



普通高等教育“十一五”国家级规划教材
21世纪高等学校精品规划教材

An English Course for E-Commerce (2nd edition)

电子商务专业英语 (第二版)

主 编 孙建忠 白凤仙
副主编 岳 鹤 宋 敏 王社伟



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内 容 提 要

本书是普通高等教育“十一五”国家级规划教材。

本书第一版于2004年出版,第二版在延续第一版编写风格的基础上,为更好地适应教学改革需求,考虑电子商务技术的发展,根据广大读者使用的反馈和作者多年讲授该课程的教学经验,在保持第一版教材编写风格的基础上,对各章节的内容、结构等进行了修订、调整、完善和补充。全书共14章,主要内容包括:电子商务的基本概念、电子商务的技术基础、电子商务模式、B2B电子商务、电子支付系统、电子商务安全、电子商务定价、网络营销、电子商务法律问题、电子物流、建设成功的网上企业、建立电子商务应用以及案例分析等。本书内容覆盖了当今电子商务技术的各个方面,并力求体现电子商务的最新发展。

本书所有内容均取材于最近几年国外出版的原版教材和互联网,内容新颖,系统性强。每一章都围绕一个主题,配有学习指导、详细注释和参考译文以及精心安排的练习,可以使学生很快掌握课文要点。每章还介绍一个专业英语学习专题,帮助读者掌握专业英语的阅读、翻译和写作技巧。

本书既可作为高等院校电子商务及相关专业电子商务专业英语教材,也可用作管理与技术人员了解并学习电子商务知识的参考书。

本书课后练习的参考答案、课文的参考译文以及电子教案,均可从中国水利水电出版社以及万水书苑网站下载,网址为:<http://www.waterpub.com.cn/softdown/>和<http://www.wsbookshow.com>。

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序

自 20 世纪 90 年代中后期以来,随着互联网的飞速发展,电子商务无疑已成为最热门的课题之一。世界各地都非常重视电子商务的应用与研究,高等院校更是如此。近两三年来,为了促进我国电子商务的发展,我国以高等院校为主体出版了大量的电子商务方面的教材和著作,这对于我国开展电子商务、培养电子商务方面的专业人才大有益处。但大多数教材还主要集中于中文翻译或中文改编版本的层面上。随着我国高等教育国际化的发展,越来越多的高校开始重视中英文双语教学,为此一些高校引进了部分英文原版或影印版教材,这些教材在受到师生欢迎的同时也面临着一些新的问题,如与我国实际结合不紧、内容选择单一、难度不易掌握、教学量难于控制、过多的专业词汇不利于学生自学等。为此,一些从事双语教学的高校教师根据形势的需要,结合自身的教学实践,编写出了新一代的专业英语教材,以更好地满足新时期高校双语教学,这些都是很有意义的尝试。由孙建忠、王斌主编,白凤仙、鲍玉昆副主编的《电子商务专业英语》(本科版)就是其中之一。其实,由孙建忠、王斌、白凤仙等合编的《电子商务专业英语》(高职高专版)已于 2003 年元月出版,并且受到了读者的好评。本科版教材吸取了原高职高专版的编写经验,参阅了大量最新出版的电子商务著作与文献资料,结合在武汉部分高校开展的双语教学实践,突出了如下特点:

- 注重教材的可读性与知识性的统一,所选课文不仅有一定的趣味性,而且专业性强、难度适中。
- 注重教材的知识面与内容新颖性的统一,所选课文既覆盖了电子商务领域的各个方面,又反映了电子商务的最新发展、难度适中。
- 本书增加了科技论文英文写作、商务英语信函写作、构词法、阅读难点分析等四个专题,有助于学生熟悉和掌握电子商务英语的必要技能,扩大知识面。

本教科书主要适合普通高等院校电子商务方向的本科生,也可供研究生和电子商务专业人士参考。

华中科技大学管理学院院长 张金隆教授(博导)

2003 年 10 月

第二版前言

本书是普通高等教育“十一五”国家级规划教材，是用英语编写的电子商务技术教材。本书第一版于2004年出版后得到了广大读者的热心支持，为了更好地适应教学改革的需求，考虑电子商务技术的发展，根据广大读者使用的反馈和作者多年讲授该课程的教学经验，在保持第一版教材编写风格的基础上，进行了改版，对各章节的内容、结构等进行了修订、调整、完善和补充。

