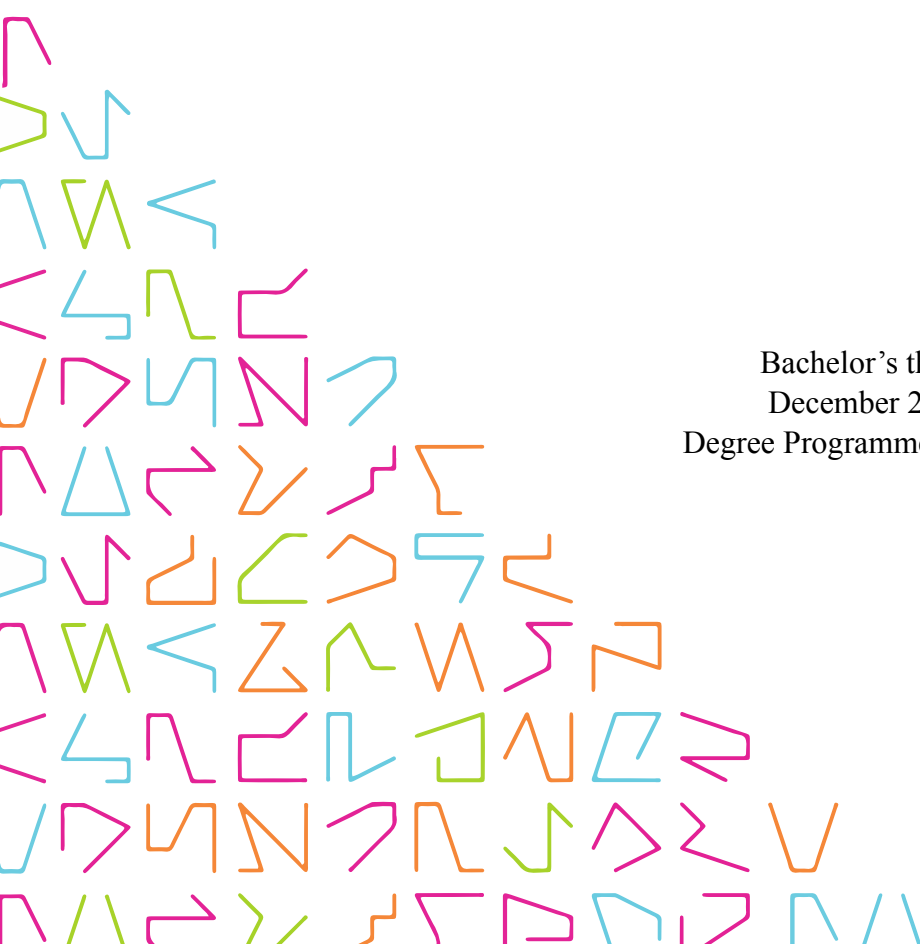


# SETTING UP AN ONLINE STORE FOR SELLING ART PRINTS

Yee Feng Giam

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**ABSTRACT**

Tampereen ammattikorkeakoulu  
Tampere University of Applied Sciences  
Degree Programme in Media  
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In the era of crowdsourcing and online entrepreneurship, there is an abundance of opportunities for makers such as artists, illustrators and designers to obtain funding for creative projects, as well as to sustain income through selling artworks online. However, as with most issues concerning the Internet and its extensiveness, it requires skill and time to sieve through oversaturated information to find the right tools for launching a creative business online.

Therefore, this thesis was initiated to gather information on existing platforms and marketplaces for makers like myself who wish to sell prints of our own artworks, to analyse their functionalities through a user experience perspective, and to prepare a guide on setting up an online storefront.

The study was constructed with information collected from online and offline reading materials about usability and user experience design for e-commerce platforms. Various existing platforms relevant to selling artworks online were identified, and a comparative analysis including trial setups was conducted.

The final part of the thesis containing documented process of setting up the online store—Foodman by Chrystal—concludes with the observation that substantial information and straightforward guidelines are crucial in helping makers find the best option to pursue online entrepreneurship in their field of interest.

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Key words: e-commerce, online store, user experience, art prints

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## ABBREVIATIONS AND TERMS

e-commerce	activities of buying, selling and transferring funds via electronic devices and the Internet.
USD	U.S. dollars (currency)
EUR	Euro (currency)
brick-and-mortar	physical presence; commonly used to describe businesses or organisations that operate in a building
crowdfunding	a method of obtaining fund through
POD	product-on-demand; service offered by companies to print designs onto products such as canvases, t-shirts, mugs, etc.
app	digital application
user conversion	process of converting users into buyers
SSL	Secure Sockets Layer;
dropshipping	direct delivery of products from the manufacturer to the customer with no physical involvement from the seller.
UI	user interface
UX	user experience
SEO	search engine optimisation
WYSIWYG	what you see is what you get; a computing term for a platform attribute that projects what is viewed the screen into final outcome in the exact form
HTTPS	Hyper Text Transfer Protocol Secure; a website attribute indicates secure data transfer on the computer network
admin panel	interface to manage and perform administration tasks
onboarding	the process of new product or service familiarisation
URL	Uniform Resource Locator; also known as a web address

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The modern-day artist is equipped with an abundance of technological tools to sustain oneself and succeed career-wise in the e-commerce economy, which continues to experience rapid growth and influence the lifestyle of many. Selling artwork online is a popular means of income for professional artists and hobbyists, yet the challenge remains to discover the right tools and to utilise them effectively in one's favour. Therefore, this thesis aims to provide a closer look into e-commerce platforms for selling art and its relevance to user experience design for aspiring art entrepreneurs to start their online store based on the documented findings.

I have been drawing and making illustrations for several years, but it is only until recently that I began to develop a signature style of my own and started a collection of artworks that gained some audience on social media. There were requests from interested followers to purchase prints of my artwork, which led to the idea of creating an online store for selling art prints. However, the huge amount of information regarding options and methods to build an online store, especially for art prints, required further analysing to discover the right platform that suits my budget and business goals.

In this thesis, I researched the definitions of e-commerce and its relation to the art market by exploring the roles of online galleries and auction houses, e-commerce marketplaces and crowdfunding platforms. Good practices of usability in the context of user experience design for e-commerce and customer-focused marketing methods are important aspects to ensure a thriving online store. However, the thesis research is focused on usability instead, due to its priority as an influential factor in the setup process.

Based on the types of online platforms introduced in the thesis—marketplace, POD and website builder—I examined the prices, features and usability of selected platforms and drew comparisons between them to find the suitable option, which was then implemented as the thesis research project where I documented the process of setting up my online store using Big Cartel.

## **2. E-COMMERCE AND ART**

E-commerce is a broad term defining all the activities of buying and selling, as well as managing monetary funds and assets through the use of electronic devices and the Internet (Khurana 2017). It is a product of technology advancement and has become a necessity to many in the modern society for efficiency and convenience. The online economy is rapidly growing, as statistics revealed that global online retail sales have reached more than 1 trillion USD in 2016 and will continue increasing in future (Statsita 2017). It is possible to sell almost anything online without investing in a physical store and reach to customers worldwide; whereas consumers have the opportunity to purchase goods and services anywhere, anytime.

### **2.1. Online art galleries and auctions**

In the past years, the art market has seen growth in its online sales despite the given general impression that obtaining art collections from artists via the Internet is impossible (PYMNTS, 2017). Findings from a recent research indicate that art sales have experienced a growth rate corresponding to the luxury item retail industry online and numbers of total market value are expected to be higher in reality, as the collected data are focused only on major online platforms and published sales figures (Cain & Kaplan 2016.)

The emergence of buyers receptive towards purchasing original art online correlates to the shift in practices of art galleries and auction houses. Many online art galleries function similarly to a conventional art gallery where they provide services in preparing artwork to be merchandised, promoting to target audience and shipping to buyers on behalf of the artists. Compared to its brick-and-mortar counterparts, online art galleries gather targeted buyers to their website by digital means—utilising online tools to direct traffic from search engines, social media and blog sites towards their websites. They charge commission based on several factors such as the extent of its curation and offered service, gallery reputation and clientele list. The supply of online art galleries on

the Internet is huge, therefore it is in the responsibility of artists to consider these aspects in deciding which one works best for them (The Abundant Artist 2017.)

Aside from online art galleries, the efforts of making art more accessible to potential collectors are present in well-renowned auction houses—Christie’s and Sotheby’s—both ranked respectively as the first and second best among leading online platforms for art sales in terms of usage and satisfaction. However, auctions performed online were regarded as mainly a method of obtaining more customers instead of revenue. This is a possible result of the existing hesitance in buyers to purchase higher-priced art, as it remains a challenge to conduct physical inspection. In contrast, online auctions have significant effects on the sales of art prints (Reyburn 2017.)

## **2.2. Online art marketplaces**

Online art marketplaces have begun to receive a remarkable boost in sales compared to previous years, as studies have shown that they gained more buyers than online auctions and have more popularity among young adults in which slightly more than half of them bought art via online marketplaces. Preference in buying art at fixed prices is a sign for online platforms to adjust to the market and few auction houses—Christie’s and Bukowski’s—have joined in this change by adding predetermined prices to some parts of their collection. (Cain & Kaplan 2016.)

On the other hand, the intense competition between online marketplaces has driven these platforms to diversify their services by including auctions, galleries and editorial contents. For example, Artsy collaborates with renowned art galleries, auctioneers and art fairs to provide extensive access to a wide variety of art and offers recommendation for beginners in the arts and collectibles market. One of its recent integration with leading auction houses places a representative of Artsy at the live auction to bid for users who participates through its platform (PYMNTS 2017.)



### 2.3. Crowdfunding platforms

Another popular trend to market art is to initiate fundraising campaigns through websites like Indiegogo and Kickstarter, which are commonly referred to as the pioneers of online crowdfunding platforms. The Oxford Dictionary (2017) defines crowdfunding as ‘the practice of funding a project or venture by raising money from a large number of people who each contribute a relatively small amount, typically via the Internet.’ (Oxford Dictionary, 2017). On such platforms, campaign creators publicise their project and fundraising goals where the online audience can pledge certain amount of money listed in categories by the creators and according to the amount they offered, these backers of the campaign are promised either tokens of appreciation, the product itself or other additional gifts in return.

The success of numerous crowdfunding campaigns have led to more artists to use the Internet as a channel to gather support from public, which can be rewarding when done right. However, the setbacks of such platforms come from the campaigns’ temporary, one-off nature – there is a time limitation to reach the targeted fund amount which dictates the success or failure of a campaign. Furthermore, the process of setting up and promoting a campaign requires time and effort, so artists are conditioned to create large-scale projects in order to guarantee enough income to continue making art (Spencer 2016.)

A more recent crowdfunding approach for artists is a social platform called Patreon, in which the creators are funded by people who pay for regular subscriptions to view and interact with the contents that creators upload on the website. It is inspired by the arts patronage system in the Renaissance era, thus making the subscribers ‘patrons’ of the creators they support. For artists seeking a more consistent flow of income, Patreon is a good alternative compared to the conventional crowdfunding platform (Roberston 2017.) Nonetheless, the challenge lies in maintaining total artistic freedom due to the necessity of creating content that satisfies patrons who provides the source of revenue. This strikes a strong resemblance to the classic idea of patronage where the customers with better fundings determines the direction of one’s artwork. (Spencer 2016.)

### **3. USER EXPERIENCE AND USABILITY IN E-COMMERCE**

Good businesses correlate with good user experience in the e-commerce industry. Creating an online store by means of a website or mobile app is the basic step to sell products online, yet it is hardly enough to retain users to continue purchasing due to the plethora of choices that competitors are offering in the market. In order to ensure a continuous stream of profit by user conversion and retention, one needs to look into creating positive experience by implementing useful practices of user experience design. (Tubik Studio 2017.)

User experience covers four aspects of a product: utility, usability, desirability and brand experience. Utility and usability are the foundations to user experience—the user determines the value of a product by its usefulness prior to using it, its effectiveness and efficiency to complete desired tasks, as well as the satisfaction it brings when used. Desirability and brand experience involves the feeling of a user in the overall perception of a product (Interaction Design Foundation 2017.)

