

RELATIONSHIP TO CATALOG STRUCTURE

WebSource configurator corresponds very closely to printed catalog structures. Almost all configurations are a transformation of print to the desktop. The difference is the configurator zeros in on the exact product without knowing the exact part number or searching through multiple pages of closely related products.

An example may help to better understand the WebSource configurator terminology and the procedure of creating new and administering current configurations.

For example, an electronic supplier catalog has an index of all types of items. These index items would be considered different “**Categories**” in a configurator. Some of the “Categories” might be Video, Home Audio, Automotive, Computers, Appliances and Communication. When there are a large number of products in a category, they may be further broken down beneath the main category. These are known as “Subcategories.”

In the Home Audio category there might be products like Home Theater, Tuners, Amplifiers, Portable and Speakers. Products can be in multiple categories, for example, Speakers may be in Home Audio, Video, Automotive and Computers. An advantage of a configurator is that the product does not have to be “printed” multiple times if it has a close association with another product. Neither does it have to be moved away and be disassociated from these products into a separate category to save print space. With a configurator “Speakers” could be a product of all four of the categories. The user has the ability to easily select the main product, the associated products, and the accessories needed to create a complete system. Modeling rules assure compatibility of the components.

“**Attributes**” describe and define the product. Products are configured by selecting values of all the attributes that describe a product. Some examples of Speaker attributes would be size, power, enclosure and enclosure finish. Although Home Audio and Automotive Speakers have the same attributes, the values of these attributes would be different.

The product modeler can use “**Tabs**” to make it easier for a user to configure a Product. If a product has many different attributes, they can be grouped together into logical segments in Tabs.

Configurators are very much related to printed catalogs. But configurators have other advantages and flexibility over printed material.