

A BEHAVIORAL MODEL OF THE ELDERLY INTERNET CONSUMER: A CASE STUDY

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ABSTRACT. *The purpose of this study is to derive a consumer behavioral model based on the observed behavior of the older Internet consumer. Twelve volunteers participated in this study. The proposed consumer behavioral model can be used to accurately interpret the consumer behavior of older individuals participating in business to customer (B2C) electronic commerce. These model results are compared with the results for younger people. The results can provide some suggestions for future study which should help designers to come up with a more appropriate interface, to assist the older customer in electronic commerce.*

Keywords: Elderly, Internet shopping, Consumer behavioral model

1. Introduction. The convenience of online shopping over the Internet has great advantages and offers vast potential for growth. It has become so important that no one dare ignore it. According to one report, “An Investigation of Internet Usage in Taiwan” published by Yam.com in 2002 [1], even in the face of economic recession, online shopping is growing, taking up ever greater portions of the average annual consumption. According to the investigation results published in 2004, online commerce has gained dramatically, both in terms of the portion of the population who shop online and the consumption amount. With reference to research reports drawn up by the Institute for Information Industry, it has been disclosed that there is still large space for improvement and great potential yet to be tapped in the domestic B2C trade market [2]. According to a survey reported by an American market research institute – eMarketer [3] (cited from Digitimes, 2001/10/15 [4]), the scale of the B2C e-Commerce market in the United States has increased significantly, from US\$38.3 Billion in 2000 to US\$156 Billion in 2005. They also estimated that the Internet population would increase from 117 million in 2000 to 184 million in 2005, and that the number of online shoppers would increase from 64.1 million in 2000 to 130 million in 2005. From this it can be perceived that the growth of online consumption in both domestic and foreign markets is expanding rapidly.

Thanks to advances in medical science, human beings have longer lifetimes, but this also means that the percentage of the population that is aged increases year by year. This change in population structure has led to the so-called problem of a “graying population”,