

Technical Overview: Interfacing Ecometry Data with the Amazon.com Web Storefront

White Paper

MARKETING
CONCEPTS
SOLUTIONS PROVIDER

Microsoft
CERTIFIED
Partner



COLINEAR
SYSTEMS INC

March, 2003

Copyright ©2003 by Marketing Concepts. All rights reserved. This publication is intended for use with Marketing Concepts products by Marketing Concepts personnel, customers, and end-users of Marketing Concepts products. It may not be reproduced in any form without the written permission of Marketing Concepts.

Executive Summary

This white paper details how Marketing Concepts' Amazon.com interface works with Ecometry databases. The process allows data to flow smoothly between Ecometry users and Amazon.com's Web storefront system. **This interface is in compliance with Amazon.com specifications** and is updated on a regular basis as user requirements are changed.

A brief overview of the interface process is followed by a discussion of the data exchange model used for the interface. This information is followed by a summary of all data feeds prepared by the system. A sample Amazon.com web page illustrates how these feeds will populate your Amazon.com storefront pages. The white paper concludes with a basic process flow chart, which illustrates clearly and simply how data is transferred between the Amazon.com system and your Ecometry system.

Technical appendixes are also included to help you and your IT department further assess the interface's compatibility with your existing system.

Overview

Payload file extracts (product files) are extracted from Ecometry and sent to Amazon.com. These extracts contain all the necessary data needed to populate Amazon's site. Order transactions and related data feeds are also transferred via the interface.

The Interface will:

- Accept incoming orders from Amazon.com's web storefront.
- Map the orders into Ecometry, and report back status information to Amazon.com for customer service and billing purposes.
- Send Product, Relationship, Price, Image, Inventory, Order Acknowledgement, Order Adjustments, Order Fulfillment (Shipping Information), Cancels and Returns information.

All files received and sent to or from Amazon.com are in a specific "XML" format. At this time our "Inbound EDI" is used for data extracts to and from Ecometry.

Data Exchange

The Merchants@ Platform

Amazon.com's Merchants@ interface provides a method for exchanging XML documents between a merchant and Amazon.com. These XML documents contain information about the products that the merchant has available for sale, orders that a customer has placed for the merchant's products, financial transactions between Amazon.com and the merchant, and other data.

Data Exchange Model

The Merchants@ interface uses a request-response model for data exchange. In this model, the merchant initiates all data exchange by sending a request message to the Merchants@ interface. The Merchants@ interface then sends a response message back to the user.

All messages sent in either direction contain a "control" section. This section contains information such as the type of the message, the name and merchant ID of the merchant initiating the request, which documents are part of the current message and the type of those documents, and which documents are available for the merchant to download from Amazon.com. The control portion of the message is a SOAP (Simple Object Access Protocol) message.

Certain messages may also contain a data section. This data section contains an XML document that is being transferred from the merchant to the client or vice-versa.

Summary of Data Feeds

Payload Files (Product and Inventory Data)

See **Technical Appendix A** for details about the information you must input into your Ecometry database in order for these feeds to work properly.

Product Feed: Product information is extracted out of Ecometry at user-defined intervals. The criteria for the selection of products is defined by the user's individual needs. This process can be set up to run on recurring basis.

