Jurisdiction and Applicable Law in International Electronic Commerce: A Bibliometric Analysis

الاختصاص القضائي والقانون الواجب التطبيق في التجارة الإلكترونية الدولية: تحليل ببليومتري

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Abstract:

The present article offers a bibliometric analysis of international electronic commerce (IEC) investigation on jurisdiction and applicable law up to the beginning of 2017. Based on 115 files published between 1998 and 2026, it investigates the years with most journals, cumulative growth rates per theme and thematic clusters: motor, niche/foundation themes; and emerging themes. The findings reveal that traditional themes, including private international and commercial law, consumer protection, and e-commerce regulation, are still the major areas of interest on the academic agenda. Simultaneously, novel issues data internationalization, smart contracts, and cross-border dispute resolution are anticipated to be playing a more prominent role in this zone.

Nevertheless, there are loopholes especially on compared scholarships, international cooperation, and longitudinal research. The conclusions highlight the importance of multidiscipline collaborations such as between law, digital technology, and public policy to develop norms that are receptive to the ever-changing dynamics in e-commerce transnationally.

Keywords: International e-commerce, Jurisdiction, Applicable law, Data internationalization, Cross-boundary dispute resolution, Smart contracts.

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Introduction

The structure of the global marketplace has been dramatically changed by the explosive growth of international electronic commerce (Zwass, 2003; Sikder & Rolfe, 2023). Digital networks are making it easier for cross-jurisdiction transactions and traditional tools of authority and alternative of law analysis are constantly being challenged (Liu & Zhang, 2024). Especially, the boundary-transcending nature of digital communications contradicts the territorial premises of private international regulation (Beck & Sznaider, 2010). Accordingly, the question of what courts have authority, and which substantive law applies to electronic contracts has become of primary importance in governance over digital trade (Hidayati et al., 2025). In this context regulatory debates related to digital trade agreements and cross boundary data flows reflect the snowballing relevance for consistent legal frameworks supporting international trade (Meltzer, 2019).

But that does not mean that we can hive off the legal aspect of digital trade from larger economic and institutional questions. For example, macroeconomic stability and sustainable growth in integrated markets operate under predictable regulatory landscapes (Comporek et al., 2022). Besides, the growth of digital financial services (DFS), including mobile banking, emphasizes the role of consumer confidence, regulatory certainty, and cross-boundary enforcement (Siyal et al., 2019). Consequently, juris- diction and alternative of law function as more than just procedural devices—they are structural shields that facilitate inclusion into the digital financial system (Walters, 2025).

Regulatory autonomy has in truth emerged as a sensitive bone of conflict within the context of cross-border e-commerce and transnational information flow (Choudhary, 2024). While data localization and internationalization regulations are frequently suggested as a tool for the protection of national interests, they can also present obstructions to digital trade (and upset jurisdictional balance) (Mirzaye & Mohiuddin, 2025; Potluri et al., 2020). At the same time, due to the progressively growing threat of electronic relations with security risks, it has triggered a heated conversation on the rule over traditional international border areas (Handoyo, 2024).

Moreover, competition law has played an expanding role in responding to the growing market power employed by transnational e-commerce platforms, exceptionally in comparative between European Union (EU), China, and Malaysian practices (Chen et al., 2025; Ong & Lee, 2025). Consequently, jurisdictional struggles become even more closely related to larger fundamental arguments on regulatory competence, platform governance, and digital sovereignty (Glasze et al., 2023; Novikov, 2024).

Besides, private means of disagreement for e-commerce has also been developed. ODR approaches are commonly considered necessary tools for promoting trust and procedural fairness in cross-border transactions (Abedi et al., 2019). Improvement, sustainability, and digital technologies: Recent knowledge also efforts on the incorporation of innovation, sustainability, or/and digitization in dispute

resolution (Wang et al., 2024). Further, attempts to develop common rules addressing conflicts over Internet contracts demonstrate the importance of consistency and enforceability in global law rather than destroyed rulemaking (Al-Freihat et al., 2025).

