Learning Objectives

Upon completion of this unit, students should be able to:

1. Discuss the goal of website development and the forces that shape it.
2. Explain the process of creating a website.
3. Explain how a company defines its online users and their intentions.
4. Summarize how a company designs the look and function of a website.
5. Discuss the processes of implementing, testing, and launching a website.
6. Define the two parts of site architecture (logical and physical).
7. Explain the factors influencing choice of logical & physical architecture.
8. Define media convergence & discuss the factors that make it possible.
9. Discuss the differing visions of top corporate leaders about a new "digital lifestyle".
10. Discuss the applications of broadband technology.
11. Identify the constraints on organizational convergence.

Unit Summary

In Unit I we discussed the strategy process and the four critical infrastructures that drive strategy. In this unit, we will examine in detail two of those infrastructures: technology and media. We will discuss the process of building a website and the architecture behind it, followed by a review of the transformation of media in the e-commerce environment.

Today, many companies have their own in-house experts to develop their websites. First, a strategy must be developed. Then the user experience is defined. Next the look and function of the website must be designed using site maps and page schematics. The next phase- the implementation phase of website development- includes building the website. Testing is performed, and finally, the website is launched.

Behind the website development process is the logical and physical architecture that defines the system in terms of hardware and software components. Choosing the appropriate architecture is a critical step in developing website strategy. E-commerce managers must understand the types of choices involved and the necessary trade-offs. Some of the most important variables include cost, time constraints, maintenance, security, flexibility, and scalability.

In addition to technology, the media infrastructure plays an important role in e-commerce strategy. In this unit, we discuss technological convergence, in which all media types converge to a digital platform, and organizational convergence through mega mergers. The proliferation of media has resulted in increasing media-usage fragmentation - in other words, because of the increasing number of media choices, total audience penetration in any one media form has declined. Experts predict that as this trend continues and as more things become digital-based, technology may converge to create a "digital lifestyle".