

### **Evaluation of E-commerce Portals in India**

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#### **Abstract**

*E-commerce portals provides plethora of information about products/services, which can be used by customers to make purchase online or offline. Therefore e-commerce portals can have a dramatic effect on consumer decision making. Today every company uploads their complete information on their official website and after collecting this information customer takes final decision for purchasing. That is why e-commerce companies have their own portals to disseminate information among consumers. This decision helps the company to increase its sale manifold. However, it is also important to look into the e-commerce portals of various companies in India so that a clear picture can be shown to the customers. To understand this, in the present paper, an attempt has been made to evaluate e-commerce portals in India.*

**Keywords:** *E-commerce, e-commerce portals, online information, e-commerce companies, ICT.*

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## Introduction

Portals is a system to connect the information sources of different corporate firewall including all the real time events, Internet news, online discussions, announcements and different news related to the corporate and its products. With the help of portals a large number of visitors can see all the information related to product or services as well as company. The primary focus of portals is not to sell products. Many large portals are becoming full service e-commerce sites and many e-commerce sites are attempting to position themselves as portals. A portal is a destination site for users of a particular class.

Portals is single, web based interface to content data; aggregated and customized, based on the user's profile, subscription and access. Profiling the user (user can be internal and external to the corporation like employees, customers, partners and suppliers). There are four functions of e-commerce portals like: (i) Content Presentation (ii) User Profiling (iii) Collaboration (iv) Personalization. Beside this there are three types of e-commerce portal:

- (i) Customer account manager portal: These portals create customer account, checking order status, address information, add and remove their personal information, etc.
- (ii) Administrator page portal: These portals upload current images of the products, manage user account and new products, update the rate and prices, and manage the merchant accounts, etc.
- (iii) Merchant portal: These portals view the sale reports, add new products, edit and remove their products, add new images of the products, etc.

Portals have following features:

- Create personal views for users by discerning user preferences and logging them into the directory.
- Organize for easy publishing by creating publishing standards and developing document templates.
- Organize content by building a corporate topic hierarchy.
- Deliver dynamic content by buying software and building dynamic personal pages.

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- Create search capability by buying a high-end search server and building a corporate wide search site.
  - Create a single length by buying a light-weight. Directory Access protocol compatible directory server and creating an intranet portal security model.
  - Facilitate document consent procedure by identifying common approval processes and hosting online where possible.

### **Advantages of portals**

- The portals using is very simple. This is the main or primary advantage and the portal are developed because of this reason.
- Portals are not always to serve a large number of users. Sometimes, single-point consolidation of portals is used to support a relatively small number of specialists. This is often used in HR portal applications where a few HR specialists use portals to better serve the rest of the company's employees.
- Supplier portals can also be one link in a complete web-enabled business chain.
- Suppliers are another ready audience for portals. Constantly changing manufacturing plans result in constantly changing material releases, whipsawing suppliers who are fighting to keep up. Ford Motor Company and other large manufacturers at Detroit have turned to supplier portals to communicate materials releases and other manufacturing data. The other data available on supplier's portals are: Quality metrics, Engineering changes, Invoice payment status, other manufacturer-supplier data.

### **Review of literature**

Billewar and Henry (2012) found that e-commerce is the purpose of Internet and the web to conduct business. The study addresses the quality and performance issues of E-commerce that become hurdle in business activities and suggest Total Quality Management (TQM) implementation as the best solution to sort out the issues.

Hamtini et al. (2013) examined that e-commerce mode of commercial activity has become a fundamental consumer contact channel for organizations in search of a competitive differential.

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In this sense, the adaptation of the electronic portal, which is the means of entrance and contact with the virtual market, to the demands of the virtual consumer, is fundamental. However, with the evaluation conducted in this article, the question is raised that maybe virtual entrepreneurs are not paying enough attention to portal quality, because there is no correlation between portal quality and the importance of web sites.

Hung and McQueen (2004) observed that the evaluation instrument is capable of evaluating e-Commerce Web sites. It is based on a theoretical discussion, and can assist an evaluator to oversee the site easily. This instrument can also be applied to evaluate sites from diverse industries. It can be employed more often to evaluate e-commerce sites in the future.

