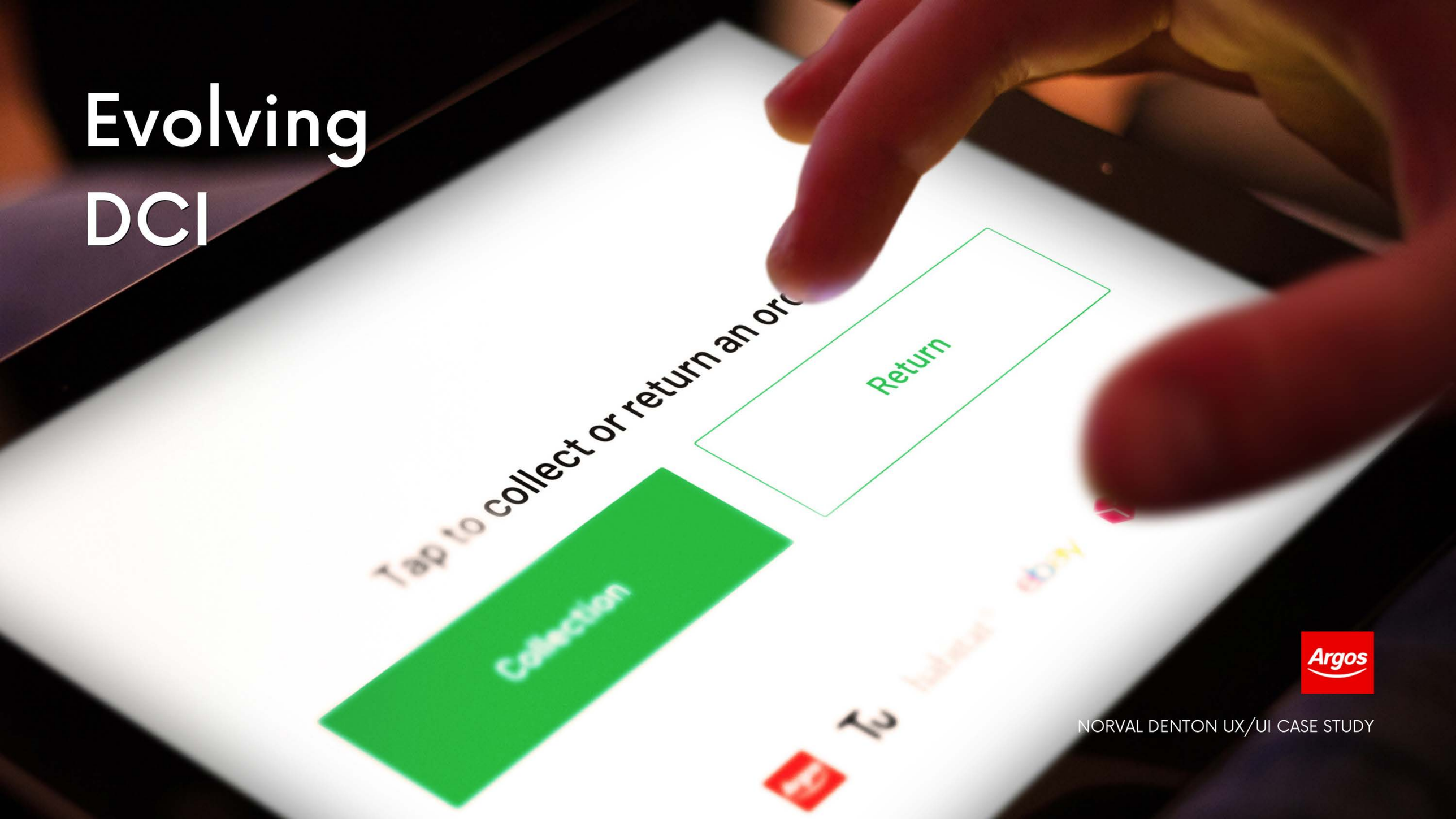
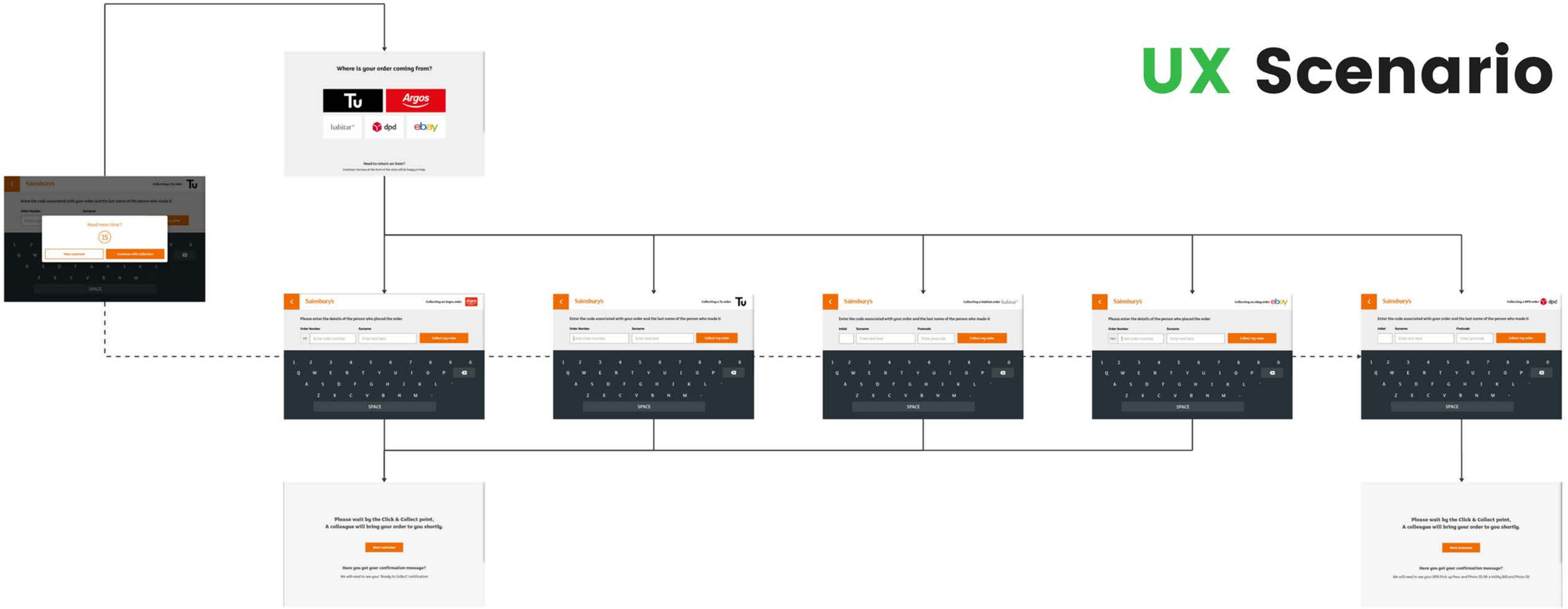
Evolving DCI



