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Example of an
osCommerce
Template
<http://osc.template-help.com/11871/index.php>

Shopping Cart Selection for an Online Store

The desired features of shopping cart applications

Ecommerce (electronic commerce) is widely used on many websites. In a general sense, the term ecommerce is referring to the purchasing of services or products from a seller website, process which is usually accompanied by the electronic payment through credit card processing systems or gateways. The most used software in ecommerce are shopping carts. Shopping carts allow your site visitors or customers to select various products or services and after the shopping ends, they will be able to checkout and pay through an electronic payment gateway. The most used shopping carts are database driven ecommerce management systems that provide an online store front and an administration back-end. They must allow someone to design its website without having HTML knowledge, for example they should provide ready-made templates that can be used to fit a certain type of online store. Shopping carts should also have a good products catalog and inventory management tools. If a shopping cart software allows you to generate static HTML pages as products catalog, then your online store visibility will be increased for search engines. You must also be able to easily administrate products categories and to provide your customers (in a separate area of your site) with front-end featured products or best sold products, their prices and number of buyers. The shopping cart must have a wish list and an authentication system for your customers. By using a membership system, your customers will be able to view their previous purchases. A good shopping cart will show the product price before the customer purchases it. A price comparison feature is indicated, because it could increase your sells. The checkout process must be done in a few easy steps in order to finalize the shopping. The security of the electronic transactions must also be a present feature in all shopping carts. You must also present your customers the security methods used for credit card processing mechanisms on your website. When you choose a shopping cart for your online store, try to compare your expectations as a customer by testing the shopping cart's features and then select the one that best suits your needs. You shouldn't neglect the marketing and merchandising opportunities offered by shopping carts, either. For example content rotators, newsletter managers and RSS feeds generators are some of the tools needed in your web store marketing process. The importance of marketing shopping cart features are critical for your online store, because they will provide you with more site traffic and customers.