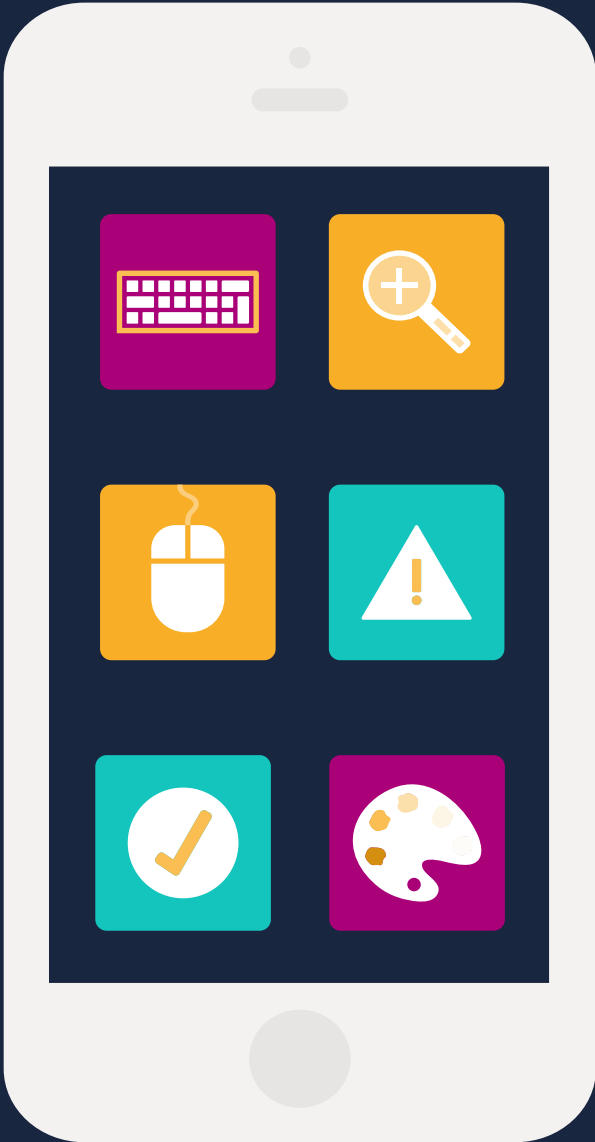


Fabulous forms for fat fingers

30 tips for mobile UX



If you've got an ecommerce website with analytics, you'll see that your traffic is now largely made up of visitors on mobile devices. Whatever the proportion, it's growing one way and it's a portion of the pie many businesses can't afford to ignore.

Form filling remains an essential part of the ecommerce journey - when choosing product options, applying filters to search results and completing a purchase in the checkout. However, it can also be a big source of frustration for mobile customers if these forms aren't optimised for mobile devices. Every tap and field to fill is mentally tiring and a inconvenience, so if your forms aren't finger-friendly you risk losing business to the competition.

When you consider that 'only 12% of consumers find shopping on their mobile device convenient. It's more vital than ever to ensure we optimise every part of the m-commerce journey. (source: dynamicyield.com)

Follow our tips for improving forms for fat fingers and you'll be well on your way to increasing mobile conversion rates.

*Growcode

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What do you need to know? Minimise the need to input text

Make forms quicker to complete. Take a good look at your forms and ask do you really need ALL the information you're asking for? Minimising the number of steps in each process and cutting out fields you probably don't need or won't act upon will have a huge impact on your conversion rate. A great example is having two fields for a phone number - a separate one for the area code is not advisable.

Minimise keyboard input

Aside from how tiresome typing can be with an onscreen keyboard, the reduction in visibility of your page can cause some users to lose the flow of your forms. Break it up where possible by offering alternative input types such as tick boxes and drop down lists. For longer lists, such as countries of the world, try ordering them with the most popular at the top to reduce scrolling.

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Launch the right keyboard

Identify field types correctly in the code so the relevant keyboard appears on screen automatically when appropriate, ie: the number pad for a phone number.

Don't make me type my address

Customers often have to supply multiple addresses which might not even be familiar home addresses (delivery, billing, etc.). Reduce the amount of typing involved with address lookup and autocomplete. A side-benefit of this is quality, valid addresses.

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Fields long enough?

Check your form field lengths, can they accommodate everyone's details?...

The world's longest postal code is 10 digits long.

The world's longest settlement name is 85 characters long.

The world's longest personal name is over 100 characters long.

Show me it worked

For selection options and where input must meet specific standards (eg: minimum 8 characters in a password), give clear feedback that the choice or entry is acknowledged and accepted.



Colour or icons to convey meaning

While a picture tells a thousand words, take care that you don't rely solely on colour or icons to deliver an error or highlight a selection. A proportion of your potential market may be colour blind or have impaired sight. It's important that you cater for these people too. NOTE: red and green are often troublesome to tell apart if you're colour blind.



Don't make things too small

Having to pinch and zoom to check which option is selected or to enter a form field will cause frustration. Make sure elements and page layout responds to mobile screen sizes so your customer can click on forms without pressing the wrong thing by accident. Multiple column forms are a bad choice for smaller screens.





If there's no choice, remove the option

When a product is only available in one size or colour variation, remove the need for your customer to select an option before proceeding, or select it for them by default.

Label your fields

Form field labels are essential as they tell the user what to put in each field, so they don't type things in the wrong field.



Label your fields in the code

Don't just use visual clues such as icons or paragraphs outside your fields to label them. Make sure they are labelled correctly in the code so all users can identify the information to be entered. People with sight impairments may use tools like Siri to read elements on the web page aloud to them.

