

# Thinking About eCommerce?

## The Right Website Makes All the Difference

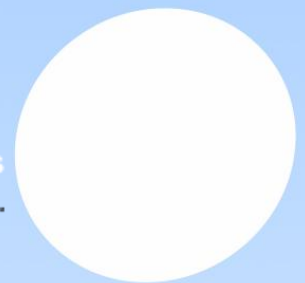
### 10 Steps To A More Usable Ecommerce Website

10 Steps To A More Usable Ecommerce Website

A White Paper by – Ameriteck Web Services



**AWS**  
ameriteck | web services  
*you're on the right page...*



**Are you getting the most from your online presence? Discover how to make your small business website work harder for you by utilizing blogs, ecommerce, and social media. It's easy to turn a basic website into a powerful interactive tool, with a Ameriteck Web Services ecommerce solution.**

You could be selling the best products in the world, at unbelievably low prices, but if shoppers can't find them or get confused along the way, you're never going to reach your full potential in terms of sales.

Improving usability is all about making the buying process on your site as quick and easy as possible.

Improving usability is all about making the buying process on your site as quick and easy as possible. The smallest of changes can have the most dramatic effect on conversion rates. The 10 steps explored below will all help to improve both sales and customer satisfaction.

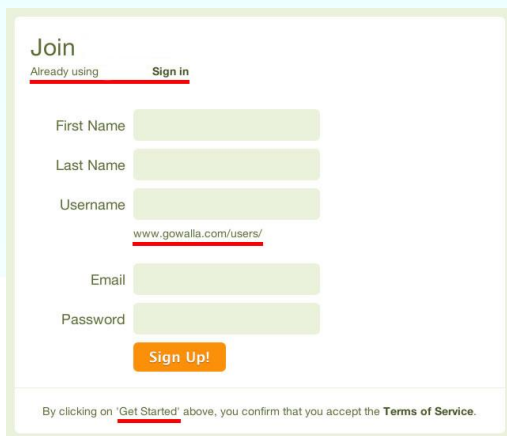
## 1. Let Shoppers Buy without Registering



Every company wants shoppers to register for an account, but the lengthy registration process is a real turnoff for many visitors, especially those who believe (rightly or wrongly) that what they want from you is a one-off purchase.

It's a good idea to allow 'guests' to add items to their carts and checkout without the hassle of registration. Once they've committed to their purchase, they should be given the option to 'Sign Up' to save time on their next visit. This method has been shown to increase sales, improve customer retention and lower cart abandonment. Remember, in many cases, a sale is more valuable than an email address.

## 2. Keep the Sign Up Simple



Join

Already using Sign in

First Name

Last Name

Username   
www.gowalla.com/users/

Email

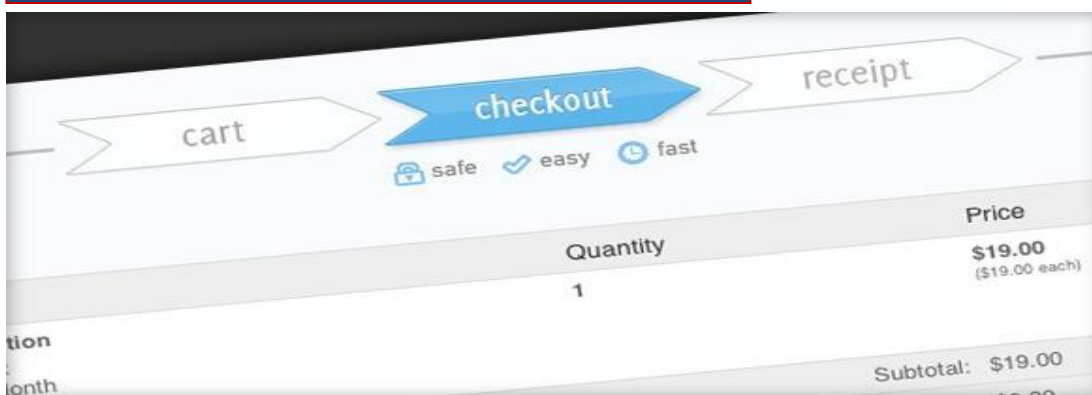
Password

By clicking on 'Get Started' above, you confirm that you accept the [Terms of Service](#).

