

Books & Music Retailers

INTRODUCTION

Industry Challenges

The most significant challenges facing books and music retailers are online commerce and electronic publishing. Music digital downloads instead of CDs and e-readers substituting paper books are making it challenging for bricks and mortar retailers to stay competitive and profitable.

However, many books and music retailers are working hard to adapt to changes in the publishing world by offering top customer service via knowledgeable, friendly staff; 'loyalty' programs designed to keep customers coming back; or are evolving into multi-media stores, selling music/movie/TV series DVDs and audio books. Many stores are also trading online. Additionally, books and music retailers are focussed on being more cost-efficient and are looking to tightly control inventory, a key component of retail success.

This is where the CONTROL retail business solution can help you overcome many of your retail challenges by offering sophisticated retail technology for your sub-sector that drives efficient processes, increases sales and customer loyalty, and enables you to be more competitive while running a dynamic and streamlined operation across stock, staff and stores. The result — **increased profit**.

CONTROL for Books and Music Retailers

CONTROL is a fully integrated business management solution with specific features to meet the needs of single and multi-store books and music retailers. It is a modular system that is fully integrated to handle all facets of point-of-sale, online commerce, merchandising, sales analysis, replenishment and stock control, as well as accounting and financial reporting.

CONTROL is designed and developed by Creative Computing and can be customised to suit particular needs to simplify your business processes.

Below is a summary of features included in CONTROL that are covered in this document.

- > Special Books and Music Features
- > In Store Functions
 - Cash Sales
 - Discount Control
 - Special Customer Orders and Lay-bys
 - Gift Vouchers

- Loyalty Programs
- Customer Relationship Management (CRM)
- Visual Cards
- Special Customer Orders
- Deliveries
- Other Store Functions
- > Head Office Control
 - Merchandising & Performance Management
 - Replenishment & Inventory Management
 - Stocktake
 - Web Shopping
 - Manufacturing
 - Accounts Payable/Receivable and General Ledger

Special Books and Music Features

In addition to all the standard POS features, we have addressed all the special needs of multi-store books and music retailers, including:

- > Maintains details for and allows enquiries by:
 - Author/artist
 - Title
 - Publisher/label
 - Supplier
 - Genre
 - Media type (hardback, paperback, CD, etc.)
 - Country of origin
 - Release date
- > **Stock allocations** can be generated and/or manually determined for new or existing ranges for new or existing stores.
- > Comprehensive **Customer Order** facilities.
- > Complete **open-to-buy** system.
- > Ability to quickly and easily see stock levels in all stores (and warehouses).
- > Extensive promotion handling facilities.

In-Store Functions

CONTROL in-store functions have been designed to be fast and easy-to-use.

In-store facilities can be customised by the system administrator, and would typically include:

- > Sales, lay-bys and special customer orders
- > Gift voucher sales and redemptions
- > Returns and exchanges

- > Stock and customer enquiries
- > Customer payments
- > Stock receipts and transfers
- > End-of-day reconciliation
- > In-store reporting

Cash Sales

- > Fast and simple operation using barcode scanning or minimal keyboard input.
- > Multiple/split tendering.
- > Extensive stock search facilities by author/artist, title, publisher/label, genre.
- > Stock enquiries, including stock availability in other stores can be performed at the point-of-sale.
- > Image of selected product can be displayed on POS workstation.

Discount Control

CONTROL will select the correct price for each item being sold taking into account various factors including:

- > Any promotional price or discount and the date when it comes into effect and when it is over.
- > Customer-based discounts.
- > Quantity being purchased.
- > Operator-initiated discounts (requires authorisation).
- > Maximum discounts or minimum profit percentage on any product group can be set.

Special Customer Orders

- > Ability to easily order non-stocked lines.
- > Supplier orders or requests for stock transfers from a warehouse or another store can be generated for items that are not in stock.
- > Items ordered in store can be marked to be despatched directly to the customer from a warehouse (or another store).
- > Optional ability for partial pickups and deliveries, and to add items to an existing order or lay-by.
- > Single customer orders requiring multiple supplier orders are supported.

Gift Vouchers

CONTROL provides complete gift voucher facilities including:

- > Recording gift voucher sales.
- > Validating gift vouchers that are tendered.
- > Gift voucher reconciliation reports.
- > Maintaining the value of outstanding gift vouchers.

Loyalty Programs

CONTROL supports a number of Loyalty Program functions including:

- > **VIP Customer Cards** – customer details can be entered at point-of-sale.
- > **Bonus points** - which may be calculated based on purchases and can be redeemed under the control of the retailer.
- > **VIP Customer Discounts** - special pricing to established customers who are identified by presentation of customer card.
- > **Mailing campaigns and special member only promotions and events.**

Customer Relationship Management (CRM)

Detailed information can be stored for each customer, including name, address, email address, phone, previous purchases and demographic information. This information can be entered and retrieved at POS or later analysed as part of a sales analysis. This information can be used so that your sales assistants better assist your customers and create up-selling opportunities, or be implemented for marketing and loyalty campaigns with very little effort.

Deliveries

- > Customer address labels can be printed for delivered goods.
- > Delivery charges can be advised based on calculated weight and delivery location.
- > Optional ability for partial pickups and deliveries and to add items to an existing order.

