E-Shopping Sub-Group Mini-Project 1

Basic Information Tools for Web Stores

System Requirements

Version 1.0

April 2011

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Introduction

E-commerce today is one of the most stable sectors of the global economy, withstanding some of the harshest economic downtimes of the recent past. According to market figures, e-commerce earnings continued to grow in a global environment of recession. That is a remarkable turnaround, given that it was only slightly more than ten years ago that the world witnessed the 'dot com bubble' that ripped through the new economy, leading to massive losses of Internet businesses and jobs. Today, electronic commerce is the sector to be in, and the Posts are not to be left behind.

That the Posts are diversifying into doing business over the Internet is not new. A number of Posts are offering such electronic services as e-box; electronic registered mail; hybrid mail; certification services; e-shopping; and many others. A working group within the AESUG was formed to draw an overall picture of how Designated Operators could better offer e-shopping related services by developing common international specifications, standards, and tools or systems for global e-commerce inter-operability among the Designated Operators.

A number of Posts are already offering e-shopping and related services. The postal e-commerce offerings range from postal web stores (e-shops), to postal e-malls and partnership web stores. Examples of Posts having e-shopping and related offerings include Canada Post, Korea Post, Hong Kong Post, Emirates Post, Saudi Post, Swiss Post, Brazil Post, La Poste of France, and China Post.

The main interest for most Designated Operators, based on their geographic physical presence and spread, is to develop tools to support cross-border delivery and fulfilment aspects of e-shopping, which would include the development of an international calculator for landed price and delivery time estimator, a unified global end-to-end track and trace tool, and a service restrictions and customs guide advisor. A related concept is how Designated Operators could share products on their e-shopping platforms in such a way that a unique product offered by one Designated Operator could be posted transparently on the e-shop of other Designated Operators. This idea was introduced to the AES UG in October 2010 following side deliberations at the Nairobi Postal Strategy Conference held in September 2010. It is now referred to I this document as 'Online Products Interchange'.

This document provides the system requirements for developing E-shopping Information Tools for Designated Operators. The general context of a postal e-shopping scenario that forms the basis of this requirements specification is depicted below.
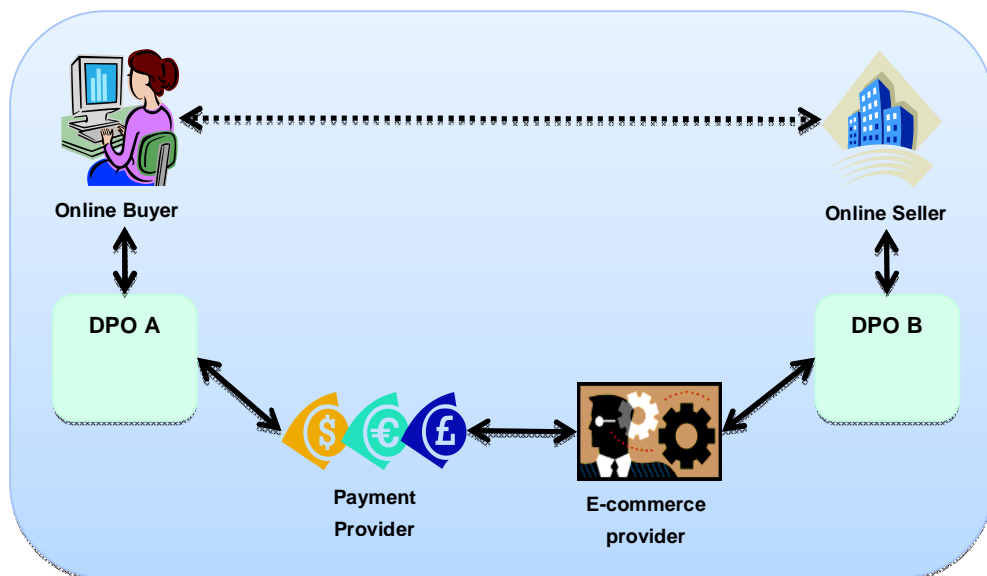
System Request

Business Need

To support the cross-border online shopping decisions of end users (customers) and to enhance end user online shopping experience and transaction completion rates through the development of e-shopping information tools which will:

- Provide information about the estimated landed price of a product bought online across borders;
- Provide information about the estimated delivery time of a product bought online across borders;
- Provide from a single point the end-to-end track and trace information of a product bought across borders from the time the product is first processed to the time it is delivered;
- Provide information about the restrictions that apply to the cross-border online service and any applicable customs restrictions;
- Place predetermined products offered by one Post (local Post) on the e-shopping platform of another Post (foreign Post). The customer would purchase the product as if it was in the local Post, except that the delivery time may be longer.

