



## Location Is (Still) Everything: The Surprising Influence of the Real World on How We Search, Shop, and Sell in the Virtual One

By David R. Bell

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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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### Editorial Review

#### Review

“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 Amazon*

“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, frictionless marketplace.” —**Strategy + Business**

#### About the Author

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.

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#### **William Grimm:**

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#### **Lauren Veach:**

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#### **Sharon Keller:**

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