



MOS325a/b

## The University of Western Ontario

Management & Organizational Studies Program

Faculty of Social Science

Fall/Winter 2007-2008

### Instructor Information

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Instructor: Adam Caplan  
Office: SSC 2231  
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Office Hours: Available by individual appointment

### Course Description

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eCommerce has been often hailed as an entirely new way of doing business. This course examines both the impact of eCommerce on traditional multi-channel retail businesses and the emerging pure-play single-channel business models that have arisen. By identifying and understanding traditional retail's best practices, we will learn to develop cogent, fundamentally sound eCommerce strategies.

### Course Objectives

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The eCommerce channel is a bold new frontier of challenges and opportunities, and the industry is evolving so quickly that there's no one clear path to success. This course will explore questions such as:

- What are the fundamental concepts of retail?
- What are the differences and similarities between traditional retail, 'click and mortar' and pure-play eCommerce strategies?
- What are the best strategies for acquiring, converting and retaining customers?
- Who are the major players in the eCommerce space and what distinguishes them from others?
- What's the 'Secret Recipe' for designing an internet strategy that works?

Using real-world examples, case studies, reading materials and discussion-driven lectures, we'll examine the methods and best-practices for developing a cogent e-commerce strategy. In-class discussion is a vital component of the course.



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### Course Materials

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Texts (not required)

Although there is no good textbook on e-commerce, there is a text that describes some good, solid fundamentals for creating and managing an e-commerce venture:

Carroll, Jim & Broadhead, Rick. *Selling Online*. Toronto: Wiley, 2002

Underhill, Paco, *Why We Buy: The Science of Shopping*. New York : Simon & Schuster, c1999

Neilsen, Jakob. *Designing Web Usability: The Practice of Simplicity*. Indianapolis, Indiana: New Riders Publishing, 2000

Neilsen, Jakob & Tahir, Marie. *Prioritizing Web Usability*. Indianapolis, Indiana: New Riders Publishing, 2002

Negroponte, Nicholas. *Being Digital*. New York: Vintage Books, a division of Random House Inc, 1995

Additionally, please plan to spend some time every week 'surfing' and bringing observations of Websites to class.

### Course Deliverables

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#### Exams

There is a final exam. Date & Location TBD.

#### Written Assignments:

There is a single written assignment, a short research paper. *Due date TBD*.

#### Presentations:

##### ***Project #1 – Mid-Term Project***

Students will make an in-class presentation of a business case for creating an eCommerce Website from an existing retail operation. Groups of 5 (or 6) students adopt roles and responsibilities as marketers, merchandisers, technologists, content producers and operations managers to develop and present a strategy as if it were a proposal to the management of their chosen retail store. Students will become intimate observers of the retail operation's demographics, product mix, and branding/marketing goals.

The business case must be supported by fundamental business concepts. Although not required, a mockup of the proposed Website will aid in presentation. Grading will be based on participation, presentation, and plausibility of implementation. The existing retail operation must be submitted to the instructor for approval no later than Week 3. *NOTE: This strategy MUST include purchasing items and/or services through the Website!*



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### ***Project #2 – Final Project:***

Much like Project #1, students will present a business case and strategy. This time, however, the subject will be an invented product or store. Focus is on again on the business case, but with a significantly greater emphasis placed on marketing, conversion and retention using the tools outlined in each of the classes through the second half of term. Grading will again be based on participation, presentation, and plausibility of implementation. Invented product or store must be submitted to the instructor for approval no later than Week 9. *NOTE: This strategy MUST include purchasing items and/or services through the Website!*

### **Presentation requirements.**

For both projects, in-class presentations are to last no longer than 15 minutes – 10 minutes to present the business case and a 5 minute Q&A from instructor and peers. Presentations will be cut short if they go over. Students are encouraged to arrive at class early for the presentation to ensure that all presentation materials are correctly formatted.

ALL GROUP MEMBERS MUST PARTICIPATE IN THE PRESENTATION.

