

Antecedents and Consequences of Social CRM Strategies Adopted By E-Tailers in India during Peak Season on Demand



ISBN: 978-81-924713-8-9

Joel Gnanaprgash
Sir M.V. I.T
Prasad Kulkarni
Gogte Institute of Technology

Social media has redefined corporate communication in India. The unprecedented growth of smartphones and enhanced internet consumption has fuelled the growth of social media. It is inevitable for any company to neglect this sunrise media platform. Similarly, e-tail industry in India has shown remarkable progress. It has detached its nascent industry tag and forced brick and mortar companies to sit up and notice its leap jump. Their spectacular show during Dasara and deepawali festive seasons in terms of reach, awareness and sales is mind blowing. Yet, few e-tailers lost their credibility by over promising and under delivering. This research paper has examined how social media has been used to build market excitement before festive season among consumers. We have also analyzed how e-tailers develop their customer engagement strategies. The big billion day failure and aftermath was analyzed using sentiment analysis.

Keywords: Social media, e- tail, Social CRM, Sentiment analysis, customer engagement, big billion day

1. Introduction

Social media has become second most sought media for business communication after television by piping print media behind in India. The biggest advantage of social media is its collaborative characteristics unlike traditional media which directed their strategies to customer. The cost of communicating and getting feedback on this platform is very less and in many times it is absolutely zero. Real time engagement with customers enhanced the speed of marketing operations. Thus, Majority of consumer and business organizations has marked their footprints in this nascent industry. Yet, only few are dynamically utilizing the potential of this platform. Many organizations present on social networking sites confined themselves to provide product information. They lack the ability to clarify customer objections, marketing products, collecting feedback and customer service. Organizations those started social CRM module in their organizations directly or indirectly are reaping rich benefits. Social media if not utilized with proper plan may boomerang and customer will a move a mile ahead and criticize the company in the open social space.

The unprecedented growth of smart phones, tariff reduction, ever improving telecom infrastructure ignited the mega underneath potential of online retail industry in India. Flipkart a major Indian e- tail company in a short span of time has produced sizeable number of billionaire. Traditional retailers like Trent, Future group, Rahejas, RPG and others moved out of their brick and mortar model and embraced click and mortar style partially or completely. Valuations of online retail companies have seen double digit growth.

2. Literature Review

Social Media has changed communication paradigm of marketers. Most of the traditional media are unidirectional in customer communication, whereas social media brought real time customer conversation. Evaluations of the effectiveness of communication through traditional media are not accurate and have many limitations. Customer engagements through social media are helping companies overcome from this problem. Customer acquisition, developing, and retaining in traditional CRM is time consuming and not real time. Social CRM bought real time factor into above mentioned CRM dimensions. Unlike the traditional CRM, Social CRM involves everyone, the entire CRM process is defined by the consumer, and the time for the CRM is set by the consumer, provides input and result in more interaction than transaction (Chess media)

Paul Greenberg, who coined Social CRM, defines it as: "Social CRM is a philosophy & a business strategy, supported by a technology platform, business rules, processes and social characteristics, designed to engage the customer in a collaborative conversation in order to provide mutually beneficial value in a trusted & transparent business environment. It's the company's response to the customer's ownership of the conversation."

Social customers are now having a greater concern towards security and privacy issues. They are looking for safe social networks where their privacy is not compromised. The biggest benefit of social media is customers get information from friends, peer and even strangers. Many customers are writing about their brand experience on their blogs (Social CRM for financial industry Deloitte). This influence of a customer to another customer is called as social influence. Social influence is the process by which individuals make changes to their thoughts, feelings, attitudes, or behaviors as a result of interaction with individuals or groups who are perceived to be similar or desirable or with experts who are recognized by the community

of buyers as knowledgeable about the product. (Naveen Ambli and Tung Bue 2011). According to the oracle report (Laurren) on social CRM customer involve with activities like Sign up and receive e- mails from the retailers, review the product purchased , Like an online retailer, Share the e- tailer information to others and Sign up with text message receiving. According to Gartner's magic quadrant report Social CRM involves co-developing new products and services, generating brand awareness, aiding information and gathering and evaluations, offering price comparisons, assisting the selling process, enabling a peer to peer customer support service after sales and service.

