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Where do users get stuck? What the published data shows about friction

Frustration touches 35% of sessions, and 48% of people who start a form don't finish. What the published data on friction shows, and what it can't prove.

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SUMMARY

Where users get stuck: what the published data shows

We read the largest published studies on rage clicks, form abandonment, page speed and attention, and traced each figure to its source. Friction touches about a third of visits and half of the forms people start. Here is what holds up, and what the numbers can't prove.

KEY FINDINGS

1 **Friction is common.** Frustration touched 35.2% of sessions across more than 99 billion sessions on 6,500 websites (Contentsquare[1]).

2 **Forms lose about half the people who start them.** 48% of people who started filling in a form didn't finish it (Zuko[2]), and the password field loses more people than any other.

3 **Tenths of a second show up in sales.** Across 37 brands, a 0.1-second faster mobile site went with 8.4% more retail conversions (Google and Deloitte[3]). In a controlled test, Vodafone sold 8% more from a 31% faster page (web.dev[4]).

4 **Most of a page is never seen.** People spent 57% of their viewing time above the fold and 74% in the first two screens (Nielsen Norman Group[5]).

5 **None of it shows that fixing one rage click earns a sale.** We found no independent controlled study linking a fixed rage or dead click to conversion. The friction data shows where to look; a test shows what a fix is worth.

CONTENTS

01 Friction touches a third of visits
02 Forms lose people at the same few fields
03 Tenths of a second show up in conversion
04 Most of a page is never seen
05 Inside the product: features and onboarding
06 What these numbers can't prove
07 What we would do with this
— Sources cited

Most teams find out a page is broken from the numbers that come after it: a sign-up rate that dips, a trial that doesn't convert. The friction itself happens earlier, to one person at a time: a button that does nothing, a form that asks too much, a page that takes too long. We wanted to know how common that is and what it costs, so we read the largest published studies on it and traced every figure to its source.

This is a review of published data, not a controlled experiment. Most of it comes from online stores and from vendors measuring their own customers, and the section on what the numbers can't prove matters as much as the findings.

01 Friction touches a third of visits

Contentsquare's 2026 Digital Experience Benchmark covers more than 99 billion sessions on 6,500 websites in 9 industries. Frustration, its combined measure of signals such as rage clicks, slow pages and errors, affected 35.2% of sessions, and slow page loads alone touched 10.9%. Contentsquare also finds that cutting rage clicks per page by 1.5 percentage points goes with one more page view per session (Contentsquare 2026 benchmark[1]).

35.2%

Share of sessions affected by frustration, across more than 99 billion sessions on 6,500 websites.

Source: Contentsquare 2026 Digital Experience Benchmark[1]

In online retail alone, rage clicks showed up in 5.3% of sessions in 2025, and JavaScript errors caused frustration in 17.8% (Contentsquare retail benchmark[6]).

FullStory's 2026 benchmark, from more than 18 billion sessions, shows the kind of friction changing: errors fell 8%, while rage clicks rose 77% and dead clicks 35%, and people on phones saw nearly three times as many rage clicks (FullStory Digital Benchmark Report 2026[7]). In a FullStory survey, 64% of consumers said they were likely to leave a site or app without finishing a transaction after a problem or frustration (FullStory[8]). That is what people say they do, not what they were seen doing.

02 Forms lose people at the same few fields

Zuko, which measures forms field by field, found that 48% of people who started interacting with a form did not complete it, in data from January 2022 to April 2025 (Zuko benchmarks[2]). In a study of 1,362 forms, the password field had the highest abandon rate of any field, 10.5% on average (Zuko field study[9]).

Baymard Institute averages 50 published studies, from 2006 to 2025, to an online cart abandonment rate of 70.22%. Leaving out people who were just browsing, the US shoppers in its survey named three main reasons: extra costs were too high (40%), the site wanted them to create an account (18%), and

checkout was too long or complicated (17%). The average US checkout shows 23.48 form elements by default; Baymard finds a checkout can need as few as 12 to 14 (Baymard Institute[10]).

Where people drop	Data	Figure
Any form	Zuko, January 2022 to April 2025	48% of people who start don't finish
The password field	Zuko, 1,362 forms	10.5% abandon rate on average, the highest of any field
Online checkout	Baymard, 50 studies, 2006 to 2025	70.22% of carts abandoned
Being asked for an account	Baymard, survey of US shoppers	18% of those who left named this reason

None of these studies is about SaaS sign-up in particular, but a sign-up is a form, and the fields they flag, a password and a required account, are the ones every sign-up asks for.

