UNIT 2 ONLINE MARKETING

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2.0 AIMS

In this unit we shall be taking you to the domain of Online Marketing. Before we proceed, we would like to clarify for you that there are differences between

- E-Marketing
- Digital Marketing
- E-commerce
- E-business

since these terms are randomly and carelessly used.

Marketing means creating a need for a product, leveraging potential customer’s emotional responses, creating and positioning advertising, handling various kinds of marketing strategies, issuing press releases, packaging the product and looking after both internet (or e-) or online marketing.

So marketing is then, in simple terms, the measures one takes to reach and persuade prospective buyers.

We shall tell you of both aspects of online marketing – marketing by the author (who would be a self-publisher) and marketing by a regular book publisher who wishes to make a global presence or extend his outreach..

2.1 INTRODUCTION

E-marketing is also referred to as I-marketing, web marketing, and online marketing. Basically, this means the marketing of products or services (here books) over the internet. The idea behind using this tool is that distributing of information via this medium is cheaper and the outreach is to a global audience—sometimes in
real time and sometimes via convergence of media—we shall explain this as we proceed.

Since this approach can be interactive in nature, this uniqueness ensures that potential customers get all the information from the “FAQs” (Frequently Asked Questions”) that can be posted online.

Internet marketing also includes maintenance of digital customer databases and Electronic Customer Relationship Management systems. The creative and the technical aspects (design, development, advertising and sales) can be combined and made accessible to the potential customer (here book reader).

The customer can be accessed by the bookseller/publisher/sales department via

- Search Engine Marketing (SEM)
- Search Engine optimization (SEO)
- Banner ads on specific websites
- E-mail Marketing and
- web 2.0 strategies.

You may do a net search for definitions of these terms since it is beyond the scope of this course to discuss them.

2.2 AUTHOR’S STRATEGIES

The enthusiasts of the internet claim that online book sales (which includes the print-on-demand, the online booking and electronically purchasable versions of books already in stock and deliverable by courier and e-books both) would surpass traditional retail sales—but that is yet to be seen.

The self-published author who does Desk Top Publishing (DTP) often discovers too late that the regular distribution and sales channels available to authors published in the conventional ways are not available to him/her. Marketing one’s books then is to be done by the easiest-to-use marketplace which is the internet—word-of-mouth and personal contacts apart, that is.

An author can use the following strategies to publicise and sell books:

- Setting up an author website
- Hosting an author website
- Using social networking sites
- Using Google and Amazon’s search facilities and
- Barnes and Nobles’ “See inside the Book” strategies, for example.

The author can also combine the traditional (free review copies, getting himself interviewed or getting his book reviewed in print or over television and radio) but making his book available through online bookstores is the best strategy according to available statistics.

2.3 PUBLISHER’S STRATEGIES: ONLINE BOOK STORES

Now what are online bookstores?

The recent phenomenon of online bookstores is one where “publishers are projecting their publications through their own websites to a huge number of readers. A lay reader on the other hand can browse through a mammoth number of books and
inantly order the one that appeals to him through a click of the mouse and get it delivered at his doorstep." (Ghai). There is a virtual "Shopping Cart" in which you can 'put' the books you wish to purchase.

Online bookstores may be stores that deal exclusively online or may be the online divisions of leading bookstores. Both these permit you to browse, choose, sample and order books for which you may pay via credit card or even choose a Cash-on-Delivery option which may be restricted to a certain distance from the store or to a minimum purchase order.

### 2.3.1 Conditions

The moment the book leaves the warehouse is the time the book's ownership is transferred and the credit card is charged. Issues like availability of books listed on the site as well as delivery time, delivery rates, delays (and the reasons thereof) are all clarified in the Site Policy and the store maintains email contact with the customer. There is a pay-back mechanism for excess or unused amounts.

However, books are not returnable since they are said to have been despatched in perfect condition.

### 2.3.2 Hyperlinks

The site may have the following hyperlinks:

- Home page
- About us
- My account
- Member's registration
- Gift coupon
- Source a book
- Contact us
- Help
- Site
- Discussion board
- Opinion poll
- Top ten bestsellers
- Special offers
- Top five children's books
- Shopping cart

#### Activity 1

Open the website of any well-known bookstore in your town and see the options and links it offers. Note them down in the space below and also, be careful to note the date on which you accessed this site.

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2.3.3 Payment Options

Apart from credit card options, cheque, draft and wire transfer of payment too are possibilities that such a bookstore may offer. This, of course, would differ from store to store.

**Cyber Wallet** is like a debit card wherein a customer can maintain an account and keep topping it up after a purchase amount has been debited by the site. Here the store may even offer a 10% discount. This account is available for the customer to check.