Any social CRM should help e-tail Company to build trust, gain customer insight, differentiate their service, lower the costs, and improve the overall customer service experience. Social CRM is growing at a rapid pace. The main reason for its growth is 23 % of customers who are having social media profile uses their valuable time for interacting with brands (IBM). Social CRM which recognizes that instead of managing customers, the role of business is to facilitate collaborative experiences and dialogue that customer value (Baird and Parasnis)

According to Fang Wang, Milena head and Norm Archer of McMaster University e- tailing is selling of goods and services to the consumer market via the internet. It is also known as e –retailing and electronic commerce in the B2C market. Online retailing in India is witnessing unprecedented growth. Traditional retailers are enticing this development with raised eyebrows. Some of these retailers already moved to adopt the mixed models. The success of Flipkart, Snapdeal and others in this domain showed the true potential of this sector. Though online retailers use some of the traditional media, but their main emphasis is on social media. This phenomena is due to their major target customer is tech savvy and uses social media to the greatest extent. According to a survey conducted by consultancy firm Techno pack on e-tailing. (Table 4) Indian consumers have transformed themselves from users of e- mail and news in 2010 for posting on social networking sites and shopping and banking on the internet by the year 2012. The government's initiatives to provide its information on the internet and success of travel firms on online market have further fuelled the growth of e –tailing in India. According to e- tailing industry sources 45 crore Indians will be having smart phones by 2020 which will further unlock the potential of e-tailing. The penetration of PC, Laptop and Tablets will replace the brick and mortar shopping experience via click and mortar mode. Adoption of third generation (3G) and fourth generation (4G) networks certainly helps me- tailing companies to consolidate their position. The recent report by Internet and Mobile Association of India pegged the e- commerce industry size to hopping Rs 50,000 crore and in which Rs 10,000 crore is contributed by Indian online retailers. The e-commerce market size is expected to grow to Rs 200,000 crore by 2025. (Deccan Herald) .According to Assochom, a chamber of commerce body in India, in its latest report on November 2 2013 released to times of India reported that online retailers are expected to increase their sales in the deepawali festival season by 250%. The major reasons for consumers looking towards online sites for shopping as cited by the report are variety, discounts and rising fuel prices (times of India).

Social CRM helps the companies to convey the reputation of the e-tailer, its products and services, and complimentary goods (Naveen) Several online fashion retailers are creating new campaigns that drives better engagement with customers (Seema) Online retailers like Netflix are providing personalized service to customers from the recommendations they got through other customers. (Matt Anderson). Intuit, tax preparation software provides free software of an earlier version on social media. The site www.woot.com publishes statistics about user interests and creates a sense of community. In the recent Los Vegas 500 social media users' conference, the list consist maximum online retailers. The biggest inputs of the conference are online retailers like amazon.com and No more rack.com are not only increasing the number of fans, but making strategies so that customer click on buy option. (Amy Dusto). The retailer like fab.com offers discounts on social media site to drive the traffic. The major difficulty for online retailer is as the volume of social media interaction increases, managing the customer communication becomes difficult (Joshuna) The growth of Social media also necessitated its evaluation. This will help organizations to control their strategies. The major metrics of social customers are Volume (The number of times the topics discussed compare to historical patterns), Tone (the number of positive or negative sentiment given by the customer), coverage (How many sources are generating the conversation about a particular topic?) and authoritativeness (The rise and fall of authoritativeness). (Paul Greenberg) Social CRM metrics are classified by Amita Paul in dummies book are follower or fan growth, click through or retweets, reach growth, engagement, retention, and Monetization

3. Research Methodology

The research was descriptive in nature. We have used sample frame from Facebook, Quora, YouTube, and Twitter. The rationale behind selecting frame only from selected social media vehicle was Facebook is leader in social networking, Twitter is leader in Micro blogging, Quora is renowned discussion forum and YouTube is Video sharing platform. The sample extent was limited to India and between Dasara and deepawali period of India. This festive season in India is a peak season for retailers like Christmas and Black Friday in the USA. Samples general comments are neglected and comments where they have expressed either positively or negatively are selected. Suspicious Black PR and employee accounts are omitted for having more clarity for the research. We have used Judgmental sampling for the research. Social media analytics tools like Text Clouding and sentiment analysis is used in the research. Total 100 samples selected separately for each platform and their comments are analyzed. The sample selection was based on priority selection and repeated comments are omitted. The responses are collected on five companies namely, Flipkart, Snapdeal, Amazon India, e –Bay India, and Jabong. The idea behind selecting five sites is Flipkart is India's e- commerce leader, Snapdeal is a deal oriented e- commerce portal, Amazon India, MNC and global leader in e- commerce, e- Bay is market place in e- commerce site and Jabong is known fashion retailer.

