

THE UX OF LUXURY

Providing unique digital
experiences for unique brands



CONTENT **SQUARE**

INTRODUCTION

If you were asked about your most recent online purchase, what would you say?

Would you talk about the product, or would you relate how you felt at the moment of purchase?

It is safe to assume that few of us would willingly return to a site that provided a frustrating user experience the first time around, whatever the brand.

While some brands may appear to be ahead of the game in this new age of experience — including a number of luxury brands — others have been slower to harness the mobile revolution to meet evolving customer expectations and spending habits.

In this era of hyperconnectivity and mobility, where the interface defines the brand, users are setting the bar high for online customer experience. It is no longer enough for a website or mobile app to simply facilitate a purchase. Whether for research, window shopping, or to compare products and reviews, visits reflect the shifting needs, whims and desires of users.

Within this endless spectrum of user motivations, today's interface must guarantee customer satisfaction — its role is to trigger, inspire, and stimulate user engagement.

Simply trying to emulate the solutions associated with the rise and success of e-commerce disruptors is not an option. Tomorrow's stakeholders will need to create their own, unique experience, which reflects their brand's core values, provides a coherent physical experience focused on user need, and connects the dots between users' lives online and offline.

TESTIMONIES

“User experience (UX) is where business objectives meet user needs - in other words, putting people at the heart of decision making, taking into account their needs and desires in order to improve and facilitate their experience. Less frustration, more pleasure - that is the key to effectiveness.”

*Anne Lesueur, International e-commerce and media director
at L'Occitane en Provence*

“In short, UX is an intuitive, simple, efficient and bold journey, whatever the interface. UX optimization means making the client's interaction with the site more pleasurable.”

*Soumia Hadjali, VP Digital Operations,
Ecommerce & Digital Services at AccorHotels*



UX IS THE NEW BRAND

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**THE CHALLENGE OF PROVIDING
UNIQUE EXPERIENCES IN THE
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**LUXURY'S NEW
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METHODOLOGY

This is a ContentSquare study on how users perceive the experiences designed by brands in the 'mobile-first' age. As part of this survey, ContentSquare compared two types of users — e-commerce and luxury.

Over 125 million user sessions between November 2016 and February 2017 were analyzed. 95% of these sessions can be traced back to users in six countries: the United States, France, the UK, Spain, Belgium and Germany.

Drawing on its expertise in the field of behavioral data analysis, ContentSquare is disrupting traditional analytics in favor of more innovative methods to measure user experience.

Through our platform, the analysis of millions of browsing sessions provides actionable insights for digital teams wishing to continuously optimize their services.



E-commerce segment:

In this study — which spans the fashion, interior design and cosmetics industries — close to half of all users are mobile users.

TRAFFIC



49.1%



38.2%



12.6%



3 MONTHS



76 MILLION



14 SITES



3 INDUSTRIES



Luxury segment:

More than 2/3 of those studied are mobile users — a statistic that should be taken into account when considering the insights provided by this study. This marks a real turning point for the industry — don't miss the turn!

TRAFFIC

 **64.6%**

 **26.7%**

 **8.1%**

 **3**
MONTHS

 **49**
MILLION

 **5**
SITES

 **3**
INDUSTRIES



3 MONTHS OF
DATA



125
MILLION
SESSIONS



6 COUNTRIES



5 LUXURY SITES



19 E-COMMERCE SITES

CHAPTER I

UX IS THE NEW BRAND

The key to success is understanding user need and context. However, these continue to grow in complexity, as do the interfaces, which have evolved from simple to elaborate websites, mobile and apps. And yet, the need to tailor experiences to user need and context is greater than ever.

1

UNDERSTANDING USER NEED IN ORDER TO CREATE THE IDEAL INTERFACE

One of the questions that keeps digital teams up at night is: “What exactly is wrong with the navigation paths we have created?”

While digital teams are better equipped than ever to understand where users come from and what they end up buying, few can tell why their site performs poorly, and which pages or page elements are to blame. The most popular pages — those that are viewed repeatedly during the same browsing session — vary greatly from one site to another, even within the same industry.

