

Reading 2

1 Read five extracts from an article about services and e-commerce and look at the sentences below. Which extract does each sentence refer to? Match each sentence with one of the extracts.

a E-commerce used to be just about buying products. But now firms everywhere have launched electronic marketplaces for services of all sorts – from gardening advice to financial planning. If services now exist in the online world, those markets will become more competitive – as they have for computers and other items sold over the internet.

b In the 1980s, the late Phil Salin dreamed up the American Information Exchange, a marketplace for research, consulting and computer code. But it never really became successful, largely because it came before the internet: much of the cash and effort went into trying to create a network.

c Advoco, one of the few services markets that is already online, employs experts who want to give advice. Users then choose one of the 'advisers' directly or post a question on a bulletin board that they can answer with a bid. Once the service is delivered and paid for, users rate the sellers on a scale from one (lowest) to five (highest) and post comments about them.

d Supply of labour is not likely to be a problem for service sites. Some companies already have hundreds of professionals, attracted by word of mouth alone. Joining is free – and more promising than an expensive ad. What is more, for professionals living in developing countries, these online forums offer a unique opportunity to enter richer service markets.

e Whether there is enough demand for service sites is questionable. Small businesses and independent professionals, always short of time, might be interested. But to be widely successful, internet service markets have to overcome cultural barriers. Individuals are used to getting advice free over the internet, and will hesitate to employ a service provider whom they have never met face-to-face.

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|---|---|-------------------------------------|
| 1 | Early attempts at trading services electronically failed. | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 2 | Companies are sometimes graded on the service they have provided. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3 | It is easy to find service providers through e-commerce. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4 | Customers do not always expect to pay for online services. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5 | Services as well as goods can be bought online. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 6 | The buying of services online can be similar to an auction. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 7 | The winners are likely to be service providers in poorer regions. | <input type="checkbox"/> |

2 Match the verbs with the nouns from the extracts.

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|---|----------|-------|---|----------------|
| 1 | offer | _____ | a | a service |
| 2 | enter | _____ | b | an opportunity |
| 3 | post | | c | advice |
| 4 | give | | d | a market |
| 5 | overcome | | e | a comment |
| 6 | provide | | f | a barrier |