Social and Hashtag Commerce: “Order by Tweet”

Teaching Case

Daniel E. O’Leary
University of Southern California
3660 Trousdale Parkway, Los Angeles, CA 90089-0441
Oleary@usc.edu

Abstract

In 2013 American Express introduced the use of “social” commerce for their card holders into Twitter using the notion of “Order by tweet:” transactions were initiated and confirmed within Twitter using unique hashtags. Shortly after American Express, in 2014, Amazon.com initiated their version of social commerce with #AmazonCart, where product requests were sent from Twitter to user’s carts in Amazon. These implementations were some of the first examples of social commerce actually executing transactions in the context of a social media platform. This paper examines the processes that were used and allows analysis of some of the strengths and limitations of the resulting approaches. In addition, the resulting case suggests a number of emerging issues within the context of the case setting.

Keywords: Social Commerce, Hashtag Commerce, Mobile Commerce, Privacy Paradox

Introduction

Jim Edmunds headed up the research division of an information technology research and consulting firm, based in Pasadena, California, that had built its reputation on being able to study and anticipate the impact of emerging technologies. A large client of Jim’s was a consortium of firms concerned about the future of how social technologies would affect the ordering of goods, centered in the use of social media. The consortium had come to Jim with a specific interest in so-called “Order by Tweet,” where customers ordered goods in the context of their Twitter use, i.e., in the context of social media conversations. Although this was a relatively new phenomenon, a number of different general names had been given to this phenomenon, including “social commerce” and “hashtag commerce.” Since the client was a consortium, Jim’s analysis had to investigate the issue from a number of different perspectives to meet the needs of those of different groups within the consortium. As a result, this project had been particularly challenging. Still, Jim had been able to gather substantial information about two particularly intriguing approaches used by American Express and Amazon.com. In addition, Jim had found some information about a related approach being used by EBay. It was clear that different solutions were emerging, but it was not clear what were the strengths and limitations of each approach, what could go wrong or which approaches would “win out” in the end. Finally, although Jim had real concerns as to whether or not “Order by Tweet” had “legs” and if it would become a “best practice” in social commerce, he would need to take an unbiased view into this rapidly changing arena. Jim’s analysis would provide his client important insights into their future strategies.

The Changing Nature of Commerce

According to a Booz & Company analysis, social commerce in the United States had grown rapidly from roughly $1 billion in 2011 to $5 billion in 2013 to over $14 billion in 2015 (Anderson et al. 2011)
In addition, since social commerce is often done using mobile devices, social commerce also was said to facilitate so-called “mobile commerce.” As a result, some industry experts and entrepreneurs had begun to argue that social commerce may be a key component in the ultimate success of mobile commerce (e.g., Sharp 2015). In any case, it was clear that the nexus of social and mobile commerce seemed to be emerging as a critical area of commerce.

Although revenues were growing in both social and mobile commerce, it was still not clear what innovations a mature social commerce would bring to electronic business and how those innovations might be used in different settings. For example, there are a broad range of social media and it was not clear which ones offer the best opportunities to leverage the capabilities of social media and yet meet business needs. In addition, it was not clear specifically how transactions are best executed in the context of particular social media or even which social media would be the preferred platforms. Further, it was not entirely clear which social media would be the best to fully leverage mobile commerce environments capabilities. As a result, concerned enterprises began experimenting with different capabilities.

In 2013, American Express, interested in exploring the use of social commerce as an approach to engaging its card members, took part in a trial use of “order by tweet.” As part of the process, orders for goods originated in Twitter, using a hashtag “#Buy***,” where the name of the specific goods were used instead of ***. Potentially, this would allow American Express the ability to more fully engage some of their cardholders and reach other potential customers through Twitter. In 2014, Amazon.com began exploring using hashtags, embedded in Twitter tweets to allow their customers to order goods on Amazon in order to extend its reach and change the shopping experience. Using messages from Twitter, customers would use #AmazonCart to place items into their Amazon shopping carts. In 2014, EBay also began to investigate the use of hashtags, announcing that they would start using “smart hashtags.” When EBay visitors were on the site of a product, by clicking the Twitter (or other social media) button, a hashtag would be generated that could be sent to followers directing them to the particular product.

