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Linking Shopping and Social Networking: Approaches to Social Shopping*Chingning Wang*

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Abstract:

The interactive feature of Web 2.0 has provided many commercial interests. “Social shopping,” combining shopping and social networking activities through social media online, is an application of Web 2.0 in electronic commerce. This paper outlines three approaches to social shopping based on practitioners’ experiences identified in trade literature to help us better understand the emergent social commerce in a new referral economy. These three approaches serve as three perspectives that address a fundamental question of what social shopping is rooted in the rationale of theories in use. These perspectives also reflect how practitioners approach social shopping. These approaches include interactive functional perspective, consumer behavior perspective and business strategy perspective. The challenges of social shopping practices and comparisons between social shopping strategies (i.e. communication strategies through social media) and search engine strategies (i.e. communication strategies through search engine) are incorporated in the discussion.