# Magnolia: Clarity For The Conscious Online Shopper

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## User Research

### 15 User Interviews → 4 Core Themes

**Goal:** Understand how people incorporate sustainability into everyday decision-making and what factors influence their clothing-purchase choices.
**Outcome:** Identified a diverse range of needs and behaviors, shaped by participants' varying sustainability knowledge, shopping habits, and financial resources.

#### 1. Longevity and Quality Are Top Decision Factors

**Top Priorities**
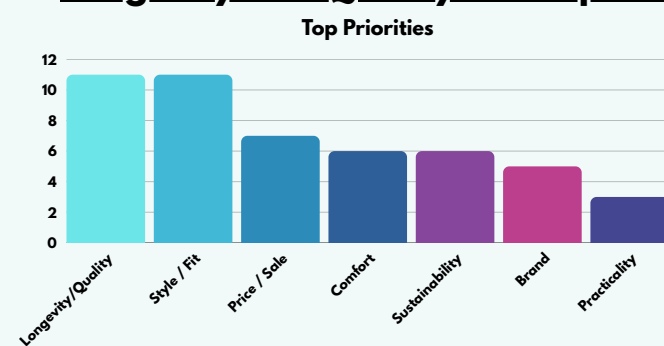


Regardless of differing lifestyle attitudes toward sustainability, **73%** of users desire high-quality, durable clothing items. This preference spans all three personas, though some may compromise on durability when presented with significant discounts or low prices.

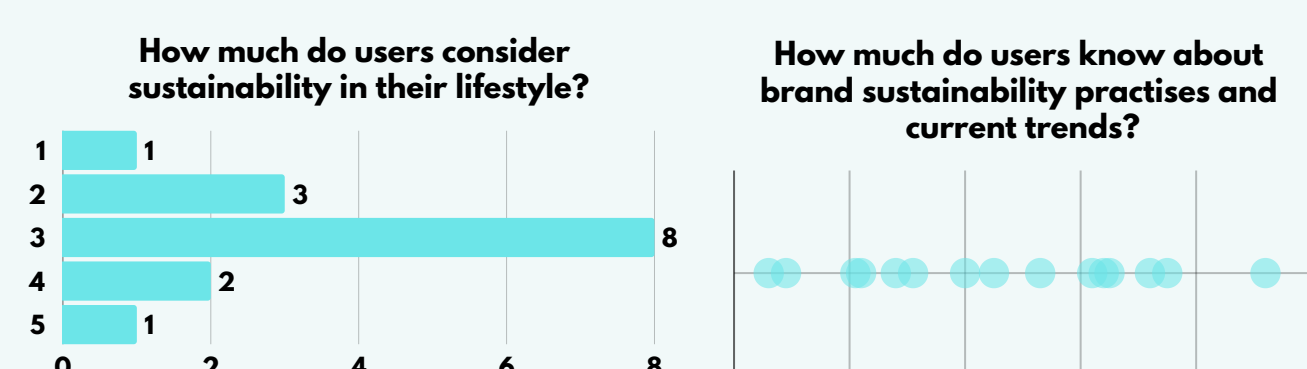#### 2. Lack of Clarity & Transparency

Especially around sustainability claims and quality.
*"It's always greenwashing. I don't really believe most clothes are sustainable, unless you're thrifting it."*
*"Usually sustainability claims are vague or misleading."*
*"If it feels heavier and stiffer, then I assume it's better quality."*