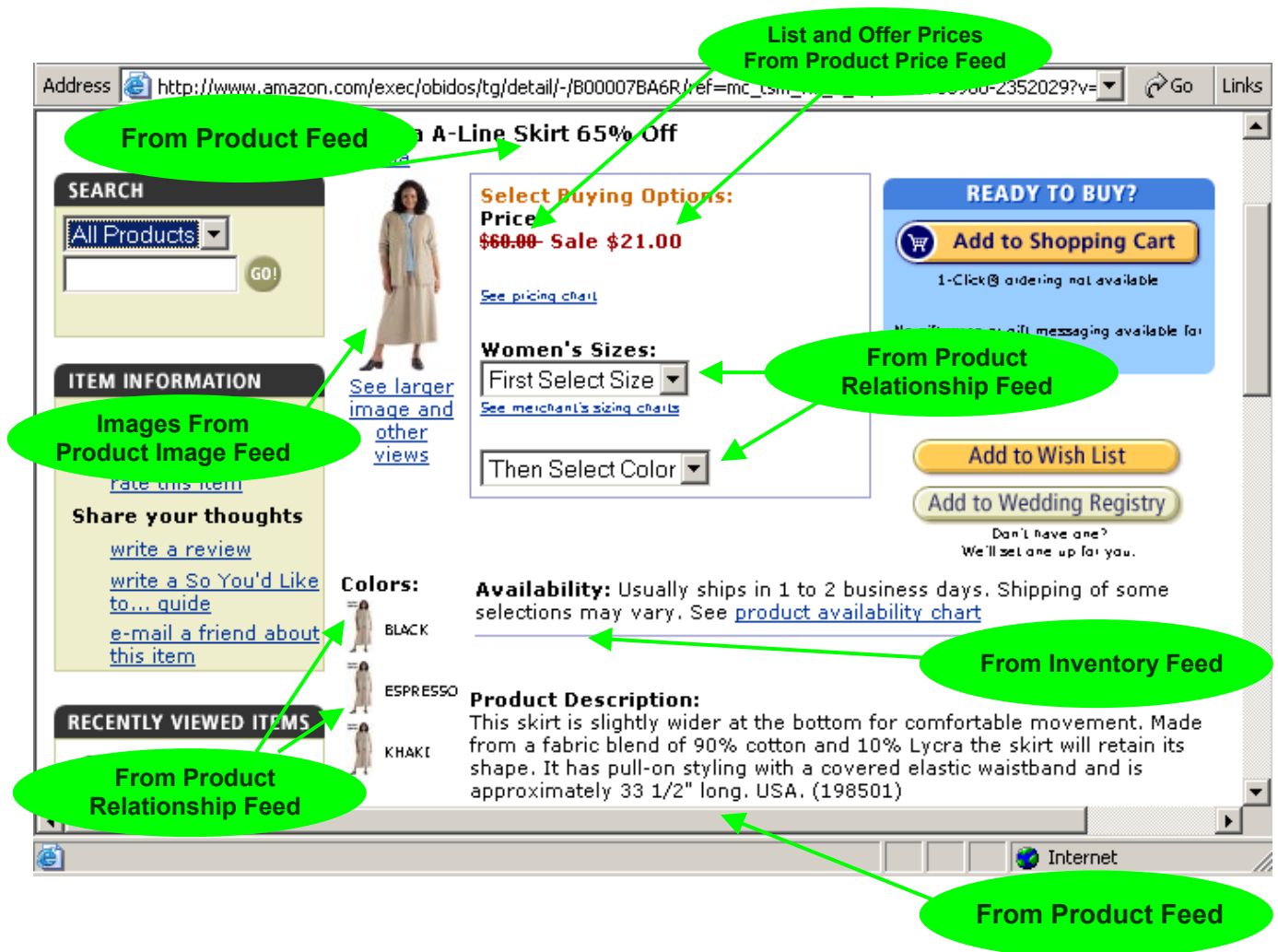
Product Relationship Feed: Product relationship information is specific to Style and Colors, creating Parent and Child groups for Amazon's site.

Product Price Feed: Product price information is extracted from the "OFFER-ITEM" table, currently based on user-definable offer code. The ITEM-MAST price is also passed as the list price for the product.

Product Image Feed: The image feed is created for each product image. The "http" address (URL – Uniform Resource Locator) is passed in this feed. Amazon.com will pull the image only when a product is included in the feed.

Inventory Feed: Inventory and next restock date is extracted for each product.

See the following illustration for an example of how your product feed data will appear on the Amazon.com storefront.



