



Victoria Jennings, Ph.D

8 October 2015

# Can On-line Availability of Contraceptives Increase Access to New & Underused Methods?

---

# INNOVATION FUND GRANT

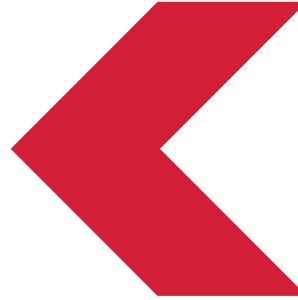
Flagship initiative for inspiring and financing new activities that further the RHSC strategic goals

- **Innovation:** any promising new idea with the potential to bring about positive change.
- **Grant from NURHTs Caucus** provided crucial support to start conversation on e-commerce

---

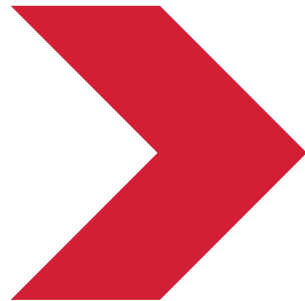
**E-commerce:** A potentially disruptive way for consumers to access family planning

Remember when the only thing that you could buy online was a **book**?



Now, you get everything from your **mattress**....

...to your **family planning.**



Levlen is a contraception pill that prevents ovulation, makes it harder for the sperm to reach the uterus and for the fertilized egg to attach.

[Buy now!](#)



Yaz is prescribed for pregnancy prevention. If used correctly, it provides 99% success rate allowing for efficient birth control.

[Buy now!](#)



Levonorgestrel is used for pregnancy prevention following birth control failure. It works by making fertilization nearly impossible.

[Buy now!](#)



Ovral G is recommended for postponing menstruation and treating endometriosis, efficient because of the way it affects specific hormones.

[Buy now!](#)



Plan B is intended for women whose birth control method failed due to any reason. It works by making a pregnancy difficult to occur.

[Buy now!](#)

Birth control pills can help patients:

---

# E-COMMERCE & REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH

- **Business-to-consumer (B2C) e-commerce sales = \$1.5 trillion in 2015.**
- **Consumers have new channels for accessing products, services, and information privately and conveniently.**
- **Contraceptive commodities on internet and mobile apps: condoms, EC, OCs, pregnancy tests, CycleBeads**
- **Mobile apps support contraceptive use and facilitate use of information-based methods**

# CASE STUDY APPROACH

Partnership focuses on specific methods and countries

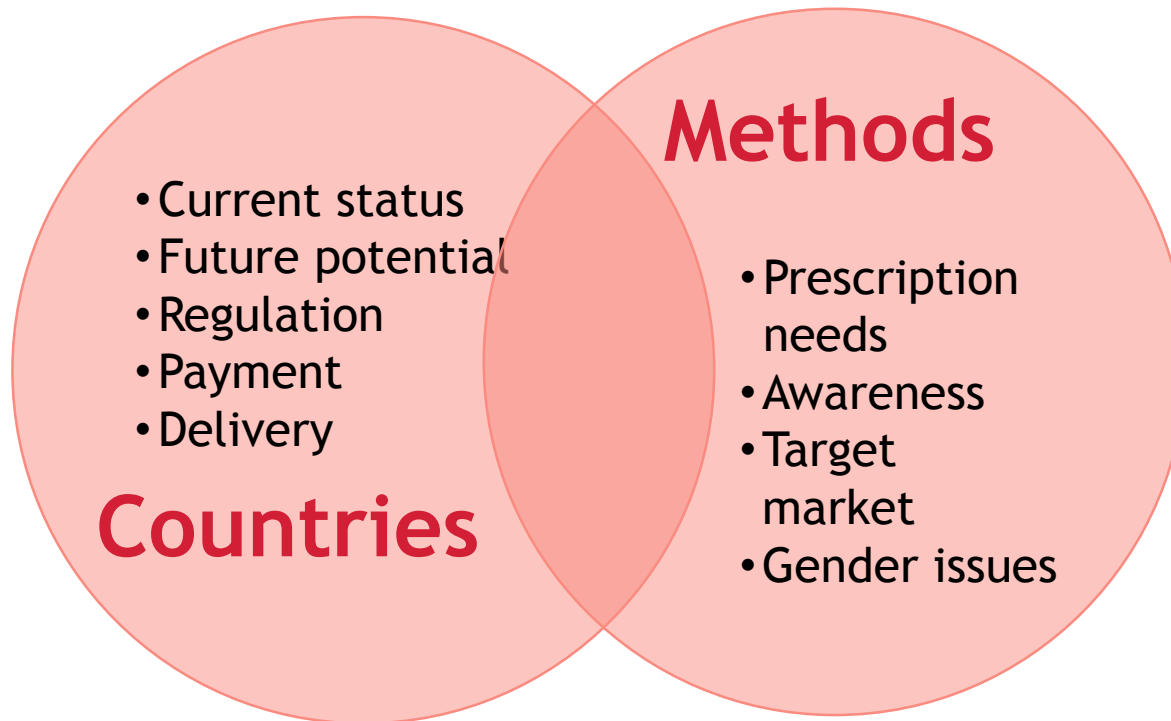
METHOD/COUNTRY	ORGANIZATION
India	Karaak Enterprises
Kenya	iHub Research
United States	IRH
Mexico	Mexfam
Female Condoms	Universal Access to Female Condoms Joint Programme (UAFC)
Emergency Contraception	International Consortium for Emergency Contraception (ICEC)
Standard Days Method	Cycle Technologies