改版后主要突出以下特点：

- 注重专业知识的系统性，贯彻知识面与内容新颖性统一的原则，所选课文既覆盖了电子商务领域的各个方面，又力求反映电子商务的最新发展，以满足新时期高校双语教学的需要；
- 注重教材的可读性与知识性的统一，所选课文既有一定的趣味性，又专业性强、难度适中；
- 紧密结合我国实际，增加了有关国内电子商务发展和典型案例等内容；
- 针对中国学生的特点，增加了科技论文英文写作、商务英文信函写作、构词法、阅读难点分析等专题，有助于学生切实掌握电子商务英语的必要技能。
- 注重专业技能培养，每章练习题除覆盖相应知识点外，还有一定的创新性实践作业，引导学生查阅最新的文献资料，掌握学科前沿；鼓励学生正确运用专业知识，进行分析案例、设计电子商务策略等。

本书的编写目的首先是让学生掌握电子商务的基本定义和术语，了解电子商务的专业基础知识，学会电子商务英语基本的表达与翻译；其次是介绍电子商务领域的一些最新发展。全书共14章，主要内容包括：电子商务的基本概念、电子商务的技术基础、电子商务模式、B2B电子商务、电子支付系统、电子商务安全、电子商务定价、网络营销、电子商务法律问题、电子商务物流、建设成功的网上企业、建立电子商务应用以及案例分析等。

本书所有内容均取材于最近几年国外出版的原版教材和互联网，内容新颖，剪系统性强。每一章都围绕一个主题，配有学习指导、详细注释和参考译文以及精心安排的练习，可以使很快学生掌握课文要点。每章还介绍一个专业英语学习专题，帮助读者掌握专业英语的阅读、翻译和写作技巧。

本书既可作为高等院校电子商务及相关专业电子商务专业英语教材，也可用作管理与技术人员了解并学习电子商务知识的参考书。

本书由大连理工大学孙建忠教授和白凤仙副教授主编，河南工业大学岳鹤老师、宋敏老师、王社伟老师任副主编。主要编写人员具体分工为：第1、5章由宋敏编写，第2、3、4章由白凤仙编写，第6、13章由王社伟编写，第7、9、12、14章由岳鹤编写，第8、10、11章与各章专题由孙建忠编写，孙建忠还负责全书的统稿工作，并对各章内容进行了修订。华中科技大学鲍玉昆副教授（博士）、大连理工大学姚卫红副教授参加了部分内容编写和讨论。此外，研究生刘然、刘博强、许伟、罗雅琴、李默竹、王博等同学参与了本书部分文字录入和绘图等工作。

本书第一版承蒙华中科技大学张金隆教授和蔡淑琴教授对教材大纲提出了建设性的意见，对第二版编写仍有很高的指导意义，在此表示由衷的感谢！北京市、上海市、大连市、广州市、武汉市、郑州市等部分高校的学生参加了本书的教学改革工作，在此一并致谢。

由于作者水平有限，加之编写时间仓促，本书在编写过程中难免出现疏漏，恳请读者不吝赐教。联系地址：sjzbfx@163.com

编者
2009年10月

第一版前言

随着 21 世纪的到来和中国加入 WTO，电子商务在我国必将迅速发展。电子商务不仅为我们带来了全新的商业和经营理念，带来了无限商机，也为我们带来了巨大的挑战。电子商务打破了国界的限制，它不仅对信息基础设施、法律体系提出了更高的要求，也需要人们更新观念与意识，提高人力资源能力，而语言能力就是一个重要的方面。由于诸多原因，国际上最通用的语言还是英语。而因特网的普及，更巩固了英语作为跨文化交往通用语言的地位。为了更好地迎接电子商务的挑战，必须具备较高的英语水平。

本书是 21 世纪高等院校电子商务专业英语教材，本书的编写目的，首先是让学生掌握电子商务专业英语的基本定义和术语，了解电子商务的专业基础知识，学会电子商务英语基本的表达与翻译；其次是介绍了电子商务领域的一些最新发展。

