

## STRATEGIC DIGITAL COMMUNICATION AND PLATFORM DEVELOPMENT FOR COMMUNITY-BASED ORGANIC AGRICULTURAL ENTERPRISES: A CASE STUDY OF KOH KRET, THAILAND

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### Abstract

The project objectives were to (1) develop a digital platform for product distribution, (2) identify successful digital marketing strategies for community-based organic agricultural enterprises in Ko Kret, Nonthaburi, and (3) determine users' satisfaction with the platform. This mixed-methods research used a user survey, participant observation, and in-depth interviews and developed a web app. The site was built using an ongoing community engagement approach to ensure it was user-friendly and responsive across devices. The results indicated that local businesses that wish to succeed in digital marketing should focus on improving their use of technology, including using social media to build brand awareness around local stories and networking with other organizations to reach more people. The key components of the developed platform include mobile compatibility and chatbot integration. The production of custom content and the enhancement of the UX/UI app were driven by community participation in content development and usability testing. This is because community members can add contextual community data and acceptability. To assess the app's efficacy depending on content quality (mean = 4.33, SD = 0.51), system performance (mean = 4.32, SD = 0.53), and user experience (mean = 4.34, SD = 0.51), a sample of 400 respondents was surveyed; all three variables significantly affected the satisfaction with using the app.

The website features were visual appeal (Mean = 4.45) and mobile utility (Mean = 4.35). Real-world results show that educating stakeholders about technology, integrating them into the process, and continuous learning are important. New research should focus on big data analytics, mobile app development, and AI-driven customization to promote digital trade in the local area in the long run.

**Keywords:** Digital Marketing, Community Enterprises, UX/UI, Organic Agriculture, Koh Kret

## 1. Introduction

Organic farming is a popular method of growing food that is environmentally friendly, conserves natural resources, and reduces reliance on synthetic chemicals. This method has seen continued market expansion in the United States and other countries, and it also benefits consumers who are concerned about environmental and health safety (IFOAM - Organics International, 2022). Organic farming stimulates local economic growth by reducing costs, increasing farmers' incomes, and promoting the independence of community-based companies. It is important for the growth of the grassroots economy because these companies use direct distribution techniques from local resources and create things on a small scale, as stated by Saberi Riseh et al. (2024).

The Koh Kret Community Enterprise in Nonthaburi, Thailand, exemplifies an innovative approach to urban organic farming. Local farmers have collaborated to produce value-added botanical products, including red tea, pandan-mulberry beverages, and dried herbs, prioritizing consumer and environmental safety. With the assistance of local governments and educational institutions, the company has expanded its market through the utilization of digital technologies and online marketing platforms. Ko Kret Subdistrict Administrative Organization (2023) stated that this collaboration is an example of collaboration between various types of organizations to enhance the community's economic resilience in the long term.

Small businesses that have transitioned to digital platforms face challenges such as facilitating understanding of technology, building brand awareness, and adapting to changing consumer behavior (Kurnia et al., 2020; Kotler et al., 2021). Many community organizations lack sufficient knowledge about data analytics, secure payment systems, and user interface (UX/UI) design, despite the potential of digital technology to reduce transaction costs and enhance market accessibility for a broader audience.

This study emphasizes community-based organic entrepreneurs and proposes the development of a digital platform that integrates contemporary digital tools with research on the local environment. Researchers have determined that content marketing, search engine optimization, mobile-responsive websites (Asmizal, A., Walton, E. P., & Naviri, S., 2024), and social media utilization facilitate client trust and knowledge regarding a business (Chaffey & Smith, 2022; Nguyen et al., 2022; Williams, 2021). The "Local Digital Platform Model" proposes a strategy framework aimed at enhancing the resilience of local economies, facilitating the attainment of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and promoting equitable economic growth through the integration of various sectors (Johnson et al., 2022). The proposed "Local Digital Platform Model" promotes equitable economic development and facilitates the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by fortifying local economies through collaboration among diverse stakeholders.