Functionality & Scope

The tools, which could be distinct or closely embedded together, will have the following functionalities:

- Compute the estimated price of having a product purchased in one country delivered to a particular address in another country and present this information to the end user through the querying website; this would involve querying the databases of the respective Posts and presenting the computed estimate landed price of the product.
- Compute the estimated time it would take to have a product purchased in one country delivered to a particular address in another country and present this information to the end user through the querying website; this would involve querying the databases of the respective Posts and presenting the computed estimate delivery time.
- Collect and present to a single querying point all the track and trace information of a product bought across borders right from the time the order was first processed to the time the product is delivered to the end customer; this would involve querying the databases of the respective Posts and presenting the end-to-end track and trace.
- Provide any other information to the customer about the restrictions of the cross-border delivery service and the pertinent customs regulations that apply to the product in the respective countries; this would involve querying the databases of the respective Posts where such information is stored.
- Display products offered by one Post (local Post) on the e-shop of another Post (foreign Post) and the enable the processing of such an order by the foreign Post as if it was bought locally.
- The tools should interact or interface with or be extensions of the International Postal System (IPS), the Export Guide Compendium, and the UPU Customs System.

Expected Value

Tangible:

- Increased customer service and customer loyalty by being able to provide single-point up-to-date cross-border online shopping decision support information.

- Increased postal business in fulfillment of cross-border orders.

Intangible:

- Recognition of Posts as key players in global (cross-border) e-commerce.

Special Issues & Constraints

- Members need to identify with the business needs that this project addresses.
- Members that identify with the business needs of this project need to support the project with implementation resources.
- Support would be needed from the PTC IPS and Customs System teams.
- The key decision elements and the complete functional description of the E-shopping Information Tools should be presented to the AESUG members during the 29 April 2011 meeting.

E-shopping Information Tools Context Diagrams

General Tools

Cross-border e-shopping entails an online customer in Country A wishing to purchase a product from Country B. Typically, the key questions the customer asks in the decision process to complete the e-shopping transaction are as follows:

- How much would it cost to have the product delivered in Country A from Country B?
- How long would it take to have the product delivered to the customer in Country A?
- Would it be possible to track the item from one point right from order completion?
- What restrictions apply to the transaction in Country A and Country B?

The context diagrams of the information tools to support the customer's e-shopping are:

Tool 1: Landed Price Calculator - Context Diagram
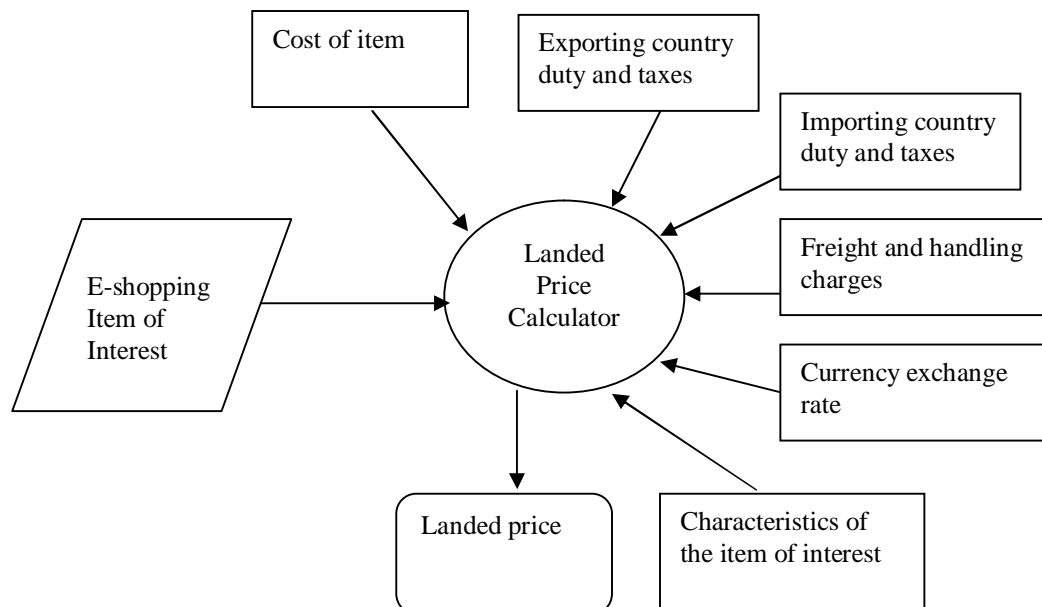
Notes:
1. Canada Post already made an offer of their Borderfree service tool for landed price calculation.