However, there was more than just “hashtag commerce,” instead there seems to be a rapid evolution occurring in electronic commerce. Now there was “social commerce” and so-called “conversation commerce” that linked commerce to conversations. Those conversations were occurring in classic computing environments. But increasingly, commerce was being linked to mobile devices, emerging as mobile commerce.

**Background: Social Commerce, Hashtag Commerce, Mobile Commerce and Conversation Commerce**

Social and mobile commerce, both relatively new terms and concepts, are becoming increasingly important over time as firms reach out to potential customers in different settings. The use of Twitter and hashtags for products is facilitating corporate experimentation with both social and mobile commerce, and related issues of hashtag commerce and conversational commerce.

**Social Commerce**

The term social commerce originated by Rubel (2006), initially referred to a feature that allowed users to provide reviews of products. One early innovation included an ordering capability when Facebook developed their “Facebook Gifts” services, which was designed to sell gift cards for companies such as Starbucks and iTunes. In addition, Facebook introduced their “Buy Button,” with “Auto-fill” for automatically populating billing information into shopping apps and targeting ads to users (e.g., Constine 2014).

These and other developments allowed companies to begin to engage and influence customers, who are connected to other individuals, whom in turn can influence others. Further, developments have led to the transactions taking place in the context of the particular social media platform. As a result of these developments, social commerce has begun to take on a different meaning than its initial definition of simply providing and sharing reviews also to include transaction processing.

In a classic electronic commerce (e-commerce) environment, the user goes to some web site, examines potential goods and then chooses from among the alternatives, generates an order, and then pays for that order. However, there are some major differences between ordering from a web site, such as
Amazon.com and ordering in a social commerce setting. With social commerce, the order takes place in the context of the social media, e.g., Twitter, Facebook, etc. As a result, the order takes place as part of social interaction, as part of conversations, relatively unobtrusively. In addition, transaction information is exchanged in the same context. As a result, an order must be captured, and arrangements for paying for it, must take place in the same social media context. Accordingly, there are some important implications associated with social commerce. For example, there is a “public” aspect to transactions in social commerce. Depending on how it is configured, in a social business setting, “friends” may be informed of purchases that are made. Further, others “external” to the transaction can access information about the transaction. People other than friends may be aware of purchases that are made. As a result, some of the asymmetries of information typically associated with transactions between different parties can disappear with social commerce.

**Conversational Commerce**

“Conversational commerce” also recently has emerged. Conversational commerce has been characterized as the exchange of information and the acceptance of orders and payments within the context of a conversation: “Conversational commerce is about delivering convenience, personalization, and decision support while people are on the go, with only partial attention to spare.”² Conversational commerce likely is one of many branches that are part of the evolution of social commerce and mobile commerce that ultimately will be embedded in e-commerce. Conversational commerce can be based in social media or other digital settings, such as email, product commentaries, etc.

**Hashtag Commerce**

At the most basic level, hashtag commerce relates to the use of hashtags to facilitate and generate commerce across a range of economic situations. As a result, one definition of hashtag commerce is the delivery of commerce capabilities using hashtags. Hashtag commerce involves users including hashtags in their communications in order to facilitate a range of economic activities, ranging from simply making others aware of an economic opportunity (e.g., a product) to initiating and completing transactions. Since transactions are executed in social media, typically there must be some structure developed independent of the social media. For example, user credit card information likely is set up on a secured site and linked to the social media site.

Hashtags can be used in different communication settings, ranging from social media to email to reports or even verbal exchanges. In addition to American Express and Amazon.com, Chirpify had been a pioneer in hashtag commerce and had been the source of multiple experiments (e.g., Chaney 2014, Empson 2013).

**Mobile Commerce**

The term “mobile commerce” was originally coined in 1997 by Kevin Duffey at the Global Mobile Commerce Forum, to mean “the delivery of electronic commerce capabilities directly into the consumer’s hand, anywhere, via wireless technology.”² According to Criteo (2015), mobile now accounts for roughly 30% of all e-Commerce, but in a few years, it is expected to account for roughly 50% of transactions in the United States. With such potential volume, companies are interested in making mobile commerce easy for potential participants.

