

AI TEST PURCHASE · OCTOBER 2026

How to prepare an online store for shoppers' AI assistants

Aventon · Himiway · Lectric · Ride1Up · Velotric

We tested a simulated pre-purchase journey with an AI agent across five US e-bike websites. No orders were placed or paid for.

- 1 Letting AI onto the site is not enough. All five stores took the agent to checkout, but they answered the shopper's main questions with different completeness.**
 - 2 At one brand the agent chose a model that cost \$200 more: a key feature of the cheaper model was not visible in its specifications.**
 - 3 A preliminary total with shipping and tax could be obtained at only three stores out of five.**
 - 4 The agent found the answer to "what if the bike doesn't suit me after the first ride?" in the return policy, not on the product page. We recommend a brief, product-specific summary on the product page, linked to the full policy.**
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Sergei Ponomarev · AI Business · aibusiness.vc · version 1.0 · 14 October 2026

How to prepare an online store for shoppers' AI assistants

AI Test Purchase at five US e-bike brands, October 2026

Sergei Ponomarev · AI Business, an independent research project · version 1.0 of 14 October 2026 · website pass made on 14 October 2026

1. Summary

Why we did this. More and more people come to an online store with their own AI assistant: "find me a bike to ride to work, under this amount, and tell me what happens if it doesn't suit me." That gives the store a new question: how should the site be built so that such a shopper can buy from you? What should be changed, added, simplified or opened up? This is the subject of the series "How to prepare an online store for shoppers' AI assistants". For this issue we chose a purchase that nobody makes in five minutes: an e-bike, with bulky delivery, assembly and non-trivial return terms.

Which brands and why. Aventon, Himiway, Lectric, Ride1Up, Velotric: five US e-bike brands that sell directly through their own websites and ship within the US. They are alternatives for the same shopper: on 14 October each had a model with a low step-through frame, a throttle and the required range within our budget. Buyer guides compare them with each other: for example, Electrek's 2026 guide to the best e-bikes by price tier lists Lectric, Aventon and Ride1Up among budget models. A sixth candidate, Rad Power Bikes, was not included: its step-through bikes within the budget were unavailable on 14 October.

How we tested. We used the AI agent Claude Code with browser access. It carried out the task of a fictional shopper from Austin under the researcher's supervision: a step-through bike with a throttle and at least 40 miles of range, up to \$2,500 all-in, delivery within two weeks, the cheapest suitable option, plus a separate question about what happens if the bike is returned after assembly and a short ride. On each site the agent searched the catalogue itself, read the product page and the shipping and return terms, put the bike in the cart and opened checkout. Product and policy pages were saved immediately after the pass.

Main conclusion. Opening the site to an AI shopper is not enough. The agent needs to understand three things: whether the product fits, what the purchase will cost, and which terms apply to this particular item. Checkout opened at all five brands, but the answers to these three questions came with different completeness. The store's next task is not only to let the agent in, but to give it everything it needs for an informed choice.

What we saw and what it means for the site.

1. Decisive specifications should be visible in the model description. The agent checks the shopper's requirements against what it reads on the page. At Lectric, Himiway and Velotric the class, throttle and range are stated directly in the specifications, and the agent quickly saw that the bike fits. At Aventon the \$1,799 model's internal product data includes the tags "Throttle" and "Class 2"; we did not verify whether it met every requirement of the task. In the text the agent read, it found the throttle only in customer reviews, and it chose the \$1,999 model, where the throttle is listed in the specifications. Part of the information was on the site, just not where the agent looked for it.

- **What could change.** List the features shoppers choose by in the visible specifications of every model and every version, not only in tags and filters.
- **What to check on your site.** Whether any feature that matters for the choice is visible only in reviews, images or internal data.

2. Shoppers need an approximate total before entering their full contact and delivery details. At

Lectric, Ride1Up and Velotric we could get shipping and preliminary tax from one ZIP code. Aventon and Himiway show shipping only after a full address, which under our research rules we did not enter. The price can also change in the cart: at Aventon a \$15 battery recycling fee appeared there, which we did not find in the saved text of the product page.

