



REVISTA INCLUSIONES

UNIVERSIDAD E INVESTIGACIÓN:
AL SERVICIO DEL ORBE

Revista de Humanidades y Ciencias Sociales

Volumen 7 . Número Especial

Octubre / Diciembre

2020

ISSN 0719-4706

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**ONLINE ARBITRATION MODEL FOR RUSSIA BASED ON INTERNATIONAL PRACTICE
OF DISPUTE RESOLUTION IN E-COMMERCE**

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Fecha de Recepción: 07 de junio de 2020 – **Fecha Revisión:** 16 de junio de 2020

Fecha de Aceptación: 28 de septiembre 2020 – **Fecha de Publicación:** 01 de octubre de 2020

Abstract

This study aimed to analyze the foreign practice of using different dispute resolution mechanisms in the field of electronic commerce in order to identify their disadvantages and advantages. The development of the commodity market and the services market in the digital era makes this study relevant and builds the need to develop a concept of online arbitration for Russia. Given the rapid growth of e-commerce, it is especially important to study consumer protection instruments, including with the use of digital technologies. This study applied an interdisciplinary approach and resorted to such methods of scientific cognition as historical, comparative, logical and legalistic, in the field of e-commerce. The study materials included acts of international law, national legislation of different countries, judicial practices of different countries, papers and publications by authors who study the regulation of e-commerce and analyze the Internet-based dispute resolution instruments. This article presents an analysis of international acts regulating consumer protection in e-commerce, identifies the main advantages of these instruments and their impact on the national legislation in different countries. The Russian legislation in terms of regulation of alternative dispute resolution procedures was also analyzed. The business practices of dispute settlement that were implemented on some digital platforms were reviewed. The study identified the best practices for implementing online dispute resolution in e-commerce. The article proposes a concept of online arbitration that can be implemented in e-commerce in the Russian Federation. The issues of compliance with the New York Convention have become more problematic in terms of the guarantee of equal opportunities to the disputing parties to participate in the case, and the proper notification of the parties about the arbitration and the appointment of an arbitrator.

Keywords

E-commerce – Dispute resolution – Online regulation – Platform – Mediation – Arbitrator

Para Citar este Artículo:

Shaydullina, Venera K. Online arbitration model for Russia based on international practice of dispute resolution in e-commerce. Revista Inclusiones Vol: 7 num Especial (2020): 198-214.

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Introduction

Ever since the beginning of e-commerce, it has only been expanding on the international scale. Hill¹ noted that Internet users had long understood all the benefits of e-commerce, and business owners were increasingly opening online shops to offer various goods. Consequently, the number of transactions made remotely also grew. According to data published by online magazine *Le Digital*, 53 million people in Japan, 121 million people in the United States of America and 200 million people in the People's Republic of China use online shopping. Financial services provider Morgan Stanley reported the annual volumes of e-commerce in different countries:

- 82.5 billion euros in the Federal Republic of Germany (about 3.1% of GDP);
- 220.0 billion euros in the United Kingdom (about 7.9% of GDP);
- 440.0 billion US dollars in the United States of America (about 2.6% of GDP);
- 680 billion US dollars in the People's Republic of China (about 4.5% of GDP).

In the Russian Federation, the volume of online commerce amounted to 1.29 billion rubles in 2019². In this regard, it is especially relevant to study consumer protection tools in e-commerce, including by use of digital technologies.

Jaberi³ observed that as countries⁴ implement the concept of economic transformation in favor of digitalization, specialized electronic platforms that create infrastructure for trade in goods and services begin to acquire significance. OECD⁵ pointed to the role that information intermediaries are now playing in commerce by providing an opportunity to resolve conflicts online and thus protect the rights of consumers and sellers. The large trading companies (such digital platforms as eBay, Amazon and Aliexpress) have already established their own commercial arbitrations online because it allows them to reduce costs and save time in the chain of trade as such an instrument often eliminates the need to initiate proceedings in the court.

Veeder⁶ indicated that the prerequisites for the development of an electronic system of alternative dispute settlement mechanisms occurred due to the digitalization of economy, the introduction of information and telecommunication technologies, the intensification of cross-border trade relations, the increase in the number of financial transactions in the field of e-commerce, the constant search for effective ways to resolve disputes in the context of mixing the traditional economy with the digital one.

For the Russian Federation, to find alternative ways of resolving conflicts in e-commerce is especially important in view of the implementation of the Digital Economy of the Russian Federation national program.

¹ R. Hill, "On-line Arbitration: Issues and Solutions. Arbitration International", The Official Journal of the London Court of International Arbitration, num 15(2) (2014): 199–207.

² E-Pepper. eCommerce 2019: Main Figures, 2019. Retrieved 2.02.2020 from: <https://e-pepper.ru/news/ecommerce-2019-osnovnye-tsifry.html>

³ M. Saleh, Jaberi, Online Arbitration: A Vehicle for Dispute Resolution in Electronic Commerce. 2010. Retrieved from: <https://ssrn.com/abstract=2128242> or <http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.2128242>

⁴ The Russian Federation among them.

⁵ OECD. The Economic and Social Role of Internet Intermediaries, April 2010. Retrieved 2.02.2020 from: <https://www.oecd.org/internet/ieconomy/44949023.pdf>

⁶ V. Veeder, Is There a Need to Revise the New York Convention. Emmanuel Gaillard (Ed). The Review of International Arbitration Awards, IAI Forum, 12–14 Sept 2008, Dijon.

