



E-Paper

More Than the Sum of its Parts

How composable architectures are finding their way into the product content life cycle

Whilst earlier PIM systems were designed to cover as many functional areas as possible, the focus today is on functional fragmentation and the flexible combination of specialised microservices. This is intended to enable companies to deploy their PIM systems in a way that better meets their needs and to make their digital business models more agile. In the following, we explain why a composable PIM is becoming increasingly indispensable, weigh up the advantages of this approach against the challenges it presents, and share insights from our projects.

The role of PIM in the digital value chain

In recent years, most companies have come to realise the importance of Product Information Management (PIM) as they have expanded their online business. Significant investment has been made in the e-commerce landscape – in new shop systems, order management, payment features and digital shelf analytics. In many cases, however, all these investments did not lead to the hoped-for improvements in performance and turnover, as the foundation for a modern product content supply chain was lacking. After all, whether it is through marketing to various output channels such as the online shop or social media, through sales, customer service or in collaboration with partner companies such as retailers and manufacturers – in all cases, reliable product information is required, ranging from technical data sheets to rich product content. And with every new channel, every new product and every new target group, the demands and complexity within the company increase.

The lesson to be learnt from this period is clear: anyone who cannot efficiently manage, prepare and deliver product data will find it increasingly difficult. To ensure that data and content processes run with the speed and reliability required by today's product communication, the relevant systems must work together seamlessly. These include, in particular, PIM, DAM, CMS and e-commerce, but also areas such as CRM, syndication and analytics. Furthermore, within the PIM functional area itself, various tasks must be integrated into an efficient digital value chain, depending on the business case. These tasks include, for example, data onboarding, data quality checks and validation, data modelling, publishing functions, workflows and business rules, AI components, and the management of different contexts.





“Composable PIM offers many compelling benefits for companies looking to build scalable and flexible business models. However, implementation can be a major challenge – and this approach is not suitable for everyone. This is why comprehensive and expert advice is so important – but, in particular, why optimal support in orchestrating complex architectures is essential.”



Stefan Gander

Head of PIM/MDM
at Advellence

The evolution from PIM to Composable PIM

The technological shift away from on-premises installations towards cloud-native SaaS solutions offers many advantages. First and foremost, a composable PIM allows individual functions to be used and utilised as microservices, enabling the system to be deployed as efficiently as possible and scaled in line with business models at any time.

What constitutes such efficient use varies from company to company, as every business has its own unique business cases, processes, workflows and organisational structures. Whether, and to what extent, a composable architecture is recommended for a company therefore depends on many factors.

To this end, the initial situation must first be assessed: How many suppliers and partner companies are there? How many products and different product ranges are on offer? In how many markets and to which target groups are the products marketed? Which channels are used for this? Who works with which systems, and what are their areas of responsibility and tasks? What do the cross-system data processes look like? How is the content created and prepared? All these questions are necessary to identify current inefficiencies and areas for optimisation that the new PIM solution is intended to address. At the same time, decision-makers must consider the direction in which the company is heading over the next few years – and how these questions will be answered in the future.

The composable approach offers the advantage here that companies are flexible, meaning they can adapt their business models and PIM landscape to new circumstances without significant programming effort.

Challenges in implementing composable architectures

As a general rule, the more fragmented the system landscape becomes, the more complex its integration and orchestration become. It is also important to understand that the added value of individual systems and microservices can only be realised if, as mentioned elsewhere, all parts work together seamlessly.

In a composable world, therefore, digitalisation projects must no longer focus on individual sub-areas, but must always be approached holistically. Every change has an impact on the rest of the digital value chain. Optimising this chain therefore also requires a very good understanding of the market – and one that looks beyond the confines of PIM. Companies must not only select suitable solutions for their product content life cycle, but also ensure that data, processes and responsibilities are coordinated across all systems.

The role of the integrator

The traditional role of system integrators is to integrate newly acquired systems into the existing IT landscape and ensure their smooth operation. Whilst this task remains part of their core business, their scope of activity has expanded significantly in recent years, as few companies have sufficient IT resources and expertise for their digital value chain. As market experts with in-depth knowledge of software solutions and

offerings – for example, across the various stages of the product content life cycle – system integrators now act in an advisory capacity with a view to optimising the digital value chain; they oversee the orchestration of solutions and, as long-term digitalisation partners, are also responsible for establishing new processes and governance guidelines, as well as for the maintenance and upkeep of interfaces.

Conclusion

The transformation from monolithic system landscapes to an open architecture is, in principle, a necessary development. To remain competitive, new digital business models must be developed and new digital channels tapped into. Today, companies must also be able to react much more quickly to market changes and adapt their product communication, as well as the associated structures and processes, to new operating conditions. None of this is possible with rigid system architectures and inflexible processes – that much is clear.

With a composable PIM, organisations are demonstrably more efficient and better positioned for the future, as they can integrate new functional areas relatively quickly and in a resource-efficient manner, and scale individual tasks as required. However, despite all its advantages, a composable architecture also presents a challenge. System integrators play a key role here, as they not only possess the technical expertise required for the integration and orchestration of technological solutions, but can also provide conceptual support to companies in designing their system landscape.

About Advellence

As an experienced digital transformation partner for companies of all sizes and industries, Advellence supports organisations in the sustainable development of their digitalisation strategies – building on their existing IT landscape and process structures. With extensive technical and domain expertise, Advellence provides both strategic consulting and hands-on support in the implementation and integration of systems, data, and processes.

With our strong and continuously growing network of technology partnerships, we identify the ideal solution for any starting point – from data and information management to modern work solutions and advanced data and analytics scenarios that give your company the competitive edge it needs.

We connect all your data so it can tell your story. Technical precision is our craft; project execution is our passion. Consulting, technology selection, implementation, development, and integration: At Advellence, you get everything from a single source – with the Advantage of Excellence.

ADVENCE

Advellence Solutions AG
Industriestrasse 50a
CH-8304 Wallisellen

+41 44 832 50 30
info@advellence.com
www.advellence.com

Advellence GmbH
Marktstrasse 11 H
D-33602 Bielefeld

+49 521 54397730 (Zentrale CH)
info@advellence.com
www.advellence.com