🏷️ *Magnifies Brand Loyalty as a Risk-Reduction Strategy*

#### 3. Convenience Overrides Sustainable Intent

*"I just don't have the time as a college student. I still use Amazon because it's so convenient."*
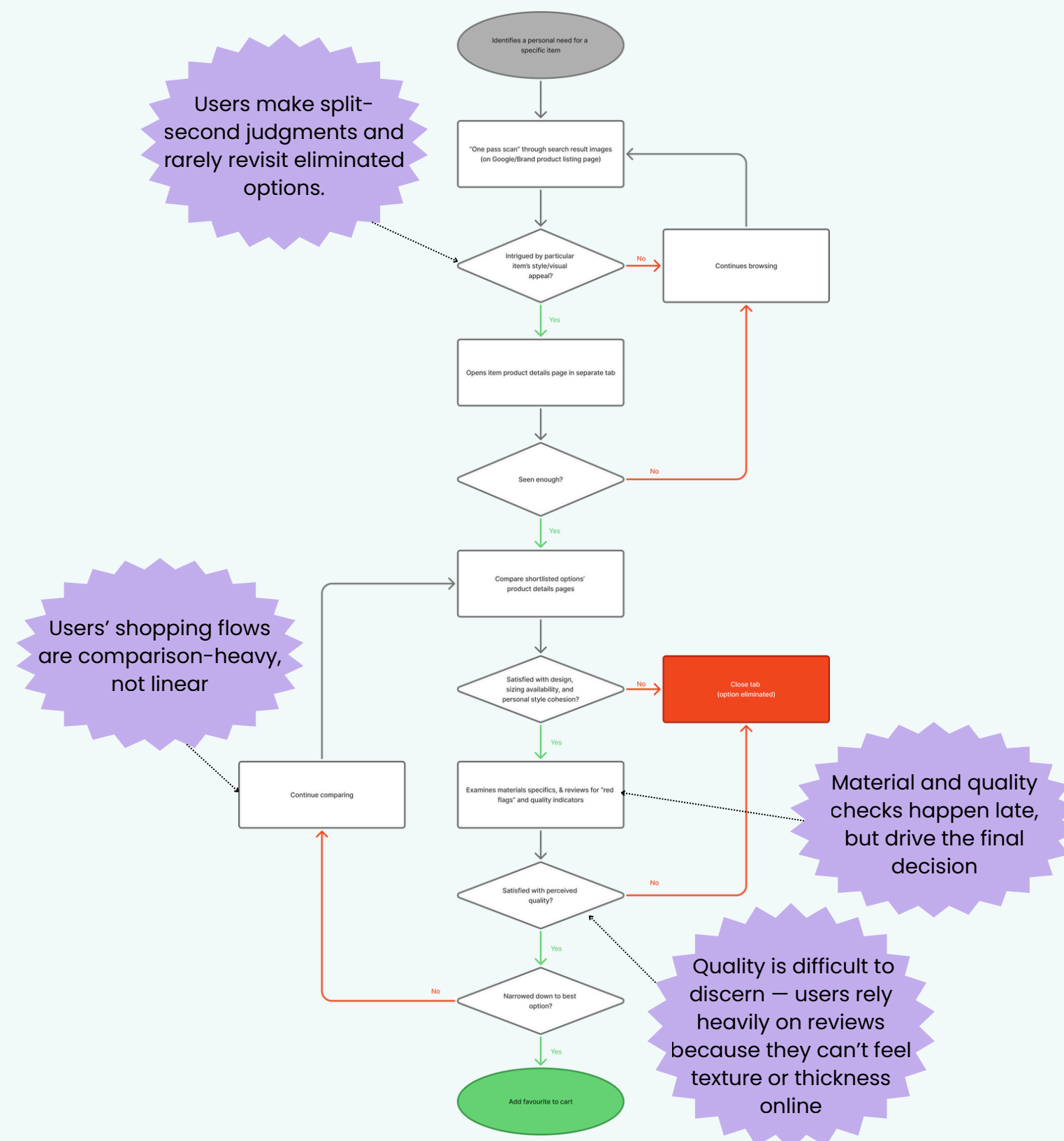*"I want to shop sustainably, but it takes too long to find reliable information."*

#### 4. Wide Variation in Sustainability Consciousness & Knowledge

How much do users consider sustainability in their lifestyle?

How much do users know about brand sustainability practises and current trends?



### 5 Think-aloud Studies → Friction Points

**Goal:** Reveal how people actually behave during online shopping.
**Outcome:** Validated our 4 core themes and exposed *where the friction points are* and *exactly when Magnolia must intervene* to be useful.



- Users make split-second judgments and rarely revisit eliminated options.
- Users' shopping flows are comparison-heavy, not linear
- Material and quality checks happen late, but drive the final decision
- Quality is difficult to discern — users rely heavily on reviews because they can't feel texture or thickness online

## System Overview and Approach

Magnolia is a **light-weight shopping extension** that assists users in the online shopping process by accessibly providing users information on garment longevity that is otherwise difficult to find. It works by scraping the webpage for information on materials and reviews, and displaying simple and intuitive graphics on **fiber composition, durability, and care instructions**. It also provides users with **review summaries, insights** to keep in mind before buying, and information on the **brand's commitment to sustainability.** Users are **empowered to shop sustainably** by being equipped with the necessary knowledge to shop durably.
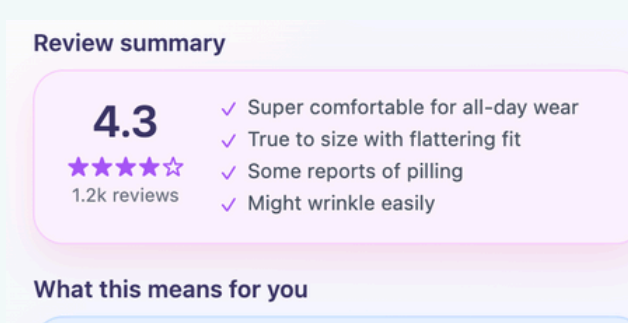