2. Landed price estimation should not be binding to the Posts. It is just an estimation.
3. Data need to be relayed or passed from one service to another by the different parties in real time.
4. Providing landed price information may be considered as commercially sensitive by others.
5. The tool should be usable by many Posts.
6. The interest of Posts in further developing such a tool should be assessed.
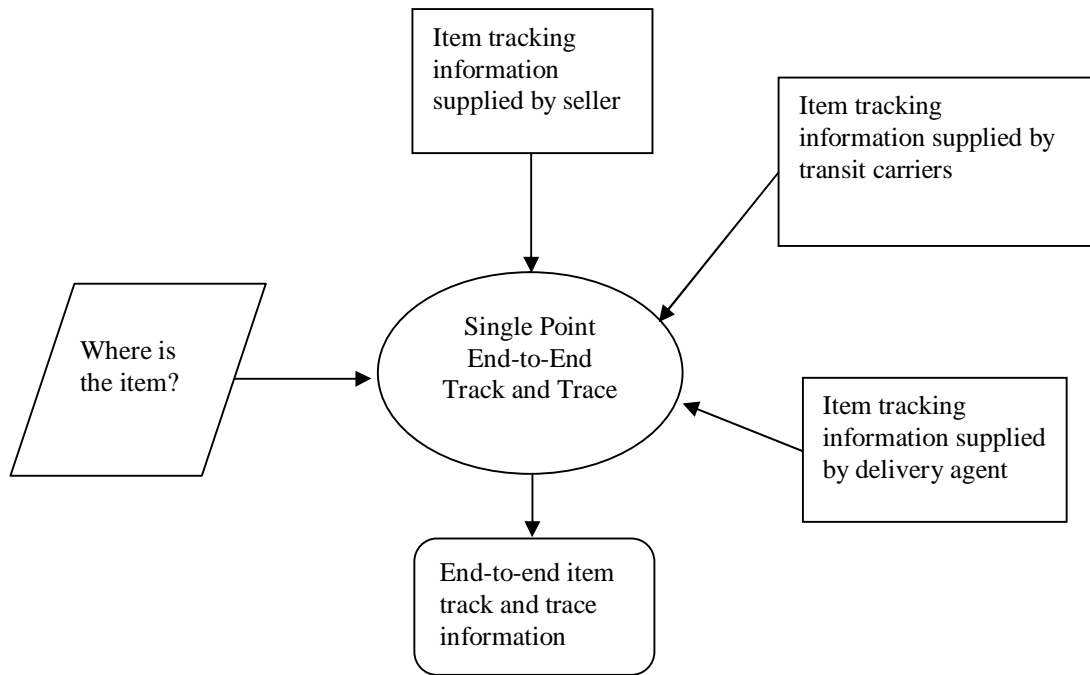7. The complete specifications of this tool should be developed by interested Posts.

