

**DigiFE** Digital Education for  
Food Entrepreneurs

# MODULE 1



## Creating an Online Platform for Agri-Food Businesses



Co-funded by  
the European Union

# Learning Outcomes

The **Creating Online Sales for Agri-Food businesses** has been developed to support agri-food entrepreneurs gain a better understanding of the benefits of using e-commerce platforms in their business.

**On completion of this session, learners will/should be able to:**

- ✓ Define what e-commerce platforms are and provide examples of popular e-commerce platforms
- ✓ Outline the opportunities and threats related to using e-commerce platforms
- ✓ Compare the top e-commerce platforms to identify the one best-suited to their business
- ✓ Understand cybersecurity and how to avoid cyber attacks

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# 1. E-Commerce Platforms

## 1.1 What are E-Commerce platforms

E-commerce refers to all activities that involve buying or selling goods and services online.

An e-commerce platform is a software application or system that **enables businesses to create, manage, and operate online stores.**

It provides the necessary infrastructure and tools for selling products or services online, allowing merchants to showcase their offerings, process transactions, manage inventory, and handle customer service.



# 1. E-Commerce Platforms

## 1.2 Benefits of using e-commerce platforms

Less overheads i.e. no office space, shop space rent, maintenance.



Opportunities for broad online marketing and effective contact with customers



Collates data on consumer purchasing behaviours



Wider customer base compared to stationary stores due to 24/7 availability



# 1. E-Commerce Platforms



## 1.3 Possible Threats of using e-commerce platforms



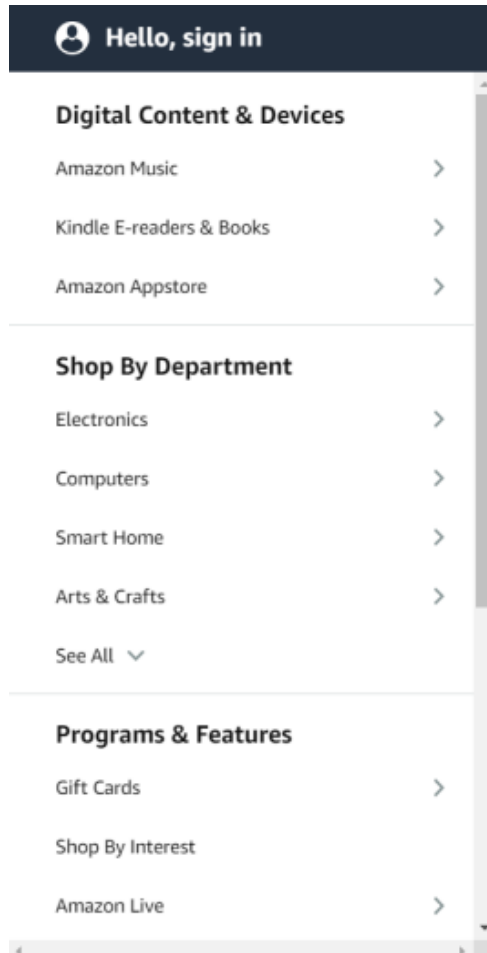
Internet users can be **overwhelmed** with information and decide to ignore some of it.

Lack of face-to-face interaction makes customer service **impersonal** which might be discouraging.

Some customers are not willing to cover the **delivery costs**.

Customer **cannot test the product** immediately and if it does not meet expectations, they have to return it which is time-consuming.