☑ Examined e-commerce landscape, and future implications

---

# RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Opportunities and risks to increase availability and leverage direct-to-consumer strategies

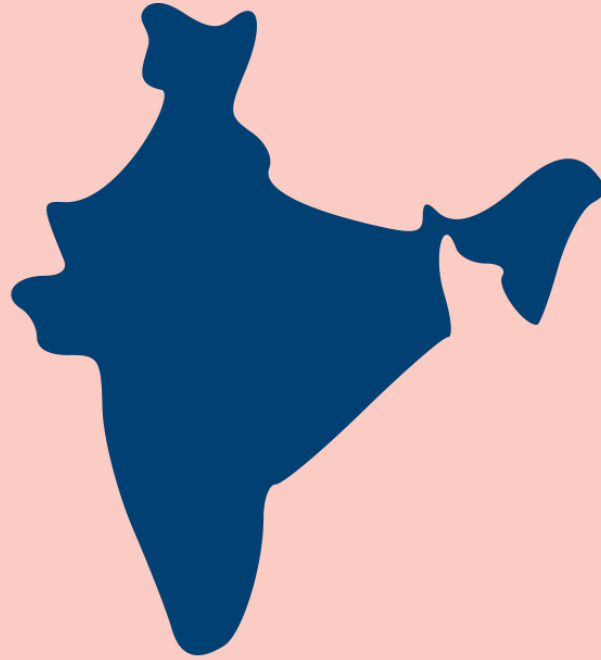


- ☑ **Implications as e-commerce increases, especially in developing regions**

# COUNTRY CASES







COUNTRY CASE:  
**INDIA**

---

Male and female condoms, EC, OCs and vaginal contraceptives available online. % of products sold online remains small compared to retail market (~1%).

## Enablers

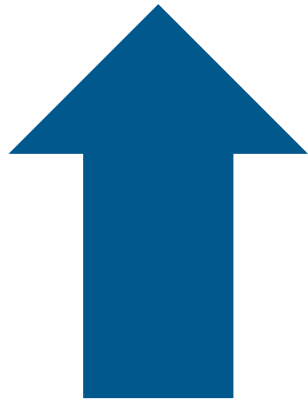
- Increased acceptance of online payments
- Cash on delivery (COD)
- Increased internet users and use
- Information about products
- Increased selection of products
- Expansion to new market segments (geographical and demographical)

## Barriers

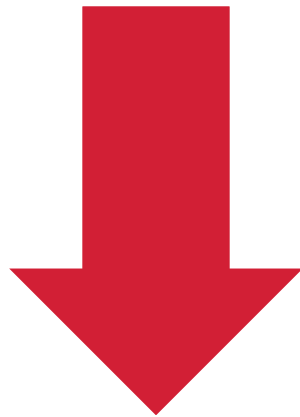
- Laws and regulations
- Privacy/ sensitivity of RH products
- Cash on delivery (COD)
- Logistics and physical infrastructure
- Competition
- Low use of spacing methods

