

BMEcat – Standard for the Exchange of Electronic Product Catalogs



Catalogue Standard for e-Commerce

- Enables Data Exchange within e-Commerce
- Supports Purchasing and Distribution
- Saves Effort, Expenses and Time
- International Alignment
- Certification through the BMEnet GmbH

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BMEcat – the Right Catalog Standard for your E-Business

E-procurement and e-selling need electronic product catalogs for the automated exchange of product information between the information systems of product suppliers (manufacturers, trade, suppliers) and sourcing companies. In view of the growing number of participants in e-business and the services and costs involved, traditional "peer-to-peer" connections have become outdated and are increasingly replaced with XML-based and standardized e-business solutions. There are many standards for the exchange of electronic product catalogs in the world, but only a few of them meet the high requirements of today's international markets.

quickly as the appropriate European or maybe even global standard for electronic product catalogs since its first version in 1999. Internationally well known software manufacturers such as SAP, Oracle or Poet have implemented a BMEcat interface as standard feature in their e-business software.

Currently, BMEcat is the only standard that meets the requirements of international markets and that can map complex application scenarios in sales and purchasing. Additionally The BMEcat catalog standard has by far the greatest compatibility with ISO 13584.

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<PRODUCT>
  <SUPPLIER_PID>54-Charlie-R</SUPPLIER_PID>
  <PRODUCT_DETAILS>
    <DESCRIPTION_SHORT>Drill Charlie</DESCRIPTION_SHORT>
    <DESCRIPTION_LONG>A excellent drill</DESCRIPTION_LONG>
    <EAN>87126709</EAN>
  </PRODUCT_DETAILS>
  <PRODUCT_ORDER_DETAILS>
    <ORDER_UNIT>C62</ORDER_UNIT>
  </PRODUCT_ORDER_DETAILS>
  <PRODUCT_PRICE_DETAILS>
    <PRODUCT_PRICE price_type="net_customer">
      <PRICE_AMOUNT>17.23</PRICE_AMOUNT>
      <PRICE_CURRENCY>EUR</PRICE_CURRENCY>
      <TAX>16</TAX>
    </PRODUCT_PRICE>
  </PRODUCT_PRICE_DETAILS>
</PRODUCT>
  
```

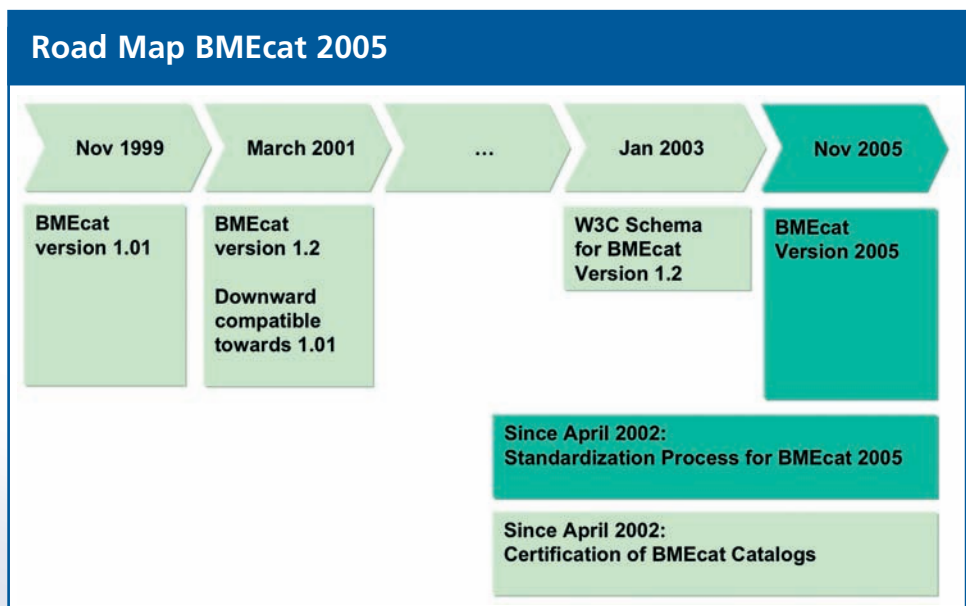
We systematically develop BMEcat according to market needs in a controlled and neutral process. International cooperation with industry and academia in the sphere of e-business standardization supports these efforts.

