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E-marketing in perspective: a three country comparison of business use of the Internet

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Abstract

Compares business use of the Internet (Net) and World Wide Web (Web) across Australia, New Zealand and the UK. The reported inter-country comparison involves studies conducted by the authors in a similar timeframe and using similar methodologies. Finds both similarities and differences across the three countries in how business uses the Web with UK firms more likely to be seeking strategic advantage from use of the Internet. In all countries, business use of the Web involves marketing communication; however, use of the Internet as a marketing channel for transactions is much lower. UK firms are more likely to use the Internet in relationship management than are Australasian firms. Concludes that there is less sophisticated business use of the Internet by Australasian companies relative to UK companies. Further concludes that there is a need for further research to resolve the conundrum facing marketing organisations in all three countries.

Introduction

The study of the diffusion of Web usage in commerce is the subject of both academic and practitioner interest in many parts of the world. This is largely because of the differences in household adoption levels of Internet connectivity and online transaction levels between countries, and the impact this is deemed to have on the economies of each country and the world generally. North America is the clear leader in this respect, accounting for 151 million people or over 40 per cent of all Internet users – with over one-third of these in the USA, and over 40 million US citizens buying online (Webstatistics.com, 2001). Japan is in a far removed second place, accounting for 27 million people or 7 per cent of Internet users (Webstatistics.com, 2001). Japan, it seems, has been less than enthusiastic about Web-based commerce – in part due to net access costs, partly due to a competing physical world express delivery system Takkuhaiban, a preoccupation with mobile telephone technology (DoCoMo iMode), and also because of a reluctance by Japanese consumers to use anything other than cash.

Not surprisingly, most studies that focus on business use of the Internet are conducted solely from the US perspective. A few studies have been conducted recently in Australia (Poon and Swatman, 1999) and the UK (Ng et al., 1998) that have contributed to our understanding of business use of the Internet in individual countries; however, it is not possible to draw any conclusions from these studies as to how business use of the Internet differs between countries. The Poon and Swatman (1999) Australian study mentioned focuses on small business to the exclusion of medium and large business, whereas the Ng et al. (1998) study
uses a broader sample base and more comprehensively describes business use of the Internet in the UK. The UK study does not, however, specifically examine use of the Internet from a strategic marketing viewpoint. There remains a need for systematic inter-country comparisons of business use of the Internet, particularly from the viewpoint of using Internet technologies as an integral part of competitive marketing strategy.

The purpose of this paper is to provide such a comparison using comparable sample bases, questions, time frame and similarities in the marketing environment. This comparison is essential, because as Table I illustrates, there are systemic differences between the countries in terms of household ownership of computers, Internet usage and online purchasing and it is necessary to know if these differences reflect differences in strategic Internet use by companies in these countries, whether cause or effect. There may be reasons unique to Australia that are the cause of differences between the proportion of the population prepared to buy from business via the Internet. Factors such as “distance from major markets, the early stages of e-commerce adoption, and much higher levels of consumer concern about Internet security” (Ernst & Young, 2000, p. 2) are put forward as an explanation for the fact that, compared with North America, Australia had, and continues to have, lower household PC penetration rates, a lower proportion of households that are online, and a lower proportion that has shopped online. There is also a possible technological reason for this difference in that only 1.5 per cent of Australian households have broadband access, compared with 11 per cent of households in the USA and 57 per cent of Korean households (Paul Budde Communication, 2001).

Table I shows that the proportion of households with online access and shopping online in Australia was lower than in the UK at the time of the studies used in this comparison. We suggest that inter-country differences present a conundrum for marketing organisations using what is ostensibly a global medium to communicate with Internet users in various countries who may well click for information search using two fingers, but who in the main still shop on two legs. Thus, an important issue this paper addresses is whether or not lower Australasian consumer usage of the Internet is a result of less sophisticated business usage of the Web relative to the UK, or for some other reason.

**Online marketing strategy**

In the present era, marketing firms may be thought of as members of marketing logistics networks where there are flows of information, goods, services and experiences, title (in the case of physical goods), as well as payment and credit. Network members have variously become enamoured with, then disenchanted with, and we suggest will soon once again favour, digital methods of increasing revenue and/or increasing productivity. The most recent, most public, and far-reaching of these digital technologies is the Net, and more particularly its present graphical face, the Web. In the eight years business and government have been using the Internet, they have struggled to accommodate this new interactive medium in their integrated marketing communications (Hofacker and Murphy, 1998; Dholakia and Rego, 1998), or broadly use the medium as a direct response tool (Adam, 2001), and more particularly as a relationship management aide (Adam et al., 2001; Kenny and Marshall, 2000).

