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Authors: Jingguo Wang, Zhiyong Yang, Deanne Brocato

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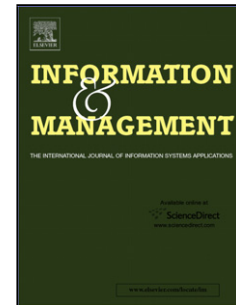
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**An investigation into the antecedents of prepurchase online search****Jingguo Wang\***Information Systems and Operations Management  
College of Business, University of Texas at Arlington

Email: jwang@uta.edu

\*Corresponding Author

**Zhiyong Yang**

Marketing

College of Business, University of Texas at Arlington

Email: zyang@uta.edu

**Deanne Brocato**

Marketing

Jon M. Huntsman School of Business, Utah State University

Email: deanne.brocato@usu.edu

**An investigation into the antecedents of prepurchase online search****Abstract**

This study investigates what influences consumers' extent of online search (i.e., the number of relevant web stores visited) before a purchase. A dataset containing website visitation and transaction activities from a panel of US consumers is used to test the hypotheses developed in the study. The results indicate a diminishing effect of competitive density on the extent of search, and the use of advanced information technologies induces more searches. Consumers also search more for experience products than for search products in contrast to the prediction in the nonelectronic market. Furthermore, online purchase experience increases, while product-specific experience reduces, prepurchase search.

**Keywords:** Online prepurchase search; competitive density; online experience; experience/search product; price comparison websites; Markov Chain Monte Carlo (MCMC)

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