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By Cat Yong Total e-commerce spend in Malaysia, is still only a measly less than 1 percent of total retail spend, according to Exabytes Networks' founder and CEO, Chan Kee Siak. He said, "Exabytes wants to overall grow the market to be 110-percent of total retail spend, and effectively grow the pie bigger."

Lifestyle Tech

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This is the main reason behind [Exabytes' recent tie-up with Celcom Planet](#).

The challenge for Malaysia, seems to be the number of merchants as well as type of products they sell online.

"E-commerce started over 20 years ago, but its development has been slow. Awareness started to increase a lot, when low cost airlines came around, and people were introduced to e-ticketing (buying tickets online)," said Chan who also added that e-commerce really started to take off, when group buying services, began locally.

"The consumer segment's behaviour has changed. Now, they want information immediately and to be able to shop efficiently," Chan added.

Trending up

2015 will be an interesting year for e-commerce, according to Chan also. "There will be major developments in terms of GST implementation, which will affect consumer behaviour. So, there are a lot of unknown variables."

Thrown into the mix also, is the fact that the local industry has matured.

Chan further observed, "The infrastructure for e-commerce – payment gateways, mobile technologies, virtual currencies – are getting mature, along with smart devices too. So, the timing is right (for e-commerce to grow some more).

In fact, new and traditional retailers would likely start more e-commerce initiatives this year, a trend which Chan wishes to capitalise on.

"We do not have the luxury of time to reinvent the wheel," Chan said, adding that as result, they are enhancing their internal capabilities and partnering with successful e-commerce players like Celcom Planet, which is helmed by CEO, Hoseok Kim.

Prior to Celcom Planet, Kim led operations for 11ST, one of Korea's top e-commerce marketplace, that served over 30 million customers a year, with gross merchandise value of USD5 billion last year.