Newer online business models, particularly “pure dot.coms” in the parlance of the information age, have generated a great deal of news media attention (Argy and Bollen, 1999; Rappa, 2001), consulting firm input (Andersen Consulting, 1998; KPMG, 1999; Ernst &
Young, 2000), government endorsement (Henry et al., 1997; NOIE, 2000), academic attention on marketing communication (Hoffman and Novak, 1996; Hofacker and Murphy, 1998), business processes such as exchanges (Klein and Quelch, 1997), alliance co-ordination (Steinfeld et al., 1995), as well as trust and commitment (Ang and Lee, 2000), in online relationship management (Adam et al., 2001).

Specific benefits are put forward for business use of the Web. These may be grouped as productivity based and revenue-growth based (Hanson, 2000) and include:

- global presence;
- establishing and maintaining a competitive edge;
- shortening or eradicating components of supply chains (disintermediation);
- cost savings; and
- a research advantage (Ng et al., 1998).

Subsequent surveys have, however, revealed that the professed benefits to business from Internet use are mostly illusory outside the information management industry (Hartcher, 2000), particularly for the small business sector, apart from reported gains made in marketing communication (Poon and Swatman, 1999). KPMG Australia (1999, p. 5) found that:

Five of the top six business functions performed electronically via the Internet relate to communication; namely, company information (50 per cent), customer communication (49 per cent), supplier communication (45 per cent), marketing (42 per cent), customer service (34 per cent) and public relations/advertising (31 per cent);

and:

Very few are using the channel for transactional services such as order-taking, procurement, product delivery and payment.

Andersen Consulting (1998) found similar results in their nine country review of e-commerce involving respondent company CEOs, policy-makers, IT users and specialists. This study found a “wait and see attitude” held by business, and that Australia is:

At the point of takeoff, ready to leverage our domestic markets’ propensity to rapidly take up new value-adding ideas to create the critical mass necessary to make and take global markets (Andersen Consulting, 1998, p. 43).

In contrast to this finding, Poon and Swatman (1999) found that small firms were disillusioned over the marketing effectiveness of the Internet in that sales were lower than targeted, and that they failed to gain competitive advantage. This point reinforces Porter’s (2001) assertions concerning the use of technology to gain sustainable competitive advantage. Porter debunks such myths as the supposed profitability of first-movers onto the Web, as well as the misguided notion that the Web, or any technology, for that matter, can provide sustainable competitive advantage – particularly when the Web actually provides a lower cost of entry to competitors than most information technologies. Porter’s main point is that online firms have failed to adequately set objectives and have not used sound strategy to achieve these objectives, thus confirming Rayport’s (1999) view that online business (eBusiness) must be judged on the same financial criteria as any other business. These views further confirm the need for inter-country studies of the strategic use of the Internet.
Method

The data for this paper have been pooled from two studies:

1. the 1999/2000 Australasian WebQUAL audit (Adam and Deans, 2000); and
2. a 1999/2000 study in the UK (Palihawadana and Nair, 2000).

Australia and New Zealand WebQUAL audit

The WebQUAL audit study is a multi-stage, longitudinal, probabilistic study of business and
government use of the Web carried out in Australia and New Zealand. There were three
phases to the 1990/2000 study:

1. An online e-mail and Web form survey <144.132.242.242/webqual/webqual.htm> of a
random sample of Australian and New Zealand organisations with registered domain
names.
2. Content analysis of respondent Websites
   <144.132.242.242/webqual/WebQualConceptualModel.htm>
3. Personal interviews with selected respondents.

The first stage of the study involved an e-mail invitation to a sampling frame of 2,976
Websites drawn from the early 1999 population of 81,563 Australian and 17,888 New
Zealand domain names (com/co; asn; edu; org; and gov). This followed a pre-test of the e-
mail and Web form interface as well as the SQL database technologies used. The publicly
available lists of domain names in both Australia and New Zealand were used to
systematically draw samples in each country, using a skip interval of 31. Before sending the
e-mail invitation to participate, we visited each Website to obtain an e-mail address. Potential
respondents were sent an e-mail inviting them to participate in the survey and supplying an
access code. The proprietary software used was able to detect respondents who had entered
the survey pages but who had not completed the survey. These respondents were re-contacted
to optimise the response rate.

