

20.1: Introduction

Let's look at a real-world example to help explain what conversion optimisation is. Think of a shoe store. When laying out the store, a lot of care has been taken in determining where to place displays, mirrors, chairs and the till. However, there is no way of easily determining if the current layout is the best option.

For example, the till may be at the front of the store. It may be worth testing to see if moving the till to the middle of the store affects sales. This would require tracking sales over a period of time with the till in the front of the store, then shutting down for a few days while the store is reorganised, and then tracking sales with the new layout, all a little impractical.

However, if we have an online store, we can just show slightly, or very, different versions of web pages to visitors, and track how different versions affect sales. We don't need to shut down our website to create new versions, and we can watch the real-time results emerge as hundreds of customers pass through the store. The cycle of tweaking and testing websites in this way is called conversion optimisation. This chapter will take you through the steps in a conversion optimisation process, helping you understand how to make things work better.

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