



**LRG**  
software  
limited

eCommerce Solutions

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# Introduction

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In recent years, the world has seen some dramatic economic and cultural changes. Information can now be accessed almost instantly on any conceivable subject using the Internet. This has led to a change in the way the consumer makes purchase decisions – there is now a medium on which to compare products from dozens of vendors at the touch of a button, which is a very valuable tool for the customer.



Online trading is an essential platform for any seller wanting to remain credible and relevant in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. After the banking crash of 2008/09, the credit culture slowed down. We discovered we had been living in a pool of cheap money that had effectively dried up. For the retailer, this meant earnings previously from borrowers declined rapidly and profits fell and even made several household names bankrupt.

The supply chain hasn't stopped, but everyone has felt the pinch in their personal wealth since the economy has taken a serious turn for the worst. From rising import costs because of the weak pound, to employment longevity concerns - these factors have altered our culture of buying goods from the first place we encounter or loyalty to a local outlet to one of shopping around for the best price. Loyalty is not an option if the price doesn't meet our budget.

Much of the population is Internet savvy now, and as the children of today move into adulthood the Internet will only continue to grow. This is true of online selling – despite the economic disasters of the past year online sales are increasing. As the consumer needs to save money, they will use the Internet more and more to get the best deals from online retailers.

Some business leaders not embracing the power of the Internet to grow their business may be reluctant because they are worried about it devaluing their product or having to reduce margins in a price dominated market. However, running costs are inherently reduced when compared to running a bricks-and-mortar store. A traditional outlet requires more staffing, security, prime location and the rates that go with it, energy costs are higher and so on.

An eCommerce website can complement your existing business in many ways, in terms of attracting local people to your store and gaining new business from further afield. Adding turnover to your business to help your business to grow or at a minimum compensate for any decline as a result of the downturn is a key part of starting or reinventing an online sales venture. Online trading can help with margin too; reducing costs by negotiating with suppliers on the back of Internet pricing and more quantity of stock normally discounts your cost price also. Some suppliers are already geared for the Internet phenomenon and will send direct to site.

An online business can also be a standalone venture in its own right. Many of the biggest retailers such as Amazon and Play for example are an online only business. LRG Software was formed with individuals who have experience in not just IT but retail and online retail. The organisation was formed to pass on the benefit of the combined IT and retail knowledge in a single solution.

Mike Parker

Co-founder of LRG Software Ltd

# eCommerce: The Software

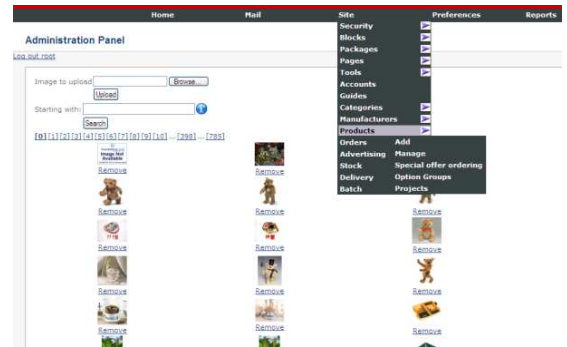
The software for an online store has to tick all the right boxes, depending on the functionality and size of the installation required. LRG Software was founded because there was a need to bring all the functionality into a single package. Now it has grown beyond that – we can now deploy and support a number of eCommerce solutions and offer assistance and advice to using the software as effectively as possible.

All businesses are different and have different requirements and aspirations for their eCommerce website, so we offer a range of solutions, regardless of size or complexity.

## Osiris eCommerce Server

eCommerce Server was originally developed by LRG to bring all the best parts of eCommerce solutions in one package. It is now is the platform of choice for several multi million pound entities that have discovered how the power of online trading can add significant value to their business.

The software features are extensive and are expanding all the time, with regular updates released containing cutting edge tools to make users of eCommerce Server keep ahead of their competition online. The product is very commercially targeted, with features that concentrate in actually producing sales.



### Key Benefits:

- Proven user friendly shopping cart facility that complies with PCI DSS guidelines
- Advanced product options such as related items, product guides, options, similar items, special offer promotions, custom fields, “you save” and more
- Custom designed template, built around your corporate image and vision
- Email newsletters to new and existing customers
- Import supplier product and category data to seamlessly add hundreds or thousands of products to your website at the touch of a button
- Automatically generated page titles and meta information for every page based on a template
- Customisable PDF invoices and shipping labels for professional looking stationary
- Order Status / Delivery Tracking
- Stock control built into product with ability to link to external stock control and accounts systems



Originally written by LRG Software, the intellectual property of eCommerce Server is now owned by a partner company, Happy Biscuit Ltd, who develop the product with IceStar Media Ltd, as part of their modular Osiris4Business suite. Combining the original LRG eCommerce Server with Osiris eCommerce means that we can cater for the small business shopping website, right through to a corporate solution for larger entities.