- **What could change.** Give a preliminary cost with shipping by ZIP code, explain what data is needed for an exact quote, and show mandatory fees on the product page.
- **What to check on your site.** Whether the price on the product page matches the price in the cart, and whether the total with shipping can be seen without a full address.

3. The answer to "what if it doesn't suit me?" belongs next to the product. Product pages carry badges such as "14-Day Returns", "15-Day Return", "30-Day Returns". Whether a bike can be returned after assembly and a ride, and how much is deducted, is stated only in the return terms: from a few hundred dollars to half the price, and at Lectric such a return is not provided for. Ride1Up has an exception for a Portola clearance sale, and it was hard for the agent to tell whether it covers the chosen bike. At Velotric one section allows a return after riding with a 22% deduction, another lists used items as non-returnable, and the agent could not settle on one rule.

- **What could change.** Do not move the whole return policy onto the product page; give a short answer for this item there: can it be returned after a ride, what fee applies, is there an exception for this model. Link it to the full terms and keep it consistent with them.
- **What to check on your site.** Whether different sections of the terms read the same way, and whether it is clear which rule applies to a particular model.

4. Price differences need explaining. For the same task the agent selected bikes from the five brands priced from \$995 to \$1,999: folding bikes at Ride1Up and Lectric, a city bike at Velotric, a city bike with GPS, a rack and fenders at Aventon, and a full-suspension bike at Himiway. These are bikes of different classes, and the shopper did not ask for most of the extra equipment. AI can explain what the difference pays for only as well as the store itself has explained it.

- **What could change.** Say which shopper need the extra equipment serves, and how the base and the more expensive versions differ.
- **What to check on your site.** Whether the description makes clear who needs the more expensive model and who will be fine with the base one.

What is about the site and what is about our pass. The bigger battery at Ride1Up was the agent's own choice; the site has nothing to do with it. The more expensive model at Aventon was also the agent's choice: it did not read the cheaper model's tags. The full address was not entered because of our rules; that does not mean an AI cannot use one. The "sold out" notes in the text of the Himiway page appeared during text extraction: the bike was added to the cart without problems, so these notes say nothing about availability on the site.

What this document is and is not. The study describes what an AI agent saw on the public websites of five brands on 14 October 2026 while carrying out one shopping task. It is not a ranking of brands or a

comparison of bikes. It is not a recommendation to buy or not to buy a bike from any brand. We do not assess the quality or safety of the bikes, customer service, or legal compliance. No orders were placed, nothing was paid, no personal data was entered, and no return was made; the return deductions are our own calculation from the published terms. Our summary of the return terms is not a conclusion about their lawfulness or about how they apply to any particular case. The study was not commissioned or paid for by the brands. Its aim is to show, through the eyes of a shopper with an AI assistant, what on the site helps and what could be improved.

2. What we asked

The task given to the AI agent was the same for all five brands.

I live in Austin, Texas, and I am 175 cm tall. I need an e-bike to ride to work. Step-through frame, so I can get on without a high top tube. I need a throttle and Class 2 mode, throttle up to 20 mph; models with switchable classes are fine. Manufacturer-stated pedal-assist range of at least 40 miles. Budget up to \$2,500 in total: bike, shipping, tax and all mandatory fees. Delivery within two weeks. Find one suitable bike on this brand's site, the cheapest of the suitable ones, put it in the cart and go to the last step before payment. Tell me the model and version, price, availability, shipping cost and time, and warranty. And separately: can I return the bike after assembly and a short test ride, what are the restrictions, and how much will be deducted from the refund. Do not pay, do not register, do not enter personal data; for the calculation you may use the state Texas, the city Austin and ZIP code 78701.

The task did not specify whether a folding or full-size bike, suspension or extra equipment was needed. For a person who simply wants to ride to work and knows little about bikes, this is a normal request. Different offers in response are acceptable. What is missing is something else: an explanation of why a particular person should choose one of them.