It aims to create an effective legal regulation and establish a favorable legal regime that could bolster the emergence and development of new digital technologies in economic activity, since an integral element of the digital economy is a high-quality digital market of goods and services, the participants of which interact with each other by use of Internet technologies. Kronke⁷ believes that such a market should be based on the principles of competitiveness, legality, rapid information exchange and efficient resolution of disputes arising in the course of its operation. It is these qualities that should distinguish Russian e-commerce in the near future.

The purpose of this article is to study foreign practices of dispute resolution in the field of e-commerce and to identify disadvantages and advantages of the available mechanisms. Such an analysis can make it possible to formulate the concept of online commercial arbitration for the practice of the Russian Federation.

Methods

The possibilities of using alternative methods of dispute resolution in e-commerce were examined by Bordone⁸, Schultz, Kaufmann-Kohler, Langer and Bonnet (2001), Schultz⁹, Smit¹⁰, Chupakhin¹¹, Tretyakova and Petrusha¹², Timoshkina and Tretyakova¹³ and other researchers, who revealed some features of arbitration for dispute resolution and consumer protection in e-commerce. However, none of these works proposes a concept of online arbitration based on the best international experience that can be of use in countries where online arbitration is still underdeveloped.

This study applied an interdisciplinary approach and resorted to such methods of scientific cognition as historical, comparative, logical and legalistic. Altogether these methods helped analyze the regulatory legal acts that govern dispute resolution in e-commerce.

The study materials included acts of international law, national legislation of different countries, judicial practices of different countries, papers and publications by authors who study the regulation of e-commerce and analyze the Internet-based dispute resolution instruments.

In order to build an online arbitration concept based on the best international experience, this study involved the following actions:

⁷ H. Kronke, *Recognition and Enforcement of the Foreign Arbitral Awards: A Global commentary on the New York Convention* (Kluwer Law International, The Hague, 2010).

⁸ R. C. Bordone, *Electronic Online Dispute Resolution: A Systems Approach-Potential, Problems, and a Proposal* (Harvard Negotiation Law Review, 1998) Retrieved 2.02.2020 from: <https://cyber.harvard.edu/property00/jurisdiction/bordoneedit.html>

⁹ T. Schultz, *Information Technology and Arbitration: A Practitioner's Guide* (Kluwer Law International, The Hague, 2006).

¹⁰ H. Smit, "Annulment and Enforcement of International Arbitral Awards: A Practical Perspective", *American Review of International Arbitration*, num 18(3) (2007): 297–307.

¹¹ I. M. Chupakhin, *Arbitration Court Decision: Theoretical and Applied Problems* (Info-tropik Media, Moscow, 2015).

¹² A. S. Tretyakova & M. A. Petrusha, "Electronic Commerce as a Special Channel of Good Distribution". *Ekonomika i sotsium*, 4-2 (23) (2016): 359–361.

¹³ E. V. Timoshkina & E. S. Tretyakova, "Risks of Electronic Trade And Their Minimization", *Nauka Udmurtii*, num 3 (85) (2018): 111–113.

- 1) the term 'alternative dispute resolution' (ADR) was analyzed, and the principal features of the ADR mechanism were identified;
- 2) the legal analysis addressed UNCITRAL legislative as the main source of e-commerce regulation;
- 3) the European Union law in the studied field was reviewed, and the main advantages of regulation within the framework of this regional union were identified;
- 4) the practices of the United States of America, the people's Republic of China and the European Union countries was examined, and the main advantages of the implemented experience were revealed;
- 5) the business practices of implementing online arbitration by large online marketplaces were analyzed.

The identified advantages in the studied business practices laid the foundation of the online arbitration concept for the Russian Federation. To confirm the applicability of this study, a survey was conducted, and 1,500 Russian citizens completed the questionnaire. Also, the Russian regulation of ADR was analyzed.

Results

The notion of 'alternative dispute resolution' refers to procedures that are alternative to government regulation¹⁴. These procedures include:

- settlement of disputes by arbitration (in an arbitration court);
- settlement of disputes by the disputing parties independently (for example, using a complaint procedure or through negotiations);
- settlement of disputes by the disputing parties through a conciliator (an expert, a financial ombudsman, a mediator or other impartial third party).

A conciliator who facilitates a conciliation procedure, unlike an arbitrator, cannot make a ruling that is binding on the disputing parties. They only help build a dialogue between the disputants. The sought outcome of resolving a disputable situation is the elimination of disputants' conflict by reaching a mutually beneficial solution in the nature of a compromise.

In 2002, the UNCITRAL adopted the Model Law on International Commercial Conciliation. This piece of legislation was recommended by the United Nations General Assembly to countries of the world to ensure uniformity of legislation on dispute settlement¹⁵.

The Model Law was taken as the basis for the development of Russian Federal Law "On the Alternative Dispute Resolution with the Participation of an Intermediary (Mediation Procedure)" No. 193-FZ of 27 July 2010. Under this law, mediation procedures can only be used if there is a voluntary consent of the both disputing parties who express their willingness to come to a conciliation on mutually beneficial terms. The mediation procedure lasts until the requirements agreed by the parties are fully met, or until it is decided to take

¹⁴ T. Schultz; G. Kaufmann-Kohler; D. Langer & V. Bonnet, Online Dispute Resolution: The State of the Art and the Issues. E-Com Research Project of the University of Geneva, December 2001. Retrieved 2.02.2020 from: <https://ssrn.com/abstract=899079>

¹⁵ R. C. Bordone, Electronic Online Dispute Resolution: A Systems Approach-Potential, Problems, and a Proposal (Harvard Negotiation Law Review, 1998) Retrieved 2.02.2020 from: <https://cyber.harvard.edu/property00/jurisdiction/bordoneedit.html>

the dispute resolution to the judicial authorities. Confidentiality is one of the main conditions that the parties must observe to comply with the mediation procedure. Disclosure of information on the dispute is allowed only with the consent of the disputing parties. The mediation agreement must be drawn up in writing, with all the necessary data related to the subject of the dispute recorded there. The reconciled parties implement the mediation agreement in all its parts exclusively on a voluntary basis, which points to the voluntary use of mediation procedures to resolve disputes in the Russian Federation. The judiciary authorities may not impose this option on the parties in dispute.