本书根据现阶段我国电子商务学科的教学特点，精心组织，合理选材。本书内容全部取自国外电子商务教材、专著、报告以及权威网站资料，并由编者进行了必要的改编。本书主要内容包括：电子商务起源与模型、因特网与环球网基础、EDI、在线支付、移动电子商务、电子商务安全、法律与税收问题、电子客户关系管理、电子商务各种模式、电子商务策略、电子物流、网络营销、动态定价、电子政务、案例分析等内容。考虑到读者的需要，我们还系统而扼要地介绍了电子商务词汇构成规律、电子商务专业英语的阅读翻译技巧、学术论文的英文写作和商务信函的英文写作等四个专题。本书的练习答案、课文的参考译文以及专题内容均可从中国水利水电出版社网站（www.waterpub.com.cn）下载。

在本书的编写过程中，华中科技大学管理学院院长、电子商务方向的博士生导师张金隆教授对教材大纲提出了建设性的意见，并欣然为本书作序。张金隆教授与华中科技大学蔡淑琴教授（电子商务方向博士生导师）在百忙之中为本书进行主审，编者在此向两位教授表示衷心的感谢。武汉市部分院校的同学参与了本书的部分教学实践工作，在此一并致谢。

本书第 1、2、3、5、6、7、9、10、11 章由大连理工大学白凤仙老师编写，第 4、12、15、16 章及专题 4 由王斌博士编写，第 8、13、14、18 章由华中科技大学鲍玉昆副教授（博士）编写，第 17 章与专题 1、2、3 由大连理工大学孙建忠教授（博士）编写，孙建忠还负责全书的统稿工作，并对各章内容进行了修订。

由于作者水平有限，加之编写时间仓促，本书在编写过程中难免出现疏漏，恳请读者不吝赐教。联系地址：sjzbfx@163.com 或 icekingp@yahoo.com.cn

编者

2003 年 10 月

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Chapter 1 Introduction to E-Commerce

当今，电子商务正在以前所未有的力量冲击着人们千百年来形成的商务观念与模式，是企业实现跨越式发展的必然选择。通过本章的学习，读者应该掌握以下内容：

- 什么是电子商务，以及它在成长过程中所经历的二次浪潮。
- 企业在实施电子商务时，为何专注于盈利模式和业务流程的分析，而不是商业模式。
- 经济因素如何产生了培育电子商务第二次浪潮的商业环境？
- 企业如何使用价值链和 SWOT 分析来发现电子商务的机遇。
- 电子商务的国际化性质以及在全球范围内开展电子商务时企业所面临的挑战。
- 掌握有关专用术语及缩略语。

1.1 Introduction

Very few people in the United States truly enjoy their hunt for a new or used car. Although many auto dealers have worked to improve their customers' experiences by introducing fixed pricing and "no-haggle" policies, a number of auto dealers continue to use aggressive sales approaches that can leave buyers exhausted, confused, or even worried that they might have been cheated in the transaction. In 1995, Autobytel (Autobytel's URL is <http://www.autobytel.com>) launched an online car-buying service that promised purchasers a haggle-free experience and offered car dealers a way to increase new vehicle sales volumes and reduce selling costs.

Buying a car with the assistance of Autobytel requires that the buyer register with an Autobytel Website and specify the desired auto in detail, usually after researching the vehicle's options and features on the Internet or by visiting local dealers. More than 95 percent of car buyers today do research on the Internet before buying their cars. Autobytel provides the buyer with a firm price quote for the selected car, then forwards the buyer's contact information to a local participating dealer. Dealers pay Autobytel a subscription fee to receive exclusive rights to referrals from a particular geographic area for the brands of vehicles that they sell. The dealer contacts the buyer, who then completes the purchase transaction at the dealer's location.

