

The Evaluation of Benefits Using WCMS Platforms for SMEs in E-commerce (the Case of Georgia)

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Abstract: The purpose of this paper is to identify the factors in the Georgian market that assist small and medium-sized businesses in beginning e-commerce activities. The paper's research is based on the assumption that for start-ups, small and medium-sized businesses, it is critical to take the first steps in e-commerce with as few mistakes and as few costs as possible. The ease of starting this type of business for small and medium-sized entrepreneurs stems primarily from the fact that they can build the website they want without having to hire expensive programmers or understand complex coding. All of this is provided by web content management system (WCMS) platforms. At the same time, however, the fact that the easier it is to start an e-commerce business through such platforms, the greater the competition in this market, in response to which, in the digital world, we need to constantly keep an eye on the news, trends, technological updates and innovations in this field in order to make the appropriate Implementation of issues in our business. In addition to international WCMS platforms, Georgia has several Georgian companies, about which we will provide a detailed breakdown in terms of positive and negative characteristics in the research section. Before that, it is worth noting that one of the primary benefits of using WCMS platforms from local businesses is quick support/facility (if needed). The used research methods and experience can be useful for other researchers to analyze opportunities for SMEs in any other country.

Keywords: Web content management system; SME; e-commerce.

1. Introduction

E-commerce effectively saves infrastructural investments and costs when compared to traditional commercial activities, and this is one of the reasons for the promotion of the e-commerce market in developed countries. However, it is intriguing to learn about the situation in developing countries in this regard. Although there may be more barriers to the rapid development of e-commerce in developing countries, it is worth noting that it has great potential for individuals and businesses to obtain products or services remotely, quickly, and easily.

A web page is an important tool for e-commerce because it allows the user to purchase a product or service. This type of website can be created in a variety of ways. It can be created by a specific programmer or special agencies on a private order, with your specifications and required functionalities taken into account. It is also possible to build a site using ready-made templates from various Web content management system (WCMS) platforms; this method is much easier and less expensive; however, when deciding on the creation of an e-commerce type of web page, we should first consider the business goals and Tailored to specific needs.

If the templates and functionality provided by the WCMS platforms based on the specifics of the business are sufficient, the website can be created from the mentioned WCMS platforms at the initial stage, saving a lot of resources. However, if the specifics of

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the business are calculated on the specific functionality of the web page and it is necessary to develop an individual design and concept, it is preferable to build the site from start to finish with full software protection.

E-commerce is rapidly growing in Georgia. According to National Statistics Office of Georgia, 23.8% of local internet users were using e-commerce services in 2022 (5.2 percentage point growth between 2016-2022). Additionally, the size of Georgian e-commerce market will be grown by 21.4% according to recent forecasts (Dec 2022) from Statista.

2. Literature Review

F. Kotler and G. Armstrong. According to Armstrong, digital marketing is a type of direct marketing that electronically connects consumers with sellers through interactive technologies such as email, websites, online forums and newsgroups, interactive television, mobile communications, and more [1].

In their study "A Comparative Study of Web Content Management Systems," Jose-Manuel Martinez-Caro et al. demonstrate how a WCMS can be managed and what can be accomplished by using it. As examples, the study uses three of the most popular WCMS platforms: Joomla!, WordPress, and Drupal. The study used a comparative methodology to compare the advantages, disadvantages, difficulties, and security of each platform, with three sites of equal purpose registered separately on each of the three platforms. The research presented in the work is founded on the aforementioned research methodology. As a result, we can conclude that WCMS is a flexible and simple way to create and manage a website [2]. The popularity of such platforms stems primarily from the fact that they are widely available, which means that anyone with no knowledge of software or coding can create a website on their own [3-4].

Yuansheng Wei and Yuxuan Dong investigated the incentives of retailers in marketplace-type businesses to mediate merchants through the online sales channel using an analytical model in their latest 2022 study "Product distribution strategy in response to the platform retailer's marketplace introduction." The study discovered that the main motivation was income from commissions on products sold on the site, as well as products created exclusively for their platforms by retailers, which added additional image and reputation to the platforms [5].

Another research provides several reasons why e-commerce in developing countries lags behind statistical data from developed countries. According to the article, developing countries represent a massive e-commerce market. E-commerce is cited in academic research as a good strategy and an ideal opportunity for developing countries to explore new economic avenues [6].

