

Choosing the Right Ecommerce Platform for You & Your Customer



A customer usability study comparing Shopify Plus and Magento 2

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Is there an ecommerce platform that is better, not just for back-end users, but for customers?

Executive Summary

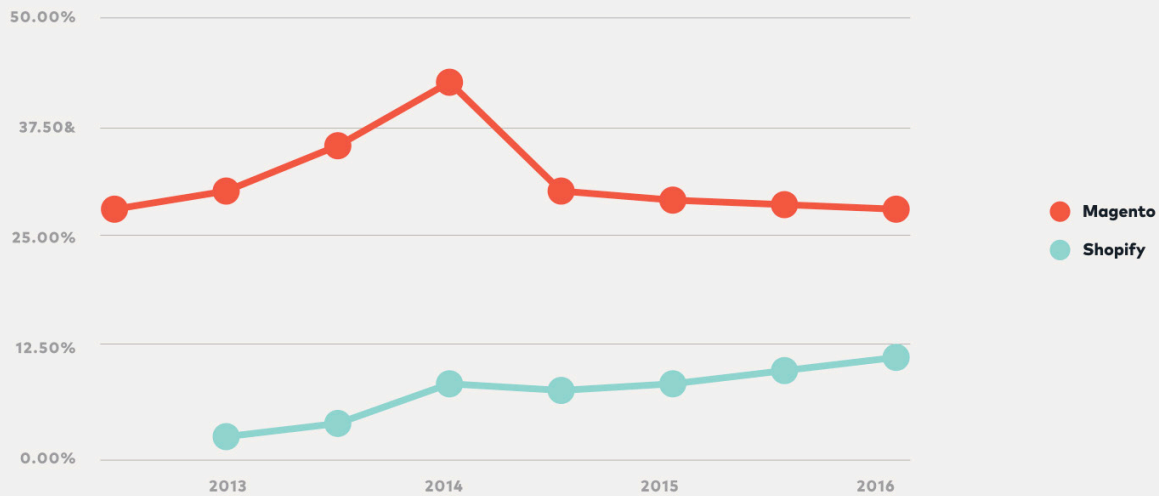
Is there an ecommerce platform that is better, not just for back-end users, but for customers?

For nearly a decade, Magento has dominated the ecommerce space as the industry standard for ecommerce software platforms. Originally launched in 2008 as a free open source platform for ecommerce sites, its enterprise solution is now employed by some of the largest ecommerce brands in the world, including Samsung, OfficeMax, Ford and Nike. Magento's dominance in the market is largely thanks to its open source roots, which enable nearly endless customization and have led to the organic growth of a robust on and off-line community of committed Magento developers and experts.

While Magento continues to own the highest percentage of market share amongst ecommerce software platforms, in recent years its percentage of share has remained stagnant while other platforms' percentage of market share has steadily grown (Aheadworks, 2016). This is in large part due to the fact that until the long-awaited release of Magento 2 in 2015, there was no "off the shelf" version of Magento, and companies without substantial development resources were opting for simpler, out of the box solutions. Until recently, many of these solutions were limited in the degree of customization they offered. This has started to change.

Over the past several years, Shopify has emerged as an industry leader. With an out-of-the-box experience that requires little to no technical expertise when it comes to installation, and now, with more recent advanced customization capabilities, it owns 10% of the ecommerce software market share compared with Magento's 29%, and is continuing to grow. (Aheadworks, 2016).

Figure 1: Shopify vs. Magento, % of Marketshare



AheadWorks, 2016 Ecommerce Platforms Analysis and Comparative Report

From a development standpoint, the benefits of Shopify over Magento have been well documented. When it comes to installation and maintenance, Shopify is a far more scalable solution and can save companies significant amounts of money in development resources. And with regular updates to the software, its customization capabilities continue to become more and more competitive with Magento.

A shift from technology to people

As a Customer Experience Design agency who has made a name for ourselves designing ecommerce sites, we know Magento intimately and over the years have worked almost exclusively with their software to develop ecommerce sites for our clients. However, as the industry has shifted to become more focused on people and experiences and less on technology, so have we. Thus our interest in discovering new ecommerce platforms that not only allow us (and our clients) to focus less energy

and resources on technology and development and more on customer experience, but also in platforms that are, in their out-of-the box design and implementation, better for end users—in this case, shoppers.

When undertaking this study, which compared the Shopify Plus and the Magento 2 out-of-the-box experiences from a usability standpoint, we were confident that when setting up the two sites on Magento and Shopify, we would find that the Shopify site required far less time and expertise to build than the Magento site—and we were correct in this hypothesis. Not only did the initial installation of the Magento site require the technical expertise of our IT team, whereas the Shopify site was quickly and easily installed by a member of our UX team, but customizing the build in Magento to suit the needs of our test store required significantly more time and expertise than in Shopify.

What really surprised us, however, was what we found when it came to the usability of both sites. While we had a hunch that the out-of-the-box Shopify Plus experience might be more user friendly than Magento's, we were surprised to find that not only did the Shopify site perform significantly better on the usability test, but users also had a better perception of their experience on Shopify Plus than they did on Magento 2.

FINDINGS



Overall, Shopify Plus' checkout process performed better in all areas of measurement.

Our Shopify Plus vs. Magento 2 usability test measured both how long it took users to complete the various tasks prescribed on each platform, and also surveyed each user on their overall satisfaction of the experience. In all areas of measurement, from performance to perception, Shopify Plus performed better.



