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**E-COMMERCE DEVELOPMENT PROSPECTS IN THE ENTREPRENEURSHIP
OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION**

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Abstract

At the current stage of development of market relations, the goal of enhancing the innovative component in the business of an enterprise for performance improvement is extremely important. The emergence of global computer networks has marked the rise of a new communications environment and a market with a large number of prospective high-income customers.

Keywords

E-commerce – Entrepreneurship – Market relations – Digital economy – Sales organization

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Introduction

Spring and summer of 2017 became the turning point in the formation of Russia, when the expert community realized the significance of digital technologies for the further development of the country. The key factor for such transition was the discussion and adoption of the program “Digital Economy of the Russian Federation”. Meanwhile, the signal was given today at the highest level that “the creation of the digital economy is a matter of national security and independence of Russia, the competitiveness of Russian companies and the country’s long-term positions on the world stage”.

The global retail e-commerce market is consistently growing: according to the online research portal Statista, its volume more than doubled in 2018 compared to 2014, surpassing USD 2.8 billion. According to Statista’s estimate, the growth will continue over the coming years, although the rate of growth will somewhat decrease. By 2021 the global market volume will amount to about USD 4.9 billion¹. Nevertheless, the numbers are impressive

Country	Population, 2017, millions of people	Internet connectivity, 2017, %	Annual GDP per capita, 2017, thousands of USD	E-commerce share in GDP, 2018, %	B2C e-commerce volume, 2017, billions of USD
China	1,390	54	8.8	4.5	680.0
USA	330	76	59.5	2.6	440.0
Great Britain	66	95	39.7	7.9	220.0
Germany	83	84	44.5	3.1	82.5
India	1,340	30	1.9	1.0	37.6
Russia	144	76	10.7	2.5	32.5
Brazil	209	61	9.8	1.0	15.8

Table 1

Main indicators of e-commerce markets in a number of countries

According to the analytical agency Data Insights, at the start of 2018, there were at least 300 thousand websites with online shops in Russia. Merely 20,000 shops receive over 20 orders per day and less than 100,000 shops receive over 5 orders per day. Only 80,000 shops are visited by over 20 people per day. Based on these results, the efficiency of remote access to orders and websites is evident. At the end of 2018, Data Insight published an overall online-sales rating. It was based on a complex approach* that included, among others, step-by-step data updates from shops representatives for a more accurate understanding of the buyer’s wishes. The rating of online shops includes the volume of online sales and the number of orders.

Russia is already living in the digital age:

- Russia has the largest in Europe and the sixth-largest in the world number of Internet users.

¹ The study by IDC commissioned by SAP “Tsifrovaya transformatsiya malogo i srednego biznesa”. Available at: http://news.sap.com/wp-content/blogs.dir/1/files/SAP_IDC_infographic_SMB_DX_102016.pdf y Doing business in the Russian Federation. Doing Business: The World Bank. <http://russian.doingbusiness.org/data/exploreeconomies/russia>

- The number of smartphones in Russia has doubled over the last 3 years – currently, 60% of the population have a smartphone. It is more than in Brazil, India, and Eastern European countries.

- The number of people using the portals of government and municipal services has doubled.

On June 10, 2019, it was reported that, according to the Federal State Statistic Service², in 2018, the share of Russians using online government services portals reached 74.8%. Whereas in 2017 it amounted to 64.3% and in 2016 — to 51.3%. In 2015 and 2014, the share stood at 39.6% and 35.2% respectively.

Methodology

In today’s environment, information and communication technologies are a driving force for economic development as a whole. In trade, most traditional format companies are entering the digital market³. The current progress of e-commerce is indissolubly linked to the major development trends in the global economy. This tendency is driven by several reasons. First, it requires extensive replication onto a new infrastructure and provides access to information and knowledge that get transformed into commodities.

Second, given the development of e-commerce, the financial economy shapes a defining characteristic of profit maximization in the absence of production, namely the role of increasing financial capital. Initially, the term electronic commerce (e-commerce) meant a form of sales organization. E-commerce operated on the same principles as traditional commerce. but it functioned with the help of the Internet. Subsequently, e-commerce came to be viewed as a sphere of the network (electronic, digital, web, etc.) economy⁴. E-commerce is a sphere of the economy that encompasses not only financial but also trade operations utilizing computer networks, as well as business processes connected to such operations. As a rule, e-commerce is subdivided into several sectors according to the parties to the trade and the direction of cooperation (Figure 1).