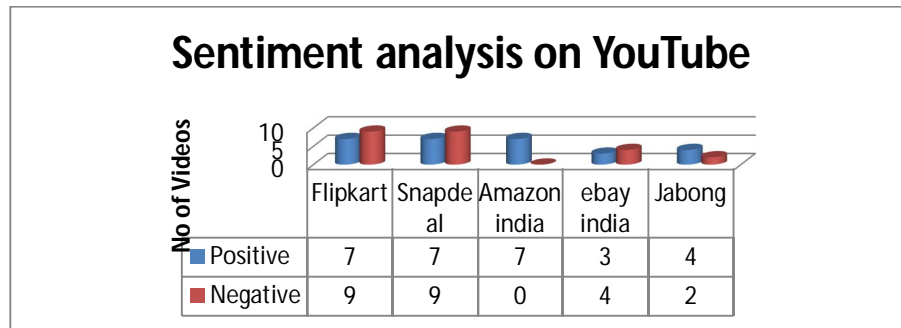
4. Results

YouTube is video sharing platform by Google. People express their sentiment by taking video of their own or of a product and upload it on the YouTube. As this is visual media appeal of customer is higher. Text cloud analysis is done five e-commerce portals. The result of text cloud is given in the following diagram 1. The detailed analysis is given in Table 2(appendix). From the diagram 1 we have derived sentiment analysis (Graph 1)

Diagram 1 Text Clouding of e-tail Sites on YouTube

Empty, Fraud, Scam, Ambition, Cheat, wealth, experience, High Low, High sales, fool Out of stock, Horror , Return, Unboxing, Don't miss, fraud, Fake , disgusting, Awesome, Fulfillment, New, lucrative, Potential, Unfazed, Launch, 10/10, earning, wrong, damage, stake, Never , cheat, Awesome, Make money, Not working, Tie up, wrong, Beware, Low price, Aggressive, Buy, interview

Graph 1 Sentiment Analysis of e- tail Portals on YouTube



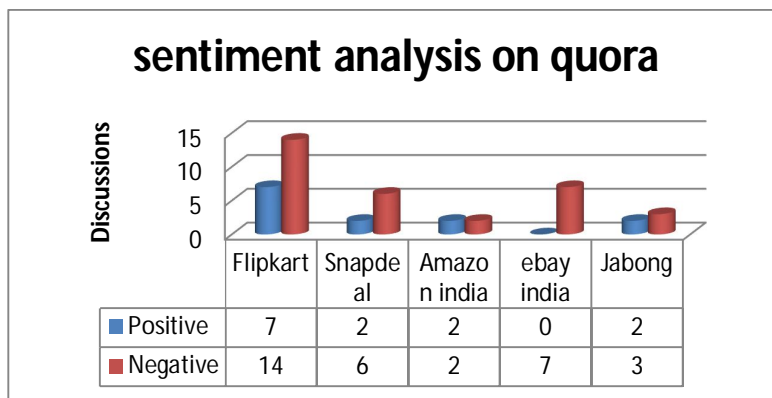
The result depicts that flipkart, Snapdeal e- bay India have negative sentiment while Amazon India and Jabong have positive sentiments. The major customer negative sentiments are towards order management, customer service, state of product, logistics and inventory management. Positive sentiment is expressed for price, wealth, information and potential company possess

Text clouding and sentiment analysis on Quora depicted in Diagram 2 and Graph 2 respectively. The detailed text clouding is given in the table (Annexure).