---

**Customers' perceptions:** Important and usually linked to buying behavior. A small survey re: buying RHSC supplies online:

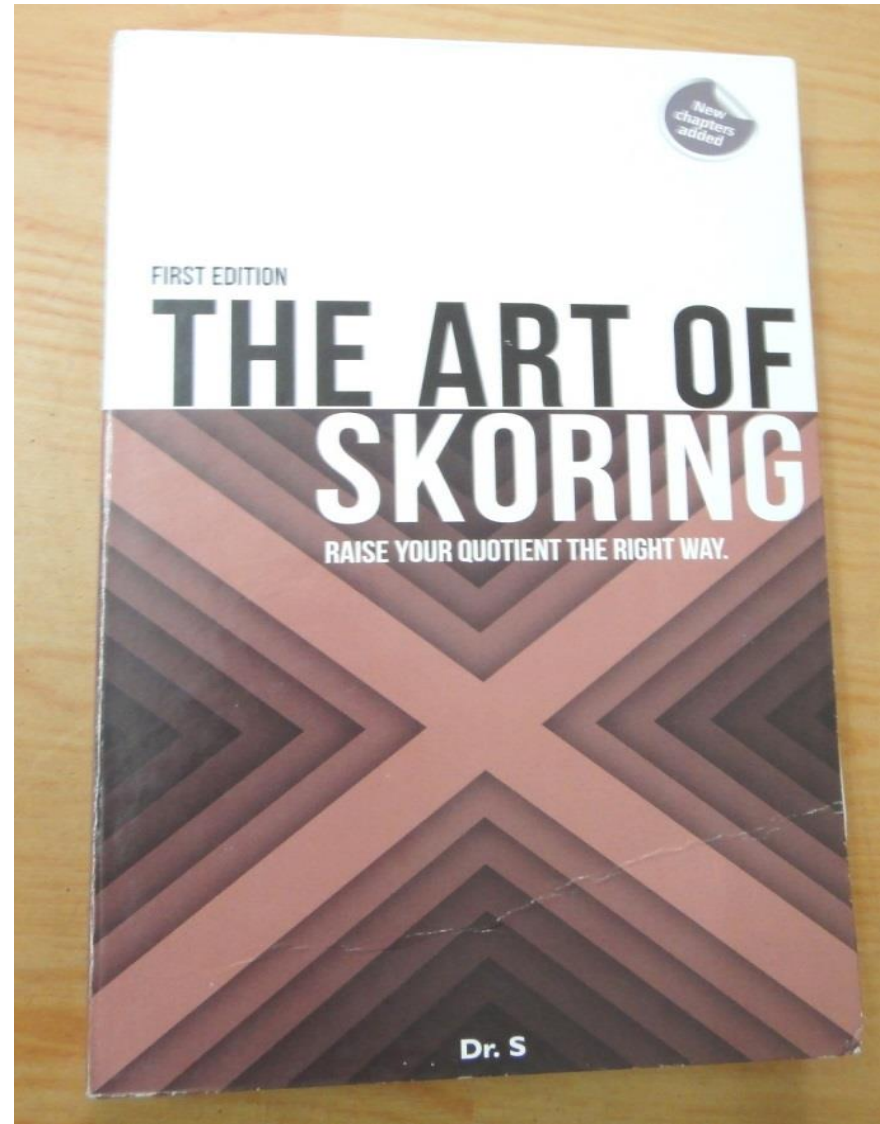


- Convenience and ease of purchase
- Privacy
- Wider range of options
- Can research products or compare prices



- Questions of quality and expiry date
- Can't wait for delivery
- Risk of products being damaged in transit
- No pharmacist to guide decisions
- Small packs are not available
- Fear of receiving products at home

# DISCRETE CONDOM PACKAGING



New chapters added

FIRST EDITION

# THE ART OF SKORING

RAISE YOUR QUOTIENT THE RIGHT WAY.