NORVAL DENTON UX/UI CASE STUDY

Report Contents

UX Scenario



The Argos Digital Check-In (DCI) system allows customers to verify and collect orders using in-store touchscreen devices at Sainsbury's Collection Points. While the concept was straightforward—self-check-in to inform staff of your arrival—the real-world experience was far from seamless.

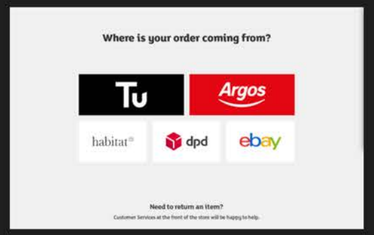
UX Scenario

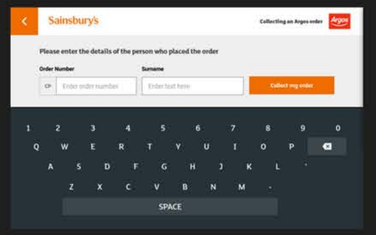
Originally scoped as a “quick win,” the project quickly revealed deeper usability and technical challenges, with fragmented systems, shifting priorities, and inconsistent customer experiences across different order types (e.g. Argos vs. eBay).

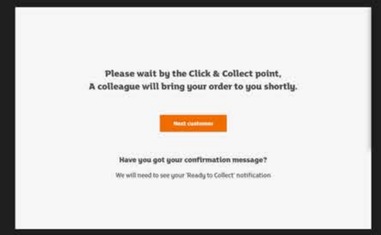
This case study explores how I worked to redesign the DCI journey to improve clarity, accessibility, and efficiency at one of the most critical moments of the customer journey: in-store collection.

Why is this a problem?

To see if the current Digital Check in device meets the customers' needs and satisfaction, we used a research company, Walnut Unlimited, which studied walk-in customers. They highlighted various areas that required attention and improvement with the current state of the DCI.







Inconsistency across store formats

Unable to check in for a return

Potential brand confusion

No ability to check in multiple orders

Inconsistent branding

No ability to call for assistance

Customers unaware that they were checked-in

UX Goals

- Create an intuitive and accessible check-in flow for all customers, including first-time users.
- Support full journey coverage—including multi-order check-ins, help requests, and returns.
- Reinforce trust with consistent, on-brand visuals aligned with Argos (not Sainsbury's).
- Minimize friction and wait time, especially in busy in-store environments.
- Support Argos' wider strategy to evolve self-serve retail experiences across touchpoints.

UX Objective

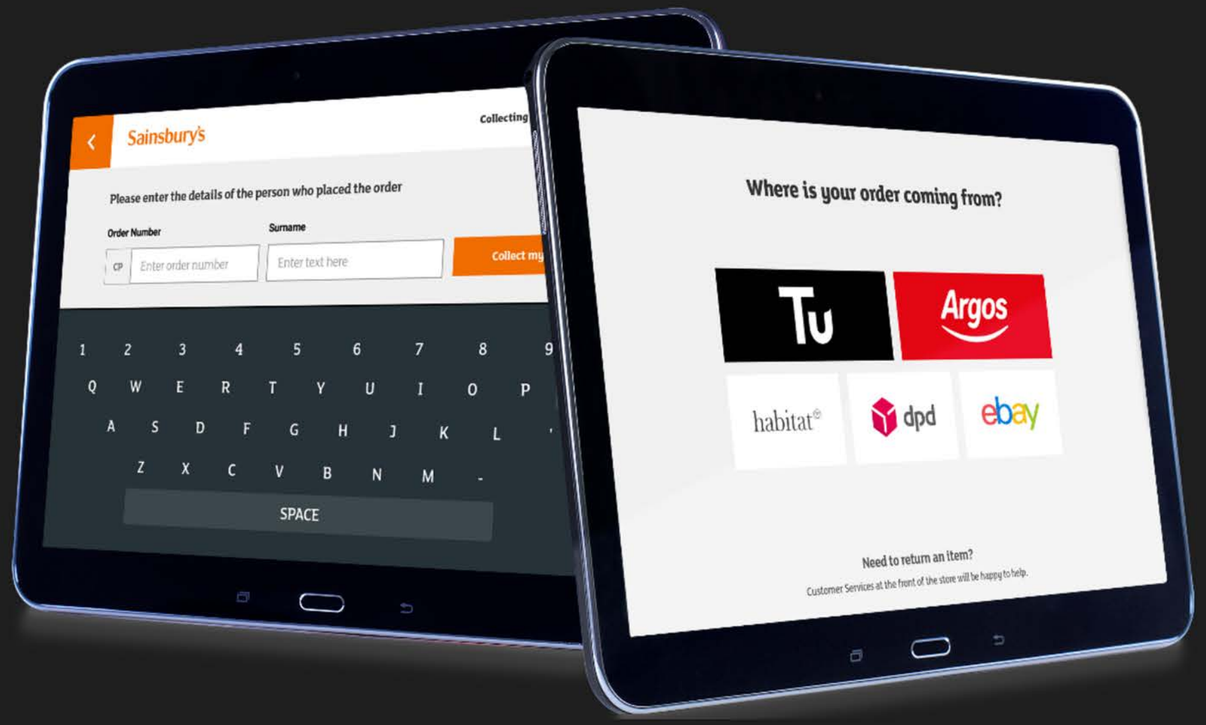
- Enable multi-order check-in in a single seamless session.
- Introduce clear return and help pathways within the digital check-in interface.
- Apply predictive technology (e.g. postcode autofill, behavior-based prompts) to reduce input effort.
- Standardize UI elements to reflect Argos' brand across all device screens.
- Improve the customer satisfaction score by addressing key issues raised in the Walnut Research.