The buyer benefits from a speedy, hassle-free, straight forward, and predictable buying process. The dealer benefits by selling more automobiles and not paying a commission to a salesperson. Autobytel receives a monthly subscription fee from each dealer that it has under contract and sells advertising to insurance and finance companies on its Web site. Autobytel currently has contracts



with more than 20,000 auto dealers. Autobytel's revenue from fees paid by auto dealers on these transactions is more than \$70 million per year (the company earns another \$20 million each year by selling advertising on its Web site and marketing services to car dealers). Internet sales referrals to dealers from Autobytel and companies like it accounted for about 30 percent of all U.S. new vehicle sales in 2007.

Autobytel experienced rapid growth in sales from its inception in 1995 through 2002, when sales growth flattened. Like many other companies launched during the early boom years of electronic commerce, Autobytel had to change its focus. Instead of pursuing a strategy of revenue growth at all costs, it began to examine its costs carefully. The company also took steps to improve the quality of its service by ending relationships with a number of dealers who were generating significant numbers of customer complaints. Since 2004, Autobytel has expanded by buying other companies and offering sales management services and software to auto dealers. Autobytel has emerged from the difficult years of 2001 through 2003 and today is a growing and generally profitable participant in the second wave of electronic commerce that you will learn about in this chapter.

New Words & Phrases

dealer n. 商人, 经销商

exhausted adj. 耗尽的, 疲惫的

sales volume 销售量

brand n. 商标

subscription fee 入网费, 加盟费

inception n. 开始, 开端

electronic commerce 电子商务

boom n. 繁荣

no-haggle 不砍价

transaction n. 交易, 事务

exclusive right 专有权, 专营权利

benefits from 通过……获益

revenue n. 收入, 收益

flatten v. 变平

pursue vt. 追求

emerged from 露出, 浮现

Notes

1. Dealers pay Autobytel a subscription fee to receive exclusive rights to referrals from a particular geographic area for the brands of vehicles that they sell. 译为“经销商付费给 Autobytel 以便获得 Autobytel 只把自己推荐给特定区域顾客的权利。”
2. Internet sales referrals to dealers from Autobytel and companies like it accounted for about 30 percent of all U.S. new vehicle sales in 2007. 译为“Autobytel 公司和类似于 Autobytel 的公司在网上汽车销量已占全美新车销量的 30%。”

1.2 Electronic Commerce: The Second Wave

The business phenomenon that we now call electronic commerce has had an interesting history. From humble beginnings in the mid-1990s, electronic commerce grew rapidly until 2000, when a major downturn occurred. Many people have seen news stories about the “dot-com boom” followed



by the “dot-com bust” or the “dot-bomb”. In the period from 2000 to 2003, many industry observers were writing obituaries for electronic commerce. Just as the unreasonable expectations for immediate success fueled the high expectations during the boom years, overly gloomy news reports colored perceptions during this time. Beginning in 2003, with the general economy still in the doldrums, electronic commerce began to show signs of new life. Companies that had survived the downturn were not only seeing growth in sales again, but many of them were showing profits. Although the rapid expansion and high levels of investment of the boom years are not likely to be repeated, the second wave of electronic commerce is well under way. This section defines electronic commerce and describes how it is growing once again in its second wave.

1.2.1 Electronic Commerce and Electronic Business

To many people, the term “electronic commerce” means shopping on the part of the Internet called the World Wide Web (the Web). However, electronic commerce (or e-commerce) also includes many other activities, such as businesses trading with other businesses and internal processes that companies use to support their buying, selling, hiring, planning, and other activities. Some people use the term electronic business (or e-business) when they are talking about electronic commerce in this broader sense. For example, IBM defines electronic business as “the transformation of key business processes through the use of Internet technologies”. Most people use the terms “electronic commerce” and “electronic business” interchangeably. In this book, the term electronic commerce (or e-commerce) is used in its broadest sense and includes all business activities that use Internet technologies. Internet technologies include the Internet, the World Wide Web, and other technologies such as wireless transmissions on mobile telephones or **personal digital assistants (PDAs)**. Companies that operate only online are often called dot-com or pure dot-com businesses to distinguish them from companies that operate in physical locations (solely or together with online operations).

