



## Article : A Case Study in Shopping Cart Usability

The following article has been written by James Saunders, Managing Director of [Site-Report.com](http://Site-Report.com).

In recent weeks, we have introduced a shopping cart and checkout system at Site-Report.com.

During our investigation of commercially available shopping cart and checkout systems, we visited a number of other web sites to establish the features that we required as merchants and, more importantly, the usability issues that would need to be addressed.

These investigations lead us to draw up a list of dos and don'ts related to shopping carts that are discussed below.

### Home > Shopping Cart

We have added the item to your shopping cart.

**Cart Contents**

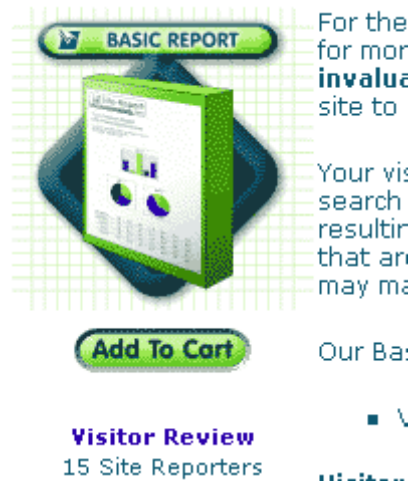
Remove	ID	Description	Price	Qty.	Amount
<input type="checkbox"/>	2	SoHo Report	£180.00	1	£180.00
			VAT (EU and UK only)		£31.50
			Total Price (no VAT)		£180.00
			Total Price (incl. VAT)		£211.50
			VAT Status		EU/UK <input type="button" value="v"/>
			<input type="button" value="Empty"/> <input type="button" value="Recalculate"/> <input type="button" value="Checkout"/>		

### (a) Make sure that you call it a shopping cart!

Calling your shopping cart anything else will simply confuse visitors. Make sure that your cart is easily assessible too.

### (b) Always let your customers 'add to cart'

Often web sites insist that their visitors 'Buy Now'. This will deter a number of visitors from purchasing from you because the button implies more of an order than a request for action. By using an 'add to cart' button instead, the visitor will not feel as if they are making such a large commitment and are more likely to complete the transaction.



**(c) Allow your customers to add items to the cart without needing to provide registration details**

A large number of major ecommerce web sites expect their visitors to provide registration details before allowing their visitors to add items to the shopping cart. This is a big turn-off and casual visitors who don't want to be forced into a purchase will soon leave and you'll lose a sale.

**(d) Make it easy to remove items**

If you offer a number of similar products, your visitors may use the shopping cart to compare prices and see total prices including sales tax/VAT and delivery without proceeding to the checkout. They often like to add and remove items from the cart. Make this easier for them by including a remove tickbox. Don't fall into the trap of only allowing your visitors to remove items by changing the quantity as this is a less usable solution.

**(e) Show the total price of an order before reaching the checkout**

In order to meet the ecommerce regulations in the UK, you need to clearly state product prices, delivery and sales tax/VAT before your visitors reach the checkout. Make sure that these are clearly displayed in your shopping cart.

**(f) Make sure that you provide feedback**

Let your visitors know that they've added or removed an item. You can either display the cart, or simply provide a message on the landing page. If the visitor is unlikely to add more than one or two items to the cart, displaying the cart after each added item is fine.

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