

Área Temática: Administração da Informação

THE ROLE OF DIGITAL MATURITY FOR BRAZILIAN COMPANIES

ABSTRACT

This paper studies and evaluates new ways to measure the digital maturity of some Brazilian companies from different industries and sizes. The aim is to analyze how the digital maturity affects the company's financial results. The theme is important, because with the constant technological development, and the subsequent growth of the relationship between business and new technologies, companies are increasingly looking for methods to assess their maturity in digital business. For this purpose, we applied a survey among Brazilian companies. After analysis, we described the stage of the digital maturity of Brazilian companies, classifying them based on the survey results. The study found several relations between the digital maturity and the business results.

Keywords: Digital maturity. IT-business alignment. Brazilian companies.

RESUMO

Este artigo estuda e avalia novas formas de medir a maturidade digital de algumas empresas brasileiras de diferentes indústrias e portes. O objetivo do estudo é analisar como a maturidade digital afeta os resultados financeiros dessas empresas. O tema é importante, pois com o constante desenvolvimento tecnológico, e o conseqüente crescimento da relação entre negócios e novas tecnologias, as empresas estão cada vez mais em busca de métodos para avaliar sua maturidade em negócios digitais. Para tanto, aplicamos uma *survey* entre empresas brasileiras. Após a análise, descrevemos o estágio de maturidade digital das empresas brasileiras, classificando-as com base nos resultados da pesquisa. O estudo revelou diversas relações entre a maturidade digital e os resultados do negócio.

Keywords: Digital maturity. IT-business alignment. Brazilian companies.

1. INTRODUCTION

With the accelerated pace of technology evolution, it is necessary for companies to adapt and follow this development, integrating and interacting with the new tools of the digital environment, such as social networks, blogs and websites (CATLIN et al., 2015). A period in which the life cycle of products is increasingly shorter, at the same time as competition increases, investment in alternatives to intensify sales is considered almost mandatory (MORAIS et al., 2011). Social media, smartphones and the science of analysis are advancing and are increasingly related to the economic scenario in various industries. Industries of all types, from a developer of new technologies to a producer of paints, are watchful to everything that happens in the digital environment, which can be an opportunity for them (WESTERMAN et al., 2012).

This research aimed to fill the existing gap, in which Brazilian companies do not know how or where to measure their digital maturity, and take an easily accessible tool, so that everyone can get simple reports on the current situation of its individual digital maturity.

2. DIGITAL MATURITY

Digital maturity, the main element to be analyzed by this research, can be assessed through the performance of two individual variables, intensity of digital presence, which encompasses both owned and earned media and paid media (CORCORAN, 2009), and the level of ties between the company's strategy with these respective investments. A company that has a satisfactory investment in IT and digital media, and manages to use these technologies in its strategy, is digitally mature (WESTERMAN et al., 2012).

This research uses as main references on digital maturity, studies carried out by McKinsey, and by Capgemini along with the MIT on digital maturity, and the studies of the ESPM Media Lab, on IDP (Index of digital presence) (OLIVEIRA et al., 2015) and DMI (Digital Maturity Index) (OLIVEIRA et al., 2016). These surveys aim to help companies improve their performance in the digital environment, and point out how companies with a more concrete and well-developed digital activity manage to obtain a superior performance to competitors who do not invest in digital technologies (WESTERMAN et al., 2012).

