

# Transactional Website

<http://www.dabs.com>

dabs@com

## Introduction

Dabs is a company who sell a wide range of electronics (ie, From floppy disks, to multimedia PCs), they usually buy in bulk, this passes savings onto the customer. Dabs was started, in 1987 by David Atherton, an entrepreneur, and a writer, Bruce Smith.

The name "dabs" was chosen as it was the initials of its founders names (**D**avid **A**nd **B**ruce'**S**)



*Illustration 1: The Dabs trading office in Westhoughton, Bolton*

Prior to the website, dabs was a mail order only service, known as Dabs Direct. David sold Dabs on 28/04/06 to British Telecom.

## A Description of the Site

The Dabs site is very easily accessible, on the NEXT PAGE, I have drawn a structure chart. The people who designed the site had ease of searching in mind as there are four different ways to find items on dabs.

The screenshot shows the Dabs.com website interface. The browser window title is "dabs.com - PC Hardware, Components, Software, Digital Cameras, MP3 Players - Mozilla Firefox". The address bar shows "http://www.dabs.com/". The website header includes the Dabs logo, navigation tabs (home, shop by brand, components & storage, computers, electronics, networking & communication, peripherals, software & books, clearance corner, mobile phone, NEW dabs+tv), a search bar, and a "quicklinx" button. A "Why Gamble?" banner for Toshiba is featured, along with a "featured product" section for a Fujitsu Siemens laptop. A "HOT DEALS" section is also visible. Callouts provide the following descriptions:

- Category selection.** These are on every page and allow people to start a new search at any time (pointing to the left-hand navigation menu).
- Search box, once again, on every page to easily start a new search.** (pointing to the search bar).
- The featured product of the week, this tries to get people interested in buying something they weren't originally looking for** (pointing to the Toshiba laptop advertisement).
- Dabs "quicklinx" which allows one to quickly find an item you looked at earlier.** (pointing to the quicklinx button).

Illustration 2: The Dabs site on openSUSE Linux 10.2, Firefox 2.0.0.2pre

It is also worth noting that the web interface adapts to fill the browser's window, this makes the web site easier to navigate, as the whole of the screen is in use.

Here is the site map:

The screenshot shows a website Sitemap page with a blue header and several sections of links. The sections are: Main Sections, Product Categories, My Account, Help, and Learn More. Each section contains a list of underlined links.

**Sitemap**

**Main Sections**

- [About Us](#)
- [Accessibility](#)
- [Basket](#)
- [Business Terms](#)
- [Buying for Business](#)
- [Delivery Charges](#)
- [Feedback](#)
- [Help](#)
- [Home Page](#)
- [Learn More](#)
- [My Account](#)
- [Promotions](#)
- [Privacy Policy](#)
- [Shop by Brand](#)
- [Wishlist](#)

**Product Categories**

- [Components & Storage](#)
- [Computers](#)
- [Electronics](#)
- [Networking & Communications](#)
- [Peripherals](#)
- [Software & Books](#)
- [Mobile Phones](#)
- [Clearance Corner](#)

**My Account**

- [Change Login Details](#)
- [Edit Contact Details](#)
- [Manage Address Book](#)
- [Manage Payment Methods](#)
- [View Orders and Returns](#)
- [Edit Communication Preferences](#)
- [View and Spend Vouchers](#)

**Help**

- [New To Dabs](#)
- [Managing Your Account](#)
- [Managing Your Order](#)
- [Returns & Refunds](#)
- [Products](#)
- [Policies](#)

**Learn More**

- [Dabs brands and Services](#)
- [Components and Storage](#)
- [Electronics](#)
- [Computers](#)
- [Networking and Communication](#)
- [Peripherals](#)
- [Software and Books](#)

On every page you can see your basket and you can order and pay at any time.

To view all the products on the web page, the user must scroll, this can be a little inconvenient, but in this instance, there is no other option, the user has the abilities to change how many results are displayed on each page.

The site uses only one frame, this means that there is no chance of losing the navigation utilities.

