% of respondents think there are enough outlets in which to publish e-commerce research, 13% think there are not enough, and 33% are not sure.

Journal Perceptions

The perceptions of journals publishing e-commerce research were first analyzed using measures of appropriateness and popularity. The first column of Table 2 lists the ranking of the top 25 journals based on the number of respondents who perceived these journals as appropriate outlets for e-commerce research. (For the complete list of the top 50 journals, see www.ccs.neu.edu/faculty/home/tarase/eccommerce.) A journal was considered an appropriate outlet if a respondent rated it as either appropriate, significant, or outstanding as

an e-commerce publication outlet. Popularity rankings give the total number of respondents who rated the journal, including those who rated it as not appropriate. Popularity is a measure of overall journal recognition. The following columns of Table 2 display the rankings based on what region of the world the academic institution of the respondent is located. Finally, the e-commerce rankings are compared with a recently published study for IS journals [4].

The most appropriate outlet for e-commerce research, based on the data collected, is *Communications of the ACM*, followed closely by *MIS Quarterly* and then by *Information Systems Research*. These are well-established journals highly regarded as outlets for IS research. The next two highest ranked journals in terms of appropriateness are “dedicated” e-commerce journals, which, as their names suggest, exist to publish only e-commerce research. These are the *International Journal of Electronic Commerce* and *Electronic Commerce Research*. In the top 10, there are two additional dedicated e-commerce journals, *Electronic Markets* and the *Journal of Electronic Commerce Research*. *Harvard Business Review*, the *Journal of Management Information Systems*, and the *European Journal of IS* are the more traditional journals that also made the top 10. Other dedicated e-commerce journals ranked highly (top 20) are the *Journal of Organizational Computing and Electronic Commerce*, the *International Journal of Electronic Business*, *e-commerce Research Forum*, and the *Quarterly Journal of Electronic Commerce*. Overall, the appropriateness rankings show a varied mix of traditional IS journals and newer journals dedicated solely to e-commerce research.

The five journals that received the highest number of ratings (the “most popular”) journals are IS journals, plus *Communications of the ACM*, and the *Harvard Business Review*. However, the four dedicated e-commerce journals that were rated most appropriate for e-commerce research still appear in the top 10 most popular journals. There is a downward trend for most of the dedicated e-commerce journals while the well-known IS jour-

nals move upward when popularity rankings are compared with the appropriateness rankings. For example, *Management Science* moved up to 13th in popularity from 29th in appropriateness, and *Decision Support Systems* moved up to 24th from 34th. This suggests that certain journals, while well known as outlets for other kinds of research, are not necessarily perceived as the most appropriate for e-commerce research. This statement is also supported if we compare our popularity rankings to those of a recently published survey on global IS journal popularity [4]. Some IS journals that were rated highly in [4] dropped dramatically in our survey popularity rankings. For example, *Decision Sciences* dropped from 8th to 28th, and *Decision Support Systems* dropped from 9th to 24th.

Appropriateness rankings were then further divided into global regions—Europe, Australasia, and North America. In the European rankings, some of the European journals moved up in the rankings, like the *European Journal of IS*, which moved from 10th to 6th and *Information Systems Journal*, which went from 15th to 11th. Other journals dropped, such as the *Journal of MIS*, which went from 8th to the 21st. In the case of dedicated e-commerce journals, most of the European appropriateness rankings did not seem to change significantly as compared to worldwide appropriateness, except for *Journal of Organizational Computing and EC*, which dropped from 13th to 20th. Respondents in Australasia do not consider *Communications of the ACM* as the top outlet for e-commerce research as its ranking dropped to 12th. *Communications of the AIS* also dropped from 11th to 21st. Similar to European respondents, Australasians also perceive the *European Journal of IS* and *Information Systems Journal* as appropriate outlets for e-commerce research publications. As compared to the worldwide appropriateness rankings, the *International Journal of Electronic Business* and *e-commerce Research Forum* are both more highly regarded in Australasia, rising to 6th and 9th, respectively. North American-based respondents do not perceive the *International Jour-*

nal of Electronic Commerce or the *International Journal of Electronic Business* as highly when compared to the worldwide rankings. However, the *Journal of MIS* (ranked 3d in North America) and *Communications of the AIS* (ranked 6th) are regarded more as appropriate outlets in North America than worldwide.

