

IDEA Electro E-Biz Forum 2007

“Business Information as a Competitive Advantage”

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Who's got the monkey on their back?



**Has your Customer said they need more Data
than just a Catalog Number, brief Description and basic Pricing
for all your Company's products?**



“Business Information as a Competitive Advantage”

The demand for data is pushing the supply chain to cooperate and collaborate in new ways to serve Customer needs and the market in general.

1. Can your Company provide the data to meet Customer expectations?
2. Is the data being leveraged to your “Competitive Advantage”?

And most importantly, do you know where these



nuggets of data are and how to maximize their value?

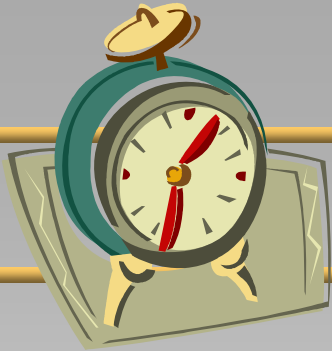




This is your wake up call...

- Internet search engines are evolving as the primary tool for finding products / services in the pre-buy stage
- Although online ordering is growing, research remains the dominant benefit from the user perspective
- “Positioning” through search engines, integrated media strategies, rich attributed catalog content and blogging may become the future state of marketing
- Next Gen workforce grew up on the internet, it is their source for information more than any other resource
- “Attributes” and “Metadata / Metatags” are enablers that allow search engines and users to find your products





A Case in Point

- Search for suppliers of product by generic description
- Following was a Search for “Surge Protection”
- Staples office supply store, came up in the results
- Visited their website and online store to “dig deeper”
- Following are some observations from the “dig”

(Think about how you find a website and where the backend data was that guided you there?)



Attributed Data plays a role in the Search > Compare > Select process...

- ✓ From www.staples.com
- ✓ Search for Surge Protection
- ✓ Selected category under "Technology" column
- ✓ Found "Batteries, Surge & UPS"
- ✓ Clicked on this product group
- ✓ Which pulled all Surge product data and displayed in table (on next slide)





The screenshot shows the Staples website interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with the Staples logo, a search bar, and links for 'Find a store', 'Order by item number', and 'Type search here'. A shopping cart icon shows '0 items, \$0.00' with a 'Checkout' button. Below the navigation bar are several tabs: 'Products', 'Ink & Toner', 'Specials', 'My Account', and 'Customer Service'. The 'Products' tab is active, displaying a grid of product categories. The 'Technology' category is highlighted, and within it, 'Batteries, Surge & UPS' is selected. Below the categories are three featured items: 'Staples® Multiuse Paper', 'Iceberg Standard-Grade Resin 4' Folding Table', and 'Brother TN-250 Toner Cartridge'. Each item has a price, a 'Special Buy' badge, and a 'Details' button. On the right side, there are promotional banners for 'Give', 'Specials', and 'Big Selection. Bigger Savings.' with a '25%-50% off select products' offer. At the bottom, there are sections for 'Ways to Save', 'Policies', and 'Corporate Information', along with a large 'easy' logo.



Attributed Data displays as the key features or searchable criteria for user comparisons

- ✓ Products / search could be narrowed by certain attributes;
 - ✓ # of Outlets
 - ✓ Price range
- ✓ Products / search results table can be sorted by;
 - ✓ Mfr. Name (alpha sort)
 - ✓ Delivery schedule
 - ✓ Price (ascend/descend)
- ✓ Option to select certain products to compare information (side-by-side)
- ✓ Selected 4 products from highest priced to others with features desired
- ✓ Comparison table with Attributes displayed (next slide)


The screenshot shows the Staples website interface for a product comparison. At the top, there are navigation links for 'Find a store', 'Order by item number', and a search bar. The main navigation bar includes 'Products', 'Ink & Toner', 'Specials', 'My Account', and 'Customer Service'. The current page is titled 'Surge Protectors - Basic' and shows a list of four products with their respective features, prices, and delivery schedules. A comparison table on the right side of the page allows users to select items for comparison and add them to the cart.