To better understand what makes a journey fluid or frustrating, let’s focus on what the user is trying to accomplish during the visit by analyzing the behavior of the 17 million users that make up our e-commerce study.

TESTIMONY

“It is interesting to measure the bounce rate of a page, but what is more helpful is to understand the user’s state of mind, and what causes them to cut short their visit. Understanding UX allows you to take remedial action, and to anticipate a similar behavior in the future.”

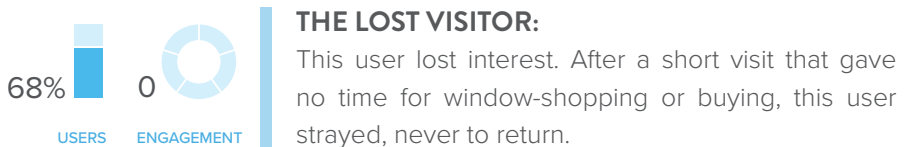
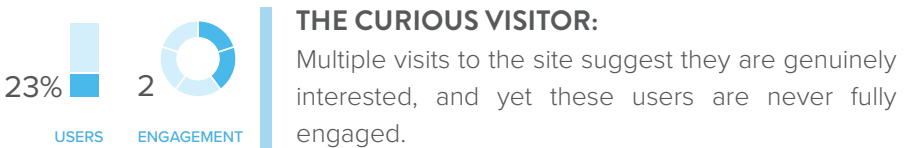
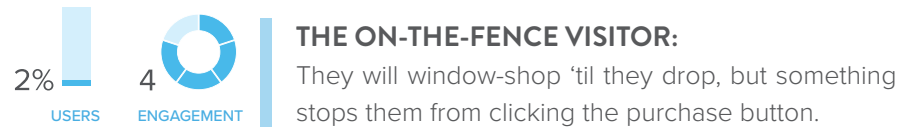
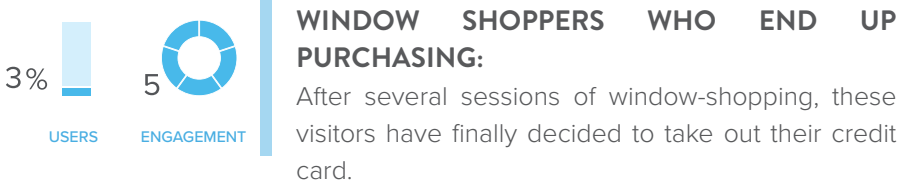
*Frédéric Gaillard, Founder of Axance,
Coordinator of UXalliance, an international network of UX specialists*

THERE ARE FOUR DISTINCT BEHAVIORAL PATTERNS:

Let's start by defining two key concepts:

For the purpose of this study, we have defined 'window shopping' as the viewing of an average of 6 product pages by a user.

'Engagement' is when a user acts on his or her intention.



SAME OLD, SAME OLD: WHY DO ALL INTERFACES LOOK THE SAME?

Measuring user behavior and understanding customer need are hampered by the fact that most companies invest heavily in areas like customer acquisition, at the expense of user experience.

According to Forrester Research, the UX industry will be worth around 3 billion dollars in 2017. In comparison, the online advertising industry was worth 59 billion in 2015 (1). Nonetheless, many e-commerce stakeholders are frustrated by the lack of understanding of browsing behaviors today.

For **Lionel Lavayssière, Director of Direct Sales CRM & e-Commerce at Belambra**, *“Traditional analytics are not granular enough to understand the journey of users once they are directed to the site.”*



The UX market will be worth around

3 BILLION
DOLLARS

in 2017

TESTIMONY

“ContentSquare’s analytics solution will allow us to follow journeys from beginning to end in a more visual way, and in particular, to understand hesitation, scrolling, what makes users convert, etc., while simultaneously remaining agnostic about customer acquisition.”