It should be noted that in Russia a refusal from mediation does not entail adverse consequences, in contrast to similar procedures in some other countries where courts may in some cases oblige the disputing parties to resort to mediation. In the United Kingdom, the court can regard a refusal to mediate as unreasonable resistance to effective conflict resolution, and the judge may rule to recover the costs of legal proceedings from the party evading mediation, even if that party has won the case. Moreover, in the United Kingdom one can be fined for avoiding mediation in dispute resolution.

The development of information technology puts forward new requirements for legal activities and inevitable changes dispute resolution procedures¹⁶. At the same time, due to the conservatism of most legislative and judicial, online dispute resolution (ODR) still serves as an auxiliary instrument (IPRG 2017). Thus, in the Russian Federation, the legal framework for ODR is developing very slowly, which explains the rare use of digital technologies in resolving disputes in e-commerce. Nevertheless, the remotely conducted survey of 1,500 people suggests that Russian citizens give priority to ODR in international e-commerce (Table 1). This is due to the fact that often it is the only option for the customer to receive compensation and the only way for an online seller to win customer trust in their service.

Question	Always	Sometimes	Seldom	Never
Do you use retail platforms (marketplaces)?	54%	33%	11%	2%
Do you initiate disputes online?	10%	48%	36%	6%
Are you happy with the results of ODR on online platforms?	64%	23%	9%	4%
Have you applied to the court after ODR?	1%	6%	3%	91%
Is ODR fair?	50%	20%	15%	5%
Are the ODR rules on retail platforms clear to you?	80%	11%	6%	2%

Table 1
Results of the survey on ODR in e-commerce in Russia

¹⁶ R. Hill, "On-line Arbitration: Issues and Solutions. Arbitration International", The Official Journal of the London Court of International Arbitration, num 15(2) (2014): 199–207.

In 2016, the UNCITRAL adopted the Technical Notes on Online Dispute Resolution, which introduced the concept of ODR¹⁷. The document notes that ODR assists the parties in resolving the dispute in the safest, most flexible, quick and simple way, without direct interaction between them. Particular attention is drawn to the fact that the ODR mechanism opens up the possibility of settling disputes between sellers and buyers entering into cross-border transactions.

In 2010, the UNCITRAL created Working Group III to draft rules for the resolution of high volume and low cost disputes arising in e-commerce in the B2C (business-to-consumer) and B2B (business-to-business) sectors. While the European Union documents establish minimum legal standards for all types of ADR methods and create ODR platforms, UNCITRAL develops a special set of procedural rules for the practical use of such platforms¹⁸. The rules are advisory in nature and provide general guidelines for establishing communication between ODR platforms, ODR administrators, parties to the ODR procedure and third parties. The communication must be suitable for efficient, flexible, prompt and simple dispute resolution of low value cross-border transactions made online by electronic means.

The main benefits of the document in question are as follows:

Firstly, the document proclaims the ODR principles, which include the fundamental principles of offline dispute resolution systems, such as the principle of accountability; the principle of transparency; the principle of due process of law; the principle of justice; the principle of impartiality, neutrality and independence of persons participating in the settlement of the dispute).

Secondly, ODR is carried out with the active assistance of a person not otherwise involved. The human factor acts as an element necessary to resolve the dispute.

Thirdly, the document defines the specifics of ODR procedures, namely, the presence of a third party (mediator) and the availability of a technological base (ODR administrator). In addition, the document formulates recommendations on the dispute resolution clause, according to which data about the ODR platform and the ODR administrator should be disclosed.

Fourthly, the document recommends how to determine the moment of receipt of the message (taking into account the moment the administrator notifies the party about the message on the ODR platform). The ODR principles of online dispute resolution are captured in the regulations of the institutions that offer platforms for ODR.

Fifthly, it gives the definition of an ODR platform: it is a system that provides preparation, receipt, sending, processing and storage of messages of participants in the ODR.

¹⁷ T. Schultz; G. Kaufmann-Kohler; D. Langer & V. Bonnet, Online Dispute Resolution: The State of the Art and the Issues. E-Com Research Project of the University of Geneva, December 2001. Retrieved 2.02.2020 from: <https://ssrn.com/abstract=899079>

¹⁸ T. Schultz, Information Technology and Arbitration: A Practitioner's Guide (Kluwer Law International, The Hague, 2006)

Here, it is worth mentioning two documents adopted to simplify the proceedings involving consumers within the European Union:

1) Directive 2013/11/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 21 May 2013 on alternative dispute resolution for consumer disputes and amending Regulation (EC) No. 2006/2004 and Directive 2009/22/EC (Directive on consumer ADR).

2) Regulation (EU) No. 524/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 21 May 2013 on online dispute resolution for consumer disputes and amending Regulation (EC) No. 2006/2004 and Directive 2009/22/EC (Regulation on consumer ODR).

As indicated in its Article 1, the purpose of the Regulation on consumer ODR is to contribute to the proper functioning of the internal market through the achievement of a high level of consumer protection by providing a European ODR platform¹⁹. The Regulation on consumer ODR contains provisions on assistance to the countries of the European Union in creating an effective system of alternative online dispute resolution.