Overall satisfaction as measured by the System Usability Scale (SUS) revealed higher satisfaction rates for Shopify Plus.

Using the SUS, Shopify Plus scored higher on perceived usability with a score of 86.12 compared to Magento with a score of 86.04. Both checkout processes scored higher than the average of 68. According to SUS scores this places both Shopify Plus and Magento 2 in the top 10% of SUS scores (SUS: System Usability Scale, n.d.). The narrow difference between the two scores is not statistically significant. Further research would be required to establish statistical significance.



The time it took users to check out was faster on Shopify Plus than on Magento 2.

Checkout is arguably the most important aspect of the user experience when it comes to ecommerce. Whether or not site users are able to check out in an easy and timely manner is the element of user experience that impacts the bottom line the most for companies. In our testing we observed a 32 second difference in checkout time between the two sites, with the Shopify Plus experience taking 157 seconds and the Magento 2 experience taking 189 seconds. This means that the checkout experience on Shopify Plus was 16% faster than on Magento 2.

—
16%

faster checkout
on Shopify Plus



Users were able to remove items from their cart at faster speeds on Shopify Plus as compared to Magento 2.

Being able to remove an item from the cart with speed and ease is an important aspect of moving shoppers through to conversion. If users are unable to edit their cart with ease, they are more likely to abandon their cart and terminate shopping. One of the tasks in the usability test we conducted asked users to review their cart and remove one item. Users on Shopify Plus were able to perform this task 9% faster than users on



The out-of-the box shopping experience in Shopify Plus is less custom than the out-of-the box Magento 2 experience, providing users with fewer options and details to help them find precisely what they are looking for.

While Shopify performed better in all areas of measurement, we did notice that Magento shoppers were more engaged in filtering options and more attune to product listing variants. In Shopify, shoppers immediately looked for filtering options to help them find what they were looking for, but were dissatisfied with the options and abandoned further use. Robust filtering capabilities must be installed with plug-ins. Whereas in Magento, where the out-of-the-box filtering options are more robust, users engaged with filtering options while shopping, and were generally satisfied with the options available.

Additionally, Shopify users were less likely to be aware of options for color variants on a product, since none were provided on the Product Listing Page. Magento provides color options on a Product Listing Page and users were able to identify their color options at that level more easily. As with the filtering options, this can be adjusted in Shopify using a plug in, but is not a part of the out-of-the-box Shopify experience.

How did user experience compare
between Shopify Plus and Magento 2?

Scope & Methodology

The purpose of this research was to understand the differences in the checkout experience between the out-of-the-box functionality of Shopify Plus vs. Magento 2 in order to make more informed recommendations to our clients as to which platform performs better from a usability perspective.

RESEARCH GOALS

The goal of this research was to compare the ‘out-of-the-box’ front end experience for Shopify Plus and Magento 2 in the following areas:

- *Ease of locating products with out-of-the-box navigation and filtering options*
- *Ease of making edits to the cart*
- *Ease of navigation between the cart and shopping*
- *Time to completion for checkout*

METHODOLOGY

The Test

Users were given an ‘out-of-the-box’ version of a live shopping experience on either Magento 2 or Shopify Plus. Each user was given the same frame of mind. They were told that, as a part of their New Year’s resolution they’ve decided to go jogging every morning and are in need of a few items of new exercise clothing. They were each given 5 tasks to complete, including shopping for products, adding products to the

cart, removing items from the cart, and checking out. In addition to qualitative feedback, tests were evaluated for time to completion, self reported ease of task via a single ease question, and a SUS survey post test. In order to narrow the focus of the study, all tests were performed on a Desktop computer.

Sample

Our research sample included 24 subjects who were randomly selected within the following parameters:

All participants were from Urban or Suburban areas of the United States and Canada.

3 subjects from each group were randomly assigned to one of the 2 test conditions.

Figure 2: Research Sample



Materials

Live shopping sites were set up with the same content and products on Magento 2 and Shopify Plus. The Shopify Plus site was hosted by Shopify servers, while the Magento 2 site was installed on Cake & Arrow's internal servers.

We conducted unmoderated usability testing via TryMyUI.com to record voice and screen footage of participants using the site in each test condition to record qualitative feedback as well as time to completion. Participants were additionally given an SEQ question for each task, and an SUS survey post test.

Using TryMyUI.com we collected quantitative feedback in two ways:

- *System Usability Scale(SUS)—A post-test survey that rates the perceived usability of the UI.*
- *Single Ease Question (SEQ)—A single, post-task question to gauge the performance satisfaction of each task. Ease of making edits to the cart.¹*

¹The System Usability Scale (SUS) is a reliable tool for measuring usability of a variety of products and services. It consists of 10 questions, with 5 response choices available to respondents. One of its key benefits, and why we included it in this study, is that it can reliably be used in small sample sizes (System Usability Scale (SUS), N.D). Like the SUS, the Single Ease Question (SEQ) is a tool for measuring usability. As its name implies, it consists of a single question and pertains to an individual task, rather than a series of tasks (Measuring task usability: The Single Ease Question, n.d.). The SEQ provides a simple straight forward way to measure the usability of an individual task and is useful alongside the SUS as a way of narrowing in on specific usability issues.

Measurements



Time to completion for checkout was measured in seconds from the time that subjects began reading the task question aloud to the time that they landed on the Order Confirmation Screen. These numbers were then averaged per condition.