The project was designed to provide online marketing to community enterprises. Through studying consumer behavior, we learned why people buy organic products and how to create effective marketing campaigns using digital technologies, social media, and popular e-commerce platforms to make it easier for their communities to reach and interact with them. Evaluation of the project by users of the innovation. The project will consider commercial benefits from increased awareness, sales, and customer retention, as well as technical assessments of the innovations, such as loading speed, responsiveness and security of the functionality, and user feedback on usability. These goals demonstrate the potential of the improved digital platform and online marketing strategies to transform local organic farming communities.

## 1.1 Research scope

The scope of this research focuses on studying and developing an online marketing approach for the Koh Kret community enterprise group in Nonthaburi Province to promote the distribution of organic agricultural products. This research covers consumer behavior analysis, the use of digital tools such as SEO, social media, and e-commerce platforms, website design and development to increase product access channels, and the use of user feedback to improve the website. In addition, technical outcomes such as speed, security, and user satisfaction are evaluated, as well as commercial outcomes such as increased sales, brand awareness, and long-term customer retention. This research has been reviewed by the Human Research Ethics Committee, Research Project No. 091/2023, Certificate No. 2023019, Faculty of Liberal Arts, Metharath University, Thailand.

## 2. Literature Review

The literature review compiled knowledge related to the development of digital marketing platforms for community enterprises, focusing on considerations from 3 main dimensions: (1) guidelines for online marketing development, (2) website development for agricultural products, and (3) website development evaluation, all of which are in line with the research objectives as follows: 1. Guidelines for the development of online marketing for organic agricultural products. Many studies indicate that developing an effective digital marketing plan for community enterprises requires a deep understanding of consumer behavior (Smith et al., 2018). Important strategies mentioned include the use of social media such as Facebook, Instagram, and SEO to increase website visibility and the use of content marketing to communicate the story of community products (Brown & Jones, 2019; Liu et al., 2017). 2. Website design and development

The website is the center of the online marketing platform. Research indicates that websites with good UX/UI and mobile display will increase the chances of repeat purchases (Nguyen et al., 2022). In addition, integrating online ordering features, payment systems, and convenient contact channels will enhance the user experience. 3. Platform evaluation: The Evaluation of community enterprise website usability should consider both system efficiency (technical) and user behavior. The work of Garcia & Martinez (2019) suggests that quantitative data from questionnaires and qualitative data from real users should be collected to evaluate both satisfaction and impact on sales. 4. Technological factors and consumer behavior. In this regard, AI technology, Chatbots, and data analysis systems such as Google Analytics and Facebook Pixel play a role in increasing the platform's capabilities to support personalized marketing (Williams, 2021) and respond to rapidly changing consumer behavior in the digital age.

### 2.1 Research Framework

In the research study on “Development of a Digital Marketing Platform for Agricultural Entrepreneurs of Community Enterprises in Koh Kret, Nonthaburi Province”, the researchers used Digital Marketing Frameworks and User Experience Design (UX/UI) concepts as the main frameworks for the study in order to comprehensively answer all three research objectives. Chaffey & Smith's (2022) digital marketing concept and Smith et al.'s (2018) organic consumer behavior concept demonstrate that organic customers have expectations about safety and health value. These concepts help researchers understand consumer behavior and motivations related to creating health marketing plans and website content that align with the needs of the target audience.

The researchers used this concept to develop an agricultural product sales website that meets the needs of both sellers and buyers. Garcia & Martinez (2019) used the technology evaluation concept to set criteria for evaluating digital platforms, considering both website usability, user satisfaction, and business outcomes, and used the marketing support technology concept (AI, Chatbot) by Williams (2021) to enable the platform to have the ability to respond to customers in a modern way.