Challenges & Constraints

Although the project had a clear mandate, execution was far from linear. From unclear ownership of customer interface data to delays in cross-functional collaboration and real-world testing, we often had to work through ambiguity and adapt on the fly.

With limited competitor benchmarks (most kiosk designs weren't publicly documented), inspiration had to come from live in-store observations and iterative testing.

Business Context or Strategic Vision



This project fed into a broader strategic goal to make self-serve collection and returns the default experience across Sainsbury's Group retail locations.

Business Context or Strategic Vision

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User Research

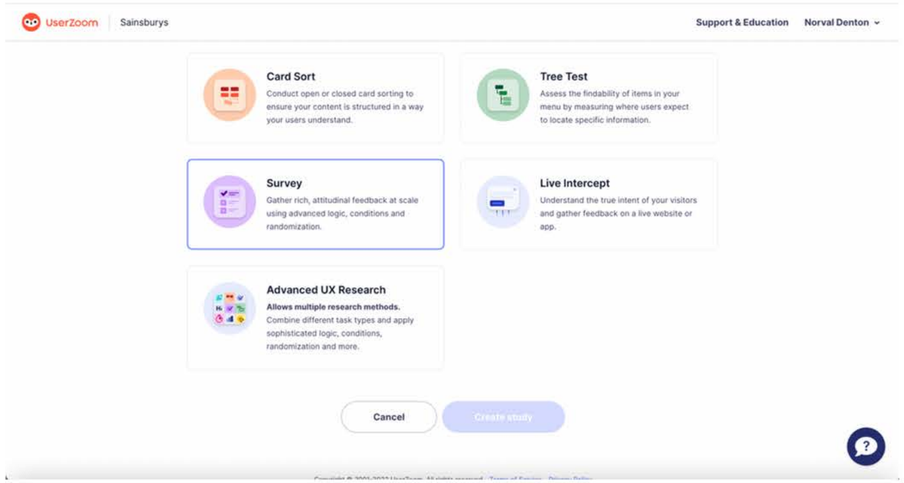
To uncover user pain points and validate areas for improvement, we conducted focused user research around the current Digital Check-In experience. This included a mix of direct observations, feedback sessions, and review of prior UX audit data (Walnut Research).

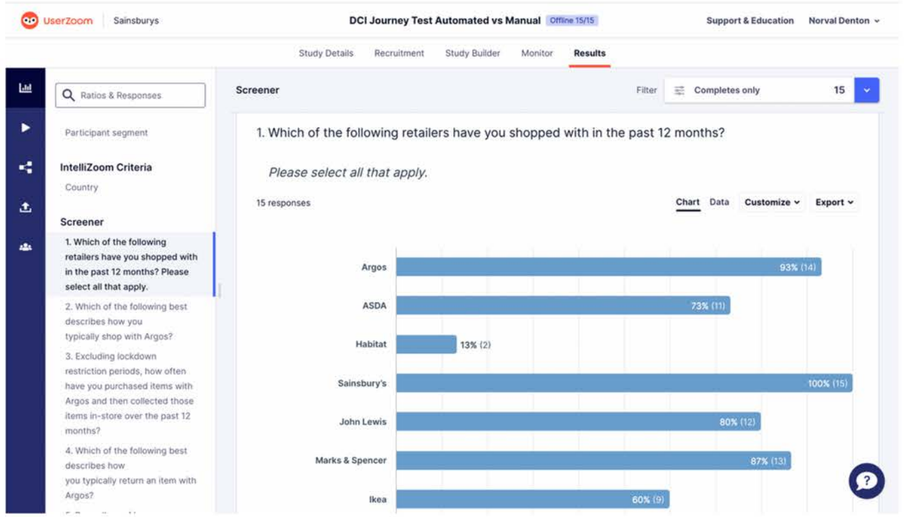
User Research

We focused on identifying friction points, including:

- Inability to check in multiple orders in one session
- Confusion due to Sainsbury's branding on an Argos experience
- Lack of clarity around what to do if something goes wrong (no help/support feature)
- No functionality to handle returns—forcing customers to rely on staff assistance

These findings were used to shape our design priorities, aiming to reduce cognitive load, streamline task flows, and support more complete customer journeys.





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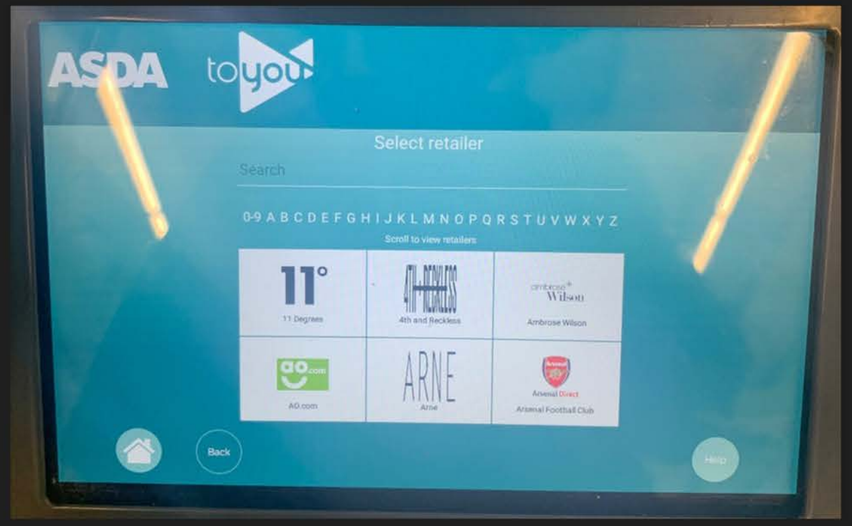


Competitor Analysis

To benchmark against the market and identify inspiration, we reviewed in-store devices and self-check-in systems from a range of competitors, including:

