Sitecore Commerce Connect 8.1

Sitecore Commerce 8.1

Release Notes

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Chapter 1 Release Notes

Release notes for Sitecore Commerce Connect 8.1 rev. 160202. Contains information on late breaking developments, known issues, and workarounds.

1.1   Release History

Some of the issues described on this page contain internal reference numbers listed in parentheses. You can use these reference numbers to communicate with Sitecore about a particular issue or feature.

Feb 1st, 2016

Sitecore Commerce Connect 8.1 rev. 160202 is released.

Tested with Sitecore XP 8.1 rev. 151207

Highlights

Commerce Connect 8.1 ships with some new features, enhancements, and a number of resolved bugs. There are three main new features to be aware of: Sitecore XP 8.1 compatibility including CMS-Only mode, Commerce Reports in Experience Profile, and a sample web site called StarterKit that runs against nopCommerce.

Other than the standard Sitecore XP 8.1 compatibility you would expect, Commerce Connect can also run in the various CMS-only modes. Depending on whether xDB is enabled and/or tracking is enabled you may or may-not be able to leverage EAPs, Page Events, Goals, and Outcomes. You can read more about the new CMS-only feature at https://doc.sitecore.net/sitecore_experience_platform/xdb_overview/cmsonly_mode_an_overview .

You can now visualize the data gathered by Commerce Connect in xDB using new commerce reports inside of the Experience Profile application. For more information, see the new commerce related topics added to Experience Profile under section Reference at https://doc.sitecore.net/sitecore_experience_platform/experience_profile. An additional Commerce tab and 6 sub-tabs have been added, covering:

- Overview, showing aggregated order and abandoned cart metrics respectively per contact:

  - Total value

  - Average value

  - Number of orders / abandoned carts

  - Number of unique products

  - Total number of products

  - Frequency of orders / abandoned carts

  - First order placed / First abandoned cart

  - Last order placed / last abandoned cart

- Orders, e.g. order history and details

- Products, e.g. products viewed, added to cart and purchased

- Missed Sales Opportunities, e.g. products visited or added to cart but never bought

- Abandoned Carts, e.g. history of abandoned carts and their details

- Shopping Cart Activity, e.g. cart lines removed, added, and updated

The reports are independent of the external commerce system in use and are based on standard Connect domain model entities, e.g. order, cart, product views, cart adds, cart removals etc. It is possible to extend with custom reports and/or augment existing reports with custom data only present in custom versions of the Connect domain model objects used in the individual connectors. By default, only standard Connect entities are tracked and persisted in xDB, but both standard and/or custom entities can be persisted in xDB for extensibility purposes.

The reports supports distributed deployments as in Cloud deployments with separate CD, CM, processing and reporting server roles. Queries against xDB is done by processors executed on the Reporting Service Server (Reporting Role) and is deployed with the Experience Platform (XP) from SXP 8.1 update-2. For standalone deployments, everything is included in the core Commerce Connect package.

Since examples are the best way to understand how an API works, as part of this release we have put together a simple ecommerce site built on top of nopCommerce. The site covers the most common scenarios in any ecommerce site e.g. category & product browsing, cart functionality, checkout, my account section, and wish lists. You can view the full source and download a pre-built copy on GitHub. This site is purely for educational purposes and is by no means built for performance or with the highest levels of security in mind.

There have also been some enhancements such as:
- Get a list of all supported countries and regions for shipping
- Get price for a cart and given shipping option
- Trigger page event when user:
  - Selects a search facet
  - Applies a sort order
  - Views a product details page
  - Views a category page
- Remotely call a method to inform of Order status change
- Track stock status in a submitted order
- An outcome is registered when an order is submitted
- An outcome is registered when a cart is considered abandoned
- Get a list of stock locations
- Get a list of stock locations for a given product
- Get a list of prices for a list of given payment methods
- Get a list of supported currencies
- Select events and goals automatically show up in the Experience Profile on both the Latest Events report and
- AnalyticsData entities introduced as abstraction for tracking and triggering events, goals and outcomes
  - Encapsulates what analytics data is persisted as well as how to persist and retrieve it
  - Used on both the tracking side (Connect API) and reporting side Custom Connect domain model objects can be included by simple configuration
    - <setting name="Commerce.Analytics.EntitiesIncludedInXDB" value="Base"/>
    - Value options: "Base", "Custom", "Both" (requires more storage space consumption in xDB)
- Additional data is persisted on certain events, like the entire cart on cart CRUD operations
- The data persisted on events, goals and outcomes is now always taken from the resulting objects being returned from the external commerce system
- A new setting ReportingCurrency has been added to accommodate for storefronts supporting multiple currencies
- Extension point created for injecting currency conversion logic at reporting time. By default, no conversion is executed
- Various Abandoned cart EAP fixes including:
  - Use of Customers API instead of talking to membership provider

