
IMRG e-Retail Standardisation Report by Snow Valley

Part 1: Transactional Navigational Elements Style & Terminology



Introduction

Confirm Order, Submit Order, Send Order, Place Order, Send Payment, Continue Checkout, Process My Order...these are just 7 examples of the different instructions that an online shopper might come across when they are about to complete their purchase in a UK online store.

As there are currently no firm design guidelines for UK retailers to follow when they are developing their sites, this should not come as a major surprise. That no formula exists, however, is a little surprising considering that usability experts have spoken out vehemently in support of standardisation. According to the most famous usability guru of all, Jakob Nielsen, standardisation is not just a good thing, it is essential for business success. In Jakob's Law of the Internet User Experience he says, "It has long been true that websites do more business the more standardised their design is." This is based on his theory that "Users spend most of their time on other sites. This means that users prefer your site to work the same way as all the other sites they already know."

It would seem that many in the UK retail community share this view. At an IMRG Senate Meeting in December 2004, a call was made for some form of assistance to be provided to help member retailers in the development and improvement of their online stores. As a result Snow Valley undertook some initial research to find out whether standardisation already exists, by looking at the terms and styles of the navigational elements that form part of the transaction process.

Of course, terminology and style of navigational elements form a small part of any standardisation debate. This is the first part of a series of reports that will go on to consider a number of related areas, such as position and size of navigational elements, and the sequence of stages in the order process.

Objectives & Methodology


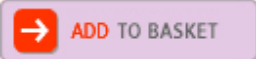



This report seeks to answer one question: are online retailers in the UK adopting the same terms and styles for key navigational elements, despite the lack of guidelines? Has an 'Add to Basket' button become the unofficial standard or are retailers, designers and developers opting for a variety of alternatives?

To find the answer we visited 100 UK online stores in January 2005. We looked for two things:

1. The choice of words and/or icons for key transactional navigational elements
2. The style of each element, eg
 - Buttons containing words
 - Buttons containing words and icons
 - Clickable or non-clickable words
 - Clickable or non-clickable icons
 - A combination of the above

This report does not seek to recommend a set of guidelines. It holds a mirror up to the current situation and allows retailers to assess their own choices against those of their peers.

Element No 1: Adding an item to a basket

STRUCTURE OF MOST PREFERRED NAVIGATIONAL ELEMENTS	EXAMPLE	NO. OF SITES
Button containing words 'Add To Basket'		17
Button containing words 'Add to Basket' and arrow icon		12
Button containing words 'Add to Basket' and basket icon		7
Button containing word 'Buy'		5
Clickable words 'Add to Basket' with icon other than basket or arrow		5

Most Popular Option

17% of retailers opted for a button containing the words 'Add to Basket'. Although we came across a whole range of alternatives (see list below), nearly half (46 %) of the sites we visited were using one of the 5 options in the above table.

Preferred Terminology




'Add to Basket' was clearly the most popular option - 43 retailers used these words either alone or with an icon. Most of the alternatives on offer were also variations on the 'Add to Basket' theme:

Add	Add to shopping basket (+basket icon)	Buy Now
Add (+ arrow)	Add to shopping basket (+trolley icon)	Buy Now (+ arrow)
Add (+ basket icon)	Add to Shopping Cart	Buy Now (+ trolley icon)
Add Item To Basket	Add to shopping trolley	Buy This Online
Add to bag	Add to Trolley	Buy Tickets
Add to bag (+ arrow)	Add to trolley (+ trolley icon)	More Info/Buy
Add to Cart	Buy & info	Plus sign
Add to cart (+ arrow)	Buy (+ arrow)	Plus sign and basket
Add to my Basket	Buy (+ basket icon)	Proceed
Add to shopping bag	Buy (+ wheelbarrow icon)	View/Buy
Add to shopping bag + handbag icon	Buy 1	Select size and colour
Add to shopping basket	Buy From (basket with arrow icon)	

Preferred Style

The vast majority (over 80%) of retailers opted for buttons. Another 14% used either clickable words with an icon or non-clickable words with an icon.