Considering these multifaceted changes, bibliometric analysis can offer a systematic approach to analyzing the intellectual progress of research in district and applicable law in international electronic commerce (Cano et al., 2022; Ghalijaei, 2025). Bibliometric methods, including citation mapping, keyword co-occurrence analysis and clustering, provide a means to identify major research themes and trends. This kind of methods has been successfully used in various domains, such as the e-learning (Tibaná-Herrera et al., 2018), artificial intelligence and digital supply chains (Rana & Daultani, 2023), cross-boundary cybercrime(Zhao & Cheng,2024), the cryptocurrency taxation(Lazea et al., 2025) and circular financial system research in e-commerce(Tran & Khoa, 2025). Furthermore, Compute Graphics accelerated software such as hierarchical clustering visualization tools augment the ability to identify structural patterns in big datasets (Chen et al., 2015).

Inspired by these methodological bases, the present paper conducts a bibliometric analysis of several trends in publication, thematic clusters and citation networks concerning authority and applicable law in international electronic commerce. In the process, it links doctrinal discussions with new challenges regarding digitalization and sustainable cross-boundary growth (Ebabu et al., 2026; Volynets et al., 2024). Finally, by charting the conceptual terrain of this subject area, the study helps make sense of how legal scholarships are grappling with hybrid forms of commercial activity and points to future avenues for comparative and normative research.

Firstly: Methodology

In abibliometric way, this research systematically investigates the evolution, intellectual structure and thematic trends of jurisdiction and applicable law research in the field of international e-commerce (Villa et al., 2018; Cano et al., 2022; Tran & Khoa, 2025) . Bibliometric analysis furnishes a quantitative apparatus through which the publication outputs, citation patterns, authorship networks and thematic clusters are mapped out with caution to give a broad view about the development of disciplinary field and scholarly trajectory (Tran & Khoa, 2025; Zhao & Cheng, 2024; Wulfert & Karger, 2022). The approach combines several analytical methods, including annual topic modeling analysis, cumulative growth analysis, and co-authorship mapping as well as content-based keyword analysis to cover temporal, but also topical development of the domain (Gao et al., 2021; Radu et al., 2026).

The dataset includes 115 papers from articles, book chapters and conference proceedings published between 1998 and 2026 in a total of 95 journals, books, and conferences. Between them, these works cite 3,775 references and illustrate the depth of their intertextuality. The domain has annual growth rate of 2.51%, mean document age of 12.8 years, and 4.426 citations per document on average. Generally,

344 authors appear in the dataset, having an average of 3.26 co-authors per article, which suggests that international cooperation is high. The documents are diverse in category, including journal article (64), conference proceeding paper (33), book section (9), and others such as early access article, review paper and editorial (Tran & Khoa, 2025; Meltzer, 2019; Gupta & Jindal, 2023). Occasionally, the dataset constitutes a good foundation for analysis of research productivity and intelligent ties.

Furthermore, the annual number of publications was modeled with a Gaussian lifecycle model to examine changes in publication rate over time. For Figure 1, blue dots are the annual productions from 1998 to 2025, while the bell-shaped curve is a plot of the life cycle projected for this field research. The greatest peak around 2013.5 represents the highest research productivity, when five papers were published. While there is considerable variation from year-to-year ($R^2 = 0.187$), the best-fitting curve models a pattern of rise, peak activity and falling off in research intensity. The model goes on to estimate that there could be almost no publications a little after 2070 (Volynets et al., 2024).

