

3 Reasons to Rethink Illustrated Parts Catalogs

Take your parts catalogs off the drafting table and into Web-based technology

The
key document
that helps customers
order aftermarket
parts
is the
illustrated parts
catalog.

When it comes to illustrated parts catalogs these three things are certain:

- Change is constant

The process for distributing new information via illustrated parts catalogs hasn't kept up with the rapid advancement of CAD.

- Consistency brings quality

The increased demand for customized products presents a growing challenge to keep documentation consistent.

- Production requires automation

Each time part information is manually added an opportunity for an error presents itself.

Today's Web-based technology eliminates the legacy process of cut and paste with a database-driven process that provides structure to directly integrate with engineering data and ERP data—so that you can quickly create, modify and maintain both printed and electronic parts catalogs.

These three common reasons often derail publishing productivity:

Does your group convert dynamic CAD content to static information for use in word processing or desktop publishing tools?

Does the need for customized parts catalogs create a struggle to keep up and maintain consistency?

Do your publishers follow a slow and repetitive process that depends too much on manually input information?

Three Reasons to Rethink Illustrated Parts Catalogs

With Documoto Web-authoring your publishers can:

- Accelerate the publishing of parts catalogs from days to hours, producing new books quickly.
- Update a single instance and all referenced catalogs are up-to-date.
- Update parts books with superseded parts information within seconds.
- Utilize Documoto's intelligent template system to create custom catalogs.
- Access the cloud environment of the Authoring Suite to make changes from anywhere in the world.
- Format PDF output with a global template to maintain consistency across all parts catalogs.
- Export parts catalogs to standard XML formats, such as for those used by the SmartEquip Network™.

Why Rethink?

Original Equipment Manufacturers (OEMs) support the life-cycle of complex equipment by providing their customers with aftermarket sales and service. Fast and accurate aftermarket sales and service keeps equipment on the job and in safe working condition—critical to both OEMs and their customers.

The key document that helps customers order aftermarket parts is the illustrated parts catalog. Shipped with new purchases, and often updated during the equipment life-cycle, they provide detailed parts information with diagrams and their associated bills of materials.

Each assembly page is designed specifically to keep equipment on the job by providing the information necessary to identify a part number for accurate ordering.

There is a broad range of information offered by OEMs. Some go to great lengths to customize parts information to accurately match the customer order. But most generalize information to cover various options due to limited resources and time constraints, even if it isn't as accurate.

Traditionally, assembly pages are created and formatted using desktop publishing tools in a repetitive, mostly manual, process. Diagrams and part lists are copied and pasted throughout various manuals that are eventually delivered as a simple PDF. However, the constant change in parts information creates a roadblock when each instance has to be manually updated and then, hopefully, redistributed in a timely fashion.

This often leaves customer service representatives sifting through internal business software and documentation to provide updated information and verify part orders at point of sale.

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Documoto Web-authoring is easy to learn, and it provides a way to make updates and changes without having to edit an entire parts book.

It's very efficient!

There is a sense of logic that makes it easy to navigate. I've learned ways to make my work even faster by using Documoto's built-in features.

Projects that took days with previous systems have been cut nearly in half by using Documoto.

And, I'm still new at this!

Jerry Barr - Publisher
Federal Signal Corp

Change is Constant

Problem:

Equipment regularly goes through engineering changes with new information released monthly, weekly, and sometimes even daily. Engineering, using advanced CAD and Project Data Management (PDM) or Project Lifecycle Management (PLM) software, keeps track of referenced files allowing part updates to be a simple process. This increases productivity, resulting in rapid product development.

These changes typically roll out to affect individual parts and critical documentation. However, the process for distributing the new information via illustrated parts catalogs hasn't kept up with the rapid advancement of CAD. Illustrated parts catalogs seem to be stuck on the drafting table, when everything else has integrated new, modern technology.

Solution:

Documoto's new Web-authoring tools, specifically designed for parts catalog publishing, incorporate a relational database that keeps track of change references—and allows for the content to be disseminated throughout multiple illustrated parts lists. Part information is automatically updated to any list with a reference to that part. As assemblies change, information can be modified and republished, updating all instances—across all books—that share that assembly.

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Store corporate branding styles in a single across-book template

Include logos, header and footer information, assembly titles, font styles, and pagination settings

Customize styles for specific serial number based parts catalogs

Create full book templates to share standard information like warranty pages or general specifications

Duplicate books that share chapters and pages, editing easily to complete books for unique models

Consistency brings Quality

Problem:

Original Equipment Manufacturers take pride in the quality of their products and continue to make those products better. But the support documentation rarely matches the same quality.

