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E-COMMERCE WEBSITES

A Quality Evaluation

Interskale Digital Marketing and Consulting

Mumbai, INDIA
www.interskale.in

Phone: +91-22-67587031
Email: info@interskale.in

E-Commerce Websites: A Quality Evaluation

AGENDA

Identification of websites for quality evaluation

We have studied existing e-commerce websites that are currently in operation, with a view to understand their overall quality.

There is an increasing interest in e-commerce worldwide, and more and more e-commerce businesses are coming to market. One of the critical success factors for an e-commerce business is having a great website, which can help achieve the business goal of getting orders. Our study was aimed at understanding the quality of Indian e-commerce websites.

The sites were identified by browsing print ads - for e-commerce businesses - in leading magazines. The fact that these businesses were advertising in print meant that their management was somewhat serious about the business per se. It was to be expected that the e-commerce websites behind these businesses would meet a minimum quality standard.

Thus, our quality evaluation is for active e-commerce businesses.

A total of 50 e-commerce sites were studied in all. They are listed in Annexure A.

Website quality parameters

At Interskale, we believe that effective websites (what we call quality websites) are those which meet certain minimum standards on certain parameters. These are parameters that are commonly accepted as being important for websites. All we have done is to evolve a standard methodology for evaluating websites on these parameters.

The 7 parameters that we have considered for the e-commerce websites quality evaluation are:

Website User Interface (UI): Website user interfaces may be classified as above average (includes good), bad or average.

Responsiveness: This parameter is about whether on mobile devices such as smartphones and tablets, the website automatically adjusts it's sizing, layout, and proportions to display in a legible manner or does not adjust.

Mobile speed: Speed of website on mobile devices using standard test measurement techniques and tools on a 1-100 scale (usually from Google)
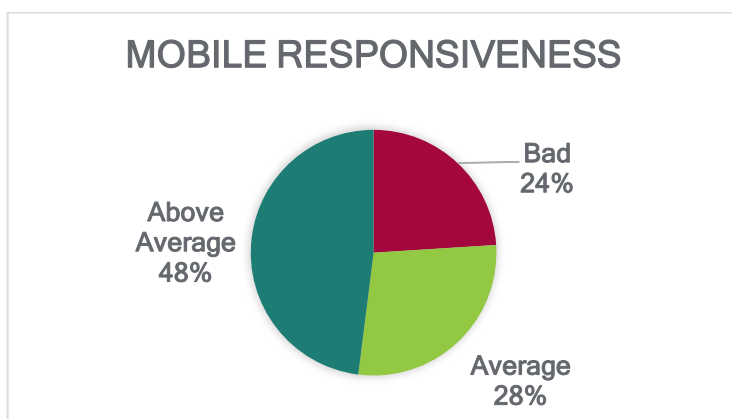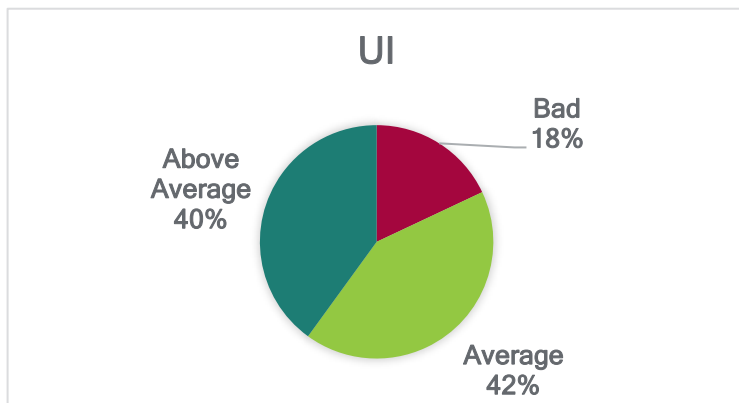
Desktop speed: The same tool and the same evaluation criterion used for mobile speed above is used to rate website speed on desktops.

