August 2004

Frequently asked questions about IBM Store Integration Framework.

NEXT

ON DEMAND BUSINESS™

FAQ objectives

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Understanding IBM Store Integration Framework

Section B:
How Store Integration Framework works

Section C:
Benefits of Store Integration Framework

Section D:
Implementing Store Integration Framework

FAQ objectives

This FAQ is designed to help answer your questions about IBM Store Integration Framework. We highlight features that deliver the foundation for transforming your retail stores into On Demand Business environments.

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Understanding IBM Store Integration Framework

Q1. What is it?

Q2. What can it do?

Q3. On which IBM technology components is it built?

Q4. On which open, industry standards is it built?

Q5. What can it enable my retail business to do that it can't do right now?

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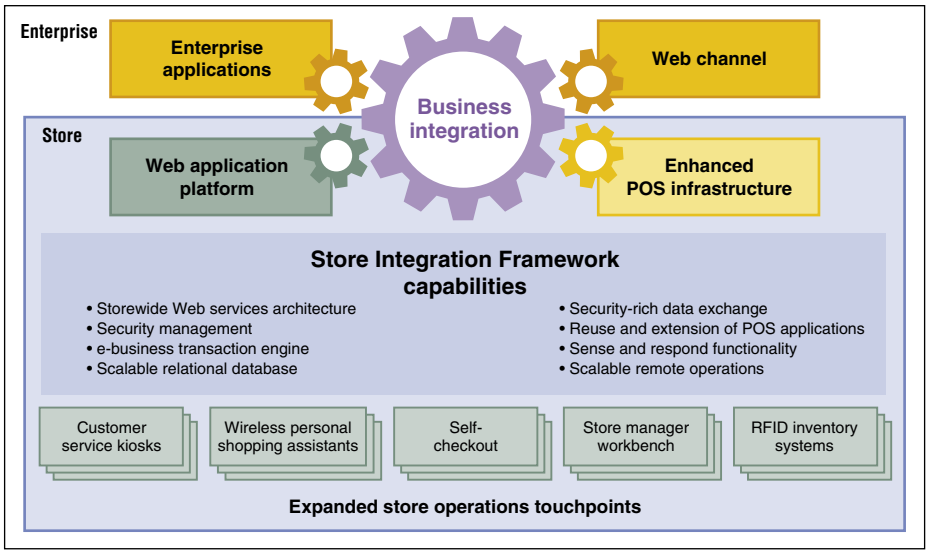
Section A: Understanding IBM Store Integration Framework

Q1. What is it?

A. IBM Store Integration Framework is a technology infrastructure for the store, optimized for retail businesses. It is an integration platform that can be configured to enable real-time access to information virtually anytime, anywhere across multiple customer touchpoints. Access points include point-of-sale (POS) terminals, kiosks, handheld devices and new wireless technologies, such as radio frequency identification (RFID) technology-enabled electronic shelf labels. Based on open, industry standards, Store Integration Framework employs a Web services architecture that enables the creation of intelligent stores—retail environments that are responsive to the needs of both consumers and employees.

The on demand operating environment for retail



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Q2. What can it do?

A. Store Integration Framework provides a standard integration platform for software and hardware solutions within the store. Using the IBM Middleware Solution for Retail Store Operations and IBM Retail Store Solutions functionality, it provides an open integration platform for delivering Web-based solutions within the store. This enables you to configure your solution to use technologies, such as thin-client/browser-based devices, to deliver new information and business capabilities to employees and consumers throughout your store environments. Mobile shopping cart assistants to assist the customer in the shopping process. Handheld communication devices to help employees service customers while they shop, as well as track progress on work items. And leading-edge technologies, such as digital media and inventory-tracking solutions, that are enabled by RFID technology.

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Q3. On which IBM technology components is it built?