Kalelkar et al. (2014) examined that the dynamics of the major factors that consumers look into any of these e-retailers and identify the major dimension that helps in binding the consumers with these portals. For meeting this objective, the top 5 e-retail portals have been selected, based on multiple parameters for evaluating the traffic and importance of a website. These sites are Flipkart, Ebay, SnapDeal, Jabong and Myntra. Subsequently, these websites have been evaluated using the dimensions extended from SERVQUAL. A systematic approach has been taken in evaluating these portals using the theories of Analytic Hierarchy Process for group decision making.

Masalov and MacGregor (2007) found that an e-commerce portal is an effective way of selling informal merchants' goods on the internet. The SMS communication aspect provides merchants with up-to-date information about the status of their wares. In conclusion this e-commerce portal can help kick start the e-commerce movement in developing countries. It is a feature-rich system that has been customized and developed specifically for such an environment.

Mitra (2013) opined that e-commerce or business is more than just another way to sustain or enhance existing business practices. Rather, e-commerce is a paradigm shift. It is a disruptive innovation that is radically changing the traditional way of doing business. E-commerce is showing tremendous business growth in our country. Increasing internet users have added to its growth. E-commerce has helped online travel industry in many ways and added a new sales avenue through online retail industry in our country.

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Nishith Desai (2013) found that from the initial years when internet was a new phenomenon to recent times where internet has become a basic necessity for every household in most metropolitan cities, the e-commerce industry has come a long way. The legal system has constantly tried to catch up especially with the enactment of the various rules under the IT Act to deal with a host of issues emerging from the use of internet. Moreover the IP issues in e-commerce transactions have taken a new form with users finding loop holes to not only easily duplicate material but also mislead other users. Hence, much more is needed to effectively regulate the tangled web.

Ray (2011) observed that e-commerce as part of the information technology revolution became widely used in the world trade in general and Indian economy in particular evolution of e-commerce business indicating the chronological order, category of e-commerce business, description of organizations involved in e-businesses in India, key characteristics of the firms engaged in e-commerce application, to examine the growth of e-commerce in both physical and financial terms, to evaluate the benefits obtained from e-business, to critically analyze the barriers and constraints involved in flourishing e-commerce businesses in India and finally to develop a framework for effective dissemination of e-commerce in India.

Silverman et al. (2001) stated that significant investment and effort is required at any given website in order to create the decision support and search agents needed to properly support buyer decision making. For this purpose a framework to guide such effort (derived from buyer behavior choice theory) is need to develop.

### **Research problem**

Information Technology (IT) is core process to use the internet for various activities in business. Today the consumer is very aware; he takes all the information from the websites of different companies. The power had been in the firms' hands before digital economy emerged as firms were able to sell whatever they produced. But now it is the consumers who have the power and there is a wide range of products/services diversity for them. The desired information can be reached within minutes, which has reduced economic distance between manufacturer and consumers. It has benefitted both companies as well as customers. That is why companies are

coming up with more e-commerce portals to take the advantages of the opportunities. The earlier studies indicate that the number of consumers using e-commerce portals for purchase is increasing manifold. These e-commerce portals not only help the consumers to purchase online purchase but also offline. Therefore, keeping in mind the importance of e-commerce portals in India there is a need for their evaluation. Thus, in the present study an attempt has been made to evaluate e-commerce portals in India.

### **Objectives**

The major objectives of the study are:

- To study the evaluation of e-commerce portals in India.
- To study the role of portals in e-commerce transactions.
- To study the top e-commerce websites in India.

### **Methodology**

The present study is descriptive in nature, based on secondary data which has been collected from the websites. Authenticated and relevant published studies that empirically investigated impact of e-commerce portals on businesses, customers and information, and relevant articles of newspapers are also studies to find the exact picture of e-commerce portals. Ranking and percentage method is used in this study. Last but not the least the investment of various companies in e-commerce space/portals has also been taken into consideration.