1.2.2 Categories of Electronic Commerce

Some people find it useful to categorize electronic commerce by the types of entities participating in the transactions or business processes. The five general electronic commerce categories are **business-to-consumer**, **business-to-business**, **business processes**, **consumer-to-consumer**, and **business-to-government**. The three categories that are most commonly used are:

- Consumer shopping on the Web, often called business-to-consumer (or **B2C**).
- Transactions conducted between businesses on the Web, often called business-to-business (or **B2B**).
- Transactions and business processes in which companies, governments, and other organizations use Internet technologies to support selling and purchasing activities.

Some researchers define a fourth category of electronic commerce, called **consumer-to-consumer** (or **C2C**), which includes individuals who buy and sell items among themselves. For example, C2C electronic commerce occurs when a person sells an item through a Web auction site to



another person. In some books, C2C sales are included in the B2C category because the person selling the item acts much as a business would for purposes of the transaction.

Finally, some researchers also define a category of electronic commerce called **business-to-government** (or **B2G**); this category includes business transactions with government agencies, such as paying taxes and filing required reports. An increasing number of states have Web sites that help companies do business with state government agencies. For example, the CA.gov Procurement site makes it easy for businesses to conduct online transactions with the state of California. In some books, B2G transactions are included in our discussions of B2B electronic commerce. Table 1-1 summarizes these five categories of electronic commerce.

Table 1-1 Electronic commerce categories

Category	Description	Example
Business-to-consumer (B2C)	Businesses sell products or services to individual consumers	Walmart.com sells merchandise to consumers through its Web site
Business-to-business (B2B)	Businesses sell products or services to other businesses	Grainger.com sells industrial supplies to large and small businesses through its Web site
Business processes that support buying and selling activities	Businesses and other organizations maintain and use information to identify and evaluate customers, suppliers, and employees. Increasingly, businesses share this information in carefully managed ways with their customers, suppliers, employees, and business partners	Dell Computer uses secure Internet connections to share current sales and sales forecast information with suppliers. The suppliers can use this information to plan their own production and deliver component parts to Dell in the right quantities at the right time
Consumer-to-consumer (C2C)	Participants in an online marketplace can buy and sell goods to each other.	Consumers and businesses trade with each other in the eBay.com online marketplace
Business-to-government (B2G)	Businesses sell goods or services to governments and government agencies	CA.Gov procurement site allows businesses to sell online to the state of California

1.2.3 The Second Wave of Electronic Commerce

Economists Chris Freeman and Francisco Louçã describe four waves that occurred in the Industrial Revolution in their book *As Time Goes By*. Many researchers predict that electronic commerce and the information revolution brought about by the Internet will go through similar waves. Those researchers agree that the second wave of electronic commerce has begun. This section outlines the defining characteristics of the first wave of electronic commerce and describes how the second wave is different.

The first wave of electronic commerce was predominantly a U.S. phenomenon. Web pages were primarily in English, particularly on commerce sites. The second wave is characterized by its international scope, with sellers doing business in many countries and in many languages. Language



translation and currency conversion are two impediments to the efficient conduct of global business in the second wave.

In the first wave, easy access to start-up capital led to an overemphasis on creating new large enterprises to exploit electronic commerce opportunities. Investors were excited about electronic commerce and wanted to participate, no matter how much it cost or how weak the underlying ideas were. In the second wave, established companies are using their own internal funds to finance gradual expansion of electronic commerce opportunities. These measured and carefully considered investments are helping electronic commerce grow more steadily, though more slowly.

The Internet technologies used in the first wave, especially in B2C commerce, were slow and inexpensive. Most consumers connected the Internet using dial-up modems. The increase in broadband connections in homes is a key element in the B2C component of the second wave. In 2004, the number of U.S. homes with broadband connections began to increase rapidly. Most industry estimates showed that about 12 percent of U.S. homes had broadband connections in early 2004. By late 2007, those estimates were ranging between 40 and 50 percent. Other countries, such as South Korea, subsidize their citizens' Internet access and have an even higher rate of broadband usage. Although these connections are more expensive, they are more than 10 times faster than dial-up. This increased speed not only makes Internet use more efficient, it can alter the way people use the Web. For example, a broadband connection allows a user to watch movies and television programs online—something that is impossible to do with a dial-up connection.

