

Homebase's new mobile commerce app reviewed

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Homebase has just launched a new smartphone app that aims to bolster its multichannel offering. The home and garden retailer launched a click-and-collect app way [back in 2010](#), but this new version offers a more comprehensive range of features.

Available on iOS and Android, the app enables customers to browse the entire product range, make a purchase, or check stock at their local store.

Homebase receives more than 50% of its traffic through mobile devices and the new app has already been downloaded more than 70,000 times.

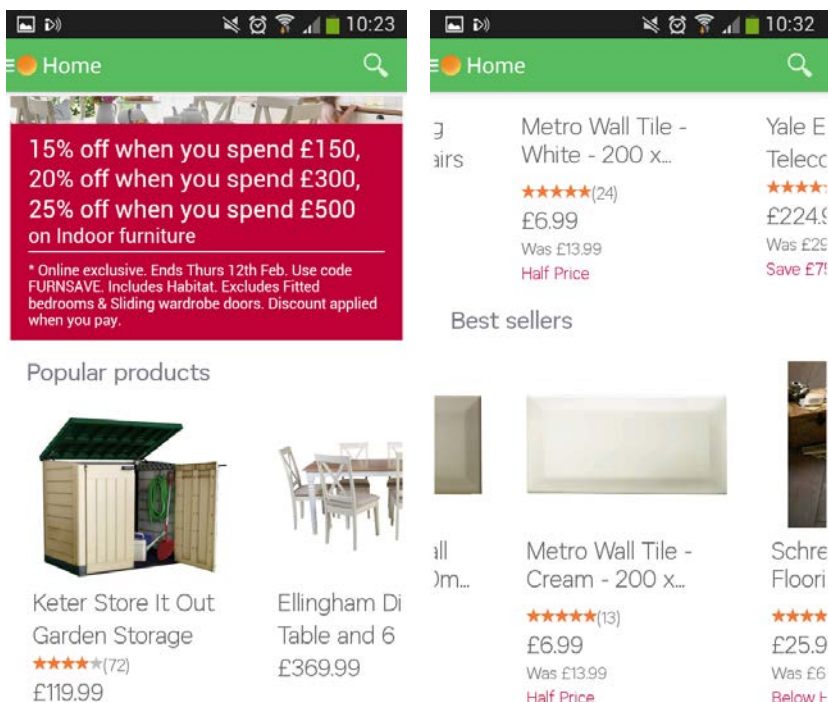
Here's what I thought of it, and for more on this topic read our posts on mobile apps from [B&Q](#) and [House of Fraser](#)...

Login and homepage

Upon opening the app for the first time, users are asked whether they want to login or register with Homebase.

On the assumption that most people downloading the app will already be Homebase customers, I signed up to make sure I got the full in-app experience.

The registration form was really simple. It just needed my name, email address and postcode.



The homepage itself is a bit random. Underneath the big sales promotion there are two product categories that users can swipe to explore.

They are labelled 'popular products' and 'best sellers', which surely mean the same thing? And they do indeed contain many similar products.

Also, the items bear no relation to each other. For example, 'popular products' contains an outdoor storage unit, wall tiles, indoor dining furniture, a home alarm and laminate flooring.

It might be more useful to have links to different product categories on the home screen.

