



CULTURAL
ENTERPRISES
ACADEMY

Ecommerce

Glossary of Key Terms

Above the fold

A term originating in newspapers, on websites this means the portion of the webpage visible without having to scroll further down.

AOV

Average Order Value, similar to ATV (Average Transaction Value) in physical retail.

API

A programming interface which allows two programmes to talk to each other, or another operating system. For example, your website and a third-party delivery company, or print-on-demand company. Stands for Applications Processing Interface.

App

In ecommerce this refers to an add-on programme giving your site extra functionality. For example, the Shopify App Store has thousands of apps, some free, which can be easily added to your Shopify site to do things like connect with a courier company, provide extra page templates, or enable pop-up banners.

Attribution

How do you know which points-of-entry to your website result in a sale? This is what Attribution looks at; has an order come via a Google search, social media, or a marketing email, for example. This is quite an expansive topic, but this is a really good introduction: <https://ecommerceguide.com/guides/attribution-ecommerce-2-minute-introduction/>

Bounce Rate

A percentage figure showing how many visitors navigate away from a website having visited only one page.

Call to action (CTA)

Buy Now, Add to Basket, Explore More, Subscribe; these are all 'Call to Actions'.

Carousel

A collection of images (usually linking to another page or product page) moving horizontally and usually automatically. Often interchangeable with **slider** or **gallery**. These design blocks are now considered less effective than static **banners**.

Categories

Products which are grouped together by theme or topic are displayed in the menu structure as categories. These will usually have their own Landing Page (see entry). Best practice is to show your best-selling products at the top of category pages, or alternatively your newer products. Also known as Collections on some ecommerce platforms.

CLV

Customer Lifetime Value. Here is a useful guide on how to measure it, and why it's important: <https://www.shopify.co.uk/blog/customer-lifetime-value>



Collections

Also known as Categories. Some sites use collections to group together products.

Conversion Funnel

A term used to describe a customer's journey from discovering your product or business, through your website, to the point of placing an order.

Conversion Rate

One of your most important KPIs for measuring the efficacy of your ecommerce site. Displayed as a percentage, this measures the number of visitors to your site who convert into buyers. Worked out by taking the number of orders on your site between two dates, divided by the number of users visiting in that same period, then multiplied by 100. If you had 89 orders in June, and 3,732 users, your conversion rate would be $(89 / 3732) \times 100 = 2.32\%$. Conversion rates usually hover around 1-3%. A 3% rate is considered very respectable. Which means 97 out of 100 visits to a website will not make a purchase.

Cookies

Small files stored on a user's computer, which allows a website to identify site visitors by building up a profile based on their behaviour. For example, this means a website can identify returning visitors.

Customer Journey

A term used to describe a user's experience of a website, from discovery all the way through to leaving the site, usually via placing an order.

Cut-out

Used to describe a photograph where the object has literally been cut out from its original background onto a clean, white background. This is important because it allows your product to stand out from a page. Cut-outs are vital if you're sending high-res images to press or journalists, as these images are required for product pages.

CX

Customer Experience. A useful short-hand term to describe the holistic experience of using your site and interacting with your brand. It can cover everything from optimising your menu structure, customer emails, and optimising a site for mobile. Customer will go elsewhere if they don't like the experience of interacting with your brand. Browse some of these free guides.

<https://www.hotjar.com/customer-experience/>

<https://www.paldesk.com/ecommerce-customer-experience/>

Distance Selling Rules

UK Government rules for selling any product online. Ecommerce sites usually contain info about Distance Selling Rules in their T&Cs in the footer.

<https://www.gov.uk/online-and-distance-selling-for-businesses>

Dropshipping

“Dropshipping is a retail fulfilment method where a store doesn’t keep the products it sells in stock. Instead, when a store sells a product using the dropshipping model, it purchases the item from a third party and has it shipped directly to the customer. As a result, the seller doesn’t have to handle the product directly. The biggest difference between dropshipping and the standard retail model is that the selling merchant doesn’t stock or own inventory. Instead, the seller purchases inventory as needed from a third party—usually a wholesaler or manufacturer—to fulfil orders.” Description taken from: <https://www.shopify.co.uk/blog/what-is-dropshipping>

ESP

Email Service Provider, like Mail Chimp. Designed specifically for sending bulk emails to your customers and subscribers. Emails services like Outlook or Gmail are therefore *not* ESPs, as they are part of larger systems which provide other services.

Footer

A fixed section of a website at the very bottom of every page, usually containing key business information such as Terms & Conditions, Privacy Notice, and Delivery & Returns information.

GDPR

General Data Protection Regulation. A landmark privacy ruling by the EU, put into law in May 2018. This is a strong set of rules placed on businesses holding or processing personal data. All websites processing data of EU citizens must comply with these regulations.

GMV

Gross Merchandise Value – the sale price charged to the online customer multiplied by the number of items sold.

Google Analytics

Google Analytics is a free web analytics service from Google that tracks and reports on your website traffic. This is a vital part of any ecommerce business. It is here that you measure the performance of your store, from the macro to the micro. It is split into sections measuring Audience, Acquisition, Behaviour, and Conversion. This Hootsuite guide shows how you can enable Google Analytics on your website: <https://blog.hootsuite.com/how-to-set-up-google-analytics/>

Google Data Studio

A free tool that turns your data into informative, easy to read, easy to share, and fully customisable dashboards and reports.