The search utility is extremely powerful and can find the type of items I was searching for. For instance, I searched "agp nvidia 256" and what was shown was a graphics card, that has an AGP interface, an Nvidia Chipset and 256MB of video RAM



Illustration 3: The perfect search result shown on Windows 2003 Server R2, Firefox 1.5.0.9

The layout is the same on every page, this makes the site look neat and tidy, and makes finding what you want a lot more simple. The whole site has been designed to work on different web browsers and on various operating systems:

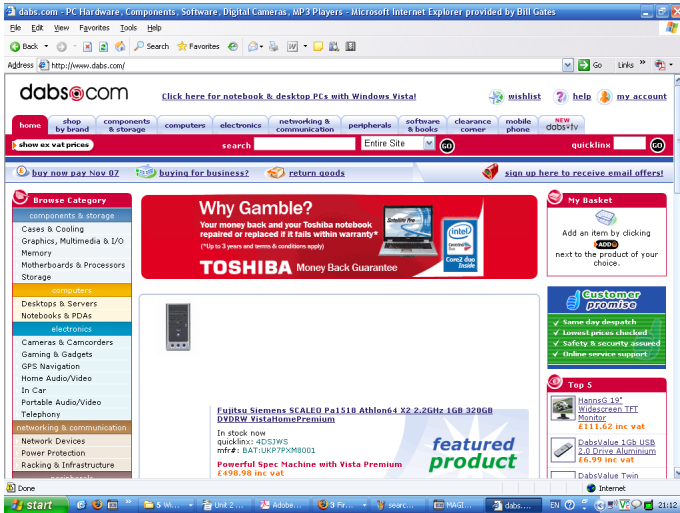


Illustration 4: Microsoft Internet Explorer 6 on Windows 2003 Server R2

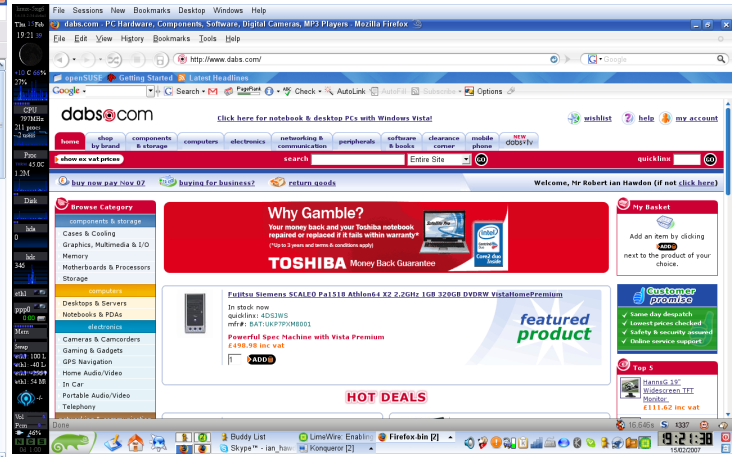


Illustration 5: Mozilla Firefox 2.0.0.2pre on openSUSE Linux 10.2

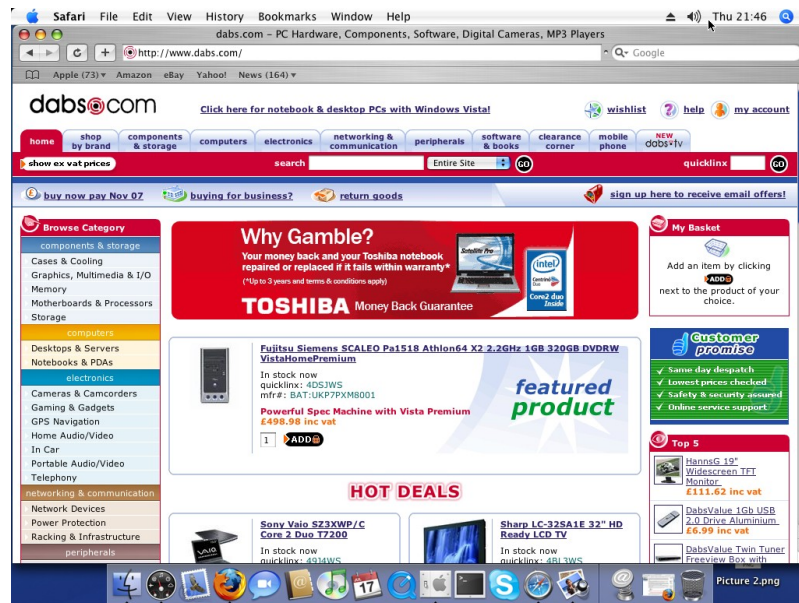


Illustration 6: Safari 2.0.3 on MacOS X Tiger (10.4.6)