Tool 2: Delivery time estimator – Context Diagram
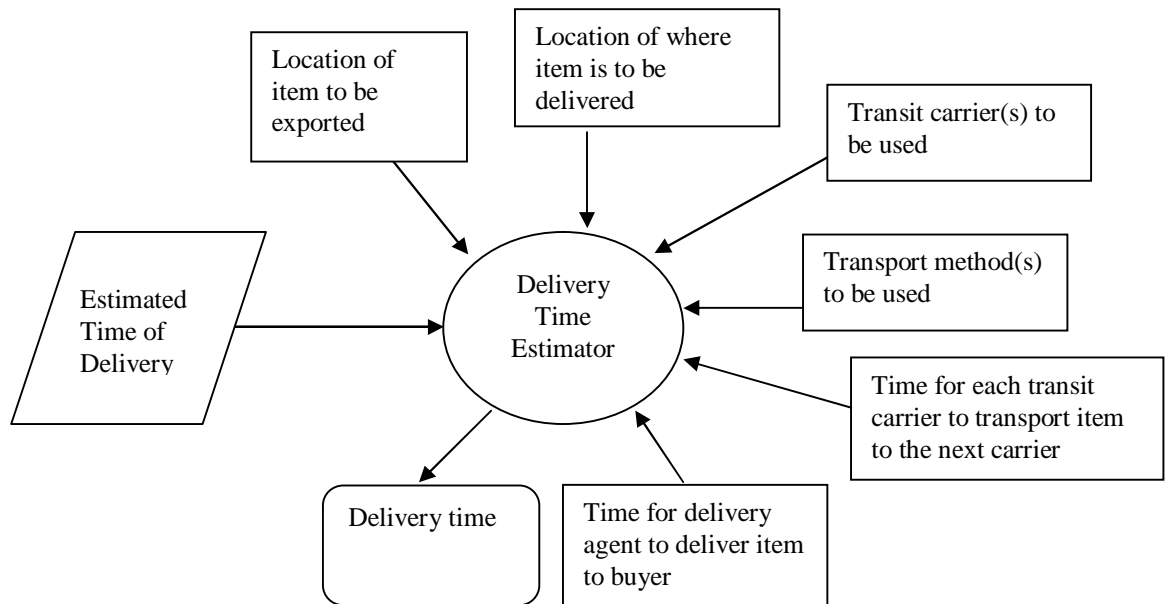
Notes:
1. Data need to be relayed or passed from one service to another by the different parties in real time.
2. Delivery time estimation should not be binding to the Post. It is just an estimation.
3. The tool should be usable by many Posts.
4. Providing delivery time information may be considered as commercially sensitive by others.
5. The interest of Posts in further developing such a tool should be assessed.
6. The complete specifications of this tool should be developed by interested Posts.

Tool 3: Single Point End-to-End Track and Trace - Context Diagram

Notes:
1. IPS already has track and trace capabilities.
2. To enable single-point end-to-end tracking, tracking information has to be shared between parties
3. This tool could be an extension of or already possible with IPS.
4. Users of IPS should explore this tracking capability of IPS.
5. The tool should be usable by many Posts.
6. The complete specifications of this tool should be developed by interested Posts.

