

E-Commerce White Paper

Are the Product Lists on Your Site Reducing Sales?

You can increase sales on your site as much as 225% by offering sufficient product information to your customers at the time they need it. One way to do this is to develop product lists that don't require shoppers to bounce back-and-forth between the list and individual product pages.



User
Interface
Engineering

Are the Product Lists on Your Site Reducing Sales?

Learn the truths about e-commerce sites as User Interface Engineering shares its findings from recent research on how people shop online.

Executive Summary

Every online shopper is presented with a group of products from which he tries to select the one he wants. When he finds the one that meets his needs and expectations, he puts it in his cart. The first step along the customer's path to product evaluation is the product list. It's a make-or-break page – it's where the site introduces its product offerings to the shopper. Does it make a difference how you display lists of products? How much time and money should you invest in designing product lists?

When we watched users shop, we saw that some of them looked at the product list, decided that one of the products listed was just what they wanted, and added it to their shopping cart. Other shoppers could not ascertain enough information from the product list, so they clicked back-and-forth between the list and multiple individual product pages before deciding whether to select a product for purchase. *Pogo-sticking* is the name we gave to this comparison-shopping technique of bouncing up-and-down between pages. Shoppers pogo-sticked when they did not find enough information in the product lists. On the other hand, shoppers bought more and had more satisfying experiences when they encountered product lists that provided sufficient product information so they could make a product selection right from the list without pogo-sticking.

If you see shoppers pogo-sticking on your site, it's an indication that you are losing sales. By understanding your customer expectations and needs, and designing your product lists accordingly, you can reduce the likelihood of pogo-sticking and increase your potential sales.

Why Are Product Lists Different?

There are many ways to display lists of products. Some lists include photos; some include descriptive text; some include SKU numbers; some include only product names; the possibilities seem almost endless. When we looked at a variety of top e-commerce sites, we saw no standard or common approach. Thus, it appears that designers believe it makes no difference how you display lists of products. For example, when looking for Eric Clapton music CDs on various sites, we found a range of list designs, from very simple to more complex (Figure 1).

Are the Product Lists on Your Site Reducing Sales?

1000s of CDs only \$9.99 Each

Search by: Artist Search Classical

CDNOW

Never miss a beat! > Custom CDs > Top 100 > Downloads > Sales & Specials

Shopping Cart

Search Results More than one artist matched **Eric Clapton**.

| POPULAR ARTIST | ALBUM |
|---|--|
| Eric Clapton | I Ain't Gonna Stand For It - Reptile - Reptile (+1 Bonus Track) - 21 Rock Guitar Standards - Telephone Blues - Clapton Chronicles (Limited Deluxe Version) (Remastered) - plus 65 other items! |
| Beatchuggers (Ft Eric Clapton) | Forever Man (How Many Times) |
| Karaoke: Eric Clapton / Various | Karaoke: Eric Clapton / Various |
| Tribute To Eric Clapton / Various | Tribute To Eric Clapton / Various |
| Various Artists-Pickin' On Eric Clapton-A Tribute | Pickin' On Eric Clapton-A Tribute |

REI Deutsch Español Français Italiano Nederlands Português

Currency:

Music Video/DVD Gifts MyCDNOW Help Account Shopping Cart

Search by: Artist Search Classical

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eamGoody.com music, movies and more!

HOME MUSIC MOVIES SOFTWARE VIDEO GAMES BOOKS SHEET MUSIC GEAR/ELECTRONICS... LOG IN | CHANGE PROFILE | LOG OUT HELP

ROCK/POP RAP/R&B COUNTRY POP/BLUES JAZZ NEW AGE CLASSICAL LATIN DOWNLOADS DVD/AUDIO

Popular Music Search Keyword Advanced Search Shopping Cart Order Status

Downloads Only

Top Matches for this Search:

1. Reptile, Eric Clapton, WARNER BROS, 47966, Rock
2. In Concert: Benefit for Crossroads Centre Antigua, Eric Clapton, REPRISE, 38510, Rock
3. Time Pieces: Best of Eric Clapton, Eric Clapton, POLYDOR, 8253824, Rock

Exact Matches for this Search:

1. 24 Nights [Video], Eric Clapton, WEA MUSIC VIDEO, 38193, Rock
2. 24 Nights, Eric Clapton, REPRISE, 507462, Rock
3. 3 for 1, Eric Clapton, ECOM DUMMY LABEL, 47895, Rock
4. 461 Ocean Boulevard/Another Ticket, Eric Clapton, RSO, 6, Rock
5. 461 Ocean Boulevard/Backless/Slowhand, Eric Clapton, RSO, 3, Rock
6. 461 Ocean Boulevard, Eric Clapton, ULTRADISC II, 531821, Rock
7. After Midnight, Eric Clapton, RSO [Netherlands], 8159944, Rock
8. Another Ticket, Eric Clapton, POLYDOR, 531830, Rock
9. August, Eric Clapton, WARNER BROS., 507462, Rock
10. Aveo Les Yardbirds Clapton, Eric, Era Music, 10, Rock
11. Backless, Eric Clapton, POLYGRAM, 531826, Rock
12. Backtracks!, Eric Clapton, FEEDBACK, 48, Rock
13. Bad Love, Clapton, Eric, Import, 10216, Rock
14. Beppinias, Eric Clapton, Charly Budget, 1174, Rock
15. Behind the Sun, Eric Clapton, WARNER BROS., 507432, Rock
16. Best of Eric Clapton [Import Bonus Tracks], Eric Clapton, Wea International, 881, Rock
17. Best of Eric Clapton [Japan], Eric Clapton, Wea International, 10738/9, Rock
18. Best of Eric Clapton, Eric Clapton, ., Rock

STORE LOCATOR zip code:

Contact Us Suggestions and comments

Help FAQ Technical Support Shipping, About Sambooks, ...

Verisign

amazon.com

WELCOME STORE LOCATOR BOOKS MUSIC DVD ELECTRONICS TOYS & BEAUTY ESSENTIAL CDs MUSIC OUTLET

Search: Popular Music Browse: All Styles

Sponsored results

116 total matches for "eric clapton" sort by: Featured items

See matches in: Rock (95) | Blues (17) | Pop (8)

Most popular matches for this search:

- 1. Reptile -- Eric Clapton: Audio CD **Our Price: \$19.99** -- Or buy used from \$10.95
- 2. Riding with the King -- Eric Clapton & B.B. King: Audio CD **Our Price: \$13.99** -- Or buy used from \$9.99
- 3. Unplugged [LIVE] -- Eric Clapton: Audio CD **Our Price: \$19.99** -- Or buy used from \$2.90

New & Coming Soon

1. **Reptile** -- Eric Clapton (Audio CD) Original Release Date: March 13, 2001 Average Customer Review: **★★★★☆** Usually ships in 24 hours **List Price: \$49.99 Our Price: \$19.99 You Save: \$4.98 (26%)**
2. **Yardbird Years** -- Yardbirds, Eric Clapton (Audio CD) Not Yet Released -- On Order **List Price: \$47.99 Our Price: \$13.99 You Save: \$1.99 (11%)**
3. **Forever Man (How Many Times) [CD-SINGLE]** -- Beatchuggers, Eric Clapton (Audio CD) Not Yet Released -- On Order **Our Price: \$6.99**

Artists, Authors & Others promote your product here

The Best CD's of 2001: A list by Jonnylanghews, Music Fan (5 item list)

Top Ten Eric Clapton Albums: A list by mcaino, that guy (10 item list)

Stuff I Listen To Now: A list by nargobort, Obsessive Music Freak (8 item list)

twee.com

enjoy shopping while listening to great music on www.radiomoodstock.com

music movies dvd downloads on stage my twee

The Web's Entertainment Center Today's Date: 5/15/01

IMPORTANT NOTICE

Though it may appear that the items you've purchased are not in your shopping cart, please be assured that your items are still there. Continue to shop and you'll see your full cart again on another screen! You have the twee.com promise that we're working to make your shopping an easy and enjoyable experience!

search

eric clapton

we found these best matches:

Eric Clapton

music titles: Reptile (2001) 1981-99: Best Of Eric Clapton (1999) Blues (1999) [2 Cd/2 Cass. Set] and 43 more...