**Fibre Database**
Coded with information about fabric composition, environmental impact, pros and cons
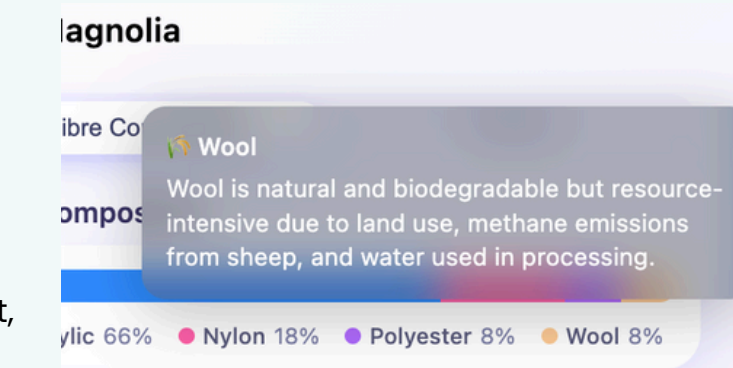
**Fibre Notes**
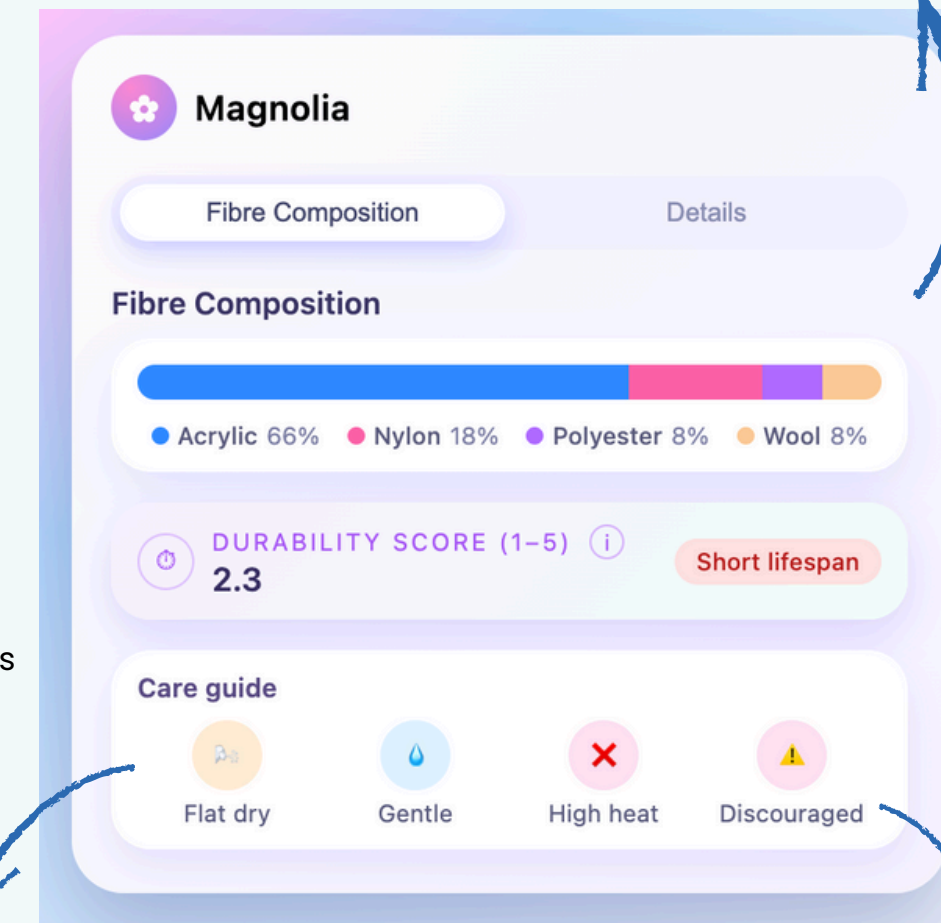Digestable descriptions of the environmental impact a fiber in the garment may have

**Review Summary**
Users get social proof and quick summaries of reviews to quickly assess garment suitability

**Brand sustainability**
Quickly understand if a brand has pledged to any sustainability initiatives
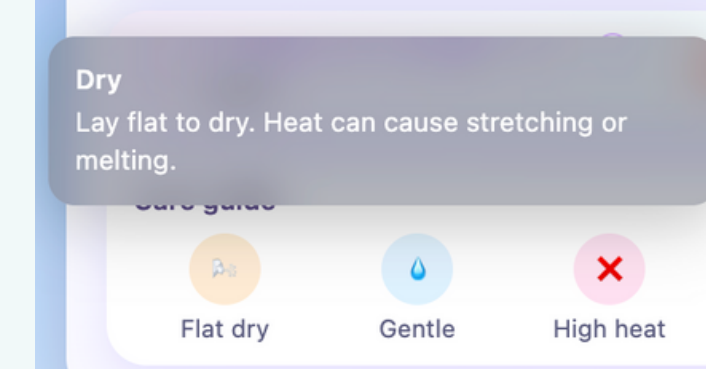
**Fibre Composition**
Visualizes fibre composition and highlights key features of each material

