

# Content Management with the Elastic Path Ecommerce Platform

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# The Elastic Path Ecommerce Platform

As the industry's most open and flexible ecommerce platform, Elastic Path is the right solution for large enterprises with substantial, highly-integrated technology ecosystems. No other ecommerce software on the market provides more freedom to customize, or more control when building complex third-party integrations, while maintaining the security and performance of a high-end, proprietary product. This makes it ideal for companies that need to tightly couple their ecommerce to a web content management (WCM) or enterprise content management (ECM) platform. In the field, these applications almost always feature unique customizations and tailored workflows that preclude the use of generic, out-of-the-box integrations.

At Elastic Path, we recognize that our software will only ever be one component in a broader ecosystem and have engineered our technology, architecture, and business model to align with this philosophy. The platform provides robust integration capabilities using secure, open source frameworks such as the core Java API, Spring, REST, and SOAP web services based on JAX-WS, making it straightforward to build into environments with an existing content management system, or into projects that include a concurrent migration to a new one. Since customers and systems integrators are always free to access and modify our source code as needed, it is far less risky and more cost effective to bend the Elastic Path platform to meet the requirements of your content management model, rather than the other way around.

## Integration with Content Management Systems

Out of the box, the Elastic Path platform provides a robust, high-performance storefront with all of the product and content management features needed to operate an advanced ecommerce website. But the size and business complexity of our enterprise clients often dictate that ecommerce functionality be tightly integrated with their web content management (WCM) or enterprise content management (ECM) platforms. These deployments have resulted in a wide range of patterns:

CMS Strategy	Description
<b>Elastic Path as a web application</b>	The CMS is a content repository for product and marketing assets, while the Elastic Path platform is responsible for advanced ecommerce functionality, administrative workflows, and delivering the customer experience. We have recommended this traditional approach to enterprises with older or homegrown CMS platforms, which often lack web application features. This strategy is also effective for companies seeking to use our multiple storefront capabilities.
<b>Elastic Path as a service and web application</b>	The CMS is both a content repository and web application that renders specific parts of your customer experience. The Elastic Path platform adds advanced ecommerce functionality to the existing infrastructure using APIs and is also a web application that delivers transactional elements such as the shopping cart and checkout. We have successfully employed this hybrid model for customers with limited web application features in their content management systems, as well as those needing to seamlessly layer ecommerce features into an existing or mandated web content workflow.
<b>Elastic Path as a service</b>	For enterprises with full-featured web content management software, or those planning to deploy a WCM application, Elastic Path is one of few ecommerce platforms that can easily be configured and integrated into your ecosystem as a headless service. Using this model, advanced ecommerce features and administrative functions can be added to your existing web application environment, while the CMS retains responsibility for delivering the overall customer experience.

These scenarios illustrate the clear advantages of Elastic Path's modern, open technology stack and flexible business model over closed, proprietary, or SaaS alternatives. With full control over the source code, plus exceptional documentation and professional services support, your business will never be at the mercy of a single vendor for the development and customization necessary to accommodate complex and challenging interactions with a content management system. Nor will it be necessary to shoehorn your desired workflow into one particular integration model that may not be the best fit for your enterprise.

Thanks to this flexibility, the Elastic Path platform has been successfully deployed into more than 250 unique customer environments, with a proven track record of facilitating robust and straightforward integrations to the most popular web content management (WCM) and enterprise content management (ECM) systems on the market.