#### **3.1. Usability as a key to good user experience**

Usability in e-commerce platforms plays a vital role in ensuring that online transactions are performed in an effective and efficient manner because it involves not just the user's time and effort, but money as well. Users are not able to buy an item if they are not able to locate it. They will also abandon using a platform when they encounter difficulties in using the platform, accomplishing what they intended to do, or even understanding the information it provides (Nielsen 2012.) Therefore, the implementation of practices such as having intuitive navigation and optimised search system, increases the usability for users to discover what they are looking for and make purchases. In addition to that, the ease-of-use should also apply shopping cart and checkout process as a key to good user experience design on an e-commerce platform.

### **3.2. Clear structure and navigation system**

Jakob Nielsen (2000) pointed out that it is common for users to scan through the contents of a new page and often they overlook the navigational aspects of the website. Therefore, irrelevant content and incomprehensible elements are often ignored, as users continue to pursue their goals of using the website (Nielsen 2000.) The aim of online stores is to gain sales through users completing their purchase on-site, yet when users fail to find the product they have in mind and may even experience frustration during the process due to badly constructed content and poor navigation, the purchase is unlikely to happen. (Goodrich 2015; Kohler 2015; Tubik Studio 2017.)

The homepage functions as an introduction to the store and the company behind it, thus it is important to convey the visual and verbal content in a clear, trustworthy manner and to feature call-to-action elements for shoppers to make a purchase. However, it is also possible that through search engines and shared links, shoppers land directly at a product page instead of the homepage. Thus, the site structure and navigation should be kept consistent across all pages for users to navigate their way and complete purchases efficiently (Nielsen & Schade 2014, 46.)

### **3.3. Optimised site search experience**

A research study done by Nielsen-Norman Group pointed out that most users display search behaviour on websites in various situations: to survey the range of products available on the store, to narrow down and find a specific product, to seek out products with a certain attribute and to obtain particular information about the product or store. They use the search method as a consequence of poor site navigation (Nielsen & Schade 2014, 58.)

Search results should ideally lead to clear information about the product, its pricing and shipping methods, in addition to relevant comparison and suggestion for options. Nonetheless, it is difficult to anticipate every step of a shopper's search process as one may move between multiple channels and devices until they discover what they are looking

for. They may even assume different shopper roles depending on their search experience. The next action of a user depends on what they find (Nudelman 2011, 24-37.)

One of the highly-advised practices for good site search experience is to have the search form positioned prominently on a page and consistently through the website. Most users expect to find the search box located on the top of a page, or more specifically, the top right corner. The magnifying glass icon is recognised as a universal symbol for search, therefore it is best to have it appear alongside the text field (Babich 2017.) In many instances, it is recommended for sites to offer users a list of attributes relevant to their searched item, allowing them to filter their own search results—also called faceted search—instead of using a scoped search, where its risk lies in the users assuming that the variety of available items is limited (Nielsen & Schade 2014, 59.)

Auto-completion in search functions benefits the users by completing their queries as they type. This expedites the process and grants opportunities to suggest items within the search scope (Low 2014.)

#### **3.4. Reduce shopping cart abandonment**

All online stores feature a *shopping cart*, the metonym for an essential software that allows users to gather items intended for purchase, calculates all costs including tax and shipping, and prior to the checkout and payment process, it displays the list of the items added into the shopping cart together with all their necessary information (Big Commerce 2017). Many of them utilise shopping carts to add their desired or favourite items into a list before making a decision to purchase. Therefore, it is recommended to maintain the users' interest by providing a quick access to the cart, intuitive interaction design for adding or removing items, an outline of the added items and links to the original, full product page of each item (Nielsen & Schade 2014, 55-56.)

Even with the improvements, a large number of users eventually abandon shopping carts before the checkout stage due to the habit of 'just browsing'. According to collective studies conducted by Baymard Institute, more than half of the users who abandoned

carts were only browsing through the websites and were not ready to make purchases, which is an inevitable pattern in online shoppers. However, the report also indicated that the remaining factors of abandonment such as complicated or long checkout process, expensive additional fees and mandatory account registration, can be remedied by shifting focus to optimising the checkout usability (Baymard Institute 2017.)

### 3.5. Simplify checkout and payment process

In every checkout journey, simplicity and speed are of main importance for users. An exemplary practice to avoid users from abandoning is by minimising the number of pages required to complete the process and by maintaining the final page for users to review their purchase order before submitting it (Chapman 2014.) A large percentage of users in Bayard Institute’s survey (Figure 1) on checkout usability describes that costly shipping, tax and additional fees was their reason for abandoning the checkout process. The inability to view or calculate costs also led to the same action from users.

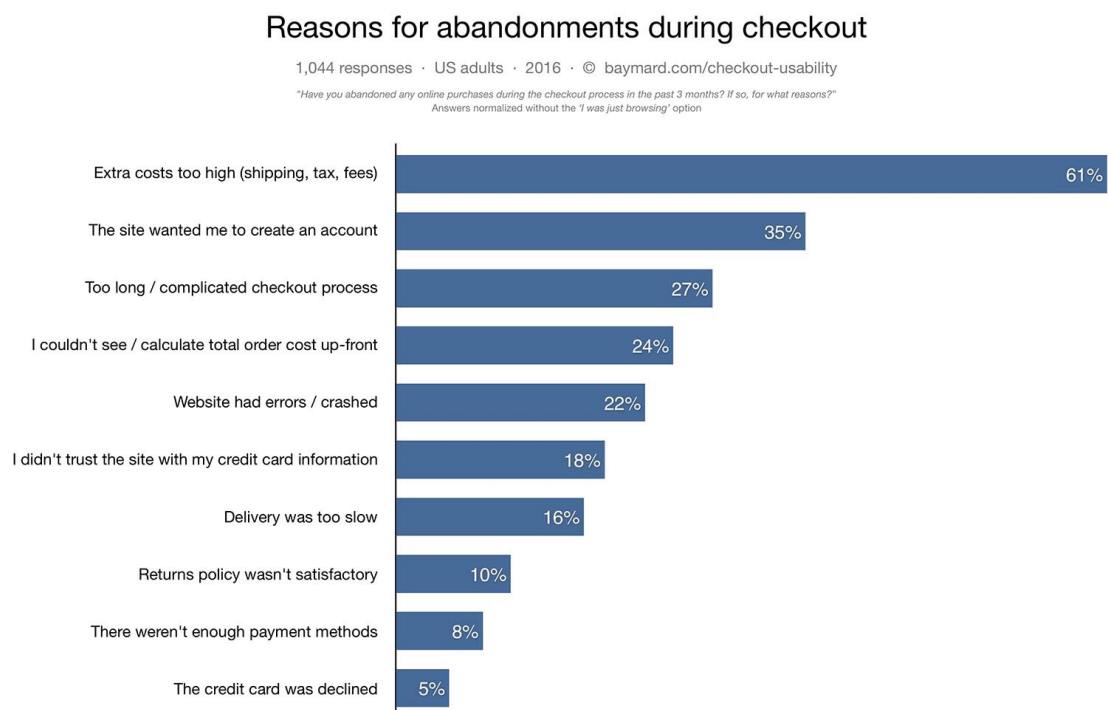


FIGURE 1. Reasons for abandonments during checkout (Baymard Institute, 2016)

In order to ensure users do not encounter surprises regarding hidden fees amidst total expenses, it is recommended to offer them shipping options in advance at the products page with an exact sum of payment that includes the aforementioned extra costs, along with an estimated delivery date (Likos-Corbett 2017).

Users prefer not to commit to account registration upon purchasing, nor do they want to impart details irrelevant to the shipping and payment process. Making registration a matter of choice and offering benefits upon registering are viewed favourably among users (Nielsen & Schade 2014, 55-56.) Form designs in the checkout stage should be simple and clear – only collect necessary information and validate them instantly. Adding a checkbox option for users to duplicate the billing address into the delivery address field expedites the process. In addition to that, a good method to keep users focused and prevent them from leaving the checkout process is to eliminate insignificant navigation elements on the page and to guide their attention in moving forward to the next step (Likos-Corbett 2017.)

### **3.6. Trust and information security**

Users perform transactions on e-commerce platforms based on trust, according to Suresh (2015), which is a critical aspect for all online stores to sustain sales, build a lasting relationship with customers and secure business potentials. A recent survey listed out the following factors that influenced respondents' trust:

- Visible trust seals on the website.
- Contact information is provided.
- A person they know of has used the website.
- Professional and well-designed look.
- The site carries popular brands or products.
- Fast and smooth website performance.



PICTURE 1. Recognised trust seals (Suresh, 2015)

Trust seals are third party badges (Picture 1) issued by companies or organisations that acknowledges credibility and authenticity of a website. However, a trust seal is not a mark for technical security; SSL certificate is the sign of secure connection and associates with information security (Picture 2). It is highly advisable to obtain such badges from recognised companies that are well-associated with security internationally or regionally, depending on the targeted users. Nevertheless, it is crucial to select suitable trust seals and apply them in moderation to avoid misleading users because malicious websites may have an excessive amount of security badges as well (Chawla 2017; Suresh 2015.)



PICTURE 2. SSL certificates (Suresh, 2017)

Visible presence of contact information eases users' fear of encountering problems with the website. It helps to offer multichannel customer support as it enhances brand experience. Users also look for reviews and testimonials from others to determine the trustworthiness of an online business. They are more willing to trust websites that feature a variety of responses – both positive and negative – and that the responders are proven genuine. Therefore, it is a requirement to devise a system for identifying actual reviews and testimonials (Chawla 2017; Suresh 2015.) In addition to that, professional-looking

websites with well-written content elevates credibility. It is also recommended to display statements that assures customer privacy and offer guarantees to establish users' confidence in the purchase process (Chawla 2017).

### **3.7. Design for mobile experience**

Mobile commerce – e-commerce by smartphones and other mobile devices – has gained steady growth in the past few years and is reported to acquire one-third of the U.S overall online retail sales by 2018 (Lazar 2016). One of the world's leading professional services company, Accenture, reported that Japan, South Korea and the UK are among the top countries where almost half of its e-commerce market are mobile-driven and purchases via smartphones are expected to increase significantly (Accenture 2016).

The mobile user experience is personalised and convenient as users are not confined to a specific location and time in order to perform online activities with internet access provided. Mobile devices allow users manage one-to-one interaction and broadcasted presence, thus creating both a personal and public persona. Designing for mobile experience requires the consideration of various factors, which Mendoza introduced in his definition of the 'Mobile Equation' – the telecommunication carrier, type of device, the operating system and screen sizes (Mendoza 2013, 8-9.)

A user's environment at the time of device usage should also be taken into account. In comparison to the desktop computer, mobile devices are smaller in screen size that equals smaller interfaces for users to interact with, but also are equipped with mechanisms such as touchscreen gestures, location tracking and image capturing functions and many others (Barret & Bentley 2014, 21.)

Despite the high usage of mobile devices for online interactions, mobile conversion still remains a concerned issue among e-commerce marketers and user experience designers. Certain practices can be applied to overcome the challenges posed – internet connectivity, limitations of processing power in comparison to desktop computers and exposure to diverse media simultaneously that distracts users from making purchases. Having a fast



and smooth website performance keeps mobile users continuously engaged on the platform, hence the importance of compressed web assets. One should also plan and manage third party tools carefully for that reason (Gapinsky 2017.)

Optimising for the browsing habit of mobile shoppers, such as two-column product image display and efficient save-to-cart features, benefits conversion rate; combined with a follow-up subsequent to cart abandonment, it is possible to increase mobile conversion. Strong tactile feedback should be implemented to support users in their purchase process due to variables in mobile network connectivity. For example, prominent visual elements that indicate whether an order form has been successfully sent; or there had been an error and the user has to resubmit information. This assures the user and facilitates the online purchasing experience (Gapinsky 2017.)

#### 4. ONLINE PLATFORMS FOR SELLING ART PRINTS

Artists and illustrators looking for online platforms to sell their artworks nowadays have plenty of options to choose from, regardless of one's knowledge and capabilities on web programming and using softwares. The challenge lies in choosing the right option that will fit to their needs and objectives of starting the online shop. These platforms are generally divided into four types: websites that function as marketplaces, auction sites focusing on arts and handicrafts, product-on-demand services and web-building platforms (Solga 2013, 76).