### **3. Research Methodology**

The research methodology mainly uses a qualitative approach under the interpretivist research philosophy to gain an in-depth understanding from the perspectives of stakeholders, whether they are community enterprise members, consumers, website developers, or marketing experts. The use of epistemology and metaphysics also allows the data collection and analysis process to fully reflect the social, cultural, and economic contexts of the community. This approach combined qualitative analysis, digital technology development, and community engagement to develop online marketing that meets the needs of community enterprises regarding real-world usage, user satisfaction, and measurable business outcomes. The digital development process in this research uses a participatory website development approach with clear steps from data collection, UX/UI design, prototype website development, testing, and improvements based on feedback from real users.

### **4. Research Results**

#### **4.1 Summary of guidelines for developing online marketing that is appropriate for the community context**

From the analysis of qualitative data through in-depth interviews with groups of entrepreneurs and stakeholders in the Koh Kret area, Nonthaburi Province, it can be synthesized into guidelines for developing online marketing that are appropriate for the community context in 5 main issues as follows:

##### **1) Development of digital skills of entrepreneurs**

Most entrepreneurs still lack knowledge in using online media for marketing, such as content creation, SEO, or setting up advertisements on various platforms. Therefore, there should be continuous workshops, such as creating a business page, product photography, and analyzing data from online consumers.

##### **2) Establishing a central community platform**

There should be a website or central system that combines products and producers in the community in one place to create credibility at the community image level. The system should have security features for ordering, support mobile phones, have a membership system, and be able to convey local wisdom through content.

##### **3) Using Storytelling to Increase Product Value**

Storytelling guidelines, such as product origins, production techniques, or environmental values, help create a connection between products and consumers, especially those who care about health and emphasize sustainable consumption.

##### **4) Creating networks inside and outside the community**

Linking with supporting agencies such as universities, government agencies, or the private sector helps increase opportunities to expand the market and create brand collaboration. and organize joint marketing activities in online or offline formats

## 5)Design products and packaging suitable for the online market

Manufacturers should be encouraged to design products suitable for online purchasing behavior, emphasizing cleanliness, clarity, and communicating selling points through packaging, such as logo design, product labels, and the use of color tones that convey safety or are environmentally friendly.

### 4.2 Summary of the development results of the website for selling organic agricultural products of community enterprise groups

The development of the website in this research is a process designed based on the principles of User-Centered Design to respond to the behavior and needs of real users, both in the community enterprise entrepreneur group and general consumers. It focuses on simplicity, easy access, convenient use via mobile phones, and building trust in organic agricultural products through user-friendly design.

In terms of website design, the UX/UI Design approach is used, emphasizing communication with natural color tones, easy-to-understand navigation symbols, and an uncomplicated ordering system, such as a shopping cart system, online ordering forms, and payment channels via QR Code and Mobile Banking, as well as displaying reviews of real users to build trust and enhance SEO, such as using specific search terms, setting Meta titles, and sharing via social media. The Agile Development rules govern the website development process, which is carried out in four sprints: 1. User study, 2. Prototype design, 3. Real website creation, and 4. Real usability testing with target groups, including gathering input and refining before actual usage. The site also offers full capabilities like 100% mobile compatibility, loading web pages in under three seconds, a product review system, a defined delivery system, and HTTPS for security.

### 4.3 Website Evaluation Results from Consumers

Table 4.3 Evaluation Results of the Organic Agricultural Product Sales Website

Category	Evaluation Item	Mean	Standard Deviation (SD)
UX	1. Users can easily search for products and information	4.30	0.51
UX	2. Website aesthetics and design	4.45	0.49
UX	3. Mobile usability	4.35	0.53
UX	4. Website loading speed	4.25	0.50
Function	1. Convenient payment system	4.28	0.55
Function	2. Clear visibility of products	4.38	0.50
Function	3. Ease of product search	4.31	0.52
Function	4. Secure payment process	4.29	0.54
Content	1. Clear product descriptions	4.36	0.48
Content	2. Clear and attractive images and media	4.42	0.50
Content	3. Blog/news section is useful and regularly updated	4.20	0.56
UX	Average score of UX category	4.34	0.51
Function	Average score of Function category	4.31	0.53
Content	Average score of Content category	4.33	0.51