Element No 2: Viewing the contents of a basket

STRUCTURE OF MOST PREFERRED NAVIGATIONAL ELEMENTS	EXAMPLE	NO. OF SITES
Button containing words 'View Basket'		5
Clickable words 'View Basket' + basket icon		4
Clickable words 'View Basket' only	View Basket	3
Button containing word 'View'		3

Most Popular Option

Unlike the previous element, there was a lot of variation in the way that customers were invited to view the contents of their baskets. Just 5 retailers shared the most popular solution, which was a button containing the words 'View Basket'. Only the 4 options listed above had more than 3 advocates each - the other 85 retailers not accounted for were using a range of terms and styles.

Preferred Terminology



Although the style in which the words were presented differed, 'View Basket' was the most popular term, appearing on 23 sites. The other 77 sites used a variety of options:

Basket	My basket 1 item + basket	View Basket + trolley + arrow
Basket & Checkout + basket icon	n items + trolley	View Cart
Basket + bag	n items + trolley	View Shopping Bag + bag icon
Basket + basket icon	Shopping Bag	View Shopping Trolley
Basket + trolley icon	Shopping Bag + bag	View Trolley
Basket Contents	Shopping Basket	View Trolley + trolley
Cart	Shopping Basket + basket	View Your Basket + arrow
Checkout	Shopping Basket + basket icon	View Your Basket + Bag
Checkout + basket icon	Shopping Basket + trolley	Your Basket
Checkout + trolley	Shopping Cart	Your shopping + wheelbarrow
My Basket	Trolley + trolley	
My Basket + trolley	View basket + trolley	

Preferred Style

22 retailers used buttons, half using words only and half using words and icons. 21 sites opted for clickable words with a clickable icon, with much variation between the wording and icons chosen. The rest was a wide combination of words, buttons and icons.

Element No 3: Updating the basket with new information

STRUCTURE OF MOST PREFERRED NAVIGATIONAL ELEMENTS	EXAMPLE	NO. OF SITES
No Update Basket element	n/a	25
Button containing word 'Update'		13
Button containing words 'Update Basket'		10
Clickable word 'Update'	Update	8

Most Popular Option

25 of the sites visited did not have an update basket navigational element. In most of these 25 cases a customer could change the number of items they wanted to order and the page automatically refreshed to display the new total cost.

Of the 75 sites with an update element, the most popular option was the single word 'update' inside a button, which was used by 13 retailers.

Preferred Terminology

The word 'update' appeared on 61 of the 75 sites with elements, either alone or as part of a phrase. Where 'update' was not used, the most common alternative was 'recalculate', but this registered just 6 appearances in various combinations:

Amend	Save Changes	Update Order Total
Change	Update + arrow	Update Price
Confirm Changes	Update + square	Update quantities + arrows
Recalculate	Update Bag	Update quantities + basket
Recalculate + calculator	Update Basket	Update quantity
Recalculate Basket	Update Basket + arrow	Update Total
Recalculate Total	Update Cart	Update Trolley
Refresh	Update order + arrows	


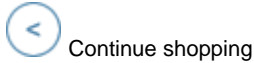

Preferred Style

51 of the 75 sites opted to use buttons. A further 14 used clickable words only.

Element No 4: Continuing to shop

There was a big variation in what happens to a customer when they select 'continue to shop'. 44% of sites returned the customer to the homepage. 30% returned to the previous page or department. Only 3 sites gave a choice of both and 23 sites did not have a specific continue to shop element at all.