As you can see, MSIE 6 has a bit of trouble with the layout on the featured products, but the site still functions.

## What Dabs Sells

Dabs sell many electrical products, ranging from MP3 players, to PCs. But dabs biggest market is selling parts for PCs for example, graphics cards.



When "electronics" is clicked, you are invited to refine the search, where you can search for "cameras and camcorders", "gaming and gadgets", "GPS navigation", "home audio/video", "in car", "portable audio/video" and "telephony"

Dabs's way of searching lets the end user, find what they want easily, just as the products they have to offer are aimed at various people, (from teenagers to adults, male and female), their interface is designed for different people too.

When the result has been refined to "portable audio/video", 7 results are shown, and another box saying that the search must be refined even more to get a sensible amount of *relevant* results.

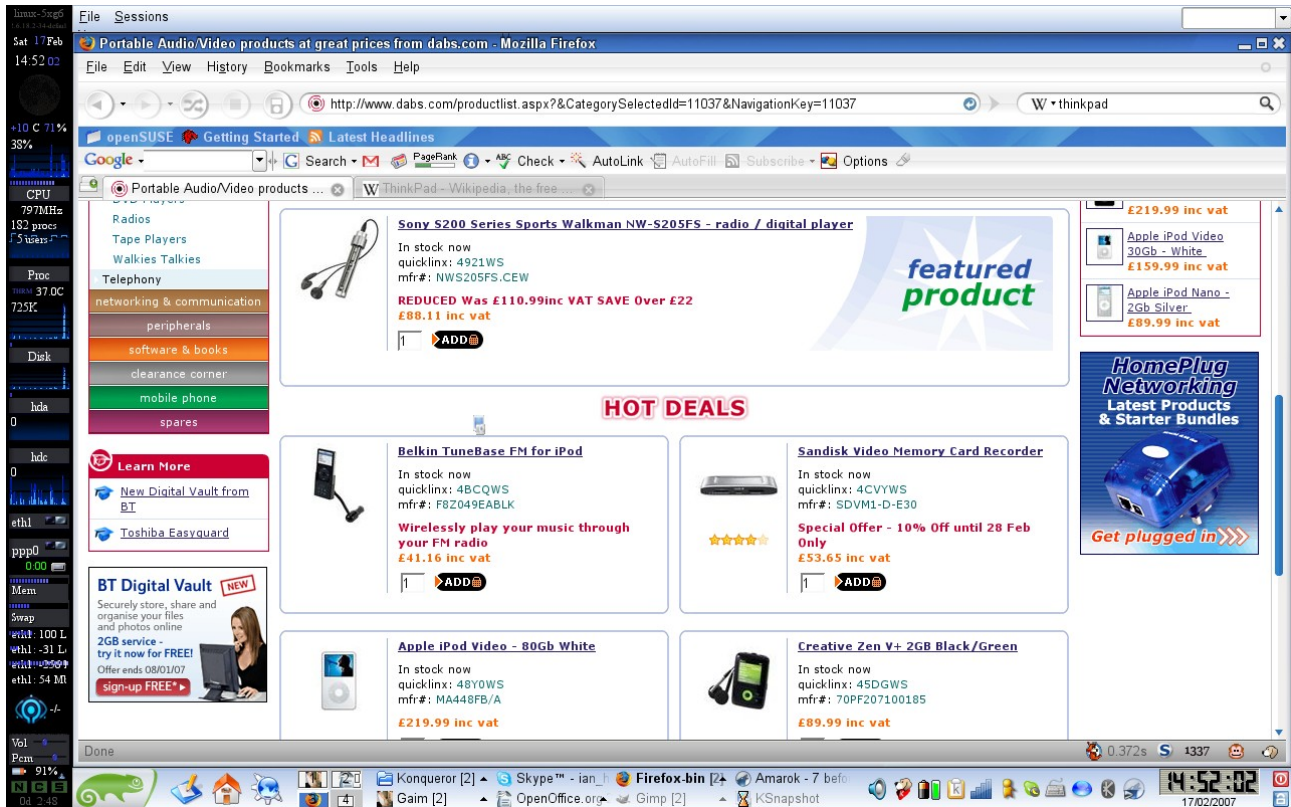


Illustration 7: The results for "portable audio/video"

When refined to "Digital Audio/Video Players (MP3/MP4)", a few results are shown, there is the "featured product", 4 "hot deals" and then we get on to the results, they are displayed 10 to a page, this can be changed to 20 or 50, also the results can be filtered, to show the following:

- Popularity
- Alphabetical (asc)
- Alphabetical (desc)
- price (asc)
- price (desc)
- Latest Products
- Customer Rating

COMPARE	product description	in stock	inc vat	qty
<input type="checkbox"/>	DabsValue 1GB MP3 Player - Blue quicklinx: 4C7HWS   mfr#: MP014	In stock now	£19.98	<input type="checkbox"/> >ADD
<input type="checkbox"/>	DabsValue 1GB MP3 Player - Pink quicklinx: 4C7HWS   mfr#: MP024	In stock now	£19.98	<input type="checkbox"/> >ADD
<input type="checkbox"/>	Canyon 1 GB MP3 player with FM tuner quicklinx: 4F0DWS   mfr#: CN-MP4DF	Due in 3-4 days	£22.98	<input type="checkbox"/> >ADD
<input type="checkbox"/>	Sandisk Sansa M240 - 1GB quicklinx: 4B56WS   mfr#: SDMX3-1024-E18	None in stock	£26.33	<input type="checkbox"/> >ADD