	<i>Government (G)</i>	<i>Business (B)</i>	<i>Consumer (C)</i>
<i>Government (G)</i>	G2G Coordination	G2B Information	G2C Information
<i>Business (B)</i>	B2G Government procurement	B2B Trade deals between companies	B2C Retail
<i>Consumer (C)</i>	C2G Taxation	C2B Price comparison	C2C Auction markets

Figure 1
Nine sectors of commercial interaction

² Federal State Statistic Service (Rosstat, 2018). Available at: <https://www.gks.ru/> y The Ministry of Economic Development of the Russian Federation: O tekushchei situatsii v ekonomike Rossiiskoi federatsii po itogam pervogo polugodiya 2019 goda. Available at: <http://economy.gov.ru>

³ L. P. Dashkov & O.A. Repushevskaya, “Vliyaniye tsifrovoi transformatsii ekonomiki na predprinimatelstvo”, Vestnik Rossiiskogo universiteta kooperatsii, num 4 Vol: 37 (2019).

⁴ A. E. Suglobov & S.Yu. Lipalina, “Metodologicheskie podkhody k ponimaniyu sushchnosti innovatsionnoi deyatel'nosti v sovremennykh usloviyakh”, Vestnik Moskovskogo universiteta MVD Rossii, num 7 (2012): 202–206.

Result

Let us address in greater detail the four main sectors of commercial interaction depending on the participants.

B2C (business – consumer) is a type of e-commerce that includes transactions between legal entities and natural persons and mainly denotes online retail. The trade may take place on specialized portals for sellers, trading platforms, or mailing lists. It is advantageous to clients as they can make a purchase based on sellers' competitive offers without leaving their homes. Sellers are limiting stock and expediting the turnover, avoiding the costs of hiring staff and trade facilities maintenance, as well as directly obtaining the information on consumer preferences. Thus, business activities become more efficient.

B2B (business – business) implies participation in transactions between enterprises (legal entities and entrepreneurs)⁵. Such interaction usually takes place on specialized open online platforms with a set of standardized tools and rules. An interactive database allows not only to ensure a large number of deliveries but also to track the fulfilment of orders. B2B transactions normally include wholesale supply setup and order placement at production facilities.

C2C (consumer – consumer) is a kind of e-commerce that refers to transactions between individuals. It usually involves transactions through online classifieds (“Avito”, etc.). One can also include other online marketplaces (“Meshok”, “eBay”, “Delcampe”, etc.).

B2G (business – government) denotes transactions between economic agents (legal entities) and state (municipal) authorities. In general, it includes a set of any paid services provided by economic agents to state or municipal authorities through electronic data interchange. An example of this would be the Portal for Government Procurement in the Russian Federation⁶.

According to the current law, B2G operations are carried out in the form of tenders or offers. The advantages of B2G are large-scale deals, clients with great solvency, and prestige of signed contracts. One must overcome significant barriers to entering this business and only very large companies succeed.⁷

Unlike traditional retail shops, there are no personal contacts in e-commerce shops. In an online store, no shop-assistant will recommend products based on one's interests, tastes, and preference.

⁵ O. A. Repushevskaya. Rol konkurentsii v razvitii predprinimatelstva (Fundamentalnye i prikladnye issledovaniya kooperativnogo sektora ekonomiki, 2019) y A. E. Suglobov & O. A. Repushevskaya, Otsenka ekonomicheskogo potentsiala sovremennoi potrebitelskoi kooperatsii. International scientific conference “Nauchnye issledovaniya stran ShOS: sinergiya i integratsiya”. 2019.

⁶ The glossary of the Eurasian Economic Commission. Available at: <http://www.eurasiancommission.org/ru/act/dmi/workgroup/Pages/glossary.aspx>

⁷ The Decree of the President of the Russian Federation N 203 “O Strategii razvitiya informatsionnogo obshchestva v Rossiiskoi Federatsii na 2017 - 2030 gody”. (May 9, 2017) y The Ministry of Economic Development of the Russian Federation: O tekushchei situatsii v ekonomike Rossiiskoi federatsii po itogam pervogo polugodiya 2019 goda. Available at: <http://economy.gov.ru>

To imitate this experience, e-commerce companies utilize personalized functions throughout the whole purchasing process. As online courses providers supersede the need offline learning, e-commerce supersedes the need for retail in shops.

By using personal online information such as search, browsing, and purchase history, brands tailor the items for sale online to best satisfy the clients' needs and interests. For example, log into one's Amazon account. There one may find recommended items based on their previous purchases, advertisements generated according to their search history and item descriptions addressing them directly. Expect more brands to follow suit as personalization technologies are easier integrated into e-commerce websites.

Moreover, personalized emails generate 6x higher transaction and conversion rates than cold emails, consumers spend 48% more than their personalization experience. In the time when privacy is of utmost importance, research also indicates that 57% of online customers share personal information with brands if they directly benefit from their purchases⁸.

Compared to traditional marketing instruments, the Internet possesses the following characteristics:

- The Internet makes it possible to obtain the most effective and thorough information on the object of advertisement;
- The Internet is a communicative environment with various means to influence its users; moreover, the user can assume an active or a passive role.
- The Internet offers advertisers the most efficient and cost-effective way of focused influence on the target audience and specific users.