Tool 4: Information on Service and Customs Restrictions - Context Diagram
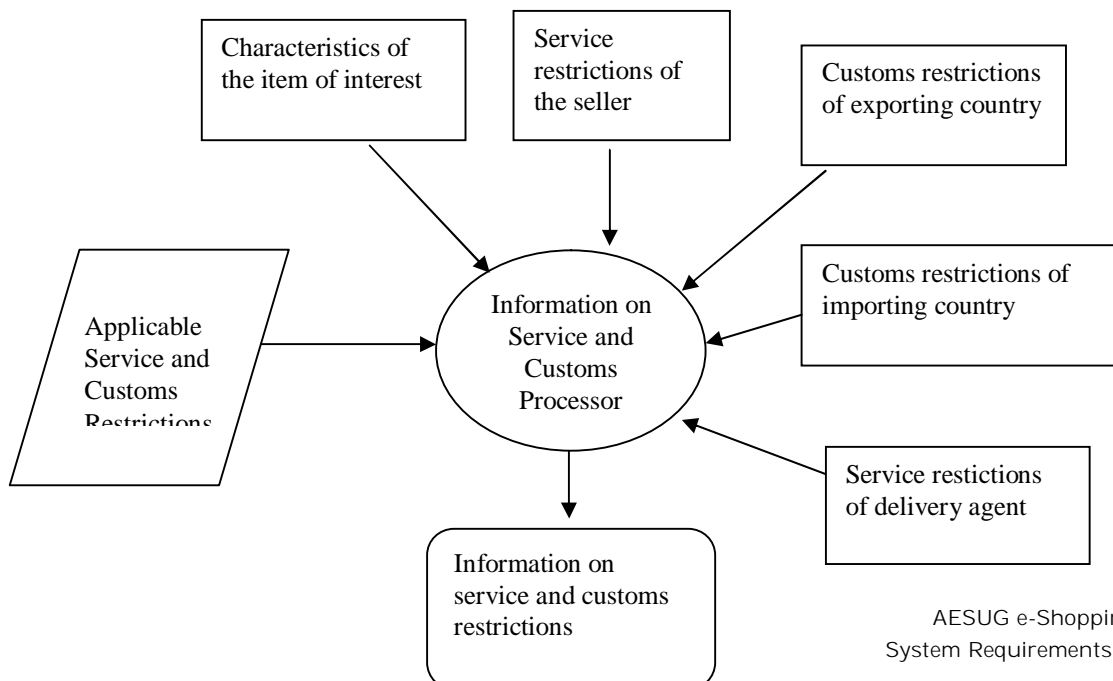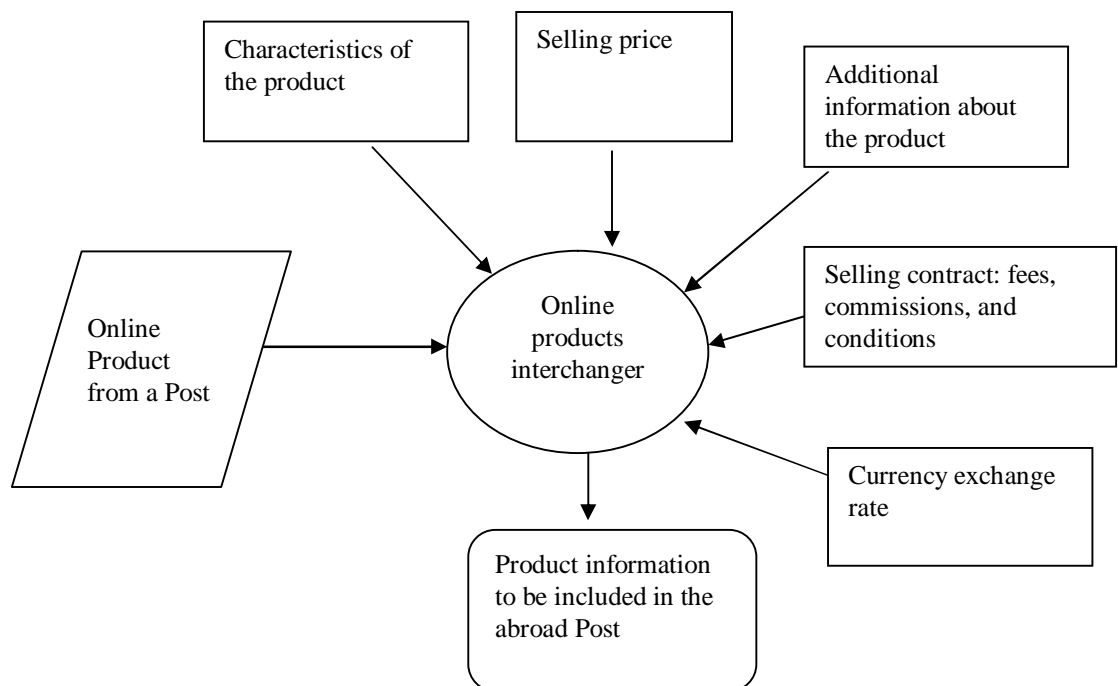
Notes:
1. The Export Guide and the UPU Customs System already have elements required for this tool.
2. Users of the Export Guide and the UPU Customs System should explore integration capabilities with this tool.
3. The tool should be usable by many Posts.
4. The interest of Posts in further developing such a tool should be assessed.
5. The complete specifications of this tool should be developed by interested Posts.

Special Tool – Online Products Interchange – Context Diagram

In addition to the four customer-end tools introduced above, the fifth tool would be a special and separate tool that would allow different Posts to share products on their respective online shops or malls. This tool would enable or allow a Post in Country A to place unique products in the online shop or mall of other Posts in Country B and in Country C. The products to be placed on the e-shop or e-mall of the other Post would be pre-determined. The delivery time for such products that have been interchanged would definitely be longer due to the fact that in reality this transaction is an import/export transaction.

Notes:
1. The feasibility and business case of this model of online shopping needs to be conducted.
2. The modalities of updating the online products interchanged need to be explored.
3. The revenue and pricing model of the online products interchange needs to be explored.

Further technical details or information that may be required

In order to progress the e-Shopping Information Tools development, the follow documents and content may be required:

- Functional Description

- Process Models

- Business Models

- Economic Feasibility Analysis

- Level 1 DFDs for each tool

- Relational Models

- Data Models