

The World is flat

17/01/2008 20:27 by Sally Ahmed

Summary from the World is Flat by [Thomas Friedman](#)

As the world grew closer and closer into being one small village elements that paved the road for this transition got revealed. The discovery exhibitions that started back in the 13th century and up to the 19th century, helped narrow the distances by defining actual miles. The era's of globalization swept in as countries grew nears, companies merged and finally individuals put aside cultural differences and became one large nation. With more elements accumulating, came the fall of the Berlin wall back in 1989, opening the door among nations and canceling the gap that civilization suffered from all those years with the western eastern struggles.

Another element that played a part was the introduction of the Windows 3.01 operating system for IBM computers. The fact that old computer systems had built-in operating systems called for proprietary governance, and it gave little leverage for developers and programmers to expand their efforts to cover the vast and diverse platforms that were there. Although during these days the Internet was present and expanding, the impact of its affect was not materialized and apparent to those using it, especially the market. The internet boomed as a medium to share information, its educational roots being developed by a governmental entity and expanding into universities, pushed back and slowed down the commercial growth that we see today. When Netscape in 1990 introduced the first open free web browser, with its user friendly capabilities and high learning curve, the Internet and the .com era came to live, and every one who is any one had online presence (Friedman, 2005) .

With Netscape also the fiber optic cable was invented, allowing one Giga bit transmission speed of information on the Internet. This drastic connection speed opened the door for two individuals on the far side of the globe to communicate as if in the same room.

Companies promoting their goods online saw the opportunities offered to them with global reach. An item available on the Internet is globally present. But the global exposure was captured when merchants started establishing their business on geographical locations that are far away from their customers. A book store located in the US can run its online business through a hired web master in India or china. The transactions are sent back through the high speed connection of the internet for actual order dispatch at the US. Many companies started offering live support services over the Internet by hiring house wives and old veterans working from their homes. Customers visit the site and make inquires or request a live chat session, and the system automatically allow the home worker access to that session to provide the help needed. This type of business is one single element that explains the manifestation of commerce online or e-commerce on a global level.

The wide availability of the Internet gave many organizations the opportunities to explore new markets by selling their goods and services for customers who are on the other side of the world. Multinational organization hired individuals from different countries not minding the geographical distance, and integrated their networks through the Internet. The feasibility of such a market brought in new requirements such as unified language, common standards, one currency, and a whole set of cultural challenges (Jones, Rathi… others) .

References: Friedman, Thomas L. 2005. It's a Flat World, After All. New Your Times. (2 April 2005)
<http://www.nytimes.com/2005/04/03/magazine/03DOMINANCE.html?ex=1183348800&en=616b56a81032426d&ei=5070> (accessed 20 Jun 2007) Jones, Cameron. Rathi, Dinesh. Twidale, Michael. Li, Wei. One System, Worldwide: Challenges to Global Information Systems University of Illinois
http://www.isrl.uiuc.edu/~twidale/pubs/one_system_worldwide.pdf (accessed 19 Jun 2007)