<input type="checkbox"/>	Samsung YP-U2RXB 512MB with FM Tuner quicklinx: 4C7HWS   mfr#: YP-U2RXB	On order, delivery delayed	£31.39	<input type="checkbox"/> >ADD
<input type="checkbox"/>	DabsValue 2GB MP3 Player - Blue quicklinx: 4C7HWS   mfr#: MP015	In stock now	£34.99	<input type="checkbox"/> >ADD
<input type="checkbox"/>	Sandisk Sansa C240 - 1Gb quicklinx: 4B5CWS   mfr#: SDMX7-1024-E70	None in stock	£35.27	<input type="checkbox"/> >ADD
<input type="checkbox"/>	Sandisk Sansa c140 - digital player / voice recorder - 1GB quicklinx: 479TWS   mfr#: SDMX5-1024-E70	None in stock	£35.46	<input type="checkbox"/> >ADD
<input type="checkbox"/>	Creative Zen Nano Plus 1GB - Black quicklinx: 439KWS   mfr#: 70PF163300084	Due in 3-4 days	£38.04	<input type="checkbox"/> >ADD

Illustration 8: The results are rearranged to suite the customers needs

This lets the user find what they want, more easily, for instance, if the person wanted something for a low price, they can select "price (asc)" and their results would be reordered.

## Information about the products

Dabs describes all of its products in great detail, when an item is clicked, dabs tells you the overview on each product, a technical specification and other customers reviews

**Product Information** email a friend add to wishlist

**Creative Zen Vision W**

In stock now

customer rating **★★★★★** [review this product](#)

quicklink: 499DWS  
mfr#: 70PFZ01000010

£214.00 inc vat

**ADD TO BASKET**

**Accessories** **Find Similar**

**description** **specification** **customer reviews**

Creative's Zen Vision W is the widescreen multimedia MP3 player for movies, music and photos. Its high-gloss, scratch-resistant 16:9 display with adjustment makes all content fit the entire screen, and its large hard disk stores up to 120 hours of movies, 15000 songs or many thousands of photos. The player has a Compact Flash slot for the transfer of stills from digital cameras, and it supports popular movie and audio formats as well as Album Art and customized wallpapers. Additional features include a built-in FM radio, a microphone for live recording, and connectivity to external TVs and speakers.

