



Q4 2010 Bug Battle Report:

Battle of the Specialty E-Tailers

What is a Bug Battle?

The uTest Bug Battle is a quarterly app testing competition where software professionals from around the world compete to find bugs in today's popular applications. Previous Bug Battles have been fought over web browsers, search engines, social networking sites, check-in apps and others. Complete history at www.utest.com/bugbattle.

In Q4 of 2010, participants tested the web and mobile components of three prominent e-tail applications. They were given one week to report the most interesting and severe bugs, and to rank these sites based on product search accuracy, usability, fraud protection and other features - with nearly **\$4,000 in prize money** at stake.



With online retail or “e-tail” sales in the U.S. expected to reach more than \$50 billion this holiday season ([Forrester, US Online Holiday Retail Forecast, 2010](#)), this time of year has many companies thinking about how they can optimize their web and mobile apps. IDC also recently reported that 28 percent of overall U.S. holiday spending will be driven by mobile in some way, accounting for [\\$127 billion in sales](#). In response to this immense demand, uTest put the web and mobile sites of three major specialty e-tailers to the test.

The Results

In all, 600+ testers from 28 countries participated in the weeklong competition – reporting nearly **900 bugs**.

eBay emerged as the clear-cut winner of this quarter's competition – placing first in *every* survey category and recording the fewest number of overall bugs (220). Trailing the popular auction site was Overstock.com (314 bugs), closely followed by Zappos (354 bugs). Fraud protection, product search accuracy and overall usability were most important to respondents. Zappos came in second place for product search accuracy and ease-of-use, while Overstock.com came in second place for fraud protection and low prices (see page 3 for all rankings).

Fraud Protection Is Most Important

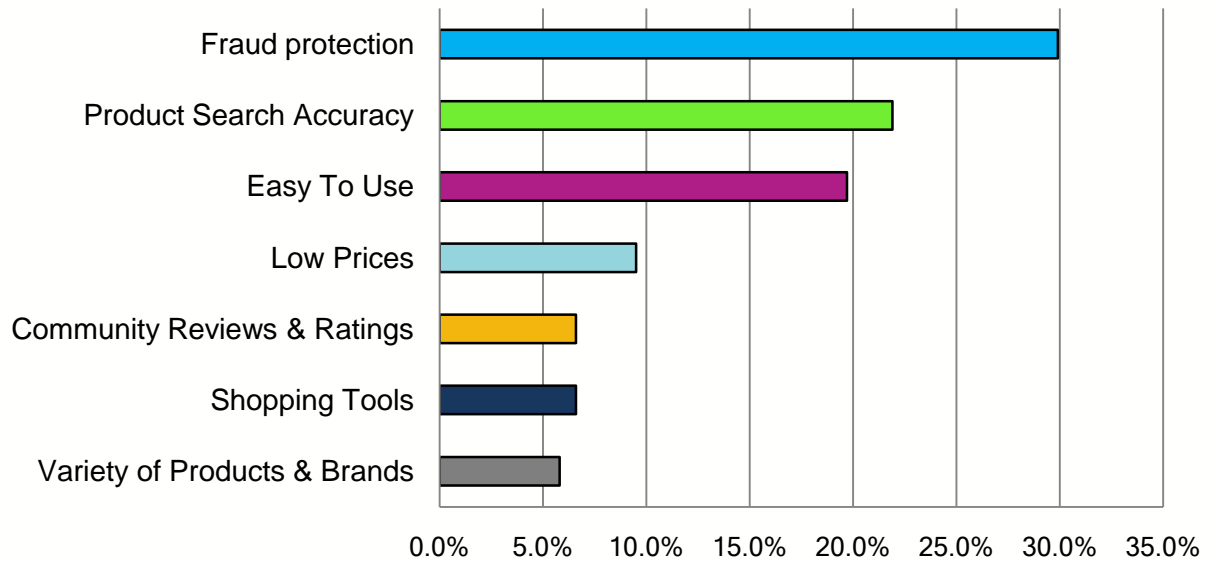
The Bug Battle for specialty e-tailers came down to fraud protection (e.g. secure shopping environment, identity protection), with 30 percent of respondents selecting it as the most important attribute when evaluating a specialty e-tailer. eBay performed best in this area with a whopping 78 percent ranking it as number one over Overstock, which received second place, and Zappos, which trailed in third. In addition, **65 percent of respondents trust eBay most** for their holiday shopping (see chart on page 4).

Product Search Accuracy & Ease Of Use

Product search (e.g. ability to browse products by brand, size, popularity) was the second most important selection criteria, with 22 percent of respondents choosing it. Ease-of-use (20%), low prices (9%), community reviews and ratings (6.5%), shopping tools (6.5%), and brand variety (6%) received the remaining votes (see chart on page 2). eBay also performed best in product search accuracy with 68 percent ranking it as number one over Zappos, which received second place, and Overstock, which trailed in third.



