Does Design Matter? An Empirical Investigation into the Design-Impact of Online Review Systems

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Abstract

Online review systems have become inherent in customers' decision-making when purchasing products or services online. Firms are aware of their impact on sales and strive to improve managing this customer-generated information. An aspect of review systems that has received little attention so far is the effect of design decisions, e.g., a 5-star rating vs. a simple "like." It remains unclear whether and how the design of the review system affects customers' decision-making. Our study investigates the impact of four review designs on six commonly used customer response measures capturing customers' behavioral intention, product evaluation, and information processing. An online experiment shows initial evidence that i) the design of review systems indeed affects customers' decision-making and ii) customer responses for behavioral intention and product evaluation strongly deviate between simple recommendation and the commonly used rating designs.

Subject Areas: *Consumer Behaviour, Decision-Making, Electronic Commerce and Internet Marketing*

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