##### 4.1. Community marketplace

A common type of e-commerce platform for selling artworks is the marketplace platform. These websites offer sellers a quick way to start a shop for free and help to manage sales transactions for a fee, while buyers have the opportunity to browse through the range of stores and find products that they like (Solga 2013, 76-77). A brief survey on Instagram—a popular tool for promoting art—indicates that Etsy and Tictail are top favourites among artists and illustrators who sells artwork online (Figure 2).

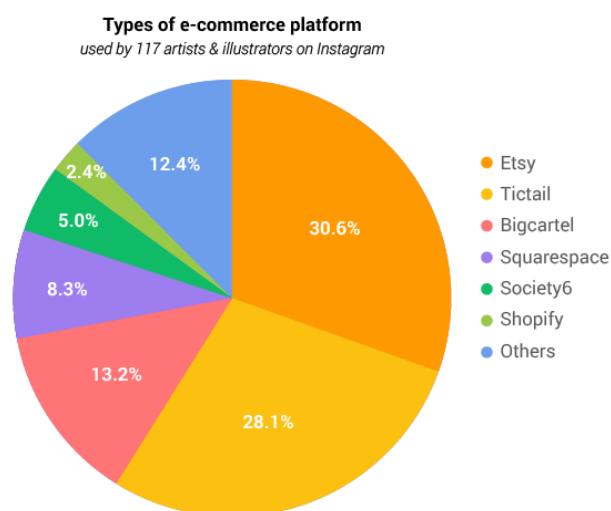


FIGURE 2. Types of e-commerce platform used by 117 Instagram artists & illustrators (Giam, 2017)

#### **4.1.1. Etsy**

In 2005, Etsy was established to create a platform for artists and artisans to sell unique, handcrafted products and vintage items online. Over the years, it has developed into a large global corporation with merchandise sales worth up to 2.84 billion USD. It has reached 1.8 million active sellers and 30.6 million active buyers to form one of the largest online arts and crafts marketplaces today. Etsy develops a community-based approach by having buyers and sellers directly engage with one another, creating forums and teams where people participate for collaboration and support (Etsy 2017.)

It is free-of-charge to create an Etsy account and to open a marketplace shop, integrated shopping cart system with a variety of payment methods; tools to manage, analyse and optimise sales; and extensive support via Etsy's support team, articles, seller's manual, as well as the seller community in forums and local teams. In return, Etsy collects fees for product listing, order transaction and payment processing. In addition to that, sellers can set up a custom website using monthly paid Etsy Pattern plan (Etsy 2017.)

#### **4.1.2. Tictail**

Similar to Etsy, Tictail offers free tools and easy setup for independent designers and small-scale businesses to build a shop for its community of consumers interested in unique and stylish items beyond the handmade and vintage. The company officially launched in 2012 and has 100,000 brands of fashion, interior decor and art from 140 countries hosted to date (Greenberg 2015; Thayer 2017.)

For a basic marketplace shop, sellers are able to have unlimited product listings for free and to make use of their marketing and analytic services; whereas a monthly-priced Tictail Plus account allow sellers to create a custom shop with added features. Tictail earns through product commissions on the marketplace and transaction fees for all purchases (Tictail 2017.)

## **4.2. Product-on-demand website**

Apart from Etsy and Tictail, a number of artists and designers opt for platforms that allow them to upload artworks which will be produced as art prints or printed onto ready-made products and delivered directly to the customers for each order placed through the website. Society6 and Redbubble are among the examples of such platforms. This print-on-demand method suits sellers who prefer to avoid the hassle of handling stocks, purchase orders and shipping. Sellers have the opportunity to decide among a wide array of products for print and make profit through royalties according to each platform's own policies (Solga 2013, 83-85.)

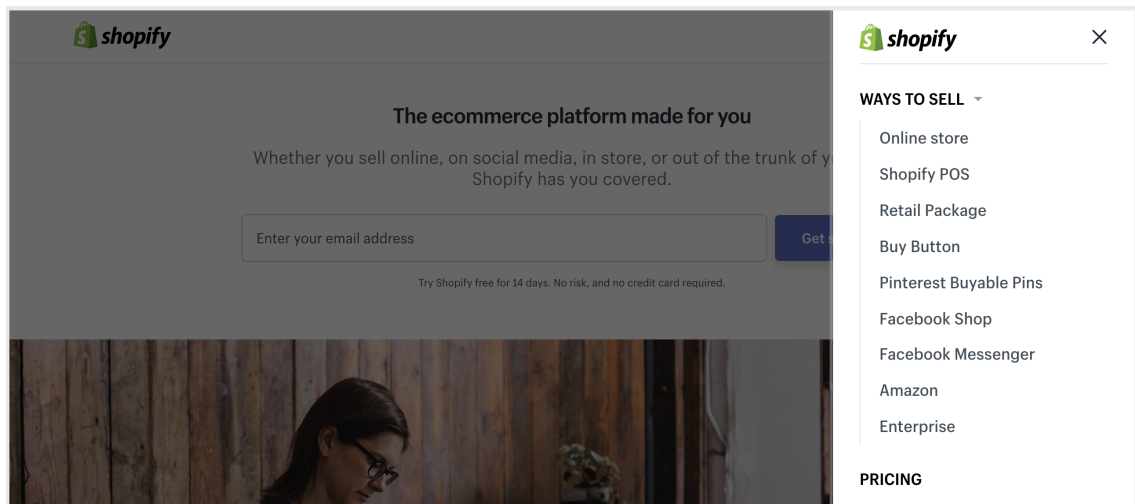
## **4.3. Website builder**

Building a website that integrates e-commerce functionalities is an alternative for artists and illustrators who seeks to establish their own identity and to take control of profit margins from their artworks. The popular trend for online businesses is to use website builders, which are softwares designed to help users construct a website with minimal or no knowledge of web programming and hosting services (Web Savvy 2017.) There is a wide variety of website builders available for users, including Wordpress and Wix, which can be integrated with e-commerce softwares. Nevertheless, the research on website builders for selling art prints concentrates on Shopify, Big Cartel, and Squarespace, as they are the preferred e-commerce platforms of the survey of observed artists and illustrators on Instagram (Figure 2).

### **4.3.1. Shopify**

Among the variety of hosted e-commerce website builders available in the market, Shopify is the leading choice for sellers because of its comprehensive range of tools and services catered for mainstream online stores and its smooth, intuitive interface (Carmody 2017; Site Builder Report 2016). According to its website, it has over 1 million

active users with 500,000 businesses launched and sales exceeding 46 billion USD via its platform (Shopify 2017).



PICTURE 3. Ways to sell through Shopify (Shopify, 2017)

Shopify takes advantage of the mobile and social commerce progression to develop features for store owners to reach a wider target audience. For example, they have the option to sell directly via Facebook Page and also create a mobile app for the store by sourcing app developers through Shopify (Carmody 2017.) Other sales channels include Pinterest and Amazon (Picture 3).

#### 4.3.2. Big Cartel

Established in 2005, Big Cartel's customer base consists of artists and others from the creative industry, which is significantly reflected in its motto 'We believe in the artist', and aims at individuals who desires a simple store to start their business (Carmody 2017). In its blog, Big Cartel placed emphasis on owning a custom website instead of setting up a marketplace shop in order to develop a strong brand presence (Big Cartel 2017). Customers praised the simplicity in setup and management along with its affordable monthly fee for Big Cartel (Site Builder Report 2016).

### **4.3.3. Squarespace**

Unlike Shopify and Big Cartel designed to fulfil requirements from a store owner point of view, Squarespace markets to everyone who desires a professional-looking website, portfolio and online store with the ease of use and it has helped created millions of websites since its launch (Squarespace 2017).

According surveys conducted by Site Builder Report, users find Squarespace easy to use and the templates offered have beautiful aesthetics. However, payment currencies, shipping issues and customisation remains a concern for many (Site Builder Report 2016).

## **5. COMPARING SHOP PLATFORMS**

As a subsequence to observing successful artists and illustrators with online shops and gathering relevant information about platform comparisons, this section first discusses the comparison between online marketplace and website builders and then investigates further on each platform within their own category on its features and user experience design. Product-on-demand marketplace is not included here, as the artworks intended for research project implementation are readily printed and available for sale.

### **5.1. Marketplace vs. website builder**

Theoretically, it is a challenge to compare between an online marketplace and a website with store functionality on an equal degree because both platforms provide assistance for users to sell products, yet they differ in terms of methods to achieve that goal. It could be beneficial to opt for both instead of just one (Haselden 2015.)

Similarly, Solga (2013) explained that making the decision depends on one's business plan and life goals. In the hypothesis of creating an online business that generates constant income flow and growth, it is best to build a marketplace shop and a professional website with own domain name, along with the alternative of selling through product-on-demand marketplaces and auction websites, and also to create a business profile on social media sites (Solga 2013, 89-90.)

### **5.2. Etsy vs. Tictail**

Since Etsy and Tictail operate on the same idea—create a marketplace shop for free and build a custom shop with own domain for a price—the most obvious difference appears to be costs that each platform obtains from product sales and payment transactions.

### 5.2.1. Price and fee comparison

Based on the comparison table shown (Picture 4), Etsy's marketplace shop is the only platform that requires sellers to pay a product listing fee every four months; however, one should note that the fee exemption for its custom shop platform only applies to 'Pattern-only listings'.

Platform	Monthly fee	Product listing	SALES Commission	CHECKOUT Transaction
<b>Etsy</b>	€ 0 Marketplace shop	€ 0.17* per listing (every four months)	3.5% of total order (excl. shipping & tax)	4% + 0.30€ of total order (incl. shipping & tax)
<b>Tictail</b>	€ 0 Marketplace shop	€ 0 No listing fee required	10% of total order (incl. shipping & tax)	3.5% + 0.30€ of total order (incl. shipping & tax)
<b>Pattern by Etsy</b>	€ 13* Custom shop with own domain	€ 0 for Pattern-only listings	3.5% of total order (excl. shipping & tax)	4% + 0.30€ of total order (incl. shipping & tax)
<b>Tictail PLUS</b>	€ 9 Custom shop with own domain	€ 0 No listing fee required	0% No commission charges	3.5% + 0.30€ of total order (incl. shipping & tax)

\* An estimation after converting from U.S. dollars. Product listing is \$0.20 and monthly fee is \$15, as stated on Etsy's website.

PICTURE 4. Difference in fees charged by Etsy and Tictail (Giam, 2017)

In order to use Pattern's custom website services, it is necessary for sellers to open an Etsy shop and create product listings there because Pattern uses them along with the shop information to generate content for the website. Sellers will then be able to manage both shops on a single management interface and list products that will only appear on the Pattern shop. These listings have no expiration dates and products are not compulsory to be handmade or vintage. It is easy to specify which listings should appear in either one of the shop or both, but each time a Pattern-only listing is changed into an Etsy marketplace listing, product listing fee is incurred and expiration period is also applied to that listing (Pattern Success Centre 2017.)



