

E-Commerce Means Integration

Sales and product configuration systems aren't deployed in a vacuum. The transfer of data to and from a company's existing systems is an essential component of every TechniCon installation.

TechniCon offers extensive experience and product capabilities to ensure our systems leverage your existing infrastructure to its fullest.

A MODULAR ARCHITECTURE

A key part of any integration plan involves balancing the natural desire to maximize the use of existing system resources with the need to provide a robust and compelling sales system.

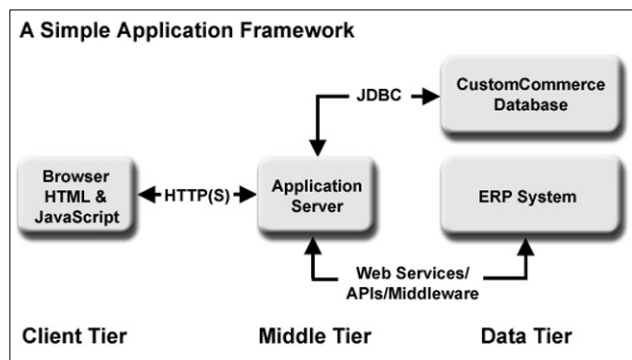
For example, for a highly interactive process such as product configuration, business rules and option data should be maintained in the configuration system to maximize system responsiveness.

Using a modular architecture that separates those functions best handled by legacy systems and those best provided by the e-commerce system, TechniCon's CustomCommerce seamlessly integrates these components.

An e-commerce system should fit into a company's IT environment, not dictate it. CustomCommerce is platform-neutral to support the technology our customers use, including .NET and Java EE.

Committed to industry-standards and open systems, TechniCon leverages Web services, APIs and other technology standards to route messages, transactions and Web site content.

CustomCommerce's generic and customizable document-processing engine provides secure integration with external systems in a range of formats, including XML and cXML, through common transport protocols, such as HTTP and FTP.



Security and rules in the integration engine ensure that only authorized users have the ability to

perform specific actions during the processing of documents into or out of CustomCommerce.

REAL-TIME INTEGRATION

Balancing the use of real-time and batch-mode data transfers from ERP and back-end systems to the e-commerce site is a standard element of every TechniCon system.

Real-time transfers are most useful for volatile information, such as inventory or prices, and for functions that require immediate action such as ordering and system authentication.

Host systems can pass user credentials to CustomCommerce to support single sign-on, so customers coming from a portal or e-procurement system only need to log in once. Any authorizations established by the host application can be enforced.

CustomCommerce passes online orders directly to your ERP system, eliminating the costs, delays and errors inherent with manually re-entering data.

The fewer the steps and hands involved, the lower your order processing costs. CustomCommerce can output order data that fully specifies products for manufacturing, including generating smart part numbers.

BATCH INTEGRATION

Using real-time transfers for base product data such as product descriptions and images would require interaction with the ERP system for every simple product query.

For data that changes infrequently, performing batch-mode transfers on a scheduled basis can significantly reduce the processing and communications load on the ERP system.

Batch-mode transfers can also improve system functionality. To optimize system response, key customer features such as product search and configuration require pre-processing of product data.

For example, batch-loaded inventory data can be indexed with other product attributes for product searches. Products that are likely to be in stock can then be included as part of the search criteria.

EXPERIENCE TELLS

TechniCon has developed transparent and easily maintainable mechanisms for transferring product and order data between CustomCommerce and ERP systems such as Baan, J.D. Edwards, Infor/Mapics, Oracle and SyteLine. For example:

- **On-Demand Pricing and Availability**

For Airpax Corporation, a leading manufacturer of magnetic circuit breakers, TechniCon integrated the configuration system with their AS/400-based Infor/Mapics system.

CustomCommerce uses HTTP functions to route requests containing form data to the AS/400 to retrieve real-time pricing and inventory data for configured parts. Equivalent Airpax parts for competitor part numbers can also be retrieved.

A LANSA server running on the AS/400 returns the requested data as HTML, which CustomCommerce edits and passes to the customer in a browser window.

- **Online Parts Store**

For True Manufacturing, a premier manufacturer of commercial refrigeration products, TechniCon developed the "Parts eStore," which allows customers to quickly locate and purchase replacement and spare parts online.

An AS/400-based J.D. Edwards system replicates a SQL Server database to the site database server hourly, updating the CustomCommerce database with any product and pricing changes.

Customer logins to the Parts eStore are also validated against information stored in the SQL Server database.

Checkout is integrated with PayPal's Payflow service for online payment processing, and UPS Online® Tools for shipping cost and address validation.

Orders from the eStore are pushed directly into the SQL Server database, which is automatically replicated to the AS/400 for order processing.

- **Supporting E-Commerce Marketplaces**

Integration does not stop at the walls of the enterprise. TechniCon's E-Procurement Connector enables "punch out" sessions from e-procurement systems, such as Ariba and Oracle Exchange, to CustomCommerce catalogs.

Teknion, an international manufacturer of office systems, has used the connector to win contracts with companies such as Citigroup and CIBC where e-procurement integration was a key requirement.

- **From CAD Models to Sales Leads**

For SMC, the world's largest manufacturer of pneumatic components, CustomCommerce passes data from the product configurator to SolidWorks' 3D PartStream.NET to dynamically produce dimensionally-accurate 3D CAD models using customer-specified options.

As of Q3 2008, SMC's customers have created and downloaded over 3,000,000 CAD models to use in their designs.

TechniCon has also worked with our customers to integrate their product configurators with CAD model providers such as CatDas and Cadenas.

CustomCommerce can collect contact information for visitors to your Web site and track online activity, such as downloading CAD or PDF files.

For SMC, these activity logs are pushed to a custom reporting application. The site funnels hundreds of leads a day to SMC's sales staff.

- **Repurposing ERP Data**

TechniCon's flexible approach to integration allows us to accommodate almost any environment.

Emedco, a major manufacturer of signs and safety equipment, pushes a SQL Server database from its AS/400-based ERP system to a Web server on a periodic basis to drive all aspects of its Web site.

The CustomCommerce database extracts data from the SQL Server database to support the configuration system and directly queries this database to access Emedco's unique pricing structures.

COMPLETE SOLUTIONS

TechniCon deploys systems designed for business users, not programmers. This means your IT group won't be committing valuable resources trying to implement and maintain a generic API.

We develop the right integration solution for your requirements and then provide ongoing support for any interface we develop as part of our system maintenance services.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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