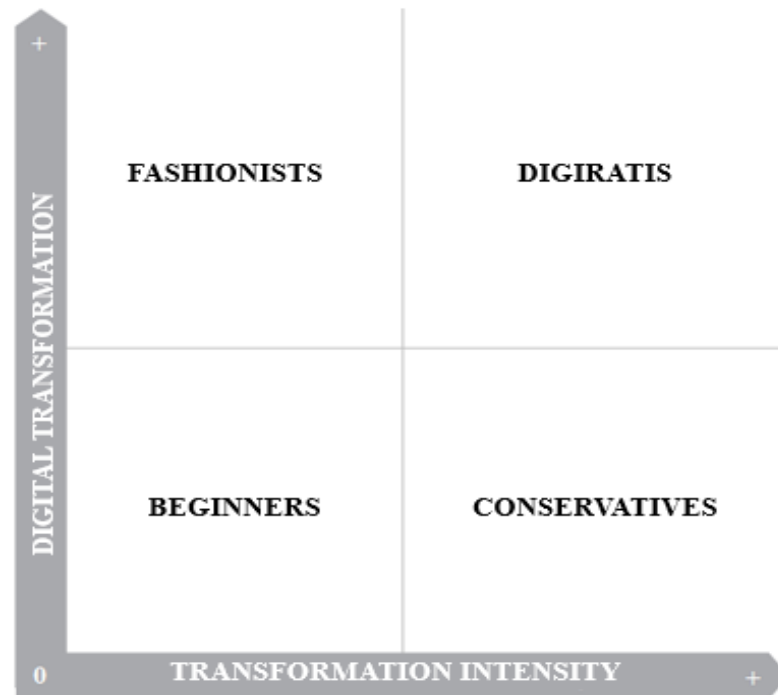


Figure 1: Digital Maturity quadrants
Source: Made by authors

According to research, a company must have a broad view of the market and understand that predefined strategies to develop digital maturity are not always effective, as stated by McKinsey (2015, p. 1), "Following the leader is a dangerous game. It is best to focus on building an organization and culture that can show you the strategy that is right for you." Thus, it is necessary for the company to support an online performance strategy that best suits it (CATLIN et al., 2015). Measuring investment capacity, which must be continuous, is also important for the project to be effective. Planning a development of digital maturity is a regular task and, aiming this goal, the projection of future expenses and returns is very important (CATLIN et al., 2015). Choosing areas to invest and specialize is characteristic of a good online maturity development plan, which will cut expenses on projects that do not generate the appropriate return (WESTERMAN et al., 2012). Having a good interpretation and a broad view of the culture is also essential to develop digitally: knowing what the user interacts with and how he does it, for example, is increasingly important. And finally, it is necessary to make such an investment with organization, always renewing it (CATLIN et al., 2015).

Technological changes are constant, and to keep up with these changes, companies need to be attentive and constantly updated. Some of the conclusions that we can draw from the analysis of the digital maturity of several industries are that with the use of technology, in addition to getting closer to the customer, companies can increase their productivity, efficiency and even influence on employees. (WESTERMAN et al., 2012).

For the punctual classification of companies, Capgemini's research defined a quadrants graph, where according to the performance in 2 individual vectors, one measuring the digital intensity, and the other measuring the intensity of

transformations, generated the following graph, where digiratis, would be the companies classified as digitally mature, beginners would be the companies with the worst possible performance in the digital environment, and fashionists and conservatives, would be the companies that manage to develop well however only in a singular vector of our analysis.

3. IT-BUSINESS ALIGNMENT

For the development of the survey, it was also extremely important to study the alignment between IT and the business, which has been studied since the late 1970s. Identifying the maturity of a company's alignment is the first step for changes to take place, be taken, and for the engagement between IT and the business to be developed and stabilized. (LAURINDO, 2001)

The IT-Business Alignment is simply the use of Information Technology in an appropriate manner and at the right time, always in harmony with the strategies, goals and needs of the business. A mature alignment is a relationship where IT and other members of the business adapt and tie their strategies to each other. (LAURINDO, 2001)

In order to carry out an assessment of the maturity of the alignment between IT and Business, according to Luftman, 1996, it is necessary to evaluate four categories that have 12 topics, and from a synthesis of these results we can understand how mature a company is in the IT-Business alignment. Identifying this maturity is important, as it is directly linked to the intensity of transformation that the company is able to exercise, a necessary vector for the analysis of digital maturity. (CATLIN et al., 2015)

These categories defined by Luftman, 2000, are: Business Strategy, Company System and Infrastructure, IT Strategies and IT Infrastructure and processes. For Business Strategy, three topics are assessed, business objective - Evaluates markets, products, services, group of consumers / customers, competition area, competitors, potential competitors, which can affect the company's microenvironment. - Different competences Evaluates brand value, research, development and production of products, cost, price structure, sales and distributors. - And business governance - It involves how directors, and administrators relate within the company, the government laws that can affect the company, and the way the company manages its relations with strategic partners.

