Merchandising Workbench
Version 1.0
Release Announcement

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Introduction

Endeca® Merchandising Workbench is a new tools suite that brings together best-in-class Web-site management capabilities including landing page management, merchandising, Content Spotlightting, search configuration, and usage reporting.

Merchandising Workbench features the new Endeca Page Builder, a powerful template-based merchandising tool that enables rapid creation of rich, dynamic landing pages. Page Builder gives the merchandiser unprecedented control over site content without the need for IT intervention.

Page Builder

The Endeca Page Builder is a new tool that enables merchandisers to rapidly create and easily manage landing pages across a Web site, to increase conversion rates and keep customers shopping longer. Because the Page Builder is tightly integrated with the core Endeca search and navigation experience, merchandisers can create landing pages for specific keywords and refinement selections or apply a single dynamic landing page to entire sections of the site, delivering increased value from all pages in the site and not just hand-selected pages or top-level category pages. Additionally, the tool leverages a template-based approach to page creation, offering advanced control for merchandisers over all aspects of the page and simplified application code for the developer.

Components of the Page Builder include:

Page Builder Tool

- Used by merchandisers and content administrators
- Creates page content using templates and cartridges
- Assigns pages to Endeca search and refinement selections, as well as profile groups and date/time ranges

Templates and Cartridges

- Created by application developers
- Defines content structure required by front-end application
- Controls merchandiser interface within the Page Builder tool

Content Assembler API

- Used by application developers to build front-end application
- Provides access to content defined in the Page Builder tool
- Populates dynamic content including products, user-generated content, buying guides, and recommendations (e.g. engine sub-queries or external 3rd-party Web service calls)
- Provided in both Microsoft® .NET and Sun® Java components
Best-In-Class Merchandising Capabilities

Built on top of Endeca Web Studio infrastructure, Merchandising Workbench continues Endeca’s tradition of delivering industry-leading merchandising control.

Dynamic Merchandising

Easily manage promotions with the control and flexibility required to enable targeted experiences for all users, and any search or refinement selection. Create up-sell and cross-sell promotions featuring designated items, or top items from a particular category or set of categories. Use any available data to rank promoted products, including information visible to shoppers, such as price and product category, or other information such as sales rank and margin.

Dynamic Content Spotlighting

Easily manage a more complete shopping experience through the ability to present relevant content to the consumer. This may include banner images, buying guides, user-generated ratings and reviews, expert opinions, videos, and more. Featured content can be hand-selected for a particular page, or it can be dynamically promoted based on the consumer’s profile or search and refinement selections.

Search Configuration

Easily manage basic and advanced synonym relationships, keyword redirections to landing pages or other locations, and other advanced search tuning capabilities to effectively complement your merchandising and user experience strategy. Tune Endeca’s search algorithms to your needs to ensure the most relevant results for your users and provide a more targeted shopping experience.

Reporting

Dozens of out-of-the-box reports are available in Merchandising Workbench to inform managers about the site’s usage and effectiveness. These reports include results from A/B testing, the most common refinement selections, merchandised items, search terms, and zero-results keyword searches. Because these diagnostics are available in the same interface as the Page Builder and search tuning modules, Merchandising Workbench helps to decrease the time between site assessment and site improvement.

Extensibility

Merchandising Workbench is built on an enterprise-class tools platform that supports authorization, workflow, and the development of fully customized utilities for greater merchandising control and deeper integration into existing business processes. Extensions may provide functionality for custom workflow and approval processes, search strategy A/B testing, and integration with search engine marketing strategies.

Workflow Management

Merchandising Workbench supports the ability for users with the right permissions to evaluate and reject or approve dynamic landing pages created by merchandisers. A particular landing page may not be promoted to the live site without this approval. To enable more efficient page creation and evaluation, Merchandising Workbench enables merchandisers to preview page configurations, so it is not necessary to make changes to production applications to see the impact of proposed changes.
Authentication and Authorization

Administrators can manage user permissions directly within Merchandising Workbench and users can be assigned granular access to functionality within Merchandising Workbench. For example, some users may be authorized to create and manage certain landing pages and merchandising rules, while others are authorized to approve pages and rules. Administrators can also control access to reports or search configuration pages. This allows IT organizations to provide the optimal flexibility to their business teams while ensuring that enterprise security standards are met.

Shared Environment Support for Multiple Applications

Merchandising Workbench supports administration of multiple Endeca applications through a single shared environment. This significantly streamlines the operational management of platform deployments with multiple distinct sets of information; multiple lifecycle environments to support development, testing, staging, and production; or multi-tenanted shared environments. Administrators can also decide whether business users can see all applications, or only have access to specific applications.

Enterprise Directory Integration and SSL Support

The authentication system in Merchandising Workbench supports integration with LDAP and Microsoft Active Directory® enterprise directory systems. LDAP groups are fully supported, enabling any member of an authorized group to log in without being explicitly specified as a user in Merchandising Workbench. Merchandising Workbench also supports secure connections via SSL.

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