3. Results by brand

Brand	What the agent chose	Price on site	What checkout showed for Texas, Austin, 78701	Where we stopped
Aventon	Level 4 REC Step-Through, size L	\$1,999	battery recycling fee of \$15 added in the cart; total \$2,180.16 with tax, without shipping; shipping and assembly options not shown without a full address	before the shipping quote: full address required
Himiway	D5 2.0 ST, 15Ah battery	\$1,999 (was \$2,199)	shipping and tax not shown without a full address; \$1,999.00 at this step	before the shipping and tax quote: full address required
Lectric	XP4 Step-Thru 500W, folding	\$999 (was \$1,078)	free shipping; preliminary tax \$82.42 as a separate line; Total line showed \$999.00	after the quote; next: e-mail, name, address, card
Ride1Up	Portola 02 Lite, 15Ah battery, folding	\$995	free shipping, expected 16–20 October; tax \$79.60; total \$1,074.60	after the quote; next: name, address, phone, e-mail, card
Velotric	Discover 2, size Large	\$1,499 (was \$1,999)	free shipping; preliminary tax \$119.92, with the note "final tax and total will be confirmed by email or text after you place your order"; total \$1,618.92	after the quote; next: e-mail, name, address, card

The totals with tax for Lectric (\$1,081.42) and Velotric are our calculation: price plus the preliminary tax shown at checkout. The final amount payable was not confirmed anywhere. Checkout data was recorded in the researcher's log during the pass; checkout pages were not saved as files.

Why the prices differ. The bikes the agent chose differ in class and equipment (according to the saved product pages):

Brand and model	Price	What sets it apart
Ride1Up Portola 02 Lite	\$995	folding; the Lite version has no built-in rack, fenders or rear light
Lectric XP4 Step-Thru	\$999	folding; 500 Wh battery, up to 50 miles stated
Velotric Discover 2	\$1,499	full-size city bike; 705.6 Wh battery, up to 75 miles stated, tracking via Apple Find My
Aventon Level 4 REC Step-Through	\$1,999	full-size city bike; GPS, electronic lock, regenerative braking, rack and fenders
Himiway D5 2.0 ST	\$1,999	front and rear suspension, wide tyres; for comfort and rough roads

The differences in equipment are real, but they do not explain why the price is exactly double. We did not study cost, durability, ride quality or the value of these features to the shopper. So neither "twice the price is twice as good" nor "the shopper overpays a thousand for the same thing" can be concluded. One thing can be said: the same request led the AI to bikes with a twofold price difference, and the shopper did not ask for most of the extra features.

What is confirmed and what is not.

- Checkout without registration opened at all five brands: this is a confirmed result.
- The final cost with shipping was not confirmed at any brand; three gave shipping and preliminary tax, two did not calculate shipping.
- At Ride1Up checkout showed an expected delivery window of 16–20 October. Velotric's product page publishes a general arrival estimate of 3–5 business days with possible delays, not a personal quote for our address. Lectric and Aventon publish dispatch and processing times; Himiway did not show a delivery time for our address.
- Choosing the cheapest suitable option was not confirmed everywhere. At Ride1Up the agent chose the 15Ah battery at \$995 instead of the 10Ah version at \$895 (according to the log, stated range 25–45 miles for 10Ah and 30–60 miles for 15Ah). Whether the extra cost was needed to meet the task was not established. At Aventon the Pace 5 REC Step-Through at \$1,799 was not chosen: in the page text the agent read, the throttle is mentioned only in customer reviews, although in the page's internal data the model carries the tags "Throttle" and "Class 2".
- The agent took the warranty from product pages and general pages: 1 year at Lectric and Ride1Up, 2 years at Aventon, Himiway and Velotric. Warranty terms were not checked.
- Class 2 mode for the chosen Aventon was not established: the page states "Throttle Included" and "Max 28 MPH", but the class is not named directly.