Eric Clapton

music title by: Eric Clapton

Eric Clapton [Guitar Hits]

music title by: Va-Guitar Hits

Eric Clapton [Remastered]

music title by: Eric Clapton

extended search results found:

1981-99: Best Of Eric Clapton

music title by: Eric Clapton

Best Of Eric Clapton [Import: Hk]

music title by: Eric Clapton

Eric Clapton & Yardbirds

music title by: Yardbirds (1980)

On Tour With Eric Clapton

music title by: Delaney & Bonnie

Tribute To Eric Clapton [Tribute To Eric Clapton]

music title by: Bub Robert

category: rock/pop, new releases, coming soon, top 100, recommendations, search popular, search classical, breaking artists

stores: store locator

customer service: customer service, order status, gift cards & more, contact us

company: company profile, employment, contact info

Figure 1: What is the best way to display information about CDs in a list? We searched for Eric Clapton on four popular music sites. These sites had different approaches to the amount of information to give the shopper at this stage. How much detail is useful? Does shipping and in-stock status matter here? Do pictures help? Can the shopper make a product selection from the list? Our studies show that list design makes a difference to your bottom line.

Are the Product Lists on Your Site Reducing Sales?

The purpose of the list is to provide sufficient information to shoppers enabling them to select and purchase the right products. Some lists are spare and offer little information, requiring the shopper to dig further for more content; other lists are rich in detail. Obviously there are costs to having this rich information: higher development costs, more customization, more database integration, to name a few. Rich lists provide more information and this would appear to be a good thing. But is the list the best place to provide this information? Are users at the right point in their decision process to make use of this information? Can we quantify the value of the effort required to produce detailed, rich lists? Are some lists more successful than others at generating sales?

Even within the same site, designers often use multiple designs to display list information (Figure 2). Apparently, many sites have not reached conclusions about the best ways to display lists of products, or perhaps they think it doesn't matter.

How Much Do You Invest in Product Lists?

If a shopper gets enough valuable information from the product list, he will select a product to buy. If he doesn't get enough information from the product list, he has to dig deeper, often pogo-sticking between pages to compare products. Every site has to design some variation of a product list to present to shoppers. What do designers need to know in order to create this list so that it will maximize sales? Developing two different interfaces (as shown in Figure 2) typically costs more money than a single interface. If Lands' End decided to consolidate their investments, which interface would be best?

Does the design of the product list really make a difference to your bottom line? Perhaps you should put the minimal amount of effort into this since it may not matter. In fact, it appears that many sites take this tack. Should you save your development budget for other areas of your site that should have higher impact?

Are the Product Lists on Your Site Reducing Sales?

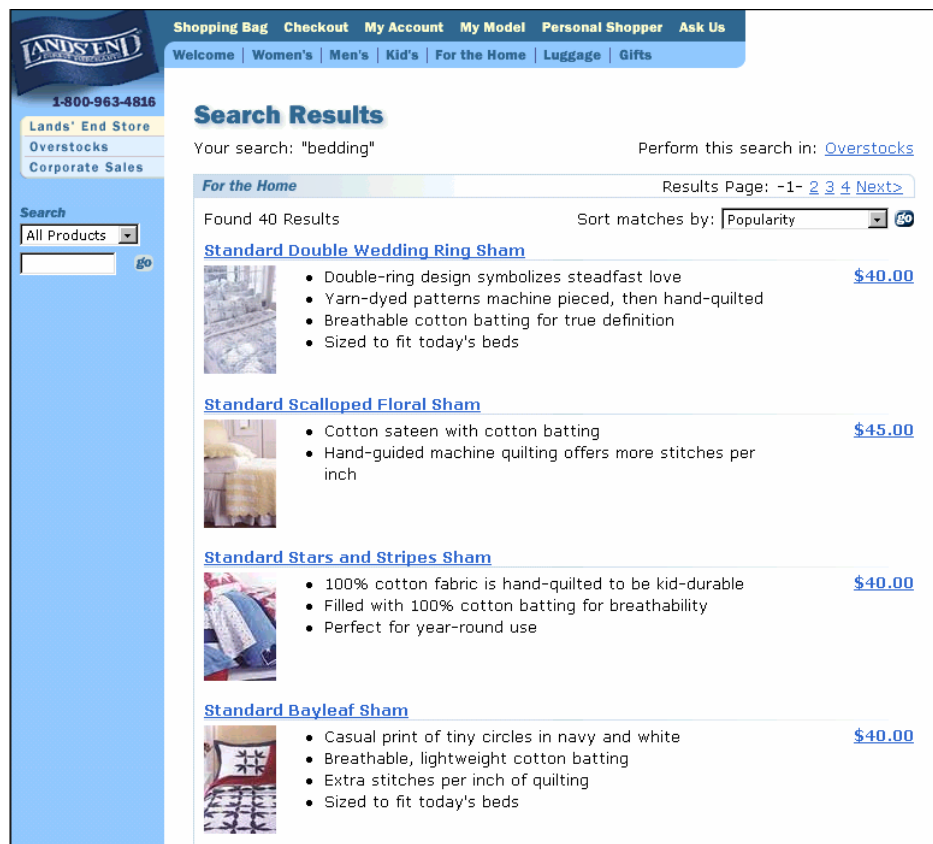
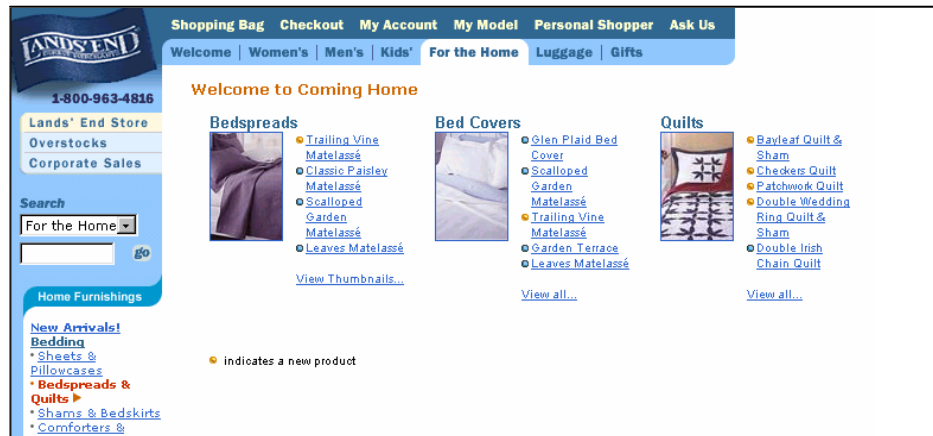


