

Unit 29: The Internet and E-Business

Unit code: J/601/1109

QCF level: 4

Credit value: 15 credits

Aim

The aim of this unit is to give learners an understanding of the internet and how e-business can be used in organisations.

Unit abstract

This unit introduces learners to the scope of e-business and the benefits it offers to an organisation through the different business models. It enables sufficient understanding of internet technology for learners to appreciate the potential, and the limitations, of using the internet for business. The features of good website design are also covered.

Learners new to studying e-business may already be familiar with e-business through having dealt with them as buyers and/or sellers. One of the aims of this unit is to help learners build on these experiences and look at them more objectively as viable and productive business organisations.

Learners will examine the scope of e-business and the inherent models it can follow. The unit will give learners the ontology of the internet and business requirements for usable website design. They will have an in-depth knowledge of the technology behind the HCI of e-business.

By studying online business environments learners will gain insight into how business is evolving within the virtual marketplace in order to remain competitive; how the development of a global marketplace impacts on all businesses; and how businesses can take advantage of these opportunities whilst meeting customer expectations.

Learning outcomes

On successful completion of this unit a learner will:

- 1 Understand the scope of e-business
- 2 Understand how the internet works
- 3 Be able to use different e-business models
- 4 Be able to use good website design.

Unit content

1 Understand the scope of e-business

Definitions: the internet; the worldwide web (www); intranets; extranets; the distinction between e-business and e-commerce; stakeholder transaction types eg business-to-consumer (B2C), business-to-business (B2B), customer-to-customer (C2C), customer-to-business (C2B)

Benefits to businesses of e-business: why a company should have a web presence eg 24/7 trading, global marketplace; overt and covert information collection; how the use of internet technology can reduce transaction costs

Barriers to businesses caused by e-business: set-up costs; impact of staff; difficulty of changing processes; ongoing maintenance eg lack of skill, security and protection concerns; managing a 24/7 global marketplace response eg language, demand, logistics; the importance of trust for e-business transactions

Security and legislation: methods and role of physical security in e-business eg passwords, access; methods and role of electronic security in e-business eg firewalls, digital signatures, digital certificates, anti-virus software; impacts of national and international legislation eg staff training, taxation

Mode of communication: devices to communicate online, fixed and portable; business communications eg shopping cart, FAQs, customer follow-up

2 Understand how the internet works

Internet technology: the importance of agreed non-proprietary standards; how messages are transferred across the global communications network using packet switching eg TCP/IP; internet protocols eg FTP, HTTP, SHTTP, IMAP; and the role of URLs; bandwidth as a measure of capacity; why this is an important consideration

Introduction to HTML: the main features of HTML as the language of the www, defines format of the information and how it is presented, but not its content as in EDI; (elements (<Tags>) – head, body, title, break, headings, forms, paragraphs, lists, tables, links and images); highlight the number of software packages available to users who can now build pages without learning HTML; brief overview of XML and XHTML

Clients, servers and browsers: the functions of servers and clients and use of two-tier and three-tier architectures; the nature and role of search engines; the role of the browser in interpreting the HTML and presenting the data to fit the user's device screen

Intranets and extranets: the differences between the use of the internet; an intranet and an extranet; explain how they can improve security and efficiency within business communication

3 Be able to use different e-business models

Business models: the different ways in which the internet may be used to generate revenue by supporting the sale of a product eg CDs; by charging per transaction for the provision of a service eg airline booking; by supplying electronic media information or services eg music downloads; by subscription-based information services eg consumer advice; advertising revenue eg from linked websites, suppliers; by the growing provision of individualised customer-centric products and services requiring customer interaction eg auction sites, photographic services

4 Be able to use good website design

Structure of web-pages: the elements of a web page that may be used by search engines comprising head/title; description; keywords; metatags; body; navigation; download considerations eg images

Effective web pages: the design features to engage the visitor ie site stickiness; consistent page layout; corporate colour scheme; consistent with image of the business (brand) and customer expectation; pictures and links; clear; intuitive; informative; builds trust; encourages visitor to return; repeat business

Website usability: stakeholder accessibility by meeting the needs of different audiences eg parents, children; multi-sensory access eg visually impaired, colour blind; legal responsibilities eg discrimination legislation

Learning outcomes and assessment criteria

Learning outcomes On successful completion of this unit a learner will:	Assessment criteria for pass The learner can:
LO1 Understand the scope of e-business	1.1 describe the environment in which e-business is conducted and business transaction types 1.2 explain the benefits and barriers to businesses considering an online presence 1.3 assess the security and legislative issues facing an online business organisation 1.4 state the modes of communication available to an e-business and their applications
LO2 Understand how the internet works	2.1 explain the internet technologies and their importance in making an e-business successful 2.2 explain the main features of HTML 2.3 analyse the functions of client servers and browsers, and the role of the search engine 2.4 evaluate the use of intranets and extranets within business communication
LO3 Be able to use different e-business models	3.1 illustrate the different e-business models that can be used to generate revenue for a business 3.2 analyse each model in terms of its capacity to generate revenue 3.3 report on future developments in e-business models
LO4 Be able to use good website design	4.1 use the key elements of good web design structure 4.2 evaluate the impact of a well designed website to an e-business 4.3 report on the issues concerning website usability.

Guidance

Links

This unit links with *Unit 30: Internet Marketing* and *Unit 31: E-Business Operations*. Aspects of this unit also link with the following units: *Unit 1: Business Environment*, *Unit 3: Organisations and Behaviour* and *Unit 7: Business Strategy*.

Essential requirements

Texts must be supported by the use of websites and case studies, for example www.bized.ac.uk which provides business case studies.

For part-time learners working in business, their work experience must be used in comparing the approaches that are adopted.

Employer engagement and vocational contexts

It would be useful for learners to engage with a local business that has an online presence or is considering one. How the business decided on a certain layout would help learner understanding.

It might also be useful to consider a cross-curricular approach with, perhaps, an IT-based unit to create a website for a real or fictitious business, or to support an enrichment activity within the centre.