**Summary**

There is substantial overlap among each of these forms of commerce, as seen in an illustration representing a rough set of the relationships between these multiple types of commerce in figure 1. Hashtag commerce can be done as a part of conversations and as part of social commerce, but can be used as part of more formal approaches. Conversational commerce can be part of social commerce, but

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¹ https://medium.com/chris-messina/conversational-commerce-92e0b2cf3cf#.bfe9qkbmi
² http://cryptome.org/jya/glomob.htm
conversations need not be part of social commerce. All of hashtag commerce, conversational commerce and social commerce can be done in mobile or more traditional environments.

Since social commerce, hashtag commerce, conversational commerce and mobile commerce are all relatively new; there is limited knowledge of best practices. As a result, firms partnered to bring together multiple capabilities and explore some of the best ways to leverage these different forms of emerging commerce.

Two of the most visible approaches to hashtag commerce were generated by American Express and Amazon, both in conjunction with Twitter. In addition, eBay also has pursued hashtag commerce, from a different approach than either American Express or Amazon. The next three sections describe those three efforts.

**American Express’s use of Hashtag Commerce through Twitter**

American Express partnered with Twitter, and with other companies, such as Sony, to sell goods to their card holders, by offering their customers purchasing opportunities enabled through Twitter. In those offerings card holders would first link their American Express credit card to their Twitter account using the “Amex Sync” page (figure 2). This process would require a legitimate account with American Express that would be used for billing purposes and a Twitter account that would be used for messaging.

**Account Syncing Process**

From the sync page, users could go to the favorites list of AMEX in order to determine the hashtags associated with particular potential purchases. Using those hashtags they could purchase those goods via
Because their American Express card was linked to the Twitter account, all that users needed to do to make a purchase was to either retweet a particular hashtag or simply reply the hashtag back to American Express's Twitter account. As noted by Bradley Minor, vice president of digital communications strategy for American Express, stated that "Card members sync their eligible cards at sync.americanexpress.com/twitter and tweet special hashtags to buy products from top brands. We send an @reply asking them to confirm their purchase. Once they do that, we then send a confirmation tweet and email, and the product is shipped" (Warnick 2013).

Since American Express's approach was embedded in Twitter, it allowed them to experiment with both hashtag and mobile commerce: Twitter frequently is used with mobile devices. For example, as noted by Tsukayama (2013): "The deal allows Twitter to try out the mobile e-commerce market — the company recently said that 60 percent of its 200 million active users log in through a mobile device at least once a month.”

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3 https://sync.americanexpress.com/twitter/FAQ
**Portal and Example**

The American Express and Twitter portal (figure 2) provides more than just a syncing capability. The portal offers the ability to sign up for Twitter and to become an American Express Card holder. The portal provides assurances and indicates that American Express Card information will not be shared with Twitter. In addition, the portal tells the user to

- **Explore** - “Find offers from brands you love – for dining, shopping and more”
- **Select** – “Add as many offers as you like to your Card by tweeting after specific hashtags”
- **Save** – “Use your Card to pay and see the savings add up as statement credits on your bill”

An example of a product offering through a tweet is given in figure 3, where the hashtag is #BuyActionCamPack. The information in the tweet provides the product being sold, the price, the expiration date, and the hashtag used for the order. The tweet also captures date and time information, and the number of retweets and likes for the tweet.

**Process**

Figure 4 illustrates the type of exchange that would take place between the customer and American Express in order to execute the transaction. The order starts with the credit card holder using the hashtag #Buy .... Then “Amex Offers” indicates that the user needs to send another tweet with the hashtag #Confirm .... After that hashtag information has been received, the user gets another message saying that there will be an email sent to them with additional details.
Characteristics of Twitter Messages and Responses