The data was then analyzed based on the perceived quality of periodicals publishing research in e-commerce (Table 3). The average provided is the overall weighted average of the ratings given, where a value of 1 was assigned for not appropriate, 2 for appropriate, 3 for significant, and 4 for outstanding (consistent with [2, 3, 5]). Appropriateness val-

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ues from Table 2 are also shown on Table 3 for comparison purposes. The metric we used for quality was the number of respondents who rated the publication as either a significant or outstanding publication outlet for e-commerce research. Looking at the journal rankings from this viewpoint of quality provides some interesting observations. The top four outlets for e-commerce research in terms of quality are all dedicated e-commerce journals, with the *International Journal of Electronic Commerce* coming out solidly on top. Furthermore, out of the top 20 quality outlets, nine are dedicated e-commerce journals. Quite a few e-commerce journals were ranked much higher when looked at from a quality perspective versus just appropriateness. For example, *e-Services Journal* moved up from 24th in appropriateness to 14th in quality, and the *Journal of Internet Research* went from 28th to 17th. On the other hand, many of the traditional IS outlets moved downward, such as *Information Systems Research*, which dropped from 3rd to 10th. The overall average values are fairly consistent with the quality rankings

for the journals. In general, journals with higher overall averages are ranked higher in terms of the quality metric.

Respondents were also allowed to write in additional journals not on the questionnaire, and to rank these journals. Some 74 respondents chose to do this. A complete listing of these journals is available on the Web site. While none of these journals made the top 50 in terms of appropriateness, popularity, or quality, many were listed by multiple respondents. Those journals recognized as appropriate for e-commerce research by at least six respondents were *Logistics Information Management*, *Journal of Global Information Management*, *Journal of Database Management*, *Journal of Global Information Technology Management*, and *Journal of Information Technology Cases and Applications*. A few marketing journals (including *Marketing Science*) were also listed several times.

Conclusion

This study sheds some light on the preferences of journals for e-commerce research. The current research supports the notion that the perceptions of journals as being appropriate outlets for e-commerce research differ from those for IS research. This is evident from the rankings of IS journals and dedicated e-commerce journals as well as the comparison of these rankings with that of a previously conducted global IS journal study [4]. While e-commerce as a research area is still in its infancy, researchers are forming their opinions about new and traditional outlets in which to publish e-commerce research. The analysis also presented some insights into the quality of these outlets. Overall, many of the newer e-commerce journals compare favorably in terms of appropriateness and quality against traditional IS journals.

While this study has answered some basic questions about outlets for e-commerce research, it leaves many unanswered, shown in part by the comments received during the data collection

process. One major concern that needs to be addressed is whether or not e-commerce will become (or remain) a distinct field of research, or simply be absorbed into current disciplines such as computer science and/or fields such as information systems. While the results of this survey show preferences by e-commerce researchers for dedicated journals such as *International Journal of Electronic*

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Commerce and Electronic Commerce Research, there is definitely a place for e-commerce research in traditional IS journals.

Another concern is that while e-commerce is interdisciplinary in nature, this study approached outlets for e-commerce research only from the IS researchers' perspective. There are certainly many high-quality journals in areas such as marketing, management, and computer science that have and will publish articles pertaining to e-commerce. This study is limited in that it does not poll preferences from other disciplines, nor does it include journals from other fields. There may also be some bias toward the traditional IS journals because of their existing reputations and previous ranking studies. Conference proceedings, where research ideas are often first presented, were also not included in this study. It may be beneficial to conduct a larger study at some point in the future that addresses these issues.

There are other possibilities to expand upon the current study as well. It may be useful to look at e-commerce research and journal preferences in terms of subcategories such as technology, strategy, marketing, economics, Web design, and wireless applications. There may be different opinions about journals based on the specific type of e-commerce research being considered. When similar studies are conducted in other fields and disci-

plines, a comparative interdisciplinary study will provide insight into the difference of perceptions among researchers.

This is the first study that investigates what IS researchers perceive as the most appropriate and best-quality journals for e-commerce research. The top 10 journals appropriate for e-commerce research include four dedicated to e-commerce,

although the top three remain traditional IS journals, namely *Communications of the ACM*, *MIS Quarterly*, and *Information Systems Research*. The top four quality outlets for e-commerce research are *International Journal of Electronic Commerce*, *Electronic*

Commerce Research, *Electronic Markets*, and *Journal of Electronic Commerce Research*, all of which are dedicated e-commerce journals. Overall, this study shows that perceptions of journal appropriateness and quality differ for e-commerce research when compared to more mainstream IS research. **G**

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