Abstract: This paper presents an application that facilitates the implementation of electronic commerce sites. The application uses a series of templates or universal forms to accomplish this development. The forms are used to populate details needed for implementing an Electronic Commerce application. Businesses who are interested in having an online store can use this product to create or build an e-commerce application. The availability of such templates can enable small companies who do not have the IT support and expertise available to take advantage of this phenomena of e-commerce.

Introduction

E-commerce is becoming essential to today's business society. Essentially e-commerce is using electronic means to facilitate the buying and selling of goods and services between two parties. As the use of e-commerce becomes more prevalent in today's business market, it will be necessary for firms both large and small to utilize its services to attract and maintain their customer base and remain competitive. Dillon [1999] reports that worldwide E-commerce revenue will grow from $98.4 billion in 1999 to $1.2 trillion in the next four years and that the United States will continue to generate a majority of the dollars produced.

E-Commerce systems enable merchants to create electronic stores where they can sell their products and services globally over the Internet's World Wide Web (WWW). E-Commerce has allowed small companies to do business on the web and appear as competitive as any large organization. However, many small companies do not have the information technology (IT) support and expertise available to take advantage of this phenomenon. This paper presents an application of templates for generating an e-commerce site. The templates or universal forms incorporated in this application allow the population and customization of all the components needed for implementing e-commerce. Merchants who are interested in having an online store can use this product to create or build an e-commerce application.

Templates for Generation of an E-Commerce Application

The application provides two views of an e-commerce site, the merchant's view and the shopper's view.

The merchant's view facilitates the design and deployment of an e-commerce site. Components of the tool allow the merchant to customize the e-commerce interface for a specific business and to customize a database for catalog and client information. Functions within the merchant's view permit the specification of a business' logo, the specification of product categories, and the population of the catalog. This view is restricted to the merchant or store manager.
The shopper's view is the e-commerce public site which enables customers to buy products. The shopper can select items from the catalog for purchase. Customers can choose the activities that they want to perform from the shopper's menu shown in Figure 1.

![Shopper's Menu](image)

**Figure 1: Shopper's Menu**

The main page of the CATALOG presents the categories to the shopper. The shopper is able to select the category which is then expanded to reveal the details of each product within that category. This organization facilitates the customers' ability to locate and buy specific products. The customer can select any product and place it in the shopping cart.

The VIEW CART allows the shopper to view the contents of the cart as well as modify them. The shopping cart will hold any quantity of an item and will show both the unit and extended price of the item as well as the total cost of items in the cart.

The CHECKOUT requires each customer to provide billing and shipping information. The customer needs to confirm the contents of the order and accept the final total. The order is then recorded in the database for later fulfillment.

**Technical Description**

The templates for generation of an e-commerce application were developed using Active Server Pages (ASP). ASP is a scripting environment for the creation of dynamic Web-based applications. ASP with Internet Information Server (IIS) 4.0 provided a flexible method to interact with the ODBC compliant database used in implementing this application.

**Reference**

http://www.computerworld.com/home/news.nsf/all/9907084eglobal