Figure 2: Shoppers see very different information presented in the product lists on Lands' End when they choose Bedding from category links (shown in the upper picture) as compared to typing Bedding in the site search engine (shown in the lower picture). Which list would make it easier for you to choose a product? Does it matter how these products are displayed in the lists? Apparently, Lands' End doesn't think so.

Watching Buyers Buy

Based on past research we conducted, we know that there are many things that designers can do on a site that affect the user experience and directly influence sales. Judging from the lack of standardization of product list design, it might seem that list design is one of those things that doesn't actually make any difference at all. Based on this, we tested the following hypothesis: *If the way that lists of products are displayed makes little difference, then shoppers should have equivalent success at sites with varying list designs.*

We conducted a shopping experiment with 30 people. We asked these people to make shopping lists of items they wanted to buy. We didn't suggest what they should buy, nor did we ask them to complete hypothetical tasks. These were real people shopping for real things they really wanted. We gave these shoppers money to spend on their purchases and we directed them to web sites that had the products they wanted. We also questioned our shoppers about their feelings and attitudes at the end of each shopping task.

If our hypothesis about list design being unimportant was true, we should have seen shoppers make their purchase decisions independent of the design of the product list. Some shoppers would find that they could make product selections right from the product list, and others would have to dig deeper into the site for more useful information, but it would not make any difference to the bottom line.

List Design Influences Buying

In fact, we found that the design of the product list was directly related to the purchases on the sites. Shoppers who encountered lists that displayed the right amount of relevant information added more products to their shopping cart than shoppers who had to pogo-stick to get more information from product pages (Figure 3).

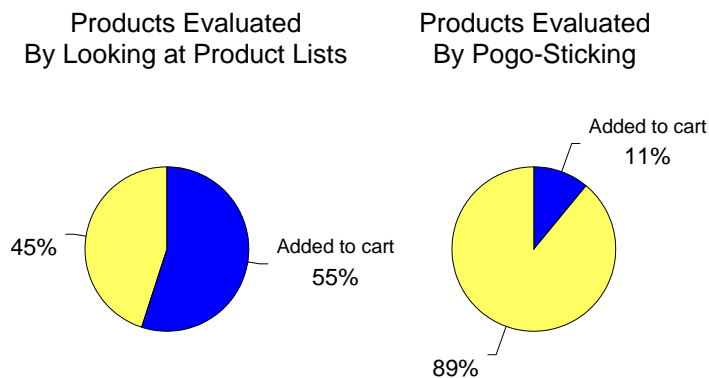


Figure 3: When users comparison-shopped using pogo-sticking techniques, they purchased 11% of the time. When they used product lists to evaluate products, they purchased 55% of the time.