Mesut Savrula, Ahmet Incekarab and Sefer Senerb in their 2014 paper described how SMEs can benefit the new environment via e-commerce. Their findings show that company size can be also a disadvantage to competing in a global platform of e-commerce [5].

Several recent articles are also discussing the role of entrepreneurship education for E-commerce managers in modern business [8-9].

The research also studied articles that analyze evaluation criterias for WCMS platforms (see methodology part). The UI/UX design principles described in the paper by Hakam W. Alomari, Vijayalakshmi Ramasamy, James D. Kiper, and Geoff Potvin serve as the foundation for the ease-of-use criterion [10]. The research offers guidelines that make it simpler for people to interact with the web page interface based on user experience.

The technical functionality and security criterion are relied upon a study published by Jose-Manuel Martinez-Caro and co-authors which compares the 3 leading WCMS platforms, listing the technical functionalities necessary to build a user-friendly site [2].

Since the site directly reflects the image of the company, its visual side is one of the important factors, so if the user decides to build the site from the WCMS platform, the platform must have many template designs, be diverse and should fit the company's brand. Gabriel Almeida Lucas and others, in their study based on user experience, emphasize the impact of site design on the buying process [11].

The evaluation tools to understand the differences between different WCMS platforms (WordPress VS DRUPAL VS JOOMLA) are also reviewed in an article by Iqbal et. al; 2020 [12].

3. Materials and Methods

The study employs a comparative methodology, which entails the development of three demonstration sites with the same structure. Georgian CMS platforms will be used to build each site. The research will look at the various functionalities and designs of Georgian CMS platforms, as well as payment systems, ease of use, security, and tariffs.

Table 1. Evaluation criteria of WCMS platforms used in the study

Criteria	Method	References
Ease of use	Observing the process of assembling simulated registered sites by the researchers participating in the study and receiving feedback from them.	Alomari et. al; 2020
Technical functions	Determining and evaluating the number of technical functionalities available on the platform.	Martinez-Caro et. al; 2018 Iqbal et. al; 2020
Template design	Determining the number of template designs in the system and analyzing the technical capabilities (how much it is possible to make changes to the template, change the color, text font or image frame size, etc.).	Martinez-Caro et. al; 2018 Iqbal et. al; 2020 Lucas et. al; 2023
Integration of payment systems	Assessment of the possibility of adding payment methods (how many payment methods can be added to the site).	Lucas et. al; 2023
Safety	To determine by what method they ensure the security of transactions.	Martinez-Caro et. al; 2018 Iqbal et. al; 2020
Tariffs	Pricing and comparison	—

source: The table was built by the authors.

Three pre-selected people were tasked with building the site in order to evaluate the ease of use of the web page control panel. People involved in the study were given the basic structure of the site, menu items, product categories, images, text descriptions, and other necessary materials so that they could work in the control panel with the already prepared materials. The personal observation was carried out in parallel with the work process. Respondents were chosen from a personal network of acquaintances who had no prior contact with WCMS. They were tasked with platform registration, template design selection, site visual assembly from the control panel, uploading pre-sent text and photo materials, product input, and simulation integration of payment systems. The site assembly process in the www.b2c.ge system took place on 10.05.2022-12.05.2022, and the site assembly dates in the www.site.namespace.ge system were 13.05.2022-15.05.2022, as for www.desk.ge in this system Assembly took place on 21.05.2022-26.05.2022.

Platform selection criteria:

1. www.site.namespace.ge was selected as the most experienced company that has been operating in the Georgian market since 2014.
2. Selected as having the lowest subscription fee.
3. Based on the statistical data of the international analytical platform as of May 1, 2022, the CMS platform www.b2c.ge (<https://trends.builtwith.com/shop/country/Georgia>) occupies the second place in the Georgian market, which led to the selection of the mentioned company. and examination.

In addition to direct observation, the participants in the study filled out the following questionnaire:

- Rate the ease of building a site from the WCMS platform on a scale of 1 to 5 points:
 - o Very difficult
 - o Moderately difficult
 - o Neither difficult nor easy
 - o Moderately easy
 - o Very simple
- On a scale of 1 to 10, how diverse were the technical functionalities in the control panel?
- Was there a template design in the system?
- How many payment methods were integrated into the control panel?