- Next
- Marks & Spencer (Check-in & Returns)
- EVRi
- Asda ToYou
- Screwfix

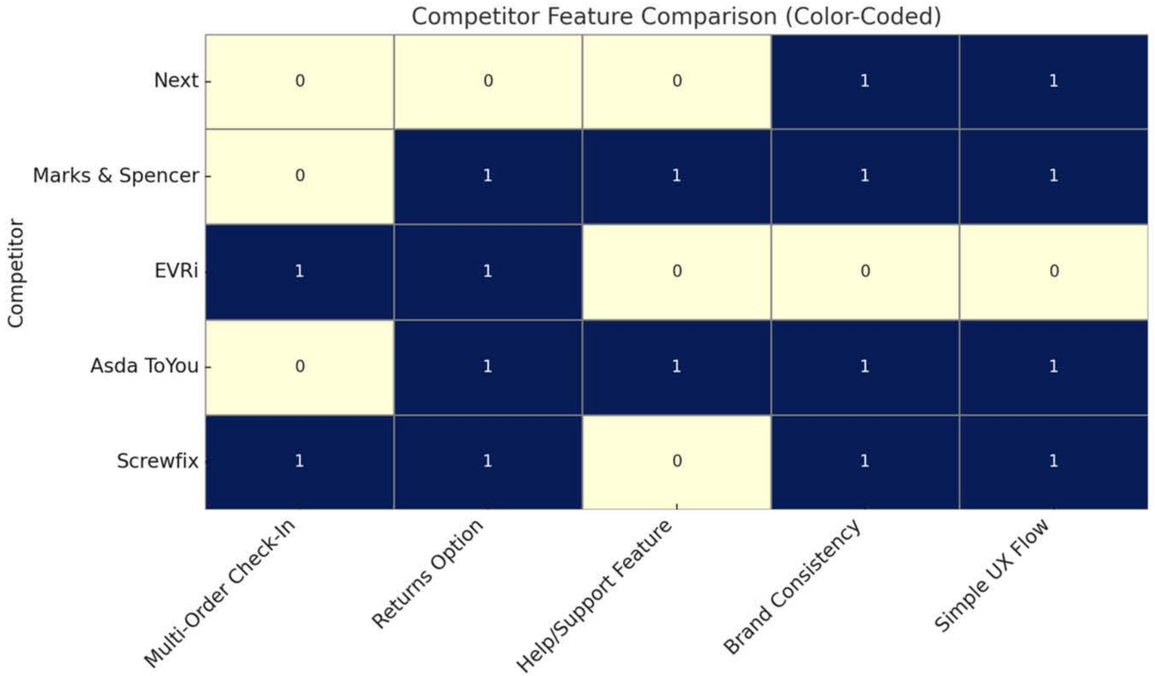
Competitor Analysis

Our focus areas included:

- Feature availability (e.g., multi-order, returns, help support)
- Branding consistency and visual clarity
- Accessibility and input simplicity
- Touchpoint guidance and error recovery

Competitor Feature Comparison (✓ / ✗)

Competitor	Multi-Order Check-In	Returns Option	Help/Support Feature	Brand Consistency	Simple UX Flow
Next	✗	✗	✗	✓	✓
Marks & Spencer	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓
EVRi	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗
Asda ToYou	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓
Screwfix	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓



👨‍💻 Persona 1: Busy Lisa

Name: Lisa Patterson
Age: 36 years old
Occupation: Nurse

Income: £32,000/year
Location: Birmingham, UK

About:
Lisa works long shifts at the hospital and values her limited time off. When shopping, she leans heavily on online ordering with in-store collection to avoid waiting or wandering. She's often picking up items during her break or between errands, so a quick, smooth process is non-negotiable.

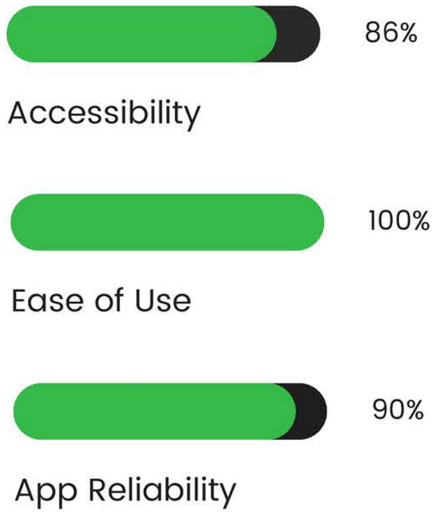
Goals:

- Get in and out of the store as quickly as possible
- Be confident her order is ready and will be found fast
- Avoid queues or asking staff unless absolutely necessary
- Feel like the system works as expected every time

Frustrations:

- Needing to repeat steps (e.g., entering multiple order numbers)
- Lack of visible help or support options
- Branding inconsistencies that make her second-guess where to go

Motivators:

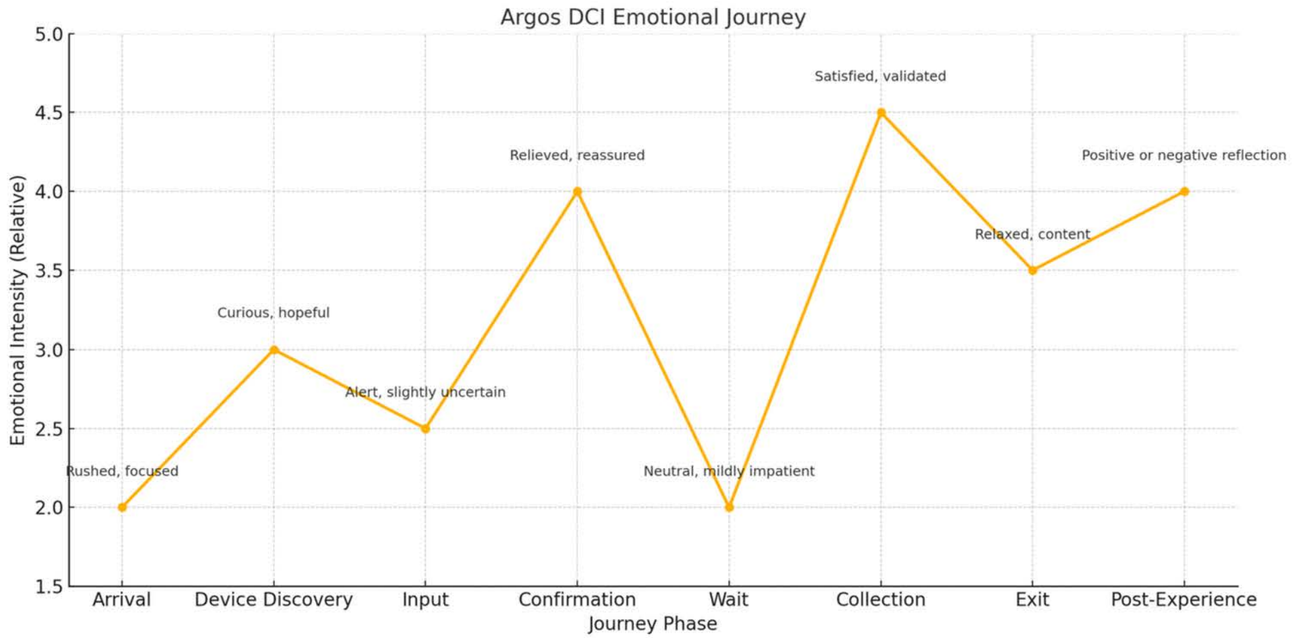


Argos DCI Customer Journey Map

	Phase	User Actions	Emotional Response	Opportunities
1	Arrival	Customer enters store, heading toward collection point	Rushed, focused	Guide customers to the DCI device with clear signage
2	Device Discovery	Spots the DCI device, approaches it with order info ready	Curious, hopeful	Use strong, consistent branding to signal trust
3	Input	Enters one or more order numbers into the system	Alert, slightly uncertain	Enable multi-order input and simple error handling
4	Confirmation	Sees confirmation and estimated wait time on screen	Relieved, reassured	Show clear, friendly confirmations with support options
5	Wait	Waits nearby or browses while item is retrieved	Neutral, mildly impatient	Add estimated wait times or status updates
6	Collection	Staff member arrives with items, verifies ID/order	Satisfied, validated	Ensure smooth staff handoff and reinforce success
7	Exit	Leaves store with their purchase	Relaxed, content	Provide optional feedback prompt or loyalty nudge
8	Post-Experience	Reflects on ease of use, speed, and confidence in the system	Positive or negative reflection	Collect insights for continuous improvement

Customer Journey

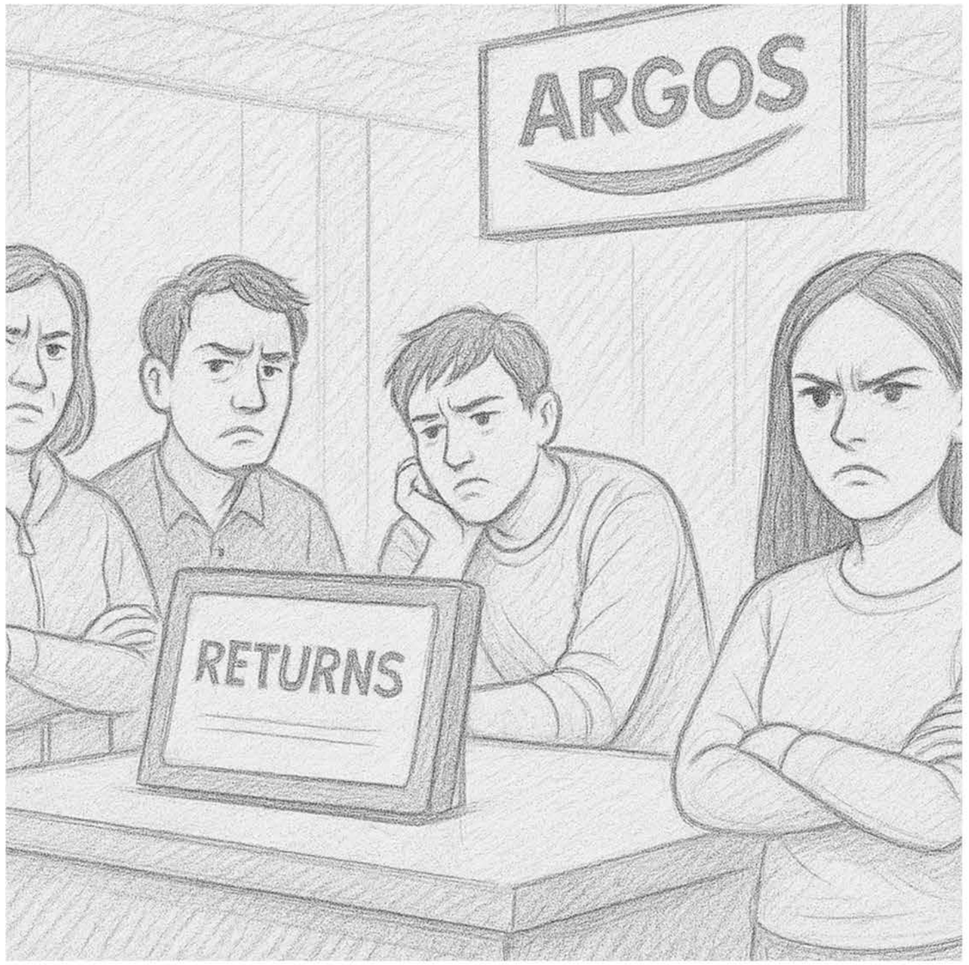
I created a Customer Journey Map (CJM) to visualize the end-to-end experience of an Argos customer using the Digital Check-In device—from entering the store to successfully collecting their order. The map highlighted key moments of interaction, emotional responses, and surfaced usability gaps in the current process.