Product description & content: This is a subjective assessment on whether an e-commerce site's products have been well described or not.
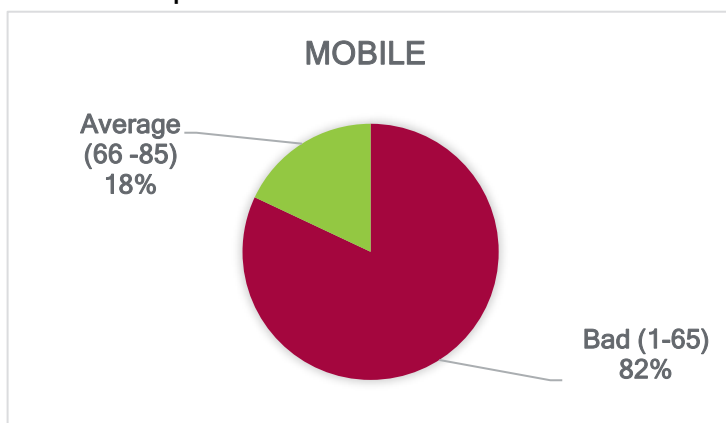
SEO score: We evaluate a website's search engine optimization on 22 criteria. Each criterion checks whether a site is implementing a particular SEO practice or not. In addition, we have an overriding criterion: have the above 22 practices taken together, been executed points well or not.

Website traffic: We rank websites depending on whether they received less than 50,000 visitors a month, 50,000 to 100,000 or more than 100,000 visitors a month, using a web-based traffic measurement tool (Alexa.com)
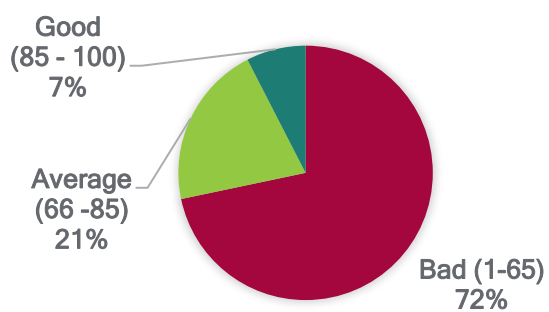
Quality rating of websites

UI

- Bad 18%
- Above Average 40%
- Average 42%

MOBILE RESPONSIVENESS

- Bad 24%
- Above Average 48%
- Average 28%

Website speed

MOBILE

- Average (66 -85) 18%
- Bad (1-65) 82%

DESKTOP

Good
(85 - 100)
7%

Average
(66 -85)
21%

Bad (1-65)
72%

PRODUCT CONTENT

Above
Average
40%

Bad
22%

Average
38%

TRAFFIC

1 lac &
above
26%

0 - 50k
74%

SEO SCORE

Good (81-95) 8%
Average (61 -80) 20%
Bad (1-60) 72%
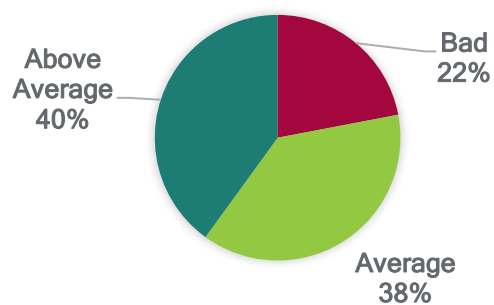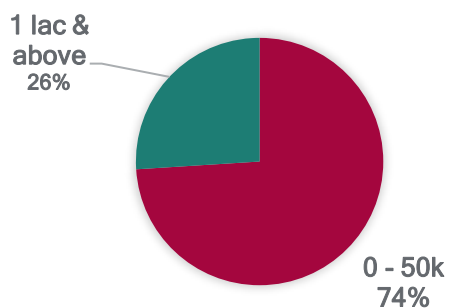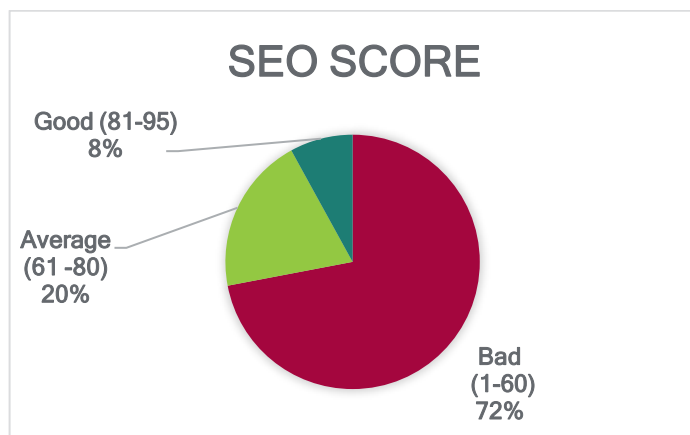
Other findings

We also gathered information on some other website parameters.