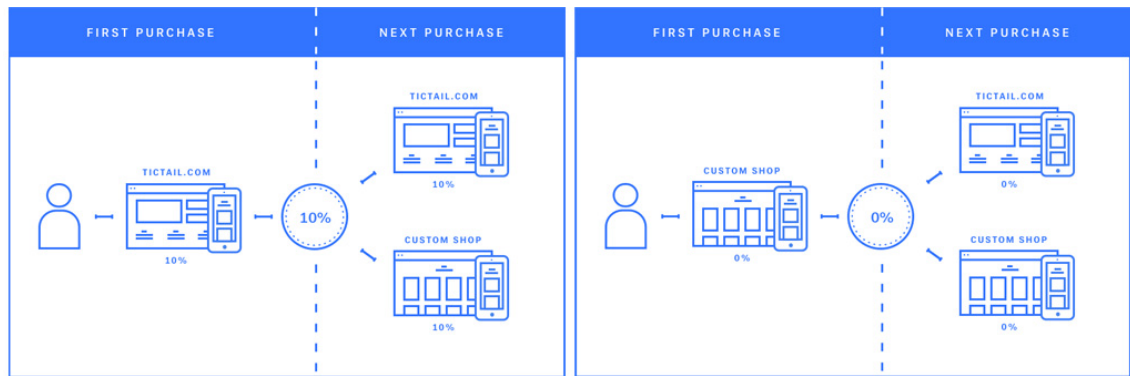
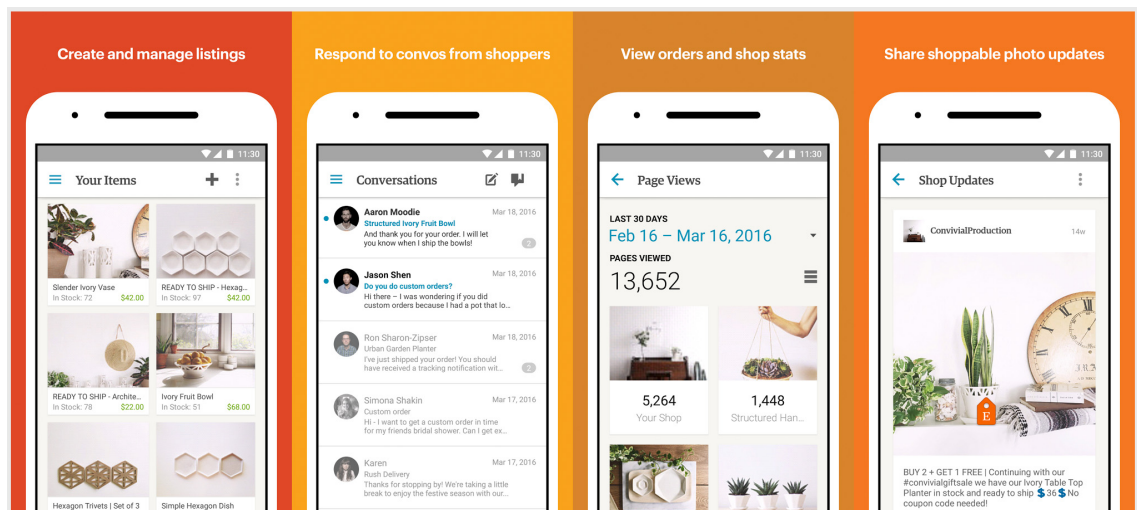


FIGURE 3. Explanation on Tictail Shoppers vs. Custom Shoppers (Tictail, 2017)

Tictail Plus is the counterpart to Etsy's Pattern platform, which appears to have an advantage over Pattern due to its relatively low monthly fee and transaction charges in addition to the absence of sales commission. According to Tictail Help Centre (2017), the commission fee is waived exclusively for customers whose first purchase is made through a Tictail custom shop instead of a marketplace shop (Figure 3). Once a user purchases an item from the marketplace for the first time, they are recognised by the system as Tictail Shoppers and a commission rate of 10% is implemented to every purchase order that follows the first (Tictail 2017.)

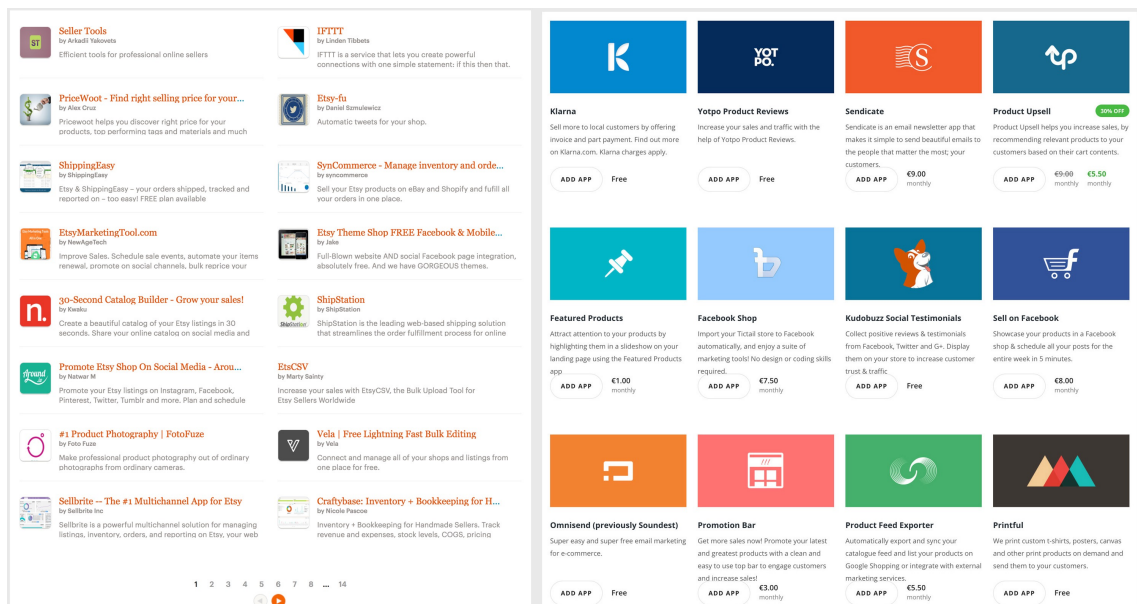


PICTURE 5. Sell on Etsy mobile app (Google Play)

The variety of tools and services that an online marketplace provides, aside from the basic e-commerce elements such as shopping cart and customer rating/review system, holds significant influence upon the seller's choice of platform. Both Etsy and Tictail designed mobile apps for sellers to manage their shops with ease on mobile devices.

Etsy divides the seller from the shopper by creating a separate mobile app, Sell on Etsy (Picture 5); whereas Tictail combines the shopping and selling functions into a single mobile app.

In order to increase sales potential and to enhance online brand presence, there is a huge resource of third-party apps—over 200 of them—available for sellers to utilise. Many of these apps provide extra services for SEO, product photography, dropshipping, social media marketing and more. Tictail has far less selection of external tools to help customise the shopping and selling experience; however, a quick inspection on the Etsy apps page shows a massive list of apps (Picture 6) that overwhelms the choosing process.

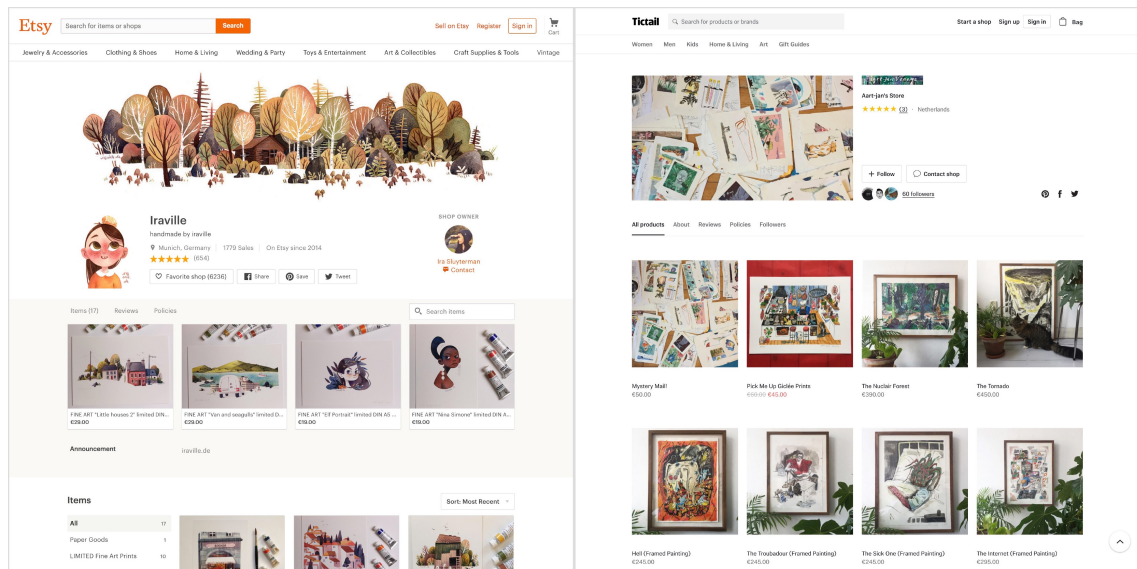


PICTURE 6. Apps section on Etsy (left) and Tictail (right) website (Giam, 2017)

A shop owner on both platforms, Maryanne Gobble (2017) remarked that Etsy shops has an advantage over Tictail in terms of notifying customers who visits the shop while the owner is unavailable to manage it temporarily. Tictail shop does not have this function therefore sellers are required to look for alternatives to send notifications and updates to their customers (Gobble 2017.) In its most recent site update, Etsy has introduced the gift wrapping option for sellers who would like to provide it to their customers (Combs 2017).

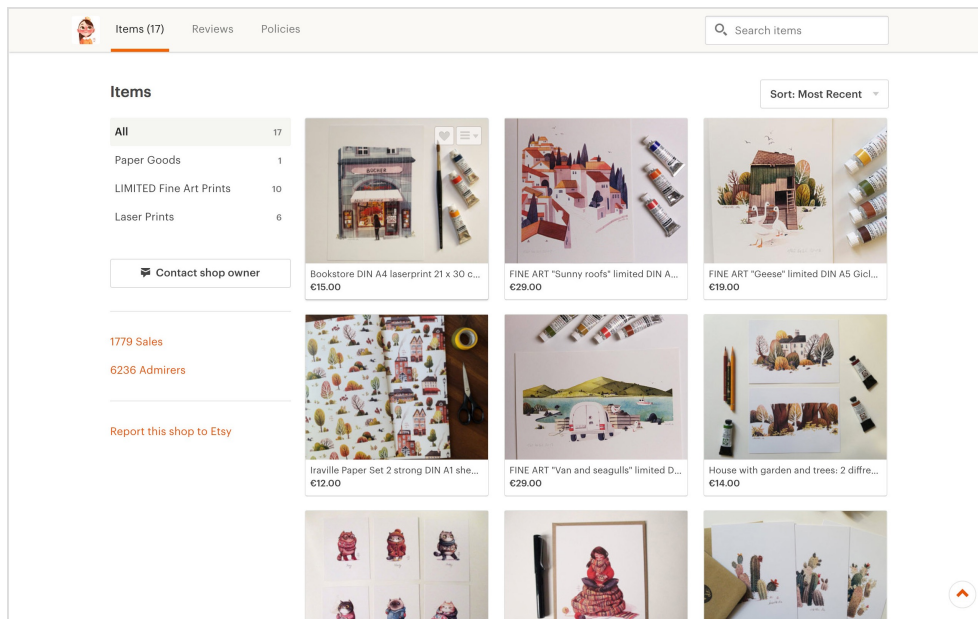
## 5.2.2. Marketplace shop interface design

A comparison of the two marketplace shopfronts in terms of UI (Picture 7) found that Etsy gives seller the opportunity to showcase more prominence in brand identity than Tictail, as header images are given full-width; whereas Tictail only provides a space of two columns out of the four-column for brand visuals. Product images are slightly larger for Tictail compared to Etsy.