Dr. S

SKORE  
CONDOMS



STRAWBERRY  
FLAVOURED  
DOTTED &  
COLOURED

10x

SKORE  
CONDOMS



BANANA  
FLAVOURED  
COLOURED &  
DOTTED

10x

SKORE  
CONDOMS



ORANGE  
FLAVOURED  
DOTTED &  
COLOURED

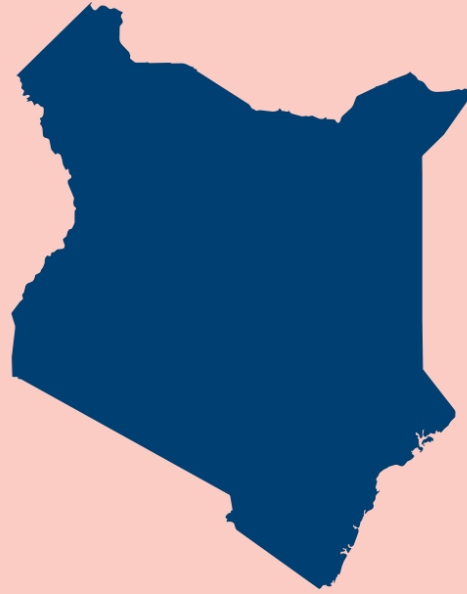
10x

SKORE  
CONDOMS



CHOCOLATE  
FLAVOURED  
DOTTED &  
COLOURED

10x



COUNTRY CASE:  
**KENYA**

---

E-commerce growing in Kenya, but still substantial barriers to widespread online FP availability.

- ☑ **Awareness:** e-commerce is still low, though gaining popularity and expanding in Kenya
- ☑ **Cost:** FP products are mostly provided for free by government.
- ☑ The popular FP methods in Kenya **require physical contact** between the user and the provider (IUDs, implants)
- ☑ **Cash society:** Despite the increase in mobile money transfers, 94% of transactions are still made in cash.

“The movement to e-commerce will be faster in sub-Saharan Africa than it was in the USA. Why? Because the physical retail structure is really bad and car ownership per capita is really low. In the US people were able to get into their cars and drive to nicely built malls that get everything they needed.

[In Kenya], access to retail in certain areas is bad hence the need for e-commerce. **So there is a huge case for consumables being brought online especially if they are all being sold in one area of the country.”**

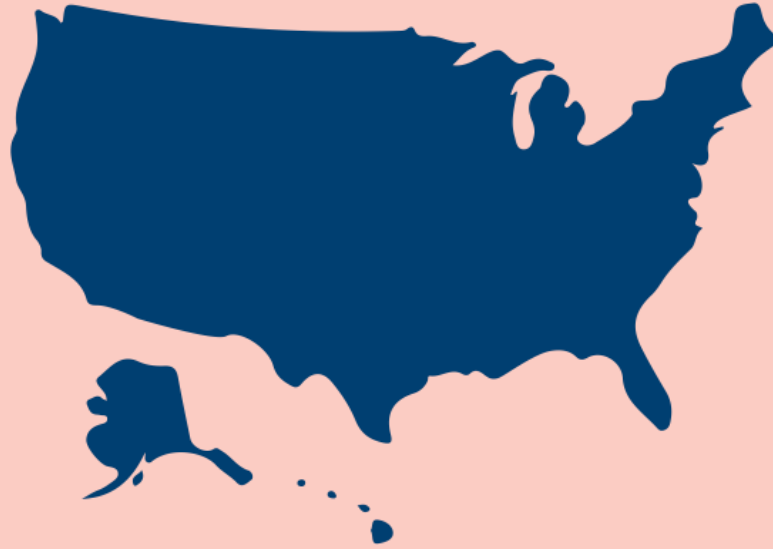
*Stakeholder interview*



“Online selling of drugs I am not sure it would work for our market. It is hardly there for other products. **There are few things that logistically need to be set into place, accessibility, delivery systems etc.** It is not even there for normal products. I would think it would harder for pharmacy products.”

*Stakeholder interview*





COUNTRY CASE:  
**UNITED STATES**

Mature e-commerce eco-system, high use of FP products.

