

Back Office Processes

A Back office process is something which makes sure that all business transactions are carried out as effortlessly and competently as possible

In this section, I shall examine:

- The events before a transaction online happens
- The events when the transaction happens
- How the information is passed through different departments

I shall also take a look at the following information processing systems:

- Maintenance of the virtual shopping basket
- Real-time tracking of the customers' actions
- Payment processing - checkout
- Despatch and delivery
- Stock control
- Identification and authentication routines

Maintenance of the virtual shopping basket

A shopping basket, is powered by a database that integrates with the website by a PHP (PHP: Hypertext Preprocessor) script. The database combined with the PHP allows the user to move from page to page without losing what is in your basket.

There could be many different databases used to make the dabs ordering system, this includes:

- One for the list of accounts
- One for the list of products
- One for the list of prices, decryption and reviews
- One dynamically created to link the three together to form a basket

When an item added to the users basket, then the item should be automatically reserved so there is no confusion at the checkout, or even in the packing department when the requested item is not in stock. If the system isn't capable of doing that, then the next best thing is to email the customer if the product is out of stock and could also email the customer if the item comes back into stock. The virtual basket should also be able to save the basket if the user closes the browser or disappears or some other reason, and resume shopping when they come back.

At the checkout, any good site should be able to deduct money from the final balance by inserting a coupon number. This will allow the customer to benefit from a discount, the basket program **must** be able to deduct the right value from the coupon.

By using cookies, the customer doesn't even have to log on each time he or she visits the website as the site should be able to see your cookie and remember who you are.

Real-time tracking of the customers' actions

Dabs will only allow the customer to buy anything, if they have an account and are signed in. This means that managing baskets for long lengths of time are easier. It is also easier to log people actions

when they are logged in, rather than using other methods like, checking IP addresses as peoples IP addresses can change (depending with Internet Service Provider (ISP) they are with).

Dabs may have some traffic monitoring software on their website, this lets them know how many hits they have had on the website, and what kind of people use the site:

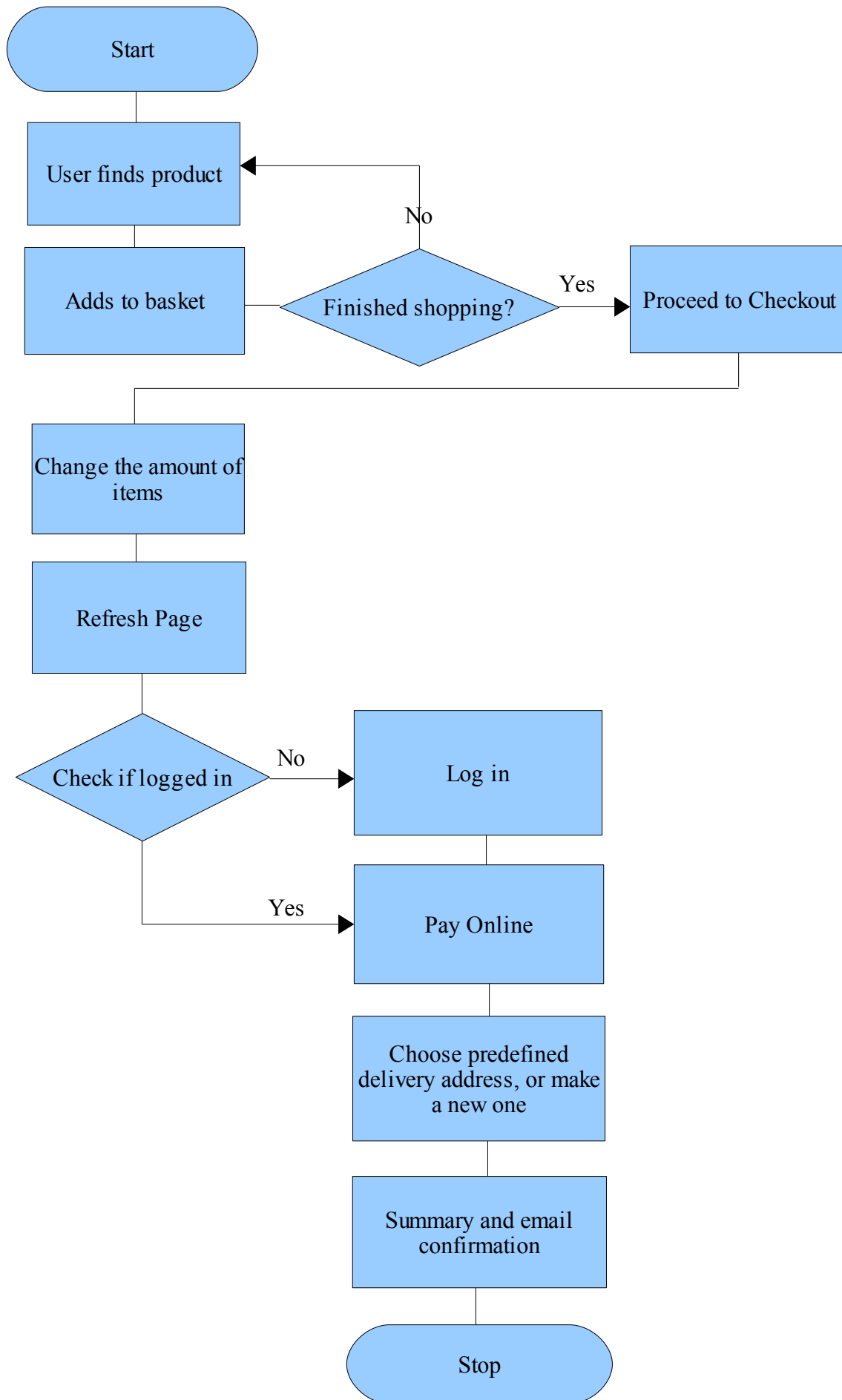
- Operating System: Windows or Mac or Linux users
- Browser: Internet Explorer or Safari or Firefox
- Java
- Flash
- Unique Visits