4. METHODOLOGY

We applied a survey for 88 Brazilian companies, the sample was chosen for convenience. We first applied a pilot test to verify the quality of survey questions. For the construction of the survey form, it was necessary to define several constructs, which originate variables. Variables which are a source for the development of questions in the survey. Constructs were necessary to meet all the necessary points when analyzing and tabulating the data.

The digital presence can be measured by combining of the various ways in which an entity can be present in a digital environment. The most common ones are own media, acquired media, and paid media (CORCORAN, 2009). Within the construct of digital presence, we can highlight several variables which are relevant to the project. Some of these variables were directly inspired by the variables of the

Digital Presence Index, which also makes a direct analysis of the digital presence (OLIVEIRA et al., 2015).

- V1 - Investment in graphic media (Paid media);
- V2 - Investment in sponsored links (Paid media);
- V3 - Boosting social media posts (Paid media);
- V4 - Digital presence through its own website (Own media);
- V5 - Digital presence through smartphone apps (Own media);
- V6 - Presence in social networks (Own media);
- V7 - Brand recall in search engines and social networks (Media conquered);
- V8 - Investment in digital media;

Another relevant construct for the project, which is related to the digital presence construct, is the activity on social media, which must be evaluated and scored, because the simple movement, or the wrong development of a social media, it can not be satisfactory for any user of the same networks (ALCARÁ et al., 2012). To measure the constructive activity on social networks, we will use the following variables.

- V9 - Frequency of posts on social networks;
- V10 - Measurement of the use of social networks, and benchmarking with main competitors;
- V11 - Number of digital initiatives;

To measure the financial performance of companies, there are several indicators, which can be studied and deepened. These indices can be separated into four groups: liquidity indices, activity indices, debt indices and profitability indices. The liquidity, activity and indebtedness indexes help to calculate mainly the risk, and the adjacent ones, calculate the profit or return potential (CAPOBIANGO, 2012). For this research, we will use the following variables referring to the financial performance construct.

- V12 - Origin of capital;
- V13 - Types of business carried out by the company;
- V14 - Amplitude of the company's market;
- V15 - Percentage of annual profit;
- V16 - Annual billing;
- V17 - Number of employees.

And the last construct developed for this project is the alignment construct between the IT strategy and the business strategy, which analyzes the use of Information Technologies, which must be applied correctly and at the right time, always in harmony with the strategies, goals and needs of the business (LAURINDO, 2001). And to develop the variables related to this alignment we will use as a basis the levels of alignment developed by Luftman (2000).

- V18 - IT communication with other business areas;
- V19 - IT and business governance;
- V20 - Partnerships between IT and other business areas;
- V21 - Resourcefulness and level of skills present in the IT area.

After the following variables were built, a pilot questionnaire was developed. And after completing the form, 8 companies were selected to participate, filling out the form, and recording a video, taught by the IT responsible for the business, explaining the company's structure and its technology-related activities. The Questionnaire had a qualitative analysis after the companies' response and to

confirm the functionality or not of the form, an analysis based on multiple evidences was performed following the flowchart shown on the figure 2.