With the increased demand for customized products, it's a growing challenge to keep the documentation consistent for each custom order, all while delivering accurate information.

Illustrated parts catalogs contain vital information: part, page, or assembly descriptions, a table of contents, page headers and footers, and corporate branding. In desktop publishing, templates are often used to keep this information consistent.

However, while these page files are being created and saved from the template, new information is being generated from engineering. Any page file affected by the engineering changes have to be updated—one file at a time.

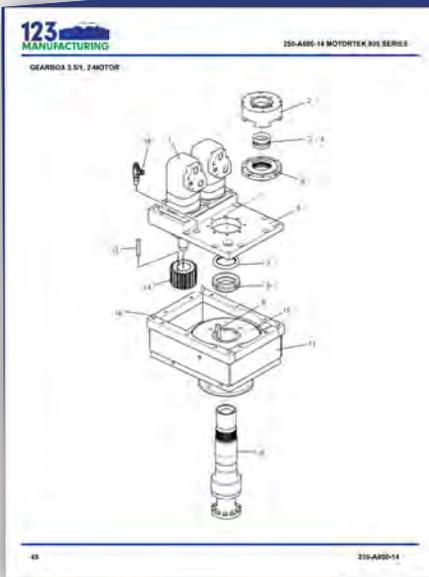
Publishers using traditional desktop publishing tools are taxed with countless hours trying to accomplish updates that are laced throughout a collection of parts catalogs.

Solution:

Documoto allows for publishers to setup data-driven templates with the foundation of a relational database for ever-changing part information.

Media templates reuse the structure of existing illustrated parts catalogs.

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Illustrators reuse the structure and content from a base model to create new serial specific catalogs. The structure of the book maintains consistency without having to worry about updates down the road.

Print templates determine the look and feel of every parts catalog and are preset by the publisher. Information is entered once and reused throughout the parts catalogs, keeping them consistent. Headers and footers pull in metadata and can be customized to the OEM brand or their distributor.

Additional information can be included for each book. For example, a template can include a generic warranty policy at the beginning of every book. However, if the warranty is unique in a particular book, the content can be quickly modified in the local settings for that specific book.

This is a systematic approach to the creation of parts catalogs. Diagrams and parts list tables are formatted for each page based on the print settings template. All book segments are combined, a defined cover page, a programmatically created table of contents (along with a parts index and page index), supplemental information (like warranties or general information), and illustrated parts list pages.

The process is similar to combining several PDFs using Adobe Acrobat, but without any human interaction. This ensures that every book authored in Documoto is consistent in look and feel and ensures all information is included.

START AUTHORIZING & DELIVERING
INTERACTIVE PARTS CATALOGS
IN THE CLOUD

- Modernize your parts catalogs
- Achieve faster turnaround time on parts orders
- Increase aftermarket parts sales

Three Reasons to Rethink Illustrated Parts Catalogs

Documoto reduces dependency on desktop publishing tools for parts catalog production.

It makes a direct connection between engineering data and illustrated parts lists. Diagrams and bills of materials can be exported for use directly in Documoto. This programmatic process eliminates the need to convert dynamic CAD data to static information for document formatting.

It preserves dynamic parts data and makes it immediately usable, and changeable, in an online relational database.

Mike Dulmage- Publisher
Getman Corp

Production requires Automation

Problem:

Traditional desktop publishing methods require several hours dedicated to formatting part information. Content has to be gathered, modified, and formatted for each illustrated parts list page. Technical illustrators scramble to find the correct part information for the bill of materials in CAD or in a database like an ERP system or an AS/400 server.

Each time this information is manually added an opportunity for an error presents itself.

Plus, the content is difficult to reuse. Even if images and parts lists are linked to external files, these links and file names must be carefully managed, which often results in a files languishing on a shared server.

When changes inevitably arise, a technical illustrator must find all the affected documentation and modify each individual file. Each instance within each file must be manually updated. It's no wonder generic manuals are commonly used for customized equipment.

Solution:

Documoto can be integrated to automate the initial creation of pages, chapters, and books for illustrated parts lists by using information already available in ERP and other project life-cycle management tools.

Documoto services can help OEMs integrate the new publishing technology into existing workflows of project life-cycle management systems.