Happy Biscuit and IceStar Media's software engineers have years of experience developing successful online business applications. Working together, they deploy and support this technology and

we offer the assistance you need to get your site seen by customers and orders coming through as quickly as possible - your return on investment can be surprisingly fast when using methods LRG's staff have developed with existing clients.

## Open Source Deployment

With the open source community thriving more than ever, LRG have embraced this approach to development of software. The larger open source eCommerce projects can match and exceed the functionality of commercial software with the benefits of rapid development using thousands of software and design professionals.

Open source is freely distributable software which must remain in the public domain and is free to use. Because there are no licensing costs, the overall deployment of an open source solution is generally less expensive, depending on the level of design, deployment, support and strategic consultancy required.

LRG Software has been working with some open source solutions for some time now, including Zen Cart and osCommerce, and has found the feature list for these solutions extensive and supported by many commercial products and solutions such as credit card processing companies and accountancy packages.

### Key Benefits:

- Lots of busy professionals contributing to various open source projects means new features are released regularly
- Open source software has no licence costs, which has benefits for all businesses
- Not tied to one solutions provider, ability to be supported from hundreds of specialist companies
- Add on modules for extra functionality are abundant and can be written, adapted and customised as needed
- Industry standard web and database platforms make moving to and from other solutions or integrating with 3<sup>rd</sup> party systems much easier



LRG Software can deploy, host, design and market your shopping site based on open source technology, which our research shows makes up a huge share of the eCommerce software market.

## Support and Expansion of existing technology

For businesses with existing eCommerce websites who want to take their sales to the next level, LRG Software can undertake a site review and may suggest keeping the existing technology but developing aspects of the website's functionality to better place a website on the search engines or improve functionality.

### Key Benefits:

- Recent investments in eCommerce are not wasted, instead used as a platform on which to grow
- Training of a new solution is negated
- Solution benefits (the reason why the product was chosen) are retained
- Cost effective if minimal adaptations are required



Certain products and solutions on the market may not allow the flexibility to expand a website much further for various reasons including legal restrictions and lack of customisation or modules available. LRG can advise and deploy a migration to a new technology with minimum disruption to your business. Migration considerations would include exporting and importing of user accounts, products and categories, maintaining/redirecting established URLs etc.

*Please call or email LRG Software to discuss your individual requirements.*

# LRG Project Assistance

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Having a comprehensive, well configured software solution to drive an online store is as essential as having an engine in a car, but without the wheels and petrol, the engine is useless. The same goes for eCommerce; without a resilient hosting solution and a focused sales and marketing strategy, a web store will never reach its full potential.

## Strategic Assistance

In 2006, Amazon.com spent 662 Million Dollars on research and development. They did this to ensure their eCommerce store remains top of the game. Whilst it is impossible to even contemplate spending a percent of that, having the benefit of how the Internet works and what gets people onto your website is where LRG can help. Our software and marketing staff have many years experience on turning online shops into successful entities and have devised a system to get our clients. We have material and guidance we can offer in many areas of eCommerce including:



- Product promotion – wording, external feeds, up selling, competitor awareness.
- Multi-channel sales approach – Especially for the early months of an online store.
- Taking Advantage of technology – Applied techniques to improve positions on search engines

## Hosting Solutions

Another critical part of the overall project is hosting. This was a big challenge for the LRG founders in the early days when running on other solutions - outages through server breakdown, or Internet routing problems can cost a website thousands in lost sales and not to mention the damage to reputation and customer confidence. We ensure that we have access to our machines and have a migration plan in place in event of a server or infrastructure issue.



We offer high specification servers, located in more than one hosting centre, installed with the latest versions of Linux and Windows server operating systems. Our servers are routinely updated with patches and are vulnerability tested on a regular basis. Backups of all client data are done daily to ensure total information protection.

LRG Software can host a website that is written and supported by us or a 3<sup>rd</sup> party. We also have email and web-based email facilities and can register and administer domain names. If a client has a specific need to host their website in-house, we can provide remote and onsite support.

## Offline Project Support

In order to sell online, a business needs to adapt to face the challenges the world of electronic trading brings. Issues need to be addressed such as staffing requirements, choice of carriers and packaging companies, legal considerations, buying techniques and so on.