Illustration 9: Overview Description

Feature	Value
Type	Digital Video Players
<b>Battery</b>	
Battery Enclosure Type	Internal
Included Qty	1
Rechargeable Battery	Rechargeable
Required Qty	1
Technology	Lithium Ion
<b>Digital Audio</b>	
Audio Output (JK)	Built-in speaker
Features	Equalizer
Microphone (JK)	Built-in microphone
Playback Modes	Random play Repeat all Resume play
Response Bandwidth	20 - 20000 Hz
Signal-To-Noise Ratio	96 dB
Supported Audio Formats	Audible MP3 Protected WMA (DRM) WAV WMA
<b>Digital Multimedia Devices</b>	
Device Type	Digital AV player
Features	FM recording Organizer
Key Features	Digital audio player Digital photo viewer Digital video player External HDD function FM tuner Memory card reader Voice recorder
PC Interfaces	Hi-Speed USB NTSC PAL
TV Standards Supported	

Illustration 10: Technical Specification

**awesome**  
Reviewed by Anonymous. Review Posted 29/12/2006

this thing is brilliant, screen is sharp and very crisp and crystal clear.

its easy to use, very simple, transferring movies etc is easy, simple and supriizing quick.

the only thing not so great is the sound quality on the speaker, its a bit fuzzy, but with headphones it sounds perfect. and the only thing it lacks in video recording (it does sound recording)

all in all 5/5, though i think its a bit overpriced.

Overall ★★★★★ Ease of use ★★★★★ Value for money ★★★★★

[Copy to Clipboard](#)

[Print](#)

[Quit](#)

Illustration 11: The Reviews

Before anything can be bought, the customer must be registered to Dabs.com, if he is, he can log in with his email address and password. If this is the first time someone has used dabs, they have the option of starting a home, or a business account

**Login**

Please log in to your dabs.com account by entering your email address and password below.

**Existing Customers** **or** **New Customers**

Shopped with us before? Simply log in below to buy online, check your order status or perform general maintenance of your account.

Email

Password

**SIGN IN**

[Forgotten your password?](#)

Shopping with us for the first time? Opening an account is easy. Please start by telling us what type of customer you are...

**Home user**

**Business User**

Illustration 12: Account type or use an old account

When the user selects "Home user", they get a page with the usual please fill in your contact details, once you have created your account, the user then

goes to their account settings and puts in their payment details

Add your payment details below by completing the form, then click 'update payment details'. The new payment details will be automatically added. SAVE PAYMENT DETAILS

**\* These fields must be completed**

\* Reference   
(a name that will help you recognise the individual cards that you use)

\* Card holder name

\* Card type

\* Card number

Issue number   
(This is for UK Maestro cards)

Card start date Month  Year

\* Card expiry date Month  Year

\* Signature digits   
On the back of your credit/debit card, you will see some numbers printed within the strip where you signed your card. These are known as 'signature digits', sometimes referred to by the credit card industry as 'CVV2'. Depending on your card type, there are between three and ten digits. We only require the last three.

\* Make default  yes  no

BACK TO PAYMENT MAINTENANCE SAVE PAYMENT DETAILS

Illustration 13: The user enters his card details

Of course, any good site will make sure that your details are not able to be viewed by anyone else, and dabs is no exception. Dabs uses 128bit encryption on their SSL portion of their website, this means the **only** you and their server can understand what information you have typed onto their web page.