A. Store Integration Framework comprises the following technology components:

IBM Middleware Solution for Retail Store Operations	
IBM WebSphere® Application Server	Provides the foundation for a Java™ 2 Enterprise Edition (J2EE) technology-compliant, Web-based environment for the retail store. Gives you the ability to create and integrate browser-based applications and business components within the store for use on thin devices.
IBM WebSphere MQ and IBM WebSphere MQe	Provides standard, assured-delivery messaging for all applications within the store. Helps facilitate real-time communication between applications and processes.
IBM DB2® Express	Provides a true American National Standards Institute (ANSI) Structured Query Language (SQL) relational database to manage information within the store environment. Enables you to synchronize data between the store and the host as needed and to keep local data that supports customer-focused store operations.
IBM Tivoli® Monitoring for Web Infrastructure, IBM Tivoli Monitoring for Databases and IBM Tivoli management agents	Provides systems management capabilities for the store environment, including monitoring the status of most devices (e.g., POS devices, kiosks and handheld tablets) to help you proactively manage hardware and software. Also enables store systems management from the enterprise level.

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IBM Retail Store Solutions functionality	
IBM Data Integration Facility	Helps unlock POS information by providing transfer and translation tools to support open standards. Easily integrates data that has been translated into XML and IXRetail with existing store technology environments, facilitating the real-time exchange of all types of information with the POS system.
IBM Store Integrator	Delivers an open, Java technology-based API that enables you to reuse existing business logic beyond the POS system via wireless devices and independent software vendor (ISV) applications. Helps you enhance the functionality of your IBM 4690 OS technology-based applications to optimize your existing investments. Providers of applications for other operating systems can also adopt this same API.
IBM Store Application Facility	Helps simplify the process of integrating browser-based applications within the store and enterprise. Provides easy-to-use navigation, managing devices and I/O support. Speeds time to deployment and simplifies development processes through the reuse of business objects.

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Q4. On which open, industry standards is it built?

A. Store Integration Framework is built on the following open, industry standards:

ARTS	Association for Retail Technology Standards
BPEL	Business Process Execution Language
FTP	File Transfer Protocol
GTIN	Global Trade Identification Number
HTML	Hypertext Markup Language
HTTP	Hypertext Transfer Protocol
IIOP	Internet Inter-ORB Protocol
IXRetail	International XML Retail Cooperative
J2EE	Java 2 Enterprise Edition
JDBC	Java Database Connectivity
JMS	Java Message Service
JMX	Java Management Extensions
JPOS	Java Point of Sale
JVM	Java Virtual Machine
ODBC	Open Database Connectivity
OSGi	Open Service Gateway Initiative
RSBO	Retail Standard Business Objects (proposed standard)
SOAP	Simple Object Access Protocol
UCC	Uniform Commercial Codes
W3C	World Wide Web Consortium
WSDL	Web Service Description Language
XML	Extensible Markup Language

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Q5. What can it enable my retail business to do that it can't do right now?

A. Retailers today are experiencing more intense competition than ever. Never before has there been such a need to differentiate your retail business in the eyes of consumers. Store Integration Framework enables you to use open standards to rapidly integrate new technologies. It can help you get new solutions to market faster to differentiate your business and help save valuable time and money. It can give your business a competitive edge by delivering an environment that transforms the customer shopping experience, optimizes employee effectiveness and helps remove costs from your retail operations.

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Q1. How does it integrate with virtually any point-of-sale (POS) application?

Q2. How does it connect with my existing point-of-sale, self-checkout and other self-service applications—and those I opt to implement in the future?

Q3. How can it facilitate integration across my retail enterprise?

Q4. What kinds of business applications can it connect?

Q5. What kinds of in-store devices can it enable?

Q6. How many devices and applications can it integrate?

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Section B: How Store Integration Framework works

Q1. How does it integrate with virtually any point-of-sale (POS) application?

A. Store Integration Framework allows nearly all POS solutions to integrate with its Web application platform using a proposed Standard Java advanced programming interface (API) and a Web services architecture. This platform allows standard access to POS data and business logic for use by other applications that need it. For example, a self-service photo-finishing kiosk may allow customers to complete and tender their photo processing transactions. Instead of having the photo kiosk vendor provide the transaction-processing function, the standard API interface would allow the kiosk vendor to create an instance of the POS application that can enter the photo processing items, tender the transaction and record the sale within the store's transaction log for consolidation.