How much information do you need from a customer when they sign up on your site? You might want as much as you can get, but in reality you need very little. Avoid lengthy signup forms which customers are likely to run a mile from as soon as they open. All you really require is an email address and a password.

Many sites ask for a username rather than an email address, but this can be a source of more confusion – usernames are easy to forget, email addresses are memorable; usernames are common, email addresses are unique

## 3. Tell Users Where They Are



Breadcrumb navigation is a must for all major ecommerce sites. When placing an order, customers need to know exactly where they stand in the purchase process – how many steps they've completed and how many are yet to come. Without such navigation, customers easily get bored, think the process is going to go on forever and abandon their purchase halfway.

Using breadcrumb navigation, customers can easily skip back to a previous step if they think they've made a mistake, rather than giving up altogether. If breadcrumb navigation is beyond your capabilities, numbering each step – e.g. Enter delivery address (step 1 of 4) – is the next best thing.



– Copyright, 2004-2011. All Rights Reserved.

6025 Sandy Springs Circle, Atlanta, GA – 30328 | ph 302-476-2491

[info@ameriteckwebservices.com](mailto:info@ameriteckwebservices.com) | <http://www.ameriteckwebservices.com>

## 4. Make Shoppers feel Safe



Quite rightly, lots of people worry about giving out credit card numbers and personal details online. Shoppers need to feel completely confident when they buy from you. You need to reassure your customers at every stage that your site is safe and that you are a reputable merchant who will protect their privacy and not share their information.

A great way to do this is to get a trust certificate from somewhere like Hacker Safe or VeriSign. You should also ensure that you have an updated SSL certificate.

## 5. Tell Users Where They Are



Confirmation is an absolute necessity if you want to make your site as usable as possible. Not only does it reassure shoppers, it saves you time by reducing the number of queries you get from confused customers.

Effective confirmation should be split up into three parts:

1. The last step in the order process should ask the customer to confirm their order. They should be presented with all the necessary information- order summary, total cost, delivery and tracking information etc. as well as an easy way to cancel their order if they've made a mistake.
2. Once the order has been confirmed, the customer should be presented with an official order confirmation complete with order number, which can either be saved or printed.
3. A copy of this confirmation should be emailed to the customer for their records.



- Copyright, 2004-2011. All Rights Reserved.

6025 Sandy Springs Circle, Atlanta, GA – 30328 | ph 302-476-2491

[info@ameriteckwebservices.com](mailto:info@ameriteckwebservices.com) | <http://www.ameriteckwebservices.com>

## 6. Search Function



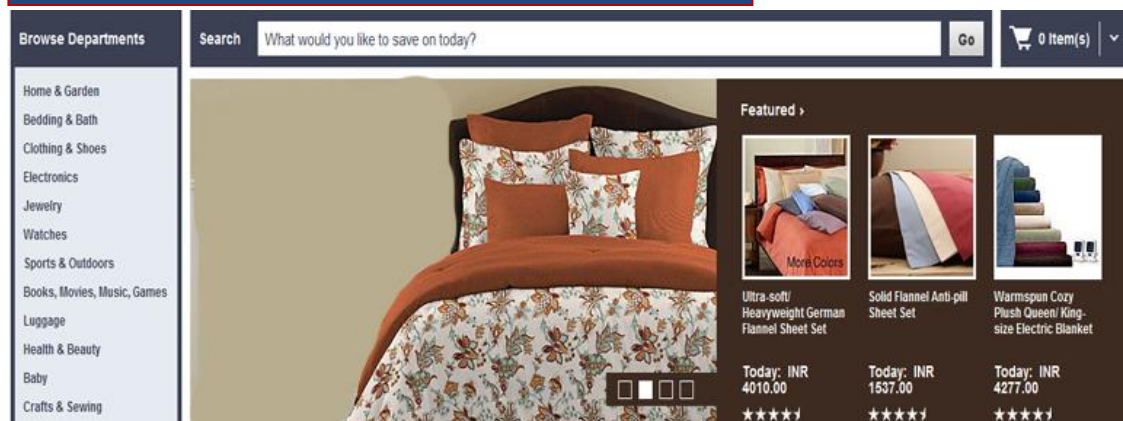
Every ecommerce site needs a high visibility search box, preferably located in a clearly marked spot above the fold, which should allow customers to easily filter and refine their results to find what they want.