### **Code of Behavior**

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1. Students are expected to engage and interact in a professional and academic environment.
2. Students are expected to attend all classes and to remain in attendance throughout the entire class. If a circumstance requires early departure, please show due consideration to the rest of the class.
3. Cell phones must be shut off. Students are more than welcome to check messages or make calls at one of the two breaks.
4. Laptop computers are allowed, and there is wireless access in the classroom. Please limit use to relevant websites or materials. Please do NOT check e-mail or use IM during class. Violations will be addressed at the instructor's discretion.
5. Any sources cited, whether verbatim or paraphrased must be referenced appropriately. Simply put, any fact, figure, or quote lacks credibility and effectiveness without context and shall be dismissed until citation is provided. Additionally, students may face disciplinary action if work is deemed plagiarized. Please see academic policies for more information.
6. Attendance is mandatory for each project presentation. If a student is absent for a presentation without due cause or prearrangement with the instructor, their grade for that presentation will be 0. Other team members' grades won't be directly adjusted.
7. Project reports are due on the scheduled day of the presentation, either in class or electronically. If the report is late, the following punitive schedule shall apply:
  - a. 5% off report's mark for the 1st day late
  - b. 2% off report's mark for each subsequent day



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### Grading

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The following weights will be assigned for each course evaluation component:

Mid-Term Project Presentation 20%

Final Project Presentation 20%

Final Exam 40%

Research Project 10%

In-Class Participation 10%

### Class Schedule

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#### **Week 1: Introduction**

We'll review the class schedule and outline, and go over the fundamental thesis at the core of the course. We'll then begin to discuss the nature of retail conceptually and practically. This class serves as a foundation or introduction to bricks-and-mortar retail and how its best practices relate to the practice of retail sales.

#### **Week 2: What's The Analogy? The fundamentals of e-Commerce**

From conversion rates to upsells, brick and mortar retailers care about fundamentally the same things that e-retailers do. This class examines the basics of retailing and makes direct reference to the multi-channel retailing.

#### **Week 3: Hyperlinks & Hysteria! e-Commerce best practices.**

What specific techniques are used to drive conversion? We'll explore site stickiness and customer retention (AECaR – Acquire-Engage-Convert-and-Retain.).

#### **Week 4: The Technology of e-Commerce: It's about choices.**

Making good technology choices is based on understanding the priorities of the business (e.g. helping increase conversion vs. reducing site abandonment). This class demonstrates how balance between what's desirable and what's possible.

#### **Week 5: Content Is (still) King. 4 capital E's = 1 C**

After over a decade, content is still king; Whether it's punchy product descriptions, intriguing images, vivid video demonstrations or blogs, content drives traffic, engages consumers, entertains and retains visitors, and educates customers. We'll look at what content is critical; what makes the best content; and how to manage your content.

#### **Week 6: e-Marketing Part I: Marketing Basics**

We'll look at the basic concepts of marketing, from the USP to branding. Cost, measurement and metrics will also be explored.



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### **Week 7: Mid-term presentations**

#### **UPDATED: e-Marketing Part II: If you build it... ~~they will come~~**

In the early days of the internet, there was a lot of hype. Today, it's returned in full force. We'll look at what it really takes to draw traffic. E-mail, SEM, SEO, CPM-based and performance-based techniques will be discussed in detail.

### **Week 8: e-Marketing Part II: If you build it... ~~they will come~~**

#### **UPDATED: Mid-term presentations**

### **Week 9: Taking AIM: Actionable Insights from Metrics**

Perhaps the greatest benefit of e-Commerce is its unblinking, cold hard facts expressed in the voluminous data that is generated by virtually every site visit. This class demonstrates how to turn data into insights and then actions to improve any e-commerce strategy.

### **Week 10: Now That You've Sold It: e-Commerce Operations**

Once the order is placed, a well-oiled machine swings into action to literally deliver the goods. Fulfillment, customer service and returns will be discussed.

### **Week 11: eCRM**

Electronic Customer Relationship Management allows organizations to both optimize and expand relationships with customers. Database mining, eCRM software and fundamental retention concepts will be examined.

### **Week 12: Looking Ahead: The future of e-Commerce**

Selling isn't limited to the Web – wireless and pervasive devices, combined with other new, and emerging technologies are expanding the reach of e-Commerce. This class will examine ways to evaluate emerging technologies.

### **Week 13: Final Presentations.**

*Schedule may change at the discretion of the instructor. Changes will be communicated in advance.*



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### Additional Statements

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#### **Use of electronic equipment during exams**

While laptops are forbidden during examinations, students are encouraged to bring and use a standard mathematical calculator. No such item will be provided by the instructor or proctor.

#### **Statement on Academic Offences**

Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at the following Web site: <http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/handbook/appeals/scholoff.pdf>

Computer-marked multiple-choice tests and/or exams may be subject to submission for similarity review by software that will check for unusual coincidences in answer patterns that may indicate cheating