Customer Journey

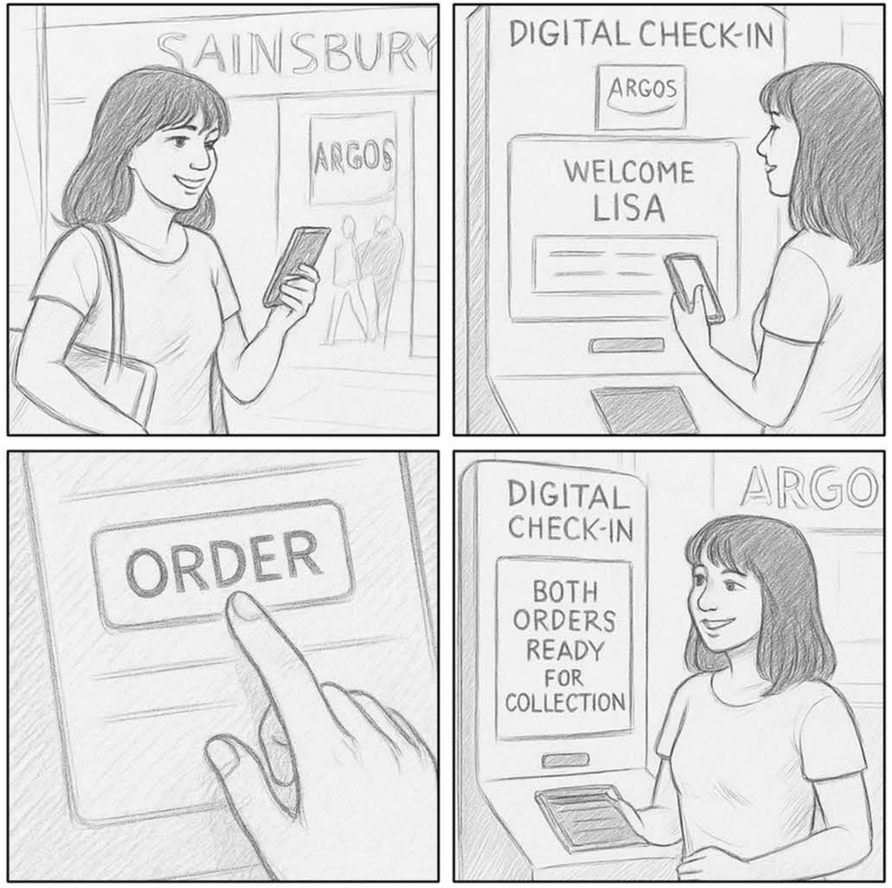
Mapping this journey helped identify pain points—like single-order limitations, lack of help options, and inconsistent branding—and guided our design to build a faster, more confident and complete customer experience.

User Story



"As a busy shopper, I want to check in quickly and collect multiple orders with minimal effort, so I can get on with the rest of my day without delays."

User Story



Scene 1

Lisa walks into Argos inside her local Sainsbury's, already juggling thoughts of her next errand.

Scene 2

She spots the bright, clearly branded Digital Check-In device and heads toward it with her phone in hand.

Scene 3

The screen welcomes her and prompts her to enter her order number—she enters two in one go with ease.

Scene 4

The system recognizes both orders and confirms they're ready for collection, reducing her worry instantly.

User Story

Scene 5

It gives her an estimated wait time and lets her request help if needed—she appreciates knowing it's an option.

Scene 6

The confirmation screen is clean and clear; it even reminds her she can initiate a return next time through the same flow.

Scene 7

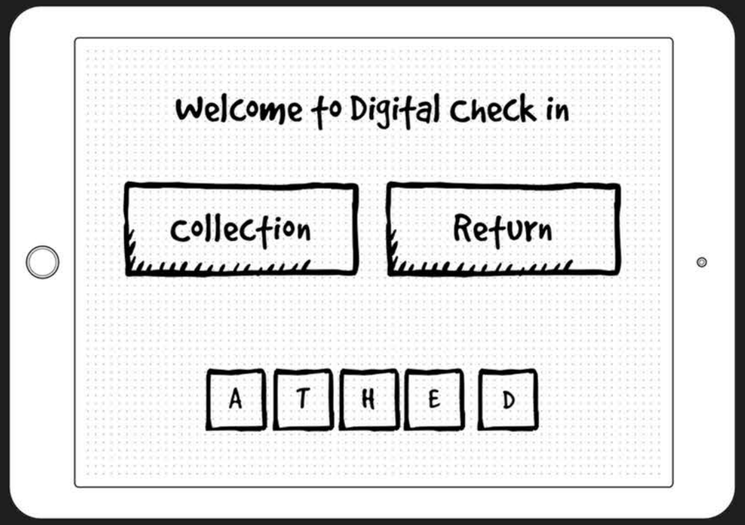
Within minutes, a staff member approaches her with her items—no awkward explanations or repeated order numbers needed.

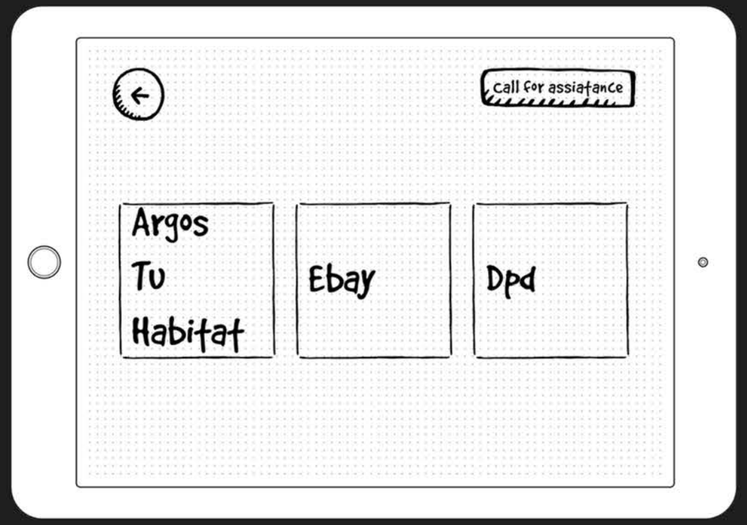
Scene 8

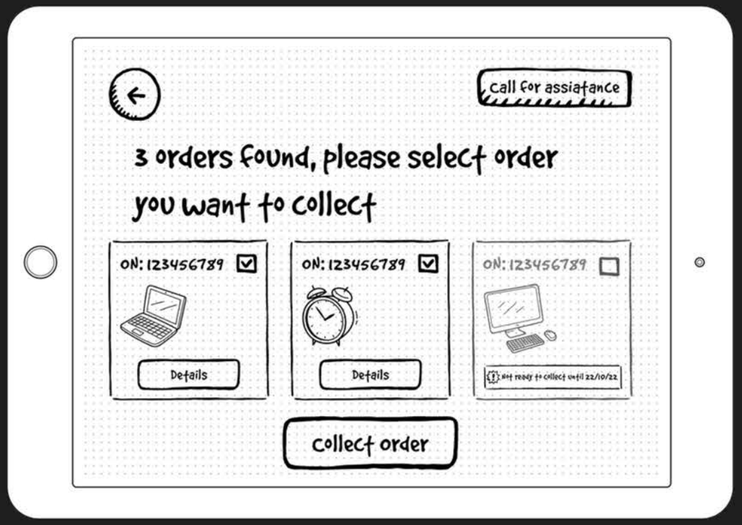
Lisa leaves the store feeling relieved and in control, knowing that check-in just worked—fast, easy, and on her terms.

