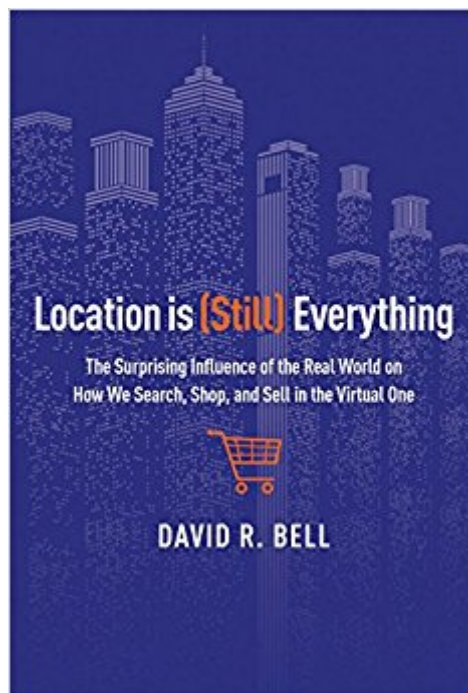




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Location Is (Still) Everything: The Surprising Influence Of The Real World On How We Search, Shop, And Sell In The Virtual One



Synopsis

Conventional wisdom holds that the Internet makes the world flat and reduces friction by erasing the impact of the physical world on our buying habits. But Wharton professor and marketing expert David R. Bell argues that the way we use the Internet is still largely shaped by the physical world we inhabit. Anyone can go online and buy a pair of jeans—but the likelihood that we will do so depends to a significant degree on where we live. The presence of stores nearby, trendy and friendly neighbors, and local sales taxes, among other factors, play a critical role in our decision making when it comes to buying online. Our willingness to search for and consume information also depends on where we live and whom we live next to. In *Location Is (Still) Everything*, Bell offers a fascinating, in-depth look at online commerce and retailing through his years of research, investing, and advising experience. His unique GRAVITY framework is a powerful and practical tool that uses fundamental human behaviors and location-based conditions to explain how the real and virtual worlds intersect—and what Internet sellers must do in order to succeed. Entrepreneurs, managers, students, and investors will all benefit from understanding how and why we use the Internet to search, shop, and sell.

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Customer Reviews

“A powerful rejoinder to anyone who predicted the irrelevancy of the three most important factors in retail: location, location and location. It’s a must read for anyone who runs an Internet business.”
—BRAD STONE, author of *The Everything Store: Jeff Bezos and*

the Age of “David Bell has written a playbook about how to win the internet. By illuminating the connections between our physical and virtual lives, he’s paved the way for smarter shopping, selling, sharing and living.”

• NEIL BLUMENTHAL and DAVE GILBOA, co-CEOs and co-founders of Warby Parker

“Thoroughly researched and elegantly written, this book offers a provocative insight •our online behavior depends a lot on where we live and this relationship is quite stable and predictable. Anyone interested in understanding online behavior of consumers would benefit tremendously from reading this book.”

• SUNIL GUPTA, the Edward W. Carter Professor of Business Administration at Harvard Business School

“The Internet has had a powerful impact on business. But the real world and the virtual one are more connected than you might think. Location Is (Still) Everything shows you what’s new, what’s the same, and what you should be doing about it.”

• JONAH BERGER, author of Contagious: Why Things Catch On

“Wharton professor David Bell reveals how location still matters in surprising ways, even in the supposedly ‘flat’ world of e-commerce.”

• INC.com

“Wharton marketing professor David Bell trots out a laundry list of convincing evidence that today, despite all the world-is-flat hype, where we live still dictates our buying patterns. It’s a welcome addition to a conversation that seems to ignore the fact that even in today’s hyper-connected age, only a projected 9% of retail transactions will happen online by the end of 2014, according to Forrester Research •and even those purchases are shaped by the physical world around them.”

• Fortune.com

“The bursting of the Internet bubble in 2000 has often been blamed on what then Fed chairman Alan Greenspan described as ‘irrational exuberance,’ but that’s only one part of the story. In [Location is (Still) Everything], David R. Bell, the Xinmei Zhang and Yongge Dai Professor at the Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania, suggests other reasons for the bust, reasons that should concern anyone with an interest in online commerce. The book doesn’t address the bubble directly, but it does deflate the idea that underpinned much of the exuberance in the second half of 1990s •that the Internet is always a flat, friction-less marketplace.”