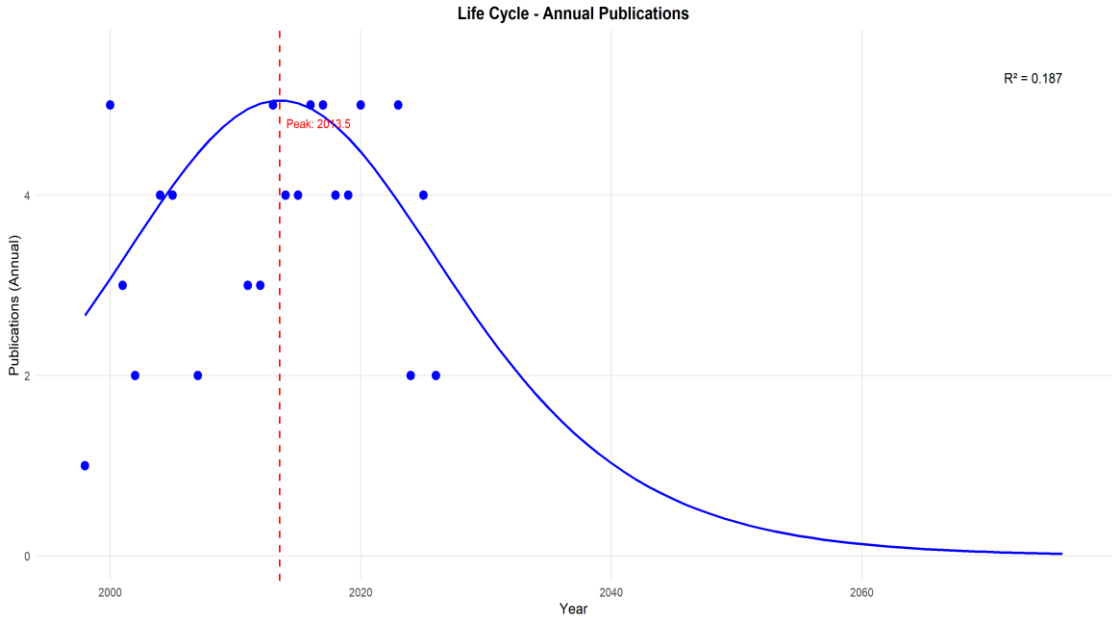


Figure 1. Annual Publication Rate and Gaussian Lifecycle Model with Maturity Peak (1998–2075).

Moreover, cumulative growth analysis puts knowledge accumulation into a historical perspective. Figure 2 shows the cumulative number of publications represented by green dots superimposed with a sigmoid growth curve. Fifty per cent of expected field production was achieved by 2015, 90% is forecast for 2040 and near-full maturity (99%) around ~2060. The carrying capacity is approximately 200 publications, indicating that the discipline is about halfway along its life cycle (Potluri et al., 2020). This aggregate perspective provides a balance to the annual publishing trend by demonstrating the general direction of knowledge accumulation in the field.

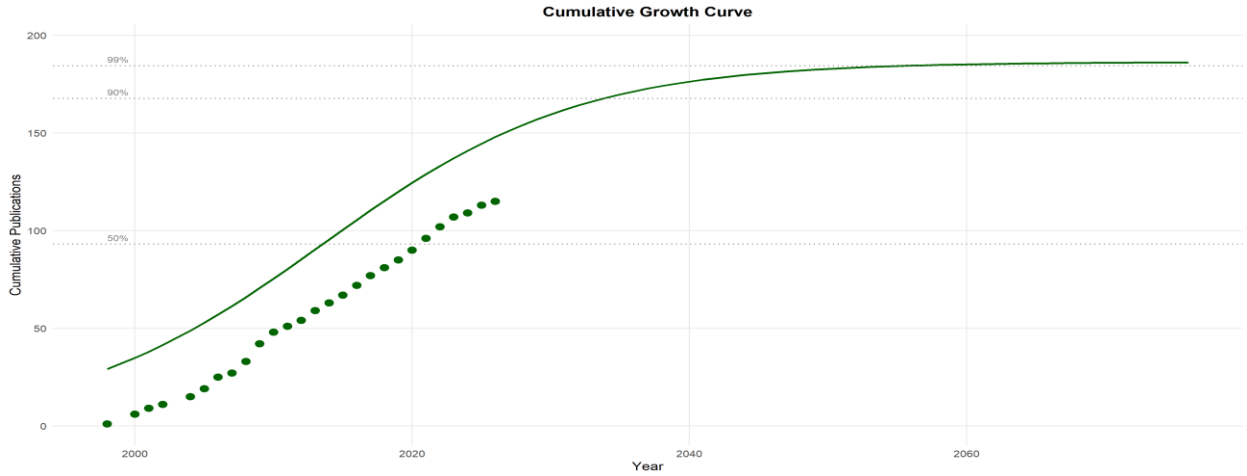


Figure 2. Cumulative growth curve and theoretical saturation of research output.

Patterns of authorship were examined to highlight inter-institutional cooperation and dissemination of knowledge. 64 authors of the total 344 authors published single-authored papers; the average co authorship per paper was 3.26, indicating moderate collaboration. A strong and a thriving co-authorship network is yet to emerge from international collaboration, but the co-authorship map identifies significant contributors and areas of development in research on district and applicable law problems in international e-commerce (Rana & Daultani, 2023).