The study achieved a response rate of over 17 per cent, with an overall useable response of
399 (13.4 per cent). The analysis of results used in this paper mainly involves the survey
phase of the study in Australia and New Zealand.

The UK

The UK study was carried out in 1999/2000 with the following two key objectives:

1. To ascertain the characteristics of firms that have adopted the Internet in business-to-
business marketing.
2. To examine and evaluate the variety of uses and the extent to which Internet is used in
marketing by business-to-business organisations in the UK.

A questionnaire survey was carried out among business-to-business marketing organisations
in the UK. A systematic random sample of 560 firms were extracted from the business-to-
business directories of the Yahoo! Directory for the UK. A skip interval of 100 was used
systematically to draw the sample of 560 firms from the population of 56,067 business-to-
business organisations. It is to be noted that the number of businesses that operate online
increased rapidly, with Ng et al. (1998) reporting an increase in the overall number of business sites from 20,000 in 1995 to 277,000 by 1997. In the sampling process, no distinction was made concerning the nature of the organisations’ Web presence – from basic information to a full secure transaction site with relationship enhancement capabilities. The only criterion employed was that the domain names selected were primarily business-to-business organisations. Nevertheless, some served both the consumer market and the business market, with some marketed only via the Internet.

Questionnaires were e-mailed during the first week of December 1999, resulting in 143 (25.5 per cent) responses by the beginning of January 2000. After discarding seven responses due to partial completion, 136 complete responses (24.3 per cent) were used in the final analysis. The questionnaire included several sections on company profiles, the Web environment, and areas of Internet use such as marketing strategy, product strategy, promotion, pricing, distribution and managing customer relations. In the main, the questionnaire was devoted to generating information on the manner in which Internet is used by business firms. In addition to seeking information on business use of the Internet, the study sought to establish the extent to which the Internet contributes to company performance as well as the possible connection between company characteristics such as size and industry sector and the variety and extent of Internet use in business-to-business marketing.

Results

Inter-study comparison

The two studies are comparable in terms of the size of respondent businesses as indicated by employee numbers ($\chi^2=4.036, p=0.672$) and turnover categories ($\chi^2=7.450, p=0.114$). As one might expect, given that the countries involved are at different stages in their economic development, respondents differ in the industry sectors they represent. The proportion of various industry types by ANZSIC or SIC (UK) is shown in Table II to profile the industry structure in the countries studied. In presenting the industry comparison in this paper, we recast the Australasian survey data using the grouping method employed in the UK study.

The inter-country study involves a comparison of 16 key questions that are listed in Table III. The questions are grouped into four categories, namely:

1. strategic goals;
2. marketing communication function;
3. marketing logistics function; and
4. relationship management function,

on the basis of the categories of use reported for small business by (Adam and Deans, 2001) using a factor analysis of 11 business uses of the Internet. The categories and results are discussed next.

Strategic goals

Many researchers (e.g. Porter, 2001; Rayport, 1999) have commented on the lack of strategic intent behind the use of the Internet by businesses that expect to be judged on revenue growth alone. Business generally seeks to achieve a return on investment commensurate with associated risk and anticipates a positive cashflow outcome. This is the major objective
behind development and implementation of corporate, business and marketing strategy regardless of whether the business is an “almost pure dot.com” or an “almost pure bricks-and-mortar” operation, or a mixture of the two.

In the current study, strategic use of the Internet, or Web, is a reflection of a focus on gaining a competitive edge in the long-term, as well as using the Net for market intelligence purposes and positioning the firm in terms of corporate image and cost advantage. Table III presents a surprising outcome whereby there is a statistically significant difference in the use of the Net to gain a competitive edge by companies in the three countries studied. Companies in the UK are more inclined to use the Net strategically than are Australasian companies. There is an unexpectedly low business use of the Internet as knowledge media (Eisenstadt, 1995) by businesses in all three countries, and more so in the UK. Companies in all three countries use the Net to portray their corporate image. However, companies in the UK are more likely to seek cost-effectiveness from use of the Web than are Australasian companies. We comment on this aspect further when examining marketing logistics usage.