Are the Product Lists on Your Site Reducing Sales?

Shoppers who pogo-sticked made fewer purchases. These pogo-sticking shoppers accounted for more than half (54%) of the product evaluations in our tests, yet these same shoppers added fewer products to their carts. Shoppers who pogo-sticked added only 11% of the items to their carts. In contrast, shoppers who encountered lists that displayed the right amount of relevant information added 55% of the products to their shopping carts. Pogo-sticking resulted in more items evaluated that weren't what the customer wanted, as well as more clicks, more wasted time, and more frustration. When the list of products were designed to offer the right amount of relevant information, the customer evaluated fewer items and bought more of them.

Pogo-Sticking Hurts Sales and Leads To Unhappy Customers

Shoppers who used pogo-sticking were one-third more likely to quit shopping following their pogo-sticking session than other shoppers. Not only did pogo-sticking result in fewer immediate purchases, but it also reduced the likelihood that the shopper would remain on the site and continue shopping.

We asked shoppers a series of questions following their shopping experiences. Based on their answers, we found that they were generally less satisfied with the sites on which they pogo-sticked. Specifically, they had lower opinions of these sites and they felt less energy after shopping. It seems that pogo-sticking was a taxing shopping technique for our users. While these results do not directly correspond to purchases and therefore it is difficult to put a monetary value on these findings, it does tell us that pogo-sticking clearly impacts customers' perceptions of your site and your brand. Not only do shoppers who pogo-stick purchase less, but they have a less favorable experience shopping on your site as well. How can you prevent pogo-sticking on your site? You can begin by developing lists that offer sufficient product information to your customers.

How The Site Designer Can Help

Once you understand that pogo-sticking hurts sales, how do you use this knowledge to increase sales? Our studies show that site designers can influence shoppers to make purchase decisions from the product list, or at least to minimize pogo-sticking.

The key is to offer sufficient product information to your customers at the time they need it. One way to do this is to design lists so that the shopper can make an informed decision about the products without having to ricochet back and forth between the list and multiple product pages. What kinds of information do your shoppers need in order to evaluate and select products? This information will vary from one type of store to another. Shoppers will look for different information when they are shopping for a modem compared to shopping for khaki pants. You need to test your users on your site to fully understand their needs.

Some sites do a good job of presenting useful information, enabling their shoppers to make informed purchases right from the product lists. One of the sites we tested, SmarterKids (Figure 4) offered rich lists, full of useful information including:

- Product pictures
- Price
- Icons indicating the type of product (toy, book, CD, video, etc.)
- Manufacturer
- Descriptive text
- Ratings
- Age appropriate information (expressed in both years and school level)
- In stock status
- Subject area

Are the Product Lists on Your Site Reducing Sales?

In addition, each item displayed in the list had an *Add to Cart* button, encouraging shoppers to make their selection and buy now. We saw shoppers purchase items right from this list, without even looking at the full product description. For some types of products, this is a useful option.

The screenshot shows the SmarterKids website's search results for 'dinosaurs'. The page features a navigation bar with links for Home, My Kid's Store, Family Resource Center, and Gift Center, along with a shopping cart, My Account, and Help. Below the navigation bar, there are tabs for different age groups: Infant, Toddler, Pre K-K, Grades 1-3, and Grades 4-6. The main content area is titled 'Search Results' and shows 'Results for: dinosaurs'. There are two tabs: 'PRODUCTS' and 'INFORMATION'. Below the tabs, there are filters for product categories: All (38), Toys/Games (24), Books (3), Music/Video (3), Software (3), and Arts & Crafts (5). The 'Top 8 Products (of 38)' are listed below. Each product entry includes a product image, title, author, price, 'Add to Cart' button, 'Add to Registry' button, 'Save for Later' button, a rating (represented by stars), age range, and subjects.