## Over the Counter (OTC) Products

- **Readily available through online marketplaces**, both virtual marketplaces and traditional brick-and-mortar drug stores with e-commerce business channel

## Prescription Products

- **Available for refills:** Planned Parenthood, drug store chains, student health centers allow consumers to order their monthly refills online.
- **Legal sites emerged** to provide access contraceptives that require prescription in the US without a prescription.
- **Online marketplaces based in countries**, including Canada, where prescriptions are not required

☑ **However, prescription requirements hinder provision of some types of RH supplies.**

## Enablers

- Reduced barriers to entry for new companies
- Mail delivery system
- Expanded access to contraception information
- Strong FP and e-commerce environment

## Barriers

- Prescription requirement
- Annual pap smears
- Consumer habit of obtaining FP through health system

SHOP PRODUCTS

1 HR DELIVERY

OUR MOVEMENT

MAKE AN IMPACT

MEDIA

WANDERLUST

MARINA

PAC HEIGHTS

FINANCIAL DISTRICT

SDMA

SAN FRANCISCO

MISSION

SF x NYC x LA

discreet delivery in under

1 HOUR

starting at

\$5

Tweet

Like

MIDTOWN

CHELSEA

EAST VILLAGE

MANHATTAN

WEST VILLAGE

SOHO

LOWER EAST SIDE



1 hour delivery available on items below in select areas of Manhattan, San Francisco & Los Angeles

NYC: 24 HRS EVERY DAY, \$8 FLAT RATE

SF + LA: 11AM-7PM EVERY DAY, \$5 FLAT RATE

CLASSIC

DO {each other} GOOD

LARGE

ULTRA THIN

L. Condoms

# METHOD CASES

---

Three NURHTs were examined in a global context to explore enablers and barriers to wide availability through e-commerce.

- ☑ **Emergency Contraception**
- ☑ **Female Condoms**
- ☑ **Standard Days Method/  
CycleBeads**

# VALUE CHAIN

1

Product Formation

Design

Regulation

2

Go to Market

Production

Transport, Storage

Marketing

Sales/ Prescription

3

Consumer Access

Payment

Price

Affordability

Distribution

Use

Disposal

Some factors were common across all three methods:

## Enablers

- Provides anonymity and privacy
- Access to less prevalent methods and more choices
- Information widely available
- E-commerce can be managed internationally
- Development of payment systems

## Barriers

- Lack of method awareness
- Weak payment, delivery and fulfillment systems
- Lack of user support
- Fulfillment and payment from a non-local website or finding local partners



METHOD CASE:  
**EMERGENCY  
CONTRACEPTION**

---

**Available online** in Europe (Austria, Denmark, Netherlands, Switzerland, UK), India, Canada, US

**Non-profit and for-profit sellers:**

- Reproductive health websites
- Marketplaces
- Dedicated RH vendors sell non-prescription medication
- Prescription medication site
- General pharmacy vendors

**Providing online access to a prescription or dual label**  
(prescription for younger women, non-prescription for adults)  
product is possible but challenging.

**EC is time-sensitive:** targeting “advance purchase” customer.

# Plan B One Step Emergency Contraceptive



mouse over image to zoom in.

\$49.99



1.0 (1)

read 1 review

quantity:

- 1 +

add to cart

shipping **ships free**

store pickup **not available**  
in stock at Cedar Rapids South

find in another store

notes - Prices, promotions, styles and availability may vary by store and online.

add to registry

add to list

share

overview reviews shipping

## details

Plan B One-Step is emergency contraception to prevent pregnancy after birth control failure or unprotected sex. It is a backup method of preventing pregnancy and should not be used as regular birth control.

**INGREDIENTS**  
Active Ingredients  
Levonorgestrel 1.5 mg,  
Inactive Ingredients  
Colloidal Silicone Dioxide, Potato Starch, Magnesium Stearate, Talc, Corn Starch, Lactose Monohydrate

**“That’s why we think this e-commerce platform can reduce barriers; retailers are often ill-informed, and the stigma at retail presents high barriers to women.”**  
*US-based Managing Director, dedicated EC online vendor*

METHOD CASE:  
**FEMALE CONDOMS**

---

Ideal product for ecommerce, but barriers to widespread availability

## Enablers

- Growing Availability of FC
- Ease of use for consumers
- Provides anonymity
- Allows access in areas without offline availability
- Marketing opportunities

## Barriers

- Lack of product awareness
- High price: FC are not sold on a large scale for full commercial price

Related Searches: condoms.