The apparent lack of strategic use of the Net to gain a competitive edge by Australasian companies is of concern, and may indicate that marketing management has yet to gain an appreciation of strategic uses for the Internet. This conclusion is supported by case studies of WebQUAL audit respondents (Adam, 2001). The reason for low usage of the Net for market intelligence purposes in all three countries is not clear, though this may be because of the perceived lower credibility of information carried on the Net.

**Marketing communication function**

In the present era, marketing communication is more likely to involve expenditure on direct response marketing than involve the mass communication paradigm of old. Moreover, the database lies at the heart of what is now more likely to be regarded as integrated marketing communication no matter which promotional tools are included (Schultz and Kitchen, 2000) and no matter how difficult it is to accurately define the term (Sheehan and Doherty, 2001). The Internet is one of a number of promotional tools; however, it may also be used for informational purposes.

The Internet is a global medium, and its graphical face – the World Wide Web – is an interactive medium. While it is a weak medium when used for display advertising and “click-through” banner advertising, its strengths as a form of digital word-of-mouth are now coming to the forefront. The proof of this statement is reflected in the usage of Napster and Gnutella that are both based on peer-to-peer or friend-to-friend digital communication. As reported earlier, and now supported by the findings of this study, a majority of companies (>75 per cent) across all three countries use the Internet to provide product information and to build brand identity.

This result is not surprising, since the Internet’s very origins lie in e-mail communication. Moreover, the now enhanced hypertext markup language (HTML, dynamic HTML and XML) that is used by browser software to present text, static and streaming images, as well as to enable keyword (e.g. company and brand name) searches have brought more users to this medium (Metcalfe’s Law). This high usage should not be misconstrued as an indication of the sophistication of the Websites employed by companies. There are, however, other elements in company use of the Internet beyond marketing communication. These are reported on in the next section.
Marketing logistics function

The marketing logistics function involves a system of efficiently and effectively making and getting goods, services and experiential products to end-users (Kotler et al., 2001). One commentary that is often repeated in terms of gaining benefits from the Internet is in terms of marketing logistics, whereby online buyers gain temporal advantage by ordering online and having products delivered over the Internet. As Negroponte (1995) pointed out though, there is a difference between marketing “bits” such as software, and “atoms” as in physical goods, over the Internet. Temporal advantage accrues to the buyer in the case of the former, but not in the latter case. And as many suppliers such as book publishers have discovered, online retailers like Amazon.com do not provide a means of gaining cost reductions through disintermediation, or removing intermediaries from marketing logistics networks. Rather Amazon.com, and others like it, are examples of reintermediation or a changed marketing channel. Newer online retailers, such as the now defunct WinePlanet.com.au, discovered that order-processing, warehousing, picking and physical delivery added to the costs of what were to be least cost operations, and caused frustration to consumers whose expectations were not met when deliveries were made outside their expected delivery time, or not at all.

Earlier, we stated that business gains from Internet use are either productivity based and/or revenue-growth based (Hanson, 2000). Online businesses, particularly those located in the USA, are more likely to appeal to a broader geographic market, and therefore we see businesses such as BootsOnline.com.au including a currency converter to enable overseas buyers to see the company’s value positioning when prices are converted to their own currency. Briggs and Stratton use an extranet site, Briggsnetwork.com, which may be accessed in one of eight languages. The company aims to reduce its costs of dealing with its 35,000 global distributors by use of the Internet (McDougall, 2001).

In this study, the marketing logistics function is represented by direct sales fulfilment, online ordering, and real-time order-processing. Respondents to the Australasian and UK studies indicated whether or not they used the Internet for these marketing logistics functions. As Table I illustrates, the overall use of the Internet for marketing logistics functions is consistently low across the three countries studied. We therefore conclude that companies expect to gain longer-term strategic advantage in terms of lower costs from online sales, order-processing and order fulfilment, but that this is yet to occur.