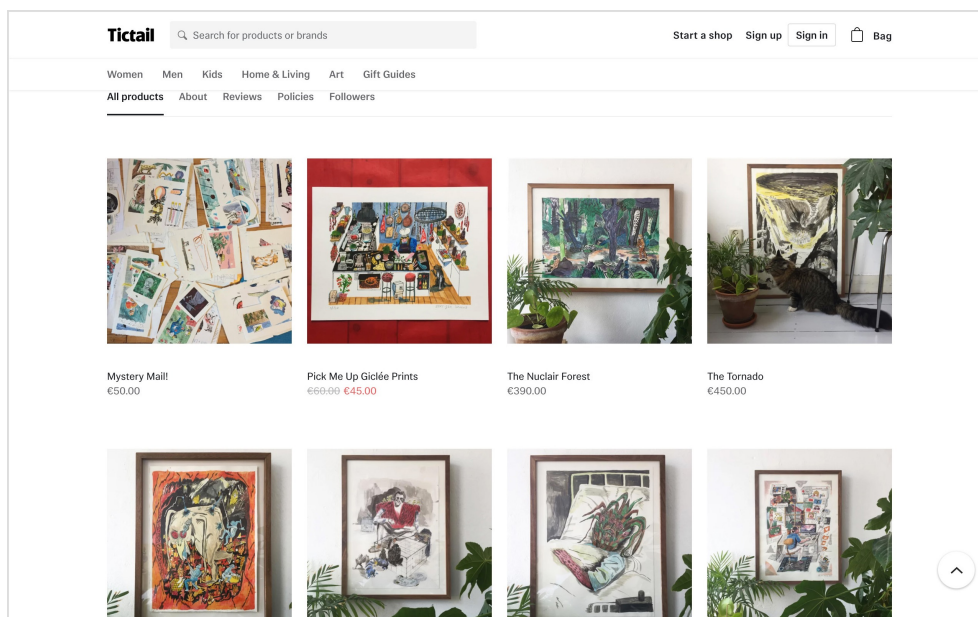
PICTURE 7. Etsy and Tictail marketplace shopfront comparison (Giam, 2017)

As the user scrolls downwards the page, Etsy's shop navigation bar which could also direct users to Reviews or Policies, remains on top of the screen. A sidebar navigation and a search field is also included. In each image, there are buttons to favourite the product and to save them into a wish list. The following screenshot image shows that Etsy goes slightly further to add a link for viewing all of the shop's purchase history in addition to the list of users following the shop in separate pages (Picture 8).



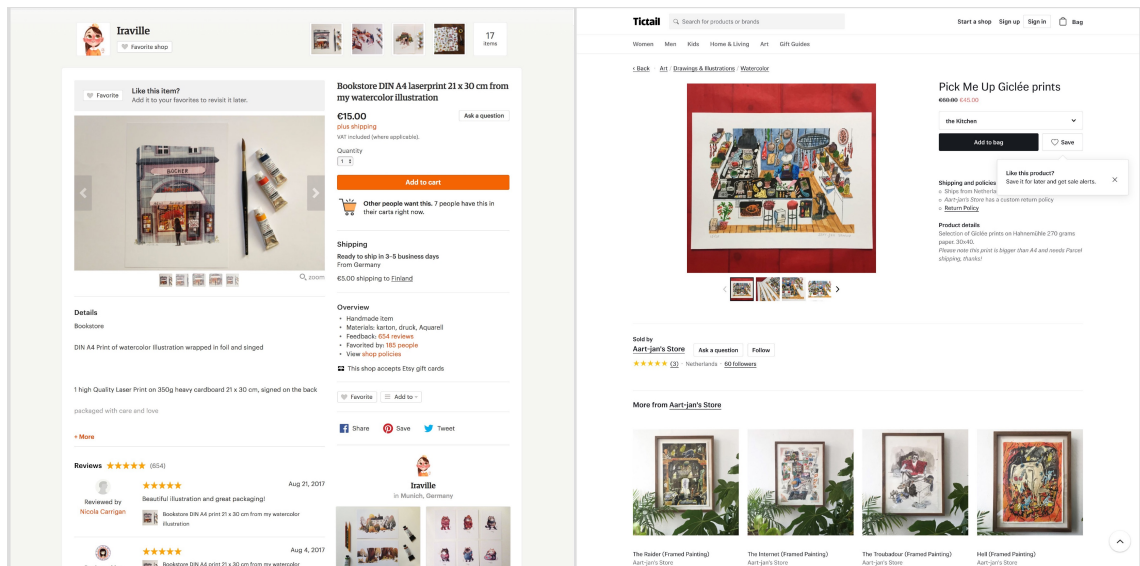
PICTURE 8. Iraville's shop front page (Giam, 2017).

On the contrary, Tictail has less functionalities on its shop front page in order to maintain simplicity in layout. The marketplace main navigation bar is fixed on the top of the screen instead of the shop's navigation bar that is in its stagnant position on the page. The only way to view the reviews, policies or followers section is to scroll upwards or to click on the back-to-top button on the bottom right corner of the screen (Picture 9).



PICTURE 9. Aart-jan's store front page (Giam, 2017).

Both marketplaces' product page follow a general outline of placing the product image and thumbnails on the left and reserve the right area for order details with prominent Add to Cart/Bag button. Etsy's page is visually more cluttered yet it enhances the buying experience by including reviews of the particular product from previous customers, positioned beneath the product description (Picture 10).



PICTURE 10. Product page layouts of Etsy and Tictail (Giam, 2017)

### 5.3. Shopify vs. Big Cartel vs. Squarespace




The comparison between Shopify, Big Cartel and Squarespace are observed in three main areas: Pricing, features and usability. Both Shopify and Squarespace offer a 14-day free trial that allows users to test the platform without enclosing credit card details, whereas Big Cartel provides a basic plan with limited features at no cost, which users are required to upgrade to paid plans in order to utilise other features on the platform.

#### 5.3.1. Pricing plan and fee requirements

Out of the three, Shopify has the most expensive prices for its packages where its basic plan starts at 25 EUR per month, while Big Cartel ranges between 0 to 26 EUR monthly for its four plan types (Picture 11). Big Cartel and Squarespace only offers payment via Stripe and Paypal, therefore sellers are bound by the rates set by the payment

providers; Shopify stores enjoy a flat rate on payment processing with Shopify Payments—the platform’s own payment service where shoppers skip third-party accounts and pay with their credit cards directly. Nonetheless, it is still feasible to integrate external services that Shopify supports, resulting in added payment processing fee.

Users who opt for Squarespace as a choice of platform should be aware of the sales transaction fee that is included in the Website category (Picture 11). The fee is billed as a separate payment to Squarespace upon each successful order checkout. The only way to avoid fee incurs from every purchase is to upgrade to the Store option with higher monthly fee. Fortunately, Shopify and Big Cartel have exempted the sales commission—a common attribute of online marketplaces—from its services.

 <b>shopify</b> Subscription fee* per month Shopify Payments* Credit card rates Payment processing fee for using external payment gateway	<u>Basic Shopify</u>		<u>Shopify</u>		<u>Advanced Shopify</u>	
	€25		€67		€254	
	2.9% + 0.25€		2.6% + 0.25€		2.4% + 0.25€	
	2%		1%		0.5%	
 <b>SQUARESPACE</b> Subscription fee per month Transaction fee % of final order total Payment processing fee charged by Stripe and Paypal	<u>Personal (Website)</u>	<u>Business (Website)</u>	<u>Basic (Store)</u>	<u>Advanced (Store)</u>		
	€11	€17	€24	€30		
	3%	2%	None	None		
	• Stripe charges 1.4% + 0.25€ for European cards and 2.9% + 0.25€ for non-European cards.			• Paypal charges 4.4% + 0.35€ per transaction for Finland.		
 <b>bigcartel</b> Subscription fee* per month <i>*Converted from the price stated on website in U.S. dollars.</i> Payment processing fee charged by Stripe and Paypal	<u>Gold</u>	<u>Platinum</u>	<u>Diamond</u>	<u>Titanium</u>		
	€0	€9	€17	€26		
	Big Cartel does not charge for sales commission.					
	• Stripe charges 1.4% + 0.25€ for European cards and 2.9% + 0.25€ for non-European cards.			• Paypal charges 4.4% + 0.35€ per transaction for Finland.		

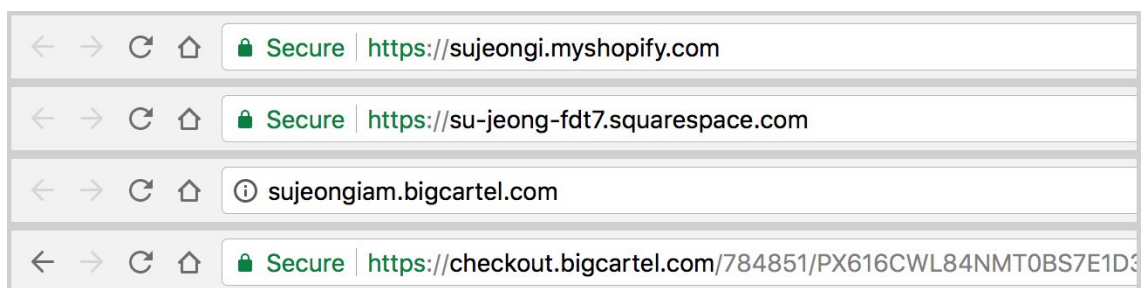
PICTURE 11. Fee comparison between Shopify, Squarespace and Big Cartel (Giam, 2017)

### 5.3.2. Similarities and differences in feature offers

Despite its fee policies, Squarespace builds an advantage over Big Cartel in its features, such as unlimited product listing, bandwidth and storage. This is similar to all of its Shopify's pricing plans (Appendix 2). Conversely, Big Cartel lacks in the capacity to host over 300 products for its highest-paid plan (Titanium) and its free plan (Gold) only allows a maximum of five products on the site without the other features such as inventory tracking, custom domain, discount codes and Google Analytics (Big Cartel 2017).

Users on Shopify and Advanced Shopify accounts have access to gift cards, abandoned cart recovery and third-party shipping rates calculation, in addition to the basic services of fraud analysis, manual order creation, discount codes, website and blog. Shopify promotes having professionals to assist users in store setup, design and even marketing, in addition to customer support personnels who are ready to provide service at any day, any time. Squarespace reflects the same in their pricing plans regarding 24/7 customer support, but only offers abandoned cart recovery and gift cards exclusively for their Advanced Online Store plan (Appendix 4).

Information security is previously mentioned as a good practice of user experience design in e-commerce platforms, which is addressed by Shopify and Squarespace with their free SSL certificates for all of their plans; however, Big Cartel does not explicitly state it as a feature because it is only present in the checkout page of a store, as shown in Picture 12.



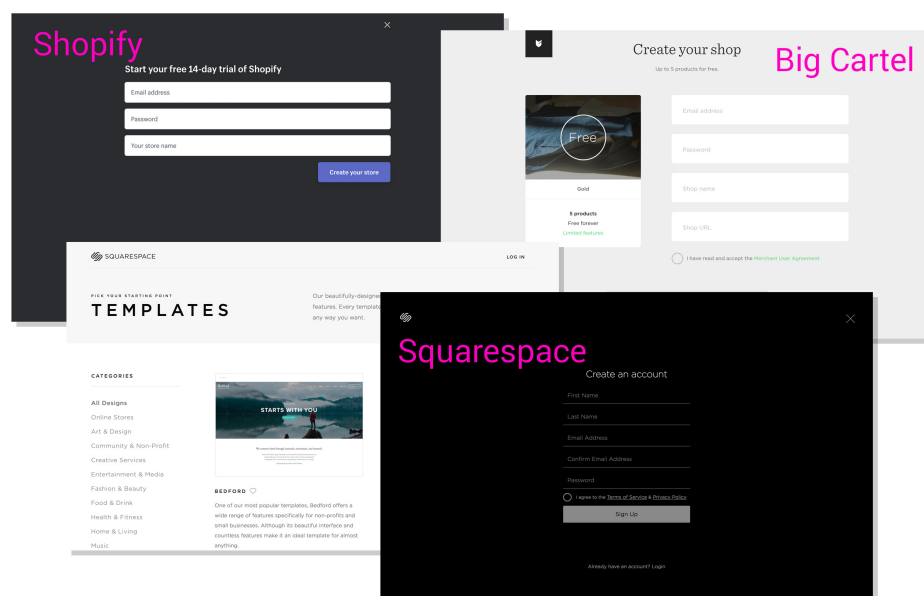
PICTURE 12. Comparison of HTTPS for Shopify, Squarespace and Big Cartel (Giam, 2017)

On the issue of custom domains, Squarespace provide free custom domains for users who apply for annually billed plans; while Shopify and Big Cartel users are required to purchase their own domain names from external hosting companies to replace the default domain names provided.

### 5.3.3. Store management and platform usability

Due to the diversity of themes offered and their customisation flexibility, it is almost impossible to compare individual store interface elements in this thesis. Nevertheless, the usability of each platform is tested out briefly using trial subscriptions that Shopify and Squarespace offers for a 14-day period and the Big Cartel free plan which comes with limited features yet available for an indefinite amount of time.