Emerging research information were identified based on 320 Author Keywords and 63 Keywords Plus terms through a hierarchical clustering reasoning and visualization procedures such as sunburst chart etc. [14]. Four main thematic clusters were discerned from this analysis: management of legal fragmentation and conflict-of-law; ODR and trust mechanisms, which crisscrosses with blockchain technology (kJcH2); regulatory sovereignity, data governance, and cybersecurity (kJcH3); connections with sustainability, technological innovation, digitalisation process in humanity (Abedi et al., 2019; Wang et al., 2024; Al-Freihat et al., 2025).

Further, Co-citation analysis of cited authors and references was approved out to identify the determining works, scholars, and the core journals which delimitate the intellectual contours in research domain.

By combining thematic analysis with lifecycle models, this approach links trends in publications to conceptual development. For instance, surge in publication activities around 2013.5 does parallel upon increased attention of scholarly community on digital trade governance and district matters for example early realization of issues in cross boundary ecommerce (Meltzer, 2019; Gupta & Jindal, 2023). Furthermore, aggregate growth projections give maturity indication for the (sub-)domain and thematic clusters reveal forthcoming sub domains e.g., digital transformation and sustainable businesses are incorporated (Ebabu et al., 2026; Volynets et al., 2024). This integrated approach not only evaluates efficiency by mathematical calculation but also establishes theoretic framework to study authority claiming of the intangible state of international electronic commerce.

Secondly :Thematic Clusters and Legal Evolution

It is important to develop a systematic identification of knowledge clusters and their trajectories, as they have evolved over time thematically in research on district and applicable law in international electronic commerce. It is by considering centrality and density of research topics that we can reveal which are the dominant field drivers, the emerging themes and even the side problems. This section provides an exploration of thematic clusters at three analysis levels, depicted in Figures 3, 4 and 5, as well as interpretations on the legal evolution of e-commerce governance that can be drawn from these results.

First, in the next section after this introduction, we gave a preliminary glance to characterizing research topics according to their centrality and density by means of Figure 3. Motor themes appear on the upper right quadrant in this map, denoting high relevance and development. Major motor themes are e-commerce, private international law and consumer suggesting that these areas are key drivers for scholarship in the area (Meltzer, 2019; Gupta & Jindal, 2023). They do not just dominate the conversation, they show good scholarly signs: well-developed citation networks, some staying power. On the other hand, niche subjects in the upper-left quadrant are both well-formed and highly specified. Subjects such as consumer protection, internet jurisdiction, and internet management and even more specific areas like in relation to the e-commerce directive or taxation jurisdiction are covered here. While these themes may not be as central or as pervasively combined as motors, they offer critical lenses for making sense of the intricate and nuanced legislative contents and regulatory mechanisms that frame our global digital budget (Al-Freihat et al., 2025; Ong & Lee, 2025).

Fundamental themes in the lower right quadrant represent critical areas for investigations that are still emerging. These are e-commerce the European Union online business, as well as clusters of authority consumer contracts, and e-commerce law. Whereas their position in the COI map suggests that these themes are at the heart of the domain, both thematical areas are immature and need research-based and theoretical development (Potluri et al., 2020; Wang et al., 2024). While themes of the lower left quadrant (such as digital financial system, smart contract, Brexit) lack association and scholarly activity in general; showing therefore to be at an early stage or under decline when compared to other legal concerns deemed more pressing (Abedi et al., 2019).