Freely available, well documented and supported

You can download BMEcat 2005 from the website bme.cat.org and use it without paying a licensing fee. It is available as XML-schema and includes extensive documentation. Currently, BMEcat 2005 is available in German and English. A Chinese version is under development since summer 2006.

BMEcat is an XML-based standard for the transfer of electronic product catalogs which meets today's international requirements. The German Association of Materials Management, Purchasing and Logistics (BME), the umbrella organization of German purchasing and logistics agents, developed this standard in close cooperation with industry and academia which is based on the experience gathered from co-operation activities in international standardization initiatives.

Numerous studies give evidence that the BMEcat has established itself very



Capabilities of BMEcat 2005

In terms of content BMEcat offers everything you need nowadays for an efficient e-catalog-based purchasing. In addition, many requirements were implemented which will allow the integration of future application areas. This guarantees sustainable use for the years to come. The supreme performance of BMEcat has been exemplified in numerous studies which compared BMEcat with competing standards.

In BMEcat, data are categorized into so-called data areas which differ according to data content, entry, management, and complexity.

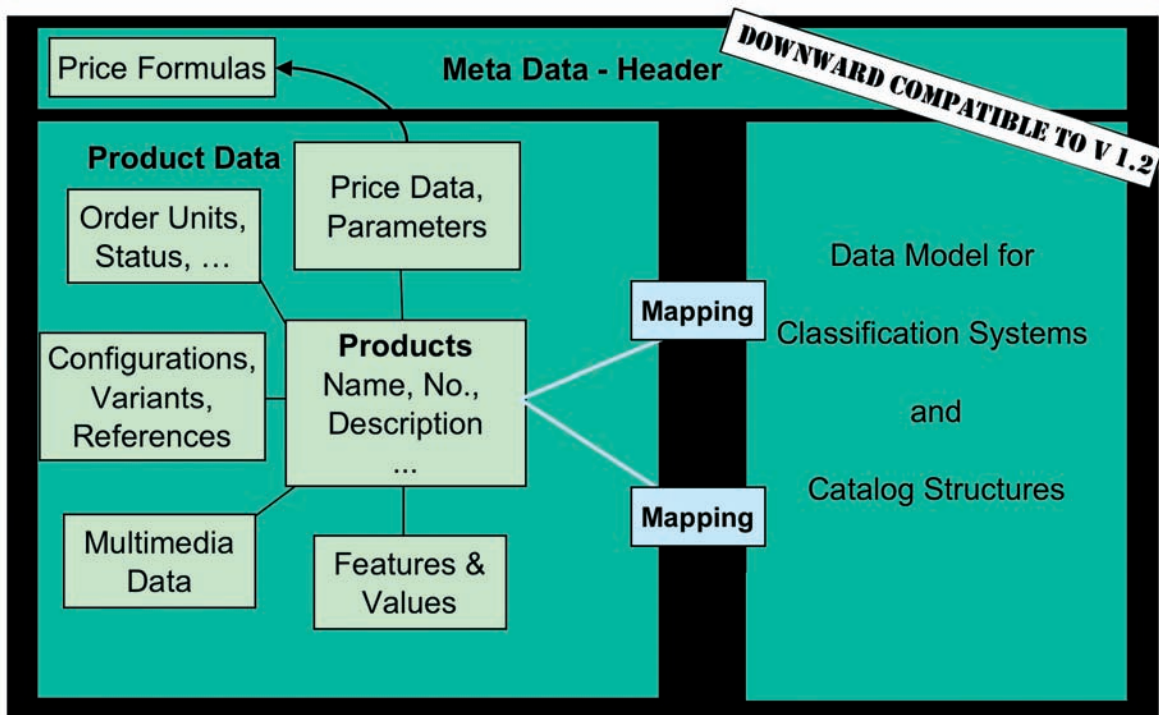
- Identification (article number, EAN, ...)
- Description (short and long description, ...)
- Grouping (ERP-product category number, ...)
