

B2B E-Commerce - UK - July 2016

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“The e-commerce market continues to rapidly develop. Electronic Data Interface (EDI) is long established but continues to permeate many industry sectors well beyond the original automotive sector applications. The website sales sector is even more dynamic and has considerably more potential for sales growth”.
– Terry Leggett, Senior Analyst

This report looks at the following areas:

- Does B2B trade lend itself to e-commerce?
- Are major differences in industry penetration continuing?
- What are the likely impacts of the UK's decision to leave the EU?

E-commerce covers the buying and selling of goods and services, or the transmitting of funds or data, over an electronic network, primarily the internet.

Electronic data interchange (EDI) is a document standard, which when implemented acts as common interface between two or more computer applications in terms of understanding the document transmitted. It is commonly used by large companies for e-commerce purposes, such as sending orders to warehouses or tracking their order. It is more than mere e-mail; for example, organizations might replace bills of lading and even cheques with appropriate EDI messages. It also refers specifically to a family of standards.

In 1996, the National Institute of Standards and Technology defined electronic data interchange as "the computer-to-computer interchange of strictly formatted messages that represent documents other than monetary instruments. EDI implies a sequence of messages between two parties, either of whom may serve as originator or recipient. The formatted data representing the documents may be transmitted from originator to recipient via telecommunications or physically transported on electronic storage media." It distinguishes mere electronic communication or data exchange, specifying that "in EDI, the usual processing of received messages is by computer only. Human intervention in the processing of a received message is typically intended only for error conditions, for quality review, and for special situations. For example, the transmission of binary or textual data is not EDI as defined here unless the data is treated as one or more data elements of an EDI message and not normally intended for human interpretation as part of online data processing.

Before using EDI, trading partners must set up a trade agreement defining the parameters of EDI. Each partner in a EDI trade agreement must independently determine a method to translate internal data to and from EDI formatted messages. Each must agree on the communications media and arrange the method for transmitting information. This may involve several methods, such as a dedicated communications link, a virtual area network (VAN), or the internet. Each must provide for system recovery in case of failure or error, security and timely response.

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DID YOU KNOW?

This report is part of a series of reports, produced to provide you with a more holistic view of this market

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