Illustration 14: All secure sites will allow you to verify their identity

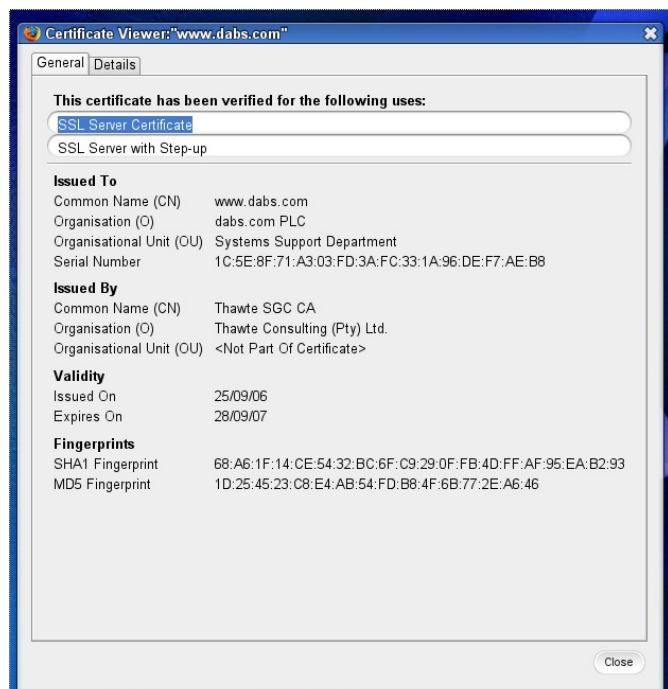


Illustration 15: The secure site has a digital certificate

Most website only secure the pages they need, this is to make the website load faster as it is not needing to be decoded on every page you click on. On Microsoft Internet Explorer, when a secure website is about to be accessed, the



used it informed by this dialogue box:



Illustration 16: Microsoft Internet Explorer 6 "Security Alert"

Also, when the user is about to leave a secure web page, another information box



Illustration 17: The page is now unsecured

appears to tell them this:

Other web browsers can tell you if you are on a secure site too, for instance, in Firefox, when a SSL webpage is accessed, the URL bar changes colour (in this example, green)

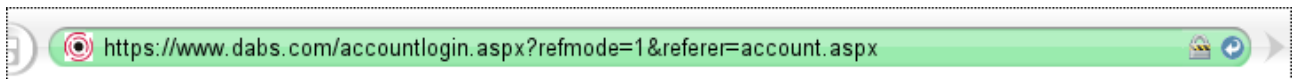


Illustration 19: A secure page on Firefox 2.0.0.2pre

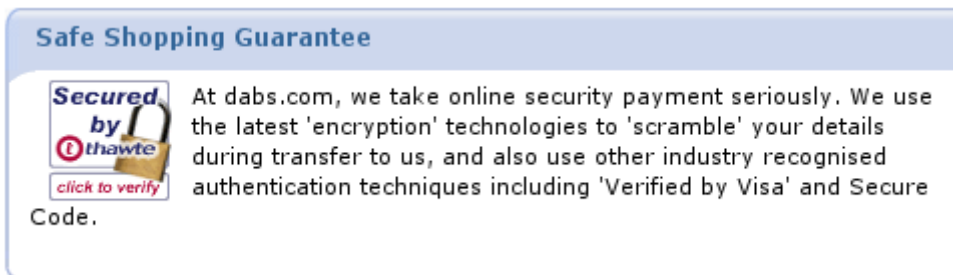


Illustration 20: Although the site claims to be secure, the only true way to check is to look for the "https" in the address bar

The last thing to look for to tell you that the site is secure is the letter "S" is after the "http" in the address bar.



Illustration 21: The https protocol is used

The Technology used to encrypt pages is called SSL, or Secure Socket Layer, it is an encryption system involving public and private keys, the resulting page is very difficult to crack.

Dabs only accepts Credit or Debit cards as a form of payment, so it relies on the SSL system.

## Ordering

Ordering on dabs is very simple, the first thing is to search for an item, for this I am going to look for an MP3 player with 512mb of memory

The thing to do next is to read the description, and specifications, and once you are happy, click the "add" button.