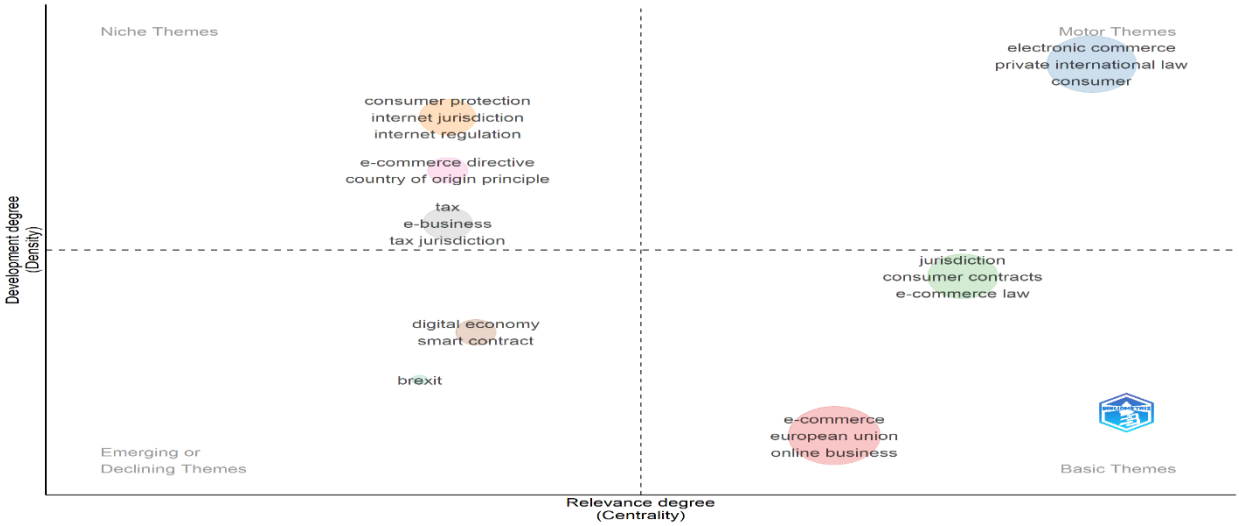


Figure 3. Thematic Mapping of Research Clusters (Set A)

Research clusters strategic position according to centrality and density. Motor themes (upper right) are both relevant and well developed; niche themes (upper left) are quite specific; basic themes (lower right) are important but less developed; emerging or declining trends (lower left) indicate lower relevance and development.

Whereas Fig. 3 gives us a basic start, Fig. 4, which we position here, will allow us to "watch this space" and capture the dynamics of the field during its progression time as research clusters became more granulated and develop over time. Notably, motor planes such as private international law and unitization continue to predominate but have been joined by inchoate (alternative dispute redressal), which highlights an snowballing attention towards an alternative means of settling cross-boundary e-commerce disputes outside of the court system (Abedi et al., 2019; Wang et al., 2024). Another motor cluster, additionally to the first clustering around data internationalization and information, evolves related to the significance in data sovereignty, regulatory compliance, and cross boundary information governance for informing legal debates on digital trade (Potluri et al. 2020).

In the niche quadrant particular clusters like the country-of-origin principle are still important, while themes such as Brexit and Privacy have shifted upwards in the direction of the frontier between niche and motor themes. This change implies greater interest in the above areas and indicates that these topics are becoming more universally applicable, especially with respect to regulatory convergence problems and legal consequences of geopolitical shifts for cross-boundary e-commerce (Gupta & Jindal, 2023; Ong & Lee, 2025).

Figure 4 The basic quadrant is more crowded in Figure 4 that the previous one, this expansion clusters around core topics like taxation, personal authority, and electronic commerce. That densification is indicative both of the real-world relevance of these questions for those working in the field and making law, on the one hand, but also its academic belated appreciation that it lies at the heart of governance for digital trade (Meltzer 2019; Volynets et al. 2024). In the meantime,

emerging / waning themes containing digital financial system, smart contract and trust were closer to the centerline indicating that these themes are moving into established sectors.