Article 5 of the Regulation on consumer ODR contains the conditions for creating an ODR platform with the participation of online consumers. The creation and the operation of such online platform is within the purview of the European Commission. The online platform is a single point of entry for e-commerce participants that should be accessible to all of them on a free basis.

The ODR platform contacts the parties in the language of their choice (Article 9 (3)). According to Clause 19 of the Preamble and Article 4 (4) (e), the ODR platform should have a function of electronic translation of data transmitted through it²⁰. These measures are aimed at minimizing language barrier associated with the cross-border legal relations. In addition, this eliminates the problem of finding alternative ways of resolving disputes and initiating the procedure abroad.

The platform for alternative online dispute resolution with consumer participation supports a number of critical e-commerce features (Figure 1).

¹⁹ H. Smit, "Annulment and Enforcement of International Arbitral Awards: A Practical Perspective", *American Review of International Arbitration*, num 18(3) (2007): 297–307.

²⁰ N. V. Bystrova; A. V. Khizhnaya; A. A. Mazunova & I. N. Paradeyeva, "Image of Organization as a Factor in Increasing Its Competitiveness", *Mezhdunarodny zhurnal prikladnykh i fundamentalnykh issledovaniy*, num 8 (2) (2017): 321–324.

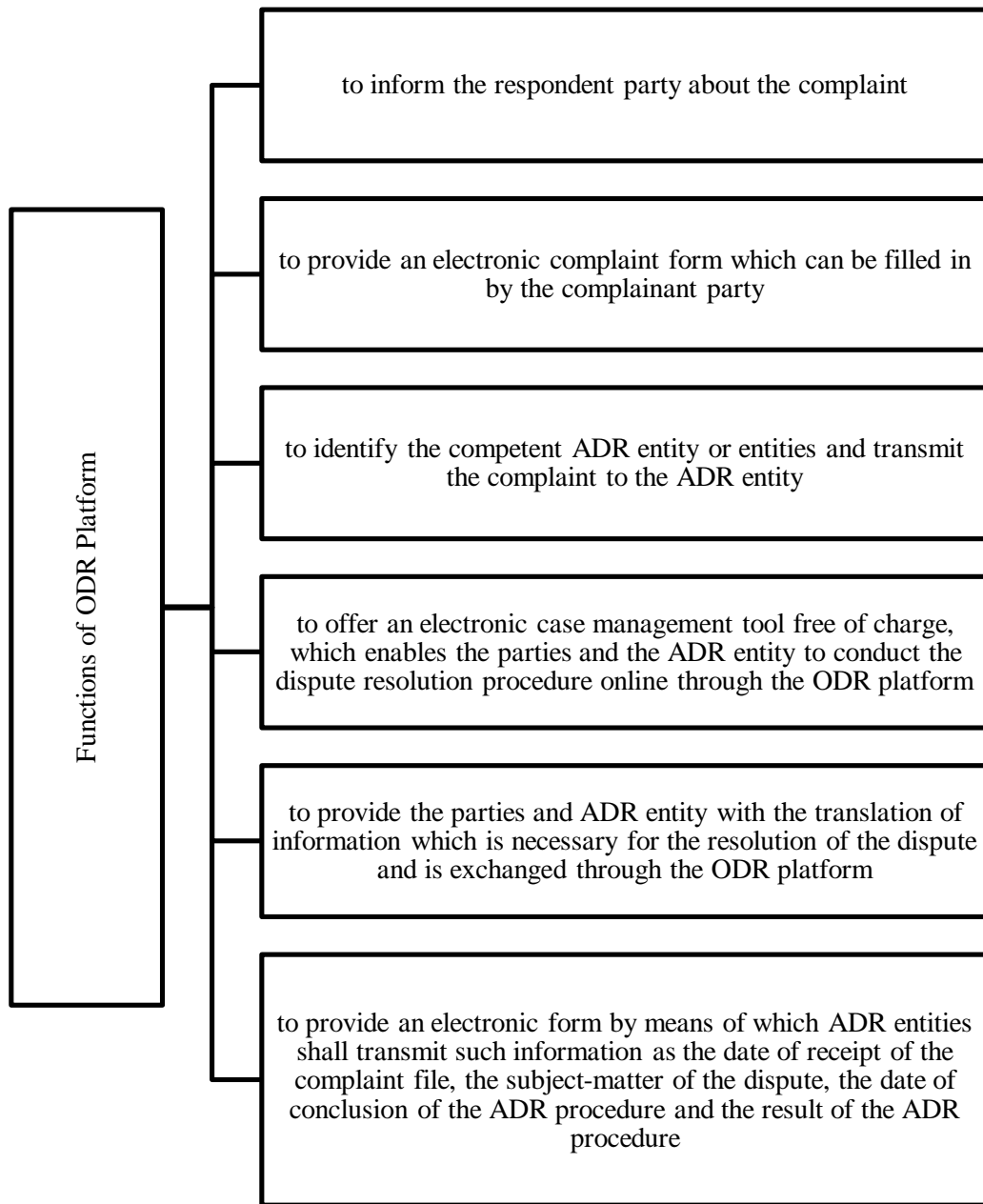


Fig. 1
Functions of ODR Platform

The functions of the ODR platform offer prompt, effective, simple and cost-effective out-of-court settlement of disputes arising in the process of online transactions as per Clause 8 of the Preamble of the Regulations on consumer ODR (Wahab 2012). The ODR entities offered by the online platform are classified by subject matter and country criteria into several types: water and energy; education; consumer goods; healthcare; customer service; financial services; transport services; electronic communication services; post services; and leisure services²¹.

