Availability Request

Mercateo AG

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1. Availability request

Availability can be indicated for all items in the Mercateo shop. Customers tend to respond very positively to the indication of available items, and would prefer suppliers offering an availability indication over other suppliers not offering this convenience if the item is sold by several suppliers. Customers may also place purchase orders for a larger quantity of the item than what is currently in stock. Customers may also place a purchase order for an item the availability of which is set to "0"; these items will be shown as "0 in stock".
Availability of items will continuously change as a function of sales or deliveries respectively. Thus, to show the customer the precise, currently available, number in stock, inventories must be updated at regular intervals. Availability is an additional piece of information and cannot be provided in the catalog. Catalogs must be updated separately.
For availability request, Mercateo AG offers its suppliers several options: data interchange by means of CSV or XML files transmitted via FTP (file transfer protocol) as well as HTTP request. For legal reasons, availability data must not include any prices, regardless of the version selected. The supplier selects a version which would then be used for the availability request.

1.1. Inventory

The quantity available can be determined with different levels of accuracy. Mercateo offers its suppliers the following options to indicate the quantity:

- Precise number: The precise number of available items will be shown in the shop.

- Cut-off number: The precise quantity is indicated up to a certain limit value such as 100. All items of which a higher number is available will be assigned the value of 101. This value will be agreed between the supplier and Mercateo.

- Scaled number: The numbers shown are not precise numbers, but rather scaled numbers such as 0, 1, 5, 10, 20 or 50. Here, the actual quantity is rounded down to the scaled value. The scales will be agreed between the supplier and Mercateo.

- 0/1 detail: 0 is shown for not in stock, and 1 is shown for in stock.

Please note that no differentiation will be made between the various versions in the shop. Indication as accurate as possible is very useful for the customer as this may have an effect on the buying decision. Selection of a version is agreed between the supplier and Mercateo.

2. Availability files

With this version, the supplier transmits its availability files to Mercateo in the format of CSV or XML files respectively. Transmission occurs using FTP. The files will be processed by Mercateo.

2.1 Definition of CSV files

"The CSV file format describes the structure of a text file for storing or interchanging simply structured data. The file extension CSV is an abbreviation for Comma Separated Values (rarely Character Separated Values)."
(translation of German original:
http://de.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=CSV(Dateiformat)&oldid=62634849)

The CSV files of the supplier merely hold the article number and the inventory of the items. The article number is also called "SKU" - "Stock Keeping Unit", "Supplier Article Number" or "SupplierAID". The format will then have the following structure:

Supplier article number; inventory

The following applies:
- Data records are separated from each other by means of a line break (CR-LF (Chr(13),Chr(10)).

- Data fields (columns) are separated by means of a semicolon.

- Each data record is composed of two data fields (columns).

- Thousand separators are not used.

- Commas are used as decimal separators.

- UTF-8 is used for encoding.

The file will be named according to the naming scheme availability-data-catalog-companyID.csv. The company ID will be communicated to the supplier during the hook-up phase, and is normally equivalent to the catalog number of the supplier. The file name of "availability-data-catalog-123.csv" would stand for a CSV file of the "Sample" company with the company ID of "123".

-- An extract from an availability file of "Sample" company is provided in Annex A.1 as an example. The fourth data line shows the transmission of an item that is currently not available.

2.2 Definition of XML files

The XML files of the supplier merely hold the article number and the inventory of the items. The article number is also called "SKU" for "Stock Keeping Unit", "Supplier Article Number" or "SupplierAID". The following applies:

- The XML declaration is <?xml version="1.0" encoding="UTF-8"?>.

- The items are listed in the "CATALOG_ITEM_LIST" element that appears once in each file.

- Each item is contained in a "CATALOG_ITEM" element.

- Each "CATALOG_ITEM" element contains precisely one "SUPPLIER_AID" element and one "QUANTITY" element.

- The article number is included in the "SUPPLIER_AID" element.

- The available quantity is included in the "QUANTITY" element.

- UTF-8 is used for encoding.

