Making Shops from Blogs: An Emerging Online Retailing Phenomenon in Southeast Asia

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Operating as mini online shops hosted on freely available social media such as blogs and social networking sites, blogshops have quietly emerged to become significant platforms for mass participation in e-commerce in Singapore and Malaysia. This paper introduces the blogshop and establishes it as the development of a unique socially-oriented approach to e-commerce. It reports findings from a pilot study that describes its unique attributes and the way they operate.

JEL Codes: L10, M31

1. Introduction

In recent years, a social media phenomenon called 'blogshops' has sprung up and become a prevalent aspect of the e-commerce scene in some parts of Southeast Asia. The term 'blogshop' refer to simple online retail shops created out of freely available blogging software such as *Blogger* (or *Blogspot), LiveJournal, Word Press, Tumblr* and other similar self-publishing templates, and is almost exclusively found in the Singapore and Malaysia regions. Sometimes referred to as 'online boutiques', 'e-boutiques', 'e-shops' or simply 'online shops', the vast majority of blogshops feature fashion themes and have become a part of the fashion scene in these regions.

Blogshop websites can usually be easily identified by the .blogspot, .wordpress, and other blog tags in their URLs, which indicate their hosted domains and which easily tells them apart from most conventional e-retail websites. Their layout, functionalities, and navigation are usually blog-like, with reverse chronological arrangement of content, use of labels or tags, and use of customizable plug-ins such as chat boxes, traffic feeds and links. Blogshops are largely associated with social media. Following the uptake in social media usage in the region toward the latter half of the 2000 decade, shops enacted on blogs have garnered increasing popularity among Web users. The arrival of Facebook as a popular social networking destination has also seen the appearance in large numbers of these forms of online retailing entities, wherein they are sometimes referred to as 'Facebook stores,' 'Facebook boutiques' or 'Facebook blogshops'.

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