- Classification data
- Properties (weight, color, ...)
- Order information (order unit, minimum order quantity, ...)
- Prices (customer price, list price, ...)

- Logistics information (delivery times, packaging information, ...)
- Additional multimedia data (images, pdf-files, ...)
- References to other products
- Qualifiers (special offer, discontinued model, ...)

There are some special content features in BMEcat that should be mentioned:

Compatibility with as many common classification systems as possible was a top priority while developing BMEcat. BMEcat thus offers a model which allows product classifications according to any classification system and product descriptions based on the properties defined by such a system. What is more, classification systems or in-house product categories can be transferred via BMEcat also. Constant co-operation with other standardization organizations, in particular with eCl@ss, made this possible. One prominent feature of BMEcat is its compatibility with ISO 13585, the most promising standard for classification systems.

BMEcat 2005 Document Structure



The Standardization Process

Another prominent feature of BMEcat is the possibility of describing complex products. While classical MRO articles are traded nowadays with electronic product catalogs, e-procurement of configurable products, and particularly of services, is not yet possible on the basis of existing catalog standards. The current version 2005 of BMEcat closes precisely this gap. It offers two principles to handle configurable products. First of all it is possible to map configurable products in BMEcat. A powerful, but nevertheless easy-to-understand description model allows parameter-based, component-based, and even multi-level configurations. BMEcat also provides the option to add even more complex products to BMEcat catalog processed by the supplier's sell

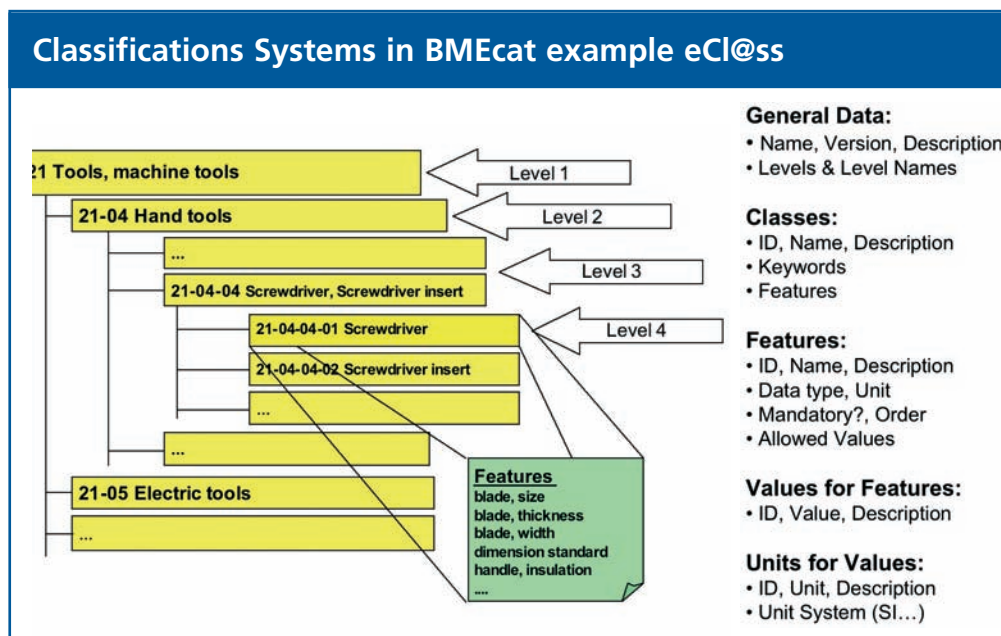
BMEcat has acquired its prominent position due to a clearly defined development process. This development process rests on two main principles – meeting industry requirements and providing a sound scientific foundation.

Enterprises involved in e-businesses place general requirements on electronic product catalogs and thus on BMEcat. Suppliers and manufacturers as well as purchasing departments are integrated into the BMEcat development process to attend to the interests of all market players. Software and consulting firms active in e-sales and e-procurement are also on board. In addition the eBSC cooperates closely with multipliers such as industrial associations and other stakeholders to really cover most of the

market requirements. This broad approach ensures that even the further development is aligned with the needs of the companies using BMEcat and those requirements can be swiftly implemented with a view to the future.