'Continue to shop' sends you to homepage	44
'Continue to shop' sends you to previous product or department	30
Both options provided	3
No 'continue to shop' element	23

STRUCTURE OF MOST PREFERRED NAVIGATIONAL ELEMENTS	EXAMPLE	NO. OF SITES
No 'continue to shop' element	N/A	23
Button containing words 'Continue Shopping'		18
Clickable words 'Continue Shopping' with an arrow icon		9
Button containing words 'Continue Shopping' with an arrow icon		8

Most Popular Option

23 sites did not have a specific 'continue to shop' navigational element. In the vast majority of these cases, however, a customer at the view basket stage still had access to the product catalogue or the homepage and so still had the option to carry on shopping. Of the sites that had a 'continue to shop' element, 18 had opted for a button containing the words 'Continue Shopping'.

Preferred Terminology


'Continue Shopping' was most popular term, appearing in one form or another on 41 of the 77 sites.

Back to catalogue	Continue Shopping + basket + arrow	Resume shopping + arrow
Back to previous page	Continue shopping + man + basket	Return to search
Back to previous style + bra icon	Continue shopping from homepage	Return to shop + arrow
Back to product page	Continue to Shop	Return to shopping
Back to shop	Go back and add more items	Return to the catalog
Back to shopping	Homepage	Shop For More + arrow
Back to shopping + arrow	Keep Shopping	Shop More
Browse	Make Further Selections	Shop More + arrow
Buy More + trolley	More shopping + bra	Shopping items
Click here to continue shopping	Previous Page	
Continue browsing	Resume shopping	

Preferred Style

53 of the 77 sites use buttons for their 'continue to shop' element.

Element No 5: Removing items from a basket

STRUCTURE OF MOST PREFERRED NAVIGATIONAL ELEMENTS	EXAMPLE	NO. OF SITES
Clickable word saying 'Remove'	<u>Remove</u>	21
Non-clickable word 'Remove' + tick box	<input type="checkbox"/> Remove	10
Button containing word 'Remove'	<input type="button" value="Remove"/>	7
Customer must change quantity to '0'	N/A	8
Clickable word saying 'Delete'	<u>Delete</u>	5
Clickable dustbin icon		5

Most Popular Option

In a move away from the popularity of buttons seen so far, 21 sites opted to provide a clickable word saying 'Remove', with another 10 sites choosing a non-clickable 'Remove' next to a tick box.

Preferred Terminology

The single term 'Remove' was used on 51 sites in total. 3 sites did not provide a remove option and a further 8 did not have a remove element but required a customer to change the quantity to '0'. Alternative terms were:

Clear + cross icon

Cross

Delete + dustbin icon

Delete + tickbox

Minus sign

Order + tick box

Remove + cross icon

Remove + dustbin icon





Remove From Basket

Remove Item From Basket + tick box

Preferred Style

Only 14 sites employed buttons. Clickable words were most popular with 31 appearances, followed by non-clickable words next to a clickable icon with 24. A clickable icon was used by 14 retailers.

Element No 6: Going to checkout

STRUCTURE OF MOST PREFERRED NAVIGATIONAL ELEMENTS	EXAMPLE	NO. OF SITES
Button containing word 'Checkout'		17
Button containing word 'Go To Checkout'		13
Button containing words 'Proceed to Checkout' + arrow icon		10
Button containing words 'Checkout' + arrow icon		6

Most Popular Option

A button containing the word 'Checkout' was most popular, with 17% of the vote. Just 4 different approaches were shared by 46 sites, making this one of the more standardised elements according to our research.

Preferred Terminology

The word 'checkout' was extremely common, appearing on its own/with an icon on 25 sites. It was also incorporated into a number of the other terms:

Checkout Now	Go to checkout + arrow	proceed to checkout + arrow
Checkout to payment + icons	Go to checkout + icon	Proceed to checkout + arrow
Checkout using secure server	Next	proceed to checkout + other icon
Click here to order now	Next Step + arrow	Purchase + square
Continue to Checkout	Pay Now	Purchase Basket
Continue to checkout + arrow	Place Order	Secure Checkout
Continue with order	Proceed	Submit Order
Delivery options & checkout + arrow	proceed secure checkout	
Go to checkout	proceed to checkout	

Preferred Style




84 chose to use buttons, making it by far the most popular choice.

