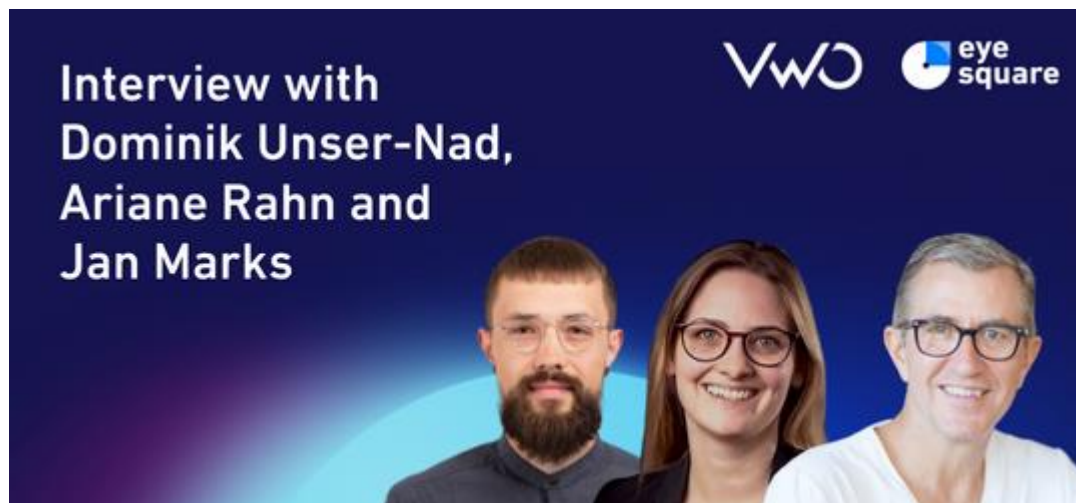


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Interview eCommerce, User Expectations and UX Trends 2023

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"What Users expect from Online-Stores: eCommerce in 2023"

Ariane Rahn and Dominik Unser-Nad, eye square
Jan Marks, VWO

2023 will be an exciting year for e-commerce. Ariane Rahn, Dominik Unser-Nad from eye square and Jan Marks from VWO explain in the following interview which UX trends there will be and which tips consumers should pay attention to. More information on these and other exciting e-commerce topics is available in their webinar on 02.02.2023.

In your online seminar, you will present the results of your study "What users expect from online stores: e-commerce in 2023". What has surprised you the most about the results?

Ariane Rahn: The device preference for online shopping surprised me. Although the increasing importance of a mobile-optimized solution is always emphasized, desktop should not be ignored: For some product types, people still prefer to shop on a laptop/PC rather than on a smartphone.

Furthermore, it came as a surprise that users only actively use two to four online stores despite a steadily growing selection. This is another indication of why it is so important to prevail over the competition and retain users with a great user experience.

So which UX trends that were still "in" in e-commerce in 2022 will be "out" again in 2023? A forecast, please.

Dominik Unser-Nad: We see more trends that will continue in 2023. In the fashion sector, diversity, e.g. body type but also age of the models, is certainly a nice development that will become even more established in 2023. For new approaches to minimizing returns, such as size finders or virtual measurement of the body, I predict a decisive year:

In our studies, we observe that these features are (still) hardly used, even though I think they offer advantages for both sides - the online store and users.

But here, too, it must be mentioned that the user experience does not end in the online store, but the crucial factor for the use of such tools are the results at the shoppers' homes - i.e. does the recommended size fit me or not.

For furniture or furnishings in general, we have already seen augmented reality features, e.g. the possibility to see how the piece of furniture will look at home, at individual providers in recent years, this trend will certainly develop further in 2023.



Ariane Rahn: Another trend is the connection to social media. Whereas the previous approach was rather to position and increase the visibility of one's own brand, the development is increasingly moving in the direction that sales are also possible via social media platforms, e.g., through live shopping events.

Jan Marks: New demands will arise because of the difficult economic environment. Uncertain and particularly frugal buyers and shoppers are visiting online stores in Europe. We are currently seeing many A/B tests looking at the effect of price adjustments, price discounts or best price guarantees.

One thing that has been important in the booming e-commerce of recent years could be counterproductive in 2023: upselling to maximize basket value. Here, in some industries and segments, it is becoming apparent that less could be more: lengthening the shopping process and simultaneously increasing the total spend today carries the risk that the customer will look in their wallet again after all and abandon before paying. Here, we are currently testing how upselling can succeed after the first completion, i.e., from the purchase confirmation page.

Apart from this, in times of general uncertainty, all confidence-building measures will play an even greater role.

Many consumers make purchasing decisions based on customer reviews, particularly in e-commerce. However, you can't always trust them. What is your advice to customers in this regard? How can companies who actually work with real, unpurchased reviews hold their ground against those who don't?

Ariane Rahn: Our results show how important ratings are for purchasing decisions. Markings such as 'verified purchase', which some providers have introduced for customer ratings, are helpful for assessment. Otherwise, users assess credibility based on the authenticity of the language, for example, or whether both criticism and praise are mentioned.

