



# Marketing research for online store

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# Overview

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## Background of Memorabilia Online store/On-campus Presence

Memorabilia is a term that unites the objects of historical nature. Such objects are collected and kept for the future, and are associated with past remarkable events, culture, and persons. The items are sold eventually to people interested in them for the profit. Royal Holloway, a University of London, has collected various memorabilia and stored them for sale. The university operates an online store with the selection of various items in categories of archives, events and conferences, merchandise, membership, Royal Holloway sport and education.

Royal Holloway online store is open to everyone through the Internet to purchase the available items. Before the placement of purchases, the online store requires registration. However, for browsing for the memorabilia items available for sale in the online store, a customer does not require registration. The university made the online store is available at all the times to the clients. In regards to the payment, the university does not accept the liability for persons unable to access the store, nor does it accept the liability for the periods when the store is not available for access.

The registration procedure is a straight forward practice that uses email address and a password of choice. The registration is once, and a customer can revisit the store frequently without having to register again.

The part of registration process also requires entry of personal information, such as contact details and addresses. In addition, a person can store different addresses saved (e.g. home, work etc.) and use them accordingly as the need arises. It is the responsibility of the user to make sure that the details are correct, and it is a personal responsibility to update information on time. However, the right to suspension or cancellation of registration details is reserved by Royal Holloway at any time. The online store requires the users to keep their passwords confidential. Moreover, the organisation leaves a person responsible for all the orders placed using his or her password. A provision for the password change is made by Royal Holloway available, where the user can log in with the current password and update the personal details. The password recovery option also exists in the online store.

The web pages with the personal details are secured by Secure Socket Layer (SSL) technology provided by Thwart. Lastly, the visitors of the website are advised to check that the online store page they visit is secured by https and a padlock is visible. Therefore, the customer makes sure that the personal data is secure and privacy is maintained for the user.

## Overall Online Shopping Phenomenon

Online shopping provides a platform where customer can order a product the Internet and then the physical delivery to the buyer is completed at a later time. Online stores require customer registration through creation of an account before any order can be placed. The products purchased are

delivered to the buyer's address. In all online stores a detailed dispatch procedure exists. Each customer is requested for delivery information as part of standard functionality of the stores. The address provided for an order is only applicable to the product purchased.

In the current technology-savvy world, online stores are widely popular. The products sold include merchandise, services, advice, etc. The dispatch and arrival of the product vary across type, location of the buyer and the characteristics of the online stores. Usually, the buyer is notified of the product dispatch by either email or phone and given a track number of the delivery. Payment for the product is made online through a processor before the dispatch or at the time of purchase.

## Introduction to Research

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### The Problem

Students are potential customers of the memorabilia items offered by the university. Their awareness of the online stores is important to the university not only for the increase of sales, but also for the expansion of the memorabilia through proper marketing strategies. The research problem is that the Royal Holloway University of London does not evaluate the students' perception of the range of memorabilia in their online stores. Furthermore, Royal Holloway does not possess the knowledge of students awareness about their online memorabilia store,

and if they need expansion of the selection.

## Research Aims and Objectives

Based on the aforementioned problems, the research is aimed at analysing the level of awareness about the memorabilia store on-campus among student, which is a first objective. Secondly, it aims at establishing the student perceptions of the online stores. Therefore, the objectives of the study will be;

- I) To establish the level of student awareness about Royal Holloway online memorabilia store;
- II) To establish the student perception of the range of memorabilia in the online store;
- III) To establish the existing opportunities to expand the range of memorabilia.

## Secondary Data Analysis

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Online stores are particularly popular for the conformable purchases of goods without leaving home. Each year the number of items bought online is increasing. According to E-commerce statistics, the multi-dollar industry is expected to grow by 20% to reach annual sales of \$1.5 trillion globally. The business is facilitated by changing consumer behaviour,

evolving technologies and improved advertisement. Various studies have been carried out to establish the nature of online market. Some of the most valuable results are presented in the following section.

According to UPS (2015), the online sales for the second quarter of 2013 were 13% less as compared to the same quarter of the subsequent year of 2014. Moreover, the 2014 saw an increase in global online sales by 4.8% of global sales in 2014. 71% of the online shoppers have a common belief that it is possible to find a better deal for goods and services online, as compared to visiting physical stores. During the online purchase process, 36% of the consumers use comparison shopping before coming to a decision on the final selection.

In US alone there are 191 million buyers and the figure is expected to grow eventually. However, in the online retailing market, only 28% of the US small businesses are venturing into online sales. In the UK, online sales make up to 13% percent of the total UK economy and the figure is expected to increase to 15% by the year 2017. The main devices used to access online stores are tablets. In 2014, 27% of the UK online sales occurred via a tablet, among which 33% competed after 6 p.m. According to Everts (2014), 47% of all online orders include free shipping, which is an added benefit compared to the physical stores. However, if free shipping is included, online buyers of items spend 30% more per order. Therefore, the items with free shipping are overpriced by an average of 30% per item. Free shipping is very convenient for the buyer, but is automatically included in the price of the purchase.

Device display plays a major role in online shopping. Devices that have

bigger display have a high conversion rate as compared to those that provide with smaller displays. In the UK, the conversion rate for desktop for the fourth quarter of 2013 was 3.11%, 2.59% for the tablet and 1.01% for the Smartphone. However, according to IBS (2015), global sales made via mobile devices like tablets and smartphone are expected to grow to \$638 billion by the year 2018. In addition, by 2018 mobile commerce will account for 30% of the world Ecommerce. Such figure is a double decrease from 15% of the in the year 2013. Currently, smartphones are less popular for online shopping than tablets. It is reported that 70% of tablet owners prefer to shop online as opposed to 47% smart phone owners. The reasons why buyers abandon online shopping carts are;

- I) Total cost became very high due to addition of shipping costs;
- II) Individual are not ready to buy the item right away;
- III) Items did not qualify for free shipping;
- IV) The shipping cost were only shown late in the checkout;
- V) Slow loading of the site;
- VI) Confusing and long checkout process;
- VII) Distraction.

Additionally, blogs are known to influence the purchase. According to a survey of online shoppers, 13% indicated that a blog post inspired them to purchase some item.

Students and universities are involved in online shopping of products. However, the patterns of purchase and type of products they buy are

significantly different from the total population. Research by Truell et al (2010) found that the items regularly purchased by students are clothing (63%). 57.40% of male college students bought electronics while, 74.60 % of female participants bought clothing. Other items that were purchased online included books, cosmetics, computer hardware, computer software, sports events, tools, televisions, stereos and auto supplies. The majority of the student, which is 57%, did not face any challenge in online shopping. The research also showed that most students are not hesitant to involve in online shopping. Despite the fact, most of the research participants complained about receiving junk emails.

## Conclusion

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Based on the aforementioned data, an online store needs to look into many aspects in order to increase the sales of their products. Some aspects are controlled by the clients, which provide an opportunity to meet customers' expectations. Students' guiding information like the preferable type of gadget for online shopping could increase sales.