Once you have clicked add, the item appears in your virtual shopping basket, from here, the customer can either delete the item(s) or go to the checkout, the total price is also shown. I am now going to add another item, a 1Gb stick of DDR RAM

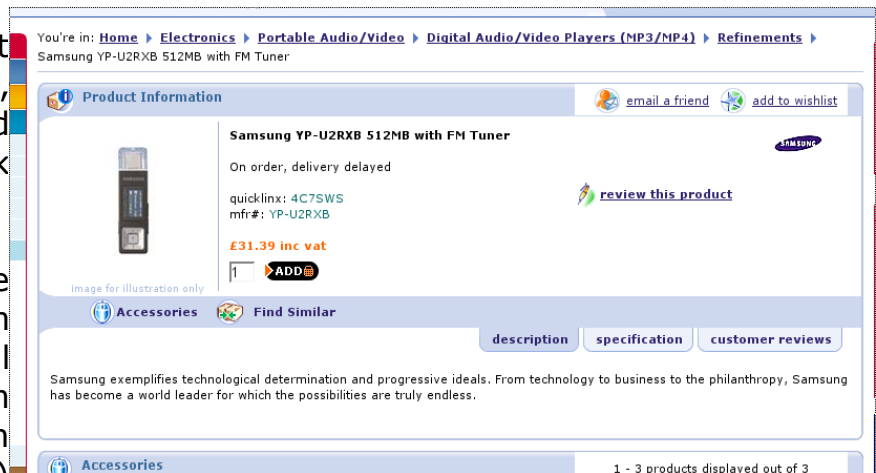


Illustration 22: The selected item

When checkout is clicked, the customer is shown a screen where they can review what they are about to buy and change if they want, also they can change where they want the items to be sent and how to pay.

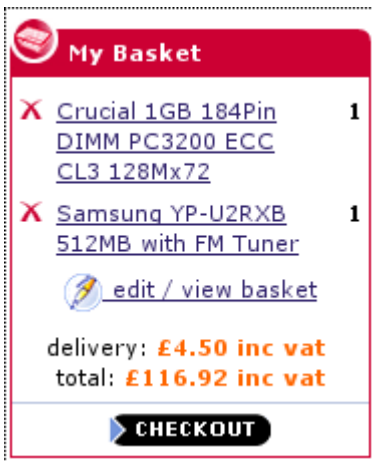


Illustration 23: The current basket

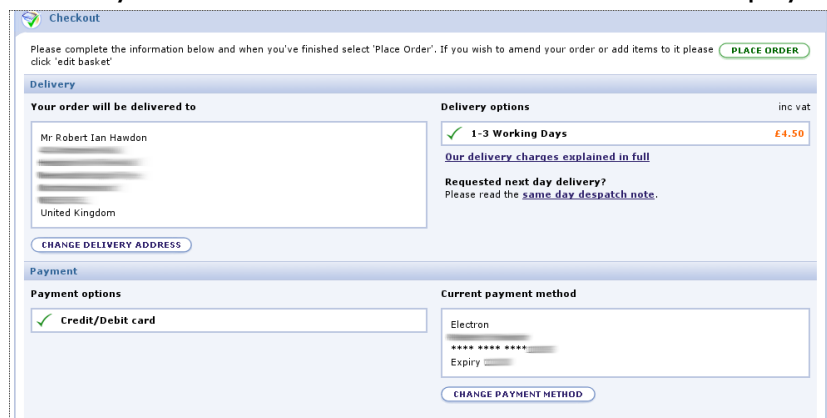
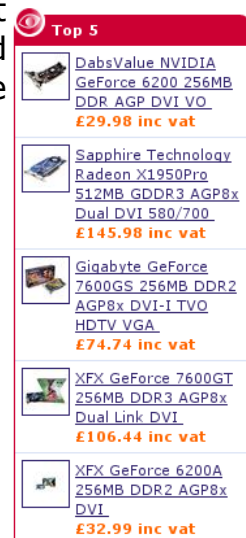


Illustration 24: The Dabs Checkout

## Analysing searches and sale information

Dabs seems to analyse previous searches and what other people have bought

This is a great idea as it will let people return to a product the previously looked at, and also see what is the best product from a particular category is. All this information would be saved in a database and will allow the customer to see what's hot and what's not.