4. Return after assembly and a test ride

The shopper asked directly: can I return the bike if it doesn't suit me after assembly and a short ride, and how much will be deducted? Below are the terms published as of 14 October 2026 and our calculation

based on them. We did not make an actual return.

Brand	What the terms say	Calculated scenario
Aventon	used bike: 14 days, under 20 miles on the odometer; 50% of the price is deducted, and the shopper pays return shipping	50% of \$1,999 = \$999.50 plus return shipping
Himiway	used, up to 10 miles, 15 days: 30% plus \$300 return shipping; at 10–20 miles, 15–30 days or listed signs of use, including "Tires with dirt or visible riding marks", 50% plus return shipping	under some conditions \$899.70; with listed signs of use \$1,299.50; the actual deduction was not tested
Lectric	to be eligible for a return, the item must be unused, in original packaging, and "there must be a good reason for the return (as determined by us)"; restocking fee of up to \$300	a return after riding is not provided for in the terms
Ride1Up	general rule: a 30-day return policy that may cover assembled and tested bikes, subject to the stated conditions (odometer under 20 miles, no dirt or signs of use) and model exclusions; the shopper pays return shipping; if Ride1Up approves a prepaid label, \$250–350 plus possible damage deductions are taken from the refund. Separately: "All sales are final on Portola and Prodigy v2 Clearance Sale" and "30 Day Return Policy is not applicable on Portola and Prodigy v2 Clearance Sale"	whether the exception applies to the Portola 02 Lite was not established: the product page has no clearance mark. If the exception does not apply, a return is possible under the conditions, with \$250–350 deducted for a company label plus possible costs
Velotric	14 days, "no mileage restrictions, just ride"; restocking: unused \$200, used 22% of the price, plus signature, return shipping and insurance costs. The same document lists as non-returnable: "Used products and gifted orders – non-returnable, except for warranty-covered defects with prior company approval"	under the return section, a 22% deduction (\$329.78) plus costs; the non-returnable section lists used items as non-returnable; we did not establish which provision applies

Product pages carry short badges: "14-Day Returns" (Aventon), "15-Day Return" (Himiway), "30-Day Returns" with the note "Terms and Model Exclusions Apply" (Ride1Up), "Restocking fee applies" (Velotric). They honestly state the period or the existence of a fee, while the answer about a test ride is in the terms. This is a summary of the published terms and our calculation from them, not a conclusion about their lawfulness or how they apply to any particular case.

5. What works well and what could be strengthened

What works well

Checkout without mandatory registration. At all five brands the agent reached the checkout form without creating an account and without "are you a robot" checks.

Shipping and tax by ZIP code. Lectric, Ride1Up and Velotric showed shipping cost and preliminary tax by state, city and ZIP code. The shopper sees the amount before entering personal data.

Expected delivery date. At checkout Ride1Up showed an expected delivery window of 16–20 October. That is a direct answer to the "delivery within two weeks" requirement.

Specifications right on the page. Lectric and Himiway name the class, throttle, range and rider height on the product page; Aventon's Level 4 REC says "Throttle Included" outright. Lines like these let an AI check requirements without guessing.

A note about the return fee on the product page. Velotric writes "Restocking fee applies" next to the product. It is not yet the full answer, but an honest signal that a return will cost money.