• Strategy + Business

David R. Bell is the Xinmei Zhang and Yongge Dai Professor at the Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania, where he studies how we use the Internet and related technologies to search, shop, and sell. David developed Wharton’s first course on digital marketing and e-commerce, and he is an active angel investor in, and adviser to, a variety of successful Internet startups. David is a New Zealand citizen and received his PhD from Stanford University’s

Graduate School of Business. He divides his time between Philadelphia and San Francisco, and searches and shops online from both places.

This book is a must read for everyone in business, whether you sell on-line or not. Not only is it chocked full of expert advice and insights, it's so much fun to read. David Bell's writing style is as captivating as it is educational. I wasn't sure what to expect, but came away a total fan--and learned a great deal in the process. As the overview says: "His unique GRAVITY framework is a powerful and practical tool that uses fundamental human behaviors and location-based conditions to explain how the real and virtual worlds intersect -- and what Internet sellers must do in order to succeed." I would add to that, what anyone in business must do to succeed.

This book provides truly novel insights that demonstrate how who we are as offline consumers (and, importantly, where we are located) affect who we are as online consumers, eloquently encapsulated in the GRAVITY framework, a set of strategies that provide the foundations for one to actively and effectively engage in the digital marketplace. As an educator I will adopt this book as a textbook for my digital marketing class, but the book is equally and especially pertinent to industry practitioners who are looking for clear advice on how to propel their marketing strategies and prosper in the digital world. (The short answer? Location!) Dr. Bell is a master storyteller, doing an extraordinary job distilling rather complex ideas from a host of academic studies into tangible nuggets through the easy-to-remember GRAVITY acronym. I highly recommend the book to educators, industry practitioners, disruptive innovators, and anyone else with an interest in understanding how to leverage the interplay of the offline and online spheres in this rapidly-evolving world.

I read a ton of business, economic, and psychology books. I'm a huge fan of Malcolm Gladwell, Clayton Christensen, and authors of that genre. I loved this book. In these days of e-commerce, we often discard location as ball and chain that we've been released from. But what this book reveals is how our physical location is still such a strong force in determining how we behave. I don't want to spoil this book for anyone, but David introduces this idea of homophily as part of his framework, GRAVITY, and brilliantly reveals how and why birds of a feather really do flock together. I actually work for a hyperlocal digital advertising technology company that runs ad campaigns based on where people live and their proximity to retail stores. This book has provided incredible insights that both explained the phenomenon that we've seen and predicted others we haven't. I highly recommend

this book for anyone that is either working in digital or starting up a tech venture. This will no doubt inform any strategy that you are considering that involves geographic expansion.

Had high hopes for this one, but was quite let down. Every demonstration inside this book is completely intuitive and obvious. If you need a Wharton professor to explain to you that people's degree of offline access to goods affects their likelihood of buying online, or that people's buying behavior is influenced by the people around them, or that generating brand awareness through offline retail locations can drive online sales from people in those locations, etc, this book is for you. If "findings" like those sound like common sense, don't bother.

A must-read book for marketers, especially those who use digital tools supporting their business. I am an MBA/Marketing student and so lucky to get introduced to this book by the author, David Bell's recent graduated PhD student - my current digital marketing professor. We actually use this book to introduce digital marketing foundations in our class. Though I've watched Wharton's marketing course on Coursera taught by Bell along with two other professors, I strongly prefer reading this book. It gives more insights and explorations of digital marketing concepts and examples than the video course. This book did a good job explaining how the virtual world interacts with the physical world. It completely changed my understanding and respects towards the real world. Thank you, professor Bell for such a wonderful job!

As an entrepreneur, retailer and designer, I found the information in this book invaluable. I am currently relaunching a brand that I was considering having simply an online presence. However after Dr. Bell's impressive case, I am convinced once again of the crucial value of brick and mortar...even if this is simply pop up shops, flash sales, or special events. There is no replacing the human touch, interpersonal communication and exchange of energy that comes with direct contact. This research compelling far beyond the retail landscape and a great study into human behavior of relationships in general. It's conversational writing style makes this an easy read for the casual reader as well as the entrepreneur or student. I highly recommend this book as a view into how we choose what we buy and potentially even more...

This is a great book on a fascinating topic -- how location continues to be as important as ever in the era of online commerce, and how the physical world affects how customers behave in the virtual one. The book is based on years of rigorous research conducted by the author and his colleagues,

explained in an accessible and entertaining way. It is filled with practice-relevant insights and really interesting (and timely) examples, many of them illustrating subtle or counterintuitive findings (for example, the fact that more diapers are sold online in areas where there are less children -- I found really puzzling)A must read for anyone involved with eCommerce or with a general interest on the intersection between technology and culture.

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