2.4 WEBSITES OF LEADING ONLINE BOOKSTORES

Some of the websites of the leading online bookstores in India are

- www.gobookshopping.com
- www.bookshopofindia.com
- www.indiatimes.com
- www.landmarkonthenet.com
- www.teksonsbooks.com
- www.crosswordbookstores.com
- www.crosswordbookstores.com
- www.oxfordbookstore.com
- www.delhibookstore.com

However, publishers too can project their books through both their own websites and through these online bookstores to the potential customer. Online bookstores enable the customer to browse through the book (20% of the text is usually the maximum that a reader can see online which includes the preliminary pages, the contents pages, some of the archived content and a part of the index).

2.5 MARKETING STRATEGIES

The marketing strategies that can be adopted for e-marketing or internet marketing can be

- As an advertising medium
- As a direct response medium
- As a platform for sales transactions
- As a distribution channel
- As a customer service mechanism (through FAQ Qs for example)
- As a relationship building mechanism ((e-mail, e-newsletters etc)

Normally the interaction or e-marketing is used by a customer to buy online and to surf for information). Those looking for books on a particular subject also use the internet as an research tool but this does result in purchase as well.
Marketing objectives, thus, are achieved by using digital technologies—chiefly websites and emails.

The book search facility that is available on the internet via a google search or through various search engines—the most popular of these are the google and the Amazon Search Programs.

As a marketing tool, the strategy of these two has been

- The books are included in search results when matched with relevant key words
- Sample pages of the book are available for viewing (not more than 20% in any case) but this amount is successful in attracting customers.
- An order can be placed, there and then, via a one-click process.
- And, of course it is not possible to copy or download these pages in most cases so the publisher and the author do not suffer.

For further information you may search Google™ Book Search and Amazon Search Inside!™

Placing articles related to the book on an internet site could be a part of the overall strategy for marketing via the publicity it garners. In the website of Amazon for instance one may create a link to the publishers website.

For further details you may want to see www.anniejenningespr.com/pages/bookpromotion.htm

## 2.6 USE OF OTHER EMERGING TECHNOLOGIES WITH POTENTIAL

Technological innovations that may cause “disruption” of the prevalent models and force publishers to change their advertising strategy models may be the following

- via Radio/FM channels through ‘jockey’ chats
- via broadcast emails to prospective customers
- creation of books that can be read via hand-held devices (e-readers, mobile phones, IPODs (portable media players)
- e- newspapers
- e-zines (e-magazines)

These are in addition to the conventional advertising channels already in place.

## 2.7 MODIFICATION OF CONTENT

Books that need to be marketed by these innovative technologies will necessarily have to themselves be innovative—publishers who plan to simply scan books and market the scanned versions via a downloadable approach or via “print-on-demand” would not find a buyer except those from the industry itself (publishers going to book fairs for example or collectors of rare texts). Buyers of e-books are now aware that content can be offered in a variety of ways and enriched content is what will find buyers—hyperlinks to music, different views, possibility of modifying background, text font and size etc.

Content thus, will have to be delinked from medium—that is to say, the printed book will have to be converted into an e-book but the content will have to have additional value.
Content can be enhanced in many ways. It can be
- multi-media
- be interactive
- have links to other media or other resources
- books (especially reference books like encyclopedias) will have to have the capability of getting updates and modifications and corrections via links to websites.
- Books will have to be deliverable anytime, anywhere (wifi, internet, even cellphones)

2.8 MODIFICATION OF FORMAT

Other strategies that publishers and distributed looking to enter the e-marketing field will be therefore, to make content available via a variety of formats

- PDF (Portable Document Format)
- Online (via html – Hypertext Markup Language)
- PDAs (Personal Digital Assistant)

The hardware requirement that these new incarnations need—MP3 players, PDAs, e-readers—are all expensive and have limitations of size, comfort or ease of use and limited battery life.

Most readers are used to reading printed books that have pages turning from side to side and books that scroll from top to down are not comfortable for them. However, e-readers now replicate the printed book for those not comfortable with scrolling down. These features include

- size and weight (now they are like a paperback book)
- not being backlit but readable with lighting like conventional books need
- electronic ‘paper’ can be flipped (side to side) not scrolled up and down
- notes (virtual) can be written on them
- bookmarks (virtual) can be added.

The e-book reader has many advantages and we are giving you some of these details so that you can see that e-marketing does not mean just making it possible to pay online and have a scanned printed-on-demand book delivered at a place of your choice.

Since the Kindle 2 Reader of Amazon has the audio feature (Text –to-speech) which enables one to have a book read out, this has the implication that the publisher of books who is looking to market them online has to also be on the lookout to create such books.

Kindle 2 is currently expensive and books on it (unlike traditional books printed on paper) cannot be lent or borrowed hence it may be just a peep into the future for you at the moment!

(The fact that the Kindle 2 has a proprietary format and its own store makes it a monopoly will have to be resolved between the book publishers and Amazon.)