Diagram 2 Text Clouding of e-tail Companies on Quora

Seller adds the image, Hate, Support, startup struggles, and script may take long time, fool, got the product, my products not delivered. Employee got the deal, get your facts right, High ethics, frustrating, Price jacking, Promise of products out of stock, Marketing gimmick, Fake, insecure, not a best deal, Not delivered till date, stupidity, Pricing is fake, cancelled, terribly bad, Worry free, Not more than 1 star, Deal sites cannot sustain longer, Impulse buy, see all deals, No search, Weak supply chain, never fulfilled, blunder. Trust, violation, Blazing fast, fade, Pathetic, counterfeit, costly, no trust, poor response, Not verified by reliable sources, headache, open delivery, large merchandise, Fund problems,

Graph 2 Sentiment Analysis of e- tail Companies on Quora



The results shown in the Quora are little different than YouTube. Though big billion dollar program was highly criticized in mass media and social networking sites, the company found few supporters and they would like to give chance to the start up. But overall sentiment of the customer is negative towards flipkart, Snapdeal, eBay India, and Jabong. Amazon India is alone able to create positive sentiment. The major reasons for negative sentiment derived from cloud analysis are price jacking, marketing gimmicks, counterfeits, payments, fake and delivery. The positive sentiments are created on visibility of merchandise, availability of merchandise and learning's of startups. We have found that overall discussion members are more knowledgeable than other platform we have selected for analysis.

Facebook is the most ideal platform for customers where they expressed their opinions and information freely. The text clouding and sentiment analysis are given below. As responses are large on Facebook we have divided them separately for each e- tail site.

Diagram 3 Text cloud for Flipkart on Facebook

Sorry, disappointment, I don't blame, deals are fake, will not lose reputation, unnecessary charging, No response, loss of service quality, duplicate orders, no cancel intimation, good luck, understand the problem, failed order, complain police, courage to accept the mistake, post removed, No shame, scammers, humility, idiots, not purchase anything, hype, cancelled, out of stock, frustrating, horrible, duped, doomsday, scamster, bakra, consumer court, fake ads, order list is empty, hate,

Diagram 4 Text cloud for Snapdeal on Facebook.

Good sale, not received, not working, worse shopping, shameless, deducted, no response, not delivering, fraud, awful, frustrating, bogus, shut down, switch to other sites, behetar portal,

Diagram 5 Text Cloud for Amazon India on Facebook

Awful service, atrocity, not able to deliver, don't trust, fake advertisements, false promises, Hiding responses, Pathetic service, victim,

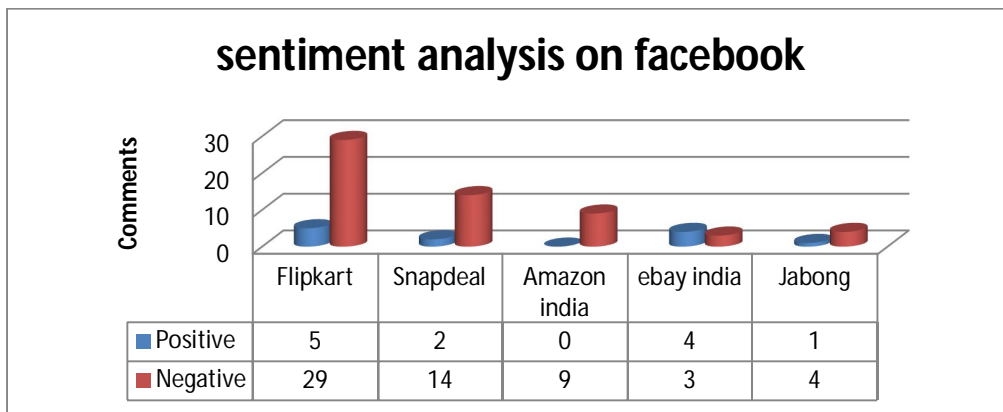
Diagram 6 Text Cloud for e Bay India on Facebook

Worst service, fast, Awesome, good site, nice, amazing, satisfied, and cheated.

Diagram 7 Text Cloud for Jabong on Facebook

Quality pathetic, horrible service, not shipped, cancels, wonderful experience,

Graph 3 Sentiment Analysis of e- tail Companies on Facebook.