The satisfaction assessment results of users of the organic agricultural product sales website operated by the Ko Kret Community Enterprise Group showed that, overall, users were satisfied at a "high" level, encompassing all aspects of the user experience, system functions, and content quality. In the User Experience (UX) category, the average score was 4.34, with a standard deviation (SD) of 0.51. The item that received the highest score was "website aesthetics and design," followed by mobile suitability and easy product search, reflecting that the website was user-friendly and truly understood. In terms of system functionality, users gave an average score of 4.32 (SD = 0.53), especially the items "clearly see products" and "secure payment system", which received high scores, confirming that the website effectively supports important functions for online shopping. In addition, the Content Quality category also had a high average score of 4.33 (SD = 0.51), with clear product images and information receiving the highest satisfaction. However, the item with the lowest score in the Content category was "News/Blog Section", although still at a "high" level (Mean = 4.20), is a point that should be improved in terms of consistency of updates and value of content. In summary, the developed website can fully respond to the needs of users in terms of design, system, and content, with some small improvements to increase efficiency in the long term

## 5. Discussion

According to Chaffey and Smith (2022) and Adiyono et al. (2021), the Koh Kret Community Enterprise Group's internet marketing website in Nonthaburi Province was developed using appropriate research and theoretical frameworks from several fields. This includes creating a user-specific e-commerce platform, user experience and interface tactics, and digital marketing methods. These authors stressed the need for a user-friendly, SEO-friendly website. The user satisfaction survey found "very high" ratings for user experience, functionality, and content quality, consistent with Smith (2020) and Wang & Chen (2020) case studies. This research found that digital marketing platforms' capacity to establish credibility through content, provide clearly understood information, and tell stories affects their local community success. Koh Kret Community Enterprise uses high-quality product photos, accurate color tones, and a user rating system to communicate the concept of its business. One of the main goals of Agile development is to involve the community in creating a community sales website. This supports Brown and Garcia (2019) and Melovi et al. (2020) conclusions that local stakeholders are needed to construct grassroots digital tools. Garcia and Martinez found in 2019 that the organic agriculture industry needed to improve marketing channels through collaboration to survive. Therefore, marketing strategies that emphasize social media, local collaboration, and networking are justified to engage target consumers. User experience and user interface design that meets client needs can boost community enterprise digital marketing platform efficiency. The website has simple navigation and user experience. The color scheme and visual style express credibility and goodwill. These authors, mindful of Chaffey and Smith (2022) and Nguyen et al. (2022), stressed the importance of a user-centric website with effective SEO. The user satisfaction survey found "very high" scores for functionality, content quality, and user experience, supporting Wang and Chen (2020) and Smith (2020) case studies. This research found that digital marketing platforms' performance in geographically particular groups depends on their ability to tell narratives, provide honest information, and build trust through their content. Koh Kret used accurate product images, realistic color tones, and a user review website to effectively communicate ideas.

The Agile development methodology emphasizes community participation during website creation. This supports Melovi et al. (2020) and Brown & Garcia (2019) contention that local stakeholders are essential to grassroots digital tool creation. Garcia and Martinez (2019) underlined that collaborative marketing channels are essential to the organic agricultural industry Sarasuk, K. P., 2018). Their article describes the use of social media to build networks and local partnerships for marketing to reach their target consumers. The success of the Koh Kret community is due to their own community enterprise digital marketing platform that is enhanced by a user experience focused on the customers using the products. According to Nguyen et al. (2022) and Chaffey & Smith (2022), visual design and color schemes improve communication approachability and credibility. This shows how a good user experience may increase engagement and decrease website bounce. In addition to design, the website uses automated digital technology and data analysis. Chatbots answer client inquiries in real time, SEO techniques enhance the website's visibility on Google, and Google Analytics tracks user activity. These enable the platform to quickly and efficiently. External sites like Facebook, Instagram, and official LINE accounts expand communication channels and audience reach. Connecting the retail system to online marketplaces like Shopee or Lazada improves order and inventory management and expands the consumer base. The platform has excelled in using communication tactics to convey the community's importance and the product's provenance. Website and social media visuals are meant to evoke emotions and boost brand confidence. Wang and Chen (2020), who believed content is the foundation of internet marketing, found this methodology to be consistent. (Zhou, F., Sheng, W., Lu, Z., & Qiu, G., 2024). Local networks can boost entrepreneurial, technological, and training skills. These networks include universities, governments, and community support groups. Local people, internet resources, and outside groups impact a website's development. Community-based entrepreneurial groups can participate in the digital market sustainably and progressively, thanks to this platform's efficiency. User-centered design, specialized technology, good communication, and internal and external networks achieve this.

