Inside story of amazon.com

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AMAZON.com an immensely popular website adds a new dimension in the cyber world activities and captured attention of students, academic personnel, and researchers for its exclusive and prudential approach. Others also love it because Amazon opens the door to most everything. You can find beauty supplies, clothing, jewelry, gourmet food, sporting goods, pet supplies, CDs, DVDs, computers, furniture, toys, garden supplies, and other stuff by just a click. In 1995, amazon. com sold its first book, which was shipped from Jeff Bezos' garage in Seattle.

One underlying reason for Amazon's growing popularity is its sensational stance for customers. Amazon interacts with its customers and provides valuable information to enrich their buying experience. During browsing, the website stores a cookie on the visitor's hard drive and collect data. When a visitor agrees to purchase anything, the website guides him/her to take a smart decision based on the collected information. Aside from this Amazon also created opportunities for business firms, individuals to utilize its platform to sell their products. This multidimensional strategy enables Amazon to become the ultimate hub for selling merchandise on the web.

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Everyday amazon. com needs to process massive amount of requests from its visitors so huge hardware capability is mandatory for its uninterrupted operations. The state-of-the art technology that keeps Amazon alive is totally based on Linux. As of 2005, Amazon has the world's three largest Linux databases, with a total capacity of 7.8 terabytes (TB), 18.5 TB, and 24.7 TB respectively. The central Amazon data warehouse is made up of 28 Hewlett Packard servers, with four CPUs per node, running Oracle 9i database software. The data warehouse is roughly divided into three functions: query, historical data, and ETL (extract, transform, and load a primary database function that pulls data from one source and integrates it into another). The query servers (24.7 TB capacity) contain 15 TB of raw data in 2005; history servers (18.5 TB capacity) hold 14 TB of raw data; and ETL cluster (7.8 TB capacity) contains 5 TB of raw data. To eliminate security risks amazon.com incorporates several advanced and reliable methods. Amazon employs the Netscape Secure Commerce Server using the SSL (secure socket layer) protocol. It stores all credit card numbers in a separate database that is not accessible through Internet and in this way resists the unlawful activities of hackers. Concerned customers can use both Internet and phone to submit their credit card information. Amazon has four software development centers worldwide. These units are constantly creating new features for amazon.com and developing the technology to support them.

As mentioned earlier both retailers and individual sellers use the amazon.com platform to promote their goods. Large retailers like Nordstrom, Land's End, and Target use Amazon. com to sell their products in addition to selling them through their own websites. Small sellers of refurbished and new goods go to Amazon Marketplace, Amazon zShops or Amazon Auctions. At Marketplace, sellers offer goods at a fixed price, and at Auctions they sell their stuff to the highest bidder. Amazon zShops features only used goods at fixed prices. Another sales channel called Amazon Advantage is a place where people can sell new books, music, and movies directly from the Amazon warehouse instead of from their home or store. In this regard, Amazon gets commission to handle the entire task. One of the recent additions to Amazon's repertoire is a subsidiary company called Amazon Services. Amazon Services is a pragmatic initiative of Amazon for the business community. Under this scheme, Amazon sells its sales platform and provides complete e-commerce solution for the businesses. Amazon sets up complete websites and gives tech support for other e-commerce companies using Amazon software and technology.

Beyond existing services, Amazon also working on a project called 'Mechanical Turk'. The aim of this project is to combine community, technology, and compensation. Amazon has funded the A9 search engine. It has full search capabilities, mapping functions, a toolbar with pop-up blocking and an easily accessible personal search history. *-Source: Internet*