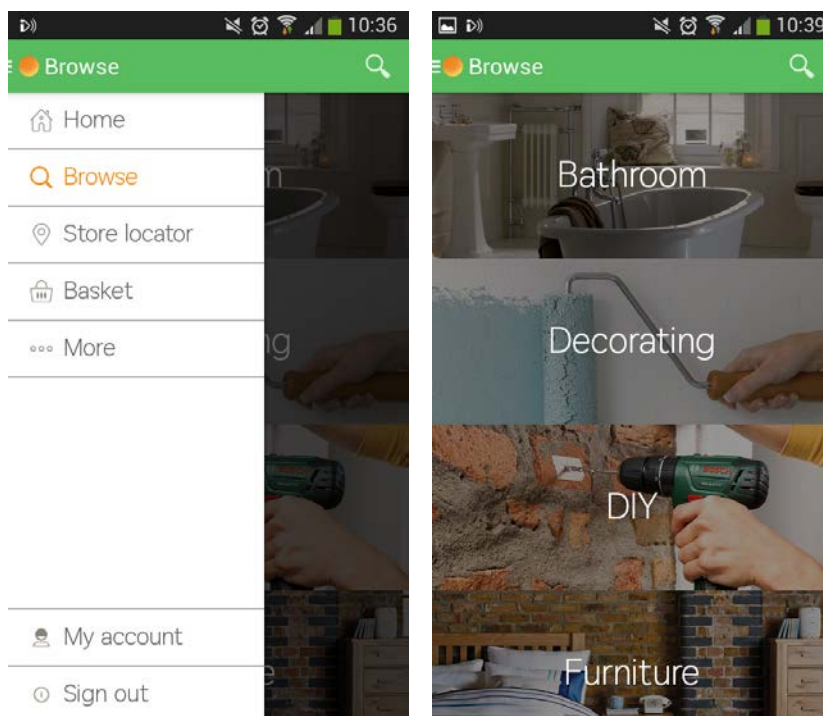
Navigation

If you do want to navigate to product categories you have to choose the 'browse' option from the hamburger menu.

This isn't particularly clear in my opinion as 'browse' uses the same magnifying glass logo as the search tool.

The category options and their sub-sections use big icons that include text and attractive imagery, so it's very easy to navigate around the app.

One criticism here would be that the app includes a category for 'Christmas', which isn't very useful in February.



I'm currently thinking about doing some work to my garden so I'm in the market for some trellis. The app makes it very easy to browse the different options, with each item including a big image, cost, star rating (where available), and fulfilment options (in-store/home delivery).

Search tool

As with most apps, the search results were a mixed bag.

Though I could find what I was looking for by doing a bit of scrolling, there were quite a few erroneous or irrelevant results.

For example, the top results in my search for 'trellis' were a pair of children's playhouses.

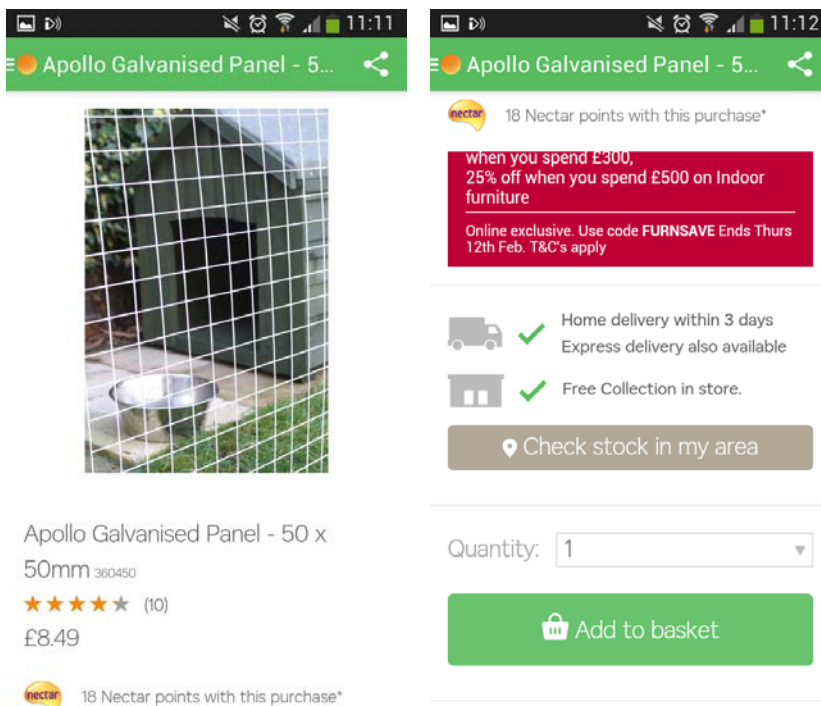
Also, it doesn't offer predictive search or alternative spelling suggestions, which are fairly common UX features.

Product pages

The product pages have a clear, uncluttered design so it's easy to find all the relevant information.

They provide big product images, customer reviews, a decent description, delivery options, and alternative product recommendations.

There are a few inconsistencies though, which are presumably an inevitable consequence of stocking such a broad range of products.



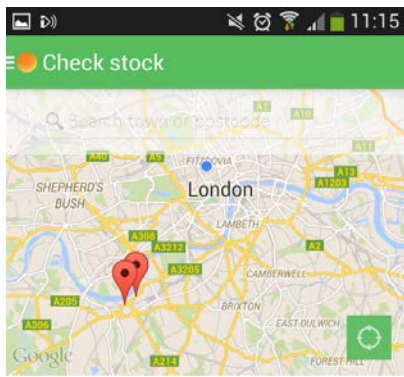
Some pages have several images while others only have one, and the stock checking function isn't universally available.

Another minor problem is that the red special offer promo isn't showing properly, as you can see on the above screenshot.