*Soumia Hadjali, VP Digital Operations,
Ecommerce & Digital Services at AccorHotels*

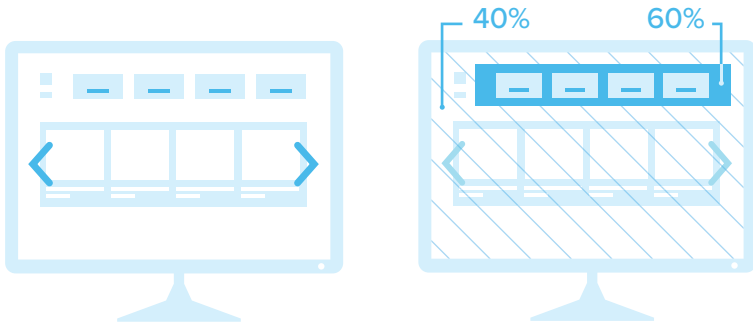
⁽¹⁾ Source : IAB Internet Advertising Revenue Report Full Year 2015

The uniformity of e-commerce site templates — which uphold outdated notions of ‘best practice’ or ‘tried and tested’ — is negatively affecting companies’ bottom line. Investing in UX means developing at times daring interfaces that also meet user expectations.

80% of homepages visited by the e-commerce customers we studied share a similar format:

TRADITIONAL TEMPLATE

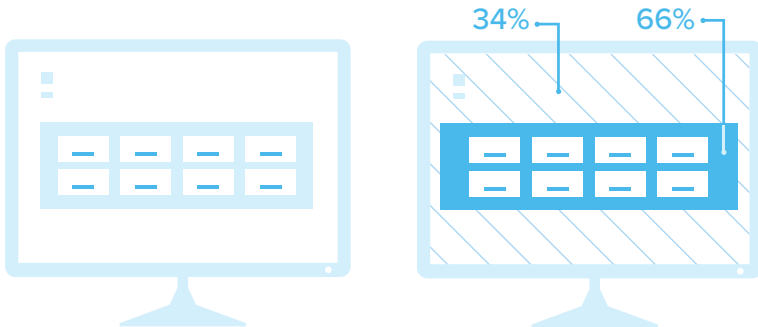
79% of the e-commerce segment



With a traditional template, almost two-thirds of clicks are made in the menu bar, versus only one-third when the menu is given more visibility - replacing, for example, the carousel (see above).

‘BROWSING FIRST’* TEMPLATE:

21% of the e-commerce segment



*The menu bar, which is usually found at the top of the page, has been repositioned in the middle of the page

Most clicks occur in a very small area of the page, **raising key questions about the role of a page's different areas.**

3

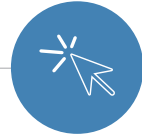
LUXURY BRANDS ARE THINKING OUTSIDE THE BOX

The luxury industry seems to have embraced the need for innovation better than its e-commerce counterpart, investing heavily in inspirational branding, and making browsing sessions an integral part of the shopping experience.

Since the bounce rate on luxury sites is comparable to the bounce rate on e-commerce sites, one might be tempted to write this off as a losing strategy. However, with mobile users making up more than 2/3 of their audience, luxury brands are rising to the challenges of the new mobile age.

It is important to remember that, on a mobile device, sessions are extremely short: 37% of visits last under 1 minute.

This in turn raises questions about the online experience of users of these sites. How do you replicate the unique experience associated with a luxury brand on a mobile device?



79%
OF CLICKS

on a homepage
occur on the menu

CHAPTER II

THE CHALLENGE OF PROVIDING UNIQUE EXPERIENCES IN THE MOBILE-FIRST AGE

LUXURY BRAND SITES: A SAVVY BLEND OF INSPIRATIONAL AND E-COMMERCE CONTENT

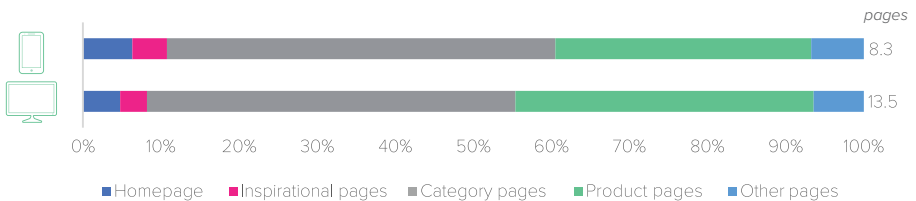
While not all luxury brand sites have a retail component, they still rely on e-commerce solutions: category and product pages are windows into the brand, and a place for users to find information.

