



Item Synchronization for Suppliers Solution Overview

Version 4.1

Note!

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This edition applies to Version 4, Release 1, Modification 0, of *IBM® CrossWorlds®* (5724-C12) and to all subsequent releases and modifications until otherwise indicated in new editions.

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Item Synchronization for Suppliers Solution Overview

Note: This version of the Item Synchronization for Suppliers process solution runs on IBM® CrossWorlds® 4.1 only.

WebSphere® Business Integration for Retail Distribution is a portfolio that provides retailers and their suppliers with industry-specific business process templates, a portfolio of connectors to leading applications, and an integration hub to help them automate their current business processes.

This overview focuses on the portfolio's first solution offering, the Item Synchronization for Suppliers process solution, which automatically integrates a supplier's item business processes with those of its trading partners. The process solution uses the IBM CrossWorlds Collaboration for UCCnet Item Synchronization, along with application connectors, the IBM InterChange Server (ICS), and Trading Partner Interchange (TPI) connector and server, to provide affordable, extensible, scalable, and secure access to the UCCnet standard registry. (UCCnet is a neutral, tax-exempt organization that provides item registry and data synchronization for electronic commerce based on industry developed standards.) The resulting efficiencies to supply chains can significantly drive down costs and improve profits for suppliers.

Challenges for suppliers

Today's suppliers face many challenges. An enterprise's business processes and associated operations can be stretched to the breaking point as a result of:

- Constantly shifting economic conditions
- Technologically complex and cumbersome planning, forecasting, buying, and inventory management processes
- Impacts from growth, acquisitions, mergers, and expansion

Consider that 20,000 new food and non-food Universal Product Code (UPC) items are created annually and that it typically takes 10 to 30 days to get new items and price changes to market. Data elements that describe these individual items typically change up to four times per year. Plus, nearly three out of five orders placed need to be revisited and reworked before completion.

To meet these escalating data demands on suppliers, UCCnet has implemented multi-industry standards for product identification and related electronic communications. A subsidiary of the Uniform Code Council Inc., the UCCnet is a neutral industry organization that implements these standards by requiring its community of trading partners to provide standardized item data in particular formats to its registry. The system also includes integral compliance checks to assure the integrity of the data in all cases. By subscribing to the UCCnet registry, suppliers can potentially achieve near real-time price changes and greatly improve their speed-to-retail-shelf for new products and item maintenance.

For suppliers to work effectively with UCCnet, they must be able to synchronize their enterprise item data with UCCnet systems quickly and easily, without the need to rewrite or replace existing systems. They must be able to extract business information from diverse sources and move this information through disparate applications quickly and accurately to keep item information current. Plus, they

must be able to get up and running on the UCCnet registry quickly with minimal disruption to their current business processes and enterprise systems.

Solution: Item Synchronization for Suppliers process solution

The Item Synchronization for Suppliers process solution meets these challenges by helping suppliers automate the item synchronization process in compliance with UCCnet standards. In fact, the solution is certified for interoperability with UCCnet version 2.0 and 2.1.

The heart of this modular, open-systems-based solution is the IBM CrossWorlds Collaboration for UCCnet Item Synchronization. This collaboration, or pre-built template, enables suppliers to automatically add items to, update or delist items within, or withdraw items from UCCnet when item updates are made in their Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) applications. When an item is updated in a supplier's ERP system, item data is automatically validated, reformatted, and sent to the UCCnet standard registry. This collaboration also provides a single process for communicating item information to trading partners via UCCnet. Thus, a supplier's enterprise data is synchronized with item data sent outside the enterprise.

The solution's benefits to suppliers include:

- Quick UCCnet format compliance, with the flexibility to connect to other partners and vendors.
- Back-end and legacy integration for true business process management without the need to write changes to existing data and application environments.
- The ability to stage a common or "catalog" view of item attribute data mapped and integrated from multiple systems of record within an enterprise.
- Fast deployment, simplified application upgrades, and reusability of both business process flows and application access code.
- Improved speed to market.
- Seamless, real-time updates to existing product records, along with immediate acceptance and setup of new and delisted items.
- Message transformation, message routing, guaranteed message delivery, as well as orchestrated workflows around closed-loop and secure business process executions.
- A fully extensible framework to support tomorrow's new processes and partners.

For more detailed information about solution components, architecture, and installation, see the following:

- *IBM CrossWorlds Collaboration for UCCnet Item Synchronization* document for comprehensive information about this collaboration.
- *IBM CrossWorlds UCCnet Solution: Operational Guide*, available at the IBM CrossWorlds Exchange Web site, for an overview of a sample solution using this collaboration and a description of the processing flows for performing synchronization.
- *IBM CrossWorlds UCCnet Solution: Installation and Configuration Guide*, available at the IBM CrossWorlds Exchange Web site, for instructions on setting up a sample solution.
- *IBM CrossWorlds Generic UCCnetGBO_envelope Business Object* document, available at the IBM CrossWorlds Exchange Web site, for information on the structure of this sample business object.

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