

UNT Global Digital Retailing Research Center & Research Lab

Mission and Purpose

Mission

To bring together the brightest minds, impactful ideas, and creativity in academia and industry to drive an objective dialog around the current and future state of *digital retailing* and its impact on the *consumer experience*.

Purpose

The UNT Global Digital Retailing Research Center & Research Lab provides research opportunities and experiences for academic scholars and undergraduate and graduate students. Collaboration is sought with other colleges and departments at UNT, consumer products and services industries, and other universities. Its purpose is to facilitate research, thought leadership, education, event experiences, and talent success. The Center serves as UNT's 'face' and 'evangelism' of Digital Retailing and the Consumer Experience to industry and the greater community through ongoing research and dialog.

Center Goals

1. **Objective Thought** – Support inquiry and dialogue about the current and future states of digital retailing and its impact on the consumer experience.
2. **Global Discovery** – Create academic – industry partnerships that support research in digital retailing from the perspective of consumer experiences in digital environments.
3. **Talent Development** – Enhance student knowledge of digital retailing and consumer experiences using discovery and discourse to formulate and exchange ideas.
4. **Excellence Awards** – Recognize excellence in digital retailing and consumer experience research and thought leadership through competitive awards.
5. **Financial Performance** – Expand the Center's resources and impact to support goals 1 – 4.

Center Leadership

The UNT Global Digital Retailing Research Center operates under the leadership of its Senior Director. The current Senior Director is Linda Mihalick, M.S. in Merchandising and Digital Retailing Lecturer in the Department of Merchandising and Digital Retailing at UNT. Her industry credentials include over 25 years of executive senior leadership experience in ecommerce and retailing with national and international companies, including fortune 100 and 500 and start-ups. In these roles, she has led businesses through many industry evolution paradigm shifts, honing deep expertise in omni-channel retail, digital transformation, customer experience, strategic planning and technology strategy.

Evolution of Digital Retailing and the Consumer Experience at UNT

A national leader in preparing future talent for consumer services and products industries – most notably retail, hospitality and tourism – UNT was first in the nation to offer a degree program for online retail commerce. Launched in 2002, the B.S. in Electronic Merchandising was renamed in 2010 as a B.S. in Digital Retailing (DRTL) to reflect the dynamic changes in the retail industry and in ecommerce. This name continues to reflect the massive transformation in online business-to-consumer commerce. UNT's DRTL program remains the only degree program of its kind in the nation.

Digitization has disrupted commerce by empowering consumers who have 24/7/360 access to information and options to purchase, engage, and experience in both virtual and physical spaces. This dynamic consumer engagement has changed expectations for personalized, customized and instantaneous digital solutions for purchases and experiences. In the 21st century, the consumer experience has emerged as possibly the single most important driver of change in commerce. Again,

UNT led in preparing talent for this massive paradigm shift with the launch of a B.S. in Consumer Experience Management (CEXM) in 2017. UNT's CEXM program remains the only degree program of its kind in the nation.

A Comprehensive Perspective of Consumer – Focused Commerce

In addition to its firsts in program development, the College of Merchandising, Hospitality and Tourism offers a comprehensive range of academic programs centered on consumer products and services industries, specifically in retail, hospitality and tourism. Academic programs, certificates, and concentrations are housed within the college and in partnership with other colleges on UNT campuses. Undergraduate students prepare for professional careers. Multiple graduate program options offer working professionals opportunities to build skills and knowledge in critical analysis and subject content. Full-time graduate students prepare for an upward career trajectory in industry or academia.

At the bachelor's level, CMHT offers the:

- B.S. in *Consumer Experience Management*
- B.S. in *Digital Retailing*
- B.S. in *Home Furnishings Merchandising*
- B.S. in *Hospitality Management*
- B.S. in *Merchandising*
- B.S. in *Retail*

At the master's level, CMHT offers resident and/or 100% online degrees in:

- M.S. in *Hospitality Management* (Resident)
- M.S. in *International Sustainable Tourism* (Resident UNT Year 1/Resident CATIE, Costa Rica Year 2)
- M.S. in *Merchandising* (Resident/Online)

At the master's level, CMHT offers 100% online professional options:

- Graduate Academic Certificate in *Digital Retail Merchandising*.
- *Digital Retail Merchandising* (9 SCH Focus) in M.S. in Data Analytics (UNT New College Frisco)

At the doctoral level, in the Ph.D. in Information Science, CMHT offers a:

- Concentration in *Consumer Behavior and Experience Management*