The e-commerce content is supplemented by inspirational content, which is designed to ensure a unique user experience. This is where a brand articulates its identity and creativity, through videos, interactive elements and animation.

But how do users feel about these types of content? Let's focus on user behavior during an average desktop and mobile browsing session.

Average breakdown of time during a session

Few inspirational pages viewed on either device

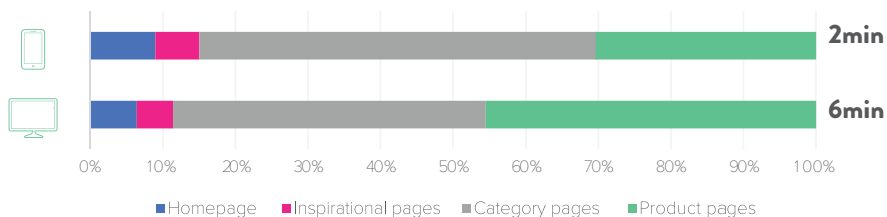


While inspirational pages get relatively little traffic, category pages perform particularly well on mobile devices. This should come as no surprise. Back in 2016, we found that mobile users tend to flock to category pages.

Not only are they user-friendly, but users also go to them for inspiration, and digital marketers are well aware of their importance.

Average breakdown of time during a session

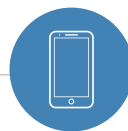
Time spent window-shopping on a MOBILE device is three times shorter



But don't be fooled. While mobile sessions generally last under 2 minutes, content consumption remains high. Mobile users tend to flick through pages, and browse through content **1.8 times faster than desktop users.**

Is it safe to say that users ignore inspirational pages? No. But these days, users have mastered the art of browsing, and head straight to the category page to get their inspiration.

The lesson? Mobile users will never cease to surprise us.



Browsing speed is

1.8x
times FASTER

on a mobile device
than on a desktop

2

DEBUNKING THE MYTH OF THE IDEAL USER

If you had to describe the ideal users, they would:



spend most of their
browsing session
consuming inspirational
content



visit the site
repeatedly



click on several
product pages



of course, buy
something

This ideal user would, in time, become a brand ambassador.

In reality, only 1% of those who visit luxury sites fit this profile. **The question is: How do you engage a brand ambassador if the mobile user is in a rush, impatient, easily distracted, and yet craves content?**

For this, we must develop a sophisticated understanding of user expectation.



Only
1%
OF LUXURY
site **VISITORS** fit the
'ideal user' profile

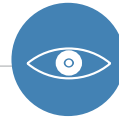


MYTH | LUXURY SITE VISITORS THINK TWICE BEFORE CLICKING THE PURCHASE BUTTON

That statement is actually false !

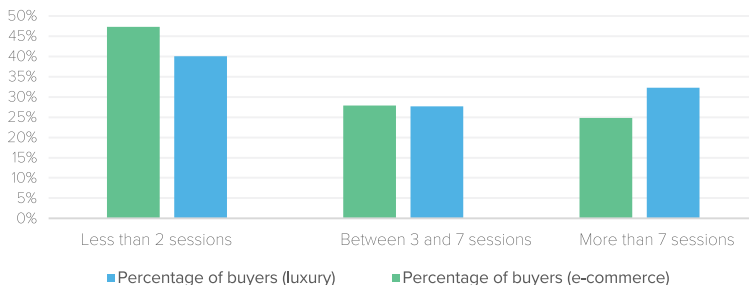
While e-commerce site users tend to visit a site repeatedly, those who browse luxury brand sites become active window-shoppers during their very first visit.

13% of luxury site visitors view more than 6 products during their first visit, versus 5% for e-commerce.