What could be strengthened

- **A feature in tags rather than in specifications.** For the Aventon Pace 5 REC Step-Through, the throttle and Class 2 appear in the product's internal tags, but the agent did not find them in the visible specifications. Including these features in the visible specifications could make the lower-priced option easier for an agent to identify.
- **The mandatory fee on the product page.** An "Environmental Recycling Fee" of \$15 appears in the Aventon cart; it was not found in the saved text of the product page. Showing the fee next to the price could help an agent include it in a preliminary cost estimate.
- **A shipping quote by ZIP code.** Aventon and Himiway show shipping options and cost (Himiway also tax) after a full address is entered. A preliminary quote by ZIP code could help an agent estimate the amount earlier.
- **A short answer about returns after a ride on the product page.** Currently product pages show the return period, while the conditions for a bike that has been ridden are set out in the return terms, sometimes in the general Terms of Service.
- **One clear rule per model.** At Velotric one section allows a used bike to be returned with a 22% deduction, another lists used items as non-returnable; one sentence saying which rule prevails could help an agent. At Ride1Up a note on the product page saying whether the clearance exception covers the Portola 02 Lite could make this clearer.
- **Internal availability text.** In the text of the Himiway page the variants carry internal notes "Variant sold out or unavailable", although the bike was added to the cart. A shopper does not see them on screen, but an agent that reads the page text may take them into account. It is worth checking how such notes get into the text.

6. How the study was done

Participants and selection

Five US e-bike brands with direct sales; the selection rationale is in the summary. The task budget was raised from \$2,000 to \$2,500 total before the pass, so that the group would include five brands.

How the pass went

The AI agent Claude (Claude Code) went through the sites in its built-in browser, connecting from Bulgaria, on the US storefront. The pass started at 09:42:30 UTC, and the last log entry was made at 09:52:23 UTC, about 10–11 minutes for five brands. The agent's decisions (choice of model and version) and everything the cart and checkout showed were recorded in the log during the pass. If the next step required an e-mail, name, full address, phone or payment, the agent stopped: this is a research rule, not a refusal by the site.

What we compared against

Product and policy pages (18 pages, 3–4 per brand) were saved with the Chrome browser between 09:52:32 and 09:54:20 UTC: HTML, text, a screenshot and a SHA-256 hash of each file. The carts were reopened at 10:08 UTC and saved separately. Checkout data relies on the pass log.

Limitations

- **One day, one task, one agent.** Another AI assistant or another day may produce a different choice and different answers.
- **The sample is not random.** The five brands were chosen as direct alternatives for one shopper and do not represent the whole market.
- **No full address and no payment.** The final amount payable, actual delivery times and an actual return were not tested; the tax at checkout is preliminary.
- **Facts not established.** Class 2 mode for the chosen Aventon, whether the clearance exception applies at Ride1Up, and which of Velotric's two provisions applies to a used bike were not established.
- **Access through an agent.** The sites were opened in the AI agent's browser without bypassing CAPTCHA or logins; in another browser or on another device a site may behave differently.

For the participating brands

All five brands opened checkout to the agent without mandatory registration. The agent stopped where continuing required personal data that our protocol does not allow it to enter. That is a good result. Everything we describe is an opportunity to make the site even easier to use for shoppers with AI agents.

If you find a factual inaccuracy, please write to info@aibusiness.vc: confirmed corrections are published with a date, and an official comment from the brand can be added to the study. The study was not commissioned or paid for by the brands; corrections and comments are free of charge.

If you would like to see how a shopper's AI assistant gets through your site, contact the author. E-mail info@aibusiness.vc · LinkedIn <https://www.linkedin.com/in/sergei-ponomarev> · Website

<https://aibusiness.vc> · AI agent test purchase methodology:

<https://aibusiness.vc/library/ai-agent-test-purchase.pdf>. **About the author:** Sergei Ponomarev has been running test purchases for more than seven years and now applies this methodology to AI assistants.

Appendix A. By brand

Aventon.

- **The agent's choice.** Level 4 REC Step-Through, L, \$1,999; "Throttle Included", up to 75 miles, "Max 28 MPH", "14-Day Returns". The Pace 5 REC Step-Through at \$1,799 was not chosen: in the text the agent read, the throttle is mentioned only in reviews, although the product tags include "Throttle" and "Class 2".
- **Cart and checkout.** A \$15 battery recycling fee added in the cart; total with tax \$2,180.16 without shipping; guest checkout; a full address is needed for shipping and assembly.
- **Warranty.** "2 Year Warranty" on the product page; warranty terms not checked.
- **Return after a ride.** 14 days, under 20 miles; 50% of the price plus return shipping.
- **What helped the agent.** The direct line "Throttle Included" in the specifications.
- **What could be strengthened.** Show the \$15 fee next to the price; move the throttle and class from tags into the specifications of every model; give a shipping quote by ZIP code.