Analysis of Facebook data has shown that surprisingly e- bay India that got negative sentiment in previous analysis is having positive sentiment among users. Other e- tail sites have more negative sentiments. The reasons for negative sentiments

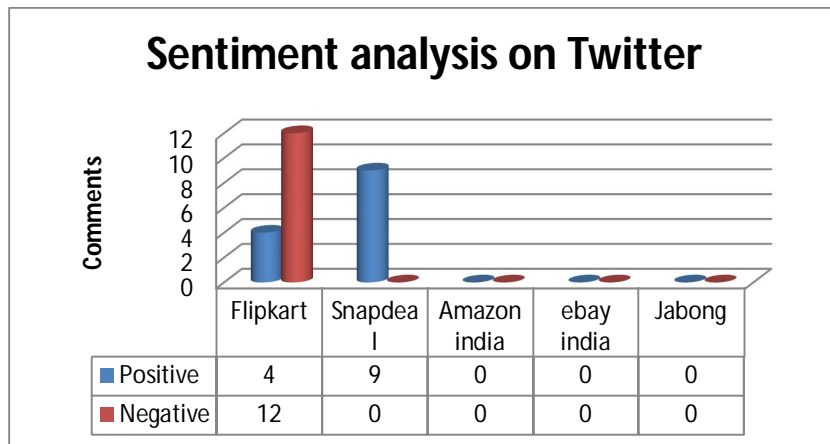
are fake deals, overcharging, delivery, cancelling, refund, order management, technology, fake advertisements, customer service and quality. The positive sentiments are towards merchandise and site visibility.

Micro blogging major Twitter is usually celebrity oriented and fans following them. We were interested how customers on this site respond to the festive season marketing of e- tailers. The research identified that only Flipkart and Snapdeal are mentioned with sentiments on Twitter and other sites have mentions for particular product without sentiment. Table 1 and Graph 4 provide the information on text clouding and sentiment analysis.

Table 1 Text Clouding of e- Tailers on Twitter

Sl. No	Company	Text	Sentiment
1	Flipkart	Right delivery	positive
		Inflated prices	Negative
		Out of stock	Negative
		trolling	negative
		Disaster	Negative
		Dis appointment	negative
		Bad deals	Negative
		To probe	Negative
		Blunder	Negative
		Poor support	Negative
		thanks	Positive (3)
		Shortcuts	Negative
		Order placing difficulty	Negative
		Fumble	Negative
2	Snapdeal	happy	Positive
		Very good	Positive
		Great experience	Positive
		Amazing offers	Positive
		Love to shop	Positive
		Delivery before time	Positive
		Customer service is good	Positive
		Impressed	Positive
		More shop	Positive
3	Amazon India	NA	NA
4	E ABY INDIA	NA	NA
5	Jabong	NA	NA

Graph 4 Sentiment Analysis of e- tail Companies on Twitter



The research has shown that Flipkart is having negative sentiment towards their marketing activities in the festive season. Snapdeal is able to generate positive sentiment among consumers. The reasons for negative sentiments are delivery, over promising, customer service and unethical marketing. Snapdeal got positive sentiment for its offers, experience and customer service.

5. Conclusion

The text clouding and sentiment analysis of Flipkart, Snapdeal, Amazon India, EBay India and Jabong have shown that social CRM adopted by these companies need to be improved. The general reactions across four platforms i.e. YouTube, Quora, Facebook and Twitter are pointing towards poor delivery system. Indian e- tail companies need to pull up their socks and improve logistics system. Customers are unhappy when their service providers do not provide response to their query. E-tail companies to succeed in India should enhance their customer service activities, Order management issues cropped up in e-tail companies. Price jacking, Out of stock condition, counterfeits, damaged products, quality of products, technology and payment mechanisms are major attributes customer have negative sentiments. Marketing programs need to be properly aligned with technology. Otherwise Indian e-tail companies will face another big billion day problem. The results shown that customer sentiment are different on different social media vehicles and e- tail companies need to have separate marketing programs to them Assortment planning and online shopping experience are bringing net savvy Indians. If the value is not added on these two factors then customer will go back to offline retailing. The study is limited to five e- tail companies and four platforms. Further research is required for other companies and platforms. The niche segment players like fashion and you, Lens kart and bluestone.com are omitted in this study. Further research on these niche players will provide better picture of the e-tail in India. The study also was limited festival period and hence overall sentiment may vary with companies and platforms.