Store Integration Framework also allows you to leverage Java technology to provide new capabilities to your legacy software applications, such as IBM Supermarket Application or IBM General Sales Application solutions. IBM, IBM Business Partners or your IT team can write new application functionality in the Java language for use at your POS terminals.

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Q2. How does it connect with my existing point-of-sale, self-checkout and other self-service applications—and those I opt to implement in the future?

A. Store Integration Framework enables new and existing applications to more readily share messaging, business logic and data. It provides virtual POS terminal sessions that provide access to POS functionality across many types of self-service devices and applications, including personal shopping assistants, self-checkout solutions and kiosk systems.

For example, mobile shopping cart assistants can run POS applications using business logic from your existing POS solutions. Shoppers could use an interface specifically designed for them, which is a simplified version of the POS interface found at checkout terminals. And functions, such as signing on with a loyalty card, retrieving a shopping list, presenting personalized promotions, scanning items into a shopping cart and tendering or suspending transactions for completion at a traditional POS terminal or self-checkout solution, would be provided by your existing POS systems. This can help enable you to save money by consolidating POS capabilities into one system and avoiding the need to adapt existing applications when you require new POS functionality.

Q3. How can it facilitate integration across my entire enterprise?

A. Store Integration Framework enables integration with applications and data across the enterprise. Working with IBM Store Manager Workbench and IBM WebSphere Business Integration tools, it helps simplify movement of information and reuse of business capabilities between the store and the enterprise. Delivers fully integrated multichannel retail operations. Enables you to rapidly respond to business needs, deliver differentiating services to customers and evaluate new technologies and solutions quickly to transform your business.

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Q4. What kinds of business applications can it connect?

A. Store Integration Framework is designed to connect all types of in-store applications—both existing and new. With IBM WebSphere Application Server technology, it uses browser-based solutions to integrate POS applications via a standard Java API and Web services. Today, it integrates with IBM Global Sales Application, IBM Supermarket Application and IBM SurePOS™ ACE software. Integration with the IBM VisualStore offering is expected in the near future.

Q5. What kinds of in-store devices can it enable?

A. Store Integration Framework is designed to integrate all types of devices within the store. These include POS terminals, kiosks, wireless tablet devices, handheld devices, electronic shelf-edge labels, RFID readers and portals, and voice communication tags. If a device can communicate using a standard browser interface device (e.g., Microsoft® Windows® CE, Linux® or Palm), a Web-enabled service or an API, it can be integrated with Store Integration Framework. IBM has worked with several device providers, such as Symbol, to provide a standard software bundle that ensures devices are optimally integrated and that IBM systems management tools can recognize and manage them effectively.

Q6. How many devices and applications can it integrate?

A. The number of applications and devices integrated by Store Integration Framework is determined by processor and memory requirements of the hardware running the applications. The WebSphere components of Store Integration Framework provide clustered server capabilities and an option for high availability and network deployment. These flexible configuration options allow applications to be deployed within the store or anywhere within the retail enterprise and then accessed from the store—making the number of connections and applications it can support virtually limitless.

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Section C: Benefits of Store Integration Framework

Q1. What are the business benefits?

A. With Store Integration Framework, you can help transform and improve the consumer shopping experience, enhance employee productivity and reduce the impact of turnover. By integrating applications and devices with Store Integration Framework, you can help improve customer satisfaction, which may lead to increased sales and reduced costs. New store capabilities include:

- The ability to quickly deliver new solutions to differentiate your services to consumers.
- The ability to provide information to customers to increase basket size.
- Self-service technologies for consumers that allow them to control their own shopping experience.
- The ability to capture consumer and inventory information to improve store flow and merchandise mix, enabling you to deliver products needed by the customer demographic shopping in a specific store.
- Deployment of tools to help employees service customers and get their work done faster.
- Implementation of new technologies, such as RFID technology-enabled solutions, to streamline merchandise delivery and inventory management processes within the store.
- The ability to automatically sense out-of-stock merchandise and products that are selling faster than anticipated.