**Table 5.1: Success Factors of the Platform**

No. Success Factor	Description
1 User-Friendly UX/UI	The website is easy to use, with clear menus, a natural color tone, and mobile compatibility, providing a positive user experience.
2 Appropriate Use of Digital Technology	Utilizes SEO, chatbot, notification systems, and Google Analytics to analyze customer behavior.
3 Integration with External Platforms	Integrates with Facebook, LINE OA, Shopee, and other channels to increase reach and sales.
4 Communication Strategy through Storytelling	Presents the product story with sincerity, reflecting local wisdom and creating emotional connections with customers.
5 Support from Partner Networks	Receive support from universities, government agencies, and the private sector in terms of technology and training.
6 Community Participation at Every Stage	Community members play a role in designing, testing, and providing feedback to ensure the platform meets real needs.

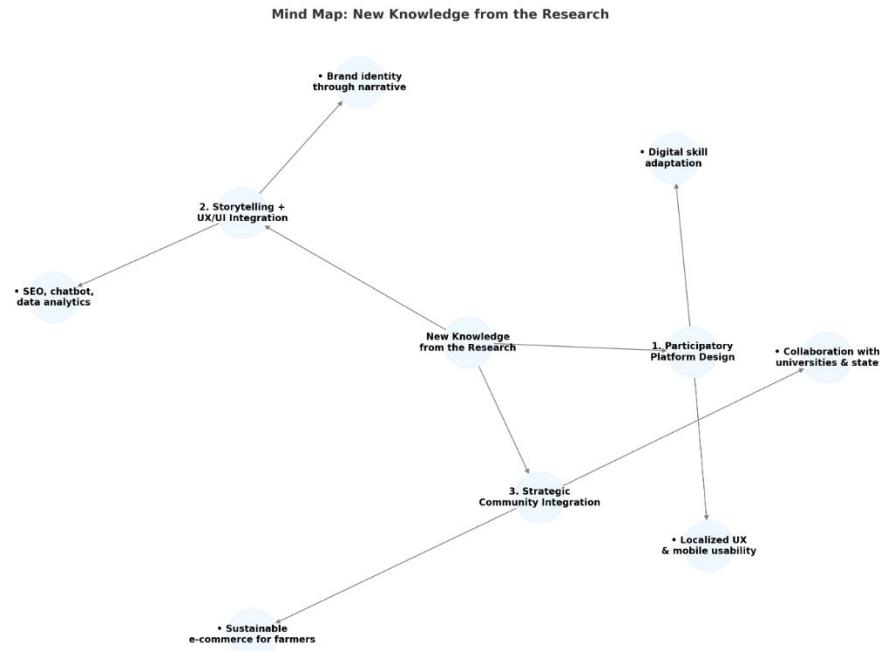
Specifically concerning the level of preparedness of the targeted community, this study revealed a number of issues that may impact the execution process. Many community entrepreneurs still struggle with technology, so they will need to put in the effort and seek out assistance frequently until they master the instrument. Data collection also takes place while communities are responsible for a wide variety of other responsibilities, therefore, access to data needs to be given priority. If development resources are insufficient, it may be difficult to overcome these difficulties, particularly when it comes to financing the construction of websites. While any potential performance issues with the system speed or order management automation are being resolved, open-source solutions are necessitated. Furthermore, there are some areas that have internet connections that are unpredictable, which frequently makes it difficult to access the site. It is possible that a website strategy that is successful for the Koh Kret community could not be user-friendly in other regions. As people in different parts of the world come from diverse cultural backgrounds, have different levels of social capital, and have different shopping behaviors, scaling-up efforts need to be tailored to the specific needs of each location.