²¹ V. Veeder, Is There a Need to Revise the New York Convention. Emmanuel Gaillard (Ed). The Review of International Arbitration Awards, IAI Forum, 12–14 Sept 2008, Dijon.

In the United Kingdom, e-commerce disputes are resolved by the following organizations and specialized entities: RetailADR; London Arbitration Center Limited; ADR Group; Kent County Council ADR Scheme; Dispute Resolution Ombudsman Limited; Center for Effective Dispute Resolution²². In the United States of America, e-commerce disputes are resolved by the International Center for Dispute Resolution. The organization was created by the American Arbitration Association. In Austria, this mission is given to the Internet Ombudsman, but only in relation to contracts concluded on the web, while disputes arising from the activities of consumer shops are resolved by Schlichtung für Verbrauchergeschäfte (Conciliation for Consumer Transaction). In Belgium, three institutions take care of resolving e-commerce disputes:

- Le Service de Médiation pour le Consommateur (the Consumer Mediation Service),
- L'Ombudsman du Commerce (the Ombudsman for Commerce), and
- La Commission Conciliation AUTOMOTO (the Auto Conciliation Commission).

Kuluttajariitalautakunta (the Consumer Disputes Board) is responsible for resolving online disputes in Finland; Tarbijavaidluste Komisjon (the Consumer Appeal Board), in Estonia; and Česká obchodní inspekce (the Czech Trade Inspection Authority), in the Czech Republic²³. There are 22 such institutions in France: among them, fourteen mediation centers (for example, Médiation Cmf, l'Association de la Médiation, l'Association des médiateurs européens) and eight ombudsmen (for example, the Federation for E-Commerce and Distance Selling, the FEVAD Ombudsman for E-Commerce, the National Ombudsman Association, the Ombudsman for Cooperatives and Associated Trade)²⁴.

Similar institutions operate in other countries:

- in the Federal Republic of Germany, Außergerichtliche Streitbelegungsstelle für Verbraucher und Unternehmer e. V. (the Extrajudicial Dispute Resolution Body for Consumers and Companies); Anwaltliche Verbraucherschlichtungsstelle NRW e. V. (the Lawyers' Consumer Conciliation Board NRW); Allgemeine Verbraucherschlichtungsstelle des Zentrums für Schlichtung e. V. (the General Consumer Conciliation Body of the Center for Conciliation)²⁵;
- in Italy, Organismo di Mediazione e conciliazione della Camera Di Commercio, Industria, Artigianato e Agricoltura di Vibo Valentia (the Mediation and Conciliation Body of the Vibo Valentia Chamber of Commerce, Industry, Craft and Agriculture); Camera Arbitrale di Milano (the Milan Chamber of Arbitration); Servizio di conciliazione della camera di commercio di Bolzano (the Conciliation service of the chamber of commerce of Bolzano)²⁶;

²² G. Kaufmann-Kohler, "Online Dispute Resolution and its Significance for International Commercial Arbitration", *Global Reflections on International Law, Commerce and Dispute Resolution Liber Amicorum in Honor of Robert Briner* (Nov 2005): 437–456.

²³ S. V. Vershinina, "Problems of Information Security in Modern Society: Culturological Approach", *Innovatsii i investitsii*, num 5 (2016): 12–16.

²⁴ M. Jaber Saleh, *Online Arbitration: A Vehicle for Dispute Resolution in Electronic Commerce*. 2010. Retrieved from: <https://ssrn.com/abstract=2128242> or <http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.2128242>

²⁵ A. Ihab, "The use of Online Arbitration in the Resolution of International Commercial Disputes", *Vindobona Journal of International Commercial Law and Arbitration*, num 18(2) (2014): 129–148.

²⁶ A. Jasna, "International Commercial Arbitration on the Internet - Has the Future Come Too Early?", *Journal of International Arbitration*, num 3 (1997): 209–221.

– in the People’s Republic of China, the China International Economic and Trade Arbitration Commission – CIETAS²⁷, etc.

In accordance with the said Regulation, in 2015 the United Kingdom adopted the statutory instrument The Alternative Dispute Resolution for Consumer Disputes Regulations. The document provides that businesses that sell their goods on the Internet must inform buyers about the possibility of resolving disputes online through ODR starting from 2016. Sellers must post a link to the ODR Platform on their websites. The requirements also apply to offers sent to potential buyers by e-mail. A failure to comply with these regulations may become the reason for fine or imprisonment for terms of up to two years, while the amount of the fine is unlimited.

It is worth noting that neither the European Union Regulation nor the Rules for Alternative Resolution of Consumer Disputes establish an obligation for sellers to use the ADR mechanism or the ODR platform to resolve consumer disputes.

The persons of law have long used ODR not only in Europe but also in other countries. Many scholars consider ODR as an online analogue of the classical methods of dispute settlement, such as mediation, negotiation process, arbitration or a combination of these. Still, ODR is rather different from arbitration and traditional mediation procedures. The central distinguishing feature is the use of electronic platforms (technological means of online litigation) that include databases (domain name, website, systems) and related software. ODR implies that:

- the parties to the conflict have the possibility to exercise control over the proceedings;
- an intermediary (a third party that acts as the administrator of the electronic platform) is involved in the process of mediation and provides technical assistance in the proceedings; and
- a significant part of dispute resolution procedure is executed in the online mode (including claim registration, intermediary appointment, online discussions, oral hearings).