Don't use Inline Labels

Labels inside the form field (inline) disappear when the user begins to type. Immediately the user has lost the reference point and any tips/ advice for what they must enter. A search box with the word 'search' inline is an acceptable exception as user's will rarely forget and the search button is often styled with a magnifying glass or other reminder.



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Label placement

On smaller screens, the location of a form label makes a big difference to usability. Clicking into a form will automatically zoom the user to that field and launch their onscreen keyboard, if your field label is to the left of the field then it will be hidden, placing them above the field is a good solution.

Label language

Avoid technical words and humanise your form labels as much as possible. Think of how you would ask a person for the information if it were a conversation. 'DOB' isn't as user-friendly as 'When is your birthday?' Form language contributes to your brand's tone of voice.



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Optional or required?

Showing users which fields they must complete and which are optional will help guide them through your form without having to return to fix errors after they hit submit.

Easy access to search and filter

If you have features allowing customers to search and filter results then make this obvious. Many users will be used to seeing these at the top of each page so if you're going to be different make sure they're easily recognisable and always visible. Research shows a search box is found quicker than a button or icon to click.

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Improve search

A lot of users want to be able to search for your general information as well as find products. Make your search work harder by retrieving as many matches as possible. Can you find results for common misspellings or synonyms - is a 'jug' found but not a 'pitcher'? Type-ahead predictive searching also helps users, as they have to type less.

Filtering

Let your users apply multiple filters at once before they have to reload their search results (they know they want black boots in size 7 so why make them perform 3 separate actions?). Also, ensure the filters are relevant to the category they are in, for example, *skirt length* and *sleeve types* for dresses but *heel height* for shoes.

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Feedback for entry errors

Let users know as quickly as possible if they enter data in the wrong format, or if their email address isn't valid. Tell them immediately after they've typed it, if possible. Help users to fix issues if you can detect what they meant. EG: for @gmal.com - "did you mean @gmail.com"? Smart email verification services will suggest corrections and also help reduce the number of bogus registrations, giving you quality data.

Avoid JavaScript verification

Note that some mobile browsers do not enable JavaScript by default so don't rely on JavaScript to verify entry errors.

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Verification before submitting

Pressing return on a keyboard usually sends off the data in the form. It's a pretty handy feature to be able to do this with the keyboard when you're doing a search, but when it's a longer form and a user hits 'return/go' in error you should catch this mistake and check the form was completed before submitting it.

Grouping

Organising similar form fields together will give your user less to think about (known as cognitive load) and allows you to break up longer forms into more manageable chunks which could be especially useful if you opt for one long page over a sequence of smaller checkout forms. Contact details such as phone number and email address will naturally fall together.

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Masking passwords

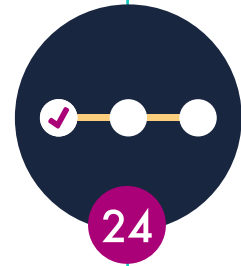
Password fields often obscure the characters typed in an effort to protect the user's security, this is even more important for mobile users where they might sit in close proximity to a stranger BUT not being able to tell if you've pressed the right keys can cause usability issues. A common solution is to display the last character typed, hiding it after a short pause, other sites have an option to reveal the whole password, giving users chance to check what was typed.



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Show progress

If your form spans across multiple screens or pages then you could help users to know how they are progressing by telling them where they are and how many steps are left to complete.



Make use of GPS

If you need to grab your user's location (eg: to show them their nearest store) then consider simplifying the process by using the GPS capabilities built into their device so they don't have to input this information. Be sure to offer an alternative for those with the feature disabled though.

Loud and clear CTA

Make each 'call to action' as large and obvious as possible. This will make them easier to find and click so customers can move to the next step and complete the transaction. Buttons should have enough white space around them so they can be clicked without pressing other links by accident. Also use a colour that contrasts with the background and other items on the page.



Click and collect delivery

If you offer 'click and collect' as a shipping option, consider how you will present the collection locations. Postcode or city lookup, store finder map or drop down list? The solution you choose should be determined by how many stores you have so that it's quick for your user to find their nearest.

Guest checkout

In an ideal world, you may attempt to capture a lot of data about your customers but the option to 'guest checkout', bypassing some of the optional form fields, will be preferred by mobile users in a hurry. Give them the choice if you can.

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Adapt for international orders

The format of (delivery/billing) addresses is different in almost every country. While many retailers offer the option for users to translate the site into their local language, few use this information to alter the layout of the address fields. Bear this in mind for the countries you wish to trade in. Recording addresses accurately will help your delivery process. Address lookup tools are a great solution for this problem, but ensure you opt for a provider with international capability.

Using your analytics tool

Try to keep track of how often each type of error occurs with your users with your analytics tool. This record will help you to identify common obstacles so you can prioritise which areas need improving to remove friction and increase form success.

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We make location an exact science

A faster, easier way to enter and verify addresses on your website

Loqate overcomes a key frustration in ecommerce checkouts by making it quicker to enter an address, ensuring complete and accurate address data is captured every time – even when typos are entered.

Improve user experience

Remove friction from online forms across any device, save customers time and increase your website conversion rates.

The best data quality

Verify against world-class data sources, including Royal Mail PAF and UK Address File (UKAF), improving communications and avoiding the cost of failed deliveries.

Global Capabilities

Reach customers wherever they are in the world, and ensure international addresses are standardised in the correct format.

Over 13,000 customers and partners trust us for their location intelligence data, you'll be in good company.



Try it free at loqate.com

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