The Twitter messages for this trial were all initiated in a two day time period as seen in Table 1. The products varied in price from $15 to $179.99 per item. In addition, the products were discounted at different rates. The corresponding responses to the different offers also were apparent, in terms of both the number of retweets and likes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Retweets</th>
<th>Likes</th>
<th>Price</th>
<th>Discount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>#BuyAmexGiftCard</td>
<td>11-Feb-13</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>$15.00</td>
<td>0.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#BuyKindleFireHD</td>
<td>13-Feb-13</td>
<td>9:09</td>
<td>337</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>$149.99</td>
<td>0.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#BuyUrbanZenBracelet</td>
<td>13-Feb-13</td>
<td>9:09</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>$80.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#BuyXbox360Bundle</td>
<td>13-Feb-13</td>
<td>9:10</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>$179.99</td>
<td>0.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#BuyXboxController</td>
<td>13-Feb-13</td>
<td>9:10</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>$29.99</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#BuyActionCamPack</td>
<td>13-Feb-13</td>
<td>11:00</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>$179.99</td>
<td>0.86</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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4 http://dealswelike.boardingarea.com/2013/02/13/reminder-discounted-items-via-american-expressstwitter-starts-now/
The verbal responses in the Twitter messages from the users also seemed to vary substantially across the different products. As examples, three sets of responses are provided in tables 2, 3 and 4.

**Table 2. Selected Twitter Responses to #BuyKindleFire**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>@AmericanExpress Many, many THANKS for this Awesome Deal!!! I jumped on this deal and am now a proud happy owner of this Wonderful Kindle!!!</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>@AmericanExpress So how does this hashtag purchasing work?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>@AmericanExpress #BuyKindleFireHD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>@AmexSync I’m trying to add my info, but it won’t submit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>@jeevagunta, Hi Abraham. Are your Tweets protected? ^Courtney</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>@AskAmex they are not protected.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>@AskAmex Got it now. Thank you very much.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>@AskPamelaGail You should have received a confirmation email from Amex when successfully syncing your Card. MB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>@AmericanExpress @AskPamelaGail got a reply that said offer no konger available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>@Sun4flower @AmericanExpress ouch ... mine got ordered...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>@AmericanExpress #BuyKindleFireHD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>@AmexSync #ConfirmKindleFireHD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>@NicksRottevnm You’ve already Tweeted #BuyKindleFireHD, pls check for a reply from @AmexSync. Terms: <a href="http://amex.co/W4XqIb">http://amex.co/W4XqIb</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>@AmericanExpress Is the Kindle Fire the only item currently for sale within the Twitter/Amex sync program? I’d love to try it out!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>@AmericanExpress Do you know if this Kindle is with or without special offers on the lock screen?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>@AmericanExpress WHY would I want to sync my private card with public twitter? What a terrible promo.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>@AmericanExpress is this the Kindle Fire with advertisements? Hope not...</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The responses to the #BuyKindleFire, (table 2) illustrate that the process to using the hashtags to purchase the goods was not widely understood by the users. For example, one user asked “so how does this hashtag purchasing work?” This table provides some of the exchanges between potential participants. Table 3 suggests that the potential buyers were particularly interested in the gift card. Table 4 illustrates the reaction to #BuyActionCamPack and some concerns for the process.

**Table 3. Selected Twitter Responses to #BuyAmexGiftCard**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>@washingtonpost Might want to fix the typo in this article: <a href="http://wapo.st/X5lElz">http://wapo.st/X5lElz</a>. Should be #BuyAmexGiftCard... not #ButAmexGiftCard...</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>@AmericanExpress #AmexSync #buyamexgiftcard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>@AmericanExpress I want to #BuyAmexGiftCard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#buyamexgiftcard$25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#buyamexgiftcard x3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#BuyAmexGiftCard 25 this must be right.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>@TerribleTaebo I love you. #BuyAmexGiftCard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#BuyAmexGiftCard</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Social and Hashtag Commerce: “Order by Tweet”