In addition to a third party, a fourth party may also participate in the settlement of a dispute. It is artificial intelligence, a special software that provides the parties to the dispute with opportunities similar to those provided to the third party. Along with this, the fourth party can, if necessary, take the place of a neutral mediator, assisting in the search for agreement options in the dispute settlement process²⁸.

Currently, the state and arbitration courts of some industrially developed countries (Indonesia, Japan, South Korea, the People’s Republic of China, the European Union, Canada, the United States of America, etc.) demonstrate the tendency to optimize the dispute resolution procedure, in particular through the implementation by the parties of legitimate innovative Internet technologies, including ODR²⁹.

²⁷ H. Kronke, Recognition and Enforcement of the Foreign Arbitral Awards: A Global commentary on the New York Convention (Kluwer Law International, The Hague, 2010)

²⁸ A. Ihab, “Enforcement of Cross-Border Online Arbitral Awards and Online Arbitration Agreements in National Courts”, Slovenska arbitrazna praksa, num 5 (2) (June 2016): 1841.

²⁹ R. Hill, “On-line Arbitration: Issues and Solutions. Arbitration International”, The Official Journal of the London Court of International Arbitration, num 15(2) (2014): 199–207.

ODR has tremendous potential for resolving conflicts and disputes in the field of e-commerce. In the United States of America, ODR is widely used in e-commerce by Amazon (over 244 million users) and eBay (about 157 million users). Similar platforms have been created by aggregators Alibaba Group and Own. eBay alone hosts over 60 million disputes between buyers and sellers every year with the use of their ODR system. About 90% of such disputes are resolved using special software without human intervention. About half of the disputes are resolved through negotiations between buyers and sellers. In nearly all cases, the decisions reached by the parties as a result of negotiations are not contested in the courts³⁰.

This success in dispute settlement on eBay’s platform can be attributed to the improvement of mediation techniques pertaining to the use of innovative software that handles a large number of disputes at the same time, and the conciliation and reframing procedures that allow the parties to change the perception of the dispute and expand the variability of its settlement. Figure 2 shows that steps of the ODR procedure on eBay’s platform.

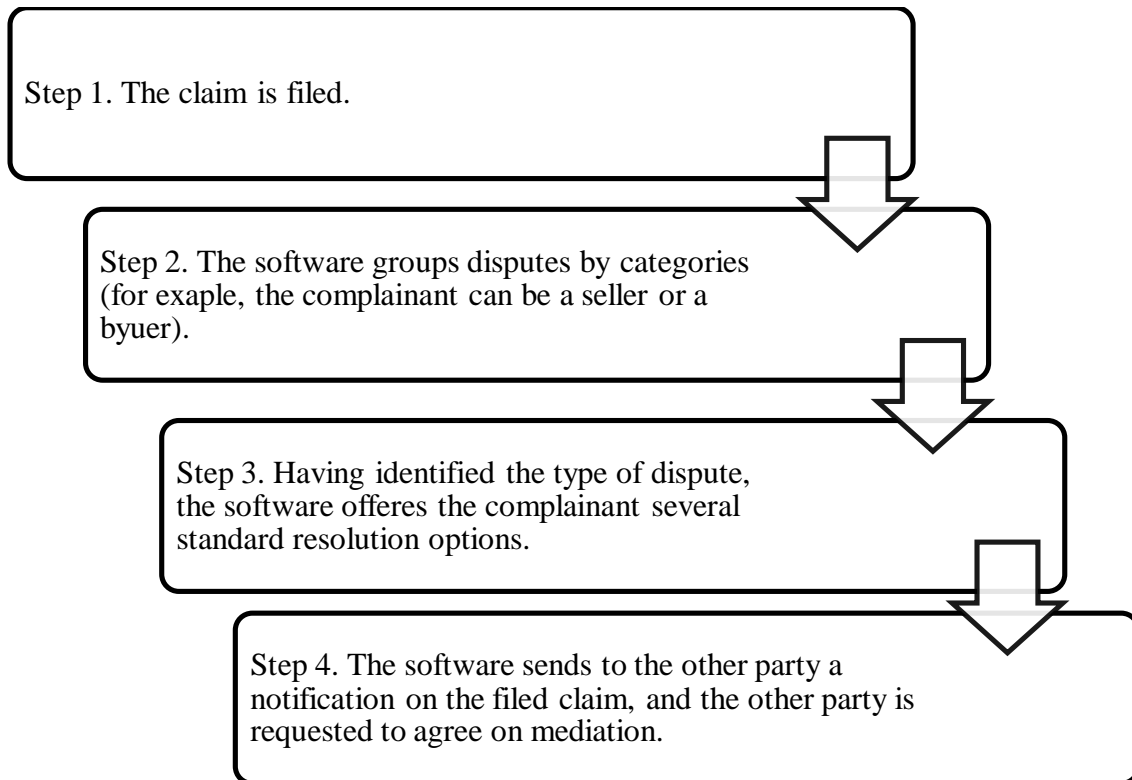


Fig. 2
Online dispute resolution on eBay’s electronic platform

If the parties cannot agree on a standard option of dispute resolution, the software provides an electronic meeting room. For this purpose, online marketplaces are used. An online marketplace is an electronic platform where sellers post information about their products. Having chosen the required product, a buyer concludes an electronic purchase

³⁰ O. N. Zuyeva & L. A. Donskova, “Ensuring Quality and Safety of Goods in the Context of Modern Logistics Integration”, *Upravlenets*, num 3(55) (2015): 68–71.

and sale agreement with the seller and makes a prepayment for the goods³¹. With this system, negotiations are conducted in a polite, constructive manner. Thus result is ensured by setting a deadline for making a decision and encouraging proposals of agreements options.