Himiway.

- **The agent's choice.** D5 2.0 ST, 15Ah, \$1,999; Class 1/2/3, 20 mph by default, thumb throttle, 70 miles on pedal assist, "15-Day Return", free shipping.
- **Cart and checkout.** The variant was added to the cart with a free fender set; guest checkout; shipping and tax only after a full address.
- **Warranty.** "2-Year Warranty" on the product page, which by its text also covers electrical components; detailed terms not checked.
- **Return after a ride.** 30% plus \$300 under some conditions; 50% plus \$300 with listed signs of use.
- **What helped the agent.** A full specification table with class, throttle and separate range figures for throttle and pedal assist.
- **What could be strengthened.** Check how internal availability notes for variants get into the page text; give a shipping and tax quote by ZIP code.

Lectric.

- **The agent's choice.** XP4 Step-Thru 500W, \$999; Class 1/2/3, thumb throttle, 50 miles, rider height 4'10"–6'3", folding, in stock.
- **Cart and checkout.** \$999 plus a free rack; guest checkout; free shipping, preliminary tax \$82.42 as a separate line.
- **Warranty.** "One-Year Warranty" on the site; warranty terms not checked.
- **Return after a ride.** Not provided for in the terms.
- **What helped the agent.** Availability, class, throttle, range and rider height on one page; shipping and tax by ZIP code.
- **What could be strengthened.** A short line about the e-bike return rules next to the price: the answer is currently only in the Refund policy.

Ride1Up.

- **The agent's choice.** Portola 02 Lite, 15Ah, Cloud White, \$995; throttle up to 20 mph, Class 1–3, folding, in stock. The 10Ah version at \$895 was not chosen; whether the extra cost was needed to meet the task was not established.
- **Cart and checkout.** Free shipping, expected 16–20 October, tax \$79.60, total \$1,074.60; a paid extended warranty was offered at checkout.
- **Warranty.** "1-Year Warranty" against manufacturing defects; at checkout an extension to 2 years for \$169.15 or 3 years for \$288.55 is offered; terms not checked.
- **Return after a ride.** The general 30-day return policy may cover assembled and tested bikes, subject to the stated conditions and model exclusions; \$250–350 is deducted if a company label is approved, plus possible costs; whether the Portola clearance exception applies was not established.
- **What helped the agent.** The expected delivery date at checkout; detailed terms for a return after testing.
- **What could be strengthened.** State on the product page whether the clearance exception covers the item.

Velotric.

- **The agent's choice.** Discover 2, Large, \$1,499; removable thumb throttle, Class 1/2/3, up to 75 miles, free shipping; the product page says "Most orders arrive in 3-5 business days. Some may take 7+ days due to weather, remote areas, or courier delays."
- **Cart and checkout.** Guest checkout; free shipping, optional signature on delivery for \$10; preliminary tax \$119.92.
- **Warranty.** "2-Year Limited Warranty", which by its text also covers electrical components; detailed terms not checked.
- **Return after a ride.** 14 days with no mileage restrictions, 22% deduction plus costs; the same document lists used products as non-returnable, except for warranty-covered defects with prior company approval.
- **What helped the agent.** "Restocking fee applies" on the product page; delivery time on the product page.
- **What could be strengthened.** State in one sentence which of the two provisions on used bikes applies.

Appendix B. Evidence

Folder EBIKES/run_2026-10-14: the exact task and the basis for the selection; the pass log with a time correction; the pass summary; the repeat capture of the carts; 18 saved product and policy pages (HTML, text, PNG) with an index; a SHA-256 manifest covering 59 files. Contact: Sergei Ponomarev, aibusiness.vc.