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Electronic Commerce: An Introduction (Book Review)

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Ziff-Davis University Staff. (1999). Electronic Commerce: An Introduction. Instruction Set, Inc., Natick, MI. 168p.

Experts estimate that Web-based shopping revenues have jumped from \$407.3 million in 1996 to \$1.1 billion in 1997 and will reach a record \$4.5 billion in the year 2000. These figures suggest that a growing number of companies have adopted electronic commerce as a means to sell their products online, thereby increasing the number of customers they reach by the millions.

Electronic Commerce: An Introduction, published by ZDU, experts in computer fields and online community, provides a wealth of information on Electronic Commerce from understanding electronic commerce of successful web sites to all you need to establish an electronic commerce web site.

Electronic Commerce: An Introduction is divided into 7 lessons, each of which is devoted to a particular aspect of getting a business online. Each lesson provides you with a wealth of basic and introductory information. The first lesson covers the evolution of electronic commerce. This lesson started with defining electronic commerce and its components, history, differences between traditional and

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electronic business, and wrap up the first lesson with a good summary of the types of electronic business interactions (b2b, b2c, and the benefits of electronic commerce). The second session covered the driven forces for electronic commerce. This lesson started with business considerations, technology consideration, growth of the Internet, and follow that with the growth of electronic commerce. The third lesson covers infrastructure for electronic commerce. This lesson walks the reader through how transmit and receive messaging and data, handling requests and processing transactions, how to the Internet works, Internet service provider (ISP) and services, Basic Internet components, enabling tools (HTML, HTTP, Java applets, DHTML and client-side-scripting, CGI scripts, servlets, NSAPI and ISAPI, and much more), and wrap up this lesson with an important issue the infrastructure security consideration (security threats, security mechanisms, access control and data security). The fourth lesson briefly runs through electronic commerce applications. This lesson takes the reader through industrial applications, research, marketing, selling and billing for product and services, purchasing and paying for product and services, financial services, professional services, and some examples of well knowing web sites that implemented electronic commerce. Although Internet security breaches have gotten a lot of press, most vendors and analysts argue that transactions are actually less dangers in cyberspace than in the physical world. The fifth lesson covers this issue and payment mechanism, which was covered briefly in lesson 3.

In this lesson the author the reader will read about the type of business transactions, form of payment, electronic date interchange (EDI), electronic fund transfer (EFT), and some important security considerations. There are many electronic commerce business opportunities. Some are opportunities for merchants, some for customers, and other are for affiliations and special interest groups. Lesson 6 discusses how to take advantages of these opportunities by explaining the business opportunities, creating awareness, growing an affiliation, marketing products and services, selling product and services, making informed purchasing and procurement decision, and finally this lesson covered managing personal finances. The previous lessons provided input to the general implementation of electronic commerce. This final lesson discusses the specific process for setting up and managing an electronic commerce business. This lesson focuses on the processes for small to medium-sized business and covers the following topics: Identifying an appropriate business opportunity, developing a business plan, developing an implementation plan, setting up the web site, establishing payment mechanisms, managing the business, and finally critical success factors

The book covers all of the bare essentials without resorting to a lot of hype and excess verbiage. In short, this is a good introductory book on net business for the timid beginner, and is best read in conjunction with Janal's 101 Successful Businesses You Can Start on the Internet, and Kent's Poor Richard's Web Site.