The file will be named according to the naming scheme availability-data-catalog-companyID.xml. The company ID will be communicated to the supplier during the hook-up phase, and will normally be the catalog number of the supplier. The file name of "availability-data-catalog-123.xml" would stand for a XML file of the "Sample" company with the company ID of "123".

-- For an example, refer to the extract from an availability file of "Sample" company in Annex A.2.

2.3 Transmission of files

The CSV or XML files respectively are transferred via FTP. The access data will be communicated to the supplier in the hook-up phase. If the files are compressed in a ZIP archive, it will be possible to significantly reduce the file size for transmission. The frequency of data transfer will be agreed with the supplier. For the customer to always have current data in the shop, availability should be updated at least once a day. Shorter periods of as little as thirty minutes are also feasible.

3 Real-time availability request

It will be possible to map the real-time availability of the catalog items in the item detailed view. Provide us with a link at which the article number is requested and the quantity (inventory) is fed back.

3.1 Sequence of the real-time availability request

Through this procedure, Mercateo retrieves the availability data for the items required through customer request only. Availability will always be as current as the data of the supplier on his web server. The supplier will be responsible for the accessibility of his web server. HTTP is used for the procedure of "external link". The following requirements apply to the feedback value:

- Upon request of the article number through HTTP, a number must be fed back.

- The number fed back is equivalent to the stock level.

- The feedback value is a positive integer (including zero).

- The feedback value will be fed back in the first line.

- Feedback values in the formats of "Yes", "No", "Availability is..." cannot be processed by Mercateo.

-- For an example refer to Annex B.

A Availability files

A.1 CSV file

```
00010151;7
00010169;18
00010452;4
00010482;0
00010591;4
00010593;7
00010649;30
```

A.2 XML file

```
<CATALOG\_ITEM\_LIST>
  <CATALOG\_ITEM>
    <SUPPLIER\_AID>42510</SUPPLIER\_AID>
    <QUANTITY>1</QUANTITY>
  </CATALOG\_ITEM>
  <CATALOG\_ITEM>
    <SUPPLIER\_AID>00101</SUPPLIER\_AID>
    <QUANTITY>2</QUANTITY>
  </CATALOG\_ITEM>
  <CATALOG\_ITEM>
    <SUPPLIER\_AID>665068</SUPPLIER\_AID>
    <QUANTITY>4</QUANTITY>
  </CATALOG\_ITEM>
  <CATALOG\_ITEM>
    <SUPPLIER\_AID>3188T</SUPPLIER\_AID>
    <QUANTITY>1</QUANTITY>
  </CATALOG\_ITEM>
  <CATALOG\_ITEM>
    <SUPPLIER\_AID>6874</SUPPLIER\_AID>
    <QUANTITY>9</QUANTITY>
  </CATALOG\_ITEM>
  <CATALOG\_ITEM>
    <SUPPLIER\_AID>5471R</SUPPLIER\_AID>
    <QUANTITY>1</QUANTITY>
  </CATALOG\_ITEM>
  <CATALOG\_ITEM>
    <SUPPLIER\_AID>22336A</SUPPLIER\_AID>
    <QUANTITY>10</QUANTITY>
  </CATALOG\_ITEM>
</CATALOG\_ITEM\_LIST>
```

B Real-time availability request

Example link: A script is activated from the browser, such as:
http://suppliername.de/availibility?examplearticlenumber

Example:

A CSV document must be generated, and must include the article number and inventory.
Name:/var/www/avlbt.csv
Content:

```
7-11;123
7-12;415
8-34;12
```

Sample script:

```
#!/bin/sh
echo "Content-type:Ãtext/html"; echo
RESULT=0
if [ -z $1 ]; then
        RESULT=0
else
        RESULT='/usr/bin/egrep "$1\;" /var/www/avlbt.csv | /usr/bin/cut -d\; -f2'
fi
if [ -z "$RESULT" ]; then
        echo 0
else
        echo $RESULT
fi
```

Sample timestamp at the beginning of a file: TIME;2004-10-26 15:44