

Antecedence of Software Recommendation – An Analysis of Software Reviews

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Abstract

Online reviews of products have become an important step for consumers before actual purchasing occurs. They may be viewed as the digital version of word-of-mouth advertising for products and services, and have become an essential component for both online and traditional marketplaces. For consumers, online reviews have the power to completely change their shopping habits and their product evaluation processes. For retail Web sites, an integrated online review system can help attract more customers to the site and give them an advantage over their competition (Li and Hitt, 2010; Hu, Zhang, and Pavlou, 2009; Chevalier and Mayzlin, 2006; Chen and Xie, 2005). A great deal of effort has been devoted to researching the impact of online reviews, particularly the relationship between online reviews and sales (Forman, Ghose, and Wiesenfeld, 2008; Chen, et al., 2007; Duan, et al., 2008; Hu, Liu, and Zhang, 2008).

Most of the previous online review studies focused on a small selection of products, such as books, movies, small electronics, or others. This paper intends to investigate the implications and characteristics of online reviews in the context of computer software. Computer software is technical and precise in nature; but it also possesses a human interface component that is hard to describe with words. That is, computer software may possess the characteristics of both a “search product” and an “experience product”. Previous studies have shown that online reviews of search products and experience products had different characteristics. Variables invested in this study include sidedness, review length, software ratings, and review helpfulness. We also intend to explore qualitative aspects, such as word lengths and word choices using content analysis tools.

Keywords: Online reviews, software reviews, technology adoption, TAM, content analysis.