



WebSphere software

Efficiently manage and deploy content to support your e-commerce strategy.



Contents

- 2 Executive summary**
- 3 Encourage faster purchasing decisions**
- 4 Understanding sell-side content**
- 6 Deliver rich, accurate content to a variety of channels**
- 7 Robust utilities provide superior catalog-management function**
- 8 Publishing personalized editorial and static content**
- 8 The future is now**
- 10 A solution for today—and tomorrow**
- 11 A total e-business on demand**
- 11 For more information**

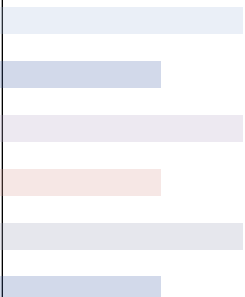
Executive summary

In every industry and sector of global business today – whether retail, healthcare or manufacturing – leaders are searching for ways to make their organizations more nimble. To respond quickly to whatever the world throws at them. And to deliver their products and services to meet individual customers’ needs faster.

The bottom line: You have to establish and maintain profitable customer relationships. Staying competitive in a demanding retail marketplace means developing an e-commerce strategy that allows you to meet challenges and to offer superior levels of service and convenience – ahead of the competition. It’s about optimizing your business to maximize revenues and lower costs. Finding ways to fully integrate your e-commerce strategy with your business operations. Extending e-commerce to all your channels to create a seamless customer experience at all touchpoints. The more fully you integrate and leverage your e-commerce systems, the more you can take advantage of changing market dynamics – and capture revenue opportunities at lower cost. While your business becomes an on demand enterprise.

Customers – armed with more information, more choices and more ways to get what they want – expect more from you. Retain your best customers and turn online browsers into profitable, lifetime buyers by providing an exceptional online experience. One that will keep them coming back to you instead of moving on to your competitors.

Delivering correct, consistent, timely product information to employees, customers and suppliers helps build stronger business relationships and increase sales. But it can be a time-consuming, staff-intensive process. You have to deal with new products. Realtime availability. Pricing changes. Merchandising. Promotions. A robust content-management solution allows business users with diverse backgrounds to collaborate to create and maintain a variety of unique content elements required for success in an e-commerce environment. As budgets tighten, you must improve operational efficiencies to reduce costs, deliver a fast return on your existing IT investments and increase your profit margins. With an efficient content-management solution, your staff can spend less time coordinating with IT and more time creating, publishing, merchandising and personalizing content to truly differentiate your business.



It's almost like a quest: Build an on demand enterprise that lets you operate your business at the speed the market dictates and your employees need. Then, you can become more efficient and respond faster. Get the jump on your competitors. And realize significant business benefits as a result. In this executive brief, you can find out how a robust content-management solution can help you efficiently and accurately create and manage increasing volumes of e-commerce content. And how IBM WebSphere® Commerce offers a range of catalog- and content-management solutions to help you address your sell-side e-commerce challenges.

“By 2004, 95% of Global 2000 firms will deploy a content management infrastructure to control Web content and associated costs.”

– META Group¹

Encourage faster purchasing decisions

Beating the competition – and increasing customer loyalty – means more than executing a simple transaction. It's delivering customer value beyond the transaction. Even with limited budgets and decreased revenue growth rates, you are charged with streamlining efficiencies and lowering costs. By providing detailed, up-to-the-minute descriptions of your products and services – and by making your Web content easily accessible – you can give your customers what they need to make faster, better-informed purchasing decisions. A solid, content-management solution can help you reduce costs and increase efficiencies – and drive your future growth.

However, many companies still rely on manual processes to manage product information – a practice that's expensive to maintain. More prone to human error. And doesn't accommodate future growth. When you introduce a new product, your team must quickly include that product in each channel where you do business. Individuals receive reports in faxes or internal mail, and then, they must find the relevant information. Each channel creates its own versions of product descriptions, imagery or specification data. When customers view different content at each touchpoint, product return rates increase. Customer satisfaction decreases. And your profit margins shrink.