Relationship management function

Relationship management has regained its significance in marketing science and practice (Morgan and Hunt, 1994; Gummesson, 1997; Ravald and Grönroos, 1996). In the present era, marketing organisations are mostly participants in marketing logistics networks that involve bi-directional flows of information – marketing communication as well as end-user and other feedback; goods, services and experiences; and importantly, payment and credit. Relationships are managed between the parties, the closest of which are alliance partners, and between the end-users and those involved in these networks (Morgan and Hunt, 1994). This is so, whether we focus on the end-user section of these networks (consumer markets) or on downstream sections of the networks (business and institutional markets) (Selnes, 1995). It is also the case in an environment where digital technologies continue to diffuse through the aforementioned marketing networks (Poon and Swatman, 1996).
In the present study, we compare company usage of the Net for maintaining relationships by way of several items as shown in Table III. There is a significant difference in business use of the Net for relationship management between the three countries. The most pronounced difference concerns use of the Net to “handle customer queries promptly”, with companies in the UK outperforming Australasian firms on this criterion. This is also evident when companies are specifically asked if they use the Net to maintain relationships with customers, as well as in the use of “online customer communities” and in the provision of “online customer service”. The only relationship management item where Australasian firms indicated greater Net use was in the provision of “online communication facilities with customers” in that they are either providing an e-mail address or Web form for customers to use. The use of the Net for such services as “online services” generally and “after sales services” specifically, was relatively low across all countries, but more so in the case of the UK companies.

Discussion and implications

The primary goal of this paper was to compare the results of studies carried out in three countries exploring commercial use of the Internet. The studies have similar timeframes and methodologies and were conducted in similar cultural environments. The comparisons made in this study are based on responses to a subset of questions common to the three studies. These responses are grouped into four broad categories:

1. strategic goals;
2. marketing communication;
3. marketing logistics; and
4. relationship management.

We find that while there are many similarities in how business uses the Internet, there are considerable differences across the countries in terms of these groupings.

The most pronounced difference appears in the strategic use of the Internet to gain competitive advantage, to improve cost-effectiveness, as well as on many aspects of relationship management where Australian and New Zealand companies under-perform their UK counterparts. This might be thought to be the result of UK businesses using the Net longer than Australasian firms. However, even when the affect of time is controlled for via a three-way cross-tabulation, the results remain the same. Thus, time has no measurable affect.

In order to understand these results more clearly, we highlight a point made by Adam and Deans (2000) in that businesses do not use the Net in a sequential manner whereby they migrate from marketing communication use to marketing transactions use and then, finally, to use the Net in relationship management. Analysis shows that Australian and New Zealand firms were using the Internet to communicate with local firms, and maintain relationships at a local level in support of sales made through traditional channels. Where the respondent firms were using the Net to transact, they were seeking revenue growth from international buyers. We suggest that because there is fragmented use of the Internet across these functions, business does not see such use as leading to a strategic advantage. Porter (2001) provides a further reason when he points out that the Internet is a possible source of fear for many companies and industries in that it lowers the cost of entry for both substitutes and competitors.
It is apparent that business in each of the countries studied sees the Internet as a strategic technology for use in communicating corporate image, and in providing product information and building brand identity. This is not to say that they use the Net effectively as an interactive medium, as only 24.0 per cent of responding businesses rated their Website as providing “good” or “very good” interaction, while 15.3 per cent claim not to have considered interactivity at all. Only 14.2 per cent ranked “the level of dialogue with specific customers” in the top three criteria used to “evaluate budget expended on Website maintenance”.

There are both managerial implications and research implications that flow from these findings that we next examine.

**Managerial and research implications**

The findings reported in this paper indicate that there are both similarities and differences in the way businesses in the three countries use the Internet. However, a conundrum is presented. Is the purchasing behaviour of Australians and New Zealanders a consequence of a failure by business to strategically use the Net to its full potential? Or is it that business views low online purchasing levels as a reason not to invest in the Internet beyond using it as they do the telephone or, indeed, mass media such as free-to-air television? The answer to this conundrum is not immediately obvious. This, despite the fact that Australasian adoption of other communication technologies, such as cellphones, is high, and standing at nearly 60 per cent of the population. Moreover, use of such familiar technologies as the telephone for new uses such as financial service transactions, is also high. It is clear that further research is needed from the consumer perspective, to answer this question unequivocally.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table I</th>
<th>Inter-country comparison of household PC adoption, Internet connection and online purchasing in 2000</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of households with PCs</td>
<td>USA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>53</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of households online</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of households that have shopped online</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Adapted from Beeby (2000, p. 21)