Time to completion for the cart task was measured from the time that the subjects began reading the task question to the time that they completed the task. These numbers were also averaged per condition

SEQ evaluations were averaged per task within a condition, while SUS scores were averaged per condition.

RESULTS

Figure 3: Research Results

	CART TASK	CHECKOUT	SUS
 SHOPIFY	AVERAGE TIME IN SECONDS	49.58	86.12
	SEQ SCORE	6.92	6.922
 MAGENTO	AVERAGE TIME IN SECONDS	54	86.04
	SEQ SCORE	6.75	6.83



How significant is our data?

Statistical Significance

How significant is our data?

In order to determine the statistical significance of our data, we calculated a single tailed p-value for the checkout time and the cart task time results. A p-value helps to determine the probability of obtaining a result equal to or 'more extreme' than what was actually observed. Our Magento analysis showed that checkout task completion time varied widely between testers. As such, the statistical significance was inconclusive. Whereas with the cart task time (removing items from the cart), we determined that Shopify Plus is faster than Magento 2 with a 10% confidence level.

To gain real insight into the statistical significance of our data, both tasks would benefit from testing a larger sample size, which we hope to do in further research.

What do our findings mean?

What We Learned

01. Speed and usability are related

Perhaps the most significant piece of data gleaned from our study was the difference in checkout time between the two platforms. With an average of 157 seconds to check out, the Shopify Plus experience tested 22 seconds—or almost 20% faster—than the Magento 2 experience. In the world of ecommerce, in which 69% of shopping carts are abandoned, every second between the initial checkout step and conversion counts.

27 %

of carts are abandoned due to a too long/complicated checkout

Baymard Institute, 2016

The checkout process is really simple and easy to follow. It's better from many other websites as it was very distraction free.

Shopify Plus Test Subject

Simplifying and speeding up the checkout process can account for meaningful increases in conversion and in revenue for an ecommerce store. There are a few key factors that can slow down the checkout process and in the case of our study, may have contributed to the difference in checkout time and perception of usability:

I had no significant issues with the checkout process, except I do wish that they let you have a final preview of your order before you place it.

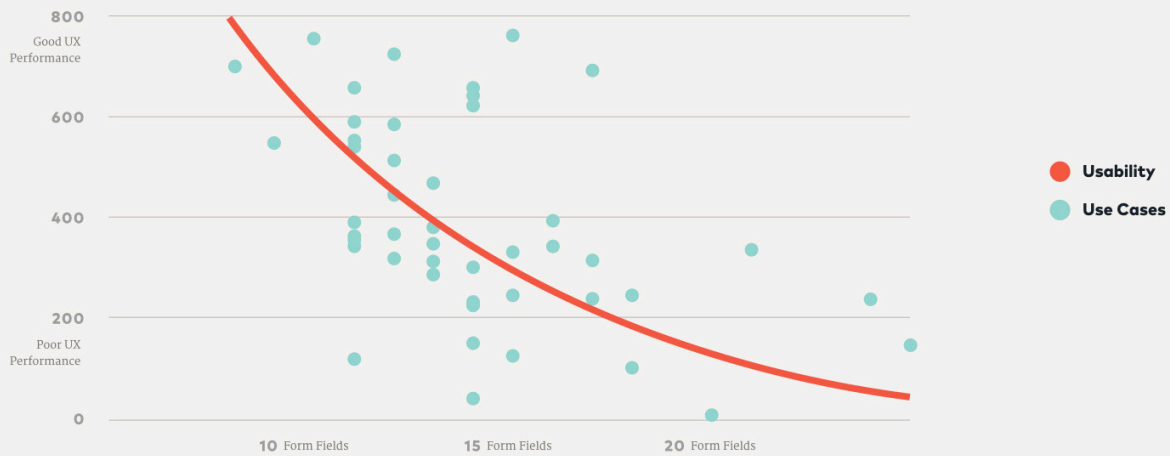
Magento 2 Test Subject

Number of form fields is important

According to the Baymard Institute's study, the average number of form fields contained in the top 50 US ecommerce site's checkouts is 14.88—twice the number necessary. A fully optimized checkout experience can contain as little as 7 form fields. The study indicates that the more form fields and selections users see during checkout, the more friction there exists in the process, leading to longer checkout times, which can influence cart abandonments. While both Shopify's and Magento's out-of-the-box checkouts fall right within the average range, Shopify Plus, with 13 form fields has managed to slightly pare down their checkout experience as compared to Magento 2, with 15 form fields. While this difference may seem slight, statistically it is significant, amounting to a 14% increase in the number of fields in the Magento 2 experience as compared to Shopify Plus. Being asked to fill out a few of these extra form fields could easily account for at least a few seconds in the checkout time difference observed on Magento.

Figure 4: Checkout Usability Performance

Top 50 U.S e-commerce sites 2016



Baymard Institute, E-Commerce Checkout Usability, 2016

Furthermore, eliminating one or two fields from a submission form is a type of incremental optimization, which is a critical component of conversion optimization. While incremental optimization is often discussed in opposition to innovation, it is widely recognized in the world of UX that the two must always go hand in hand, and that the former can mean the difference between a good idea and a great experience. This is especially true when it comes to conversion on an ecommerce site, where nearly 70% of shopping carts are abandoned (Baymard Institute, 2016). A second or two of delay or even the smallest confusion or misunderstanding in the experience can lead a user to terminate the checkout process.