Images Off	sort by Name	sort by Delivery	sorted by Price	Compare Selected
	Tripp Lite Isobar® Isotel Premium Surge Suppressor, 6-Outlet, 6-Foot Cord Item TRPISOTEL6ULTRA Model ISOTEL6ULTRA	Expected Delivery 1 - 4 Business Days	\$98.73 Each	<input type="checkbox"/> select to compare Qty. 1 Add to Cart Add to Favorites
	Belkin Audio/Video 6 Outlet Strip Surge Item 573019 Model F9H602V06	Expected Delivery 1 Business Day	\$34.49 Each	<input type="checkbox"/> select to compare Qty. 1 Add to Cart Add to Favorites
	Belkin 8 Outlet SurgeMaster Superior Series F9S820-06 Strip Surge Item 481849 Model F9S820V06	Expected Delivery 1 Business Day	\$31.55 Each	<input type="checkbox"/> select to compare Qty. 1 Add to Cart Add to Favorites
	APC 1 Outlet SurgeArrest Mobile Surge Item 380523 Model PNOTE PRO	Expected Delivery 3 - 5 Business Days	\$29.99 Each	<input type="checkbox"/> select to compare Qty. 1 Add to Cart Add to Favorites



Options to compare products are commonplace on the web

- ✓ **Comparison table** defaulted to alpha (left to right) listing of selected products
- ✓ **Attributes** displayed along left side of table
- ✓ Supplied **Values** from Mfr or self-developed by Staples are displayed in table format
- ✓ Observations:
 - ✓ Basic data supplied
 - ✓ Assume these attributes are the most important to user
 - ✓ Not all Mfrs supplied data
 - ✓ Link to products provides user with feature/benefits
 - ✓ Most expensive product displayed no attributes
- ✓ User can enter Qty to order and add to “shopping cart”



Find a store

Order by item number

Type search here

Please log in. [Log in](#) [Order status](#)


CART **0 items, \$0.00**
\$50.00 until free delivery.*

Products
Ink & Toner
Specials
My Account
NEW! Easy Reorder
Customer Service


[Products Main](#) | [Office Supplies](#) | [Technology](#) | [Furniture](#) | [Custom Products](#)

Items You Compared


Surge Protectors - Basic




[APC 7 Outlet P7T Strip Surge](#)



[Belkin 8 Outlet SurgeMaster Superior Series F9S820-06 Strip Surge](#)



[Fellowes 6 Outlet Basic Office Series 99012 Strip Surge](#)



[Tripp Lite Isobar@ Isotel Premium Surge Suppressor, 6-Outlet, 6-Foot Cord](#)

Item No.	521343	481849	387590	TRPISOTEL6ULTRA
Price/Unit	\$18.35 Each	\$31.55 Each	\$11.90 Each	\$98.73 Each
Qty. <input type="text"/>	Qty. <input type="text"/>	Clearance	Qty. <input type="text"/>	Qty. <input type="text"/>
<input type="button" value="Add to Cart"/>	<input type="button" value="Add to Cart"/>	<input type="button" value="Add to Cart"/>	<input type="button" value="Add to Cart"/>	<input type="button" value="Add to Cart"/>
<input type="button" value="Remove Item"/>	<input type="button" value="Remove Item"/>	<input type="button" value="Remove Item"/>	<input type="button" value="Remove Item"/>	<input type="button" value="Remove Item"/>
# of Outlets	7	8	6	n/a
Power cord length	6	6	6	n/a
AC adapter block faces	No	Yes	No	n/a
Additional protection	Fax/Phone	Phone/fax/modem		n/a
Connected equipment protection	n/a	\$150,000	\$5,000	n/a
Joule rating	n/a	1770	330	n/a
Initial clamping voltage	330	330	330	n/a
Maximum spike current	n/a	90,000	n/a	n/a
Response time	n/a	<1	n/a	n/a
Complete 3-line protection	n/a	Yes	Yes	n/a



Competitive advantages in comparisons need to be clear and convincing

- ✓ Details of the most expensive product listed...
 - ✓ User clicks on description link on comparison table
 - ✓ Listing of key features shown in typical catalog format
 - ✓ Included some Attributes in “long description”
 - ✓ Mfr. did not parse or provide individual attributes to populate comparison table
 - ✓ Unless user got to this page, the sale may have been lost based on lack of attributed data or selection of lower priced product would have reduced the sales and profit potential

Do your Customers, Distributors or Specifiers look for similar information?

The screenshot shows the Staples website interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with links for 'Find a store', 'Order by item number', and a search bar. The main content area features a product listing for a 'Tripp Lite Isobar® Isotel Premium Surge Suppressor, 6-Outlet, 6-Foot Cord'. The product image shows a white surge protector with six outlets. The description includes a list of features: '\$50,000 connected equipment guarantee', 'Premium protection against surges, spikes and EMI/RFI line noise', 'Tough all-metal housing with exclusive isolated filter bank', 'LED signals power problems before equipment is at risk', and 'Lifetime product warranty'. Below the product listing, there is a 'Recommended Items' section featuring 'Case Logic Cable Ties'. The product price is \$98.73 Each, and the recommended item price is \$2.49 Each. The page also includes an 'Add to Cart' button and a quantity selector.