E-commerce platform in use

Technology	
Magento	18
PHP	5
Cart Functionality	5
WordPress - WooCommerce	5
OpenCart	4
ASP.NET	1
Custom	3
Java	2
Ruby on Rails	2
Contegro	1
MartJack	1
nopCommerce	1
Shopify	1
X-Cart	1
Total websites	50

It is seen that there is a large number of platforms in use. 14 different technologies were seen in use across the 50 websites.

Using product filters on website

Categorizing products through appropriate selection filters (usually on left side of website) is a basic but critical feature of e-commerce websites. Here too, we find that a large % of sites have not implemented this feature or have implemented it correctly.
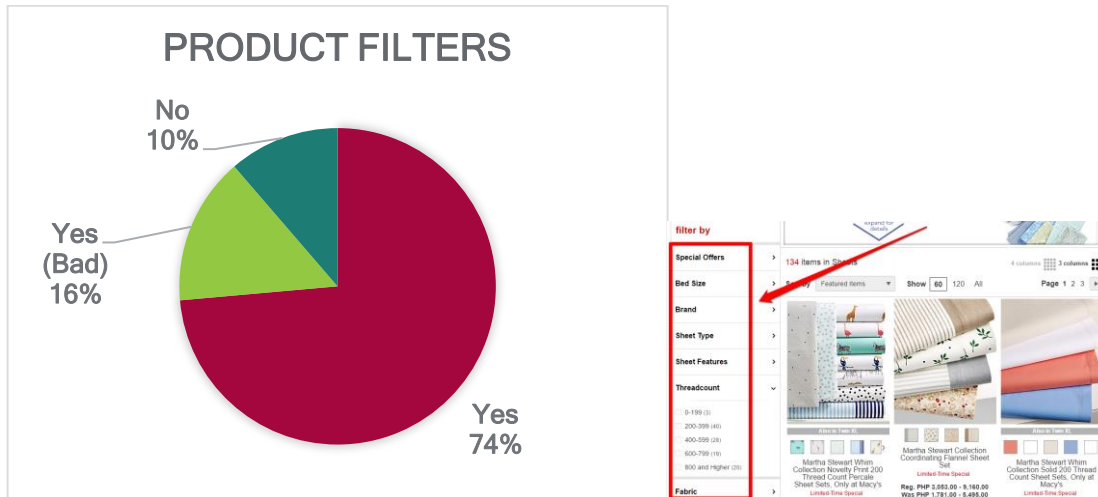
Facebook likes

This is a methodology of seeing the social media savviness of the e-commerce company. This data was picked up out of general interest (unrelated to the quality evaluation itself).
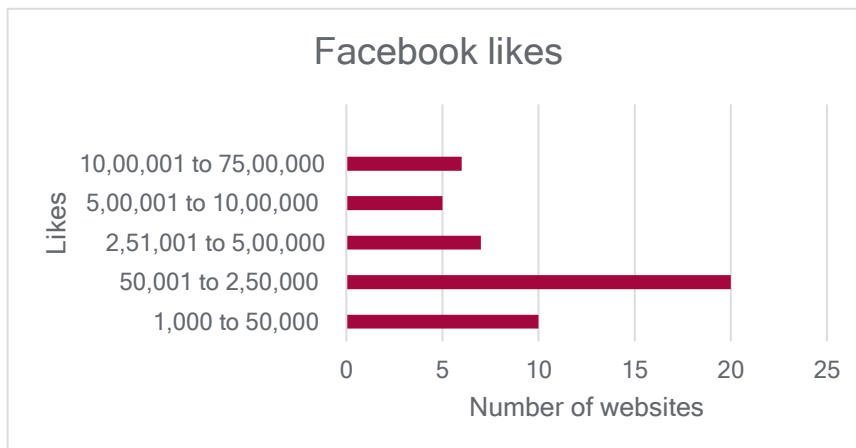
E-commerce websites quality: Conclusions

On design (UI, mobile responsiveness) and on product content parameters, the e-commerce websites are roughly split 40:40:20 in the ratio of above average, average and bad sites respectively.