See Package Quantity Options

FC Female Condom - Quantity - 3 Pack  
by FC Female Condom

**\$8.15** Prime  
Get it by **Tuesday, Sep 22**

More Buying Choices  
**\$5.25** new (7 offers)

Show only FC Female Condom items

★★★★☆ (90)



See Size Options

Female Condoms By FC2 (15 Pack)  
by FC Female Condom

**\$24.32**  
Only 14 left in stock - order soon.

More Buying Choices  
**\$25.21** new (5 offers)

FREE Shipping

Show only FC Female Condom items

★★★★☆ (64)



FC Reality Female Condom Non-Latex 5  
condoms  
by Reality

**\$11.75** Prime  
Get it by **Tuesday, Sep 22**

More Buying Choices  
**\$10.98** new (3 offers)

Show only Reality items

★★★★☆ (31)

Sponsored



Options Gynol Vaginal Contracepti...

**\$13.24** ~~\$15.99~~ Prime

★★★★☆ (75)



Shibari Premium Intimate Lubrica...

**\$8.77** ~~\$24.80~~ Prime

★★★★☆ (778)



FC2 Female Condom Indicated for  
Preventing Pregnancy - 6 Latex Condoms  
by Condom Pros

**\$20.75** Prime  
Get it by **Wednesday, Sep 23**

More Buying Choices  
**\$20.75** new (2 offers)

Show only Condom Pros items

★★★★★ (2)



See Size Options

Instead Softcups 12 Hour Feminine  
Protection, 14 Cou  
by EvoFem

**\$11.07** (~~\$0.79/Cou~~)

More Buying Choices  
**\$6.33** new (15 offers)

Show only EvoFem items

★★★★☆ (558)



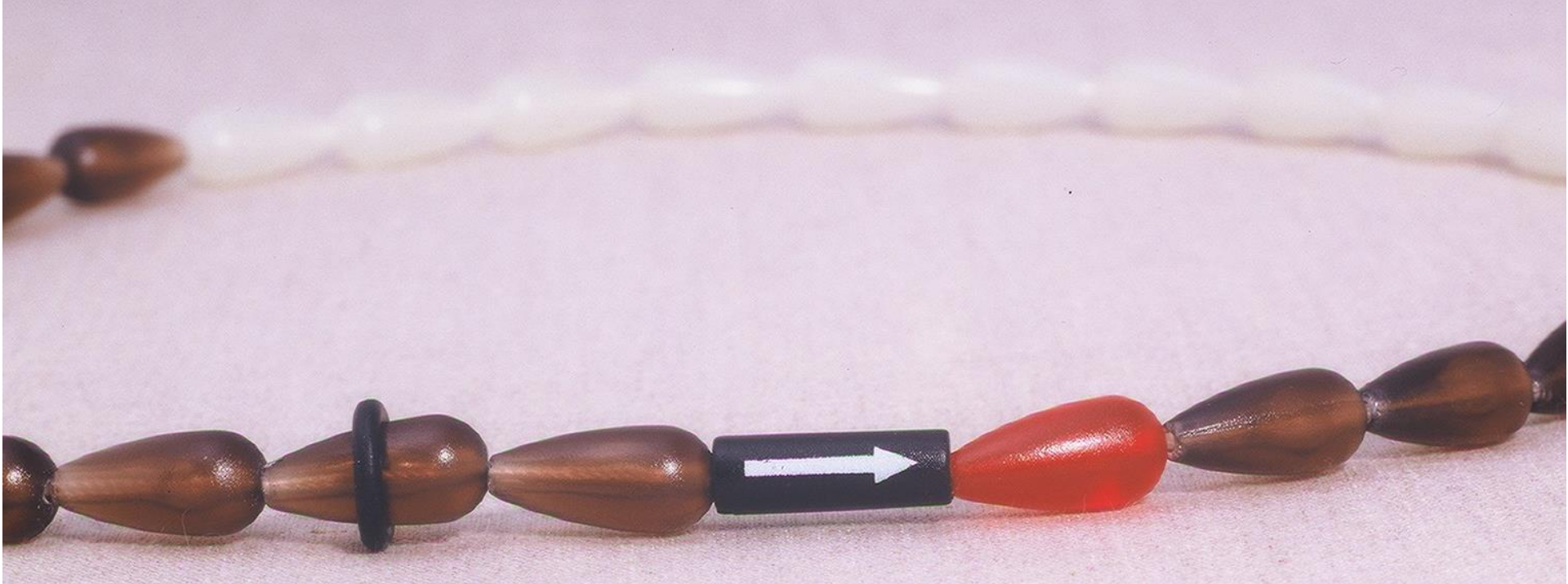
FC2 Female Condom 12 Pack  
by Condom Pros

