



OpenGlobal Virtuemarkt Product Feeds

Instruction Manual



Introduction

This Joomla! component makes it easy to provide CSV datafeeds of all of your Virtuemart products for various external companies.

The software comes preloaded with product datafeed configuration for

- Affiliate Window
- Channel Advisor
- Ciao
- Ebay
- Edirectory
- Google Base / Google Products
- Paid on Results
- Play Trade
- PriceGrabber
- PriceRunner
- ShareASale
- Shopping.com
- Shopzilla
- WebGains

And you can configure your own bespoke product feeds very easily.

The datafeeds can be password protected so that only recognised third parties can access them.

Please note that some of the preconfigured datafeeds will not work “out of the box” because they require you to categorise your products against a strict taxonomy or to configure other custom fields.



Installation

The OpenGlobal Virtuemart Product Feeds component installs in exactly the same way as any other Joomla! Component . Simply log into the Joomla! administrative control panel as an Administrator (not “Manager”) and go to Extensions > Install/Uninstall.





Upload and install the package by locating the package on your computer and clicking “Upload File & Install”.










As long as there are no errors, The component is now installed and can be access from the Components menu under “OpenGlobal Product Feeds”.



Product Feeds Manager

The opening screen of the Product Feeds Manager shows all of the available product feeds, showing the package product feed configurations when first installed.

 **OpenGlobal VM Product Feeds Manager**   

ID	<input type="checkbox"/>	Feed Name	Feed	Published
8	<input type="checkbox"/>	Affiliate Window		
6	<input type="checkbox"/>	Ciao		
1	<input type="checkbox"/>	Google Base		
3	<input type="checkbox"/>	PriceGrabber		
7	<input type="checkbox"/>	PriceRunner		
9	<input type="checkbox"/>	ShareASale		
4	<input type="checkbox"/>	Shopping.com		
5	<input type="checkbox"/>	Shopzilla		
2	<input type="checkbox"/>	WebGains		

You can create a new bespoke configuration by clicking on the “New” button in the top right hand corner of the screen, or you can edit an existing configuration either by clicking on its name, or checking the box next to the name and clicking the “Edit” button in the top right hand corner.

Any product feeds that are published will have the product feed URL displayed next to them in the Product Feed Manager list. This is the address where the third party/application can download the datafeed from.



Creating a New Product Feed Configuration

From the Product Feeds Manager, click on the “New” button.

The “Feed” options contain the settings that apply to the whole product feed.

Feed

Feed Name:

Locale:

Field Separator:

Field Quote:

Escape Field Quote:

Convert newlines to: \n will leave carriage return intact.

Show header row: No Yes

Password:

Single category per product: No Yes

Exclude Out of Stock Products: No Yes

Shopper Group for prices:

Published: No Yes

Feed Name	The name of the product feed you are creating. It is suggested that you use the name of the company or application that the product feed is for.
Locale	Some of the Virtuemart data is stored in locale-specific tables so you'll need to enter your locale, using the two letter codes with an underscore (not a hyphen) between them.
Field Separator	This is the character(s) that will separate the fields in the product feed. eg. For CSV this will be a comma ','. If you have trouble entering a <TAB> character for tab-delimited files, you can use '\t'.
Field Quote	This is the character(s) that will quote each of the fields in the product feed. This is usually a double quote, '"', or empty.
Escape Field Quote	If a Field Quote is used, there needs to be some way of escaping those character(s) if they appear within the data itself. The Escape Field Quote character(s) will replace any occurrence of the Field Quote character(s) in the data. This is usually two double quotes, '""', or a backslash and double quote, '\\"'.
Convert newlines to	Some applications will not allow newlines in the feed except to terminate the end of each product entry. If newlines are permitted, this should be '\n', if they are not permitted, you can