Some people think that measures like that could be classed as spy ware, but in reality it is very difficult to find a specific person from the data recorded from these traffic monitoring programs.

The data from these programs will though, allow the webmasters to know how the website pages should be designed, and how many people are accessing the site.

How the customer makes an online purchase

The starts by opening their browser and points it to www.dabs.com then searches for the product they are looking for, when they find it, they will add it to their online basket, along with other products, when they are finished, they go to the online checkout and pay for their products. After that, they no longer have to worry about their order, Dabs's database does the rest of the work:



Payment processing – checkout

To pay on dabs, you must have your own account already set up, or you could create one when you go to the checkout. You will be asked for your card details when you sign up.

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 1: The user MUST enter their card details on Dabs before buying anything

All the personal data will be sent via a secure SSL connection, this means that no-one else can hijack their data and steal their bank details.

Despatch and delivery

Dabs allow you to choose where you want the items delivered. The addresses are set up before going to the checkout by adding them to the “address book”. They will be available to chose from when purchasing.

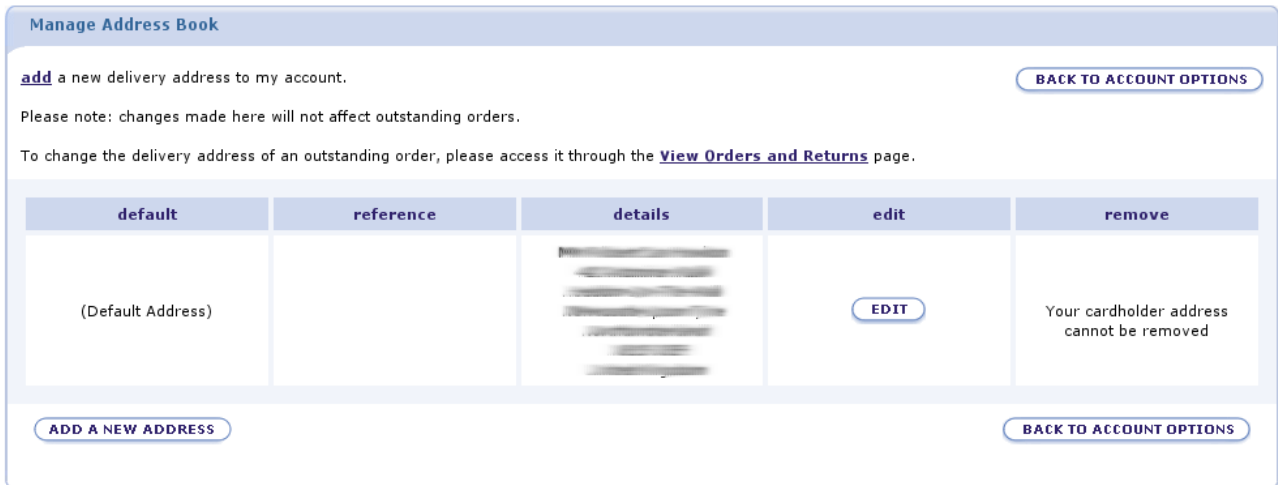
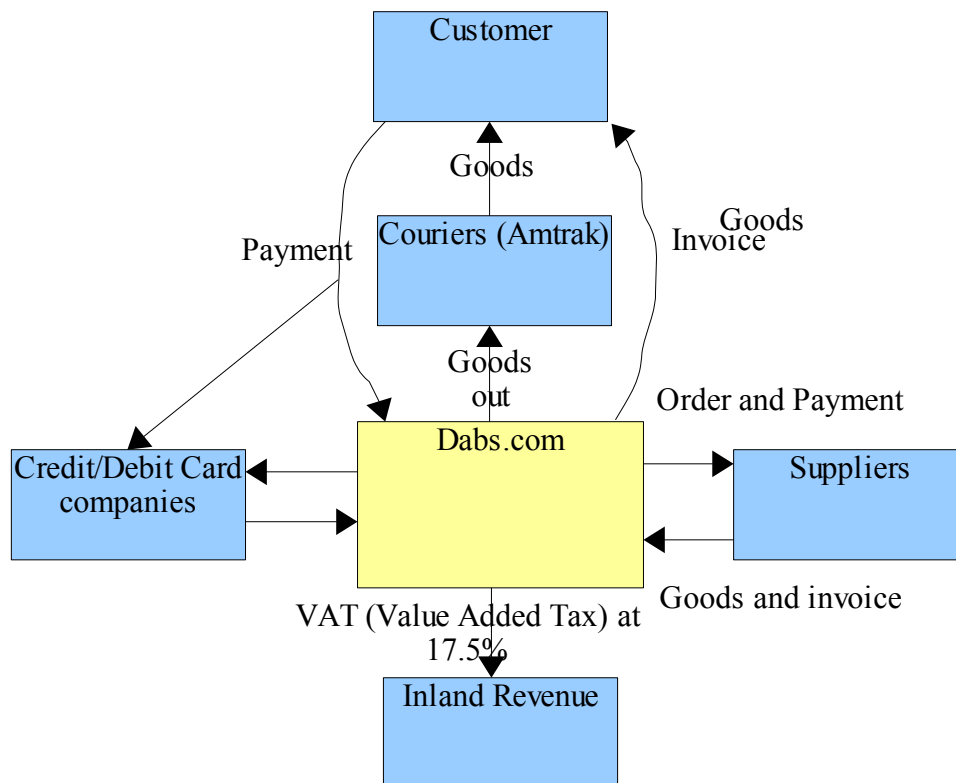