Search functionality reduces the time customers spend searching for items, making their shopping experience a happier one.

If your site offers a wide variety of products, you should strongly consider adding a search by category refinement, which not only quickens the search process, but reminds customers of the wide range of items you have for sale.

Letting shoppers search by colour, size etc (if applicable) is also a good idea. In addition, you might want to give your visitors the power to customise their search results, by letting them choose how many items are visible per page.

## 7. Specify Related Items



Nobody wants to feel pressured into buying more than they really want when they visit a website, but if used properly, specifying related items and cross-selling can prove very helpful for customers and very profitable for merchants.

If a shopper's looking at a coat on a clothing site, for instance, they can be provided with suggestions for other items to complete the look. If they're buying an electronic gadget, additional necessities like batteries and cables can be made easily available. Amazon's method for suggesting related items has been shown to increase revenue and retention massively.



- Copyright, 2004-2011. All Rights Reserved.

6025 Sandy Springs Circle, Atlanta, GA – 30328 | ph 302-476-2491

[info@ameriteckwebservices.com](mailto:info@ameriteckwebservices.com) | <http://www.ameriteckwebservices.com>

## 8. Call- to- Action Buttons



Never underestimate the power of the call-to-action button. Effective 'add to cart', 'sign up' and 'proceed to checkout' buttons can push your conversion rates through the roof and vastly improve your site's usability.

To make these buttons stand out you need to think carefully about their size, colour, font, wording and positioning. They need to be large, clear and in a colour that will stand out against your site's background. 'Add to cart' should be used instead of 'buy now', which can scare away some people. Local language should be taken into consideration when designing call-to-action buttons. For example, Americans are more accustomed to 'add to cart', while a British shopper would be more familiar with 'add to basket'. If possible, use IP delivery to serve custom versions based on the customer's geographic location.

## 9. Avoid Hidden Charges



If there's one thing that angers customers more than anything else, it's hidden costs. Make sure that you display prices, taxes, shipping charges (and money saved if applicable) as early in the purchase process as possible. People tend to shop on a budget and want to know their genuine totals before adding other items to their cart. If they're presented with a load of extra costs when they finally come to pay, they're more than likely to abandon ship, trust will be broken and repeat orders lost.



- Copyright, 2004-2011. All Rights Reserved.

6025 Sandy Springs Circle, Atlanta, GA – 30328 | ph 302-476-2491

[info@amerteckwebservices.com](mailto:info@amerteckwebservices.com) | <http://www.amerteckwebservices.com>

## 10. Keep the Cart Accessible



The cart should be visible to a customer at all times, on every page. It should appear above the fold, at the top or on the right, so that customers need not navigate away to view their cart contents and the total order cost. To increase usability further, customers should be able to edit their cart, adding and removing items, at any stage, on any page, without having to update or refresh.

A 'proceed to checkout' button should be positioned inside the cart, making the order process that little bit quicker.

## YOUR TURN TO TALK

We design, build and optimize websites that achieve your business goals. If your business is small, large or a new start-up, we work with you to produce a website that scales up to grow as your business grows. *We do custom Website Design, Business website design, eCommerce Websites, Website Hosting, Website Redesign, Graphic Design, Brand/Website Marketing and Search Engine Optimization.* **Request a FREE Quote** to get connected to our Web Specialist.

Call us now on **302 476 2491** or fill in the simple form to discuss your requirements and to receive a free, no obligation quote.



- Copyright, 2004-2011. All Rights Reserved.

6025 Sandy Springs Circle, Atlanta, GA – 30328 | ph 302-476-2491

[info@ameriteckwebservices.com](mailto:info@ameriteckwebservices.com) | <http://www.ameriteckwebservices.com>