1.0 INTRODUCTION

The business world today, as we move into the 21\textsuperscript{st} Century, has evolved from the days of barter trading to virtual market places and Electronic Commerce. This change in the face of business and commerce has been brought about by man's quest for greater sophistication in order to ride the new wave of globalisation. This new wave has started to run the business world upside down via the breakdown of traditional economic barriers that kept business corporations successful for the past decades.

Globalisation means different things to different people, amongst which is the ability of multinational corporations and businesses, through the use of free-trade agreements and free-trade zones, to invest and conduct businesses throughout the world in ways that are beneficial to them.

With globalisation today, organizations and nations alike are re-looking at traditional business practices and making moves to revamp traditional activities so as to ride on this wave and avoid being swept aside or swallowed by the globalisation forces.

World trade liberalisation or globalisation as it is commonly referred to, has been powered on by the advent of the Internet which has given rise to a new medium of doing business known as Electronic Commerce.

The creation of the World Wide Web ("WWW") and the advancement of the Internet technology, has given the web an edge over other direct marketing channels. The WWW has accomplished wonders for consumers around the globe by supplying them with quantities of information on every product and service imaginable. It has become a viable marketing channel for most companies selling goods and services, from financial services to hot sauce (Peypoch, Raymond J [Harvard
Business Review May – June 2000 Pg 1]). Through the combination of interactive capabilities, networking, multimedia and data processing, Internet-based Electronic Commerce offers a tremendous wide variety of business opportunities, limited only by imagination, which may be complementary to traditional businesses or represent a completely new way of doing business (Timmers, Paul [Yr 2000, Chpt 2, Pg 4]). The most important part of Electronic Commerce is in Business-to-Business ("B to B") trading although Business to Consumers ("B to C") Electronic Commerce receives most public attention.

Internet Electronic Commerce includes electronic trading of physical goods and of intangibles such as information. This encompasses all the trading steps such as online marketing, ordering, payment and support for delivery. Electronic Commerce includes the electronic provision of services, such as after-sales support or online legal advice. It also includes electronic support for collaboration between companies, such as collaborative online design and engineering or virtual business consultancy teams. Internet Electronic Commerce offers a range of advantages that collectively has been shown to be important enough to attract massive interests on the part of businesses, both as users of technology and as providers of technology and solutions.

The global accessibility, and the relatively low cost of Internet access has resulted in:

(a) Whole new markets opening up at low costs, especially for small companies that can now build up global marketing, and
(b) Companies that previously divided up the local market among them, now find themselves confronted with new competitors in their very own backyards.
1.1 Objectives

In line with these developments, the National Information Technology Council ("NITC") the country's premier organisation in the planning of the development of Information and Communication Technology ("ICT") launched the National Information Technology Agenda ("NITA") in December 1996. NITA provides the foundation and framework for the utilisation of ICT to transform the Malaysian society into an information society and a developed nation consistent with the country's Vision 2020 initiative. Some of NITA's initiatives are the Multimedia Super Corridor (MSC) and Demonstrator Application Grant Scheme (DAGS). The mission of DAGS lies in facilitating the social and economic progress of Malaysians through the utilisation and innovative use of ICT. Some of the main objectives of the Grant include:

(a) building an integrated network of Electronic Communities using ICT and multimedia technology,
(b) acculturate Malaysians to ICT enabling them to maximise the benefits of ICT applications at work and home, and
(c) develop entrepreneurial communities enabled by electronic networks (www.nitc.org.my/nita/index.html).

The Malaysian Government has acknowledged the changes that technology, especially the Internet would bring to the nation and its people. Therefore, to enable Malaysians to participate in this globalisation wave, the Government has created opportunities through DAGS for Malaysians companies, especially the Small and Medium-sized Industries /Enterprises ("SMI/SME") which are primarily family-owned, and who will not be able to withstand the onslaught of globalisation trends, to be able to participate in this globalisation wave.
In addition, an individual company may lack the branding, global recognition and the ability to draw buyers to their individual dotcom site. But through an e-commerce trading community platform, a company can join forces with others with similar products, hence enhancing each other's presence.