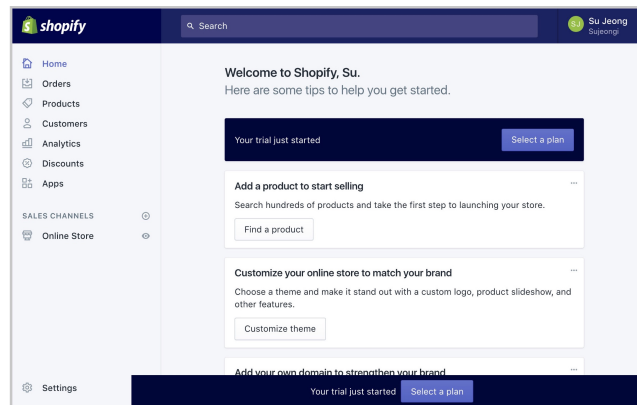
Upon signing up for Shopify and Big Cartel, users are directed to the main page of the store management system with a default store template chosen. Squarespace on the other hand, first starts with asking users to pick a template (Picture 13) and then proceeds to request for account registration. Both Squarespace and Shopify permit users to handle multiple domain names under a single account whereas Big Cartel account is only applied to a single store at a time.



PICTURE 13. Trial signup page Shopify, Squarespace and Big Cartel (Giam, 2017)

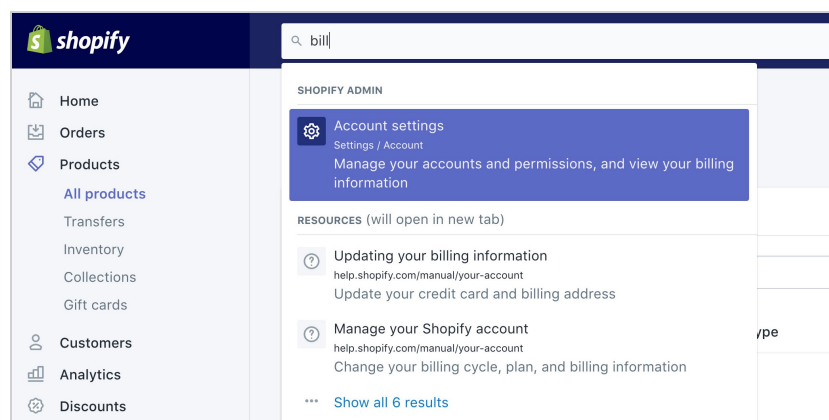


The store manager interface on the three platforms are unique to one another. A quick glance at the main page of Shopify's admin panel reflects clear structure and navigation where users have access to essential functions through the sidebar: Orders, products, customers, analytics, discounts, apps and settings (Picture 14). One can also manage different sales channels, such as Facebook and Pinterest on the admin panel.



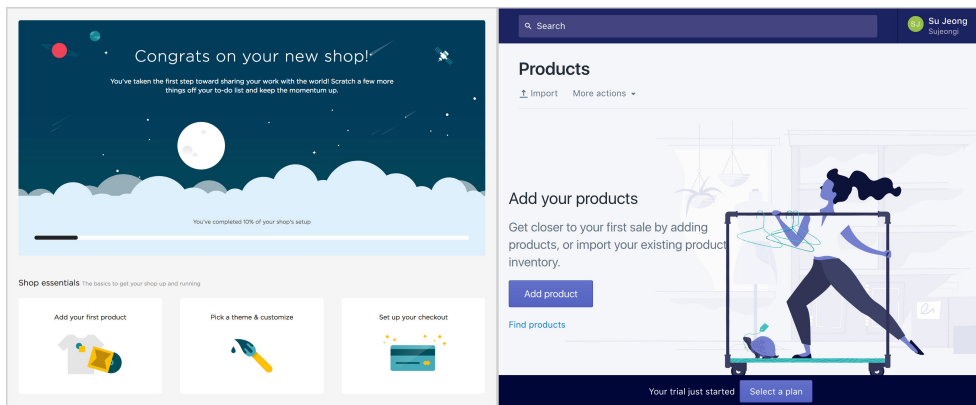
PICTURE 14. Admin panel interface of Shopify (Giam, 2017)

The onboarding for Shopify is fairly easy as it provides instructions for each step and guides the user with clear navigation, good readability and visual elements on its interface. As shown in Picture 15, there is also a prominent search function on top of the page that is extremely convenient if users encounter difficulties in the setup process or have questions regarding certain topics. The generated search results link users to either a relevant solution in the admin page itself or specific sections on Shopify's help and support pages.



PICTURE 15. Shopify admin page search tool (Giam, 2017)

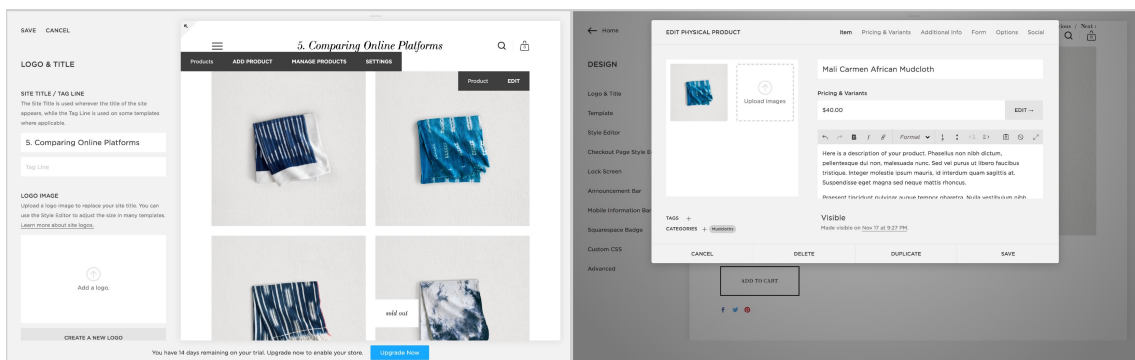
Big Cartel is similar to Shopify where it guides users with an overview of actions to setup the store, in which both platforms utilise illustrations to draw the user's attention and create character to the brand (Picture 16).



PICTURE 16. Use of illustrations in Big Cartel and Shopify admin page (Giam, 2017)

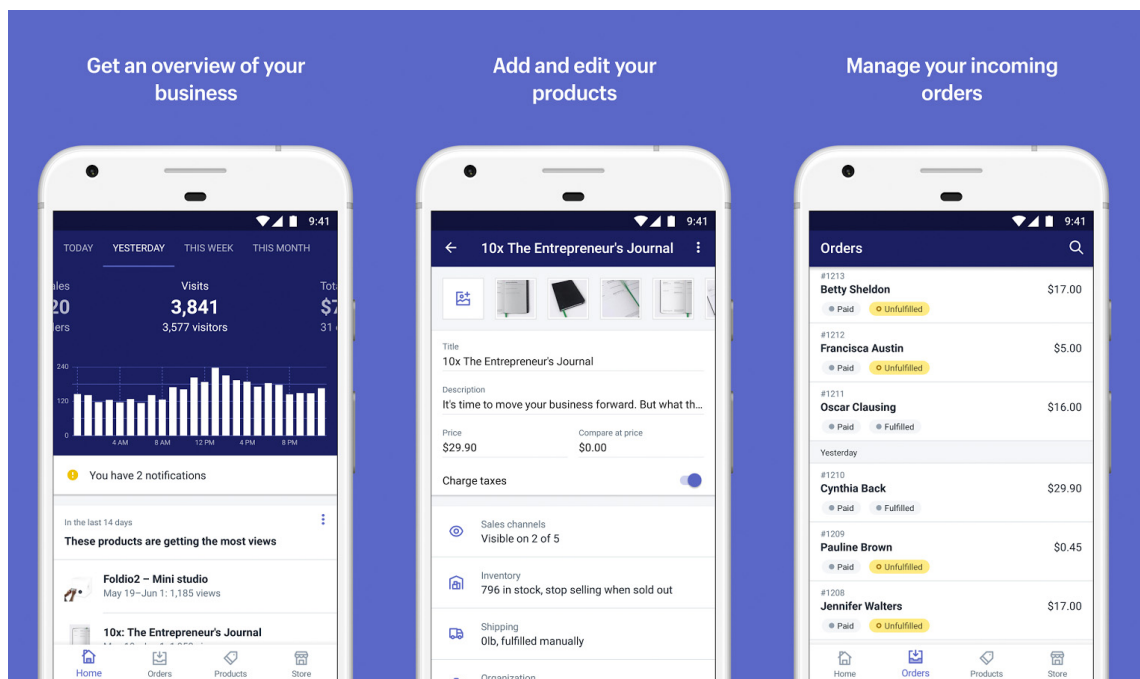
According to Robichaud (2017), illustrations in digital products are aimed at communicating messages to users and support the content when it is inundated with text information. Illustrations are typically found in empty states, onboarding, announcements and progress indications. It can be used to congratulate or celebrate user's success of performing an action or to avoid them neglecting certain features (Robichaud 2017.)

On the contrary, Squarespace keeps the visuals minimal and focuses on creating a full WYSIWYG interface for its admin panel, where users navigate through both the sidebar and template (Picture 17) to edit the content and design style of the website. It takes a little more time to learn the functions on the admin page as the setup process is more fluid due to the absence of an overview of instructions that Big Cartel and Shopify provide.



PICTURE 17. Admin interface on Squarespace (Giam, 2017)

Shopify exceeds Squarespace and Big Cartel in the mobile optimisation by having an exclusive app to manage the online store, which allows users to monitor store activity, add items to inventory and many other similar functionalities as the desktop version (Picture 18). Squarespace has a store manager app called Squarespace Commerce which has all the features except creating new products in the inventory and customising template. Despite being a provider of mobile-optimised websites, it lacks in providing an optimal mobile user experience for its store owners. Big Cartel unfortunately remains disadvantaged in this area for not having its own mobile app.



PICTURE 18. Store managing mobile for Shopify users (Google Play)

## **6. SETTING UP THE ONLINE SHOP**

In 2016, I started a series of food-related character illustrations entitled ‘Foodman’ and showcased it on Instagram. It was well-received by many and regular requests for purchasing art prints came in. This led to my decision to sell my artworks online to meet demands from potential buyers located in various countries and create a brand for myself as an illustrator along the process.

### **6.1. Launching with Big Cartel**

After reviewing the comparisons, I decided to sign up with Big Cartel for the reason that building a custom website to sell prints is a more viable option than using the online marketplace services because I aim to develop Foodman as an independent brand and establish a fanbase for it. Furthermore, the sales commission and additional costs for using their custom shop functions are disadvantages that I would prefer to avoid.

The main factor for my choice of using Big Cartel among the three web building platforms was its affordability for beginners in the e-commerce business despite Shopify being the clear winner in terms of features and usability. My current goal is to test the market while learning the process of managing an online store for selling artworks before I provide more prints and merchandises for my customers. Out of the four plans offered, I chose Platinum—approximately 9€ a month—to leverage the features it offers, since I have more than five types of postcard prints to sell at present and I intend to use a custom domain in the future.

### **6.2. Preparations before setup**

The setup process was fairly easy and uncomplicated, yet there were several aspects that required prior arrangements. For example, setting up a Stripe account to allow credit card payments for customers. Registration for Stripe’s merchant account requires one to

select their business type (Picture 19). In this case, the option that I chose was ‘Yksityshenkilö / Toiminimi (T:mi)’—personal or private trader/entrepreneur in Finland.

The image shows a Stripe registration form with the following sections:

- Your product:** A text box containing "I sell my own illustration prints and merchandises". Below it is a checkbox for "I am accepting pre-orders for a product that has not yet launched or an event that has not yet happened" and a link to "Learn more".
- Account details:** A dropdown menu for "Your business type" is open, showing options: "Julkinen osakeyhtiö (Oy)", "Yksityshenkilö / Toiminimi (T:mi)" (selected), "Rekisteröity yhdistys (ry)", "Avoin yhtiö (Ay) / Kommandiittiyhtiö (Ky)", and "Osakeyhtiö (Oy)".
- Arvonlisävero (ALV):** A text box containing "FI12345678".
- Business address:** Text boxes for "Street", "00000", and "District".
- Your website:** A text box containing "http://foodmanbychystal.bi".