Requirements are implemented according to scientific methods and in close cooperation with different international standardization bodies. The use of existing standards is a

principle that guarantees resource-optimized and internationally harmonized standardization. Content and structure of BMEcat are based on systematic comparisons with globally active catalog standards and on the active involvement of BMEcat developers acting as experts in diverse bodies, e.g. in the CEN/ISSS Workshop of the European Union or in the international standardization initiative UBL (Universal Business Language). In addition, essential innovations and concepts are discussed at international congresses.



side via "remote access" (PunchOut, Round-trip).and to integrate them seamlessly into the order process. BMEcat supports common protocols, such as OCI from SAP or cXML from Ariba. This means that, no matter whether the order is processed traditionally or via the supplier's sell-side, the customers can search for all available products in BMEcat catalogs and read their descriptions.

BMEcat Organization

Management, further development and dissemination of BMEcat are within the responsibility of the eBusiness Standardization Committee (eBSC) and are carried out under the aegis of the BME. Together with its members from industry and academia and in close co-operation with the European Content Club (ECC) the eBSC ensures the competent development of BMEcat in line with international market requirements.

BME – Driver and Strong Partner of BMEcat

The Association of Materials Management, Purchasing and Logistics (BME) is Germany's leading professional organization for purchasing and logistics. Its approximately 6,000 members purchase more than 80 percent of all producer goods in Germany. Presently, the association offers about 0.7 trillion worth of services and is open to all industries, business types and sectors (such as trade, municipalities, banking institutions, insurances and logistics service providers). The BME supports its

members internationally and regionally in all issues related to purchasing, material management and logistics. It boasts a strong further education and training system, encourages contacts and the exchange of experience by congresses, company visits and working groups dealing with future-related issues. BMEcat is the result of one of the BME working groups.

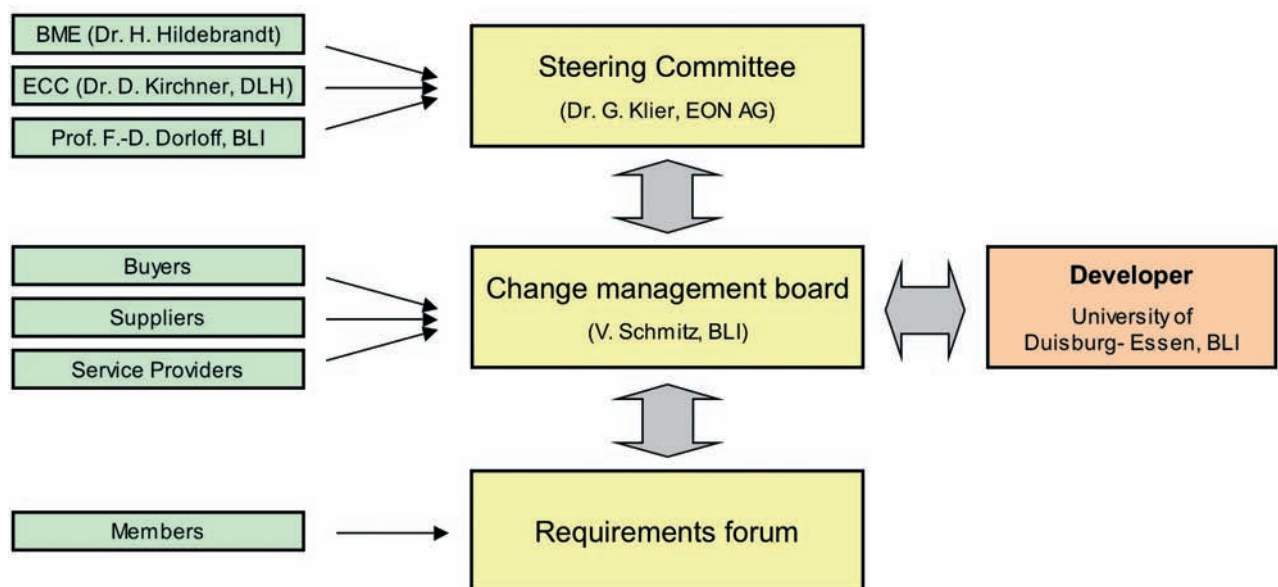
The eBSC – Responsible for Development and Dissemination

The eBusiness Standardization Committee (eBSC) has a lean and efficient organization which adapts BMEcat quickly and competently to required modifications. The eBSC has the following organizational structure:

* The BMEcat Steering Committee

The BMEcat Steering Committee is responsible for the strategic orientation, for managing BMEcat enhancements, coordination, budget planning, and the dissemination of BMEcat.