However, a large number - 70 to 80% percent - of websites suffer from bad speeds. A similar percentage have poor SEO. Considering that good website speed and SEO are two important determinants of good traffic to the site, it is no surprise that only 20 to 25% of the sites have good traffic (> 100,000 visits/month).

We hypothesize that all e-commerce shoppers today have experienced Amazon. Shoppers own expectations of product information, speed and user experience have been set and indeed are being constantly raised by the likes of world-class e-commerce sites such as Amazon.

Thus, to do good business, a site needs to be A+. For this to happen, we recommend that sites should rank in Above Average / Good across all the 7 parameters listed above.

On the above important criterion, only 10% (5 of the 50 sites - libertyshoesonline.com, bblunt.com, eyeplus.titan.co.in, thebodyshop.in, store.hihonor.com) actually ranked as above average or good in all parameters. The quality of the other 90% sites was deficient in some way or the other.

Note that all the e-commerce sites in our sample were advertising (in print magazines). The majority seem to have also worked to accumulate a good number of Facebook fans (see data above on Facebook likes).

It would have cost these sites not more than the cost of one or two print ads to make the improvements in these websites. But this had not been done. It is worth reflecting why. Are e-commerce businesses ignorant of their website quality ? Or do they face a lack of expertise in advising them how to improve their quality ? Or is the poor quality due to some other factor?

Our interactions with e-commerce businesses reveal several other gaps in their understanding of what's needed to scale up. For such questions, please contact us at info@interskale.in.

ANNEXURE A
E-commerce websites considered for the study

Website	Industry Type
airoshine.com	Air purification products
poshakbazaar.com	Apparel
orra.co.in	Jewellery
rmkv.com	Apparel
ozonesafes.com	Home security
talwarjewellers.com	Jewellery
clearline.co.in	Home appliances
libertyshoesonline.com	Footwear
swarovski.com	Jewellery, Fashion accessories
mypeachtree.in	Furniture
bblunt.com	Beauty & Grooming
vajor.com	Women clothing, décor accessories
o3plus.com	Beauty & Grooming
only-india.com	Apparel
holii.in	Bags, Wallets & Footwear
krausjeans.com	Apparel
sprig.co.in	Food
organicindiashop.com	Health supplements
vega.co.in	Beauty & Grooming
meemee.in	Baby Products
metroshoes.net	Footwear
casioindiashop.com/index.php	Gadgets & Electronics
dollarshoppe.in	Apparel
sbuys.in	Apparel
winta.in	Apparel winter clothing
aromamagic.com	Beauty & Grooming
maxfashion.com	Apparel
reneindia.com	Apparel
pcchandraindiaonline.com	Jewellery
nutsnspices.in	Food
koovs.com	Apparel
vajor.com	Apparel
mebaz.com	Apparel
eminenceorganics.co.in	Beauty & Grooming
baggit.com	Handbags
blueheavencosmetics.in	Beauty & Grooming
snoozer.in	Mattress
thechennaisilks.com	Fashion
sleepwellproducts.com	Mattress, Furniture

spawake.in	Beauty & Grooming products
spaces.in	Bed, Bath Accessories
hidesign.com	Fashion Accessories
eyeplus.titan.co.in	Jewellery, watches
vummidi.com	Jewellery
thebodyshop.in	Beauty products
store.hihonor.com	Mobile
lavieworld.com	Bags and shoes
shaze.in	Jewellery
madameonline.com	Apparel, Bags, shoes
damilano.com	Bags

Total: 50 websites

Interskale Digital Marketing and Consulting Pvt. Ltd.
635 Laxmi Plaza, Laxmi Industrial Estate
New Link Road
Andheri (West)
Mumbai – 400 053, INDIA.

Tel: +91-22-67587031.   Email: info@interskale.in   *December 15, 2018*