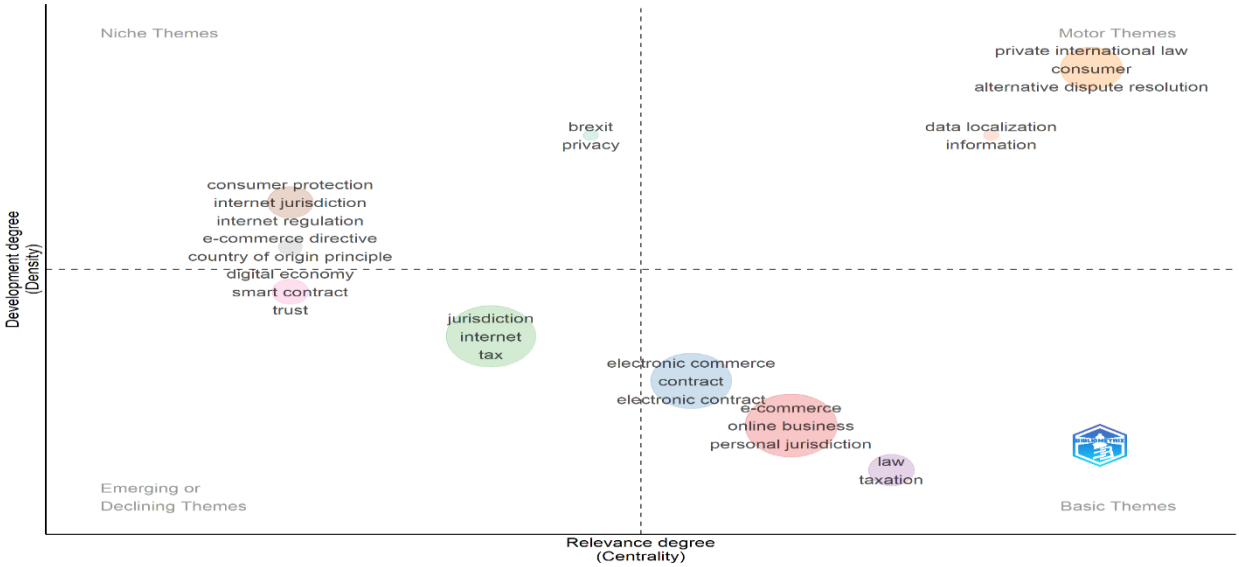


Figure 4. Evolution and Granularity of Research Themes (Set B)

Motor themes are private international law, consumer, ADR, and data governance. Niche themes represent highly specialized legal clusters with possibility of upward mobility. Core topics show expansion of fundamental themes. Emerging and declining themes reflect transitional subjects with the possibility of wider applicability.

For simplicity of interpretation gives an overview strategy diagram of the field's thematic structure as Figure 5. The driving motors of this visualization are e-commerce, private international law, and consumer themes, which confirm once again their head position in the academic discourse. There will be emphasis on niche themes, such as consumer shield and internet district with discussions emphasizing the significance of legal compliance and conflict resolution (Al-Freihat et al., 2025).

Basic themes are expressed by beans of such foundations as e-commerce, European Union and online business that have not only gained in significance but can also be referred to as the space structure of research on district and applicable law (Potluri et al., 2020; Wang et al., 2024). Crucially, a core transitional cluster comprising the district, tax and e-commerce Mandate does serve as a link between niche specialization and wider, high-relevance problems. This cluster is characteristic of the field's multi-disciplinarity, as legal principles, regulation, and business practices interface to construct global electronic commerce (Gupta & Jindal, 2023; Ong & Lee, 2025).

Newer research themes such as digital financial system, smart contract, and Brexit appear in the lower-left quadrant indicating that they are at an early or quasi-driver level. However, as more central clusters are located close to them, we expect

that these ideas will become snowballingly relevant in coming years with changes in the legal and technologic environment (Abedi et al., 2019; Wang et al., 2024).