Element No 7: New Customer Registration

The options for new customers differed, with 4 procedures on offer. 5 sites allowed new customers to choose between registering all their details or shopping as a guest. 6 sites gave a customer the option to save details if they wished. 22 sites did not appear to offer registration at all. However, the majority did require a customer to set up an account, complete with password, before a purchase could be made.

Customers must register before purchase can be made	67
Customers can opt to save details	6
Customers are not given chance to save details	22
Customers can choose to register or shop as guest	5

In this section we considered ONLY navigational elements. Other text/instructions were not recorded.

STRUCTURE OF MOST PREFERRED NAVIGATIONAL ELEMENTS	EXAMPLE	NO. OF SITES
Button containing word 'Register'		15
Button containing word 'Continue'		7
Button containing word 'Register' and icon		4

Most Popular Option

The most popular option was a button containing the word 'Register' - 15 of the 78 sites that allowed customers to register had taken this route.

Preferred Terminology

Register was used with or without icons in 19 cases. A variety of other terms was used for the other 33 buttons not accounted for above:

Register now (+ arrow)	New customers click here (+ arrow)	Continue (Go)
Register with Majestic.co.uk	New Account + arrow	Create Account
Proceed	New Account	I am a new customer, I wish to sign in for the first time (+ arrow)
Proceed + arrow	Establish Membership	Sign In Using Our Secure Server (+ arrow)
Proceed to next stage + arrow	Create New Account	Shop without registering (+ arrow)
Proceed to checkout + arrow	Sign Up	Create Account + arrow
Register Me Now	Submit	Enter
Register Now	Submit (+ arrow)	Log In
Register Me	Submit Details + arrow icon	
Next Step + arrow	Check + arrow	
New Customer	Continue + arrow	

Preferred Style

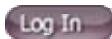



59 of the 78 sites used buttons, with the remainder split between clickable words and icons.

Element No 8: Existing customer log in

The majority of sites we visited (82%) allowed existing customers to log in. On 18 sites visitors had to place orders as if they had never shopped there previously, even if they were regular customers.

Existing customers can log-in	82
No existing customer log-in	18

In this section we considered ONLY navigational elements. Other text/instructions were not recorded.

STRUCTURE OF MOST PREFERRED NAVIGATIONAL ELEMENTS	EXAMPLE	NO. OF SITES
Button containing words 'log-in' or 'login' or 'log in'		22
Button containing words 'sign-in'		10
Button containing words 'login/log-in/log in' and arrow		5
Button containing words 'continue' and arrow		4

Most Popular Option

A 'log-in' (or 'log in' or 'login') button was clearly the preferred term, with 22 appearances from 82 sites.

Preferred Terminology





43 of the 82 sites used a variation of the single terms 'log in' or 'sign in', with or without icons. Other buttons used:

Continue	Login Now	Sign in and review order
Custom Checkout	Login/Register Now	Sign In Using Our Secure Server (+ arrow)
Express Checkout	Proceed	Sign In/Register
Go!	Proceed + arrow	Submit
I have an account + arrow	Register & Sign In	Submit + arrow
Log Me In	sign in and complete order	

Preferred Style

Buttons were most common by far - 65 of the 82 sites that allowed customers to log in used a button in this section of their site.

Element No 9: Completing an order

STRUCTURE OF MOST PREFERRED NAVIGATIONAL ELEMENTS	EXAMPLE	NO. OF SITES
Button containing words 'Confirm Order'		12
Button containing words 'Submit Order'		10
Button containing words 'Send Order'		4
Button containing words 'Place Order' with arrow icon		4

Most Popular Option

The most popular choice was a button containing the words 'Confirm Order', which was found on 12 sites.