SmarterKids

Home | My Kid's Store | Family Resource Center | Gift Center | My Account | Help

Infant | Toddler | Pre K-K | Grades 1-3 | Grades 4-6

Search Results

Search Go

Results for: **dinosaurs**

PRODUCTS | INFORMATION | Refine Search

- All (38)
- Toys/Games (24)
- Books (3)
- Music/Video (3)
- Software (3)
- Arts & Crafts (5)

Top 8 Products (of 38)

Survival Or Extinction Dinosaur Game
By Latz Chance Games
Our Price: **\$19.99**
[Add to Cart](#)
[Add to Registry](#)
[Save for Later](#)
Rating: 1/2
Gr 2 - 4
(8 - 10 Years)
Subjects: Science

Dinosaur Adventure 3D
By Knowledge Adventure
Our Price: **\$19.99**
[Add to Cart](#)
[Add to Registry](#)
[Save for Later](#)
Rating: 1/2
K - 3
(5 - 9 Years)
Subjects: Reading & Writing, Science

Chocolate Dinosaur Pops
By Curiosity Kits, Inc
Our Price: **\$14.99**
[Add to Cart](#)
[Add to Registry](#)
[Save for Later](#)
Rating:
K - 5
(6 - 11 Years)
Subjects: Creative Arts

Eyewitness: Dinosaur (Video)
By DK Vision
Our Price: **\$11.99**
OUT OF STOCK
[Notify me when available](#)
Rating: 1/2
Gr 1 - 6
(7 - 12 Years)
Subjects: Science

Figure 4: SmarterKids provides rich product lists, offering lots of useful product information as well as the ability to buy right from the list. We saw shoppers take advantage of this feature.

Are You Leaving Money On The Table Due To Your Site Design?

In our experiments, we compared shopping success rates of users on five different genres of sites (Figure 5). We watched shoppers go to sites with shopping lists in hand, knowing that the sites had what they wanted to purchase. The best results we saw were on pet supply sites, where an average of 88% of the shopping tasks resulted in a purchase. The worst results were on computer accessory sites, where the average purchase rate was only 27%. In both cases, the shoppers should have been able to easily find and buy the desired product, but the design of the computer accessory sites clearly didn't meet the shoppers' needs as well as the design of the pet supply sites. There is a huge difference between these sites that just shouldn't exist.

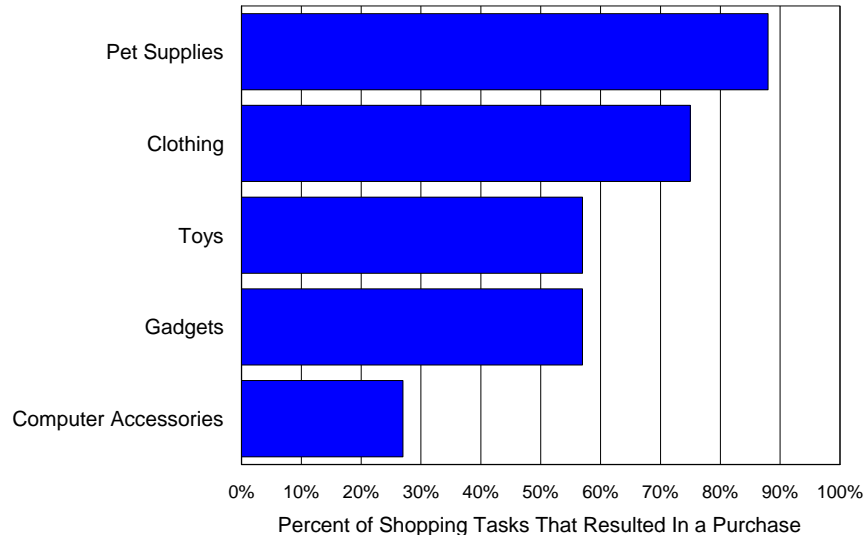


Figure 5: There is a large gap between the best-performing and the worst-performing sites we tested. By understanding your customers' needs and designing your site accordingly, you can help your site become a top-selling site.

We saw that design played a huge role in the difference. By changing your design, you can improve your site sales performance. The difference indicates that if the worst-performing sites learned the design lessons that the best-performing sites knew, they could close the performance gap. If the lowest-performing site increased their sales to match the higher-performing site, their sales would increase 225%. Even the best sites have room for improvement -- if the best sites made design changes that reflected their customers' needs better, they should be able to increase their sales as well. It appears that *all* sites are leaving money on the table due to their site designs.

This is not meant to imply that improving your list design is the one thing that will result in this degree of improvement in your site. Many problems appeared in our tests, but one that surfaced repeatedly was pogo-sticking. In fact, pogo-sticking seems to be a good way to measure the health of the product evaluation process. It's a significant problem that is easy to identify and straightforward to fix.

Are the Product Lists on Your Site Reducing Sales?