3. Results

A. Platform www.b2c.ge

The main findings of the researcher on the mentioned platform are:

- The process of registering on the site turned out to be simple;
- The name of the menu items in the control panel and several terminologies turned out to be difficult for the researcher to understand;
- The researcher was unable to upload the product without the help of the video tutorial.

As a result of observation during the researcher's work, we can conclude that a small textual description of the terminology given in the control panel would simplify the user's perception of the term's purpose.

The researcher's observation and final summary of the work process are presented in the form of a table:

Table 2. Summary of findings on www.b2c.ge

Criteria:	Rate
Ease of use	Harder than average
Plenty of technical functionality	4 points out of 10
Template design	12 pieces template design
Integration of payment systems	22 different payment methods
Safety	Secure Sockets Layer (SSL) protocol
Tariffs	Averagely expensive

source: Authors' desk research.

Platform www.desk.ge

The main findings of the researcher on the mentioned platform are:

- The process of registering on the site turned out to be simple;
- The researcher spent a lot of time choosing the template design since there were 64 different designs;

- The control panel of the site has become easy to understand for the researcher;
- The functionality required for the online store was presented, but the system functionality required for embedding plugins for social networks and statistics counters was less available.

As a result of observation during the researcher's work, we can conclude that, despite the control panel and easy site configuration, it is necessary to add system functionalities so that the platform can keep up with modern technological developments.

The researcher's observation and final summary of the work process are presented in the form of a table:

Table 3. Summary of findings on www.desk.ge

Criteria:	Rate
Ease of use	Very simple
Plenty of technical functionality	6 points out of 10
Template design	64 pieces template design
Integration of payment systems	9 different payment methods
Safety	Secure Sockets Layer (SSL) protocol
Tariffs	Cheap

source: Authors' desk research.

Platform www.namespace.ge

The main findings of the researcher on the mentioned platform are:

- The process of registering on the site turned out to be difficult since direct registration is not possible;
- The system does not stand out in terms of the variety of template design, although this cannot be considered a drawback, since the platform is based on WordPress, so it is possible to use many plugins or blocks, which also creates visual variety;
- The control panel of the site was so difficult for the researcher that he could not manage it on his own without help;
- The platform was characterized by functional diversity, as the researcher was able to build several interesting functions tailored to the needs of the business he registered.

The researcher's observation and final summary of the work process are presented in the form of a table:

Table 4. Summary of findings on www.namespace.ge

Criteria:	Rate
Ease of use	Very simple
Plenty of technical functionality	6 points out of 10
Template design	64 pieces template design
Integration of payment systems	9 different payment methods
Safety	Secure Sockets Layer (SSL) protocol
Tariffs	Cheap

source: Authors' desk research.

In addition, the results of all three companies for visibility are given in the form of a table, where the evaluations of all 3 platforms included in the study are given, according to 6 predefined criteria:

Table 5. Summary on findings of all selected WCMS platforms used in the study

	CMS	Number of Functionals	Number of Design	Number of Payment Methods	Safety	Price
B2C	Moderately difficult	4 points out of 10	12	22	SSL	99 Gel
Desk	very simple	8 points out of 10	64	9	SSL	14.99 \$
Namespace	very difficult	7 points out of 10	15	according to demand	SLL; IP Address.	99 Gel

source: Authors' desk research.

5. Conclusions and Recommendations

The flexibility and simplicity of WCMS platforms contribute to their popularity and widespread use. Most importantly, it does not necessitate a large sum of money or specialized programming knowledge. The aforementioned factors contributed to their global popularity, though the situation is different in Georgia, where similar platforms are not widely used. Even though the local market is quite small, Georgia has six WCMS platform providers. In this study, three concrete WCMS platforms from the Georgian market are chosen, and the work process is discussed. These platforms are open source, and anyone can register and create their site.

In e-commerce, at the initial stage, the correct selection of the sales channel is of great importance for further development. If we consider scarce resources as one of the main problems for startups, then we can assume that saving money and human resources at the initial stage will play a big role in achieving success step by step. E-commerce sales channels can be a custom-made website, your online store built from WCMS platforms, placing products on large online marketplaces already in the market, or using mobile applications for fast delivery services.