Organisazational strcture of the eBSC



BMEcat Service – BMEnet and its Partners

* The BMEcat Change Management Board

Based on the strategic orientation defined by the BMEcat Steering Committee, the BMEcat Change Management Board is responsible for decisions related to the further development and versioning of BMEcat. Based on the budget defined by the BMEcat Steering Committee the BMEcat Change Management Board decides whether the submitted modification proposals are implemented (including the time schedule, priorities, release planning etc.) or rejected.

* The BMEcat Requirements Forum

The BMEcat Requirements Forum is responsible for submitting, discussing, and evaluating modification and enhancement proposals. The BMEcat Requirements Forum is made up of businesses and individuals interested in enhancing BMEcat and actively supporting its enhancement. Members in the BMEcat Requirements Forum pay a one-time registration fee and an annual membership fee. The BMEcat Change Management Board moderates of the BMEcat Requirements Forum.

* The BMEcat System Developers

The University Duisburg-Essen is responsible for the development of BMEcat. If necessary, the BMEcat Steering Committee contracts additional, appropriate service providers for BMEcat management and enhancement.

* The BME Office

The BME office is responsible for operational implementation in the areas of marketing, internationalization and cooperation, and is the contact for queries and first level support.

The exchange of catalog data is the central part of e-catalog data management. It requires close cooperation between business partners on the technical level and in terms of content and organization. The business partners involved have to choose one product catalog standard, specify the catalog regarding the contents and where necessary also the used classification system, adjust their information systems to process this standard and harmonize the data exchange processes. The BMEnet GmbH provides support for establishing these processes and the selection of appropriate software and services.

The BMEcat Service provides advice and support to BMEcat users regarding the creation of BMEcat as well as its application and its improvement. This includes the following services:

- Advice and support for establishing an e-business infrastructure based on BMEcat
- Advice for the catalog creation process
- Support for establishing corporate catalog data management
- Advice for aligning BMEcat based e-business across companies
- Verification of catalog quality regarding syntactic correctness
- Award of quality seals
- Certification of individual catalogs or companies
- Testing, evaluation and certification of software products in the BMEcat environment

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Implementation and Success stories

The evidence provided by numerous studies (conducted e.g. by Berlecon Research or CEN/ISSS) is that BMEcat is the leading standard software for electronic product catalogs in Europe. The number of users suggests a top ranking for the use of standardized catalogs, even at a global level. The number of downloads of the BMEcat specifications is another proof of its wide use: it was downloaded more than 30,000 times in recent years.

All renowned software vendors support BMEcat for e-procurement and catalog data management solutions, including well-known providers like SAP, Oracle or Poet. BMEcat is used in a broad range of applications, from small-scale implementations for SMEs to large-scale solutions for corporations with several thousands of users.

The importance and increasingly international presence of BMEcat and the benefits it offers are evidenced by the following statements made by renowned companies with international operations.

SIEMENS

Siemens AG

For its electronic procurement marketplace click2procure, Siemens AG relies on applied and tested standards. Over 50% of a total of 160 cata-

logs with more than 2 million articles are delivered and processed in BMEcat 1.2 format. An increasing number of suppliers use the possibilities offered by the format preferred by us, and we expect their number to continue to rise. BMEcat 2005 will lead to further improvements and make catalog processing even more efficient: its additional functions will enable us to use material categories in our applications which so far have been unused.