In our 7 years worth of usability testing checkout flows we consistently find that ‘8 vs 15 form fields’ is a much more relevant discussion and priority of resources, than ‘4 vs 6 checkout steps’.

Baymard Institute, 2016

The number of checkout steps matters (but not as much as the number of form fields)

Like the number of form fields, the number of checkout steps can influence the speed or complication of the checkout process, but only after the checkout process exceeds 8 steps.

While it may seem a little counter-intuitive, we consistently see during end-user testing and checkout benchmarking that the number of steps isn’t the most important aspect of the users’ checkout experience—rather it is what the user has to do at each of those steps that’s important.

Baymard Institute, 2016

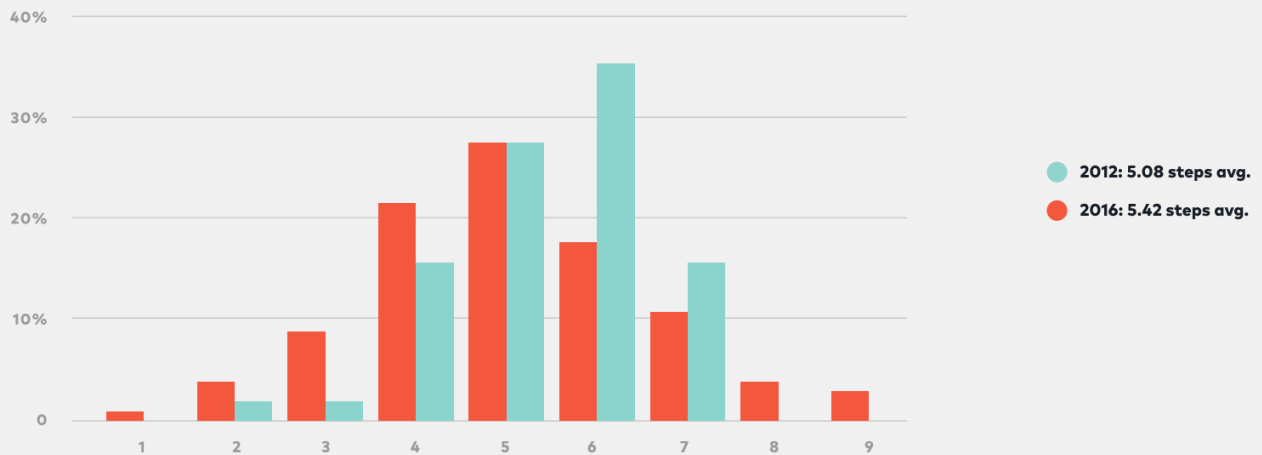
In fact, one-step checkouts are dying out, and the average checkout has actually increased in length between 2012 and 2016, from 5.08 to 5.42 steps². This can in part be explained by the introduction of more complex checkout options, like omni-channel delivery options but also by the rise in popularity of accordion-style checkouts, in which the

²See figure 5

checkout process is broken into multiple shorter steps. The percentage of sites using accordion-style checkouts has increased from 14% in 2012 to 32% in 2016 (The Average Checkout Flow Has 14.88 Form Fields – Twice as Many as Necessary, n.d.). to 32% in 2016.

Figure 5: Number of Checkout Steps (2012 vs 2016)

Among the top 50/100 grossing US online retailers



Baymard Institute, E-Commerce Checkout Usability, 2016

The benefit of the accordion-style checkout is that, by displaying fewer fields on a page, it can give users the perception of a simpler checkout process. While both Shopify and Magento’s checkout experiences are moderately simple and, from a heuristic standpoint, follow many of the best practices for checkout optimization, Shopify’s experience is broken into 3 steps, while Magento’s is broken into 2. The differences are particularly noticeable in step 1. In the Magento 2 experience, there are 11 form fields stacked vertically on the page, while in the Shopify Plus

experience there are 9 fields, but the page looks much shorter, because rather than stacking all fields vertically, related information, such as first and last name, are grouped into logical blocks. This can help users make sense of the information they must fill in and can reduce the cognitive processing time it takes to do so.

Figure 6: Magento Checkout Step 1

LUMA

Shipping 2 Review & Payments

Shipping Address

Email Address *
emilieanne@gmail.com

You can create an account after checkout.

First Name *
Emily

Last Name *
Smith

Company
Cake & Arrow

Street Address *
149 5th ave
Floor 8

City *
New York

State/Province *
New York

Zip/Postal Code *
10010

Country *
United States

Phone Number *
6467386179

Shipping Methods

\$15.00 Table Rate Best Way

\$5.00 Fixed Flat Rate

[Next](#)