In order to correctly select the platform from which our product or service will be sold at the initial stage, it is better to take practical steps, which means defining the needs. If the business idea is based on functionally loaded needs, for example, authorization through registration, reservation function, generation of specific documents in a personal cabinet or integration of other electronic systems, then it would be better to make a website tailored to the business needs. If the business idea is based on a simple buying and selling concept, perhaps building a personal website created from WCMS platforms available on the market or placing products on existing popular marketplaces is a more practical solution, thus saving human and financial resources. However, the latter does not exclude one or the other, and it is entirely possible to place products on other large marketplaces in parallel with the personal web page.

Creating a personal web page that is tailored to the needs of a specific business necessitates the involvement of people from various professions, such as web developers, UX/UI designers, and web administrators, and the need for people from other professions may increase depending on the specific needs. In this case, the rate for site creation is calculated on an individual basis.

A site registered through WCMS platforms is simple to manage and does not usually necessitate the involvement of a web developer. When selecting a platform, we should be

guided by the needs of the business, what kind of technical functionalities should be on the web page, how the platform ensures the site's security, whether the uploading of the assortment of products is limited, whether the visual diversity of the site is provided, and the other components discussed in the research section.

The role of mobile applications in e-commerce is growing in popularity, as this direction is based on fast delivery service, which in turn provides logistical flexibility. For example, in the local market, there is a Georgian company called "Elvis," as well as international companies called "Glovo" and "Wolt." Similar platforms were primarily aimed at the food sector; however, increased market demand for fast delivery services has led to the development of so-called Q-commerce, which is rapidly expanding into other areas. As a result, for newcomers, this is one of the best channels for increasing sales of their products or services.

To summarize, aspiring entrepreneurs must first define their business needs and then match them with the various sales channels available in the market.

Management systems need to be more loaded with technological functionality, which can be said to be a general recommendation for all 3 WCMS platforms provided in the study. The innovative, technological, and digital improvements that have already been thoroughly tested on the worldwide market should be put into practice right away. In addition, none of them has a clear competitive advantage. It is necessary to promote the field from their side, which may be due to the support of startups and budding entrepreneurs.

Since the worldwide technical sector is expanding and improving quickly, it is essential to incorporate comparable technological advancements on Georgian WCMS platforms as well, so that locals can access high-quality web services based on user experience.

The proper choice of sales channel is crucial for future development in e-commerce in the beginning stage. Saving money and human resources, in the beginning, will likely play a significant part in achieving success step by step if we view a lack of resources as one of the major issues facing startups. A unique website, your online store created on WCMS platforms, listing products on sizable online marketplaces already in existence, or employing mobile applications for quick delivery services are all examples of e-commerce sales channels. The best course of action is to take practical measures, which entails outlining the demands, in order to properly choose the platform from which our product or service will be marketed at the beginning stage.

- It would be preferable to entrust the creation of a website tailored to business needs to a programmer if the business idea is based on functionally loaded needs, such as authorization through registration, reservation functionality, generation of specific documents in a personal cabinet, or integration of other electronic systems.
- If the business idea is based on a simple concept of buying and selling, perhaps creating a personal website using WCMS platforms that are currently on the market or listing things on already-established, well-known marketplaces is a more workable approach, saving both time and money. The latter does not, however, preclude either option, and it is completely feasible to list products on other significant marketplaces concurrently with the own website.

The majority of the time, a website registered through WCMS platforms does not need the assistance of a web developer and it is easy to manage. Yet, as I already stated, the requirements of the business should continually serve as a guide when selecting a platform.

The importance of mobile applications in e-commerce is growing as this industry's focus is on quick delivery, which in turn allows for flexible logistics. For instance, there are international "Glovo" and "Wolt" as well as a Georgian company called "Elvis" on the local market. Such platforms were primarily targeted at the food industry, but as the market's desire for speedy delivery services expanded, the so-called Q-commerce emerged and is now expanding to embrace more and more industries. Because of this, one of the best ways for newcomers to enhance the sales of their goods or services is in this route.

In summary, it can be said that new entrepreneurs should first define their business need and match it with the various sales channels available in the market.

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