Preferred Terminology

A further 5 sites used 'Confirm Order' with some sort of icon, making it the most popular term. Otherwise a wide range of different phrases were used. Unlike the other navigational elements, where there was often a variation on one or two themes, the terms used in this area were much more varied:

Place order	Complete Order	Place Your Order
Proceed	Complete Order (+ tick icon)	Place Your Order + arrow
Continue (+ arrow)	Complete this order	Please click here to complete your purchase
Continue	Confirm	Please Process My Order
Complete Purchase	Confirm my Order + arrow	Buy It Now + arrow
Confirm Order + arrow	Continue + arrow icon	Proceed to Payment
Order Now	Continue Checkout	Proceed with my order
Send Payment	Continue Check-Out	Process My Order
Complete + arrow	Make Payment (Worldpay)	Click To Confirm Address & Order + arrow
Submit Order (+ arrow)	Order Now + arrow	Process Order
Basket & Checkout (+ basket icon)	Place My Order + arrow	Submit Your Order (+ arrow)
Buy	Place order now	Thanks, Now complete your order
Checkout	Place Order Now (+ arrow)	WorldPay Confirm Order
Checkout + arrow	Place this order	
Buy Now + arrow		

Preferred Style

Buttons were by far the most popular choice, with 85 appearances.







Conclusion

Most Popular Elements – Terminology & Style

The table below contains the most common options for the 9 navigational elements that we considered in this report.

This table takes **both the terminology and style** of each element into account, ie 17 retailers used a button containing the words 'Add To Basket'. If a retailer used clickable words 'Add to Basket' rather than a button, they have not been included in this summary.

Theoretically, a retailer designing a new site or improving an existing one could use these 9 elements, safe in the knowledge that although they may not be officially classified as standard, they are at least being used on the majority of other retail sites. However, not one of the 9 elements listed below appeared on more than 21% of the sites we visited. In the case of 'View Basket', the most popular option was being used by only 5 retailers. This would suggest that, although there are often similarities, there is limited standardisation among online stores in the UK.

Element	Preferred Style & Terminology		% of 100 sites
Adding an item to a basket	Button containing words 'Add To Basket'		17%
Viewing the contents of a basket	Button containing words 'View Basket'		5%
Updating the basket with new information	No update element – customers change quantity and the basket page refreshes	n/a	25%
Continuing to shop	No continue to shop element - customers usually have access to the home page and/or catalogue at basket stage	n/a	23%
Removing items from a basket	Clickable word saying 'Remove'	Remove	21%
Going to checkout	Button containing word 'Checkout'		17%
New customers - options	Button containing word 'Register'		15%
Existing customer	Button containing words 'log-in' or 'login' or 'log in'		22%
Completing an order	Button containing words 'Confirm Order'		12%

Most Popular Terminology

If we relax our criteria and focus purely on the words used (leaving the style debate of buttons, icons, or clickable words aside) we see more commonality, as the table below shows:

Preferred Terminology	% of 100 sites
'Add To Basket'	43%
'View Basket'	23%
No update element	25%
No continue to shop element	23%
'Remove'	51%
'Checkout'	25%
'Register'	19%
'log-in' or 'login' or 'log in'	33%
'Confirm Order'	17%

However, only 'Remove' appeared on more than half the sites we visited, which suggests that although there are definitely some terms which are more popular than others there is no wholesale standardisation.

Retailers can use the above tables as a guideline, but at present there does not seem to a great deal of standardisation in the key navigational elements on the UK's online stores.

Next Steps

This is the first of a series of reports. Future reports will include analysis of the order process, particularly the checkout stages, as well as further research on site navigation. We will be looking to involve IMRG members in our research and would welcome all suggestions and input.

To receive copies of future reports, please e-mail lucy.james@snowvalley.com or register your details at www.snowvalley.com/report

For More Information

We would be delighted to receive feedback or answer queries regarding this report. We would also welcome suggestions for topics for future research. In all instances, please contact:

Chris Lofts
chris.lofts@snowvalley.com
020 7813 9521

Sarah Clelland,
sarah.clelland@snowvalley.com
020 7813 9520

www.snowvalley.com