In the first wave, Internet technologies were integrated into B2B transactions and internal business processes by using bar codes and scanners to track parts, assemblies, inventories, and production status. These tracking technologies were not well integrated. Also, companies sent transaction information to each other using a patchwork of communication methods, including **fax**, **e-mail**, and **EDI**. In the second wave, **Radio Frequency Identification (RFID)** devices and smart cards are being combined with biometric technologies, such as fingerprint readers and retina scanners, to control more items and people in a wider variety of situations. These technologies are increasingly integrated with each other and with communication systems that allow companies to communicate with each other and share transaction, inventory level, and customer demand information effectively.

The use of electronic mail (or e-mail) in the first wave was as a tool for relatively unstructured communication. In the second wave, sellers are using e-mail as an integral part of their marketing and customer contact strategies.

Online advertising was the main intended revenue source of many failed dot-com businesses in the first wave. After a two-year dip in online advertising activity and revenues, companies began the second wave with a renewed interest in making the Internet work as an effective advertising medium. Some categories of online advertising, such as employment services (job wanted ads) are growing rapidly and are replacing traditional advertising outlets. Companies such as Google have devised ways of delivering specific ads to Internet users who are most likely to be interested in the products or services offered by those ads.



The sale of digital products was fraught with difficulties during the first wave of electronic commerce. The music recording industry was unable (or, some would say, unwilling) to devise a way to distribute digital music on the Web. This created an environment in which digital piracy—the theft of musical artists' intellectual property—became rampant. The promise of electronic books was also unfulfilled. The second wave is fulfilling the promise of available technology by supporting the legal distribution of music, video, and other digital products on the Web. Apple Computer's iTunes Web site is an example of a second wave digital product distribution business that is meeting the needs of consumers and its industry.

Not all of the future of electronic commerce is based in its second wave. Some of the most successful first-wave companies, such as Amazon.com, eBay, and Yahoo! continue to thrive by offering increasingly innovative products and services. The second wave of electronic commerce will provide new opportunities for these businesses, too.

New Words & Phrases

- | | |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| phenomenon n. 现象 | humble adj. 谦逊的, 卑微的 |
| downturn n. (价格或活动) 开始下降 | bust v. 打破, 打碎 |
| bomb v. 轰炸, 失败 | obituary n. 讣告, 讣闻 |
| gloomy adj. 黑暗的, 令人沮丧的 | perception n. 感知, 观念 |
| in the doldrums 意气消沉, 无精打采 | under way 已经开始并进行着 |
| transformation n. 转型, 转变 | interchangeably adv. 可交地, 可替交地 |
| wireless transmissions 无线传输 | business processes 业务流程 |
| characteristics n. 特性, 特征 | predominantly adv. 主要地, 显著地, 突出地 |
| currency conversion 外汇汇兑 | impediment n. 妨碍、阻碍某事物进展的人或物 |
| start-up n. 启动 | capital n. 资金, 资本 |
| overemphasis n. 过分的强调 | exploit vt. 开发, 开采 |
| underlying adj. 根本的, 潜在的 | subsidize vt. 给……津贴或补贴, 资助或补助…… |
| be integrated into 统一到……中 | bar codes n. 条形码 |
| assembly n. 装配, 组装 | inventory n. 详细目录, 存货清单 |
| patchwork n. 拼凑物 | biometric technology 生物技术, 生物辨识技术 |
| fingerprint reader 指纹读取器 | retina n. 视网膜 |
| dip n. 凹陷处 | renewed adj. 复兴的, 重申的 |
| devise vt. 想出; 计划; 设计; 发明 | fraught adj. 充满着不愉快的事情的 |
| music recording industry 唱片业 | piracy n. 盗版, 非法翻印 |
| intellectual property 知识产权 | rampant adj. 猖獗的 |
| thrive vi. 兴盛, 兴隆 | innovative adj. 新发明的, 新引进的, 革新的 |

Abbreviations

- e-commerce(electronic commerce) 电子商务
PDA (personal digital assistants) 掌上电脑



B2C(business-to-consumer) 企业与消费者间电子商务
 B2B(business-to-business) 企业间电子商务
 C2C(consumer-to-consumer) 消费者间的电子商务
 B2G(business-to-government) 企业与政府间的电子商务
 EDI(Electronic Data Interchange) 电子数据交换, 无纸贸易
 RFID(Radio Frequency Identification) 射频识别
 e-mail(electronic mail) 电子邮件

