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Why Users Abandon Their Cart

Now in all fairness to the e-commerce industry, a large portion of cart abandonments are simply a natural consequence of how users browse e-commerce sites – many users will be doing window shopping, price comparison, saving items for later, exploring gift options, etc. These are largely unavoidable cart and checkout abandonments.

In fact, our latest quantitative study of reasons for abandonment found that 48% of US online shoppers have abandoned a cart within the last 3 months because "I was just browsing / not ready to buy". Most of these will abandon even before they initiate the checkout flow. However, if we segment out this "just browsing" segment, and instead look at the remaining reasons for abandonments we get the following distribution:

Reasons for Abandonments During Cart & Checkout (2024 data):

48% Extra costs too high (shipping, tax, fees)

26% The site wanted me to create an account

25% I didn't trust the site with my credit card information

23% Delivery was too slow

22% Too long / complicated checkout process

21% I couldn't see / calculate total order cost up-front

18% Returns policy wasn't satisfactory

17% Website had errors / crashed

13% There weren't enough payment methods

9% The credit card was declined

Unlike the "just browsing" segment, a lot of these issues can be resolved. In fact, many of them can be fixed purely through design changes. Let's take a look at just 1 of 140 examples in our new [checkout](#) research study:

22% of US online shoppers have abandoned an order in the past quarter solely due to a "too long / complicated checkout process".

Now, our large-scale checkout usability testing shows that an ideal checkout flow can be as short as 12-14 form elements (7-8 if only counting the form fields).

Yet, our checkout [benchmark](#) database reveals that the average US checkout flow contains 23.48 form elements displayed to users by default. (14.88 if only counting the form fields.)

In other words, over 1 out of 5 shoppers have abandoned a cart in the last quarter due to a "too long / complicated checkout process", yet for most checkouts it's possible to make a [20-60% reduction](#) in the number of form elements shown to users during the default checkout flow. And again, this is just 1 of the 140 documented causes for checkout usability issues.

The Effects of Shopping Cart Abandonment: $260 Billion are Recoverable

If we focus only on checkout usability issues which we – during the past 10 years of large-scale checkout testing at Baymard Institute – have documented to be solvable, the average large-sized e-commerce site can gain a 35.26% increase in conversion rate though better checkout design. And that is despite testing the checkout flows of large e-commerce sites in the US and EU, such as Walmart, Amazon, Wayfair, Crate & Barrel, ASOS, etc.

If we look at the combined e-commerce sales of $738 billion in the US and EU, the potential for a 35.26% increase in conversion rate translates to $260 billion worth of lost orders which are recoverable solely through a better checkout flow & design.

Now, achieving such gains won't come easy. But even when we [audit](#) leading Fortune 500 companies, who've

already run a couple of checkout optimization projects, we find that major gains are still possible. And the potential is big: our [benchmark](#) of the checkout flows of 60 leading e-commerce sites show the average site has 39 potential areas for checkout improvements.

Learn more about our full [checkout research](#) findings.