

SESSION 04

E-Commerce Platforms & Players

Shopify • WooCommerce • Marketplaces • Custom Sites

E-Commerce | Winter 2026 | 3rd Year Bachelor

Session 3: E-Commerce Models



Four Core Models

B2B, B2C, C2C, and D2C — each defines who sells, who buys, and how value flows online



Key Numbers

B2B: \$7.7T globally; B2C: 65% of e-commerce; C2C: 127M+ sellers; D2C: +40% YoY growth



Strategies & Platforms

Each model requires different marketing, platforms, and sales cycles



Hybrid Models

Amazon, Nike, and Alibaba now operate across multiple models simultaneously

Session Objectives

- 01** Discover the different types of e-commerce platforms available today
- 02** Understand the difference between marketplaces and proprietary merchant sites
- 03** Compare SaaS, open-source, and custom-built e-commerce solutions
- 04** Identify criteria for choosing the right platform for a business project
- 05** Analyze how Moroccan businesses are leveraging e-commerce platforms

Agenda: Platform Landscape → Platform Deep Dives → Choosing a Platform → Morocco Focus → Your Decision

What Are E-Commerce Platforms?

An e-commerce platform is the technology that powers online selling — it provides the storefront, payment processing, and tools to manage products and orders.



SaaS Platforms

Hosted solutions like Shopify and BigCommerce — pay monthly, no coding needed



Open-Source

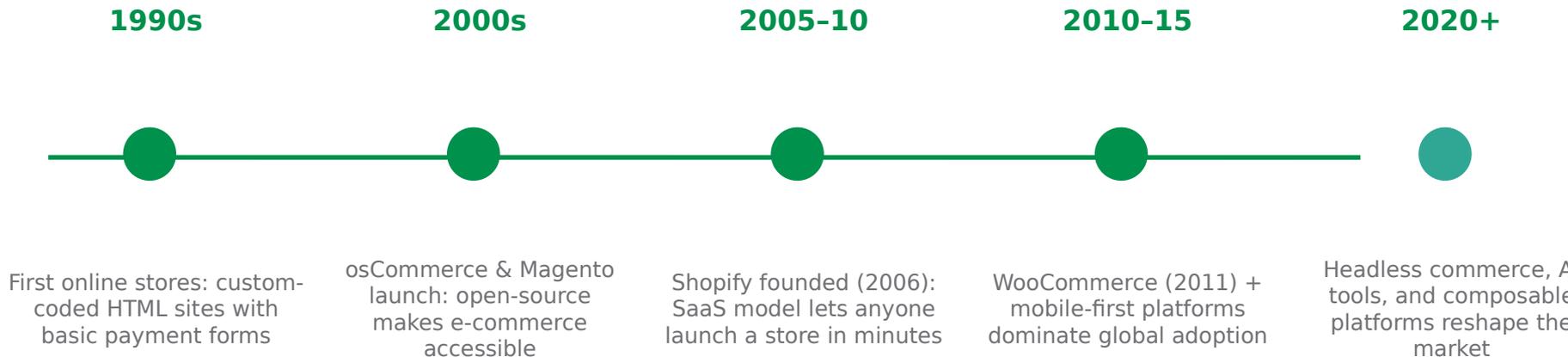
Self-hosted solutions like WooCommerce and PrestaShop — free but need technical skills



Marketplaces

Multi-vendor platforms like Amazon, Jumia, and Avito where many sellers share one site

Evolution of E-Commerce Platforms



Today there are 370+ e-commerce platforms globally — choosing the right one is a strategic decision

Platforms by the Numbers

29%

Shopify Share of
Global E-Commerce Sites

6.3M+

WooCommerce
Active Stores

370+

E-Commerce Platforms
Available Globally

\$6.3T

Global Online
Sales via Platforms

SaaS Platforms: Hosted Solutions



**Merchant /
Brand**



**Online
Storefront**

**SaaS
Platform**



**Payment &
Checkout**



**Shipping &
Analytics**



**Shopify powers 4.6M+
stores including Gymshark,
Allbirds, and Kylie
Cosmetics**

Open-Source Platforms

WooCommerce

WordPress plugin powering 6.3M+ stores — free, flexible, huge plugin ecosystem

PrestaShop

European open-source platform — 300K+ active stores, strong in France and Morocco

Magento / Adobe

Enterprise-grade platform for large catalogs — used by Coca-Cola and Ford

OpenCart

Lightweight PHP solution — easy to install on any cPanel hosting environment



Morocco Open-Source Focus

PrestaShop is the most popular open source choice in Morocco

- WooCommerce used by Moroccan artisans and small businesses on WordPress
- Local web agencies in Casablanca and Agadir specialize in these platforms
- Maroc Telecom and hosting providers offer one-click installs
- Lower cost than SaaS — ideal for price-sensitive Moroccan startups

Marketplaces: Multi-Vendor Platforms



Global Giants

Amazon, eBay, Etsy — handle millions of sellers with built-in traffic and trust



Regional Leaders

Jumia (Africa), MercadoLibre (LatAm), Allegro (Poland) — localized experiences



Revenue Model

Marketplaces earn via commissions (8-20%), listing fees, and promoted placements



Morocco Marketplace Landscape

Jumia.ma — Morocco's #1 marketplace • Avito.ma for C2C • Hmizate for deals • Growing social commerce on Instagram and Facebook

Custom-Built & Headless Solutions



Full Control

Custom code gives you 100% control over design, features, and integrations



Headless Commerce

Separate front-end and back-end — use React/Next.js with any commerce API



API-First

Platforms like Medusa.js, Saleor, and Commerce.js offer composable architecture



When to Choose

Best for large brands with dev teams needing unique UX or complex integrations



Key Insight: 71% of enterprise brands now use or plan headless commerce. In Morocco, custom PHP/Laravel solutions are popular among agencies building client stores.