Among the recipients of the Grant are SMIs such as Cyber Care, My-Biz and Electronic Placement System (www.nitc.org.my/gads/index.html) MyBiz.com was developed to aid SMI/SME to carry out business activities and transactions through Electronic Commerce, which is to increase the accessibility and connectivity of its users to a world of suppliers and customers through the Internet (www.mybiz.com.my).

Therefore, the objective of this study is to:

(a) to analyse the various e-business models available in the market
(b) identify the motivating factors pushing SMIs to be members of e-portals,
(c) to determine the benefits (both perceived and actual) derived by the SMI/SMEs since joining MyBiz.com, and
(d) to review and compare other existing e-portals with MyBiz.com.

1.2 Limitations

In fulfilling the objectives of this study, the following limitations were faced:

(a) the accessibility to data on the exact business model adopted by MyBiz.com as HiTechniaga Sdn Bhd. The developer of MyBiz.com was reluctant to disclose details of the entire project and the business model adopted by MyBiz.com. This limited the ability of the author to fully evaluate MyBiz.com's business model, modus
operandi, current position and compare it in depth against other established B-2-B portals,

(b) a significant number of SMI/SMEs who had signed on the portal were not actively using the portal thus posing limitation in extraction of sufficient and relevant information via the interviews based on a questionnaire which were designed to ascertain the primary concerns and derived benefits by the SMI/SMEs on the portal,

(c) inadequate information available on the MyBiz.com website and interviews which limited an in-depth analysis/ evaluation of MyBiz.com,

(d) inadequate information available on other B-2-B portals such as the exact modus operandi and marketing strategies which limited an in-depth analysis of the business models and marketing strategies of the portals as there was lack of documented literature on these portals, and

(e) the requirement for the usage of a username and password, which are allocated, to paying members restricted the authors' ability to access the individual company's website to enable us to view the strength of the website to provide sufficiently adequate information to enable transactions.

1.3 Concepts/Theories

This study takes cognizance of the following concepts/theory that was addressed during the course of this programme and further illustrates the practical application of the following: -
(a) Electronic Commerce is not limited to mere web presence but more than that.

(b) Business to Business (B-2-B) facilities can be utilized to transform existing business arrangements and capitalise on the cost advantages.

(c) Malaysian businesses are still complacent in adopting Electronic Commerce despite all the facilities and benefits offered by the Malaysian Government.

MyBiz.com was chosen as an illustration as the authors' previous employer was involved in the road shows organised to promote MyBiz.com to the SMIs/SMEs and also it is part of NITA, an initiative by the Government to promote ICT in the country and thus provides an interesting and informative case study in the above areas.

1.4 Significance of the Study

In line with the scope of this study, the objective will be to conclude with the criteria which could be applied to further enhance the capability of MyBiz.com to better serve the members using the portal.

1.5 Methodology

To meet the objective of this study, the main source of information, shall be from interviews that have been conducted with members of MyBiz.com, the insight from a staff of the former BSN Commercial Bank who was involved in the initial development work with Hitechniaga Sdn. Bhd. and finally some subscribers of MyBiz.com.

A basic questionnaire (open ended questions) was formulated to address the main aspects of this study to tentatively obtain feedback from the
subscribers on their satisfaction with MyBiz.com. A sample group was identified at random from the population of MyBiz.com subscribers.

Personal interviews were conducted with key personnel of subscribers who were in-charge of the MyBiz.com facility in their companies and also those who were involved in developing/promoting the MyBiz.com portal.

A compilation of the outcome of the questionnaire will be discussed in Chapter 4 of this study.

1.6 Chapter Outline

Chapter 1 provides a general introduction into the changing face of international business through globalisation and the role of the Internet in enabling this change.

Chapter 2 will highlight some of the literature/reviews/studies that have been carried out on the business models used in Electronic Commerce, i.e. the theorists' views.

Chapter 3 will provide details of the Company being studied, i.e. MyBiz.com and Hitechniaga Sdn Bhd, the company involved in the setting up of MyBiz.com, the objectives of the set-up, the business model adopted, its clientele and the present position of the company.

Chapter 4 will provide the analysis of the business model against the proposed models expounded in the reviews.

Chapter 5 will provides an overview, recommendations and a final conclusion to this study.