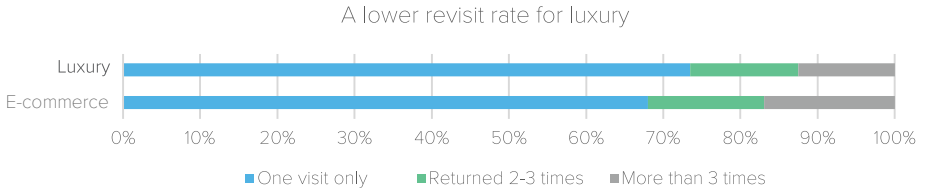


13%
OF LUXURY SITE
VISITORS viewed
more than
6 PRODUCTS

More compulsive buyers on luxury retail sites



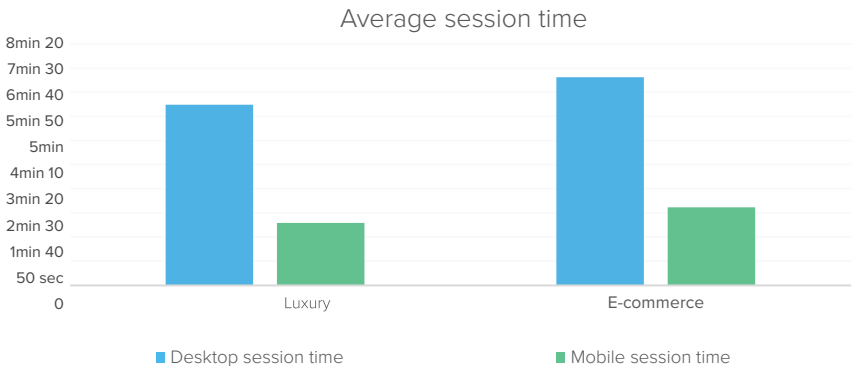
It's true that conversion rates are 2 to 3 times lower for the luxury industry than they are for e-commerce. Nonetheless, luxury users are more likely to convert on the first visit than e-commerce users. We could even cautiously say that luxury users are 'compulsive' buyers.



MYTH | VISITS TO LUXURY SITES LAST LONGER

In fact, the opposite is true.

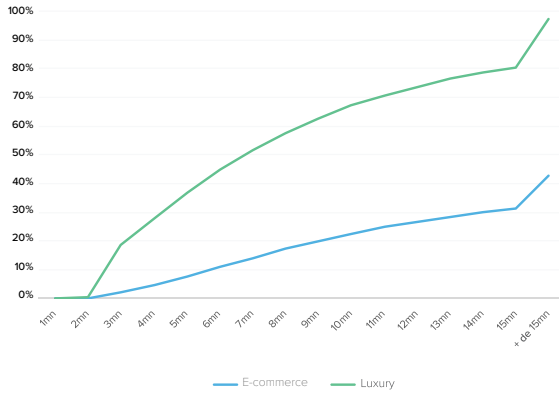
Browsing sessions on luxury sites are shorter than visits to e-commerce sites, whether on a desktop or a mobile device (see graph).



The way luxury website users behave on product pages supports this idea: **they spend an average of 30 seconds on each product description — half the average time spent by e-commerce users.**

However, these sessions are more fruitful, with twice as many visitors actively window-shopping (viewing 6 or more products per session).

Luxury website users are engaged faster



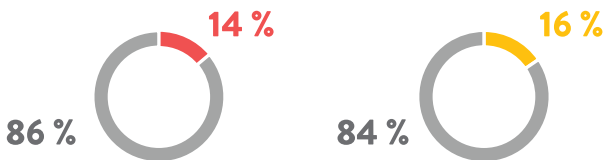
MYTH

THE ONLY WAY TO CONVEY BRAND IDENTITY IS THROUGH INSPIRATIONAL CONTENT

Should we be concerned that only **15%** of visitors interact with inspirational content?

It could be a visibility issue, or it could be that users are familiar with luxury sites and know exactly where they want to get to — a theory that is supported by the high number of clicks recorded on the horizontal menu.

Users and inspirational content: mobile VS desktop



- Viewed inspirational content on a mobile
- Viewed inspirational content on a desktop
- Other users

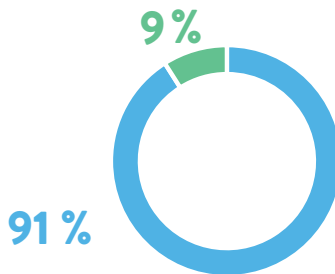
If mobile users are so enthusiastic about category pages, then surely those pages are the ideal place to articulate the brand's identity.

Mobile users are changing the rules of the game - it pays to listen to them!

Luxury customers love a good story and therefore content is at the heart of the window-shopping experience.