Figure 7: Shopify Checkout Step 1

Luma

Cart > Customer information > Shipping method > Payment method

Customer information

Email
test@test.com

Subscribe to our newsletter

Shipping address

First name
Jane

Last name
Smith

Address
2020 Broadway

Apt, suite, etc. (optional)
10

City
New York

Country
United States

State
New York

Zip code
10010

Save this information for next time

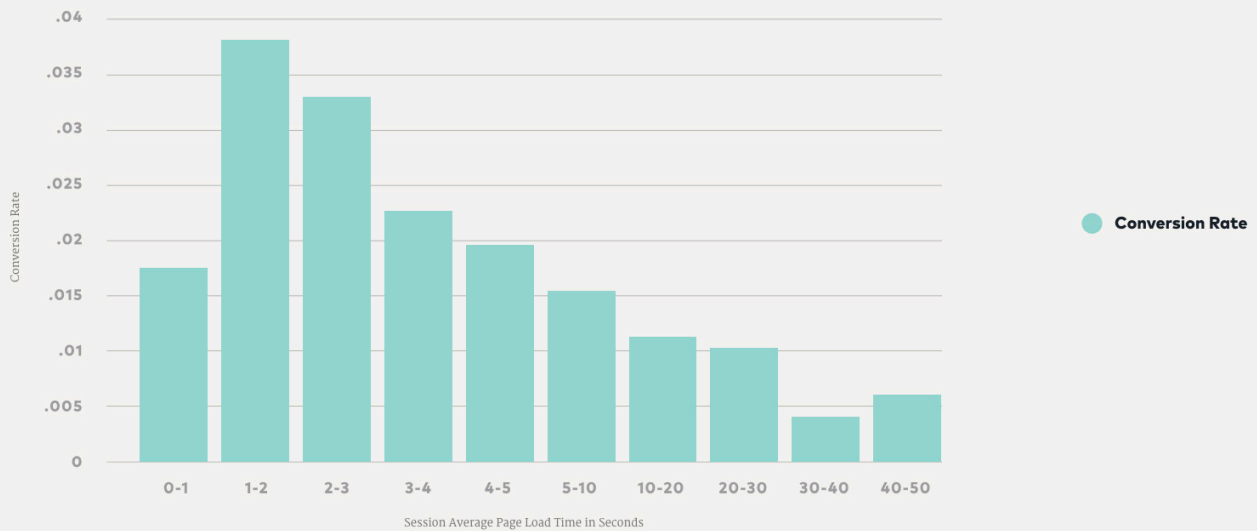
[Return to cart](#) [Continue to shipping method](#)

Page load time impacts the bottom line

Page load time is also critical to an optimized ecommerce checkout. According to an Aberdeen Group study, a 1 second delay in page response

can result in a 7% reduction in conversions (Aberdeen Group, 2015). For many ecommerce stores, this can be the difference of millions of dollars. Slow-loading websites cost retailers 2.7 billion dollars in sales each year. (Moth, n.d.)

Figure 8: Conversion Rate by Page Load Time



Tag Management, 2012 (Soames, C. n.d.)

When we first conducted this study, our results showed a staggering difference between checkout times on the two platforms, with Magento’s checkout experience taking over a minute longer on average than Shopify’s. The frustration users experienced due to the slow page load times also led to a significant disparity in the perceived usability of the two sites, as measured by the SUS and SEQ surveys. After reviewing the test videos, it became clear that the experience on Magento was

occasionally timing out and that there was a serious issue with site performance (ie. page load times) that was skewing our data. We realized that when we had set up the two stores, our IT team had spun the Magento 2 store up on one of our QA servers, which had not been optimized for performance, whereas with Shopify Plus, because the platform is cloud-based and the servers are maintained by them, site performance was not a concern.

Although we threw out the first set of data and it is not included in this study, the experience provided an important lesson on the value of cloud-based software, especially when site performance is concerned. Considering the tremendous impact site performance can have on conversion and on a company's bottom line, for a small to mid-size retailer, without the IT resources in house to maintain site performance, Shopify Plus is the safer, more cost-effective alternative for ensuring an optimal customer experience and keeping page load times to a minimum.

Removing items from the cart should be easy

There was about a 5 second difference between Magento 2 and Shopify Plus in the time it took shoppers to remove items from their cart, with Shopify Plus performing faster. While it may seem counterintuitive, it is important to make removing an item from a shopping cart easy. Making the process difficult can cause shoppers, even those intent on making a purchase, to abandon their carts.

When analyzing the two experiences, there are two major differences we noticed: in Magento, both the cart page and the cart slide out box, which you see when hovering over the shopping cart icon, include both a pencil icon for editing the cart and a trash can icon for removing an item from the cart. When clicking into the cart, the same two icons appear and a shopper must click the trash can icon to remove the item from their cart. In Shopify Plus, the shopper sees a button underneath the

product that reads remove. Clicking this button will remove the item from the cart. Shoppers can also remove items from the cart by setting the quantity to 0 and updating. In Magento, if a shopper tries to set a quantity of 0, they are told this is an invalid quantity.

According to Nielsen Norman Group, ecommerce sites should give shoppers multiple ways of removing items from their cart, and recommend a remove button (as opposed to delete) as well as the ability to set the quantity to 0. Furthermore, Nielsen Norman Group also warns that universal icons are rare, and even when using an icon (like a trash can) that is generally understood, icons should always be accompanied by text label for recognizability, which the icons in the Magento experience were not. Because icons are not always immediately translatable, it takes longer for users to process what they mean and can add to the cognitive load when trying to figure out how to do something, which can ultimately slow users down.