Table 4. Selected Twitter Responses to #BuyActionCamPack

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Comment</th>
<th>Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>@AmericanExpress Extra steps, public broadcast of purchase and Amex use, pending delivery, etc, for 10% off?! No thanks.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>@AmericanExpress I guess supporting the profits of the credit card industry is worth a free toaster.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>@AmericanExpress or go on @amazon and pay the same</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>@AmericanExpress CAN YALL GO LIKE MY FAN PAGE TO SHOW RESPECT TO DA MOVEMENT ...</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>@AmericanExpress Any current specials on laptops? Also could it apply to the PRG &amp; Business Plat?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isn’t this the standard price ?@AmericanExpress</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>@Thenetsguy Standard price for camera, not camera + headband.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>@AmericanExpress Have a Blessed day</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>@AmericanExpress Why would I buy any #sony #rootkit product? Just say NO to #sony and (sp)#amex</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>@AmericanExpress Promote some new items already!</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Amazon’s Use of Social Commerce through Twitter

Amazon also partnered with Twitter and a number of vendors to use a similar approach. As an example, figure 5 illustrates the use of what was referred to as #AmazonCart, and indicates that the goods could have been added to the customer’s amazon cart while the customer is in Twitter (e.g., Olivarez-Giles 2014).

Figure 5. #AmazonCart
As noted by Bensal (2014) “#AmazonCart is a really cool way to add items to your cart if you are on vacation or away from your computer and liked an item to buy. This way you can add them to your cart and when you get back, it will be waiting in your cart.” Accordingly, this approach also appears to integrate mobile commerce and classic e-commerce.

**Portal**

Figure 6 illustrates the portal that users would employ as part of the process to link their Amazon and Twitter accounts, and summarizes the approach in greater detail. The implementation at Amazon.com was a bit different than the American Express implementation, in that when a linked user tweets a hashtag, the item was only put into their Amazon cart. The goods are purchased in Amazon, but using this approach, the user does not have to leave Twitter to put the item in their cart. Further, they would determine whether or not to buy the item whenever they checked their cart out at Amazon.

In addition, the portal indicates that “you’re about to authorize your first app!” As a result, this suggests that after the user implements this app there are likely to be other applications that would tie back to the user’s Twitter account, expanding Twitter to other capabilities.

The portal also provides information as to what Amazon will and will not be able to read from the user’s account. For example, Amazon will be able to see who the user follows, but will not be able to access direct messages or the user’s password.

![Portal for Amazon.com Authorization](https://twitter.com/oauth/authorize?oauth_token=mTzs2AAAAAAACHb2AAABUonnzB0)
Example

Figure 7 provides an example illustrating the process at Amazon.com using the setting initiated in figure 5. In particular, the user needs to start the process by enabling their account to be able to use the hashtags. That process links the Twitter account and user’s Amazon account. After that link is established, then the user need only reply with the hashtag #AmazonCart to the offer of interest. At that point, the offer would be put in the customer’s cart. The user is given more detail about the purchase in a URL link if they are interested.

Multiple Platforms

Although American Express had a strong web presence, there really were no goods for sale on their site. As a result, there was no real concern of having customers go from one site to another. However, Amazon’s usage of Twitter had generated some potential controversy, particularly internally. Should Amazon be using Twitter or should they focus the customer on the Amazon site? Would it be social or hashtag commerce if Amazon did not involve a social media site? These concerns raised two bigger
issues: Should Amazon should try to integrate with other ecommerce sites? If Amazon did not, could they even do social or hashtag commerce?

**EBay's Smart Hashtags**

In March 2014, EBay announced that they were going to begin to use “smart hashtags” (Kung 2014). A visitor to an EBay page could send a tweet (and other social media) to their followers. While on the specific page, the visitor would simply click on the Twitter button and the system would create a tweet as in figure 7. The tweet would have three different phrases, delineated with hashtags. In the example, there is a hashtag for the title of the original EBay site, one for the manufacturer of the product and one direct link to the EBay site.

EBay’s approach was different than those used by both American Express and Amazon. Instead of leading directly to an order, only information about a site would be sent. However, as noted by one observer: “This is great for my eBay niche sites. Helps make it easier for my ... tweets to get dispersed.” In addition, unlike American Express and Amazon, Ebay's approach kept the user on the Ebay platform.

