

The Key Dimensions of Criteria for the Evaluation and Selection of ISPs: An
Exploratory Study

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Abstract

The progressive advancements in information technology (IT) coupled with the global expansion of communication infrastructure has enabled firms to create and sustain large scale strategic advantages, with the result of an ever-increasing demand from firms for new types of information services (IS) to facilitate and coordinate their daily operations. Hence, the aim of this research is to explore the underlying dimensions of criteria for the evaluation and selection of information service providers (ISPs). By undertaking a review of the literature, we first analyze the dynamics of ISPs to define their present day role before going on to develop a questionnaire for the field survey. Based on the data collected from 57 firms, two distinct procedures are adopted to carry out the exploratory factor analyses in order to derive the preliminary factor solutions. Followed by a process of post-analysis validation, these empirically derived factor solutions are reviewed and refined in accordance with domain experts' opinions, and as a result, the final factor solution is obtained. It is hoped that through the utilization of mechanical factor analyses and subsequent manual validation, it will be possible to achieve both "parsimony" and "inclusiveness" of the final factor solution. This study results that there are seven dimensions of criteria which are critical to the evaluation and selection of ISPs: (1) performance of information systems; (2) awareness of and response to customer requirements; (3) ISP's market capability; (4) performance of networking; (5) ISP's credibility and fame; (6) provision of customized professional services; and (7) innovative R&D into technology.

Key words : Information service provider (ISP); Information service (IS);
Electronic commerce (EC); Information infrastructure