Figure 9: Magento
Removing an item from the cart

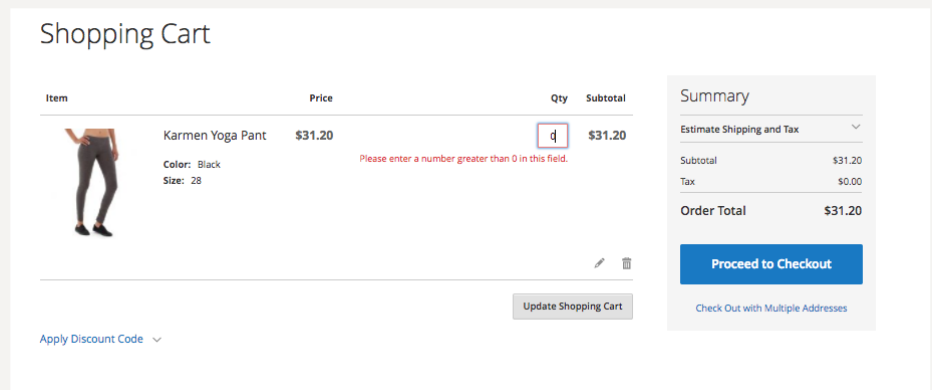
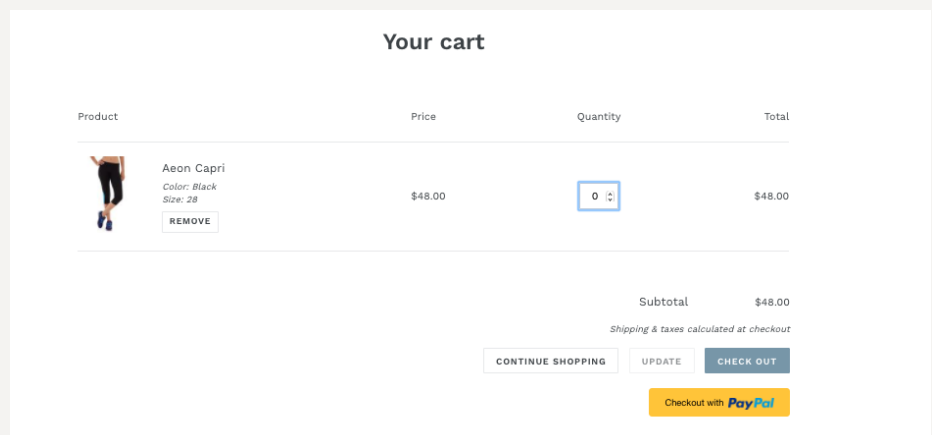


Figure 10: Shopify
Removing an item from the cart



These minor differences in the UX design of the shopping carts may account for time difference observed in our testing.

I love how it's so quick that you don't have to go back to the cart, and you can just quickly click remove. I wish more websites had that.

Shopify Test Subject

02. If you give shoppers meaningful options, they will use them.

When designing the usability test we did not measure the time shoppers took to complete the browsing/shopping task in part because we wanted to see how users interacted with filters. If shoppers are given meaningful browsing options they may spend more time (and money) shopping.

Filtering should be useful

While both Shopify Plus and Magento 2 provide plenty of flexibility as far as filters go through the addition of plug-ins, the default filters in the out-of-the-box Magento experience were more robust and more useful to shoppers in our testing. For example, in the Magento experience, users can filter by gender, by clothing item, and once within a clothing item type are presented with multiple filtering options, including style, climate, color, materials, pattern and price. In the Shopify experience, the default filters included gender and clothing item type, with no further options within clothing item type.

Figure 11: Magento Filtering

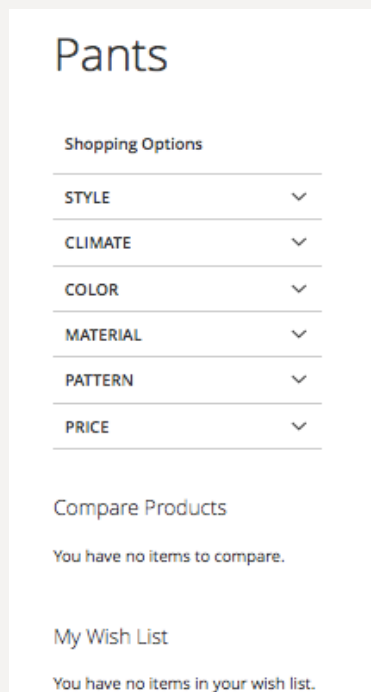
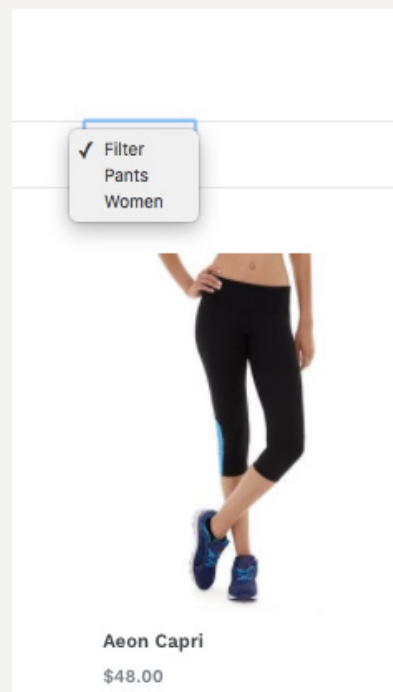


Figure 12: Shopify Filtering



When observing the shoppers, we noticed that Shopify shoppers immediately looked for filtering options but were dissatisfied and immediately abandoned further use of filters, whereas in Magento shoppers were actively engaged in the filtering options when shopping, and used them to find and navigate products. From a usability standpoint, Magento's filter availability and logic are superior to Shopify's for a number of reasons.