### **Analysis**

#### **Portals in India**

In India some known portals are: Indiaproperties.com, koolMall.com, sharekhand.com, Indbazar.com, electricmela.com, etc is some of the portals launched recently. Besides, portals like rediff.com, to stand out in competitive global market. Their main idea is to catch kids on their sites. Higher the number of net surfers hitting their sites, higher would be the valuation for their portals. The takeover of Indiaworld portal of Rajesh Jain by Satayam Infoway for Rs. 500

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crore has resulted in the mushrooming of portals. The idea is to build up a portal and sell it eventually at a premium, after it becomes little popular. Many of the firms are flooded with request for developing portals. It is easy to start a portal as it can cost as little as Rs. 10 lakhs. However, maintaining and nurturing is more important. It is the backbone to your site. It is said that even VSNL, the biggest ISP provider in India felt the need to have some meaningful content and has entered into a tie-up with India Info which have very high quality control. Similar to a newspaper or a television channel, the objective behind starting a portal is to build a large subscriber's base by offering a lot of content and linkages and then to cash in on by attracting advertisements. But many are making portals without realizing how many IT professionals have got into portals ignoring the usefulness of the same and without investigating the futurity of their portals. Even the funding organizations also venture into this. India fund decides on funding for setting up of portals on the basis of i) idea ii) how good the team iii) sustainable advantages and iv) the passion of the entrepreneur. Portals in India are springing up fast and many more are in the pipeline. The kind of services being offered by portals is amazing and vast. There is unlimited choice in every field like: (i) Shop online (ii) Buy/sell Shares (iii) Order Books (iv) Look for Property (v) Get a wider choice to buy a second hand car

You can click [www.143gifts.com](http://www.143gifts.com) for sending sweets, flowers or anything you want and to buy or sell a car, and then you can visit [www.carindia.com](http://www.carindia.com). Mahati Technologies of Hyderabad, a Hyderabad-based internet start-up, plans to concentrate on R and D local language applications on the web. The plan includes proposed strategic alliances with the Centre for the development of advanced computing (C-DAC) in language related technologies. This endeavor is very humble 'Let the common people embark on the internet related revolution, most important on a day to day life' the sites that cater to various requirements of the people are:

[www.143gifts.com](http://www.143gifts.com)

[www.indwalk.com](http://www.indwalk.com)

[www.india2020.com](http://www.india2020.com)

[www.carindia.com](http://www.carindia.com)

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[www.myluckyhome.com](http://www.myluckyhome.com)

[www.studentera.com](http://www.studentera.com)

This is the first e-commerce site of Andhra Pradesh. It caters to the needs of NRIs and Indian's as well. Aged over a year, this domain is gaining steady popularity, Try it, if you like to have something useful from it.

**www.indiawalk.com** Branded as a comprehensive Indian services portal, it deals with matrimonial, health checks, astro guidance, auctions, real estate, rentals, etc. apart from regular free email, chat, message board, forums, clubs, etc.

**www.india2020.com** It is a B2B portal which acts as a global market place for buyers and sellers.

**www.myluckyhome.com** It is an exhaustive portal on Indian real estate.

**www.carindia.com** Buy sell or hire a car on rent.

**www.studentera.com** A one stop site for aspiring students and career seekers.

So as you can see, for almost anything now, all you need to do is click [www.whatever.com](http://www.whatever.com). The notion about portals in the earlier years would probably have been that it meant a door-as per dictionary meaning. With the number of internet users being minuscule, there was no way a portal, also described as dotcoms would catch the fancy of the people. Now things have undergone a sea change, particularly over the last couple of months with hundreds of new portals springing up.

There are different examples of portals in India for various purposes, like automobiles, health care, personal care, pharmacy, technology and for the software also. Portals for different activities and for different peoples are summarized in Table 1.