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Imagine this:

Once engineering approves an assembly, a technical illustrator is alerted and can create an exploded view to produce an image.

At the same time, a bill of materials can be output as the associated parts list.

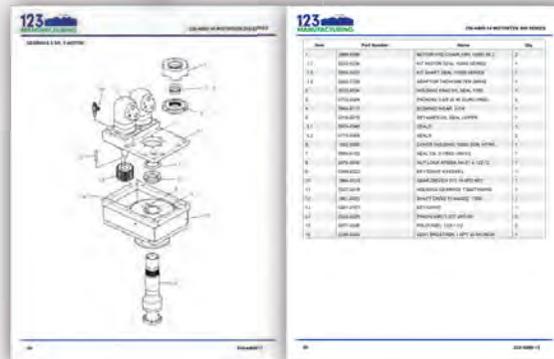
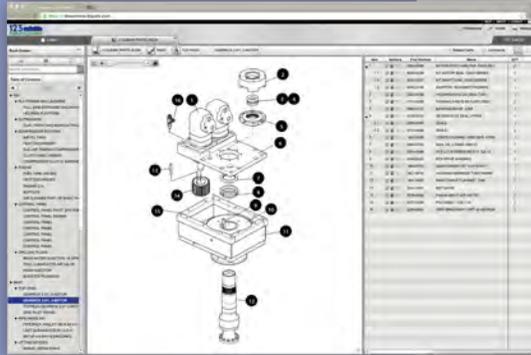
Once the image and parts list are defined, the page is built systematically.

The only human interaction would occur in order to change a state or check in a file.

To build a book based on a customer order, ERP system integration references recent orders. Based on these customer orders, a book structure can be defined and a new serial parts book assembled using the pages that were systematically created by the project life-cycle management system.

By leveraging the predefined templates, illustrated parts lists can be produced with the defined format settings, removing tedious publishing time and replacing it with in a systematic approach. All content, links, and references, are managed in a relational database with little to no management by the end user.

When updates are needed a publisher makes a change once—and all referenced illustrated parts catalogs are updated within seconds. This is easily accomplished by leveraging the power of Documoto Web-authoring and the foundation of its relational database.



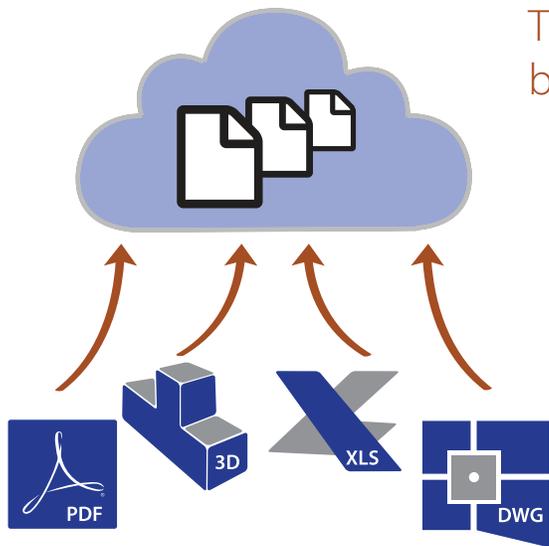
PROGRAMMATIC OUTPUT OF PARTS CATALOGS SAVES TIME AND INCREASES ACCURATE PART SALES

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Conclusion

Documoto Authoring Suite can bring value to the Original Equipment Manufacturer as well as its customers. Content can be customized based on orders; technical illustrators can easily manage unique manuals with minimal effort; and valuable time can be spent producing accurate parts information rather than reformatting and managing illustrated parts lists for simple PDF output.

Automated and intelligent, Documoto Authoring Suite replaces traditional and manual methods used to produce parts catalogs and the vital illustrated parts lists—allowing technical illustrators to keep on pace with Engineering.



There is also an added benefit that should not be ignored.

Documoto Authoring Suite not only remedies the tedious time spent producing illustrated parts catalogs by replacing it with programmatically produced, data-driven content. Documoto prepares books for online access, allowing users to look up and order parts online 24/7, using the same database that created the books in the first place. See the Documoto Web Library whitepaper for more information about easy online part ordering.

Documoto is a technical Web library that provides secure, Web-based management for aftermarket technical documentation—including the publishing of illustrated parts catalogs—that integrates with engineering and ERP systems.

Before you release your next batch of technical manuals, contact our Digabit sales group for an online demonstration and information about our complete online and interactive application suite.

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