AVAILABILITY

When analyzing the out-of-the-box experiences of both Shopify Plus and Magento 2, Magento exceeds Shopify in filter availability. As discussed above, unlike Shopify (and 42% of the top 50 ecommerce sites)(Product Lists: Display Extra Information on Hover (76% Don't), n.d.), the out-of-the-box Magento experience provides category-specific filtering options by default (ie. the ability to filter pants by material or style etc.). In a Baymard Institute study on product list usability, they found that the mere display of certain product attributes increased the subjects' desire to filter by those attributes (Ibid). Similarly, a 2013 econsultancy study found that "kilt retailer buyakilt.com saw a 26% increase in conversions and a whopping 76.1% boost in revenue after implementing a product filter which gave visitors an option to shop by kilt type and kilt pattern" (Moth, n.d.).

LOGIC

Magento's filtering logic is also better than Shopify's in that it provides filtering options that allow users to filter by multiple filters at the same time. For example, in the Magento 2 experience, a shopper can shop by "lightweight" "black" "CoolTech" tops all at the same time, whereas in the Shopify Plus experience shoppers can only choose one filter at a time.

Product listing pages should display the right amount of information

The trick with a product listings page is to present enough information that a shopper is able to adequately evaluate whether or not they want to continue to explore a product, but not too much information that they become overwhelmed and scanning becomes difficult. Displaying not enough information can make the shopping experience frustrating and tedious for shoppers, as they have to go in and out of product pages in order to find the information they need to evaluate a product.



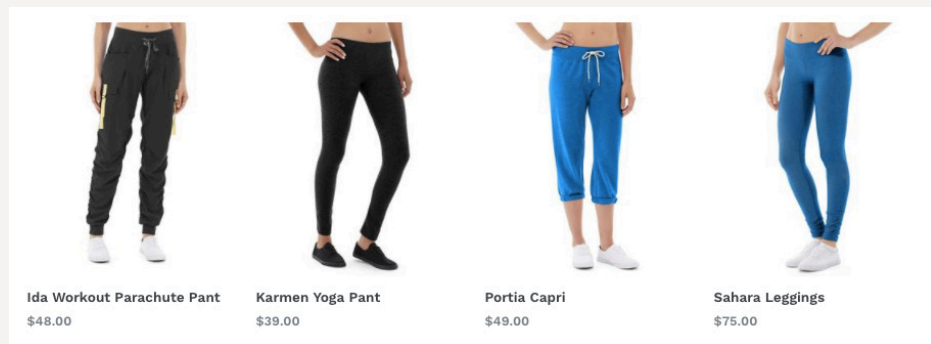
46%

of top US ecommerce sites display too little information in their product lists

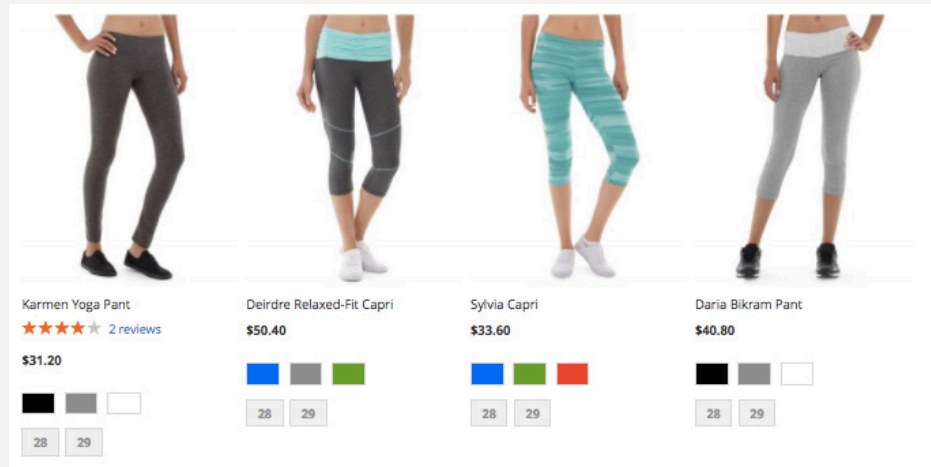
Product Lists: Display Extra Information on Hover (76% Don't), n.d.

When evaluating the Magento and Shopify shopping/browsing experience we noticed significant differences in regard to what information was displayed on the product listing pages, particularly in regard to color. On Magento, users can see product color variants on the product listings page, whereas in Shopify, users had to click into the specific product page to see color variants. Furthermore, the Magento experience also displayed product reviews and sizes, neither of which were displayed on the product listings page in Shopify. From a usability standpoint, Magento provides a superior experience to Shopify,

**Figure 13: Shopify
Product Display**



**Figure 14: Magento
Product Display**



03. The back-end usability of a system can impact the front end experience

At Cake & Arrow, we believe that human-centric design means designing for all of the actors involved in an experience, not just the front-end users. Any design we implement is only as good as its usability for those who have to maintain it. For an ecommerce store, ease of use on the back end is especially important considering the constantly changing nature of ecommerce content. And while back-end usability matters to employees and this in and of itself makes it worth thinking about, the back-end usability of a system can have an impact front end usability as well.

When setting up the two ecommerce stores, we came across multiple instances of the ways in which back-end usability can impact front-end experience.