Deutsche Lufthansa AG

In its capacity as the initiator and a charter member of the European Content Club, Deutsche Lufthansa AG has for more than 2 years exclusively used BMEcat 1.2 for connecting its currently 159 suppliers to the electronic marketplace Trimondo. The consistent use of BMEcat has been a success as evidenced by, among other things, the fact that approx. 94% of all order items of non-productive material can be processed electronically today. BMEcat 2005 will help us to develop this success as the new functions and improvements will open up opportunities for other applications.





E.ON AG

E.ON has built its own electronic procurement platform for its corporate group as early as in 1999. Right from the beginning, we consistently used BMEcat and eCI@ss as data exchange and classification standards. Both standards enable us to provide a uniform structure and efficient support for our electronic catalogs as well as to ensure worldwide communication across our decentralized group.

This is why E.ON supports and welcomes the consistent development of BMEcat. We will migrate our approx. 100 electronic catalogs to the current version „BMEcat 2005“ and expect the additional functions to help us to realize further significant benefits.



cc-hubwoo

cc-hubwoo is one of the leading electronic marketplaces worldwide and a leading e-procurement service provider in Europe.

On the part of the sourcing companies, the electronic marketplace and the portal are tailored towards their entire procurement processes for technical and administrative goods and services as well as to electronic catalog management. The more than 40 major corporations using cc-hubwoo include Total, BASF, EDF-Gaz de France, Michelin, Thomson, Bayer, Henkel, Volkswagen, Degussa, Alcatel, Snecma, Crédit Agricole, Danone, etc. Over 9,000 suppliers in 44 countries are connected to the network created by cc-hubwoo, and the cc-hubwoo catalog service supports more than 2000 electronic catalogs.

cc-hubwoo fully supports the BMEcat standard. Numerous suppliers deliver their data in the BMEcat format to the platform – and their number is rising.



A Buhrmann Company

Corporate Express

Corporate Express provides its customers with a complete range of office and facility supplies. With our extensive product selection and broad range of services we meet the needs of offices and businesses by delivering the supplies and services they need for their daily work. Corporate Express is a major player in the market for office products and services and employs more than 1,000 people in Germany.

Corporate Express Germany supplies its customers with over 1,200 BMEcat catalogs every year. Through the long-term use of this format standard we are able to ensure extremely efficient high-quality implementation and updating processes both for our business partners and for Corporate Express. The BMEcat 2005 enhancements will enable us to even better support the functions of catalog systems and to present more complex product groups in a suitable and user-friendly manner. This is especially the case when it comes to exchanging catalogs with international business partners. These are just a few examples of how BMEcat can be used in a successful way. eBSC members all rely on BMEcat but there are countless businesses worldwide which also use the BMEcat catalogs to tap the potential of e-business.

What you get from BMEcat 2005

Top quality content:

- Variable pricing models to cover even complex trade relations – price formulas, e.g. to describe transport costs or products traded at the commodities exchange (e.g. steel)
- Support of all media formats such as PDF, JPG, PNG for product descriptions
- Mappings of relations between different types of products such as spare parts, successor products, product variants
- Supports almost all classification systems – compatible with ISO 13584
- Mapping of configurable products with the help of parameters or the component model
- Fully support of “remote access” to supplier websites – compatible with PunchOut (cXML), Round-Trip (CommerceOne), OCI (SAP)
- Support to handle even complex e-business scenarios like multi-supplier catalogs, multilingual or international catalog applications

The right standard for a sustainable and effective E-Business:

- Definition of requirements based on the experience of a broad range of suppliers, service providers and purchasing agents harmonized with the most relevant industry associations
- Based on practical input from the BME, Germany's largest association of sourcing and logistic companies
- BMEcat is based on the latest research findings and developed by applying scientific methods
- Close co-operation with international standardization bodies for the standardization process
- BMEcat is extremely successful in terms of widespread implementation and performance
- Careful development processes and professional quality assurance enable the development of versions characterized by long-term stability without the problem of frequent release changes

Conclusion

The wide-spread implementation combined with flexible capabilities designed for future requirements guarantees a sustainable and efficient application at the highest quality level.

BMEcat Guidance and Contacts

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Please visit our website www.bmecat.org for more information on contacts, catalog data management and e-procurement. There you will also find extensive guidance material and the complete specification.



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