Order Import into Ecometry

Orders placed via the Amazon.com storefront will be pulled to the SOAP server every **xx** minutes (xx time is user definable). These files will then be pulled via FTP to the Ecometry server for processing. This process is designed to run automatically without the assistance of an operator. **Note:** Ecometry's TapeMacs™ is used as part of the Order Import process.

Order Acknowledgement

Orders will be reported as "Success" or "Failure" after import process has completed.

Canceled Orders or Line Items

If any line item on an order (or the complete order) is canceled in Ecometry, these records will be picked up as an Order Adjustment Feed.

Shipped Orders and Returns

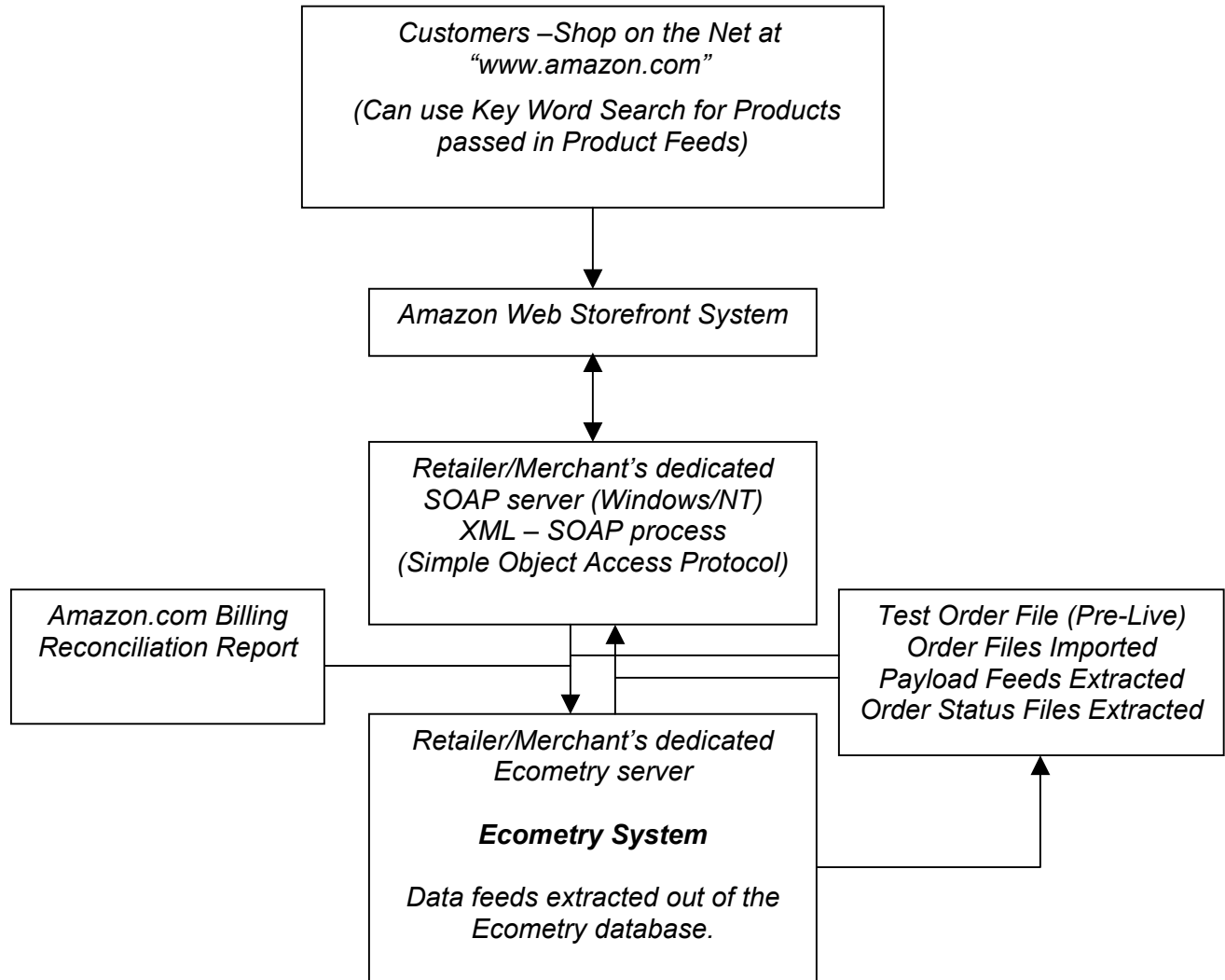
After ship-confirming orders (in Ecometry), the Order Fulfillment file is generated to send to Amazon.com.