**Durability Score**
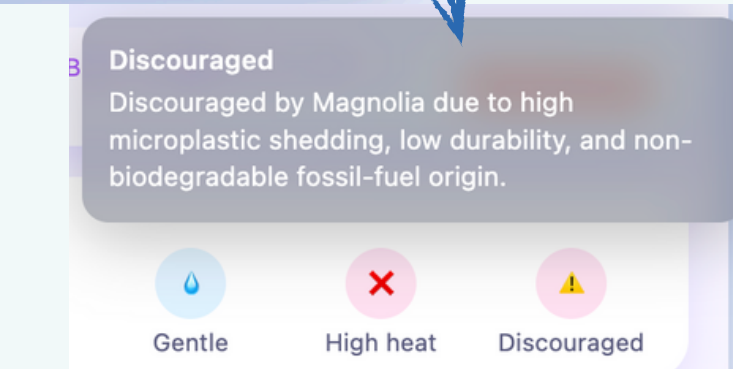Weighted average of the main fibres in the garment

**Care Guide**
Quick, scannable way for users to see optimal washing instructions for product durability

**Care Notes**
Clear instructions and reasoning for how to take care of this garment

**Recommend/Discouraged**
A quick note on whether or not we recommend the garment, based on the materials

## Scenarios and Design Goals

### Key User Group & Scenario

**18 - 30 Year Olds**
who shop online, and want to find **long-lasting, durable clothing**, and shop smarter **without the hassle of research and replacements**

**Pain Points**

Limited time and care to research materials, care and longevity; Large learning curve

Confusing "sustainability" claims and hard to judge durability before purchase

**Goals**

Reduce effort spent comparing options and quickly grasp details about clothing

Buy smarter with items that last, while avoiding waste and misleading marketing

**Solution**

Simple at a glance product summaries, metrics and visualizations.
Additional detail about fibre durability, production and wash care.

Summarizes customer reviews, and clear material quality indicators
Displays brand sustainability pledges

### Design Goals

**1. Instant and Low Effort**
Convenient, and surface clarity at the skim stage

**2. Reduce Cognitive Load**
Translate fiber compositions and user reviews to intuitive indicators

**3. Comparison - Friendly**
Integrate seamlessly into users' shopping flow when comparing items, reducing friction

**4. Decision Supporting**
Provide most impactful guidance at the final moment right before purchase

## Evaluation and Future Direction

Pilot → Iteration → Usability Testing → Iteration → Validate Improvements
(7 sessions overall)

### What Went Well

From our usability testing, we were excited to see the following ratings for outcomes we were looking for:

| Outcome | Score 1-5 |
| --- | --- |
| Quick to learn | 4.7 |
| Confidence in use | 4.3 |
| Convenience in use | 4.8 |
| Future use | 4.6 |
| Value | 4.1 |
| Efficiency | 4.4 |
| Clarity | 4.7 |

**Clear Alignment with Design Goals**
When asking users about how well the system satisfied different parts of our design goals, all users responded positively (Goals 1,2)

**Directly Addresses 4 Core Themes**
All users' user journeys suggested vast improvement in the 4 core themes. We were able to see users who did not consider environmental impact as a factor when shopping begin to evaluate the sustainability of an article of clothing using our system.
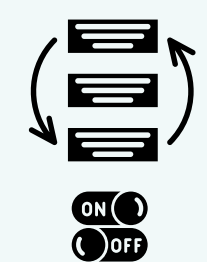
**Integrates well into shopping flow**
Users found it easy to navigate between our system and the clothing listing. They required little to no instructions and quickly adopted Magnolia into of their existing shopping process.

### Moving Forward

**Enable Customization**
Users differed in which features they found most impactful, and engaged with different parts of the experience. Offering customization options, like rearranging modules, turning features on or off, would allow users to shape the experience around their priorities.

**Sharpen visual language**
By refining visual indicators, we can make key information easier to spot and strengthen overall skimmability, especially in when users are comparing multiple options.

**Increase scraping extensibility**
Refine scraping pipelines to support a wider range of e-commerce sites and handle variations in page formats, making data ingestion more resilient.

**Expand fiber database**
Users benefit from deeper, more accurate fiber insights. Expanding the database will increase coverage across niche fibers, blends, and alternative materials.