

PEER-TO-PEER RECOMMENDATIONS: A COMPARISON OF US AND CHINA BASED WEBSITES

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ABSTRACT

The important influence of peer recommendations on consumer purchases has been strongly established. However, the growth of electronic discussion boards has recently created an additional channel for product recommendations and endorsements between people who have never met, and anecdotal reports suggest that such recommendations can be influential in subsequent choice.

This study examines Peer-to-Peer recommendations on digital camera electronic discussion boards within a US and a China based website, and presents findings for three main areas specific to these two discussion boards (eBay and EachNet), namely Frequency of Mentions, Country of Origin Effects and Direct Requests for information. The analysis showed differences in the pattern of brand mentions across the two websites and a significant country of origin effect among users of a Chinese web site, in the form of a significantly higher frequency of negative references to brands originating from Japan.

Information seeking behaviour was also found to vary between the two sites, with users of the China based website more likely to request information thus possibly increasing the likelihood of, and influence of, Peer-to-Peer recommendations for users of this website. Implications for research and for practice are discussed.

A copy of the full paper is available from the authors