UI mock-ups

Low Fidelity







Usability Testing

To validate and refine the Argos Digital Check-In experience, I conducted in-store guerilla testing with real customers at multiple Sainsbury's locations. Observing interactions in natural, high-traffic retail environments surfaced usability challenges that wouldn't emerge in remote or lab-based testing.

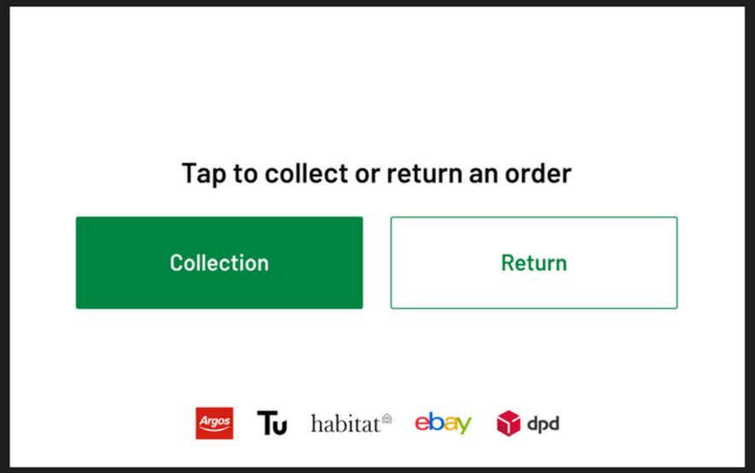
Participants were asked to complete key flows including:

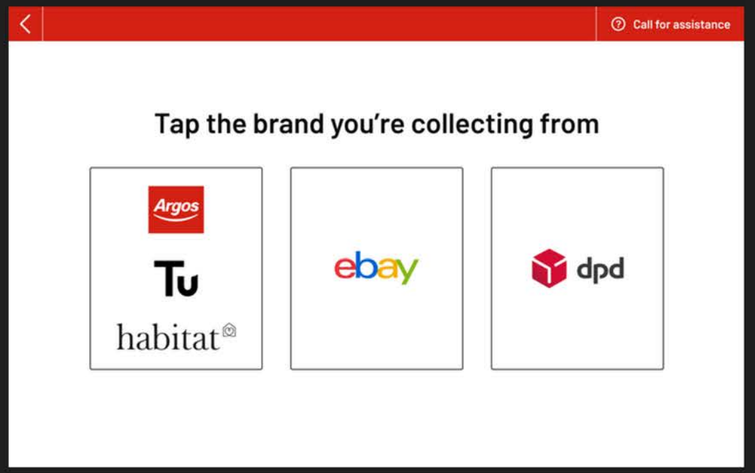
- Checking in with multiple order numbers
- Navigating the system for help
- Attempting to initiate a return

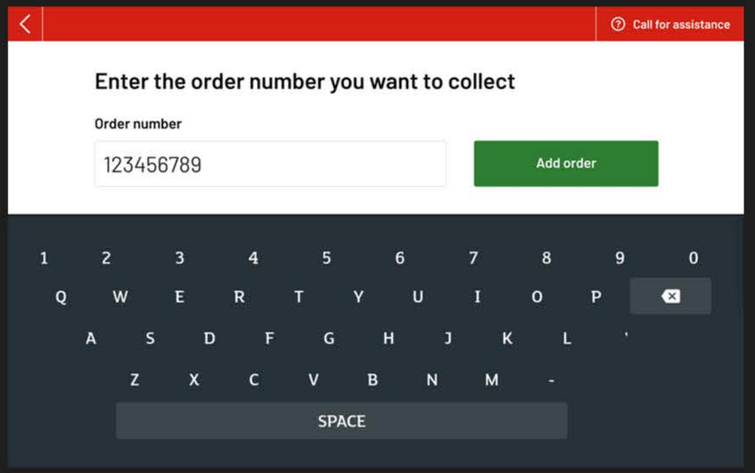
I closely observed moments of confusion, pauses, and errors, as well as signs of confidence or success.
Key feedback centered around the lack of guidance, frustration with single-order limitations, and the need for faster visual confirmation. These insights directly shaped interface refinements, improved help pathways, and a clearer, more responsive check-in flow.

UI mock-ups

High Fidelity







UI mock-ups

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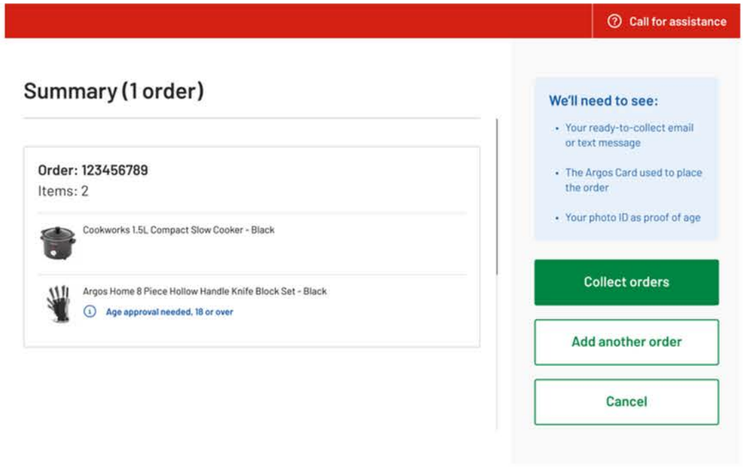