## Content Management Successes

- The Elastic Path ecommerce platform powers a suite of international B2C websites that handle thousands of concurrent sessions and transactions per hour for one of the world's largest software companies. In this project, advanced commerce capabilities were seamlessly layered onto an existing Autonomy Interwoven® web content management platform and enterprise workflow. Using a conventional push model to move data into the Elastic Path asset repository, detailed merchandising information for more than 70,000 individual SKUs is synchronized daily, optimized for ecommerce, and published to web storefronts delivered by the Elastic Path platform.
- For a major telecommunications carrier, the Elastic Path platform added guided selling, bundle configuration, purchasing, and other ecommerce features to an online customer experience powered by EMC® Documentum®. In this hybrid service and web application deployment, high performance APIs allow the content management platform to access product and merchandising data on demand, while the Elastic Path shopping cart and checkout functions are effortlessly delivered into the existing website infrastructure to ensure a seamless customer experience.
- Elastic Path has enabled a global consumer electronics leader to sell mobile devices worldwide. As their business needs and technology infrastructure evolved and matured, so too did their implementation of our product. In parallel with the deployment of Atex Polopoly™ web content management software, Elastic Path was upgraded and transformed from a standalone, end-to-end ecommerce application into a headless provider of shopping and merchandising features via APIs in a CMS-driven environment.
- One of the world's leading mobile carriers relies on Elastic Path to deliver advanced selling features such as targeted merchandising, street-level entitlement, and service bundling on its website. Operating in conjunction with Adobe®/Day CQ5 web content management software, Elastic Path provides high performance JSR-170- and JSR-283-compliant content repository APIs that allow other parts of their technology infrastructure to effortlessly interact with functions and assets from the ecommerce platform.

# Beyond the Feature List

Elastic Path is one of the only ecommerce vendors with out-of-the-box features designed specifically for enterprises that sell digital goods and services—software, games, internet-based services, publications, and digital media. But features alone are not enough. Meeting the unique business challenges of these verticals, and delivering the best possible customer experience, requires that these features interact closely and frequently with data and functionality from your content management platform.

Innovative global enterprises such as Google, Time Inc., and Virgin Media selected Elastic Path not just for our comprehensive ecommerce feature list, but also for the material benefits of our open technology and integration model:

- **Ultimate flexibility and control, during and after implementation.** Industry analysts predict that content management software sales will post a CAGR of over 10% through 2014 as this functionality becomes a fundamental part of the enterprise information infrastructure<sup>1</sup>. To prepare themselves for the challenge of integrating with an existing or future CMS, our customers chose to bring their ecommerce platform and capabilities in-house for ultimate control and faster change cycles.
- **Ease and speed of integration with existing enterprise infrastructure.** Delivering a broad and consistent multichannel buying experience requires considerable interaction between diverse applications within your commerce ecosystem. With its open technology stack, full access to source code, exceptional documentation, and a strong developer community, Elastic Path eliminates many of the barriers to building fast, robust integrations. Since content management workflows and processes are difficult to change, it is the ecommerce software that must adapt to them. Unlike closed, proprietary, or SaaS solutions, our platform has been built from the ground up to provide this flexibility.
- **Greater availability of resources and lowered total cost of ownership (TCO).** Rapidly and cost-effectively integrating with content management systems, while complex, should not be unattainable. The open source foundation of the Elastic Path platform means that acquiring development resources with the necessary skill and expertise is far easier and less costly than doing so with closed, proprietary, or SaaS alternatives—whether you choose to deploy using the experienced professional services group at Elastic Path, a preferred solutions provider, or your own internal team.
- **Technology and architecture that aligns with industry standards.** The Elastic Path platform is built with Java and other dominant open source technologies. Over 95% of the Top 200 ecommerce sites in North America, as well as many complementary software products, are also predominantly Java-based<sup>2</sup>. Readily available application programming interfaces (APIs) and software development kits (SDKs) for Java ecommerce, coupled with easier access to skilled resources, mean fewer CMS integration headaches for your project.

## Conclusion

Every aspect of an Elastic Path solution is geared towards simplifying and accelerating integration with the leading content management systems being used by innovative enterprises. Elastic Path delivers ultimate flexibility, control and a lowered total cost of ownership, as well as the extensive support, solutions partnerships, and professional services expertise. It's these factors that have enabled us to deploy our platform successfully in more than 250 unique corporate environments, including many of the largest digital goods and services companies in the world.

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1 Gartner Inc, 2010  
2 Internet Retailer, 2010.

## About Elastic Path Software

Elastic Path is the leader in digital commerce technology and expertise for enterprises selling digital goods and content. Major global brands such as Google, Time Inc., and Virgin Media rely on Elastic Path to monetize digital relationships with their customers in ways that are frictionless, social, and everywhere.

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