Web-based e-commerce systems have rapidly evolved from experimental projects to strategic business applications – and the impact on customer and distribution channel touchpoints continues to grow. From your Web site – and those of your trading partners – to mobile phones and desktops. In-store kiosks. Point-of-sale systems. Your customers' e-procurement systems. Your catalog and toll-free telephone numbers. The challenge is to provide a unified brand and product representation. And give customers consistent, accurate product information. Across all channels. On demand.



“Effective management of content across the enterprise is one of the most significant challenges facing organizations...[A] significant portion of a company’s value is tied up in its knowledge capital, much of which resides in unstructured content, including Web pages, business documents, spreadsheets and e-mails.”

– Butler Group²

As requirements for immediate, customized and detailed e-commerce content increase, manual processes can’t consistently produce the level of content needed to optimize online sales and customer service. Your distributors are implementing e-commerce sites. Your customers are building e-procurement systems. To keep pace, it’s critical to build a content management solution that can efficiently and accurately create and manage increasing volumes of content. One that allows you to deliver information to everyone along your value chain in realtime. To help you increase sales revenues. Improve employee productivity. And reduce your customer support costs.

Understanding sell-side content

Choosing a content-management approach for your sell-side e-commerce environment means understanding the many content types that drive your business. The people required to manage it. And the content sources and destinations – from back-end systems, from your product or from your sales managers to manufacturers’ catalogs and Web sites.

Content elements

The content types that drive your business include:

- **Catalog content**
Helps you sell your products and services. Often referred to as structured content because it’s contained in a database. It includes product descriptions, features lists, prices and images, as well as engineering diagrams, warranty information and product specification sheets. Depending on the individual product or service, you can also incorporate rich media—including audio, animation and video—to describe it. The amount and depth of content types multiplied by the number of products in your catalog determines the complexity of your catalog-management task. Because product records are stored in a database, you need the right tools to optimize catalog-management efficiencies.
- **Editorial content**
Is not specific to a particular product or service, but is related to the products and services you offer. It supplements content in your catalog and within your Web site to help your customers make purchasing decisions, to better understand the breadth of products and services your organization offers and to publish any other pertinent information to your site. Editorial content includes shipping terms, return policies, product usage guidelines, regulatory information and hints and tips. Though still critical to the success of your Web site, it’s less complex than catalog content and requires a different—and often simpler—set of tools to manage.

- *Web content*

Comprises the unique elements necessary to organize and publish your content to the Internet. It includes—but isn't limited to—static HTML pages, dynamic HTML pages, link management, Macromedia Flash technology-based Web sites, interesting site images and site graphics. Web content requires highly specialized tools for each content type.

Collaborative content management

If you own a small business, you may have one person to create, review and publish all content for your Web site. If you manage a large, multinational organization servicing multiple geographies and languages, you may have many creators, reviewers and approvers involved in the content-management process. As the number of people required to deliver a content-rich site increases, defining, assigning and reinforcing tasks and processes grows more complex. Collaborative content creation capabilities, including workflows, notifications, approvals, project workspaces, task lists, change history, previews and versions, help to streamline the way groups of people work together to efficiently create content for your site. With the freedom and flexibility to transparently integrate with your value chain's systems, you're free to establish collaborative, intercompany connections to better serve your customers.

Catalog and content lifecycle

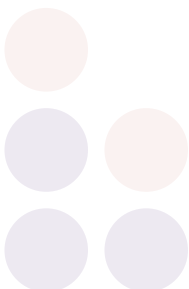
Tasks you perform as part of the catalog and content lifecycle can include:

- *Identify and collect*

When you first implement an e-commerce site, you must identify the source for all product-related information. Including elements like product name, item number, description, product image, specification sheets and price. This information typically resides in multiple formats, such as paper catalogs, product glossies, enterprise resource planning (ERP) applications, legacy applications, inventory systems and relational databases. It can also come from disparate sources—including internal product divisions and external supplier organizations. If the source for your product information format is paper, you must manually enter that content into your catalog-management application.