INSTALLING THE SOFTWARE

There were marked differences in our experience installing the two platforms. Because Shopify Plus is cloud-based, we did not have to install the software at all, we just had to create a Shopify account, which took a matter of minutes. One of our experience designers was then able to set up the entire test store on her own. The most arduous aspect of this process was converting the data we had downloaded from an old Magento 2 site for upload into Shopify Plus. But once the data export/import was complete, setting up the rest of the site was easy and intuitive.

Shopify Plus was made for somebody like me to go in there and make changes without messing anything up.

Lisa McGee, Experience Designer

From the get-go Magento was more complicated. Because Magento had to be installed on our servers, we had to engage our IT team before we could even begin setting up the Magento store. While our IT team has worked extensively with Magento 1, this was our first experience with Magento 2, so there was already a learning curve. Once glitches were worked through, the install alone took several hours to complete, as compared to the 5 minutes or so it took to set up our Shopify account.

- **How did this affect usability?**

Because Magento 2 had to be installed on our servers (using a significant amount IT resources), whereas the Shopify Plus environment is cloud-based and required zero IT expertise, the Magento store was vulnerable to the performance quality of our servers. This had very real implications on users, and on us as a company, operating this test with a limited amount of resources. Because we had used our under-resourced

host the Magento store, site performance was significantly compromised, causing the Magento store to time out and leaving users with a negative perception of the Magento store. For us, this meant we had to recruit another 12 test subjects, migrate to a product environment, run the test again, and analyze the videos and results, resulting in hours of extra time and money that could have been directed toward other projects.

ADDING AND REMOVING PRODUCTS (ON THE BACK END)

Another issue we ran into with Magento 2 was difficulty removing a product category from the Magento store. Once we had imported the data, we realized that we had an extra product category with an extra set of products in Magento that we did not have in the Shopify store. In order to ensure we had an apples-to-apples comparison to test, we needed to remove the extra category and products from the Magento site. After tinkering around the Magento 2 interface for close to an hour, we ended up just adding the extra set of products to the Shopify site because it was easier and faster to add the category on Shopify Plus than to continue trying to figure out how to remove the product category from Magento 2.

I felt really afraid that I was going to break something in Magento. There was a lot of jargon that I didn't understand and it made me afraid to start clicking.

Lisa McGee, Experience Designer

- **How did this affect usability?**

While for the purposes of our test, having an extra product category in our test stores did little to affect usability, if these were real stores where real people would be spending time browsing and shopping on their own (not just completing a set of predetermined tasks), having a product category that you either no longer carry or no longer sell on-line is obviously a huge problem from a usability standpoint. Product categories are critical to how shoppers navigate products. If shoppers see a product line in your store, they expect to be able to shop that product line. Displaying a product line you do not carry sets up false expectations for shoppers, and can also have obvious implications for a brand. Back-end users need to be able to easily control what front-end users are seeing, when they can't, the front-end usability can be compromised.

Which platform is better for
businesses *and* customers?

Conclusions

Which platform is better for businesses *and* customers?

- 01.** With two less form fields and an extra checkout step, the Shopify Plus checkout experience is superior to that of Magento 2, and takes less time to complete. In the larger scheme of things, these small differences could play a major role in conversion.

Relatedly, removing an item from the cart not only took less time on Shopify Plus than it did on Magento 2, but was more intuitive for shoppers, with Shopify Plus providing multiple ways of performing the same action and a clearer call to action.

- 02.** Magento 2 beats Shopify Plus when it comes to filtering options and product display. This makes the browsing experience on Magento 2 more interesting, useful, and rewarding and could lead to more engagement with products on a Magento 2 store.

- 03.** From a back-end usability standpoint Shopify Plus is far superior to Magento 2, requiring less technical resources. The difficulty experienced on the back-end when using Magento 2 can have an impact the front-end experience for customers, and ultimately on the bottom line for businesses.

It is clear that both Magento 2 and Shopify Plus offer competitive best-in-class solutions to ecommerce stores and that there are tenable reasons for choosing either solution. However, based upon our analysis and usability testing of the out-of-the-box offerings

from both products, Shopify Plus tested better overall, providing shoppers a faster, more user-friendly means of checking out, also leaving them with a better impression of their experience overall. While from a heuristic standpoint Magento 2 performed better on a few accounts (ie. filtering and product display), it is our conclusion that the back-end ease of use supported by the Shopify Plus experience, including the easy installation of plug-ins to further customize filtering and product display capabilities, far outweigh the advantages we observed within the Magento 2 out-of-the-box experience. Back-end administrators and front-end customers are, after all both a kind of user, and Shopify Plus is a platform that addresses the needs of both. In doing so, Shopify Plus provides a superior experience for all parties involved, taking a fundamentally user-centric approach to enabling business objectives and solving the unique challenges businesses face within the ecommerce industry.



About Cake & Arrow

Cake & Arrow is a customer experience agency that builds digital products and services for the ecommerce, fashion, insurance, and a handful of other key industries. We focus on helping companies who spend over \$1 million a year on digital initiatives, honing in on what motivates their customers and creating transformational experiences that deliver it. We have partnered with leading and specialty ecommerce and retail brands across the nation, including KIND Snacks, Catbird, Lowe's, Sacks Fifth Avenue, Louis Vuitton and others.

To learn more about how Cake & Arrow can support your ecommerce business, including replatforming your store on Shopify Plus, visit our website at www.cakeandarrow.com or email us at biz@cakeandarrow.com.

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