Observations in this Case

- How did we get from keyword search to results?
 - How did attributes drive these searches?
 - What data was used to search for specific products?
 - Was there an option for product comparisons?
 - Were there enough details to make a buying decision?
 - Do you think Staples got this data from their various suppliers or developed their own?
- ✓ **Lessons learned** – metadata or attributes are key building blocks for a web-based “positioning” strategy



Building data for a Competitive Advantage

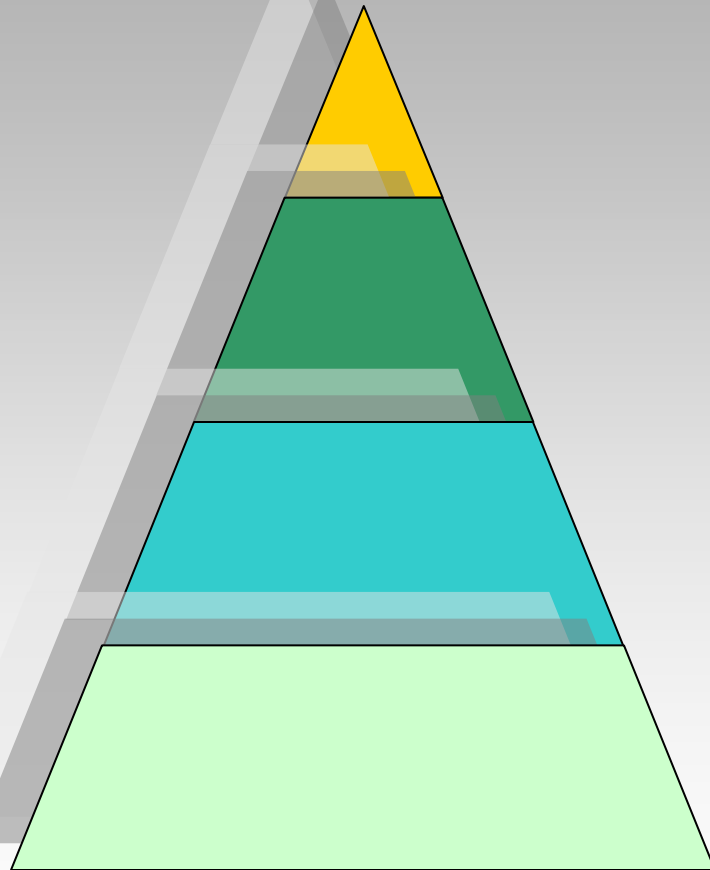


The reality of web-based search and compare, should be considered in future strategic planning of content syndication...

Development of the data is only the start of the journey. Leveraging that data can position your product or service as the Competitive Advantage in the long term.



Building Data from the Bottom Up



STRUCTURED DATA

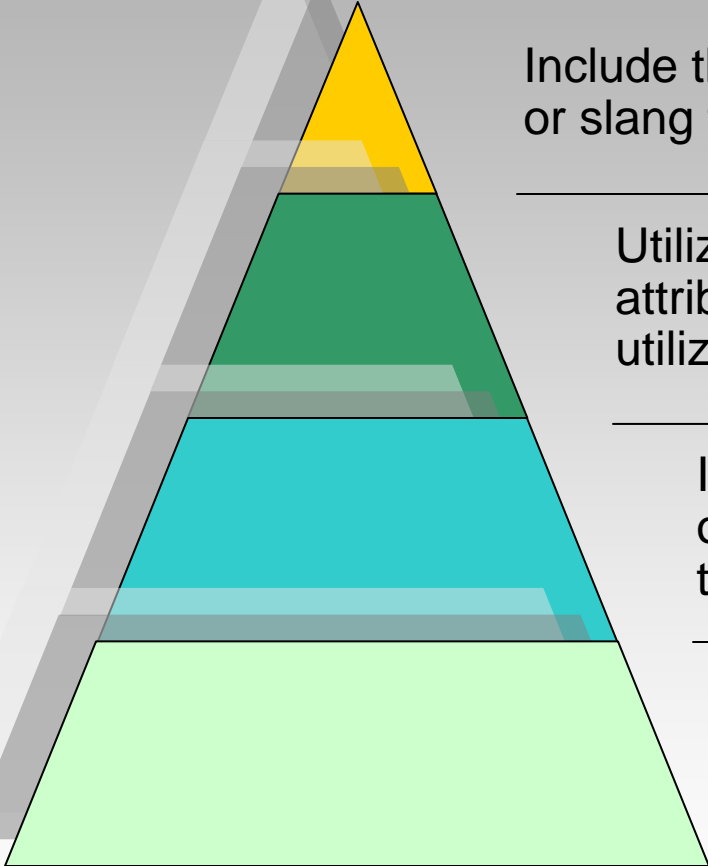
Any data that describes the functionality, brand or key features of the product.