![Figure 7. Example of Ebay Smart Hashtag](http://www.v7n.com/forums/online-business-forum/362548-ebay-launches-smart-hashtags-social-commerce.html)

**Privacy and the Privacy Paradox**

As Jim was documenting his analysis he openly wondered about privacy. Harris (2013) and others had suggested that order by tweet could lead to a privacy sacrifice. Accordingly, Edmunds had a number of emerging questions. Would people be concerned about the notion that hashtag commerce was largely open for others to see? Would people be concerned that others could see what they were buying?

However, others around Jim suggested that millennials were willing to make commerce social, so that privacy would not be an issue. There had been an interesting discussion on the “privacy paradox” (Barnes 2006, Taddicken 2013 and Witte and Liu 2015). The privacy paradox suggested that while users might express concern for the privacy, their actual behavior might not reflect those same concerns. In addition, rather than a loss of privacy, some at the office were arguing that order by tweet could provide the transmission of new information, and result in a new wave of communication.

**Theory of Convenience and “Order by Tweet”**

Before Edmunds would bring his findings to the consortium, he felt he needed an organizing theme to help explain the potential success of the phenomena of order by tweet, beyond the privacy paradox. After consulting with others in the team, Edmunds came up with what he called the “theory of convenience.”
He had heard about the “Theory of Convenience” in voting (e.g., Gronke et al. 2008). But there did not seem to be an instantiation of this notion when it came to buying goods or purchasing goods. As a result, Edmunds planned on couching his analysis behind the “theory of convenience for buying.” In particular, Edmunds would propose that the potential for the success of order by tweet was because of its convenience. Increasingly, people would be using mobile devices and they needed for purchases to work easily. Purchases needed to be convenient – and order by tweet was clearly convenient.

**Next Steps**

Jim’s analysis of American Express, Amazon and EBay’s use of social/mobile commerce using Twitter had uncovered a number of issues. A committee was formed and you were named to be a key member. As part of being on that committee you have been designated to prepare a report of your findings on these uses of hashtag commerce.

Your report should address a number of issues, including the following.

- What do you think about Edmunds’ two “organizing themes” of the privacy paradox and the convenience theory of purchasing? Do they make sense? Would they help members of the consortium understand order by tweet?
- What are the advantages and disadvantages of so-called hashtag commerce? More broadly, what were the advantages and disadvantages of implementing a commerce capability within a “social media” platform?
- How would firms ultimately evaluate the success of the use of “hashtag” commerce? What analytics might they use to drive that evaluation?
- Twitter was a public forum. Would there be any potential issues associated with the privacy of the customers?
- What business intelligence information could be tease from this set of social commerce activities? Was the business intelligence that could be gathered the same as in other purchasing or commerce channels or was it different?
- How could the approaches used by American Express, Amazon.com and EBay be extended? How might other social media beyond Twitter be used?
- In American Express’ implementation, customers could provide the information by either replying to or retweeting a hashtag. What were the implications of customers using those two different approaches?
- As seen in the implementation by American Express, responses by users to the different opportunities seemed to vary substantially. Edmunds was interested in what were some of the potential factors driving those differences in responses.
- Amazon and others were interested in the implications associated with using a platform “different” than their own platform. What was at stake if customers used Twitter to place orders, rather than the Amazon.com platform?
- There were emerging questions as to how this approach would lead to monetization for Twitter: What was in the arrangement for Twitter? What would Twitter gain if it were to become a platform for commerce?

**Conclusion**

“Order by Tweet” is exemplary of the emerging trend of social commerce, in general and hashtag commerce specifically. Recently, at least three firms have used different versions of “order by tweet:” American Express, Amazon and EBay. Order by tweet was couched in two different theories: privacy paradox and the theory of convenience buying.
Analysis of the different approaches to order by tweet brings out a number of issues: What are the advantages and disadvantages? How will firms evaluate the success of hashtag commerce? Is the privacy of the participants affected? Does hashtag commerce provide a new form of communication? Why did people respond differently to the purchasing opportunities? What was the impact of potentially integrating different ecommerce platforms, e.g., Amazon and Twitter? If “order by tweet” had “legs,” what would be the impact on Twitter? Will hashtag commerce emerge as a “best practice” of mobile commerce?

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