Illustration 2: Addresses can be added or taken away

This allows people to send stuff to other people directly, without having to receive the packages first. This can save on postage if you are buying something for a friend or as a gift.

For an item to be bought successfully, there must be cooperation with other. This diagram shows how big companies must work with each other.



The goods are delivered to the customer by a courier and the invoice is either sent with the goods or sent on at a later date. Dabs orders with their suppliers and have to pay for the goods. The supplier will deliver the goods with an invoice. Dabs must pay tax to the Inland Revenue (if there is VAT on the products).

Stock control

Dabs must make sure its stock doesn't go AWOL, it could have disastrous effect if it happened, for instance, the prices on items could dramatically increase. Dabs use a database to keep track of what is and what is not in stock. This system should be integrated with the ordering system, this would allow the customer to be notified if the selected product is out of stock and lets them choose something else before it gets to the packaging department.

If the product is going to be soon out of stock, or is, the system should be able to re order so that it will be available at a later date.

How much stock should Dabs order?

There are a few things Dabs have to take into consideration before buying stock:

- **The price on storing** – Dabs would have to find place to store its stock, although their depot is rather large, they may need more space to store all their items. To rent or buy another large storing facility is rather expensive.
- **The price of buying stock** – Dabs also needs to pay for the items before they are sold, they would probably buy on credit.
- **The Waste** – With high levels of stock, there is obviously going to be a lesser demand on a particular item, this means that there will be stock that is not going to sell and is going to sit in storage for along time, some of it will decay (batteries for example), and some old stock will never shift (5¼" floppies springs to mind)

Although it is also a bad thing if they order too little:

- **More time consuming** – If things are ordered in smaller amounts it take more time combined to received the items.
- **Less is more** – Suppliers usually give people a discount for the more units bought, ie. The price of each unit could cost \$20 (most things are bought in USD) but if the company wanted to buy 50 units then the supplier could sell each unit at \$18 and if the company wanted 50000 units then price could be as little as \$5 or even less per unit.
- **Could easily run out of stock** – Dabs's customers would be very unhappy if the items they wanted were always out of stock, this would mean Dabs would get a bad reputation, and the price of items would rise

Dabs must check stock regularly, stock should automatically be re ordered when it is at a dangerously low level.

Just-In-Time (JIT) approach

Some companies use a Just In Time approach to ordering stock, this approach means that dabs can stock very few items. It's advantage is when there is no room to store items, but it can be dangerous too, the company **must** rely on other companies to get the stock to the right place in time, or the there could be many delays in customers receiving their products, in my knowledge, dabs does **not** do this.

Identification and authentication routines

Dabs require you to log into their system before you can buy anything, this lets Dabs contact the user to tell them about special offers, and email forgotten Passwords and status on shipping. They also let the user enter their mobile phone number and they SMS you when they dispatch the product to let you know it is on its way.

This system also means you don't have to keep re entering your details, this means that you have less chance mistyping your details and not paying for your item.