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Appendix

Table 2 Text Clouding of Five E- Commerce Portals on YouTube

FLIPKART				
Sl. No	Video	Channel	Text	Sentiment
1	Empty case- dainik Bhaskar	N-O	empty	Negative

2	Fraud fully	Individual	Fraud	negative
3	Pricing scam	Individual	Scam	negative
4	Ambition to join 100cr club- NDTV	N-O	Ambition	Positive
5	Real big billion day	individual	Cheat	negative
6	Starting Flipkart	Individual	wealth	Positive
7	Xiomi Mi3	Individual	experience	Positive
8	Flipkart on big billion day- NDTV	N-O	High Low	Positive and Negative
9	Online sale- ABP	N-O	High sales	Positive
10	Big million Fool day	Individual	fool	Negative
11	Xio Mi out of stock	Individual	Out of stock	Negative because customer unhappy
12	Online shopping horror	Individual	Horror	Negative
13	How to return	Individual	Return	Neutral
14	10400 amh power bank	Individual	Unboxing	Positive
15	Flipkart v/s Snapdeal – Online shopping review	N-O	Don't miss	Negative to Flipkart
16	Asus zenfone	Individual	fraud	Negative
17	Official channel	Official	Fake , disgusting	negative
SNAPDEAL				
Sl. No	Video	Channel	Text	Sentiment
1	627 million investment - NDTV	N-O	invest	Positive
2	Snapdeal Fraud	Individual	Fraud	Negative
3	Showing less price	Individual	cheat	negative
4	Bad service	Individual	Bad service	negative
5	Courier service mishap	individual	Mishap	negative
6	Broken promises	Individual	Broken promise	negative
7	Online sale- ABP	N-O	High sales	Positive
8	Epic war	N-O	epic	positive
9	Best commercial ad	N-O	best	positive
10	Fake xiomi power bank	Individual	fake	Negative
11	Snapdeal Diwali- I review	N-O	10/10	Positive
12	Affiliate earning	Individual	earning	Positive
13	Wrong order	Individual	wrong	negative
14	Damaged speakers	Individual	damage	negative
15	Tat stake	N-O	stake	positive
16	Official channel	official	Never , cheat	Negative
AMAZON INDIA				
Sl. No	Video	Channel	Text	Sentiment
1	Awesome	individual	Awesome	positive
2	Beyond toys and gifts	individual	Fulfillment	Positive
3	5 new warehouses- TOI	N-o	New	Positive
4	Most lucrative business	N-O	lucrative	Positive
5	Amit Agrwal - ET	N-O	Potential	positive
6	Snapdeal investment	N-O	Unfazed	Positive
7	One plus one	N-O	Launch	Positive
EBAY INDIA				
Sl. No	Video	Channel	Text	Sentiment
1	Make money with eBay	Individual	Make money	positive

2	Compass not working	Individual	Not working	negative
3	Ties up with CIAT - Mint	N-O	Tie up	Positive
4	What went wrong with eBay	individual	wrong	negative
5	Beware buyers- Mobile duniya	N-O	Beware	negative
6	Wrong product delivery	individual	wrong	negative
7	Msi radeon	Individual	Low price	Positive
JABONG				
Sl. No	Video	Channel	Text	Sentiment
1	Aggressive play- VC circle	N-O	Aggressive	Positive
2	Amazon to buy - ET	N-O	Buy	Positive
3	Manu jain	Individual	interview	Positive
4	Indian haul	Individual	Herbal sales	positive
5	Makup and show haul	Individual	Fraud	negative
6	Jabong fraud	individual	Fraud	negative

Diagram 8 Quora Discussions on e- commerce Sites

What is wrong with Flipkart?

Answer 1 of 56 • [View All](#)

Nikhileswar Gowd, Technophile, connoisseu... (more) — Look Closely!!