- *Load*

You must load all static content—images, PDFs, engineering diagrams, warranty information and product specification sheets—into a content repository or a file system. You must also transform catalog data found in electronic format into the format of your destination electronic catalog. After the initial load, you can update content on a



“In Gartner’s 2002 CIO survey, content management was ranked as the No. 2 priority. Why? The technologies of Web content and document management, imaging and workflow are proven business productivity tools.”

– Gartner Research³

continuing basis. Depending on the amount and quality of your data cleansing—where you make sure data elements conform to a defined standard or set of rules—you may need to take time to standardize data attributes, transform the data to the same format as your electronic catalog and, then, classify the data to help make maintenance easier.

- **Manage, enhance, merchandise and personalize**

After your content experts have collected the appropriate information, they can organize existing—and add new—content so the right business information can drive your Web site sales and service objectives. Web sites that service geographies where customers speak different languages can easily translate content into the expected languages. With a base set of site content, you can create meaningful customer interactions for business-to-business (B2B) and business-to-consumer (B2C) environments. Produce business contracts to outline customer relationship terms, like product views, pricing, shipping and return policies. Manage multiple catalogs to create unique product groupings and navigation structures for your target segments, seasonal activities or business customers. And develop product associations to cross-sell, up-sell and provide alternates, accessories and replacements.

- **Publish content**

Rich, cleansed and approved content can be distributed to your e-commerce site. You may need to leverage rich product content for other internal and external uses beyond your sell-side Web site. Online procurement applications, channel partners’ Web sites, e-marketplaces, print catalogs, customer relationship management (CRM) systems, point-of-sale (POS) systems and in-store kiosks. Each customer who views your product data expects to receive data in a particular format. Tools to extract content from your catalog and transform the data to the required format, usually XML, are fundamental to this process.

Deliver rich, accurate content to a variety of channels

IBM WebSphere Commerce offers a range of catalog- and content-management solutions to help you address your sell-side e-commerce challenges. Integrated, out-of-the-box services that can speed your time to market and lower your total cost of ownership. Whether you’re a one-person shop or a multinational organization running multiple Web sites, serving distinct customer segments in multiple languages, WebSphere Commerce can provide a catalog- and content-management solution to address your specific business needs. Tackle complex content requirements. Feed rich, current – and accurate – content to multiple internal and external destinations. Increase efficiencies. And grow your solution as your business needs dictate.

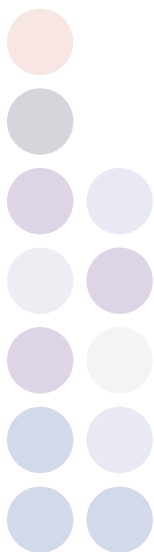
WebSphere Commerce includes robust business-user tools and data utilities to help you efficiently manage online catalog content. IBM WebSphere Commerce Studio gives you a comprehensive tool set so your team can create and manage static and dynamic HTML pages, images, audio files and video files. An open system, built on industry standards, WebSphere Commerce allows you to publish an XML-formatted catalog or Web content from your management systems to a WebSphere Commerce Web site. You can leverage your investments in third-party content-management systems and data – saving time and money in the process.

As part of the WebSphere Commerce business-user tool set, the product manager tool is designed to help reduce time spent on catalog-management tasks. With this multiuser, browser-based tool, your product content experts, category managers and merchandising managers can efficiently create and manage new products, product attributes, product categories, packages, bundles and product associations. Without your having to bring in resources from your IT team. With the product manager tool, you can:

- *Edit multiple products at one time to improve user productivity.*
- *Manage product attributes – terms to describe size, color and weight – more efficiently.*
- *Add a virtually unlimited number of attributes to describe your products appropriately. Give your customers the information they need to make purchasing decisions – and increase sales as a result.*
- *Attach documents, such as engineering diagrams, user manuals, warranty information and product specification sheets, to provide users with the information they need.*
- *Manage multiple-language versions of your catalog. This tailored, global approach can make your worldwide customer experiences meaningful, helping to build the loyalty you want to grow your international e-business.*

Robust utilities provide superior catalog-management function

You must continually find ways to reduce costs, especially when profit margins shrink. Long-term profitability means incurring IT expenditures that help you closely manage operational costs, even as they maximize your revenue and help reduce the cost of running your business. You have to show that you can earn a quick return on new investments while leveraging investments you already have in systems, processes, skills and technology. WebSphere Commerce content-management software can help you achieve peak operational efficiency. Create an integrated, uninterrupted flow of





information, processes and transactions between the actions of your customers on your Web site and the systems and applications you have running inside your business – across divisions, channels and your supply chain. So, you can make the most of your current investments – and gain competitive advantage in the process.