## 2. Online Shop Structure

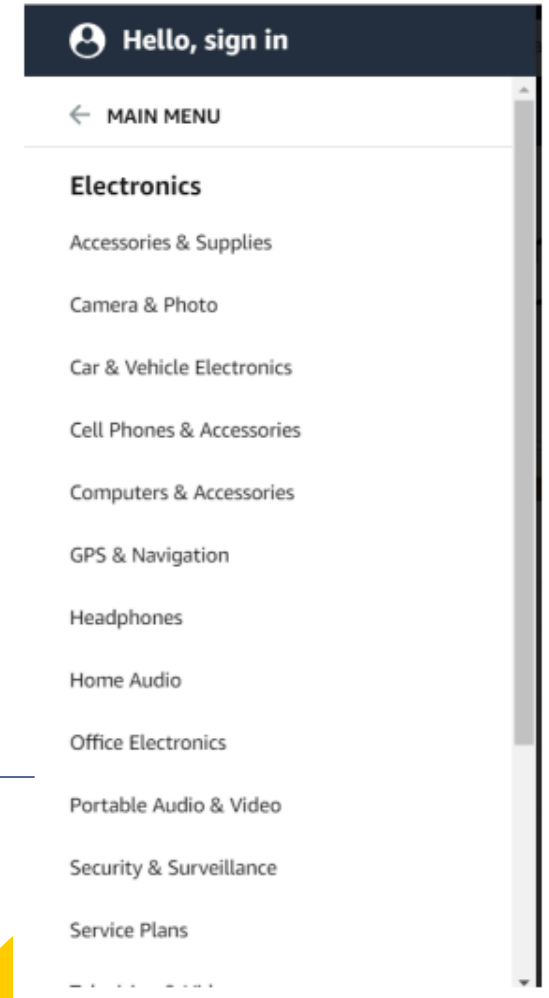


An e-commerce site typically consists of various sections and tabs that are designed to facilitate online shopping and provide a seamless user experience.

**Product categories:**

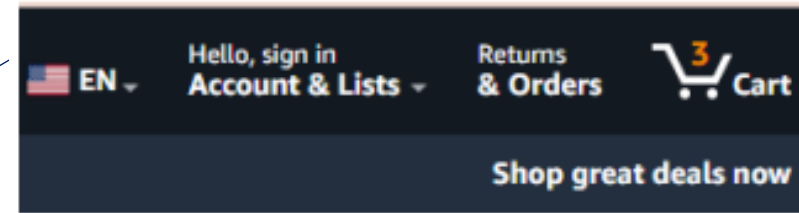
These tabs or sections group similar products together.

**Individual product listings** with details such as images, descriptions, pricing, customer reviews, and ratings. Users can often sort and filter the product listings based on various parameters like price, popularity, brand, etc.






## 2. Online Shop Structure

**Shopping cart:** These sections allow users to enter shipping and billing information, select payment methods, and complete the purchase process.



**Shopping Cart**

	Price
 <p>Betron Nylon Braided Premium 3.5mm Auxiliary Aux Cable Audio Jack Cord Line for Headphones iPods iPhones iPads Home/Car Stereos and More 1 Metre</p> <p>In Stock <input type="checkbox"/> This is a gift Learn more</p> <p>Qty: 1   Delete   Save for later   Compare with similar items   Share</p>	\$7.99
 <p>Betron in-Ear Headphones with Microphone - Balanced Audio Lightweight Tangle-Free Cord, Wired 3.5mm Jack</p> <p>In Stock <input type="checkbox"/> This is a gift Learn more</p> <p>Qty: 1   Delete   Save for later   Compare with similar items   Share</p>	\$10.99
 <p>SAMSUNG Jet 60 Flex Cordless Stick Vacuum Cleaner, Lightweight, Portable w/ Removable Battery, Powerful Household Cleaning for Hardwood Floors, Tile, Carpets, Area Rugs, VS15AG031R7, Rose</p> <p>50+ bought in past week In Stock <input type="checkbox"/> This is a gift Learn more</p> <p>Qty: 1   Delete   Save for later   Compare with similar items   Share</p>	\$199.00
Subtotal (3 items): \$217.98	

**Checkout:** This section or icon displays the items that a user has added to their cart while shopping. It shows the quantity, price, and allows users to proceed to checkout or make changes to their order.



## 2. Online Shop Structure

While the specific layout and functionality may vary depending on the site's design and purpose, the sections and tabs presented on previous slides are common for every e-commerce website. Some other features include:

**Wishlist:** It enables users save products they are interested in for future reference or purchase. It helps users keep track of items they might want to buy later.

**User Account:** A dedicated section for user accounts, where users can create a new account or set up personalized features.

**Customer Support:** A section that provides assistance and information for users, such as FAQs, contact information, live chat, or a support ticket system.



# 3 Top E-Commerce Platforms

## 3.1 WooCommerce



WooCommerce is an open-source e-commerce platform built as a plugin for WordPress, a popular content management system. It enables businesses to set up an online store to sell their products and services directly to customers. Because WordPress is a content management system first and an ecommerce platform second, many of the selling features are simple or rely on adding apps.

**Price:** Offers various different packages at different price points.

**Best for:** Content driven brands, small to medium stores.

**Integrated sales channels:** Google Shopping, Etsy, eBay, Facebook, Amazon, Pinterest, and Walmart; integrations are disjointed.



### Product Bundles

by [Woo](#)

Offer personalized product bundles, bulk discount packages, and assembled products.

€76 annually

★ 4.8 (135)



### Name Your Price

by [Backcourt Development](#)

Allow customers to define the product price. Also useful for accepting user-set donations.