PICTURE 19. Stripe registration page (Giam, 2017)

An essential part of launching a business, product pricing also had to be calculated beforehand to list it in the store. Big Cartel (2014) published a guide on pricing through its blog where it provides a simple method for calculation, shown in Picture 20: Wholesale price  $\times 2 =$  Retail price. The wholesale price consists of a sum of material and labour costs and other expenses needed to run the business (Big Cartel 2014.) Even with the formula provided, there are no fixed rules for pricing because one may look into their competitors’ price offers and consider much profit is sufficient to maintain the business (The Abundant Artist 2010).



PICTURE 20. Pricing formula (Big Cartel, 2014)

Next in the process is product photography which is the core of an online store due to its nature of being the closest presentation of an actual product. Thus, sellers are required to invest enough time for good product photography to relay accurate informa-

tion to customers. A typical way to create photos of an art print is to photograph it with a person as the holder (Picture 21), which allows customers to visually gauge proportions of the print. One can also place it on a flat surface or in a frame and include interesting objects to decorate the scene.



PICTURE 21. Product images from Half Joyed (left) and Carolina Buzio (Giam, 2017)

In order to suit the style of Foodman illustrations, I aimed for a minimalistic approach by experimenting between single colour and textured backgrounds for the product images, as seen in Picture 22. Overall, the soft pastel-toned background of the first image projected minimalism better and the postcard position bonds well with the clean look the image portrayed.



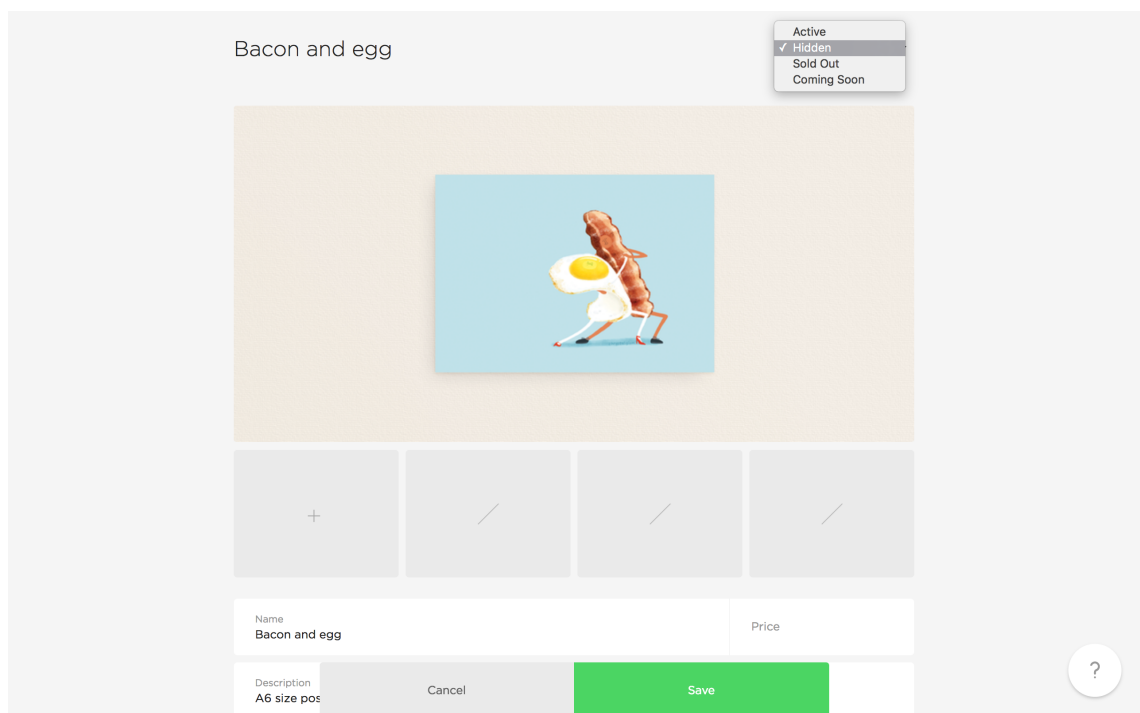
PICTURE 22. Foodman product image experimentation (Giam, 2017).

Since I have in my own possession physical prints of Foodman postcard, I am responsible for handling packaging and shipping of all purchase orders. Shipping is a challenging task due to varying postal fees and delivery time for different countries, which will

take a few trial-and-error to be accustomed to the process. The cost-effective method is to send packages through Posti—Finnish national post service—although it does not guarantee the speed of delivery compared to other courier services, for instance FedEx or DHL (Appendix 4).

### 6.3. Setting up Big Cartel

After registration and payment for Big Cartel’s Platinum plan, the first step was product page creation where I was able to start inserting product images and descriptions, prices, variation and shipping options. Big Cartel’s Platinum provides five images per product for its paid plan, which is generally sufficient for the customer to inspect product attributes. There is also a dropdown menu to select the status of a product—active, hidden, sold out or coming soon (Picture 23).

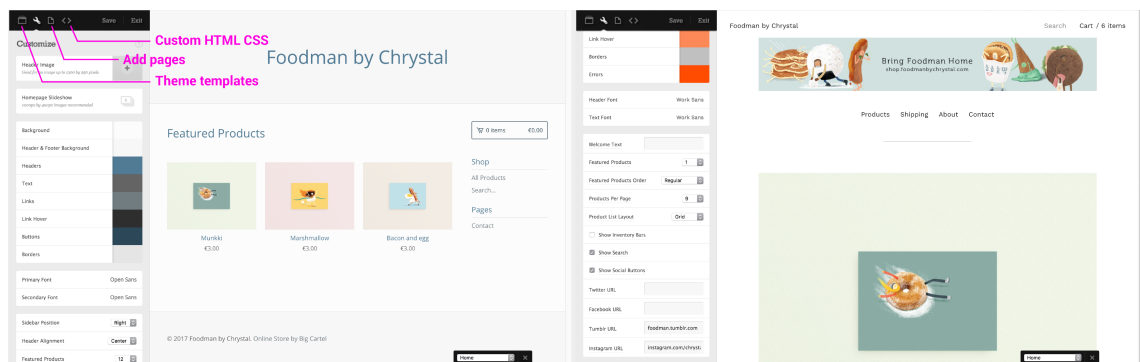


PICTURE 23. Screenshot of Big Cartel product page with dropdown menu (Giam, 2017)

In the shipping section, users may choose between which countries they ship to and which they do not. It is also possible to set separate prices for countries, while the fees are separated into two: ‘Shipping alone’ and ‘with others’. During occasions when cus-

tomers make a single item order, they pay the fee for ‘shipping alone’. The other shipping fee acts as an extra cost for purchases of other items in the same order, which should ideally be lower than the single order shipping fee, but sellers can choose not to charge for that additional fee.

After adding the products, customising the theme template is a key action which can ultimately take either minutes or hours, depending on the store requirements. The starter template comes in a clean minimal UI layout with essential e-commerce elements such as shopping cart and search form ready. Its WYSIWYG theme editor allows users to select from a choice of 13 templates, add pages and customise the HTML and CSS codes directly (Picture 24).



PICTURE 24. Before and after customising with Big Cartel theme editor (Giam, 2017)

I used Nova theme as a foundation for my store UI, which is coherent with the minimalistic style of the postcards. A number of usability aspects in relation to visual elements are maintained, for instance the placement of the store name on the top left corner; search bar and shopping cart button located on the top right corner. I designed a header image (Picture 25) to personalise and add brand presence to the store. The UI background colour is kept to white in order to allow the images to stand out.

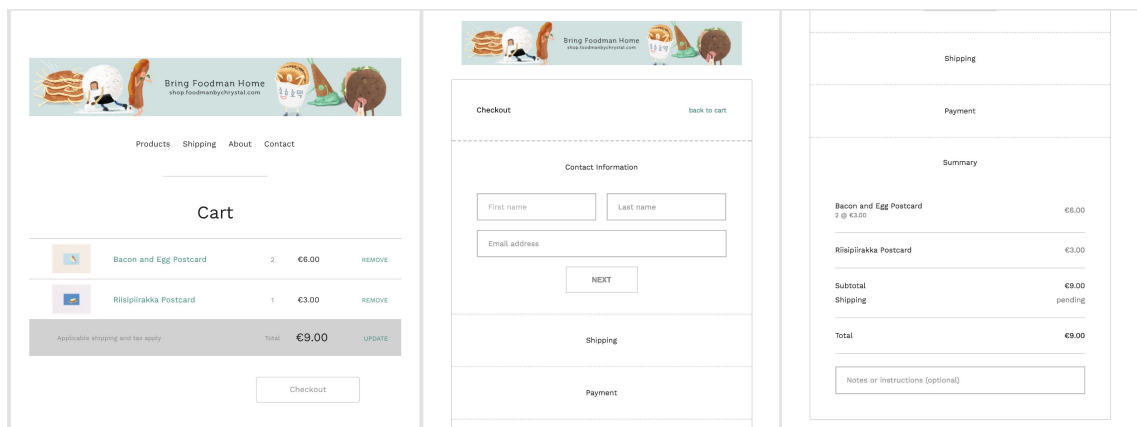


PICTURE 25. Header image of online store (Giam, 2017)



The current navigation—products, shipping, about, contact—is prominently positioned beneath the header image at the top of the page and also the bottom of the page, as it allows users to easily access other pages as they scroll downwards to view more products. I chose a grid layout for an overview of the product variety on the ‘All Products’ page and as the user hovers above an image, the product name and price appear. In order to purchase the product, users click on the image that leads to the individual product page which shows a description of the product, the price and a ‘Buy Now’ button underneath it. Additionally, the UI design includes page-to-page navigation buttons for users to move from the previous page to the next one.

The shopping cart and checkout page, as shown in Picture 26, retain the minimalistic layout and simplicity in access. Users may remove an item or change the quantity of purchase by editing directly into the quantity field box and view the updated price by clicking onto the ‘Update’ button. Once in the checkout page, users follow a step-by-step process to fill in their contact information, shipping and payment details. A summary of the purchase that includes the shipping fee in its total price is listed. Users may also leave an optional message about the purchase before confirming their payment.



PICTURE 26. Shopping cart and checkout page during a purchase test (Giam, 2017)

Users receive a confirmation page that shows the order number and purchase summary upon successful payment, which is also automatically sent to the users’ email address. It is up to the seller to send a separate payment receipt to the buyer as a proof of purchase.

## 7. DISCUSSION

This thesis provided a deeper understanding in the topic of creating an online store for selling art prints for those who are unfamiliar with the workings of e-commerce platforms. Important usability and user experience elements were addressed to help store owners enhance their business platforms for the needs and habits of the online shoppers, in order to increase sales potential and build a strong relationship with its customers.

Using existing online store builders or marketplace platforms to build one's own store is a more viable option for makers with a minimal budget than creating their own website. The research project using Big Cartel is presented as a guideline based on my current business goals and it is possible that some information may render as incoherent in future—features and pricing—due to the nature of technology constantly evolving at an exponential rate, therefore aspiring sellers maintains the privilege to choose which works for them best.

Based on the setup process and its usability aspect, I found Big Cartel a good alternative for makers who want to launch their business in a quick and effortless manner, yet maintain individuality for their brand. It was easy to follow the steps on setting up the store and the integrated payment gateway of Paypal and Stripe. Customising the ready-made template was fairly simple and it has the necessities of a good shopping cart system and a secure checkout process.

Nevertheless, there are obvious limitations when compared to more expensive store builders and marketplaces. It does not include blogging options and the only method is to redirect a page by modifying the template's code with the URL of an external website or blog. Generating and directing traffic to the store also remains a challenge despite the SEO support that Big Cartel provides. Sellers on marketplace platforms have an existing community of buyers, while the others have to build their own fanbase to draw in audience. There is a possibility of expanding the collection of my art prints and other merchandises, thus I expect a further evaluation on the use of Big Cartel as a way of selling in the future.

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## Inventory and pricing

### Price \*

Factor in the costs of materials and labor, plus any related business expenses.

### Quantity \*

For quantities greater than one, this listing will renew automatically until it sells out. You'll be charged a \$0.20 USD listing fee each time.

### SKU Optional

SKUs are for your use only—buyers won't see them. [Learn more about SKUs.](#)

## Variations

Add available options like color or size. Buyers will choose from these during checkout.