## 6. New knowledge gained from the research

This research has created new knowledge that is important in the context of developing a digital marketing platform for community enterprise groups, especially in terms of the application of digital technology to the local context, which is a harmonious combination of communication concepts, UX/UI design, and social marketing. The results of the research show that the community participatory design approach can create a system that is consistent with consumer behavior and the capabilities of local users.

One of the outstanding new knowledge is the platform development model that links the communication strategy of Storytelling with UX/UI design, using the story of organic agricultural products as the core of the communication to create emotional engagement and consumer confidence, along with the use of technological techniques such as SEO, Chatbot, and Google Analytics at the community enterprise level, which have previously been studied in practice, especially in semi-urban and semi-rural areas such as Koh Kret.

In addition, the research also proposes a new approach for linking networks within and outside the community, such as universities, government agencies, and online market platforms, together systematically to create a sustainable digital marketing infrastructure. This research is, therefore, considered new knowledge that can be further developed in other communities or developed into a policy framework for grassroots marketing innovation in the future.



**Figure 6.1** The mind map illustrating the core areas of new knowledge generated from the research.

The mind map illustrates the core areas of new knowledge generated from the research on developing a digital marketing platform for community-based organic agricultural enterprises. The first cluster focuses on Participatory Platform Design, highlighting how engaging local stakeholders throughout the development process leads to a platform tailored to the real needs of the community. This includes adapting UX design for local users, such as ensuring mobile responsiveness and providing digital skills training to empower community members to manage the platform independently.

The second and third clusters reflect the integration of storytelling and UX/UI strategy with strategic community collaboration. Storytelling is used not only to build brand identity through cultural narratives but also to improve customer trust and emotional connection. The platform incorporates SEO, chatbot, and analytics tools to enhance online visibility and responsiveness. Finally, successful collaboration with universities, government agencies, and private sector support plays a crucial role in building a sustainable digital ecosystem, enabling rural producers to engage in e-commerce effectively and competitively.

## 7. Conclusion

This research aimed to develop a digital marketing platform that is appropriate for the context of the Ko Kret Community Enterprise Group, Nonthaburi Province. The results of the first part of the study found that effective online marketing should focus on creating storytelling content, using social media in conjunction with the website, and linking up with support agencies to expand access to customer groups and increase marketing opportunities for organic agricultural products. The developed website has a structure and design based on UX/UI principles that respond to the behavior of users in the community in terms of aesthetics, ease of use, and suitability for mobile devices. The results of the evaluation of user satisfaction in all 3 dimensions - user

experience (UX), functionality (Function), and content quality (Content) were all at the "high" level, confirming that the website can truly meet the needs of users in the community context.

## 8. Recommendations

Practical recommendations for entrepreneurs are to continuously focus on learning digital skills, including media production, online advertising, and creative brand communication, while government agencies should play a role in supporting knowledge, technology, and network development to enhance the potential of community enterprise groups to enter the digital market sustainably. In addition, recommendations for future research should study the use of new technologies such as AI and Chatbots in customer service systems, as well as the development of mobile applications to facilitate access to products and services, analyzing Big Data from websites or social media user behaviors will help adjust marketing strategies to be more specific and targeted to the target group.

In conclusion, this research has proposed a new approach to integrating digital technology with cultural communication at the community level and creating a platform prototype that can be applied in other communities with similar contexts. It also complements knowledge in communications and spatial digital marketing, which will be beneficial to both grassroots entrepreneurs and researchers in related fields.

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