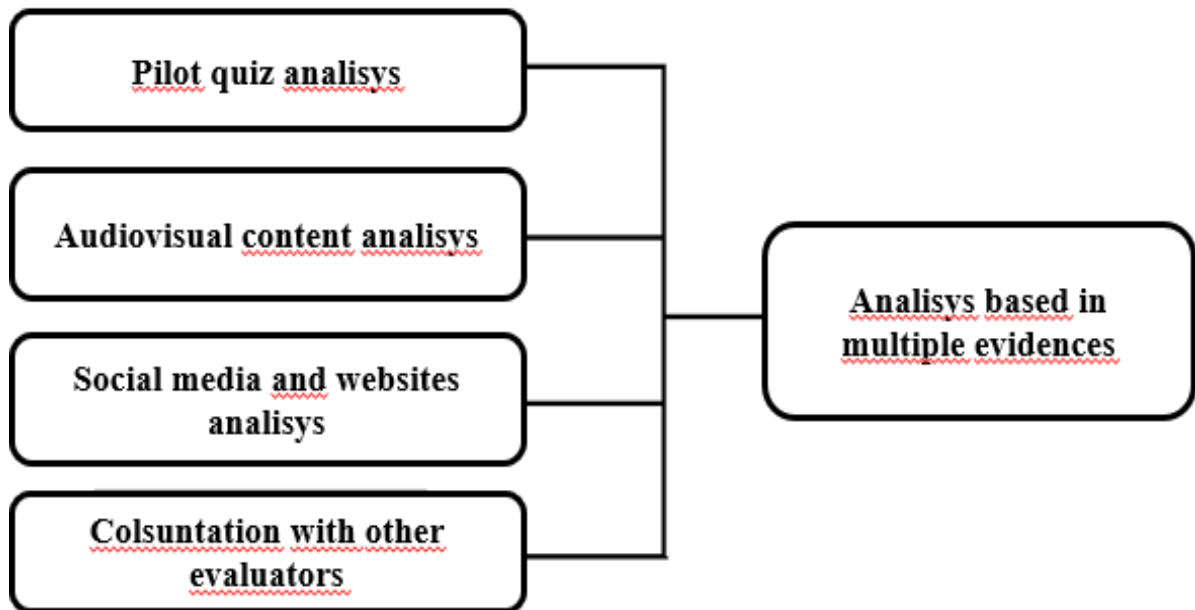


Figure 2: Analisis Workflow
Source: Made by authors

When analyzing companies, through the pilot survey, we first encountered a difficulty, which consisted of differentiating companies with Business-to-Consumer (B2C) businesses and companies with Business-to-Business (B2B), when evaluating through form.

While a company focused on the end consumer has a much broader target audience, and is more present on various social media, a company that does business with other companies may indeed have the help of digital media to leverage its business, however the tools and resources types of investment of B2B companies are differentiated, and most of the time the B2B company does not need to have such an intense investment in digital media to be considered a Digirati or a Fashionist when it comes to digital maturity.

To solve this problem, the analyses between the types of companies were differentiated and applied in the final questionnaire. If a company has any type of business aimed at the end consumer, it is normally evaluated through the questionnaire, however if the company has exclusively B2B businesses, investments in media such as Instagram, Snapchat, Youtube, and graphic media in portals and blogs will be disregarded, and the weight in the evaluation of investment in sponsored links (Google AdWords), e-mail Marketing, and boosting Facebook posts, will be increased in assessing digital maturity.

This change will give more consistency in the final results of digital maturities received by companies, as a B2B company has a very limited target audience compared to companies with B2C businesses, and not necessarily the B2B company will need to have an intensity in various media.

After redesigning the form, so that the differentiation from B2B to B2C could be carried out, the automation of this same form began to be sought, so that the

answer and the assessments guaranteed by them even if they were asked instantly, and for that we made a score table of the questions dividing different scores between B2B and B2C. A maximum score was calculated for each vector to be analysed, which would automatically place the respondents in the survey in one of the quadrants, which facilitated the delivery of reports and quick diagnoses (Appendix). The maximum scores can be seen in the figure 3.