03 Tenths of a second show up in conversion

In **Milliseconds Make Millions**, Google and Deloitte followed 37 brands and 30 million sessions over four weeks in 2019. A 0.1-second faster mobile site went with 8.4% more conversions in retail and 10.1% more in travel. The speed changes were natural rather than a test, and Deloitte did not audit the data, which the report says itself (Google and Deloitte, 2020[3]).

Two companies ran controlled tests and published them on Google's web.dev. **Vodafone** sent half of a landing page's traffic to a faster version: a 31% better Largest Contentful Paint led to 8% more sales (Vodafone[4]). **Rakuten 24** split a landing page's traffic 50/50 for a month: the page optimized for speed had a 33.13% higher conversion rate and 53.37% more revenue per visitor (Rakuten 24[11]). Each test covered one page.

04 Most of a page is never seen

In a **Nielsen Norman Group** eye-tracking study of 120 people on desktop screens (2018), 57% of page-viewing time went above the fold and 74% to the first two screens (Scrolling and Attention[5]). An older Nielsen Norman Group analysis of Microsoft Research data found that people often leave a page within 10 to 20 seconds, unless it makes its value clear (How Long Do Users Stay on Web Pages?[12]).

Contentsquare's 2026 benchmark puts the average scroll rate at 50.5% on desktop and 45.2% on mobile (Contentsquare engagement[13]). Whatever sits low on a long page, such as a sign-up form or the answer to a pricing question, is seen by far fewer people than whatever sits at the top.

05 Inside the product: features and onboarding

Pendo, which measures usage inside its customers' software, found in 2019 that 80% of features in the average product were rarely or never used (Pendo 2019 Feature Adoption Report[14]). Its 2024 benchmark puts the median feature adoption rate at 6.4% (Pendo[15]).

Userpilot tracked 62 SaaS companies and found an average activation rate of 37.5%: almost two of every three people who sign up never reach the step that makes the product useful. Across 188 companies, 19.2% of users completed the onboarding checklist. Each company defines activation its own way (Userpilot activation[16], Userpilot benchmarks[17]).

Chameleon, from more than 550 million interactions with product tours: tours of three or four steps were finished about three times in four (72% and 74%), and tours of seven steps or more only 16% of the time (Chameleon[18]).

06 What these numbers can't prove

It is tempting to read these figures as "fix the friction and conversion goes up". The data supports looking for friction; it does not promise what a fix earns, for four reasons.

Each vendor grades itself	Contentsquare, FullStory, Zuko, Pendo, Userpilot and Chameleon each measure the sites and products that use them, with their own definitions of frustration, activation or adoption. None of these figures is independently audited.
Mostly online stores	Baymard's data and much of Contentsquare's and FullStory's come from ecommerce and mixed industries. SaaS sign-ups and in-product flows are a small part of it.
Association, not cause	Most of the speed and frustration figures compare sessions or sites, not the same page before and after a fix. Only the Vodafone and Rakuten 24 tests split traffic, and each covered one page.
Old lab data	The Nielsen Norman Group studies are from 2010 to 2018, and the attention study is a desktop lab study, not real traffic.

We found no independent controlled study showing that fixing rage clicks or dead clicks lifts conversion; the published results are vendor case studies. To know what a fix is worth on your own site, test it: send half of the traffic to the fixed page, or compare the same page over the same weeks before and after.

07 What we would do with this

1. **Look at people, not averages.** A frustration rate tells you there is a problem; the page where one person clicked the same button five times and left tells you where it is.
2. **Start with forms.** Sign-up, checkout and anything with a password: count who starts and who finishes, field by field.
3. **Keep what matters in the first two screens,** where about three quarters of attention goes.
4. **Check phones first.** FullStory sees nearly three times as many rage clicks on mobile.
5. **Follow up with the person who got stuck.** Someone who gave up on your pricing page or a half-finished sign-up is still interested. A short email that helps with what they were trying to do can bring them back.
6. **Test the fix** before you count on it, with half of the traffic or a before-and-after over the same weeks.

TRY IT IN BEHAVLY

See where each person got stuck

In Behavly, Heatmaps counts rage clicks and dead clicks page by page and paints the heatmap over your real site, for everyone or for the one person who got stuck.

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Every figure in this report comes from one of these publications.

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ABOUT

About Behavly Research

Reports on lifecycle email and user behavior, built from published studies. Every figure links to its source, and each report says what the numbers can't prove. We publish no figures from Behavly customers' data. Every report is free to read online at behavly.io/research, and free to quote with a link to it.

About Behavly

Agentic analytics and lifecycle email for SaaS. Behavly shows what each person did on your website and in your product, and follows up with each of them by email based on what they did. It has a free plan, no credit card needed.

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