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Small Business Web Shopping Cart Software: 7 Reasons Hosted Is Better

By Joel Walsh

Why should you pay for a remotely hosted shopping cart for your small business website, rather than just install a free OpenSource shopping cart on your site?

There are a lot of reasons:

- 1) Focus. Your business is selling stuff, not installing and managing a complicated script. You'll have enough issues running a business that you won't be able to outsource to someone else the way you can with a shopping cart script.
- 2) Price. Paid hosted shopping cart software's price is inconsequential: \$10-\$100/month. If that's a significant expense for your business, you need to look into improving your profit margin.
- 3) Support. While support for "paid" business software is included in the cheap price, support for "free" business software is pretty expensive. OpenSource and other free software come without any support except forums for do-it-yourself-ers to share ideas. So, you'll end up paying someone to install and maintain it. Or you do it yourself, which costs so much time it's more expensive than paying someone if your time is worth anything.
- 4) Installation. When you buy hosted software on a subscription plan, installation is already done and support is included. When you have an issue-and have you ever had software that you didn't have an issue with at least once?-you don't have to pay a developer \$150/hour to make it go away.
- 5) Security. Security issues are taken care of for you by the provider-no patching software.
- 6) Speed. Hosted online shopping carts really do work now, out of the box. You just input your inventory and go. OpenSource shopping carts come with dozens of customization options that will take you hours just to decide you don't need most of them.
- 7) Peace of mind. The shopping cart is the jugular vein of an online business. If anything makes the blood stop flowing, however minor the cause, you'll feel it fast. If you are the one who has to make sure

the blood stays flowing, or if you have to rely on the availability of a freelance programmer, you won't be getting the soundest sleep. Let a specialist do that worrying for you, 24 hours a day.

About the author: Joel Walsh is a business writer. Try EasyStoreCreator for an easy hosted

<http://www.easystorecreator.com>

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URL/web address w/ link text/anchor text: "shopping cart software" OR leave this bracketed message intact.]

E-commerce Solution: Shopping Cart or Web Store?

By Joel Walsh

If you're planning on opening your own online store, you should make sure that you learn all about e-commerce, so that you can select the best online store builder for your business. One big decision you want to make early on is whether you want your online store to consist only of a shopping cart, or if you want your online store to be your entire site, with shopping cart functionalities available to every page. Let's look at the options. Ecommerce Option One: Complete Online Store

Software that creates a complete online store for you, with completely integrated ecommerce capabilities, is arguably best for new websites, since it will save you the trouble of buying separate content management software and then integrating it with your current site.

Here are some things you can do with a completely ecommerce-enabled web store that you can't do with a traditional website that just has a CMS attached: Show a "in your shopping cart" list of selected items to users who add something to a cart, then continue browsing your site. Studies have shown that "shopping cart abandonment," in which users add something to the cart and then forget about it while browsing the site, is greatly reduced when users can see their shopping cart contents in front of them at all times. Feature a different product on your homepage each day, rotating based on a dynamic selection from your shopping cart inventory. Automatically recommend a brand new product to users who are browsing a related page on your site-without updating the code on that page. Remind returning visitors to your homepage of an item they added to a shopping cart on a previous visit but did not purchase. Manage your entire website's look and feel, including both the regular pages and the shopping cart pages, from a single interfaces, without having to copy changes in design from one to the other. Automatically remove a product featured on regular pages of your site when it is no longer in stock. Show an updated list of the latest additions to your inventory on the homepage or other non-shopping-cart pages. Display a signup form for users to receive email announcements of new products, dynamically generated from your web store. Ecommerce Option Two: Separate Shopping Cart

If you already have a website, transferring everything to a new web store system can be daunting. You may want to start your foray into ecommerce with a simple add-on shopping cart.

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But don't limit your possibilities for the future. You can still employ a full-featured web store now and simply use only its shopping cart functions. Simply set up the online store to show in a directory or subdomain of your existing domain, or host it off-site completely. Then link to the individual product pages on the web store from your existing site.

Users never have to know the shopping cart is actually a full-featured site with its own homepage-they'll never see those pages, and in many web store software packages, you can simply disable those pages from every being created.

After all, on the web you don't have to buy a bigger building to expand your store. Why limit your growth with less-fully-featured software? Choose ecommerce software that will grow with your business, and your store can grow as big as you can make it.

Joel Walsh is a writer and online business owner. Check out this affordable web store:

Ecommerce

Solutions

<http://www.easystorecreator.com>



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