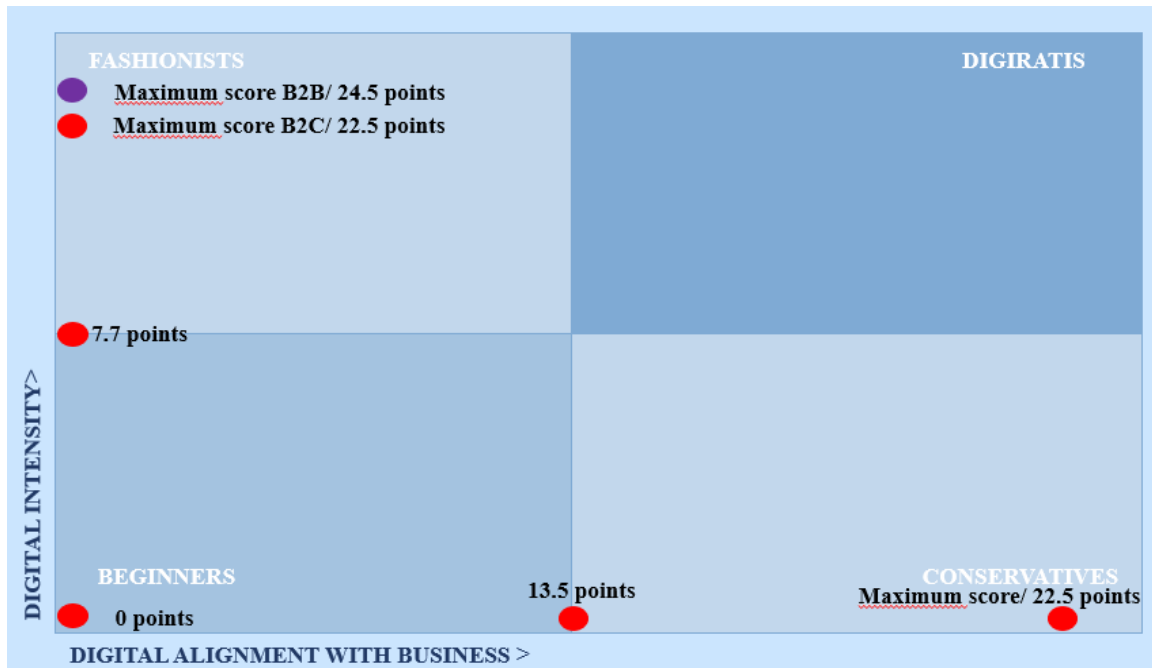


Figure 3: Digital Maturity Scale
Source: Made by authors

5. RESEARCH RESULTS

For the purpose of analyzing the results, the constructs and variables defined at the beginning of the research must be resumed, so that the final results are compared with the hypotheses and expectations pointed out at the beginning of the research.

After a year of research on digital maturity in the Brazilian market, it was possible to elaborate results and findings on the subject. As the research progressed, and with the final form available online for approximately 12 months, companies of different sizes and sectors were analyzed, and this showed us how different the way in which these determined companies operate in digital. Companies with strong brand recall in the market that did not have investments in digital media, and small companies, who invest a large percentage of their budget in digital media are examples of companies who participated in the research.

Analysis of the first wave of responses

A preliminary analysis was carried after the first sample of responses received, where interesting data could already be observed. For this first wave, 22 companies answered the form. These companies were selected for convenience based on the network of the researchers. The first action to be taken was to create a graph of the

environment, where indicators from all companies were positioned, creating the idea of how mature the Brazilian market is in the digital sphere. The chart with the first sample can be seen on the figure 4.

