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WHAT IS E L COMMERCE

...in search [?] of a definition

NO SHORTAGE OF DEFINITIONS

Some academics see EC as spanning a wide array of telecom applications that support commercial activities.

•...the sharing of business information, maintaining business relationships, and conducting business transactions by means of telecommunications networks; includes not only the buying and selling of goods, but also the various processes within individual organizations which support that goal. (Zwass).

ACADEMIC VIEW...

- ð...more than simply buying and selling goods electronically; involves using network communications technology to engage in a wide range of activities up and down the value-added chain both within and outside the organization.ö (Applegate, et.al.)
- ð...a modern business methodology that addresses the needs of organizations, merchants, and consumers to cut costs while improving the quality of goods and services and increasing the speed of service delivery. The term also applies to the use of computer networks to search and retrieve information in support of human and corporate decision making.ö (Kalakota and Whinston).

INDUSTRY FOCUS

- The industry focus tends to be narrower, viewing EC as buying and selling goods over the Net.
 - ...all the marketing and selling and various other business-related activities that take place over a network.ö (Communications Week Interactive)
 - ...all the activities you conduct online to interest a customer in your products before the sale, as well as fulfillment and customer support after the sale.ö (Internet Computing).
 - ...business model for prospecting customers, order management, and order fulfillment.ö (General Electric)
 - ... Commercial transactions occurring over open networks.ö (OECD).

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ö...to mould the vast network of small businesses, government agencies, large corporations, and independent contractors into a single community with the ability to communicate with one another seamlessly across any computer platform.ö (Electronic commerce Resource Centre ECRC).

ö...general term for the conduct of business with the assistance of telecommunications.ö (Roger Clarke, consultant).

INDUSTRY FOCUS...

“Electronic Commerce can be defined as an exchange of values through a ubiquitous electronic network including, but not limited to, the buying and selling of hard (tangible) and soft (digital) goods.”

IBM's definition of E- Business and Network Computing is much more all pervasive, broader and covers:

- **Content**
- **Collaboration**
- **Commerce**

Content

**Content is about hosting
business data and running
business applications- this
requires an IT infrastructure
in place.**

Collaboration

Partnering to make better business decisions- is all about leveraging content, communication of ideas, collaboration between teams and co-ordination of critical business processes.

Collaboration

Collaboration could mean Workgroup computing using Lotus Domino or Microsoft Exchange, where virtual team works in collaborative fashion. It also includes Business integration—i.e. supply chain integration, integrating your dealers and Vendors on your Intranet. It also involves integrating the customer's ERP with Workgroup software, where one can take benefit of structured information of an ERP and unstructured information of the Workgroup application.

Commerce

Transacting business—this could be business to business transactions or business to customer. For true end-to-end e-commerce solutions, the Content and Collaboration layers must be present.

WHAT ARE WE LOOKING FOR IN A DEFINITION?

Something that guides us toward
consideration of the **strategic importance
of electronic commerce technologies** to
the business.

The best definitions view EC as a strategy to
support the total delivery of products and
services to the customer, rather than just
another set of tools and technologies.

ELECTRONIC COMMERCE CAN BE DEFINED AS...

The strategic deployment of computer-mediated business tools and information technologies to satisfy business objectives.

As such, electronic commerce offers fundamentally new ways of doing business, rather than mere extensions of existing business practices.