★★★★☆ (1)

Ecommerce: Not the way, but a way.



METHOD CASE:  
**STANDARD DAYS  
METHOD®**



**CycleBeads**, the physical product to support SDM: well suited to online purchasing, lack of awareness and international distribution present challenges

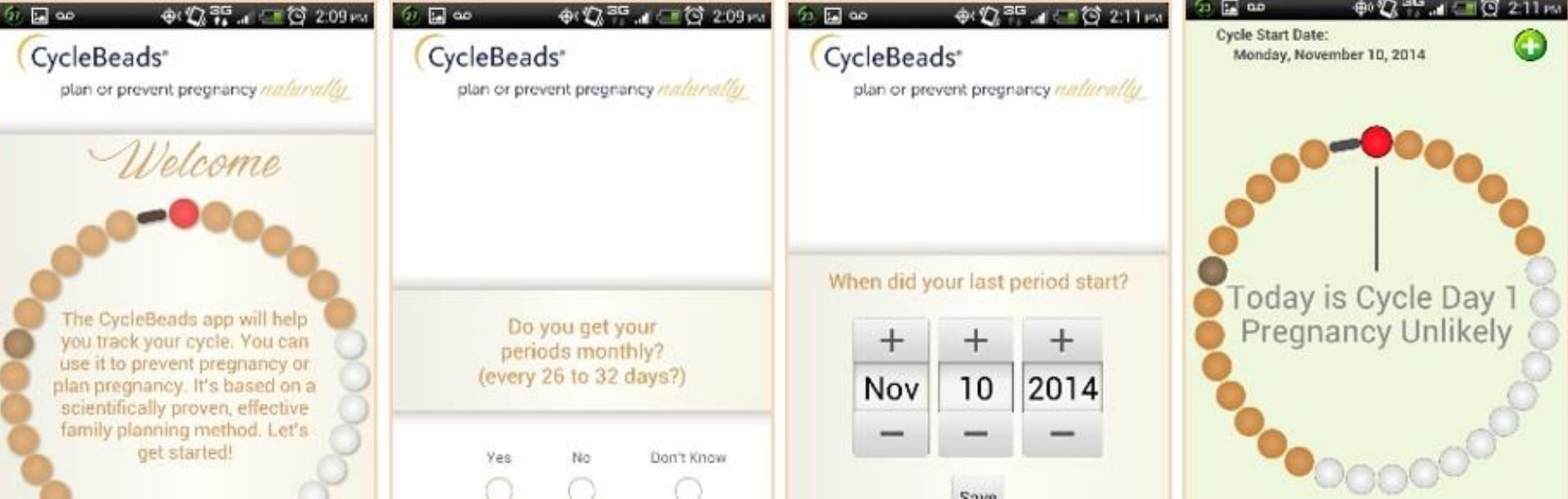
## Enablers

- E-commerce can be managed internationally in some places
- Development of innovative payment systems

## Barriers

- Lack of method awareness
- Challenging business model (one time purchase)





Digital products, including **CycleBeads** app for mobile phones, developed to address those challenges.

## Enablers

- Smartphone technology creates new market places,
- Direct consumer reach
- Digital marketing can reach certain audiences better than traditional offline advertising

## Barriers

- Lack of method awareness
- Lack of user support
- Customers' lack of comfort with apps

**CONCLUSIONS**

- 
- ☑ We still **have a lot to learn!**
  - ☑ E-commerce **growth will continue be uneven** across the globe and within countries.
  - ☑ **Some RH supplies will be more successful** on e-commerce platforms
  - ☑ **Companies are adapting** to the e-commerce-favorable environment



The future?