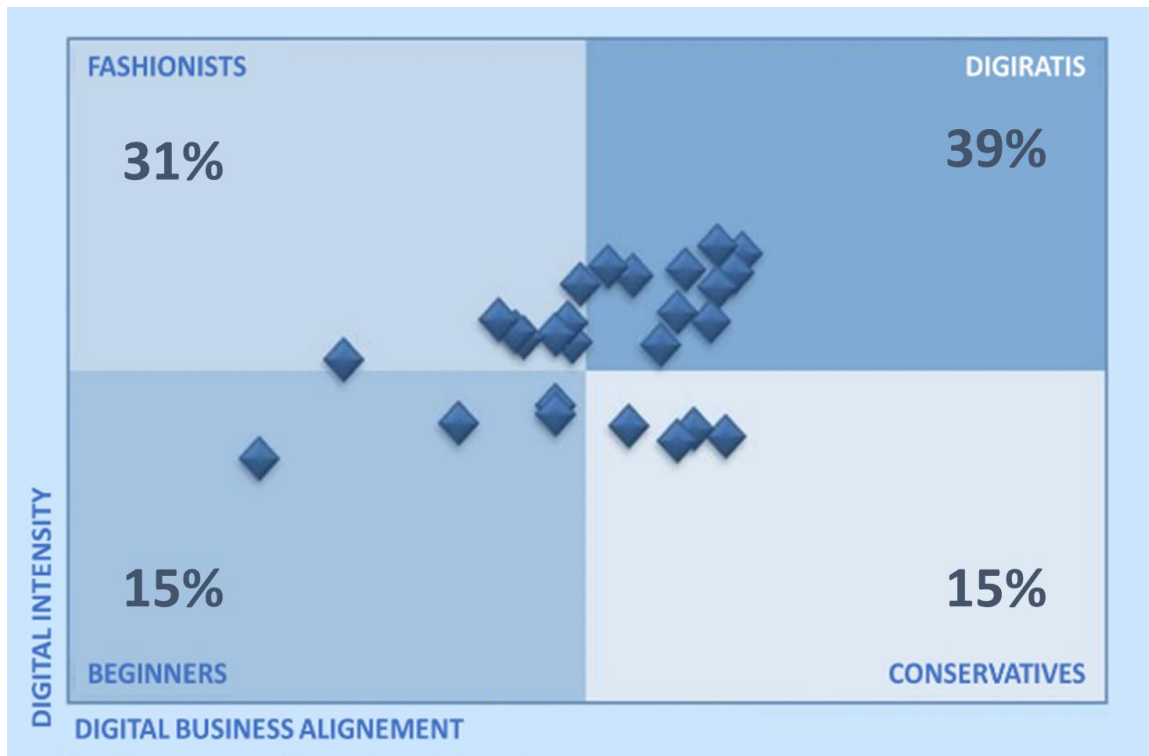


Figure 4: Results of the first sample

This sample included micro businesses and multinational companies together in a single environment. And even without a filter, the first result observed was surprising, 69% of the companies had a satisfactory intensity of digital presence. A surprising result for the Brazilian market, which leads us to the first finding of the survey. The recognition of Brazilian companies on the importance of investment and presence in digital media. From the companies analyzed in the first sample, 15% were classified as Beginners and 38% classified as Digiratis. 83% of the Digiratis grew more than the market average in the last 12 months. This can be used to reinforce one of the main constructs of this research, which states that digital maturity has a direct link to the company's revenue. Since the number of Digiratis is more than twice the number of Beginners, this led us to a reflection about possible biases on the sample, so we decided to publish the survey on the site of the ESPM Media Lab Portal in order to collect a more random profile of companies.

These first research findings were extremely important for the development of a short text, which was posted on social networks directly linked to businesses such as LinkedIn and also on the ESPM Media Lab online portal. The purpose of this text was to encourage and motivate other companies to participate in the research, showing details about the importance of the development of this digital maturity, and highlighting the results of research carried out by international institutions used as a basis for this research.

Analysis of the second wave of responses

88 respondents joined the second wave of the survey, which lead us to a margin of error of 10,7% with 95% confidence (FONTELLES, 2010). With this information, a new environment chart was created, and the proportions of companies per quadrant have not undergone major changes. On the figure 5, it is possible to observe the percentage of companies, as well as the indicators of all companies.