**Table 1 Different examples of portal**

Portals	Purpose
1. Good healthyou.com a virtual which provides: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Comprehensive Information</li> <li>• Advisory services</li> <li>• Family health management to ordinary folks</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is the middle class rather than the upper class, as the users are more concerned about managing more health and information hungry.</li> <li>• A large base of real consumer need exists and the portal is relevant well beyond Netizens.</li> <li>• Many the service providers' competence with the brick-and-mortar and consumer access competence of the health care business.</li> </ul>
2. Familyyou.com	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Offers a utility to help families bond in rich ways.</li> </ul>
3. Many of pharma firms have portals. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pharmaweb.net</li> <li>• Pharmabiz.com</li> <li>• Pharmaceuticals.gov.in</li> <li>• Pharma.bsf.com</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Think primarily customer as the doctor who will add value to them and benefit more from the good will earned than they would have been able to by just giving promotional freebies.</li> <li>• Patients have access to the Net whereas doctors have no time to learn using the Net and hence feel uncomfortable.</li> <li>• Pharma firms to conduct one day training programs to doctors on the Net; can also add value to doctors by helping them offer time-value to their customers patients; get higher share of doctor's mind by involving ISP along with them.</li> </ul>
4. Portals of the Brick and mortar companies. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Smallfirminnovation.com</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Looking at CRM as a competitive weapon. At least 10 ways are there in which the two can collaborate beyond advertising and sponsorships.</li> </ul>

Source:- Murthy C.S.V. 2010

**Portals accessible for transaction in India**

Table 2 shows that different products purchased by the customers with the help of different websites. The websites and portals on the web addresses for the different type of products like automobiles, finance, general shopping, arts, music, textiles, books, IT products, matrimonial, construction products and online services, etc.

**Table 2 Portals accessible for transaction in India**

<b>Product</b>	<b>Web Address</b>	<b>Service Provided</b>
Automobiles	indiacar.com	New and used car sales
	automartindia.com	Used cars
Finance	ecredit.com	Value added credit and
	indiainfoline.com	Financing solution.
	walletwatch.com	Investment advice
	moneycontrol.com	Personal finance
	equitytrade.com	Personal finance investment advice
General shopping	rediff.com	Over 15 categories of goods and toys,
	indiashop.com	miscellaneous items
	beautyarcade.com	Cosmetics
	jaldi.com	General goods
	indiabazar.com	General goods
Music/Books	febmart.com	Music and books
	dhadkan.com	Music
	phinindia.com	Books by Prentice Hall of India
	himpub.com	Books by Himalaya Publishing House
Art	arstall.com	Virtual art gallery for paintings
Matrimonial	snequest.com	Find your partner
Construction industry	buzzsaw.com	Items for building construction
Textile	Skumar.com	E-commerce, retailing, Finance

Business to Business	indiamarket.com	Listing of business, supplies, auctions or second hand machinery
	trade2gain.com	Business to Business auction
	easybargain.com	Business to technology exchange
IT products	ITchain.com	Hardware/software sale
	fandu.com	Digital products,
	hotdispatch.com	Technical expertise buying and selling
Free services	chequemail.com	Free e-mail site profit sharing if you visit the site often.
	cheecoo.com	Free access to internet
	formsindia.com	All types of forms for tax returns etc.
Customer to Customer	kabadibazaar.com	Auction site
Education	eguru.com	Educational service

Source:- Murthy, C.S.V. 2010

### Top e-commerce websites in India

According to a census conducted by eBay in 2012, New Delhi has emerged as the top e-commerce hub in India. The study is designed to throw light on online buying and selling behaviour in India. The top five states with most transactions were Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu and Karnataka. India's e-commerce industry is currently at a nascent stage with a size of \$800 million but expected to grow rapidly to become \$5 billion in 2015, eBay India's Head - Marketplace Experience.

**Table 3 Top e-commerce websites in India**

Sr. No.	Online shopping websites	Rank
1	eBay.in	1
2	Flipkart.com	2
3	Jabong.com	3

4	HomeShop18.com	4
5	Tradus.in	5
6	Shopping.IndiaTimes.com	6
7	SnapDeal.com	7
8	Infibeam.com	8
9	Zovi.com	9
10	Myntra.com	10
11	Yebhi.com	11
12	Zoomin.com	12
13	Indiaplaza.in	13
14	Buytheprice.com	14
15	FutureBazaar.com	15
16	Bookmyshow.com	16
17	Rediff Shopping	17
18	Yebhi.com	18
19	Dealsandyou.com	19
20	Dell.co.in	20
21	Fernsnpetals.com	21
22	IndianGiftsPortal.com	22
23	Snapfish.in	23
24	Picsquare.com	24
25	Yatra.com	25
26	IRCTC.co.in	26
27	Makemytrip.com	27
28	Expedia.co.in	28