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Q2. What are the technical benefits?

A. Store Integration Framework extends existing POS application capabilities, allowing reuse of POS business logic and integration of POS applications with other store and enterprise systems. It enables rapid design, deployment and management of new Web-based applications and pervasive devices. Technical features include:

- A platform for integration of disparate technologies based on industry standards.
- Investment protection for your existing in-store technologies and integration with newer technologies.
- A standardized infrastructure that connects the store to the enterprise to deliver a consistent customer experience across all shopping venues.
- Flexibility and choice in installing tools, operating systems and solutions throughout your enterprise.

Q3. Is it right for my retail business?

A. Store Integration Framework is designed for retailers that want to transform their retail environment to better service customers, reduce employee turnover, improve sales associate productivity and remove costs from their business. The technology IBM offers with Store Integration Framework enables multichannel integration. So you can deliver a consistent level of service no matter what channel your customers use. And you can experience it now.

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Q5. What are the maintenance requirements?
Q6. What is the timeline for future releases?
Q7. How can I find out more?

Section D: Implementing Store Integration Framework

Q1. How can I get started?

A. Assess your company's readiness by asking the following questions:

- Do its stores have a persistent connection for real-time integration?
- Does my IT team understand the open standards used in retail environments?
- Does my IT team have the necessary skills and knowledge in open-standards tools and technologies?

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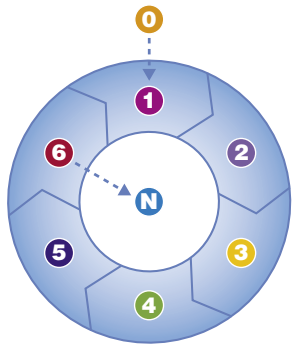
Q2. What are the steps in the implementation process?

A. Store Integration Framework provides a flexible migration path, tailored to your business needs and existing technology investments.

Implementation roadmap for IBM Store Integration Framework



0 Step 0: Assess your company's readiness
- Persistent connection to stores for real-time integration
- Understanding of the open standards used in retail
- Skills in open-standards tools and technologies

1 Step 1: Visualize
- Envision the points of integration between the store/Web and the enterprise

2 Step 2: Prioritize
- Develop a prioritization mechanism based on business value, business risk and/or business need

3 Step 3: Integrate
- Integrate and implement high-priority solutions

4 Step 4: Evaluate
- Evaluate business effectiveness and ROI for the new solutions

5 Step 5: Deploy
- Realize solution value

6 Step 6: Enhance and extend
- Begin iterative process again with new project

N Step N: End state
- Fully integrated store, enterprise and Web environment

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Q3. How can I buy it?

A. Store Integration Framework is available for purchase directly from IBM, through your IBM retail sales representative.

Q4. How long does it take to install?

A. Today, installing the individual components of Store Integration Framework takes merely hours. And once it is released as an integrated and tested solution later this year, installation will be handled by scripts that allow remote installation using IBM Tivoli Enterprise Console® software. This will provide a much faster installation process that does not require your intervention.

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Q5. What are the maintenance requirements?

A. When you purchase Store Integration Framework, you are entitled to maintenance releases for each component included in your solution bundle or purchased individually. Maintenance is delivered via a standard yearly agreement.

Q6. What is the timeline for future releases?

A. IBM will continue to refine Store Integration Framework and deliver new components and extensions to existing components through new releases on an annual basis. The first release will enable easy, efficient integration, implementation and support through scripts that support remote installation using IBM Tivoli Enterprise Console software. Future extended capabilities will include additional Tivoli software components to streamline systems management requirements for the store and new solutions that leverage Store Integration Framework.

Q7. How can I find out more?

A. For additional information about IBM Store Integration Framework, please contact your local IBM sales representative or visit:

ibm.com/industries/retail/store

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