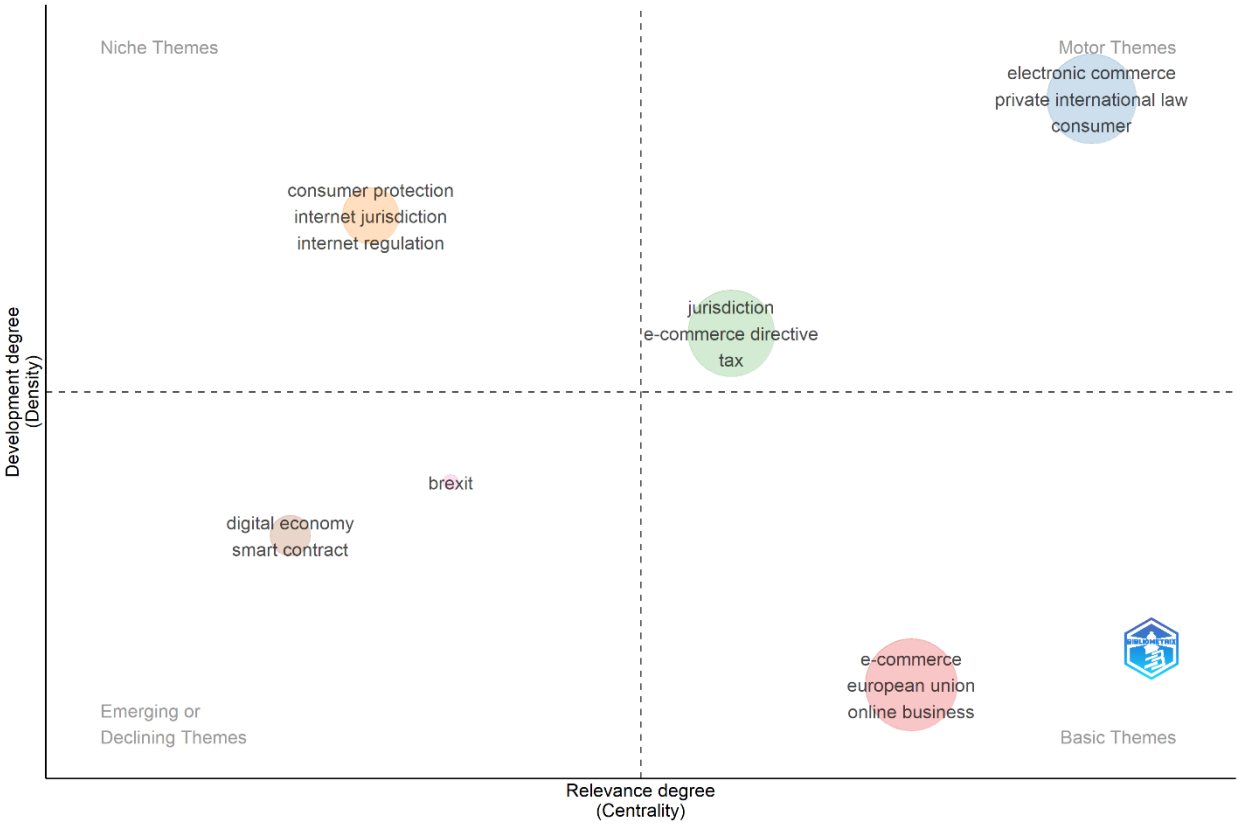


Figure 5. Simplified Thematic Distribution (Set C)

Motor themes There are some big drivers (e-commerce, PIL, consumer) underlying these: Specialist themes feature the specific legal and regulatory problems. Primary themes are structural supports, whereas a central subcortical cluster acts as an intermediate between specialized/dedicated and motor fields. Some may be emerging themes, of growing importance but not mainstream and others are peripheral.

Bibliometric mapping results of thematic clusters shed light on the dynamics of the research front in international e-commerce law. In its early stages, research mostly revolved around the fundamental concepts of electronic commerce and cross-boundary jurisdiction, creating the necessary theoretical groundwork for legal exploration (Meltzer, 2019; Gupta & Jindal, 2023; Afuwape, 2025) As the field professionalized, niche areas such as consumer shield, taxation in cyberspace and law of the internet to take account of practical and policy driven problems began to appear indicating a greater sophistication of legal governance problems within digital markets (Al-Freihat et al., 2025; Ong & Lee, 2025).

The ADP, data globalization and infoGov show that the future for our legal systems is adaptive digital laws. Growing attention devoted towards ODR, smart contracts and blockchain is indicative of the changing interaction between law and technology (Abedi et al., 2019; Wang et al., 2024). Emerging regulatory and geopolitical topics also influence a future research agenda (Potluri et al., 2020).

Thirdly: Discussion: Gaps and Future Directions

We also review the bibliometric study recently supervised on the authority and governing law in international electronic commerce, focusing our attention on some main trends as well as unaddressed issues Bibliography: p. 441-470. Foundational matters of private international law, consumer protection, and technology adoption have been addressed unevenly with new initiatives, including smart contracts and dispute determination using blockchain technologies being underrepresented in the literature (Meltzer, 2019; Gupta & Jindal, 2023; Abedi et al., 2019; Wang et al., 2024). This focal point the necessity of interdisciplinary research integrating laws, computer informatics and e-commerce operation to cope with more sophisticated cyber trade conflicts.

The analysis shows that specialist legal themes like internet district, consumer shield and tax district are also likely well advanced although confined in specific regional or national frameworks (Al-Freihat et al., 2025; Ong & Lee, 2025). As a result, comparative work regarding harmonization of law among different countries are scarce. Such a void is especially crucial due to the inherently transnational functioning of e-commerce. Further investigations are required to understand the cross- boundary regulatory harmonization or effectiveness of supranational legal infrastructures, such as e-commerce Mandate and international dispute resolution mechanisms that could help multinational organizations effectively (Potluri et al., 2020; Volynets et al., 2024).