Returned orders in Ecometry will later be sent to Amazon.com as part of an Order Adjustment file. Exchange information is usually excluded from the Returns Adjustment feed. Even-money exchanges are handled by the retailer, and do not require a feed back to Amazon.com.

Basic Process Flow

The following chart outlines how the Amazon.com interface works. Information flows smoothly between the Amazon.com storefront, the Merchants@ platform, and the merchant's Ecometry database.

Process Flow Chart



References

This text is based on Marketing Concepts' first-hand experience with:

- Developing and implementing interface products used in conjunction with Ecometry at multi-channel retailer sites.
- Managed direct-commerce application service.

About the Author Company

Marketing Concepts, a leading provider of direct commerce software and services, is a Microsoft Certified Solution Developer and Reseller of the Microsoft Business Solutions product suite.

Marketing Concepts has become a leader in the direct commerce industry by using the knowledge that comes from a 20-year history in direct marketing. We offer our customers a range of experience in technology, marketing, operations, e-commerce and software solutions that is unmatched in the industry.

The flexibility and range of services provided by Marketing Concepts allows our customers to select from traditional direct marketing services, such as catalog production and circulation strategy, to e-business solutions, like Managed Application Services (MAS) using Ecometry, Ability-Software™ and custom programming services that allow you to interface with almost any software.

Our philosophy is simple; we apply the knowledge and experience of our professional team, and partners like the Ecometry Corporation and CoLinear Systems, Inc., to provide our customers with the services they need for maximum success and profitability. Let us develop a solution to help your business grow in today's challenging global marketplace.

Technical Appendix A: Product Feed Requirements for the Amazon.com Interface

To **normalize** product "Type/Category/Style Information" data, specific information is required as part of Product SetUp (Ecometry Item-Master). This appendix outlines information pulled for all products you sell on the Amazon.com web site. Add this information for all products to ensure maximum system flexibility and less future program maintenance.

- **Color and Size** information will be mapped from standard Ecometry **Color** and **Size** fields.
- **Description/Title** information is captured from standard Ecometry fields.
- A Product Keyword(s) (**ITEM-DESC**) or Product **Upsell** record must be input into Ecometry for any Amazon products. You can choose to use **Item-Desc** (keywords) or **Upsell** (1-7/A-Z), the option will be a variable for the Product Feed.
- The Amazon information can be set up at the "**Style Level**" (The first SKU of the style series), or can be specific for each SKU within a style. The program will first check the individual SKU for "**CTypeDptLife**" ITEM-DESC or UPSELL record, if not found will search the lead Style SKU (first item of STYLE-INDEX /STYLE-ID = "XXXXX 00000000" type = "I").

Technical Appendix B: Amazon.com File Summary

The file format is: Prefix – MMDDSS, where MM=MONTH, DD=DAY OF MONTH, and SS=SEQUENCE #1-99.

File Description	Prefix
Product Feed	PA
Price Feed	PB
Relationship Feed	PC
Image Feed	PD
Inventory Feed	PE
Order Acknowledgement Feed	OA
Order Adjustment Feed (Picked Orders)	OB
Order Fulfillment Feed (Shipped Orders)	OC
Order Adjustment Feed (Returns)	OD