- o The AddVisitorToEAPlan processor has been deprecated and replaced in configuration with the new UpdateVisitorInEAPlan processor, which takes care of both enrolling the contact into the Abandoned Cart plan if not already present and otherwise move the contact to the initial state. The UpdateVisitorInEAPlan processor is now by default configured in most pipelines related to cart operations, so that the visitor is moved to initial state as you would expect when manipulating the cart.
  If you are upgrading from an earlier version, you will have to compare your existing Connect pipeline configuration with the new and make the configuration changes needed
  The UpdateVisitorInEAPlan processor has a protected virtual method GetContactIdentifier to allow for easy customization when integrating with different external commerce systems. The method is overwritten in the SCpbCS solution

1.2   Compatibility

This version of the module only runs on Sitecore XP 8.1 rev. 151207 or later.

1.2.1   Known issues

Detailed below are the known issues for Sitecore Commerce Connect 8.1.

- A SQL server deadlock occurs during product synchronization when using multi-threading. This has caused the default implementation of Connect to only use a single thread and thereby lowering performance. In order to take advantage of multi-threading, changes must be made to the SQL server configuration for the Sitecore Master database. For more information about the configuration changes need, see the article Choosing Row Versioning-based Isolation Levels. When configuring SQL server to use row versioning based isolation levels, the ProductSynchronization.NumberOfThreads setting can be set to a number higher than 1.

- Inventory engagement automation plan Products Are Back In Stock will not work when used with the page event Product Are Back In Stock as trigger as designed. The issue is related to an issue in xDB where Page event data is not available to conditions and actions in EA plans (408253). Workaround is to use a timeout as trigger instead. The EA plan is also designed to work in this way. The default timeout is 1 day.

- On the Order Details window launched from the Commerce->Orders sub-tab in Experience Profile:

    o   Parties will not include values for first name, last name, phone and e-mail. The values are not recorded on the Reference Storefront, but is a storefront specific decision.
    o   For SCpbCS, the fields for Currency code, Email, Shipping and Reductions will be empty, e.g. contain two dashes
    o   For SCpbCS, the shipping and billing addresses will not be filled out
    o   For SCpbMD, the billing address will not be filled out
    o   For SCpbMD, adjustments, e.g. charges and reductions, on line level will not be listed
    o   By design, shipping address will only be filled out, if all items on the cart/order are shipped to the same address
    o   For SCpbCS, adjustments, e.g. charges and discounts are only registered at the order/cart line level. In order for total savings to be calculated correctly and have line level adjustments showing, the setting "`Commerce.ExperienceProfile.IncludeCartLineAdjustments`" must be set to true, which is the default for SCpbCS.

- In the Product View subsection of the Products tab in Experience Profile, price is not displayed for products for both SCpbCS and SCpbMD; dashes are shown in its place.

- On the commerce reports in Experience Profile, product and category names are not localized as the data is captured at runtime. The language used will be the same as the language chosen by the contact/visitor at the time of the visit, so it can be a mix of languages appearing on the reports

- On the commerce reports in Experience Profile, there is no default conversion executed between currency used at runtime (e.g. time of registration) and at the time of reporting. All amounts are by default registered in xDB in the currency used on the storefront and/or selected by the customer. The value of the new ReportingCurrency setting is used on reports when presenting amounts and totals. A new extension point has been created for injecting currency conversion at reporting time and can be used to convert all amounts into a single currency and is especially important for the calculation of totals like order and abandoned cart totals.

- For all Commerce reports, multi-column sorting is not functional and is due to a problem in the Experience Profile application in general.

1.2.2   Breaking Changes

No known breaking changes.