Key Selection Criteria



Budget & Cost

SaaS: \$29-299/mo; Open-source: free + hosting (\$5-50/mo); Custom: \$5K-100K+ to build



Technical Skills

Shopify: no coding needed; WooCommerce: basic WordPress; Custom: full dev team required



Scalability

SaaS scales automatically; open-source needs manual server upgrades; custom is limitless



Customization

Custom: unlimited; open-source: high via plugins; SaaS: limited to themes and apps



Speed to Launch

SaaS: hours to days; marketplace: instant; open-source: days to weeks; custom: months



Ownership & Data

Open-source/custom: you own everything; SaaS: platform controls; marketplace: limited data

Platform Comparison at a Glance



Shopify

4.6M stores globally, \$29/mo basic plan, 8000+ apps, best for beginners and D2C brands



WooCommerce

6.3M stores, free plugin, 59K+ extensions, ideal for WordPress users and budget stores



PrestaShop

300K+ stores, popular in Europe and Morocco, strong multilingual and multi-currency



Magento/Adobe

Enterprise solution for 100K+ SKU catalogs, used by HP, Coca-Cola, and Nike



Morocco Platforms

Jumia.ma marketplace; local stores use PrestaShop/WooCommerce; agencies build on Laravel



Decision Rule

Start simple (Shopify/WooCommerce), validate demand, then scale or migrate as needed

Platform Head-to-Head Comparison



Cost Structure

SaaS: \$29-299/mo fixed; open-source: \$5-50/mo hosting; custom: \$5K-100K+ upfront build



Ease of Use

Shopify: drag-and-drop; WooCommerce: moderate learning curve; custom: developer only



Time to Launch

SaaS: 1-7 days; marketplace: instant; open-source: 1-4 weeks; custom: 2-6+ months



Best For

SaaS: beginners/D2C; open-source: developers; marketplace: quick sales; custom: enterprise



Morocco: PrestaShop and WooCommerce dominate local market; Shopify growing fast

Platform Selection – Key Trade-offs

BENEFITS

- ✓ SaaS: launch in hours with zero technical skills
- ✓ Open-source: complete code ownership and flexibility
- ✓ Marketplace: instant access to millions of shoppers
- ✓ Custom: unlimited design and feature possibilities
- ✓ Multi-channel selling across platforms is possible
- ✓ All platforms support mobile commerce in 2025
- ✓ Payment gateways integrate with every platform type

CHALLENGES

- ✗ SaaS: monthly fees add up and you never own the code
- ✗ Open-source: requires technical skills to maintain
- ✗ Marketplace: high commissions (8-20%) eat your margins
- ✗ Custom: expensive, slow to build, needs a dev team
- ✗ Platform migration is painful and risks data loss
- ✗ Vendor lock-in limits your future options
- ✗ Security responsibility shifts to you with open-source and custom solutions

E-Commerce Platforms in Morocco

45%+

Local Stores Use
PrestaShop

30%+

Moroccan Shops
on WooCommerce

2x

Shopify Growth
in Morocco (YoY)

Platform Landscape

- PrestaShop is the #1 open-source platform used by Moroccan online stores
- WooCommerce popular among small businesses and artisan cooperatives
- Shopify adoption doubling yearly as Moroccan brands go international
- Local agencies in Casablanca and Agadir build custom Laravel/PHP stores
- Morocco Digital 2030 aims to digitize 50% of SMEs including e-commerce platforms

How to Choose Your Platform



Define Your Budget

Under \$50/mo? WooCommerce. \$29-299/mo? Shopify. \$10K+ budget? Custom or Magento



Assess Your Skills

No coding? Shopify. Basic WordPress? WooCommerce. Full dev team? Custom/headless



Consider Your Catalog

Under 100 products? Shopify. 1K-10K SKUs? WooCommerce/PrestaShop. 100K+? Magento



Plan for Growth

Start with SaaS or open-source, validate your market, then scale — migration is always possible

Real-World Platform Choices



Gymshark: Shopify

From garage startup to \$500M brand — Shopify Plus handles 5000+ orders per minute on launch days



Jumia: Custom Platform

Africa's largest e-commerce platform built a custom solution to handle 11 countries, multiple currencies, and local payment methods



Marjane: WooCommerce

Morocco's leading supermarket chain uses WooCommerce for online grocery delivery — proving open-source works at scale locally



Allbirds: Shopify → Headless

Started on basic Shopify, migrated to headless as they grew — showing how platforms evolve with your business



Key Takeaways

- 1 Your platform choice is one of the most important early decisions — it affects cost, speed, and scalability
- 2 SaaS platforms like Shopify let you launch in hours, but open-source gives you full ownership and flexibility
- 3 Marketplaces provide instant traffic but charge 8-20% commissions that reduce your margins over time
- 4 No platform is permanent — start simple, validate demand, then scale or migrate as your business grows
- 5 In Morocco, PrestaShop and WooCommerce dominate — but Shopify is growing fast as brands go global

Homework & Required Reading

Required Reading

Book: *"How to design, create, and manage your site"*

Author: Pelet, Jean-Eric | **Publisher:** Dunod (2018)

Pages: 57 to 70

Access: <http://international.scholarvox.com>

Coming Up — Session 5

Hosting, Domain, and Domain Name — We will understand the technical basics for putting an e-commerce site online, explore hosting types, and learn how to choose a domain name.

Thank you | Questions? | See you next session!