€57 annually

★ 4.9 (75)

## 3. Top E-Commerce Platforms

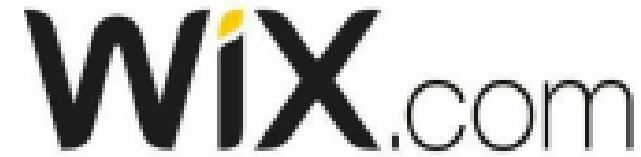
### 3.1 WooCommerce



#### Pros & Cons

- **User-friendly:** WooCommerce is easy to set up and operate, requiring no coding knowledge or technical expertise.
- **Customization:** WooCommerce provides a wide range of customization options, making it easy for businesses to create unique storefronts that match their brand.
- **Security:** As an open-source platform, WooCommerce may be more susceptible to security vulnerabilities if not properly maintained and updated.
- **Support:** While WooCommerce has a large community of users, support may not be as readily available as with other e-commerce platforms.

## 3. Top E-Commerce Platforms

The logo for Wix.com, featuring the word "Wix" in a bold, black, sans-serif font with a yellow dot above the 'i', followed by ".com" in a smaller, black, sans-serif font.

### 3.2 Wix

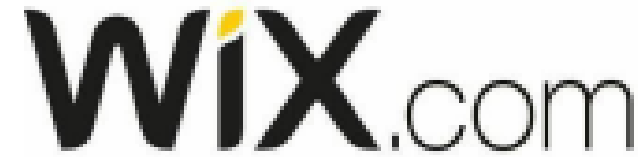
WixStores is an e-commerce platform provided by Wix, a website builder that allows businesses to create professional-looking websites without requiring any coding knowledge. Wix's ecommerce features have evolved drastically in a few years. They now offer multi-channel integration, abandoned cart recovery, dropship, and print-on-demand capabilities.

**Price:** Business Light: €16/month; Business: €33/month; Business Elite: €146/month.

**Integrated sales channels:** Facebook and Instagram require third-party app Ecwid.

**Best for:** Print on demand, small stores, boutiques.

## 3. Top E-Commerce Platforms

The logo for Wix.com, featuring the word "Wix" in a bold, black, sans-serif font with a yellow dot above the 'i', followed by ".com" in a smaller, black, sans-serif font.

### 3.2 Wix

#### Positives:

- **Cost-effective:** WixStores is affordable, with plans starting at just \$23 per month, making it an affordable option for small businesses.
- **Customization:** WixStores provides a range of customization options, including templates, themes, and apps, to help businesses create unique storefronts that match their brand.

#### Negatives:

- **Tracking and analytics** require paid plan
- **Site isn't transferrable**

# Top E-Commerce Platforms Analysis



## 3.3 Shopify

Shopify is a cloud-based e-commerce platform designed to help businesses set up and operate online stores. It offers a range of features to help businesses manage their storefronts, including product listings, inventory management, payment processing, and shipping.

**Price:** Basic Shopify: €24/month; Shopify: €69/month; Advanced Shopify: €289/month

**Best for:** Drop shipping, print on demand, small stores, brick and mortar.

**Integrated sales channels:** Facebook, Instagram, Google, Walmart Marketplace, eBay, and Amazon.

## 3. Top E-Commerce Platforms



### 3.3 Shopify

#### Positives

- **User-friendly:** Shopify is easy to set up and operate, requiring no coding knowledge or technical expertise.
- **Security:** Shopify provides a secure platform that is PCI compliant, ensuring that customer data is protected.
- **Support:** Shopify provides 24/7 customer support, including live chat, email, and phone support.
- Shopify's app ecosystem allows businesses to add additional functionality to their storefronts, including marketing or accounting.

#### Negatives:

- **Cost:** Shopify can be expensive, particularly for businesses that require additional features or customizations.
- **Limited customization:** While Shopify provides a range of customization options, it may not offer the same level of flexibility as other e-commerce platforms.
- **Transaction fees:** Shopify charges transaction fees on sales made through third-party payment providers, which can add up over time.

## 4. Cybersecurity

**Cybersecurity** is the use of technologies, their processes and controls to protect online systems, networks, programs, devices, and data from ‘cyber attacks’

**Cyber Attacks** are any offensive activity that targets computer information systems, computer networks, infrastructures, personal computer devices, or smartphones.

**IT Governance Europe** offers information and support to short- and medium- sized businesses on understanding and managing cyber security: <https://www.itgovernance.eu/en-ie/green-papers/cyber-security-101-a-guide-for-smes-ie>





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