Modern eCommerce

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The internet has become one of the most popular things in the world. People use it every day for a wide variety of reasons. Talking to friends, sharing something they made, looking up facts, and many other things that could be done without the internet, but are made easier with it. One particular thing that has become a major part of many peoples lives is e-commerce. In the modern era, you have to exchange money for goods and services. E-commerce is the ability to do so without having to leave your house, or having to find a shop near you that sells what you want. Simply put, e-commerce is trade over the internet.

You can buy almost anything, anytime, anywhere, from anyone. An idea so tantalising that people will often choose to wait for something to ship rather than drive to a local store. But mom and pop shops aren't the only ones competing for business with e-commerce. With so much purchasing freedom also comes the burden of choice.

As a consumer, how do you choose what site to buy from? As a retailer how do you make sure that your site is the one people pick? That is where web design comes in. You want to make sure that your site looks better and offers more than any other site the consumer visits. It’s also important to make that your site gets visited to begin with. If you don’t show up on the first page of google then you might aswell not exist. How do you show up on google? By making your site so easy to use and packed with information to the point where even a robot can figure out what your selling and how to buy it.

Odds are, if you search for any product right now, Amazon will be somewhere in the top ten results. This is thanks to years of building up one of the largest and most well respected eCommerce markets for virtually any product. That being said, if you look up a computer part you will most likely see specific computer part companies such as Nvidia before you see Amazon. Amazon still has what you want but other companies specialize in what you want. Though they may not be as big overall, they are bigger when it comes to the product you're looking for. Now look up the name of a computer game, you probably won’t see Amazon. What you will see, is Steam. Steam sells digital computer games, something that Amazon doesn't.

There is a major difference between the products these companies sell. Amazon sells anything they can get from other companies. Nvidia is selling their own computer parts directly to customers on their own site as well as selling them to Amazon. While Steam is offering a product that you can’t get anywhere else, you can’t go to a store in real life and you can’t go to amazon. That being said, Steam itself is somewhat similar to both Amazon and Nvidia. Valve made Steam. Some of the games available for purchase on Steam were also made by Valve. Many of the games on steam can be purchased through the website of the person that made the game or other marketplaces like steam.

So what is it that made these sites come out on top. I would say convenience is the number one factor. The process of buying a product on either site is as easy as it can get. You click the product you want, you put in your information, and your done. That product will be available to you as soon as possible without you having to do any more work. Alternatively, if you plan on buying from them more in the future you can make it even easier. By making an account and putting in your information once, you can now buy any product with the click of a button or two.

They also come with useful features. They all let you see your past purchases and the exact time and price of each. Amazon goes further in showing you where your package is and where it is expected to be at what times. Steam, being digital, has no shipping. But it does provide a plethora of features people love. Steam has a built in forum, mod hub, guide list, and community for every single game they sell. They also provide customers with information on what parts they will need to play a game and the option to refund games. These are all features you won’t find on any other digital game marketplace. Nvidia on the other hand does not have many features, instead they have a product people really want.

Of course, there is always room for improvement. Nvidia could step up and add features similar to Amazon or others that would be relevant to people buying their parts. Steam has a problem with discoverability. It can be hard to find a game on steam unless it’s either a bestseller or a brand new release. In the case of Amazon, they have almost everything you could want, the next step is to have literally everything you could want.

Aside from features and products, it’s also important that eCommerce websites look good and are easy to understand. If you visit Nvidia’s website you will first be greeted by an outdated region select window. Once you are into the website you will notice lots of white space along the side of the screen. The home page is an awkward mix of black and white graduated to grey. In the center of the page is a table of information. The home page is supposed to grab people's attention, hiding it behind a region select and putting the information in a table is a great way to make sure people don’t read it. Yet, despite the poor home page, if you click over to the shop page you will see something completely different. The shop has a sleeker modern design of primarily solid black with solid white text, grey buttons, and green highlights. Edges are sharp, colors are solid, and information is big and bold at the top of the page with borders neatly organizing data. Nvidia can easily improve their site by taking the design of the shop page and transferring it over to the rest of the site.

Steam and Amazon are both exemplary in terms of visual design. Amazon goes for a simple look that appeals to anyone. Using small amounts of whitespace and thin dark grey lines to separate information as well as color coding information into categories for ease of use. It also prominently displays pictures of products as much as possible to promote purchases. Steam follows a similar style. The main difference is steam's appeal to a more modern audience with dark greys and radiant blues that create a cooler look than amazon's friendly white. Considering steam is selling video games it makes sense to go for a cooler style.

In the modern age eCommerce has become a vital part of many peoples lives. It does not seem like it will be going away anytime soon and almost every company is working towards building a strong web presence. With competition only getting fiercer as time goes on I suspect we will see a rise in quality of life features and more devotion towards faster service and delivery with online purchases.