Should we worry that 91% of window-shoppers end up viewing less than one minute of inspirational content (particularly since window-shoppers are, by definition, users with a higher level of engagement)?

Window-shoppers who spend more than one minute browsing brand content



- End up viewing less than a minute of inspirational content
- End up viewing more than one minute of inspirational content

Window-shoppers seem to shy away from inspirational content — the reason being that this type of content takes much more time to load! Users may feel like they are being made to wait too long.

Marketing teams today face a daunting challenge: reinventing both content and formats to meet the needs of users in the mobile-first age.



There is a

**50%
CHANCE**

that mobile users will leave a site after 5 seconds of loading time.

Luxury brands have been thinking outside the box, and have started to blend branding elements with effective purchase funnels.

The trick is not to overhaul this balance, but to figure out where best to feature inspirational content so that it remains both visible and user-friendly.

Let us now focus on our two main luxury protagonists.

CHAPTER III

LUXURY'S NEW PROTAGONISTS

1

THE AFICIONADO: THE IDEAL USER, MAKING UP ONLY 1% OF ALL USERS



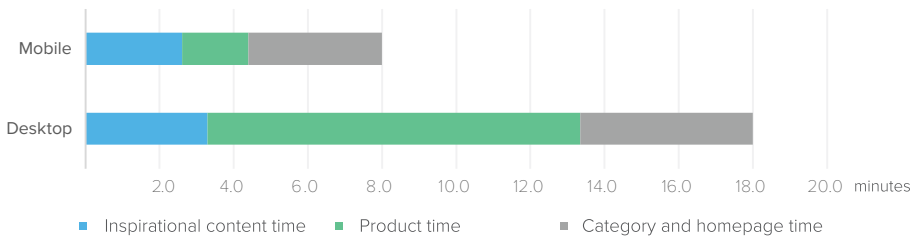
Over the course of our study, this user consumed more than 10 minutes of inspirational content. **They are also window-shoppers, and are part of a small group of 'ideal' luxury site visitors.** Aficionados returned to a site more than eight times during our two-and-a-half-month survey, viewing up to sixty products.

1.1 Key Findings

Percentage of aficionados on each device	59%	41%
Number of sessions per user during the survey	11	8
Session time in minutes	18min	8min
Number of pages viewed per session	14	7





Aficionados spend between 15 and 30% of a session consuming branded content. The rest of the session is spent viewing e-commerce content.



1.2 Behavioral patterns on pages featuring inspirational content


Aficionados can't get enough of inspirational content when browsing on a desktop: they scroll, interact with the content, and spend an average of two and a half minutes on each page.

Their patience wanes, however, on a mobile device. On a mobile, the same customers consume less than half as much inspirational content than on a desktop, they scroll less, and yet they ‘tap’ just as much.

		
Number of inspirational pages viewed per session	1.4	2
Time spent	2min25	1min15
Scroll rate	93%	82%
Number of clicks	4.8	4.7

1.3 Behavioral patterns on product pages

Aficionados tend to skim through e-commerce content on mobile devices. They interact very little with product pages and spend little time on them.





Aficionados spend

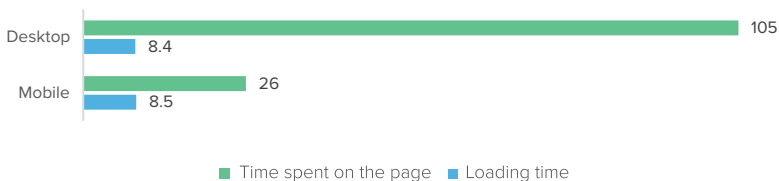
1/3

OF THEIR TIME

waiting for product pages to load on their mobile device

		
Number of product pages viewed per session	5.7	4.1
Time spent	1min35	26sec
Scroll rate	80%	78%
Number of clicks	2.3	1.7

Aficionados wait an average of 9 seconds for a product page to load on their mobile device — 1/3 of the time they will spend on the page once it has loaded.



1.4 How to optimize the aficionado's user experience?

By speeding up load times for inspirational and product pages!

In many ways, the aficionado is the unicorn of users. But aficionados can also come across technical limitations, causing them at times to leave a site. Inspirational content is often very heavy, with an average load time of 11 seconds on a mobile device and 8 seconds on a desktop.