DIGITAL INTENSITY SECOND SAMPLE

■ Beginners ■ Fashionists ■ Conservatives ■ Digiratis

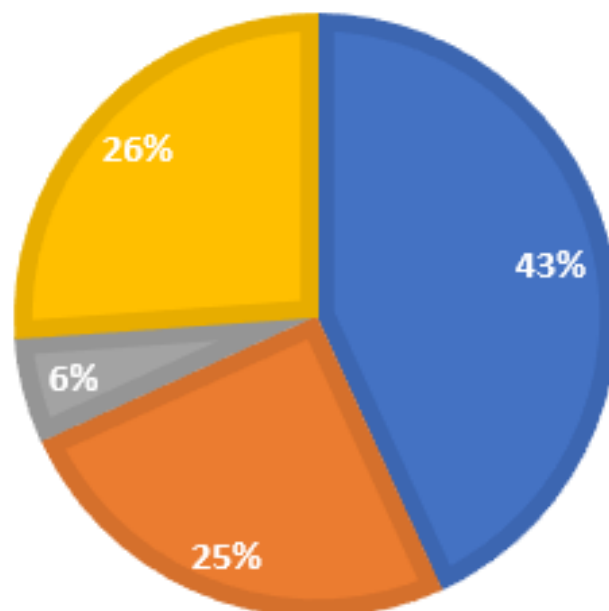


Figure 5: Results of the second sample

The main statistical changes from the first to the second analysis were the significant increase in the number of Beginners, and the slight reduction in the number of Digiratis. 43% of Brazilian companies positioned themselves in the beginners quadrant, which lead us to the finding that in Brazil, some companies still have to search more about the impact of digital maturity before investing in technologies and in digital media. This also showed us that these companies still have difficulty in understanding all that digital maturity impacts, investments and what technological advances are in the business strategy. What compared to the statements of WESTERMAN et al., 2012, is a little different from the American scenario, where companies have technology tied to strategy, and compete with their main competitors through innovation, and by deepening this investment and connection, while Brazilian companies still do not know how to use digital investments as an activator or differential in the competition with the main competitors.

When analyzing the performance of these companies vis-à-vis competitors in the last year, as done with the first sample, 75% of Digiratis companies in their

responses stated that they grew more than their main competitors, while only 34% of the beginners had grown more than their main competitors in the last year.

This variation in data shows us once again that the company's financial performance can be strongly correlated with digital maturity, since companies that do not invest in digital media in most cases remain below a competitor, which can have an advantage over it by investment, and presence in digital media.

Four types of messages were sent to the respondents explaining the company's position vis-à-vis the market in a general mode and give small instructions and insights which can help the company to improve its digital maturity, or stay in front of the competition.

6. CONCLUSION

After extensive research on how technology, digital presence and later maturity are impacting not only on the business but on society in general, we can see the relevance not only of this research but of the subject in general to be researched.

To analyze the digital maturity, first it was necessary to understand everything that could lead an entity to influence such maturity. For this, not only the observation of big businesses and their actions in digital media were necessary, but also the study of how new technologies are implemented in business, and how not only training is necessary, but the integration of different areas of a company to support small changes (LAURINDO, 2001). Analyzing the digital maturity of a company, it became clearer after understanding that the maturity did not depend only on the digital presence, but on concrete actions, which generated returns to the company. These returns can be observed in different ways, both financially, which is always the most evident and desired when making any change, but also returns such as accessibility for customers, benefits to employees and ease of administration in general (WESTERMAN et al. 2012).

This research did not achieve the desired sampling goal, which was more than 100 respondents so that the margin of error could be reduced to 10%. However, with the sample obtained, several conclusions and insights were taken. Among them, it is interesting to note that the companies that participated in the research, in a way are already aligned with digital strategies in general, and are also interested in improving their performance on digital media. However, investment in digital presence made by Brazilian companies is often still unfocused. The majority of companies manage to have a satisfactory digital presence. Although only 32% of the companies aligned the business strategy with this digital presence, managing investments that generates return.

The form itself with automated diagnostics, is now a tool available to help the Brazilian market to expand digitally and understand all the advantages that a company can have in being more mature than its competitors digitally.

Still on the subject, there is an interest in continuing to research on digital maturity. This is a theme that still needs to be studied and developed, mainly in the national scenario. With the speed of change in digital tools used by consumers and producers, keeping up with these changes and forecasting trends is one of the main lessons, which need to be studied and explained to national businesses.

After a year of research on digital maturity, it can be said that the benefits of digital maturity for a company are satisfactory and probably will bring returns. It would be financial return, which most correlates with digital maturity, or return through emotional benefits for customers, employees, and the entire productive cycle of the

business. The digital maturity seems to bring competitive advantage in Brazil confirming international researches.