*LRG Software is committed to building the best eCommerce solution on the market. We do not believe this can be achieved with software alone. A combination of ever-evolving technology and a dynamic approach to the practicalities involved when running an online outlet are what we have found to be the ingredients of a successful eCommerce deployment.*

# Marketing online shopping sites

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LRG Software can use the combined knowledge contained within the company and our partner companies to give clients maximum benefit from their online store. Using some search engine optimisation techniques, some external content and feeds to 3<sup>rd</sup> party marketing tools, LRG have proven to be efficient in getting traffic and conversions of traffic to sales as quickly as possible.

There are many ways of promoting eCommerce websites; some more effective than others. Having had first hand of trading online, we try to do marketing assistance for our clients with a view to making a return on investment as soon as possible. Many marketing campaigns we have encountered just don't make sense when looking at the cost vs. how much sales is required just to pay for the consultancy!

## Marketing deliverables

Many SEO companies can use a “smoke and mirrors” approach to marketing websites – holding back the info that would empower the eCommerce store owner to become self sufficient. LRG works differently, by passing on our current strategy to the clients as we proceed to drive customers to their sites so in the future an online entity can stand alone to achieve success with minimal ongoing costs.

The bottom line for online shops is profitability and there can be no greater testimonial for us if our clients are making money, not funding an elaborate, ongoing marketing consultancy, so we endeavour to work quickly and effectively to make any outlay be significantly overshadowed by the returns in terms of sales.

## *Some examples of marketing project tasks:*

- Search Engine Submission to all the major and some of the more obscure search engine websites
- META and content analysis to report on any potential weaknesses in descriptions and titles – including some tips that can to give a site a competitive edge
- PPC campaigns, which although should be used with caution can play an important role in a wider marketing scheme
- Google Analytics and Webmaster Tools installation to give important information about traffic to a website
- Google Products is an incredible tool and is free to submit to. LRG is experienced in creating the feed data to the best commercial effect
- eBay is more expensive than running a self-contained eCommerce website, but used correctly it can be a great expansion of an overall online sales strategy, especially in a project in its infancy
- Generating sitemaps for Google and Yahoo will ensure pages that might not automatically be crawled by the search engines are found and added to the major search engine's indexes
- Human edited directories are still a valuable resource for assisting search engines produce relevant results as well as being browsed by potential customers looking for a specific range of products or services
- Reviews, blogs, social networking and forum websites can help search engine rankings, but sites that are designed just to drive search engine results can be detrimental, we can advise on this.
- Affiliate programs can be a useful tool to drive traffic to a website and conversely to generate additional revenue by hosting affiliated advertising on the shopping site.

Marketing is an important part of any online website. Whether an LRG deployed website or not, we can assist in maximising online business. Please get in touch with LRG Software if you are interested about learning more about Internet sales and marketing.

# Additional Services

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As well as eCommerce consultancy, LRG Software is able to offer other IT solutions, through its own staff and partner companies. The LRG team have worked in the IT and retail industry for years and as such are well positioned to give commercial IT services.

## Virtual Private Networking

We have a successful VPN solution that we have deployed in multi branch organisations. The solution can be used for inter branch data and voice connectivity via the Internet and/or allow staff working remotely to connect to the office. Our VPN deployments place security and reliability as priorities, with full redundancy to a backup connection possible for critical VPN roles.



## Retail IT Support and Deployment

We are able to assist in many types of retail and merchant/trade counter IT requirements. From hardware and software provision, to project management and product testing roles. We are resellers of Internet and counter based credit card processing systems, and EPOS equipment. We have partners who work with us on deploying small and multi branch stock/accounts/EPOS software and hardware for trade and retail businesses of many types.



## Website and Email Hosting

Our hosting services are available to clients who need commercial web space or email provision. We have both Linux and Windows operating systems, both capable of running simple or more complex, database driven websites. Our email services include POP/SMTP mailboxes and webmail as standard.

## IT Support

LRG Software is the first choice for many businesses requiring IT support. We offer support for networking infrastructure, including wireless technologies and server and workstation hardware and software.

## Content Managed and Static Websites

Although we specialise in eCommerce websites, we are equally able to deploy business Internet presence websites. Our designers are capable of giving your site a professional look and we can bolt a marketing package and/or content management system onto your website, tailored to your budget and requirements.

## Custom Applications

LRG and its partners are happy to review any programming work and have a rich team of programmers and database technicians at our disposal. We are able to undertake online and offline software projects on a variety of platforms. All products we develop are taken through a strict testing programme and are supported by comprehensive documentation and after sales support.

# Contact Information

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