In the past ten years, various new fields of marketing have significantly influenced e-commerce businesses. Amazon, Walmart, and Alibaba, some of the biggest online sellers in the world, are always at the forefront of implementing and using these trends.

In 2019, a robot carried infil through an online shop. After all, bots such as chatbots and artificial intelligence (AI) are designed to improve the overall shopping experience for buyers.

An AI assistant can perform various tasks that are normally assigned to people, such as inventory management or request processing. These digital assistants perform a variety of processes and free up one's time so that they can focus on other aspects of business.

⁸ A. A. Maksaev; A. V. Tkach & O. A. Repushevskaya, "Potrebitel'skaya kooperatsiya v sotsialno-ekonomicheskom razvitii infrastruktury sela", *Fundamentalnye i prikladnye issledovaniya kooperativnogo sektora ekonomiki*, num 4 (2019): 3–11 y A. V. Tkach & A.S. Zhukov, *Potrebitel'skaya kooperatsiya v ekonomike Rossii. Osnovnye napravleniya razvitiya kooperatsii: opyt, problemy, perspektivy*. Proceedings of the International scientific and practical conference within the framework of yearly Chayanov readings (Yaroslavl – Moscow: Izdatelstvo "Kantsler", 2017).

For example, a chatbot can meet a number of needs related to customer service, ranging from replying to questions about a product to discussing complaints. Moreover, AI and chatbots improve through conversations with clients to better assist users in their personal interaction with e-commerce.

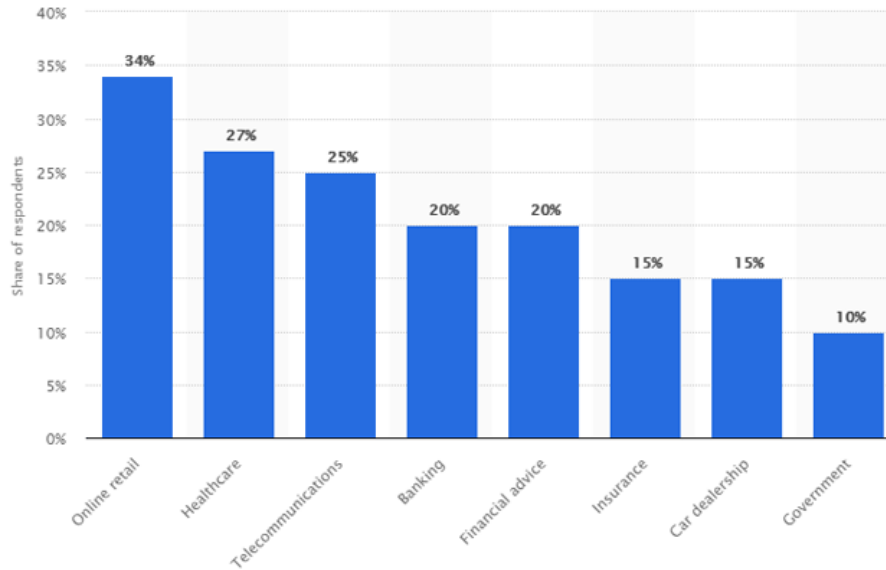


Figure 2
Chatbots meeting the needs related to customer service

B2B e-commerce is booming and by 2020 B2B e-commerce sales are expected to increase by USD 6.6 billion worldwide.

Discussion

The dominant trends in e-commerce development in 2019 are:

1.- Omnichannel is an opportunity to make online purchases through different channels, from social networks to messengers.

They are all closely connected and allow to obtain the client's full profile based on their interaction with the company.

Today a lot of customers choose a product on their smartphones and pay via their PC. The more channels are used, the higher the chance that the client will find the most convenient way to interact with a business.

2.- Cryptocurrency – payment by cryptocurrency, just a decade ago a lot of people were cautious about online payments. however, nowadays, one can hardly imagine Russian and global e-commerce markets without such payment systems as paypal, yandex money, and epayments.

The introduction of payments by cryptocurrency will allow businesses to attract more clients and the cryptocurrency market capitalization is increasing daily.

3.- Voice search and search by image. It is forecast that in a few years half of all search requests will be made by voice.

Currently, there is a trend to develop and adapt e-commerce websites with this function in mind.

Search by image will also continue to proliferate on the e-commerce market in 2019. Finding a product through an image from the internet or personal photos can save the user's time and help increase conversion.

Conclusion

To summarize, the e-commerce industry is changing dynamically every year. With the emergence of AI, it continues to evolve towards personalization, creating new experiences for consumers. According to the research agency Statista, the global revenue from retail e-commerce is expected to reach USD 4.88 billion by 2021.

Modern entrepreneurs actively implement the features of information technologies in their operations. Meanwhile, the level of such implementation often determines how successful the business is domestically and on the global market and, consequently, the entrepreneur's status. Obviously, the number of e-commerce businesses will grow and so will the competition.

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