Source-<http://indiaranker.com/websites/ecommerce#sthash.21XhfTqF.dpuf>

### Companies involved in e-commerce business in India

E-commerce companies in India provide the most important tangible and fine solutions for the care of the privacy and security of the e-commerce portal. E-commerce services include various activities like database programmers, flash designs, graphic design services, shopping carts, graphics and e-business, etc. These services developed by the different e-commerce companies, who provide different type of information on the official websites. Table 4 shows the top 10 companies involved in e-commerce businesses in India and also website design companies.

**Table 4 Top companies involved in e-commerce business in India**

<b>Sr. No.</b>	<b>E-commerce companies</b>	<b>Rank</b>
1	ASA Systel communication Pvt. Ltd	1
2	Candid Info	2
3	Chenab Information Technology Pvt. Ltd	3
4	Euro Link Systems Ltd	4
5	HashPro Technologies	5
6	Compare Info Base	6
7	Sanver E-solutions	7
8	Planet Asia	8
9	Candid Web Technology	9
10	Trisoft Design	10

Source: Ray, Sarbapriya (2011)

### **Investments in the e-commerce space in India**

Table 5 reveals the details of some of the important investments made by different investors for various e-commerce portals in India during the years 2011 and 2012. Softbank is one of the top investor who invests \$ 200 million in Inmobi Company in September 2011, whereas Sap Ventures and Sequoia Capital is least investor in JustDial.com in June 2011.

**Table 5 Investments in the e-commerce space in India**

Company	Investment Date	Investment (in million\$)	Investors
Inmobi	Sept. 2011	200	Softbank
Flipcart.com	June 2012	150	Tiger Global, Accel India
Ybrant Digital	Jan. 2011	48	Oak Investment Partners, Asia Pacific Capital
Yatra.com	April 2011	44.5	Norwest Venture Partners, Valiant Capital Partners, Intel Capital
Cleartrip.com	April 2011	40	Concur Partners
Fashionadyou.com	Nov. 2011	40	Norwest Venture Partners, Intel Capital
Snapdeal.com	July 2011	40	Bessemer
Komli Media Pvt., Ltd.	June 2012	39	Norwest Venture Partners, Nexus Venture Partners, Helion Ventures, Draper Fisher Jurveston, Western Technology
Quiker.com	May 2012	32	Matrix Partners, Norwest Venture Partner, eBay Inc., Werburg Pincus
Mapmyindia.com	July 2011	30	Zenrin
Naaptol.com	Oct. 2011	25	NEA
Homeshop18.com	July 2011	22.5	SAIF Partners, Network18, GS Shopping
Kaltura	Feb. 2011	20	Nexus Ventures Partners, Intel Capital
Myntra.com	March 2011	20	Tiger Global
Ixigo.com	Aug. 2011	18.5	SAIF Partners, Makemytrip.com
Dealsandyou.com	Nov. 2011	17	Mayfield, Norwest Venture Partners, Intel Capital, Nokia Growth Partners
Exclusively.in	May 2011	16	Tiger Global, Accel India
Firstcry.com	Feb. 2011	14	IDG Ventures
JustDial.com	June 2011	10	Sap Ventures, Sequoia Capital

Source: <http://www.indianeye.org/2012/06/30/investments-in-digital-and-ecommerce-start-ups-an-analysis/>

**Conclusion**

Today the information and communication technology (ICT) has dramatic effect on consumer demand and there is increase in online purchase manifold. For this e-commerce portals are considered as hub for products/services information. E-commerce companies have their own portals so that all the required information about products/services can be displayed. There is surge in investment by the companies in this area. That is why there are many specific portals which are product wise and price wise. In the years to come e-commerce portals will prove boon for the companies. Therefore, there is a need for the companies to be transparent while having e-commerce portals to gain the trust of consumers.

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