*Table I Inter-country comparison of household PC adoption, Internet connection and online purchasing in 2000*
Table II
Country differences in industry groupings by ANZSIC/SIC classification

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ANZSIC/SIC classification (using modified UK divisions)</th>
<th>Australia per cent 1998-99 (n=706,000)</th>
<th>New Zealand per cent 1999 (n=198,486)</th>
<th>UK per cent 1999 (n=1,300,000)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture, hunting and forestry (and fishing*)</td>
<td>15.7*</td>
<td>4.2*</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mining and quarrying</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>2.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manufacturing</td>
<td>7.0</td>
<td>7.9</td>
<td>23.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction</td>
<td>11.1</td>
<td>13.8</td>
<td>6.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wholesale and retail trades</td>
<td>21.0</td>
<td>19.5</td>
<td>14.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hotels and restaurants</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transport and communication</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>11.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial intermediation</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>2.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Real estate and business activities</td>
<td>15.4</td>
<td>33.5</td>
<td>27.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community and personal services (cultural and recreational services *)</td>
<td>2.3*</td>
<td>3.6*</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private (private community services plus personal and other services *)</td>
<td>12.8*</td>
<td>4.4*</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other services</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>6.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes: *Refers to the Australian and New Zealand Standard Industrial Classification description of the industry
The following main public sector categories have been excluded: utilities; public administration and defence; education; health and social work
Sources: Australia – ABS (2000)
New Zealand – adapted from Statistics New Zealand (1999)
UK – adapted from ONS (2000) (where n=60,600 businesses)

Table II Country differences in industry groupings by ANZSIC/SIC classification

Table III
Internet uses in Australasia and the UK

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Internet uses</th>
<th>UK n=133 (% Yes)</th>
<th>Australia n=242 (% Yes)</th>
<th>New Zealand n=74 (% Yes)</th>
<th>Sig. (2-sided)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strategic goals</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gaining competitive edge</td>
<td>76.7</td>
<td>14.0</td>
<td>18.9</td>
<td>$\chi^2$ 159.75, p=0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marketing intelligence</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>31.0</td>
<td>35.1</td>
<td>$\chi^2$ 39.39, p=0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corporate Image</td>
<td>78.9</td>
<td>81.4</td>
<td>83.8</td>
<td>$\chi^2$ 0.763, p=0.683</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cost-effectiveness</td>
<td>61.7</td>
<td>28.1</td>
<td>25.7</td>
<td>$\chi^2$ 46.57, p=0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marketing communication function</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide product information</td>
<td>84.2</td>
<td>81.4</td>
<td>83.8</td>
<td>$\chi^2$ 0.553, p=0.758</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Customer information purpose</td>
<td>55.6</td>
<td>90.1</td>
<td>90.5</td>
<td>$\chi^2$ 0.72, p=0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building brand identity</td>
<td>75.2</td>
<td>81.4</td>
<td>83.8</td>
<td>$\chi^2$ 2.88, p=0.237</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marketing logistics function</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Direct sales</td>
<td>36.1</td>
<td>31.0</td>
<td>39.2</td>
<td>$\chi^2$ 2.12, p=0.346</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online ordering facility</td>
<td>30.8</td>
<td>16.5</td>
<td>14.9</td>
<td>$\chi^2$ 1.928, p=0.381</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Realtime order-processing</td>
<td>16.5</td>
<td>12.0</td>
<td>10.8</td>
<td>$\chi^2$ 1.983, p=0.371</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationship management function</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintain relationships</td>
<td>59.4</td>
<td>37.6</td>
<td>37.8</td>
<td>$\chi^2$ 17.94, p=0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>After-sales service</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>16.5</td>
<td>14.9</td>
<td>$\chi^2$ 21.79, p=0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online customer service</td>
<td>44.4</td>
<td>9.5</td>
<td>9.5</td>
<td>$\chi^2$ 71.602, p=0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online communication facilities with customers (e-mail and/or form)</td>
<td>55.6</td>
<td>93.0</td>
<td>85.1</td>
<td>$\chi^2$ 77.742, p=0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online customer communities</td>
<td>31.6</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>$\chi^2$ 68.518, p=0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promptly handling customer queries</td>
<td>65.4</td>
<td>14.9</td>
<td>12.2</td>
<td>$\chi^2$ 114.297, p=0.000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table III Internet uses in Australasia and the UK

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