The software used by eBay's ODR platform can analyze similar causes of problems and decisions made³². Based on this analysis, ready-made options for resolving disputes are formulated and offered to the parties to the dispute to choose from.

If the dispute between the seller and the buyer cannot be resolved through eBay's ODR platform, the dispute is forwarded to the Resolution Services Team³³. Having reviewed the complaint and the attached documents, the Team makes a decision on partial or full satisfaction of the claim or refusal to satisfy it.

In the United States of America, one of the most famous online platforms used to resolve disputes arising in e-commerce is CyberSettle³⁴. Its main function is to automate the negotiation process without interference from the mediator (a third party). CyberSettle's patented web-based negotiation technology provides confidential and secure settlement of monetary disputes between two or more parties³⁵.

The procedure for this technology includes the following steps:

- 1) The parties submit their confidential proposals and requirements online;
- 2) CyberSettle compares the parties' positions to determine if they are within the range of mutually acceptable resolution. If not, then the parties may consider another proposal. Upon reaching an agreement, the parties submit proposals for payment.

The parties cannot see the requirements or proposals of the other party until the moment they reach an agreement, and the negotiations are, in fact, blind-bidding³⁶. This platform also runs industry-specific applications for financial institutions, insurance companies, service firms and other types of business.

A similar digital platform in the United Kingdom is Nominet. It provides an online mediation procedure for trademark owners and domain name owners³⁷. The Dispute Resolution Service takes the dispute through several stages of resolution (Figure 3).

³¹ I. M. Chupakhin, *Arbitration Court Decision: Theoretical and Applied Problems* (Info-tropik Media, Moscow, 2015).

³² A. S. Tretyakova & M. A. Petrusha, "Electronic Commerce as a Special Channel of Good Distribution", *Ekonomika i sotsium*, 4-2 (23) (2016): 359–361

³³ I. M. Chupakhin, *Arbitration Court Decision: Theoretical and Applied Problems* (Info-tropik Media, Moscow, 2015)

³⁴ S. Qingbiao, "Features of the Use of Big Data in E-Commerce", *Mezhdunarodnaya trgovlya i trgovaya politika*, num 4 (12) (2017): 114–119.

³⁵ E. V. Timoshkina & E. S. Tretyakova, "Risks of Electronic Trade And Their Minimization", *Nauka Udmurtii*, num 3 (85) (2018): 111–113.

³⁶ S. A. Kurochkin, "The Latest Trends in the Foreign Doctrine of International Commercial Arbitration: A Brief Overview", *Vestnik grazhdanskogo protsesssa*, num 6 (2015): 42–68.

³⁷ A. A. Panov, "Online Arbitration: Problems, Solutions, Prospects". A. V. Asoskova, A. I. Muranova, R. M. Khodykina (Eds.), *New horizons of international arbitration*, num 2 (2014): 111–153.

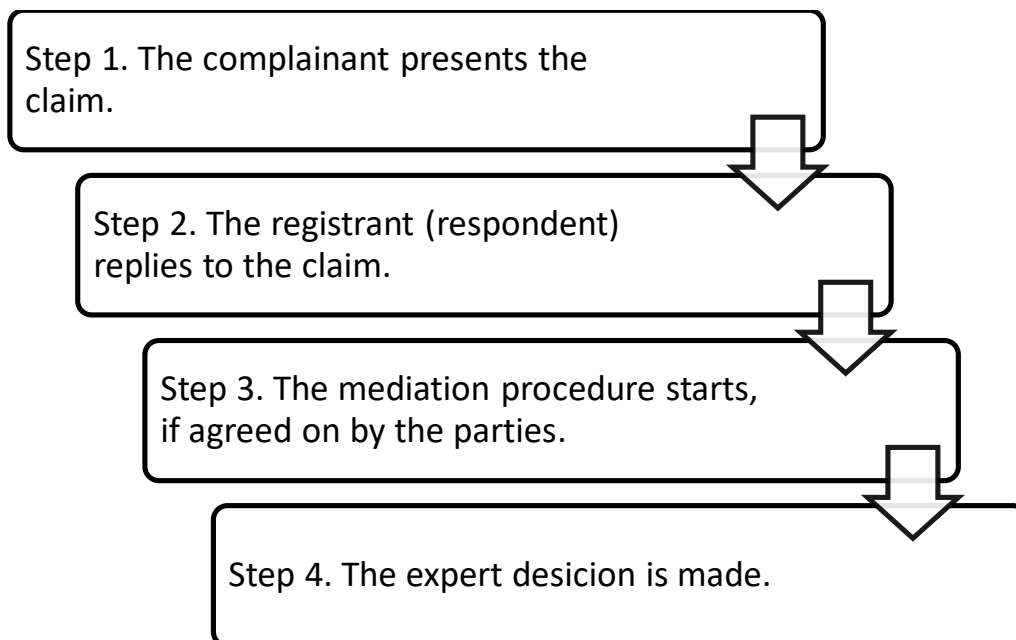


Fig. 3

Dispute resolution with Nominet's Dispute Resolution Service

If the respondent does not give a response within the stipulated timeframe and the case is not resolved through mediation, the complainant can pay the fee of 200 GDP plus VAT to an independent arbitrator (expert) and receive their decision on the future of the disputed domain name³⁸. In other cases, if the parties have not reached an agreement during the mediation procedure, the expert decision will cost 750 GDP plus VAT³⁹. The independent arbitrator will clarify the nature of the complaint made by the complainant to the respondent, or provide the remedies requested by the complainant, or reject the complaint.