Yet another perceptible gap exists in the theme concerning governance of Data and Privacy which has become a motor-theme in recent years, especially with focus on data internationalization and cross - boundary information flow (Wang et al., 2024; Potluri et al., 2020). However, while the scholarly community have snowballingly come to recognize these topics, most literature provides descriptive rather than analytical treatment of the topics, and leaves much of contemporary policy unaddressed as a question of law effectiveness. This would allow future studies to use scenario- or agent-based modeling approaches to simulate the effects of different regulatory regimes on digital trade, building on these types of methodological approaches used in studies of telecommunications policy and cross boundary e-commerce (e.g., Potluri et al., 2020; Zhao & Cheng, 2024).

Emerging issues such as Brexit, taxation of cryptocurrencies and trust in digital transactions direct the field's reactive attitude towards geopolitical and technological changes, but also point to weaknesses in longitudinal research (Lazea et al., 2025; Gupta & Jindal, 2023). For instance, although the effects of Brexit on private international law and EU e-commerce regulation are examined to some extent, research into taxation of cryptocurrencies is in its infancy and needs further policy and empirical investigation (Lazea et al., 2025; Wang et al., 2025).

Additionally, the level of international collaboration in research seems low as shown by bibliometric data on inter-country co-authorship, particularly in relation to jurisdictional problems and legal frameworks (Zhao & Cheng, 2024). This restriction

limits the applicability of results and inhibits the possibility for comparative legal research. Cross-continental research networks and cooperative research could further strengthen theoretical soundness and practical significance and gain a more global understanding of e-commerce law.

The former remains underutilized in the field that gets examined through qualitative analysis or doctrinal approach while quantitative methods (viz., bibliometric mapping), network, and computational framework exists in lesser extent (Chen et al., 2015; Shah et al., 2023). Adding methodological pluralism might help researchers to better grasp the unfolding of themes, legal forces, and law–business practices/digital technology interaction that could generate predictive knowledge for policymakers and regulators (Tran & Khoa, 2025; Ebabu et al., 2026).

In conclusion, the paper identifies several probable future directions: development of modern technologies in legal frameworks, cross-boundary comparative studies, longitudinal consideration of geopolitical effects and relations between them, reinforced international cooperation and methodological heterogeneity. Filling these gaps is key to the establishment of adaptive, resilient, and globally consistent legal instruments that can regulate the fast-paced digital financial system (Meltzer, 2019; Wang et al., 2024; Volynets et al., 2024).

Conclusion

Last but certainly not least, this bibliometric analysis briefly discusses the evolving process and evolutionary structure of research about district law and applicable law in cross-border electronic commerce. The analysis further demonstrates that motor themes like private international law, consumer and electronic commerce continue to emerge as drivers of the field, particularising continuing academic & practical relevance (Meltzer 2019; Gupta & Jindal 2023). In contrast, specific article or research domains – like internet district; data internationalisation; Brexit or smart contracts accentuate the dynamic articulation of scholarship across technological change and regulation as well decomposition (Abedi et al., 2019; Wang et al., 2024; Lazea et al.; 2025).

The inspection also shows that fundamental law disciplines become an anchor and continuity, whereas the new ones would reflect a change of course that must be investigated in an interdisciplinary way. One such instance is when law digital technologies and cross-boundary trading are developed as a connected ecosystem that requires more intelligent legal frameworks - where the ability to learn has been included - mainly for e-dispute resolution, taxability, data governance, and customer shield (Al-Freihat et al., 2025; Potluri et al., 2020). Besides, a thematic cluster in bibliometric maps are expanding (an emerging trend) is shown, this suggests that the field is currently becoming more and more complex and interconnected with district problems, regulations, and commercial practices.

The paper is also valuable in that it identifies a number of continuing short-comings (in comparative research, international cooperation, longitudinal measures) while at the same time noting: Many more studies are being done; and Scholarly

relevance on a global scale remains uneven. Substantial these gaps would enhance not only academic knowledge but also significantly assist policy-makers, lawyers and companies who have to deal with the international e-commerce regulatory maze(Wang et al., 2025).

Bibliometric techniques can be a systematic and replicable method of recording the growth of legal research in e-commerce. By integrating thematic clustering, evolution mapping and strategic analysis, this study not only presents the panoramas of the fields but also directs the future science inquiry. The law can continuously be expected to trail the bleeding edge of technology developments and digital trading practices, starring to impetus for trust and jurisdiction issues within cyberspace. As a result, the regulation of international e-commerce has to resolve traditional legal tenets with flexibility in response to technological, economic and geopolitical change

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