KEY QUESTION: Which Attribute Is Most Important When Evaluating A Specialty E-Tailer?



eBay

With the lowest bug total (220) and first-place rankings in every survey category, eBay was the undisputed winner of this quarter's competition. The auction site was given particularly high praise for its user friendly mobile application, despite testers finding 42 mobile bugs. In fact, when asked if they urgently needed to find a holiday gift and could only use one of these sites, 68 percent chose eBay. Only 8 issues were reported as "showstoppers" in need of immediate attention – the fewest such bugs ever reported in the competition.

Common positive feedback from the testing community:

- "The most mature site of them all. The layout of eBay is very attractive and keeps in mind that the focus of the user should be *on the items*."
- "m.eBay.com was easily the best mobile experience. Its sleek look with minimal options helps carry out the essence of the main website. In other words, mobile users can also find anything they want."



Common negative feedback from the testing community:

- "The most important thing e-Bay can do to foster customer loyalty is to stop the intrusive third party advertisements when switching pages; primarily after the initial sign-on."
- "One area of improvement would be to consolidate the UI and accessibility of the various 'Advanced Search' screens. I found the navigation in this area to be confusing at times."

Featured eBay Feedback

"eBay's marketplace has grown, matured and improved greatly over the years. Browsing the site prompted me to become a tester years ago. They have implemented so many clever and intuitive ideas for the users. As a loyal customer, I would like to see eBay.com mobile apps for smart phones other than iPhone, BlackBerry and Android devices, like the Palm Pre."



How They Stack Up (based on survey respondents)

Product Search Accuracy:

1. eBay
2. Zappos
3. Overstock

Reviews & Ratings:

1. eBay
2. Overstock
3. Zappos

Low Prices:

1. eBay
2. Overstock
3. Zappos

Fraud Protection:

1. eBay
2. Overstock
3. Zappos

Shopping Tools:

1. eBay
2. Zappos
3. Overstock

Overall Usability:

1. eBay
2. Zappos
3. Overstock

Overstock.com

Overstock fared well in terms of fraud protection, low prices and a relatively low bug total (314), yet the e-tail giant could not top eBay in any of the tester survey categories. Likely reasons could be related to bug severity, as more than 150 of the site's reported bugs were classified as either "showstoppers" or as high priority – much greater than both Zappos (89) and eBay (88). Mobile usability also appeared to be a soft spot in an otherwise very user-friendly application.



Common positive feedback from the testing community:

- "Search capability is very robust and gives not just the main categories (and departments) but also sub-categories, which help the user zero in on detailed searches on specific items. This is a big plus."
- "I was ecstatic to find that I could set the site to be in a mode where shipping options, prices and info were related to me being a shopper from the UK."

Common negative feedback from the testing community:

- "The UI elements like text fields, buttons, dropdowns are shattered all over the display screen. A definite minus for Overstock when it comes to Mobile Support."
- "I found several cart options - like editing the product quantity, removing products etc. - difficult to find. A simple highlighting or underlining of the links can work well."

Featured Overstock Feedback

"I loved Overstock for its simplicity and variety. The site's filtering options made it easy to find very specific items and the window shopping feature was a cool, elegant way to remember recently browsed items. Also the fact that items can be shipped to many countries around the world makes the site all the more unique."



Zappos.com

Despite its high marks for product search accuracy and ease-of-use, Zappos had the most reported web bugs (354). Zappos also had the fewest number of mobile bugs (19). The site also attracted more participants (410) than both eBay and Overstock by a wide margin. Of the bug total, more than half (205) were reported as functional in nature, with only 18 reported as "showstoppers" in need of immediate attention.



Common positive feedback from the testing community:

- o "I was really impressed by the clarity of the site's features. It has an intuitive navigation with a simple menu to sort through all products and sections – extremely user friendly."
- o "Very good user interface and easy to navigate. The site features and product categorizations are also very well organized. 'Tags for this product' is just one of many great features of this site."

Common negative feedback from the testing community:

- o "I found numerous broken links when using some tools. I also hit a bunch of 404 and 403 errors. I would suggest using link validation tools to ensure the Zappos website displays consistently to *all* users."
- o "Anyone who has used Zappos on the web and has been impressed with its robust features and functionality will be highly disappointed with the way the website has been handled on mobile devices."

Featured Zappos Feedback

"First of all, it's just plain unfair that Zappos only ships to US and Canada, because after testing the website for a week I've got a strong desire to become a real customer. I've got a feeling that it's a good place where people really matter. The idea to add humor into the interaction with the customer was a risky one, but it works. And thanks to that the website has its own unique 'face' - a face with a friendly smile."

KEY QUESTION: Which Specialty E-Tailer Do You Trust The Most For Your Holiday Shopping?