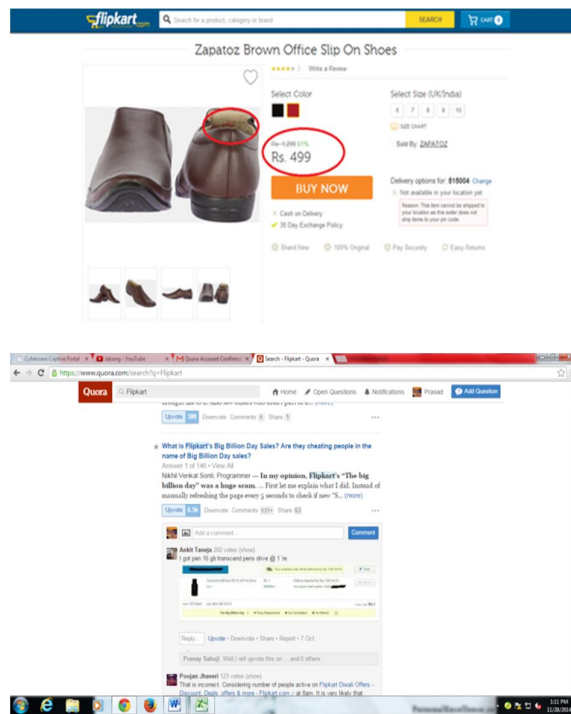


Table 3 Text Clouding Analysis of e- commerce Sites on Quora

FLIPKART				
Sl.No	Discussions	text	sentiment	comment
1	What is wrong with flipkart	Seller adds the image	positive	2
2	Why there is so much hatred towards flipkart?	Hate,	negative	6
3	Big Billion day	Support, startup struggles, script may take long time, fool, got the product, my products	6 positive	131

	sales	not delivered. Employee got the deal, get your facts right ,High ethics, frustrating, Price jacking, Promise of products out of stock, Marketing gimmick, Fake, insecure, not a best deal, Not delivered till date, stupidity, Pricing is fake, cancelled, terribly bad,	13 Negative	
4	Reviews of flipkart	Worry free		
SNAPDEAL				
Sl.No	Discussions	text	sentiment	comment
1	review	Not more than 1 star	Negative	1
2	Are service deals closing on Snapdeal	Deal sites cannot sustain longer	negative	4
3	Why no search bar	Impulse buy, see all deals, No search	2 positive 1 Negative	4
4	Flipkart rates better than Snapdeal	Weak supply chain, never fulfilled, blunder.	3 negative	7
AMAZON INDIA				
Sl.No	Discussions	text	sentiment	comment
1	Trust worthy	trust	positive	1
2	Copy right	violation	Negative	1
3	Review	Blazing fast, fade	1 Positive 1 Negative	2
EBAY INDIA				
Sl.No	Discussions	text	sentiment	comment
1	Is eBay India failing	Pathetic, counterfeit, costly, no trust, poor response,	7 negative	7
JABONG				
Sl.No	Discussions	text	sentiment	comment
1	Difference between Jabong and Mynta	Not verified by reliable sources, headache, open delivery, large merchandise,	2 positive 2 negative	14
2	Is Jabong shutting down	Fund problems,	1 negative	5

Diagram 9 Flaws in Marketing Strategies of e- tailers shown by the Customers on Facebook



Diagram 10 Facebook Discussion Flipkart big Billion Day Sales

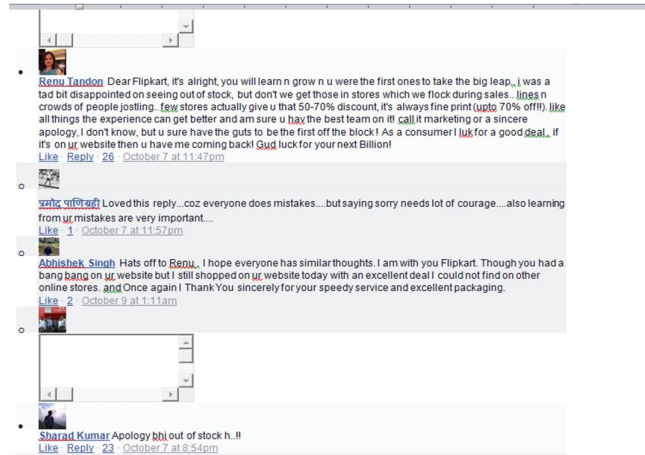


Table 4 Penetration of Technology in India (Million)

	2005	2012	2015	2020
People with Internet access	25	110	300	800
Mobile phone subscribers	150	930	1000	1100
Smart phone users	1	40	250	450
Laptop and notebook users	1	12	50	150

(Source: e- tailing Techno Pack August 2012)