Publishers thus need to make value addition to their books by

1. Modifying editorial and design processes

2. arranging for their printing and production processes to shift towards print-on-demand (for the so-called ‘purists’ who would still like to have a paper book)
3. tie up with or arrange online bookstores
4. provide ‘unbundled’ books (giving only one chapter or one entry from a reference book)

### 2.9 ADVANTAGES OF GOING DIGITAL

While paperless books are not going to replace the printed book in the near future, by moving towards the online marketing strategy, publishers who want to maintain a ‘backlist’ will not have to spend on warehousing, can have a larger selection of titles available, provide out-of-print books to customers, have shorter print-runs. While these features may not make much economic sense at the moment, a publisher would, in a round-about fashion, be advertising his company as a place where books can be readily found. Book buyers may therefore turn to him even for their conventional book purchase requirements.

**Activity 2**

You can view a Demo on YouTube of Print-on-Demand at www.onDemandBooks.com

### 2.10 USING THE SOCIAL MEDIA SITES

Media sites like Face Book and MySpace are best used by self-published authors. How it works is to purchase a social media setup service and through its questionnaire you can have
- a blog
- a Facebook profile/page
- a MySpace page
- a Flickr account
- a FeedBurner Account
- a Goodreads social book account
- a Twitter micro-blogging account

The advantage (hopefully) in this strategy is that major search engines like Google, Yahoo! and MSN Live Search pick up and index the content on such sites.

Social media sites can be used to post status updates about the book. Always, the entries must include details of where and how the book can be purchased.

Basically, the idea is to publicise the work(s) through cyberspace where you use the social media.

### 2.11 SUMMING UP

In this unit we have walked you through the entire domain of e-marketing. This has necessitated a discussing on e-books, both content and format, online bookstores, emerging media and some hardware that would be necessary in order to access the e-books and online bookstores.

It has been our attempt to give you a broad overview of the field of online publishing and online marketing/e-marketing so that whether as publisher or as author, both these options can be further explored.
2.12 A SELECT GLOSSARY

The terms in this glossary have been taken from two sources and therefore are in two groups, as per the reference source.

**Internet:** (Lower case l) An internet is created any time 2 or more networks are connected together.

**Mailing List:** An email-based discussion group. Sending one email message to the mailing list sends email to all other members of the group. Mailing lists are usually joined by subscribing, and can be left by unsubscribing.

**Multimedia:** A combination of media types in a single document, such as text, graphics, audio and video.

**Newsgroup:** The name for a discussion group on USENET.

**Online:** When someone is connected to the Internet, they are considered “online”.

**Search Engine:** A tool for locating information on the Internet by topic. Popular search engines include Yahoo, AltaVista, and HotBot.

**Site:** A single web page or a collection of related Web pages.

**Spam (or Spamming):** To send a message or advertisement to a large number of people who did not request the information, or to repeatedly send the same message to a single person. “Spamming” is considered very poor Netiquette.

**Subscribe:** To become a member of a mailing list, newsgroup, or other online service.

**USENET:** A distributed bulletin board system that runs on news servers, UNIX hosts, online services and bulletin board systems. Collectively, USENET is made up of all the users who post to and read newsgroup articles. The USENET is the largest decentralized information utility available today.

**WWW:** (World Wide Web) - The technical definition of the WWW is the global network of hypertext (HTTP) servers that allow text, graphics, audio and video files to be mixed together.

(http://www.domainavenue.com/faq_glossary.htm#usenet) June 20, 2009

**Blog:** A blog is information that is instantly published to a Web site. Blog scripting allows someone to automatically post information to a Web site. The information first goes to a blogger Web site. Then the information is automatically inserted into a template tailored for your Web site.

**Chat** - real-time, synchronous, text-based communication via computer.

Format for compressing audio only defined in both MPEG-1 and MPEG-2. Commonly used for digital music played on personal computers (MP3 songs) but also targeted at applications such as digital phones and new hardware MP3 players intended as discman or car CD player replacements.

**Home page:** Generally the first page retrieved when accessing a Web site. Usually a “home” page acts as the starting point for a user to access information on the site. The “home” page usually has some type of table of contents for the rest of the site information or other materials. When creating Web pages, the “home” page has the filename “index.htm”

**HTML:** A type of text code in Hypertext Markup Language which, when embedded in a document, allows that document to be read and distributed across the Internet
Hyperlink - Text, images, graphics that, when clicked with a mouse (or activated by keystrokes) will connect the user to a new Web site. The link is usually obvious, such as underlined text or a “button” of some type, but not always.

Internet - A global network of thousands of computer networks linked by data lines and wireless systems.

Newsgroup - An Internet “site” centered around a specific topic or course. Some newsreader software can “thread” discussion so there can be various topics centered around a central theme. An advantage over e-mail is that the messages are archived and don’t reside in your e-mail account, taking up your memory, unless you set up a “sent mail” or “carbon copy” option. The messages can often be threaded according to a particular discussion. e Web’s integration of audio, video, graphics and text.

Search Engine - specialized software, such as AltaVista and Yahoo, that lets WWW browser users search for information on the Web by using keywords, phrases, and boolean logic. Different search engines have different ways of categorizing and indexing information. Search engines are accessed by typing in the URL of that engine or using a browser’s compilation of search engines in its Internet search function.

(http://mason.gmu.edu/~montecin/netterms.htm) June 20, 2009