Users can therefore often unmask false reviews on the basis of language use and content, which can have a negative impact on the user experience.



Jan Marks: This is a strategic decision. If you want to work with authentic customer reviews, but usually only get a "good to satisfactory" grade, you should try out tests at various points in the journey to see how the feedback affects conversion rates and sales. Those who often see grades such as "sufficient" or "poor" should first look into the reasons for this and work on quality improvements and test more generic trust badges in the web store.

Sustainability is likely to be a selling argument that many e-commerce providers want to use for themselves again this year. But what is the current situation regarding the problem of "greenwashing"? Does the argument still appeal to consumers at all?

Dominik Unser-Nad: Particularly in the fashion sector, one notices that the topic of sustainability is playing a growing role among providers, e.g., on the basis of filter options or the label/icon on the product overview page. The topic is difficult to grasp for the end consumer without certain prior knowledge, which is why transparency certainly plays a decisive role, ideally the entire supply chain of a product is displayed (for those interested).

To be honest, however, we find in our studies that the topic does not yet play a (decisive) role in the purchase decision.

The topic of sustainability becomes an issue again at the very end of the customer journey, which then also affects online stores, namely the packaging - here, providers should avoid unnecessarily large packages and plastic.

Jan Marks: The truthful answer to the question "Does the argument still count at all...?" must actually be evaluated on a case-by-case and brand-by-brand basis. Most online store operators will not know whether and to what extent the consideration of sustainability and fair trade in the product range and in the presentation and searchability in the online store has an impact on the results. My recommendation: test it!

What is most important to you in your personal online shopping experience?

Ariane Rahn: For me, it is important to process online purchases as quickly as possible. Therefore, I like to get all the important details about the delivery as early as possible in the process. So if I only see before I pay that the delivery will take much longer, that there are delivery costs or that the delivery will be split into several packages, I have to rethink my order and adjust it if necessary. An undesirable waste of time.

Jan Marks: Shopping must be quick and easy. The subject of personalization also plays a major role here. Some of our customers have specifically optimized the registration and login processes and now find that the logged-in user appreciates the better shopping and checkout experience.

What problems and disruptive factors do you know yourself when using online stores? What do you always see that should be improved?

Dominik Unser-Nad: Amazon has set very high standards through its high customer orientation, especially in fast delivery and returns. The general expectations are therefore high and difficult to implement, especially for smaller providers. That's why it's so important for them to assert themselves in the market despite this by offering an optimal user experience.

Personally, I store very purposefully, so a functioning search function is of great importance to me. Although the importance of this has been known for a long time, I sometimes wonder about the poor implementation in some online stores. For me and many of our surveyed users, this is often reason enough to quickly leave the store again.

Jan Marks: An ongoing issue is the information overload on product detail pages. Too much information, not prepared pyramidally, hard to digest, too many texts, and not enough pictures, especially while shopping on the smartphone.



Do you have a horror online store that will probably always be remembered for its user (un)friendliness?

Ariane Rahn: Of course, a lot has changed in the last 20 years in terms of usability and user experience in eCommerce. Every now and then, however, one still discovers very "classic" websites. For example, one participant stated that a certain provider of electronic goods is one of her favorite stores - due to habit and good prices. Looking at this online store, the content and design are strongly reminiscent of the eCommerce beginnings 20 years ago, making UX professionals cry out. However, this "favorite store" was a clear exception to the other favored online stores in our study, which boast a much higher UX.

Jan Marks: It's not so much a specific individual store but more the recurring mistakes you still find in smart online stores of well-known brands because no one talked to the users.

Who should not miss your web seminar?

Jan Marks: I would say anyone who is responsible for the outcomes of an online store should be there. When I was being interviewed for the role of "Director E-Commerce" many years ago, the CEO said to me, "Your job is really quite simple: 1. get lots of people into our online store and 2. make sure it turns visitors into customers!" E-commerce decision makers need to know the expectations of their website visitors and should be there.

Jan Marks
Director Europe
and Latin America
WVO



Jan Marks has never been satisfied with the fact that over 95% of visitors to a digital channel leave the site without purchasing a product or signing up for services. As SVP of Customer Success at a leading CRO agency, he built and managed highly effective CRO programs for companies of all sizes and industries. As Director of Europe and Latin America at WVO, Jan now enables growth and customer satisfaction across the EU and Latin America - and everywhere....



Ariane Rahn
Research Consultant
UX Research
eye square



As a Research Consultant in the User Experience Unit at eye square, Ariane Rahn understands exactly what is important in global qualitative UX studies and online surveys. During her master's degree in psychology, Ariane dedicated herself to research methods and the interaction between humans and machines. She is also a certified expert in the field of usability and user experience (CPUX-F) and conducts preparatory CPIX-F courses.

Dominik Unser-Nad
Principal Research
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Dominik Unser-Nad applies his UX and consumer psychology expertise as Principal Research Consultant at the User Experience Unit of eye square. His focus is especially on guiding clients in qualitative interviewing and quantitative research methods from the first click dummy to the market launch of the respective product. As an expert in UX online benchmarking studies, Dominik serves clients from a wide range of sectors such as eCommerce, online...