Publishing personalized editorial and static content

WebSphere Commerce provides easy-to-use interfaces that allow your marketing manager to create marketing campaigns. Target particular market segments or individual buying organizations. And create product promotions or recommendations. These interfaces, as part of IBM WebSphere Commerce Accelerator, allow business users to choose content, determine where on your Web site to display content and under what conditions. With these tools, you can:

- *Schedule the placement and removal of promotional graphics on your Web site's home page or other pages.*
- *Quickly and easily update content – like return policies or warranty information – throughout your Web site.*
- *Publish and remove seasonal graphics as your business needs change.*
- *Attach documents and images to describe your products in compelling detail.*
- *Control the personalization of virtually any content elements.*

The future is now

As part of its ongoing commitment to innovation, IBM is currently developing enhancements for WebSphere Commerce that extend the depth and breadth of its content-management capabilities. The next enhancements to content-management services provided by WebSphere Commerce software focus on driving down the cost of managing your WebSphere Commerce system, while helping you provide accurate, authentic, timely and effective content.

For the next generation of WebSphere Commerce, IBM will strive to give business users more control than ever before. And to allow them to quickly and accurately coordinate and execute content-management tasks. IBM also plans to build robust, collaborative content creation and management into its WebSphere Commerce software. To expand management of content types. More efficient content management can lower the cost of running your Web site. Improve customer service. And help increase revenue as customers use the information you provide to make well-informed buying decisions faster than before.



Panasonic tackles catalog management

For Panasonic, innovation is the name of the game. Developing electronics that can exceed expectations and add value to customers' work and personal lives. So, it's no surprise that it was one of the first to take advantage of e-commerce. But, after years of rapid e-commerce deployment, Panasonic had systems based on software from multiple vendors, all using different underlying technologies. When it came time to bring these disparate applications and systems under one umbrella, it looked to IBM—and the award-winning WebSphere software platform—to help build a robust, open standards-based, e-commerce solution that could simplify the growth and maintenance of its e-business environment.

Managing product content meant eliminating redundant processes and gaining efficiencies. By adopting WebSphere Commerce, Panasonic realized a 325% growth in its e-commerce system. Handling hundreds of thousands of products with more than 24,000 distinct attributes serving industrial, business and consumer sectors. And Panasonic expects this product base to increase to approximately one million models within the next six to 12 months.

With content constantly changing and requiring a different marketing spin and level of detail depending on the audience, Panasonic found in WebSphere Commerce a catalog-management solution that could provide the rich marketing information needed to effectively describe and sell products on the Web.

"Creating, managing and publishing rich product content at this scale presented a significant challenge," said Eric Keil, director of e-business. "To minimize redundant activities across our organization and speed time to production for our e-business initiatives, it was critical that our solution could support the existing product introduction cycles—and offer new processes to enrich content for effective Web presentation."

Collaborative content management

As the number of people participating in the content-management process grows, so does the challenge of delivering timely, accurate and effective content. Collaborative content creation capabilities help to streamline the way groups of people work together to create content for your Web site.