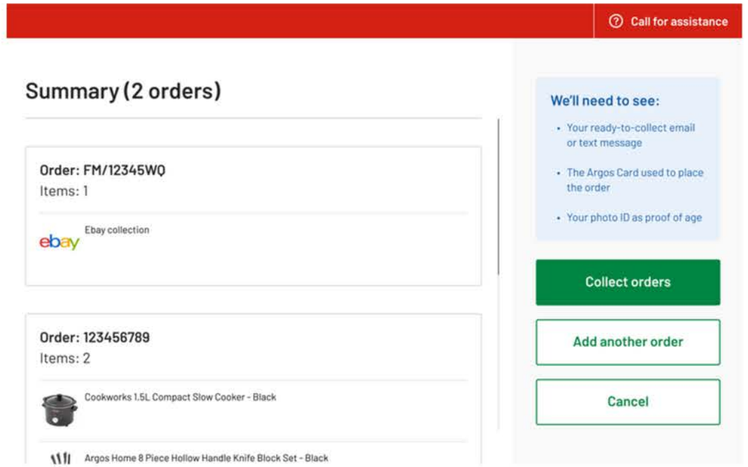

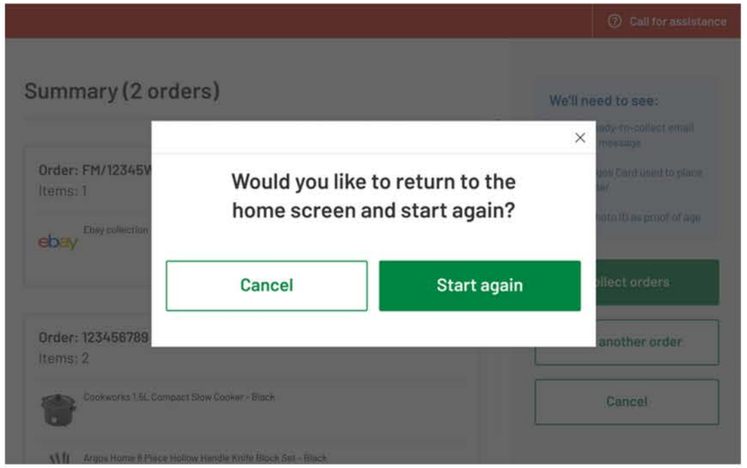

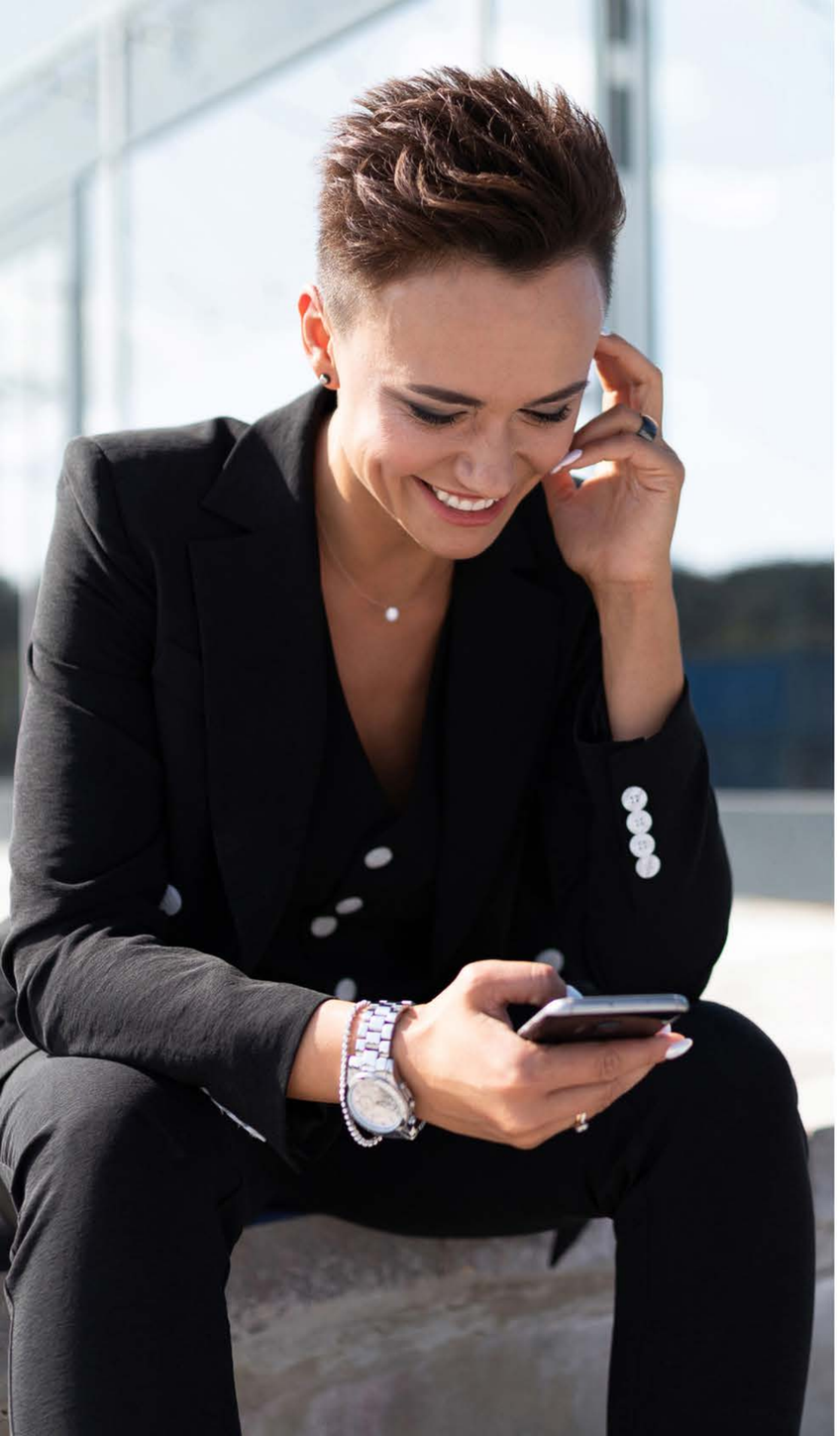

The Conclusion

Designing the Argos Digital Check-In experience was about more than improving a device—it was about rethinking how customers interact with self-service in one of the most time-sensitive, high-intent moments of their journey.

Rooted in real-world observations, cross-team collaboration, and iterative testing, the work focused on reducing friction, clarifying next steps, and expanding what the device could do—from supporting multi-order check-ins to offering help and initiating returns.

This project reinforced how impactful thoughtful UX can be—especially when it respects context, constraints, and the small decisions that build user trust. Great service design doesn't just guide people through a task—it helps them feel confident, capable, and cared for in the process.

THANKS FOR VIEWING!