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APPENDIX

Table 1: Survey Questions of Digital Maturity Scale

Questions	B2B		B2C		Justification
	Digital Presence Intensity	Digital Alignment with business	Digital Presence Intensity	Digital Alignment with business	
Does the company outsource or subcontract IT services?	0	0	0	0	This question show the analytical value and don't interfere in the company score.
IT's function is to enable the implementation/realization of companies strategy?	0	2	0	2	Evaluate if the IT is used as a business activator
Does the companies IT strategy united with the business strategy?	0	2	0	2	Evaluate the alignment of IT's strategy with the business strategy
In the last few years IT's impact was determinant to the growing of the company above the competitors?	0	1	0	1	The score of this question is inferior to the others companies due to IT's impact could be apparent in different ways, and not only on the companies growth.
How's the relation between the IT's communication area with the business?	0	2	0	2	Verifies the alignment of IT's strategy with the business strategy, deepening the communication between the areas.
What's the contribution of the IT's area for the company?	0	2	0	2	Verifies if the company uses the IT to improve the intern yield..
How are the partnerships in the IT area in the relation to the business.	0	2	0	2	Analyzes the IT's relation not only internally, but with partners and competitors as well.
How's the skills of the IT's area?	0	2	0	2	Analyzes the companies knowledge about IT, and how does it develops in the same segment.
What's the initiatives of digital presence total (ex sales campaign, apps and websites release) that the company engages during a year period?	2	0	2	0	Analyzes the number of campaigns carried out by the company in digital media, which directly impacts the digital presence.
Does the company invested in digital media in the last year?	1	0	1	0	Analyze if the company dedicates part of your investments in digital media.
The digital presence in the company represented by paid media is composed by?	1	0	1	0	Analyze how the investments in digital media are performed.
The digital presence in the company represented by own media is composed by?	1	0	2	0	Analyzes the digital presence composed by own media.
The digital presence of the company represented by conquered media is composed of (mention only if is relevant)	0,4	0	0,4	0	Analyzes the media conquered by the company.
What's the average of posts made by the company in a week?	2	0	2	0	Analyzes the frequency of the social media activity. Worth 1 point for B2B companies and 2 point for B2C.
The company uses any metric to measure the use of that social media?	1	1	1	1	Checks if the company measures its digital activities.
Does the customers frequently uses available resources on the website?	1	1	1	1	Analyzes the use of resources made available by the company to the customer.
The e-commerce made it possible the access to new markets?	0,5	0,5	0,5	0,5	Checks if the company uses the digital to expand its business.
The digital presence enables the formation of partnerships to offer complementary products and services?	1	1	1	1	Observes the public analysis conversion in the digital media for the generation of new products, services and insights.
Does the digital presence affects the relationships with the customers?	1	1	1	1	Checks the interaction with the customers through the digital media.
Does the company outsource or subcontract management services for social media?	0	0	0	0	This question has a analytical value, but doesn't affect the digital maturity scores.
The digital presence enables the company to identify customers desires, which generates new products, services or improvements?	0	1	0	1	Checks if the company measures the use of digital media
Does the digital presence increases the companies efficiency?	0	1	0	1	Analyzes if the company has the sensitivity to changes in their intern yield.
Does the investments in digital media helped the company directly to achieve its goals?	0	1	0	1	Checks if the investments in digital media wore satisfactory to the company.
Their competitors in the same strategic group of your company has similar media activities to your company?	0	0	0	0	This question has an analytical value, but don't affects the maturity presence scores.
Do you consider the investment and the activity in social media of your company higher e more engaged towards the belonging competitors of the same industry as yours?	0	1	0	1	Compare the digital activity of the company with its main competitors
The companies differents departements are involved in the planning and in the execution of that initiatives?	0	1	0	1	Checks if the company engages all their sectors in campaigns and digital activities realized in the company
Maximum score on which vector	14,9	22,5	12,9	22,5	