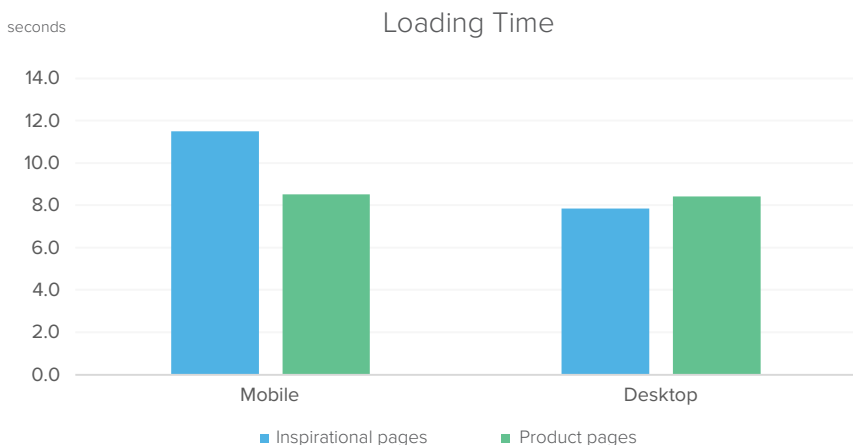


A page that includes inspirational items takes

11 SECONDS
to load

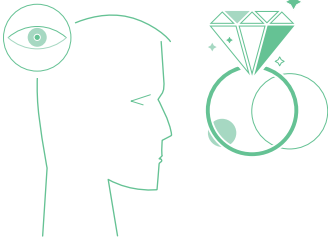
Load times are just as bad on product pages, which is a bigger problem, because of the negative impact on a site's transaction performance.

The branded content featured on product pages is heavy and largely ignored: remember that aficionados and your average window-shopper spend between 30 seconds and 1 minute on each product page.



2



THE EXPERT: LUXURY WINDOW-SHOPPERS, 20% OF USERS



The expert is mainly interested in the product. During the course of our study, they viewed more than 6 products and up to one minute of inspirational content. Experts make up 91% of window-shoppers and 20% of all users surveyed for this report. The expert is a loyal customer, returning to the site almost once a month.



2.1 Key Findings

A majority of luxury window-shoppers do their window-shopping on a mobile device, viewing many pages in a short amount of time.

		
Percentage of experts for each device	32%	68%
Number of sessions per user during the course of the survey	2.3	2.7
Session time in minutes	9min30	3min
Number of pages viewed per session	21	12



2.2 Behavioral patterns on pages featuring inspirational content

Experts tend to stay away from branded content, seeking efficiency instead. They spend an average of ten seconds on pages featuring inspirational elements, and are out in less than two clicks.

		
Number of inspirational pages viewed per session	0.17	0.14
Time spent	10.71	10.10
Scroll rate	91%	78%
Number of clicks per page	1.94	1.62

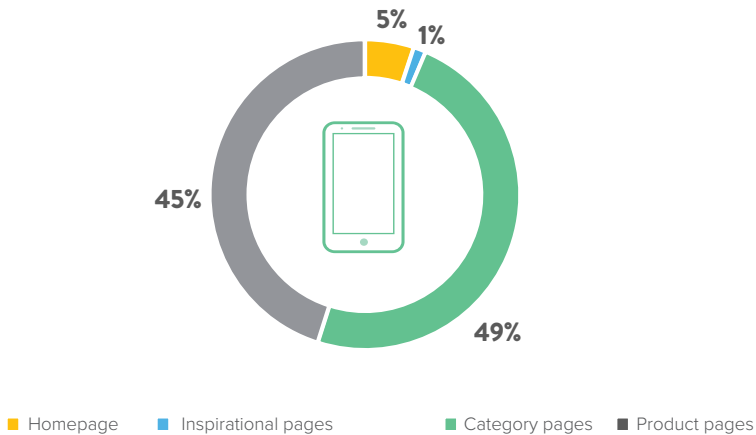
2.3 Behavioral patterns on product pages

Experts view as many product pages as aficionados, but spend less time on them. This is particularly true for mobile users, despite smartphones being the device of choice for window-shoppers.