## Shipping

Set clear and realistic shipping expectations for shoppers by providing accurate processing time and shipping rates.

### Shipping options \*

Fill out your shipping options for this listing. You can keep these options specific to this listing, or save them as a shipping profile to apply them to future listings.

#### Shipping origin \*

The country you're shipping from

#### Processing time \*

Once purchased, how long does it take you to ship an item?

Buyers are more likely to purchase items that ship quickly

#### Fixed shipping costs \*

The price each buyer will pay for shipping

Destination	One item	Each additional item	Optional
Finland	<input type="text" value="€ 0.00"/>	<input type="text" value="€"/>	
Everywhere Else	<input type="text" value="€ 0.00"/>	<input type="text" value="€"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<a href="#">+ Add another location</a>			

#### Shipping upgrades Optional

Add faster options for your buyers (added to shipping cost)

[+ Add a shipping upgrade](#)

You can save these options to apply to future listings, if you'd like. [How shipping profiles work](#)

### Preview shipping cost

See what buyers will pay for shipping

Destination

Cost to buyer

€—

## Appendix 2. Shopify price and feature comparison chart

	<b>Basic Shopify</b> All the basics for starting a new business	<b>Shopify</b> Everything you need for a growing business	<b>Advanced Shopify</b> Advanced features for scaling your business
Monthly price	<b>\$29</b>	<b>\$79</b>	<b>\$299</b>
<b>CREDIT CARD RATES</b>			
Online ⓘ	2.9% + 30¢	2.6% + 30¢	2.4% + 30¢
In person ⓘ	2.7% + 0¢	2.5% + 0¢	2.4% + 0¢
<b>TRANSACTION FEES</b>			
Using <a href="#">Shopify Payments</a>	None	None	None
Using <a href="#">external payment gateways</a>	2.0%	1.0%	0.5%
<b>FEATURES</b>			
Staff accounts	2	5	15
Number of products	Unlimited	Unlimited	Unlimited
File storage	Unlimited	Unlimited	Unlimited
<a href="#">Retail Package</a>	+ \$49	+ \$49	+ \$49
<a href="#">Shopify Shipping</a> discount ⓘ	Good	Better	Best
Print shipping labels ⓘ	✓	✓	✓
24/7 support	✓	✓	✓
Fraud analysis ⓘ	✓	✓	✓
Manual order creation	✓	✓	✓
Discount codes	✓	✓	✓
Website and blog	✓	✓	✓
Free SSL certificate ⓘ	✓	✓	✓
Gift cards ⓘ	-	✓	✓
Professional reports	-	✓	✓
Abandoned cart recovery ⓘ	-	✓	✓
Advanced report builder	-	-	✓
Third-party calculated shipping rates ⓘ	-	-	✓

## Appendix 3. Squarespace fee and feature comparison

	WEBSITES	ONLINE STORES
	<p><b>PERSONAL</b></p> <p>€ 11 Per month billed annually or €15 month to month.</p> <p>A beautiful, simple website.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ 20 Pages, Galleries, and Blogs with Unlimited Bandwidth and Storage, and 2 Contributors</li> <li>✓ Mobile-Optimized Website</li> <li>✓ Powerful Website Metrics</li> <li>✓ Free Custom Domain* with annual purchase</li> <li>✓ SSL Security Included</li> <li>✓ 24/7 Customer Support</li> <li>✓ Fully Integrated E-Commerce</li> <li>✓ Sell Unlimited Products &amp; Accept Donations</li> <li>✓ 3% Transaction Fee</li> </ul>	<p><b>BUSINESS</b></p> <p>€ 17 Per month billed annually or €24 month to month.</p> <p>Perfect for businesses of all sizes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Unlimited Pages, Galleries, and Blogs, with Unlimited Storage, Bandwidth, and Contributors</li> <li>✓ Mobile-Optimized Website</li> <li>✓ Powerful Website Metrics</li> <li>✓ Free Custom Domain* with annual purchase</li> <li>✓ SSL Security Included</li> <li>✓ 24/7 Customer Support</li> <li>✓ Fully Integrated E-Commerce</li> <li>✓ Sell Unlimited Products &amp; Accept Donations</li> <li>✓ 2% Transaction Fee</li> <li>✓ Professional email from Google*</li> <li>✓ \$100 Google AdWords Credit</li> <li>✓ Promotional Pop-Ups</li> </ul>

## WEBSITES

## ONLINE STORES

## BASIC

€ 24 Per month billed annually or €28 month to month.

Everything you need to get your business off the ground.

- ✓ **All Features from the Business Plan**
- ✓ Sell Unlimited Products
- ✓ No Transaction Fees
- ✓ Mobile-Optimized Website and Checkout
- ✓ Free Custom Domain\* with annual purchase
- ✓ SSL Security Included
- ✓ 24/7 Support
- ✓ Powerful Commerce Metrics
- ✓ Inventory, Orders, Tax, Discounts
- ✓ Label Printing via Shipstation
- ✓ Integrated Accounting Via Xero
- ✓ Checkout on Your Domain
- ✓ Customer Accounts

## ADVANCED

€ 36 Per month billed annually or €42 month to month.

Advanced features as your business grows.

- ✓ **All Features from the Business Plan**
- ✓ Sell Unlimited Products
- ✓ No Transaction Fees
- ✓ Mobile-Optimized Website and Checkout
- ✓ Free Custom Domain\* with annual purchase
- ✓ SSL Security Included
- ✓ 24/7 Support
- ✓ Powerful Commerce Metrics
- ✓ Inventory, Orders, Tax, Discounts
- ✓ Label Printing via Shipstation
- ✓ Integrated Accounting Via Xero
- ✓ Checkout on Your Domain
- ✓ Customer Accounts
- ✓ Abandoned Cart Autorecovery
- ✓ Real Time Carrier Shipping
- ✓ Automatic Discounts
- ✓ Gift Cards

## Appendix 4. Price list for Letter Mail Services (Posti, 2017)

## LETTER MAIL SERVICES – Price List for Cash Services from October 2nd, 2017



New rates for Mail Services ordered and paid for online as of October 2, 2017, or as the service in question is available in Posti's online service. COD (Cash on Delivery) is exclusive of value-added tax in the same way as Posti's universal service products: Letter and Posti Insured Item and Registration and Advice of Delivery supplementary services. However, items sent to addresses outside the European Union are subject to 0% VAT. Further information is available on the Internet at [www.posti.fi](http://www.posti.fi).

DOMESTIC				
LETTER Max. weight	EUR	No-Value Indicator Stamps*		
50g (postcard as well)	1.40	1 pc		
100g	2.10	1 pc+EUR 0.70		
250g	2.80	2 pcs		
500g	5.60	4 pcs		
1,000g	8.40	6 pcs		
2,000g	14.00	10 pcs		
Domestic no-value indicator stamp*	1.40			
No-value indicator stamp for Christmas*	0.95			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maximum weight: 2kg • Maximum size: 25 x 35.3 x 3cm</li> <li>• Minimum size: 9 x 14cm</li> </ul>				
*) No-Value Indicator Stamps are also accepted as postage fee in other postal items. The value of the old 1st and 2nd class no-value indicator stamp is the same as the value of the current domestic no-value indicator stamp.				
ADDITIONAL SERVICES	Letter Online	Letter Outlet	Insured Item	
Cash-On-Delivery	EUR 5.00	EUR 7.00	EUR 7.00	
Registration	EUR 6.30	EUR 7.20		
Advice of Delivery	-	EUR 11.00		
Handing over to the receiver personally	EUR 1.30*	EUR 1.30*	EUR 1.30	
*) Only offered for items for which the additional service of registration or advice of delivery is purchased.				
ALL-IN-ONE ENVELOPES		Set (20 pcs)		
Sizes C5 and E5		EUR 40.00		
Size C4		EUR 73.00		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maximum weight: 500g • Maximum thickness: 3cm</li> </ul> Only the envelope charge includes value added tax.				
EXPRESS LETTER Max. weight	Online	Outlet	Additional Service Saturday Delivery	
250g	EUR 7.30	EUR 8.20	EUR 5.90	
2,000g	EUR 14.90	EUR 15.80	EUR 5.90	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maximum weight: 2kg • Maximum size: 25 x 35.3 x 3cm</li> <li>• Minimum size: 9 x 14cm</li> </ul>				
PRE-PAID EXPRESS MAIL ENVELOPE	Pcs	Set (20 pcs)		
Envelope size 25 x 35cm	EUR 9.70	EUR 194.00		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maximum thickness: 3cm • Maximum weight: 500g</li> </ul> Attach the Exprès barcode label to Pre-Paid Express Mail Envelopes.				
INSURED ITEM Max. weight	Insured value EUR 1-5,000			
250g	EUR 19.00			
2kg	EUR 28.00			
A special "Helposti särkyvä" (fragile) label, available at Postal outlets, must be affixed to fragile items. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maximum size: length + width + thickness combined 90cm, maximum length 60cm – In roll form: length + double diameter combined 104cm, maximum length 90cm</li> </ul>				
<b>Redemption Fee</b>				
In addition to unpaid postage, <b>EUR 3.00/item</b> (excl. VAT EUR 2.42)				
INTERNATIONAL				
PRIORITY AND ECONOMY LETTER Max. weight	Europe		Other countries	
	Priority EUR	Economy EUR	Priority EUR	Economy EUR
20g (postcard as well)	1.50	1.40	1.50	1.40
50g	2.20	2.00	3.30	2.40
100g	3.00	2.80	7.20	3.50
250g	4.80	4.30	11.80	6.10
500g	8.00	6.80	20.00	10.60
1,000g	15.00	12.40	33.50	16.00
2,000g	27.00	24.80	60.50	32.30
International no-value indicator stamp*	1.50			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maximum weight: 2kg • Maximum size: 25 x 35.3 x 3cm</li> <li>• Minimum size: 9 x 14cm</li> </ul> If any of the dimensions exceed the maximum size, use Maxi Letter.				
*) No-Value Indicator Stamps are also accepted as postage fee in other postal items.				
PRIORITY AND ECON. MAXI LETTER Max. weight	Europe		Other countries	
	Priority EUR	Economy EUR	Priority EUR	Economy EUR
250g	8.50	6.70	12.50	10.30
500g	13.40	10.80	22.60	15.40
1,000g	19.00	17.00	37.00	24.70
1,500g	27.80	24.70	50.40	32.90
2,000g	38.00	31.90	69.90	43.70
ADDITIONAL SERVICES			Priority	
Registration			EUR 10.30	
Postal Insurance (Insured value EUR 1-5,000)			EUR 27.00	
Advice of Delivery			EUR 5.30	
Also note country-specific restrictions for services.				
EXPRES-PIKAKIRJE Max. weight	Europe*		Other countries*	
	Priority EUR	Economy EUR	Priority EUR	Economy EUR
250g	EUR 15.10	EUR 18.50		
500g	EUR 20.40	EUR 33.50		
1,000g	EUR 29.20	EUR 49.70		
1,500g	EUR 40.80	EUR 68.20		
2,000g	EUR 53.00	EUR 89.00		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maximum weight: 2kg</li> <li>• Maximum size: length + width + thickness combined 90cm, maximum length 60cm – In roll form: length + double diameter combined 104cm, maximum length 90cm</li> <li>• Minimum size in roll form: length + double diameter combined 17cm, minimum length 10cm</li> <li>• Minimum size of an Exprès Letter: 9 x 14cm</li> </ul> *) Please check if it is possible to send an Exprès Letter to the destination country.				
PRE-PAID EXPRES ENVELOPE	Pcs	Set (10 pcs)		
Envelope size 25 x 35cm	EUR 16.20	EUR 162.00		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Price for all countries where the Exprès service is available</li> <li>• Maximum thickness: 3cm • Maximum weight: 500g</li> </ul> Attach the Exprès barcode label to Pre-Paid Express Mail Envelopes.				
INTERNATIONAL REPLY COUPON				
Selling price			EUR 2.50	
A reply coupon presented for exchange in Finland will be exchanged for stamps to the value of 1.50 euros.				

## Appendix 5. Screenshots of Online Store Project