The goal is to move customers from being *seekers of information* to being *shoppers of products* as early as possible. If your product lists are not giving your customers enough information, then your customers will continue to seek information. This postpones the purchase process and you risk losing the sale. On the other hand, if your list provides enough valuable information to enable your customers to make informed product selections, you are more likely to close sales without further time and effort on the part of your shopper.

Another benefit becomes clear when we look at additional purchases made on the sites. The shoppers who found rich information in the product lists, and therefore made their product choices without pogo-sticking, were more likely to shop longer and potentially purchase additional products. Not only did pogo-sticking often lose the immediate sale, but it reduced the likelihood of additional sales as well!

Amazon.com offers another example of a list that encourages shopping (Figure 6). Their list of *Today's Top Sellers* in the Music category offers product photos, shipping information, and price. It also offers the ability to purchase CDs directly from the product list. This seems like a valuable feature and, in fact, we saw shoppers make purchases directly from this list. Even more interesting is the fact that Amazon.com doesn't include the *Add to Cart* button on other product lists throughout the site – not even on other lists within the Music category. This means that shoppers have the ability to make a purchase decision and buy right from the product list in some instances, and in other instances Amazon is driving them to dig deeper into the content before they can buy. As stated earlier, developing two different interfaces typically costs more money than a single interface. If Amazon decided to consolidate their investments, which interface would be best?

Are the Product Lists on Your Site Reducing Sales?

The screenshot shows the Amazon.com interface for the 'Top Sellers' section. At the top, there are navigation links for 'VIEW CART', 'WISH LIST', 'YOUR ACCOUNT', and 'HELP'. Below this is a search bar with 'Popular Music' entered and a 'GO' button. The main content area is titled 'Top Sellers' and features a list of 'Amazon.com 100 Hot CDs'. The list includes the following items:

| Rank | Product Name | Artist | Shipping Info | List Price | Our Price | You Save | Action |
|------|-------------------------|-----------------|---------------------------|------------|-----------|--------------|-------------|
| 1. | Reveal | ~ R.E.M. | Usually ships in 24 hours | \$18.97 | \$13.28 | \$5.69 (30%) | Add to cart |
| 2. | Lateralus | ~ Tool | Usually ships in 24 hours | \$18.97 | \$13.28 | \$5.69 (30%) | Add to cart |
| 3. | Sailing to Philadelphia | ~ Mark Knopfler | Usually ships in 24 hours | \$18.97 | \$13.99 | \$4.98 (26%) | Add to cart |
| 4. | Exciter | ~ Depeche Mode | Usually ships in 24 hours | \$18.97 | \$13.28 | \$5.69 (30%) | Add to cart |

Each item includes a product photo, a link to 'Click here for more information', and an 'Add to Wish List' button. A sidebar on the left lists various music genres like Classical, Pop, Rock, etc. The top navigation bar includes categories like 'WELCOME', 'STORE DIRECTORY', 'MUSIC', 'CLASSICAL', 'TOP SELLERS', 'NEW & FUTURE RELEASES', 'FREE DOWNLOADS', 'ESSENTIAL CDs', and 'MUSIC OUTLET'.

Figure 6: Amazon.com offers product photos, shipping information, prices, and the ability to purchase directly from this list. This seems to be an effective strategy and resulted in purchases in our tests. We wonder why this Add to Cart feature is absent from many other lists on Amazon. Why would Amazon develop multiple interfaces for product lists? If Amazon decided to consolidate their investments, which interface would be best?

How Can You Design Your Lists to Increase Sales?

Our findings show that site designers can directly impact the sales on your site. How can you design product lists that will maximize your sales? First you need to understand what information your customers need in order to make buying decisions. Develop lists that provide the basic information so that shoppers don't need to bounce back-and-forth between the list and multiple product pages. The goal is to offer sufficient information to your customers *at the time they need it the most*. Watch shoppers on your site. Do you see pogo-sticking behavior? What information can you provide that will increase the likelihood that they will make their product choice from the product list?

Want To Learn More?

This is just a small sample of what we learned when we researched how people shop online. Our body of research is constantly growing. Find out the latest:

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Our Brain Sparks blog is becoming *the* place to discuss the latest design and usability issues. We offer dissections of site redesigns, pointers to influential new design techniques, as well as providing a valuable place for ongoing discussions. Visit Brain Sparks at: <http://www.uie.com/brainsparks/>

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