## Cookies

Dabs, like many other sites, use cookies, cookies are used to identify a person when the revisit a website. A cookie is a text file that is downloaded to their home folder and each time that website is visited, the browser looks for the text file, and can be used to automatically log in.

The cookie **could** (but not necessarily) be a tracking cookie, this could be considered spyware. What this means, is that dabs could use this cookie to see what other sites have been accessed and if they have products that are also sold by dabs, then they may feature the same product on their home page.

## Advertising

On the main website, dabs use very few adverts, and each advert is, relevant to dabs.



Illustration 25: A relevant BT Advert

For example, there are a few BT adverts, these are usually advertising phones or broadband. The reason most, if not all, of the adverts on the dabs page are for BT are because, BT own dabs.


Dabs also advertises products on its home page, this allows people to see a product that they, otherwise, would not usually buy.

If you have ever bought something from dabs and have specified the option in your account, dabs will send you a catalogue each month with the latest items and what's hot etc.



Illustration 26: An advert for laptops with Vista

## Special Offers

Dabs has a various selection of special offers, usually they are featured in an advert (like above), dabs also has a . Here the customer can see all the items dabs are trying to get rid of. They have the usual choice of categories, that can be rounded down to find exactly what you want. Dabs do the usual trick of making things look cheaper, by reducing things by a penny or a pound. Eg. £10 becomes £9.99

Customer Service
<b>Customer service statistics.</b>
<b>Previous 24 hours:</b> Average wait time for chats: 5 seconds Average email response time: 8 hours 36 minutes (based on working hours)
<b>Previous 28 days:</b> Average wait time for chats: 29 seconds Average email response time: 12 hours 42 minutes (based on working hours)
<b>Last updated:</b> 02/03/2007 09:30

Illustration 27: Dabs customer support status

## Contacting Dabs

Dabs lets customers contact them, either by email, or via live chat. The chat is not available 24/7, but when it is up, it enables the customer to talk to a dabs representative in an IM chat style.

Dabs lets their customers know the status of the technical support team.  
Ease of interaction with the website

## Ease of interaction with the website

Any website should be easy to navigate, or people will move away, and use another website to buy something. Dab's use of navigation, lets people easily find what they want.

Some websites are hard to navigate, for instance, I came across a site called stupid.com, an American site that sells random and useless items. The website is horrible to navigate, and the colour scheme and layout look like that were created by a child.



Illustration 28: Stupid.com's awful site layout

The purpose of the dabs site is to let people look for something they want, see what others think before parting with their money. The site does this well and keeps the customer in mind. The site is easy to use. The background colour is plain white, this is good as it looks professional and white seems to be the colour fashion at the moment. There is no animation, this is a good thing as it doesn't distract the attention of the customer. The page is updated virtually everyday.

I believe that dabs has done a really good job on making a website that is accessible to all, the only criticism I can find is that the text can't be enlarged, but most web browsers can do this for people.

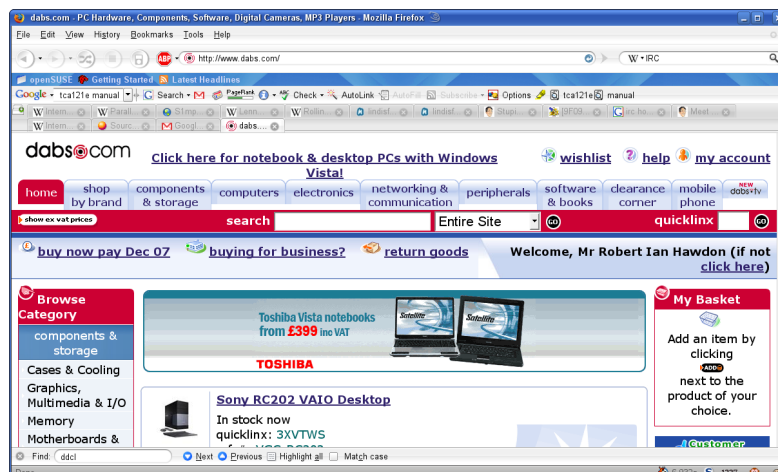


Illustration 29: The dabs site can be enlarged by most web browsers