- *Workflows put structure around content-management processes to help select the right experts to contribute content and the right managers to approve content.*
- *Notifications inform content experts and approvers about new work items assigned to them. Task lists help content experts track the status of each assigned item. As content managers approve and reject content, notations are made in the system to share the approvers' comments with the content team. Rejected content is routed back to the content creator, with an explanation about the desired changes.*
- *Workspaces enable content contributors to work at their assignments in isolation from approved content. When it's approved, new or changed, content can be previewed by authorized team members before final approval and publication to the production Web site.*
- *Previews allow content experts and approvers to see content—including product content, editorial content and personalized content driven from the WebSphere Commerce campaign system—as it will appear on the production Web site. Campaign managers can preview WebSphere Commerce campaigns in the context of their target customer segments before approving and publishing to the production system.*
- *Your scheduler controls where and when approved content is published on the production site.*

Today's catalog-management tools will be retrofitted to run in the content-management environment so catalog-management activities can be put through workflows, approvals and previews before going live on your production Web site. Because you already know how to use these applications, you save money. And lower your costs.

Content-managed campaigns

Creating a campaign often involves a marketing manager, a graphic design expert and an approval manager. The marketing manager creates the business rules that drive the campaign. The graphic designer creates the corresponding graphic image that will appear in the designated location – at the designated time – on your Web site. And the approval manager will test the campaign in context of its target audience to see if the rules are set up properly and that the image looks good. When your team launches a new campaign, team members can retrieve previous campaign information and use it to get started. Driving campaign creation and management through the content collaborative and management services of WebSphere Commerce allows you to quickly publish new and accurate campaigns.

Template-driven editorial content creation and management

Catalog content and campaign content require highly specialized tools that enable business users to productively manage such information. Because editorial content can cover any subject matter and originate from just about anyone in your organization, you must provide easy-to-use tools to help facilitate the process. A template-driven approach makes content contribution intuitive for even one-time users. A Web template form helps content experts clearly identify where to enter the required content. With WebSphere Commerce, you can drive the new content through the workflow engine to obtain appropriate approvals before publishing.

A solution for today—and tomorrow

Effective catalog- and content-management is fundamental to running a successful e-commerce Web site. Consider how you can provide up-to-date product information to your customers – on demand. Whether one end is the system of your supplier or distributor, or a personal digital assistant (PDA) in the hands of an individual consumer.

Because product and service information provides the foundation for virtually any e-commerce transaction, WebSphere Commerce offers you a robust solution focused on managing catalog content. Create rich media to effectively describe and differentiate your products and services. And if you need a more customized solution, IBM Business Partners specializing in Web- and content-management software can provide a range of solutions to meet your most demanding catalog- and content-management challenges.

A total e-business on demand

WebSphere software – the leading platform for e-business on demand™.

- *Deliver your products and services to meet individual customer demand fast – ahead of the competition.*

An integrated environment helps your developers get applications up and running quickly.

- *Quickly respond to market fluctuations and new, industry supply-chain requirements – in realtime.*

A robust platform lets you easily adapt to new technologies and integrate your business with that of your partners.

- *Improve operational efficiencies with dynamic and automated processes.*

Leading process integration software makes it easy to create, change and publish new business processes.

- *Give everyone along your value chain access to the same view of information, applications and services on the fly – regardless of location or device.*

Sophisticated portal technology provides a single interface that simplifies information and application access.

- *Use the business expertise and assets you already have.*

Modular, market-leading solutions let you start small and grow your business at a pace that suits your needs.

With the WebSphere software platform, you can address your business challenges in entirely new ways. And create an on demand e-business – regardless of the business you're in.

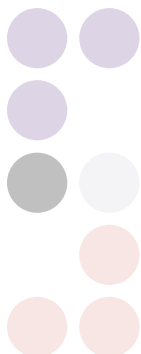
For more information

To learn more about IBM WebSphere Commerce content-management solutions, visit:

ibm.com/software/info/portal-commerce/index.jsp

To learn more about IBM Business Partner solutions for WebSphere Commerce, visit:

ibm.com/software/info/portal-commerce/index.jsp





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- ¹ Web Content Management METAspectrum Part 1—Market Characteristics. META Group, September 2002.
- ² Content Infrastructures—Technology Audit. Butler Group, January 2003.
- ³ CIOs Demand Content Management. Gartner Research, July 2002.

All statements regarding IBM future direction or intent are subject to change or withdrawal without notice and represent goals and objectives only.