Other Store Functions

The Point-of-Sale workstation also allows users access to any other part of the system to which they are authorised: for example, recording stock receipts, stock transfers and stocktakes.

Head Office CONTROL

Stores can be on-line to a central server or they can operate stand-alone and be “polled” from the central server on a regular basis.

If the stores are on-line, then the consolidated data is always up-to-date. If the stores are off-line, then the data on the central server is brought up-to-date whenever the stores are polled.

Head office functions can include comprehensive merchandising and performance management, inventory control, replenishment management, accounts payable, accounts receivable and general ledger including financial management reporting. **Any of these functions can be made available in the stores if required.**

Merchandising & Performance Management

- > A comprehensive array of sales reports is available by store, category, (department and sub-department), brand, salesperson and stock item. Reports can be consolidated for all locations.
- > Stock item reports include comparative analysis of sales quantities, sales value, gross profit; stock turns across multiple periods, GMROI and **best and worst performers**, etc.
- > Sales by hour reporting can be used to review staffing levels. Number of sales, number of multi-item sales, average sale value and sales by product group by salesperson, can also be used to measure individual performance.
- > Sales value by area can be used to review store layouts.
- > Customer reports include best customers, customers due for a bonus point reward, customers with purchases above or below a nominated figure, etc.
- > All sales reports have a range of options that greatly assist merchandising and performance management.

Stocktake

Accurate recording of all sales and stock receipts significantly reduces the need for stocktakes. However, stocktakes are still important to monitor stock shrinkage.

CONTROL has a comprehensive stocktake module with many features including:

- > Provision for both full and cyclic stocktakes.
- > Stocktake counts can be recorded with a Portable Data Entry unit (PDE).
- > Trading can continue while the stocktake is being finalised.

Replenishment & Inventory Management

- > Suggested restock reports, interactive replenishment and store allocations assist the restock process including the redistribution of existing stock.
- > Handling of consignment stock.
- > Serial number tracking.
- > Various replenishment methods, including max/min, sales trends, days-to-sell and open-to-buy.
- > Stock levels for new items can be based on pre-set model stock levels which can be different for each store if required.
- > Depending on your business practices, orders can be generated by a store for its own requirements or orders can be generated centrally for any selected store or group of stores.
- > CONTROL provides simple-to-use inter-location transfer facilities with comprehensive transfer reconciliation for optimum use of your stock investment.
- > Comprehensive inventory querying, including movement history, current orders, availability in all stores, notes and pictures, details for all colours and sizes for any item.
- > Full product descriptions and pictures of new products can be captured during the stock receipting process.
- > Minimum purchase order values may be set for each supplier.
- > Stock and shelf label printing facilities are provided.
- > Provision for 15 character alphanumeric stock codes.

Web Shopping

CONTROL is ready for electronic commerce via the Internet as soon as you are. Customers worldwide are able to view and even place orders on stock items online. The module is designed to create online product catalogues including relevant details, thumbnail and expandable pictures of items matching a query. Items can be added onto a shopping cart, which can be reviewed and altered at any time. Finalising a sale is as simple as providing delivery details and arranging payment. The data is secured using SSL.

Accounts Payable/Receivable and General Ledger

CONTROL includes a sophisticated accounting module that is fully featured for retailers' accounting needs. The following lists some of the many features available:

- > Generates required payments while ensuring you claim any allowable settlement discount.
- > Automatic calculation and handling of GST in supplier invoices and adjustments.
- > Generates consignment stock invoices for consignment stock.
- > Full foreign currency invoice handling.
- > Enquiry facility allows instant access to account details including transaction history, outstanding amounts and notes for each supplier.
- > Cash requirements' reporting.
- > Chart of Accounts: unlimited number of accounts, cost centres and groupings. The chart may be established hierarchically, e.g., for reporting by store and overall.
- > Budgets and forecasts may be stored for any account.
- > Ad-hoc cheque printing with transaction details recorded as a sundry payment.
- > Ability to operate in a new financial year before closing off the previous year.
- > Provides for separate financial reporting for stores, departments and profit centres.
- > Handles multi-company consolidations, with inter-company accounts automatically reconciled.
- > Full audit trail available at any time.
- > 7, 14, 30-day and other user-defined terms can be set for each customer, and terms can be changed at any time.
- > Facilities for extended credit finance accounts – with daily interest and arrears calculations.
- > Credit notes and payments are aged unless they are allocated; forward dated invoices are supported and aged to future periods.
- > Facilities to generate overdue balance interest charges, administration fees and extended credit interest charges.
- > Bank deposit slip for account payments is printed on demand complete with credit card and cheque details.
- > Optional ODBC connection allows for user developed queries and reports by third-party products using Crystal Reports, Access and Excel.

SUMMARY

CONTROL supports books and music retailers with sophisticated retail functionality that takes care of POS functions, merchandising, inventory, stock and staff performance, online selling, and much more. This enables you to be more efficient and profitable in spite of modern retailing challenges whether you're a large chain, an independent or specialist book or music store. Additionally, advanced, industry-specific features such as maintaining details and enquiries for author/artist, publisher, supplier, genre, media type and release date, means you don't have the added expense of customising POS software to suit your retail sub-sectors' unique and evolving requirements.

Significantly, CONTROL for books and music retailers has been designed by Creative Computing, a retail software vendor of more than 25 years where we aim to deliver practical retail software innovations that assist you to compete better locally and internationally.