

IBM unified content management for multi-channel retailers



Highlights

- ***Increases customer satisfaction through consistent brand experience and production information across channels***
- ***Reduces costs by automating and streamlining processes and eliminating data-entry errors***
- ***Improves process efficiency by orchestrating content contributions from multiple sources***
- ***Accelerates time-to-market through better collaboration of content contributors***

Speaking with a single voice

Consistency is the key to success in multi-channel retailing. Consumers demand a seamless experience, wanting to see the same “face” no matter how they choose to interact with a retailer. And fundamental to that consistency is making certain the information retailers provide is the same, whether it’s presented in person at a store, in print in a catalog or direct mail, on the phone by a call center rep, or electronically at a kiosk or on the Web.

The Web is a particularly important factor. With almost ubiquitous access to a virtually unlimited amount of information, more and more consumers are making Web research an important part of their purchasing decision process. Today, cross-channel sales (in which a product is researched online but purchased in a store) total almost US\$390B, representing 16 percent of total non-travel retail sales. This is expected to grow to US\$1.1 trillion and 38 percent of total retail sales by 2012.¹ Making certain that information is consistent across all channels is vital to capturing sales generated by this consumer purchasing trend.

Many retailers face the challenge of siloed channel operations, which lead to fragmented, inconsistent information, a lack of coordination between channels and overall inefficiency. Information about a product might have to be handled by separate departments for each channel, with several people generating content for the same item. Without coordination and transparency, information may get published in one place but not another, which can lead to confusion and frustration for the customer.

The challenge is exacerbated by the frequency and increasing velocity of product changes in the marketplace. Product lifecycles are growing ever shorter; for example, the cutting-edge electronics gadget that carried a premium price tag two months ago is often found on deep discount today because it's been made "obsolete."

The IBM Unified Content Management solution

The key to managing the vast amounts of information that retailers must deal with is centralizing the way content is handled. The IBM Unified Content Management solution does this by providing an integrated content management environment that helps to ensure content is only created once and leveraged across the enterprise, tying together multiple repositories to provide more holistic information, and coupling it with automated business processes and governance procedures.

Structured information such as price, location, supplier, availability, description, etc., can be aggregated, enhanced and managed while being made accessible to all business processes, applications and concerned individuals. The solution augments this information by managing and linking unstructured information such as images, videos, product manuals, ratings and reviews to provide a complete, accurate view, regardless of channel.

This enables retailers to streamline content management processes by coordinating input from multiple content contributors, providing consistent, accurate information across all channels and touch-points. This unified approach, in which content is generated once and automatically disseminated throughout the enterprise, helps accelerate time-to-market and new product introductions.

The possibility for inaccuracy and inconsistency caused by operator error is dramatically reduced because more processes are automated; in addition, the solution offers a comprehensive set of management features including attribute dictionaries with inheritance and re-use capability, change tracking and spelling correction tools, and data validation rules.

The solution also allows retailers to leverage IBM's deep industry and business expertise to design and tailor the solution to fit their individual needs.

For more information

Learn how IBM can help you improve the accuracy, consistency and efficiency of your content management activities. Contact your IBM representative, or visit us on the Web at:

ibm.com/retail/multichannel



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¹ "The Web's Impact on In-Store Sales: U.S. Cross-Channel Sales Forecast, 2006 To 2012," Forrester Research, 2007.