UNSTRUCTURED DATA

This includes images, spec sheets, long descriptions, MSDS, RoHS compliance, etc. data (often in other databases or even in print form only).



Building Data from the Bottom Up



Include the primary nouns, keywords, brand names or slang terms in the metadata for your websites

Utilize MS Excel spreadsheets to list out all attributes, load into a common database or utilize a Content Management System

Include enough attributes to drive selection of products to a single catalog number – this is the parametric / searchable criteria

Establish the most important selection criteria by product category (e.g. what is the primary noun that describes the product, is it a plug, receptacle, connector, etc)



Building Data from the Bottom Up

Start with a simple 3 step process... (using a spreadsheet approach)

- 1.** List all products by **Generic category** – often the “**Keyword**”
- 2.** Identify the **Key Attributes** associated with **Product Selection**
- 3.** Populate **Values** with standard terms and links to reference docs

Product Group (primary noun)	Attribute 1s (searchable)	Attribute 2s (searchable)	Attribute 3s (searchable)	Attribute 4s (searchable)	Attribute N (non-search)
Plugs	Type (adj)	Amperage	Voltage	Color	Image
Receptacles	Type	Amperage	Voltage	Color	RoHS
Switches	Type	Poles, Wires	Voltage	Color	Gangable
Inlets	Type	Amperage	Voltage	Material	Drawing

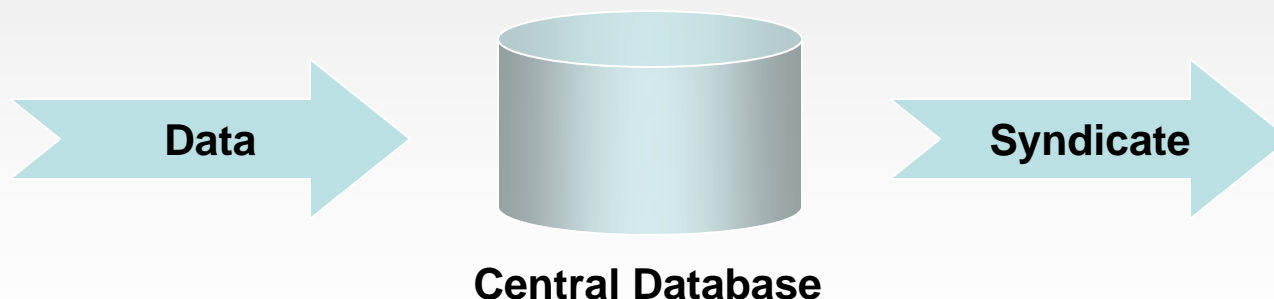
Who knows this Stuff?

Where is this type of data in your company?



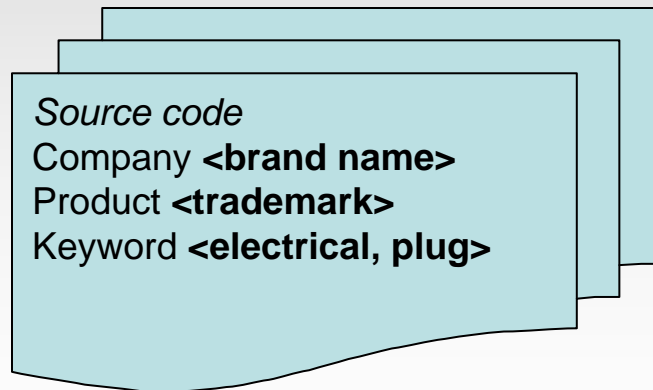
Getting the Competitive Advantage

- Build a single repository (dbase internal / IDW external) for content
- Review options for PIM (product information management) tools
- Integrate new product launches with requirements to populate database
- Always include the product Brand / Trademark name as an attribute
- Identify the “grade” of products (industrial, commercial, residential)
- Include enough attributes to differentiate one product from another
- Tie important non-structured data as an associated attribute (N)
- Include marketing descriptions that tell why the product is better than X
- Educate product management and technical support staff



Getting the Competitive Advantage

- **Develop a “metadata” strategy... which includes, keywords & metatags**
 - Embed these in the source code of all of your web pages
 - Allow 2 to 3 days for search engine bots and spiders to index
 - Check your results, have content owners conduct searches
 - Although search engines offer options to purchase keywords, properly placed metadata can push your site to the top of search results



Source code
Company <**brand name**>
Product <**trademark**>
Keyword <**electrical, plug**>



Get the monkey off your back...



**Data differentiation is as important
as product or service differentiation**



Summary

- Audience Suggestions - Tips & Tricks
- Leveraging IDW
- Know your Options
- Wrap-Up



Thank You