Hamburger menu

A term describing a graphic of three horizontal lines, usually seen in the top left-hand corner of a site, which reveals a hidden drop-down menu when selected. This feature is often utilised on the mobile-version of online shops as an efficient use of space on a smaller screen.



Header

The section at the top of a website usually containing the logo, menu bar, and search function, and is displayed on almost all pages. It's the first thing most visitors see when landing on your site.

Hero image

The lead image used to illustrate a product. Hero images for best-selling or important products deserve attention; a strong image can improve click-throughs to the product page or adding to basket. They are often not just seen on the product page, but on the category page and can be used in marketing and PR.

High-resolution images

Image files 1MB or higher.

Journey Mapping

Also known as CJM, Customer Journey Mapping. Understanding the journey visitors take on your website.

KPIs

Key Performance Indicators. Important ways of measuring success on your site, determined by you and your business goals. In ecommerce these are likely to be metrics like Conversion Rate, Bounce Rate, Shopping Cart Abandonment Rate, AOV, as well more obvious figures like gross and net sales.

Landing Page

A web page which serves as the entry point for a particular section of a website. This could be because it is featured in a marketing campaign or optimised search engine result. These are pages featuring important collections of products, so should have special attention paid to their content and design. For example, think of important Category Pages as having their own mini homepages within the site, as this can be where a lot of your customers are 'landing' on your site. Here's an example guide: <https://unbounce.com/landing-page-articles/what-is-a-landing-page/>

Metadata

Data which is communicated between a website and a search engine, not visible to the front-end user.

Meta Tags

A form of metadata that tells search engines important bits of information about your web pages. In ecommerce examples are the meta title and meta description. This information helps inform search engine results.

Mobile optimised

Mobile optimisation ensures your ecommerce site displays and works on a mobile or tablet as well as a more traditional desktop or laptop screen. See also, Responsive.

Omnichannel

Strategy across online and offline parts of a businesses. Encompassing online stores, social media, mobile, in-store, and marketing. An extreme (though now realistic) example: someone sees your product in an Instagram post, clicks through to your brand's website, sign-ups to the newsletter, a few days later places an order via an email they receive, uses Klarna to spread the payments, and chooses to collect in-store.

Organic traffic

Visits to your site that are free, for example from search engines, as opposed to from paid adverts or referrals from newsletters. Sometimes called natural traffic.

Payment gateway

Payment gateways authorise payments taken on your website and provide the payment methods for customers to check out online. Examples you may have heard of and might recognise the logos for might be: SagePay, BrainTree, CyberSource, WorldPay, Stripe and Adyen.

Payment method

The most common payment methods are card payments i.e. credit and debit cards, PayPal, mobile wallets, like ApplePay, and a Buy Now Pay Later option. Confusingly, some payment methods are also payment gateways, for example, AmazonPay, ApplePay and PayPal, meaning you don't need to run these payment methods through another payment gateway.

PCI Compliance

Adhering to the Payment Card Industry Data Security Standard, set to protect customer card data.

PDP

Product Detail Pages. Showing individual products, usually with images, price, descriptions, and the buy now button.

PLP

Product Listing Page, commonly known as a product page. A list of products based on a category or grouping of your choice, or as a result of a search query.

Referral

A referral in ecommerce is a visit to your site made via a third-party link. This is an important section in Google Analytics, where you can see the origin of your traffic from places like search engines, social media, or advertisements.



Responsive / responsive design

Responsive design means a site automatically takes into account the different types of devices customers use to look at your site. Responsive layouts adjust to different screen sizes and resolutions, meaning you don't have to design separate sites for mobile or desktop for example.

SaaS

Software as a Service.

SEO

Search Engine Optimisation, meaning the process of generating (organic) traffic from search engines like Google and Bing.

<https://www.shopify.co.uk/blog/ecommerce-seo-beginners-guide>

Session

A term used in Google Analytics to mean a visit to your website. An individual user can therefore create several sessions, if they visit then leave your site more than once. Think of a session in the context of, how many times do you visit a website to browse, before finally making a purchase? That's one user and several sessions.

Social sign-on

A feature enabling customers to create an account on your site using existing login-details from a third-party, such as their existing Google or Facebook ID. Quicker and more efficient for the customer.

SKU

Stock keeping unit, a unique number assigned to each product.

Thumbnail

A product image used on Product Listing Pages (PLPs), usually the primary image used to advertise the product across your site including on the product page.

User

A Google Analytics term for an individual visitor to a website, sometimes known also as a **Unique User**. For example, you can make ten separate visits to a website in a week, which records as only 1 user, and 10 sessions (see definition above).

USP

Unique Selling Proposition. What makes you special? What differentiates you from your peers and competitors?

UX

User Experience. Meaning the overall experience of interacting with a website, usually relating to its design and structure. Here are guides you might find useful.

<https://medium.com/@floship/ecommerce-ux-mastery-best-practices-and-ui-patterns-to-follow-ed5af051a96a>

<https://www.ecommerceceo.com/ecommerce-user-experience/>



Widget

A widget is a bit of code used on a page that displays a program, or part of a program, on that page. This has the benefit of allowing users to access a service without having to leave your website and go to that service's own website. A good example you may have come across is booking tickets; you may well be using a widget for EventBrite on an exhibition or event page, but it sits within a page on that organisation's own website, rather than being redirected to an EventBrite page.

Have we missed anything? Let us know: academy@culturalenterprises.org.uk