Notes

1. Just as the unreasonable expectations for immediate success fueled the high expectations during the boom years, overly gloomy news reports colored perceptions during this time. “就好像在泡沫年代突然地成功激起了不切实际的期望一样, 此时媒体报道的色彩又过分灰暗。”
2. An increasing number of states have Web sites that help companies do business with state government agencies. 本句中的 that 引导定语从句, 用来修饰 Web sites。译为“美国有越来越多的州建立了网站来帮助企业和政府机构进行交易。”
3. This created an environment in which digital piracy—the theft of musical artists’ intellectual property—became rampant. 本句中“the theft of musical artists’ intellectual property”是对“digital piracy”的进一步说明。译为“这就产生了数字盗版——侵犯音乐家知识产权——十分猖獗的环境。”

1.3 Business Models, Revenue Models, and Business Processes

A business model is a set of processes that combine to achieve a company’s goal, which is to yield a profit. In the first wave of electronic commerce, many investors sought out start-up companies with appealing business models. A good business model was expected to lead to rapid sales growth and market dominance. The idea that the key to success was simply to copy the business model of a successful dot-com business led the way to many business failures, some of them quite dramatic.

Copying or adapting someone else’s business model is neither an easy nor wise road map to success. Instead, companies should examine the elements of their business; that is, they should identify business processes that they can streamline, enhance, or replace with processes driven by Internet technologies.

Companies and investors do still use the idea of a revenue model, which is a specific collection of business processes used to identify customers, market to those customers, and generate sales to those customers. The revenue model idea is helpful for classifying revenue-generating activities for communication and analysis purposes.

1.3.1 Focus on Specific Business Processes

In addition to the revenue model grouping of business processes, companies think of the rest of their operations as specific business processes. Those processes include purchasing raw materials or



goods for resale, converting materials and labor into finished goods, managing transportation and logistics, hiring and training employees, managing the finances of the business, and many other activities.

In some cases, business processes use traditional commerce activities very effectively, and technology cannot improve them. Products that buyers prefer to touch, smell, or examine closely can be difficult to sell using electronic commerce. For example, customers might be reluctant to buy items that have an important element of tactile feel or condition such as high-fashion clothing (you cannot touch it online and subtle color variations that are hard to distinguish on a computer monitor can make a large difference) or antique jewelry (for which elements of condition that require close inspection can be critical to value) if they cannot closely examine the products before agreeing to purchase them.

1.3.2 Product/Process Suitability to Electronic Commerce

One business process that is especially well suited to electronic commerce is the selling of commodity items. A commodity item is a product or service that is hard to distinguish from the same products or services provided by other sellers; its features have become standardized and well known. Gasoline, office supplies, soap, computers, and airline transportation are all examples of commodity products or services, as are the books and CDs sold by Amazon.com.

Another key factor that can make an item well suited to electronic commerce is the product's shipping profile. A product's shipping profile is the collection of attributes that affect how easily that product can be packaged and delivered. A high value-to-weight ratio can help by making the overall shipping cost a small fraction of the selling price. An airline ticket is an excellent example of an item that has a high value-to-weight ratio. Products that are consistent in size, shape, and weight can make warehousing and shipping much simpler and less costly. The shipping profile is only one factor, however. Expensive jewelry has a high value-to-weight ratio, but many people are reluctant to buy it without examining it in person unless the jewelry is sold under a well-known brand name and with a generous return policy.

A combination of electronic and traditional commerce strategies works best when the business process includes both commodity and personal inspection elements.

New Words & Phrases

business model 商业模式

dominance n. 优势; 支配地位; 控制力

streamline vt. 简化使效率更高

logistics n. 物流

antique n. 古董

yield v. 生产, 出产, 带来

dramatic adj. 戏剧性的

revenue model 盈利模式

tactile adj. 触觉的, 触觉感知的

profile n. 轮廓, 外形

Notes

1. The idea that the key to success was simply to copy the business model of a successful dot-com business led