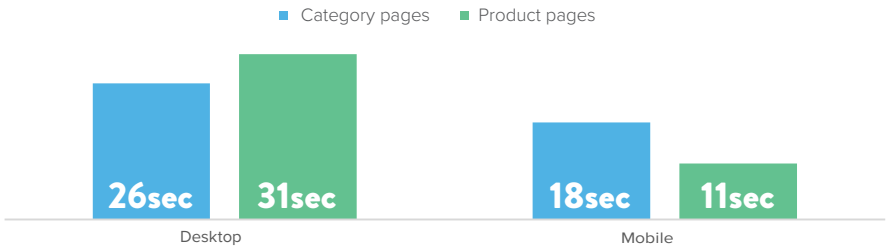
		
Number of product pages viewed per session	10.2	4.9
Time spent on each page (in seconds)	31	11
Scroll rate	80%	78%
Number of clicks	1.83	1.54

When browsing on a mobile device, experts spend less than 12 seconds on each product. They prefer lists, viewing between 5 and 6 per browsing session. Window-shoppers with mobile devices spend twice as long on category pages as they do on product pages.

Pages viewed on a mobile device



Window shoppers with mobile devices spend more time on category pages than on product pages



2.4 Optimizing the expert's journey

The luxury sector is more than ever embracing the 'mobile-first' approach. In order to keep up with their users, luxury sites have no choice but to streamline the heavy content featured on their product pages. Improving product visibility on category pages is also a priority, since mobile users respond well to this type of page.

Several luxury brands have started to keep their branded content and e-commerce content separate, as part of an effort to streamline the user journey. This is mostly aimed at window-shoppers, whose primary concern is efficiency, especially when browsing on a mobile device.

SUMMARY



Imagine reading the opening paragraph of a newspaper article that contained no clues as to the whys and hows of the story. The lack of information would surely leave you frustrated.

Content Managers, Web Traffic Managers, and other e-commerce wizards find themselves in a similarly frustrating situation.

As we've seen, understanding user need and context are key to creating an experience that meets user expectations. It's all the more vital because it helps reduce ever-escalating acquisition costs, which are 40 times higher today than they were five years ago.

Because conversion rates are influenced by more than just the quality of leads made via acquisition, a high acquisition budget is not always justified. The experience and feelings of users also play a major role. And, as we have demonstrated in this report, visitors can sometimes behave rather unpredictably.

TESTIMONY

“Data analysis has been a complete game-changer, by allowing us to better anticipate consumer behavior thanks to a more and more sophisticated understanding of traffic — at times integrating Artificial Intelligence. However, this level of knowledge is not enough to fully understand the user journey, in particular the obstacles and incentives that determine his or her behavior. These are the requirements for a UX analytics platform today: it needs to identify the main pending issues in order to encourage the user to consume a service, to spread the word, and to return.”

*Frédéric Gaillard, Founder of Axance
Coordinator of UXalliance, an international network of UX specialists*

As a rule, e-commerce stakeholders still have difficulty determining which indicators evidence a well-designed UX, leaving digital teams frustrated and testing solutions blindly.

“Faced with an ever-growing quantity of data, access to data and a growing awareness of cross-sectional data within companies are key to data-oriented decision-making.”

*Anne Lesueur, International e-commerce and media director at
L'Occitane en Provence*

- ✔ **Solution:** To work towards democratizing data and involving all design and programming stakeholders.
- ✔ **Objective:** To better understand what inhibits window-shopping, conversion and customer retention, in order to determine the appropriate remedial action.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS



We would like to thank,
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and L'Occitane en Provence.



CONTENT SQUARE

ContentSquare is a user experience (UX) analytics and optimization platform that helps businesses understand how and why users are interacting with their app, mobile and web sites. We compute billions of touch and mouse movements, and transform this knowledge into profitable actions that increase engagement, reduce operational costs and maximize conversion rates.

Using behavioral data, artificial intelligence and big data to provide automatic recommendations, ContentSquare empowers every member of the digital team to easily measure the impact of their actions, and make fast and productive data-driven decisions to optimize the customer journey.

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