Stock checker

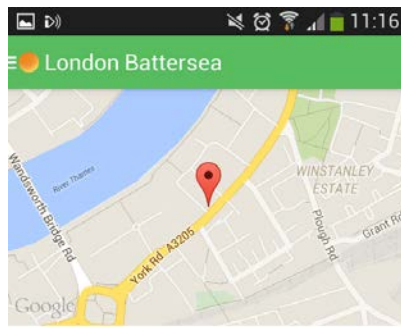
Mobile apps have the potential to be an integral part of a retailer's multichannel offering, but only if they offer the right functionality.

Homebase's app has a really useful stock checker tool that will likely help to drive footfall in-store.



Stores near your current location

✗	London Finchley Road Out of stock	2.91 miles
✓	London Battersea 8 in stock	4.06 miles
✓	London Wandsworth 8 in stock	4.43 miles



London Battersea

York Road
Battersea
London
SW11 3SJ
0345 640 7667
4.06 miles from your current location
[Get directions](#)
Opening hours
Monday 08:00 - 21:00

It works extremely quickly, enabling customers to see where the product is available, the store's location and its opening times.

However you can't actually reserve the product through the stock-checking tool, so you have to gamble that it won't have sold out by the time you arrive.

The checkout

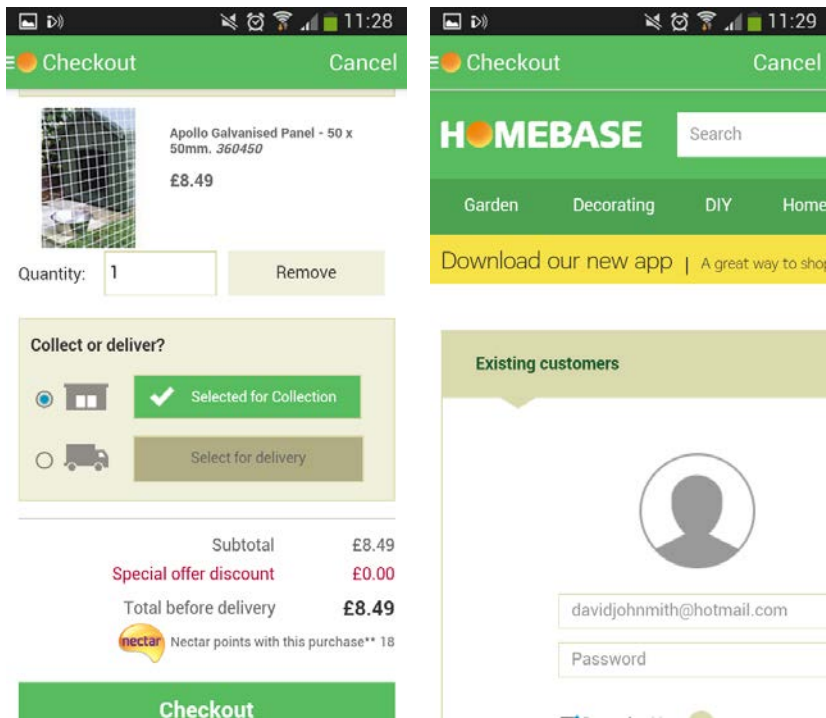
When you select an item using the excellent 'add to basket' CTA it's not immediately obvious how to then get to the shopping basket.

While most apps either take you there automatically or have a basket icon in the top right-hand corner, in Homebase's app the basket is only available in the hamburger menu.

This isn't a major flaw, but it probably isn't what most users would expect.

Unfortunately the next stage of the process does suffer from a major flaw.

Having selected in-store pickup I'm then routed to a desktop site to complete the order, which ironically includes a banner ad encouraging me to download the new app.



For some reason my login then wouldn't work, and the guest checkout required a huge amount of form filling and pinching and zooming.

This is a massive barrier to purchase and should really have been sorted out prior to launch.

In conclusion...

Homebase's app has the potential to be really good, but it currently has way too many rough edges and UX flaws.

These range from minor issues (e.g. 'browse' and 'search' icons are the same, shopping basket located in the hamburger menu) to big problems such as the lack of [a mobile checkout](#).

I'm sure these problems will be fixed as Homebase upgrades and develops the app, in which case it could be a very important sales channel, particularly given the growing usage of [click-and-collect services](#).

But at the moment the app is really only useful for product research as there are too many barriers to purchase.

Link: <https://econsultancy.com/blog/66061-homebase-s-new-mobile-commerce-app-reviewed/>