What may follow next is the appeal. The disputants resort to the appeal in exceptional cases, for example, if the expert decision is lost or grounds for reconsideration of the complaint emerge.

Finally, the complaint is closed. If the arbitrator or expert makes a decision to suspend, cancel or transfer a domain name, the system independently makes the appropriate changes to the domain name registration record. Then the rendered decision is subject to official publication on Nominet. If there is a mediation agreement, the involved intermediary (mediator) assists the parties in fulfilling the terms of their agreement.

Modria, an American digital platform, offers a convenient solution designed to save money and time for its users (for cases ranging from simple debt to complex juvenile custody issues). It's worth to remark that Modria is currently the world's foremost ODR instrument. PayPal and eBay took its functionality as an example when creating their own ODR systems. For disputes with a large amount of claim and complex circumstances (patent disputes, child custody disputes, family disputes), Modria developed special platforms while for many minor

³⁸ M. L. Kaluzhsky, *Electronic Commerce: Marketing Networks and Market Infrastructure* (Moscow: Ekonomika, 2014).

³⁹ M. N. Idrisov, "Online Retail Market". Scientific Community of the 21st Century Students. *Economic Sciences: Proceedings of 31st Scientific Conference*, Novosibirsk, num 4(31) (2015): 7–12.

disputes, there is a step-by-step algorithm. This system is represented by a multi-stage process, which includes diagnostics of the dispute, determination of the subject of the dispute and the positions of the parties, the diagnostics of negotiations and the stage of summarizing disputed issues, the consideration of the variability of the parties' proposals to resolve the dispute, the mediation, and the online arbitration.

Discussion

Based on the analysis of the identified best practices and international experience in ODR, it is possible to build a concept of online arbitration for the purposes of e-commerce that can be implemented in the Russian Federation.

Let us describe the resulting model. The online arbitration model preserves such ADR benefits as protection of disputants' data, confidentiality, impartiality, independence, proper qualifications of intermediaries assisting the parties in ODR.

Any online arbitration operates in accordance with the rules of arbitration. These rules are posted on the official online arbitration website. The rules provide guidance on the types of disputes administered by online arbitration; the applicable law; the language used in the proceedings; the place of the proceedings; the procedure for conducting online arbitration; the procedure for the distribution of arbitration costs; the arbitration fees, etc.

The main specific features of online arbitration are as follows:

The documents submitted by the parties to the dispute are electronically sent to the online arbitration institution via a technological platform. In special cases, there is the possibility of sending correspondence by ordinary mail.

The platform administrator registers the accounts, appoints an impartial third party, schedules online discussions and oral hearings, provides the participants in the proceedings with any information coming from the use of the technological platform, informs the parties about the beginning and the completion of various stages of the online proceedings.

The institutions that provide online arbitration services select and train appropriate impartial intermediaries, and post their names on the websites of these institutions.

The party initiating the online arbitration must submit an electronic claim by posting the relevant electronic documents on the online arbitration platform after the registration procedure has been completed. After placing a claim on the online arbitration platform, the platform administrator sends data about it to the email addresses specified in the arbitration agreement. Having received the claim documents, the institution providing online arbitration services invites the parties to pass the negotiation procedure or the online mediation procedure.

If the claim is filed correctly in accordance with all the requirements, the platform administrator issues an order to initiate an online proceeding. The order must contain information about the arbitrator appointed by the administrator. The administrator notifies the parties to the dispute about this fact by sending notifications to e-mail addresses specified in the arbitration agreement.

The parties receive a declaration of independence and impartiality completed by the arbitrator. The platform administrator may send to the disputing parties an additional order to initiate arbitration by registered mail with acknowledgment of receipt.

The complainant and the respondent submit their responses to the claim by posting electronic documents on the online arbitration platform.

The arbitration procedure is conducted solely by the arbitrator who is appointed by the platform administrator. The arbitration procedure requires only the documents submitted by the parties. Usually, there are no oral hearings. However, the arbitrator may hold a meeting with the disputing parties using videoconferencing if necessary. Hearings are held with the parties to the online arbitration in special cases only.

The proofing in online arbitration is carried out in accordance with general rules based on the adversarial principle. If the party duly notified of the online proceeding fails to participate in the proceedings, the arbitrator may continue the proceedings on the basis of the submitted documents and materials. The same rule applies when the party to the dispute, which the arbitrator requested documents and other evidence from, fails to submit them within the prescribed time limit without a valid reason. In this case, the arbitrator makes the arbitral award on the basis of the available evidence and documents.

The arbitrator issues a reasoned award based on the results of the online proceedings. This decision is signed and approved by an electronic signature. Next, the platform administrator then sends the arbitrator's award in electronic copy to the parties to the dispute. The decision is delivered either by e-mail or by posting on the online arbitration platform.

Despite the clear advantages of online arbitration, as opposed to its classic offline counterpart, the disputing parties most often choose the mediation procedure since it is a faster way of resolving a dispute. There are several reasons for this: the need for careful preparation by the parties of claims and responses to claims with the supporting evidence; the need to involve lawyers and bear additional financial expenses; the length of the online arbitration procedure versus the mediation procedure.

Conclusion

In conclusion, let us note that recently the issues of compliance with the New York Convention have acquired more relevance. The arising questions usually relate to the procedure of holding proceedings in terms of non-compliance with the guarantee of equal opportunities for the parties to participate in the case, and the proper notification of the parties about the arbitration and the appointment of an arbitrator. The statutorization of the enforcement of online arbitral awards remains unresolved either. Thus, the conducted study formulated the resulting concept of implementing online arbitration, based on the best foreign practices, in the Russian Federation.

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