	leave it blank to simply strip them out, or enter new text to replace new lines with something else appropriate. eg. ' '. This option defines whether a header row will be added to the top of the product feed giving the column names for each field.
Show header row	
Password	Enter a password here to prevent unauthorised users from accessing the product feed.
Single category per product	Virtuemart allows products to belong to multiple categories. By selecting “No”, any products which are assigned to multiple categories will be duplicated, once for each category it is in. By selecting “Yes”, each product will only appear in the product feed once and will be assigned the first of its categories selected from the database.
Exclude out of stock products	Whether the feed should only include in-stock products.
Shopper Group for prices	Virtuemart can set different prices for different shopper groups so it is important to make sure you select the correct shopper group for your feed. If you have no idea about this, try using NULL or default, either of these are likely to work.
Currency	Choose the currency that prices should be converted to. If you only use one currency, leave this as “Original”. This is a very intensive process and converting the native currency to the same native currency is wasteful. “Original” performs no exchange rate calculation. Please note that only the convertECB module is supported for price conversions.
Published	Whether the product feed is published and available to external users.

Clicking on the “+” in the Fields options adds more fields to the product feed. Fields can be removed by clicking on the red cross at the far right of each field line entry.



Field	The database field to use for this column in the product feed. The fields are grouped by their appropriate database tables and there are some special options at the end of the list.
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	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>Full Category Taxonomy</td> <td>The Category > category_name option will only display the immediate category (eg. London). This option displays the full path to the category (eg. World > Europe > UK > London).</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Calculated Price</td> <td>The <i>Price (Default)</i> options simply take the core price straight out of the database. If you want the calculated price based on your tax rules, use this field instead.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Product URL</td> <td>The complete URL to the product.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Product Image URL</td> <td>The complete URL to the main image (Product > product_full_image only displays the filename).</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Product Thumb URL</td> <td>The complete URL to the thumbnail of the main image (Product > product_thumb_image only displays the filename).</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Fixed Value</td> <td>A fixed text value which is identical for every product and should be specified in the “Fixed Value / Custom Field Default Value” textbox.</td> </tr> </table>	Full Category Taxonomy	The Category > category_name option will only display the immediate category (eg. London). This option displays the full path to the category (eg. World > Europe > UK > London).	Calculated Price	The <i>Price (Default)</i> options simply take the core price straight out of the database. If you want the calculated price based on your tax rules, use this field instead.	Product URL	The complete URL to the product.	Product Image URL	The complete URL to the main image (Product > product_full_image only displays the filename).	Product Thumb URL	The complete URL to the thumbnail of the main image (Product > product_thumb_image only displays the filename).	Fixed Value	A fixed text value which is identical for every product and should be specified in the “Fixed Value / Custom Field Default Value” textbox.
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Fixed Value	A fixed text value which is identical for every product and should be specified in the “Fixed Value / Custom Field Default Value” textbox.												
Fixed Value / Custom Field Default Value	<p>If the field selected is “Fixed Value”, this is where the fixed value will be entered.</p> <p>If the field selected is one of the Custom fields (see Custom Fields), you can add a default value for any products which have not been assigned a value of the custom field. If a default value is not specified, any products which do not have a value assigned for this custom field will not be present in the product feed.</p> <p>If any other fields are selected, this textbox will not be editable.</p>												
Column Name	This is the name of the column which will appear in the header row of the product feed if the header row is shown.												
Quote	Even if a Field Quote value has been specified for the product												



	feed as a whole, some fields may be prevented from using the Field Quote (sometimes the price field or other numeric fields are not allowed to be quoted) by selecting “No”.
Strip HTML	Some fields will contain HTML code which is unacceptable in some product feed formats. If HTML is not permitted, set this option to “Yes” and it will strip out all HTML from this field.
Sequence	The sequence that the fields should appear in the product feed. You can move fields up and down the sequence using the green up and down arrows as appropriate.

Once the product feed settings are complete, click the “Save” button in the top right hand corner of the screen and this will save the product feed. If the product feed has been published, the feed can be accessed from the address displayed next to the product feed on the Product Feeds Manager.

6	<input type="checkbox"/> Ciao		
1	<input type="checkbox"/> Google Base	/index.php?option=com_ogvmproductfeeds&format=raw&id=1&password=	
3	<input type="checkbox"/> PriceGrabber		



Using the Preconfigured Product Feeds

There are preconfigured product feeds for

- Affiliate Window
- Channel Advisor
- Ciao
- Ebay
- Edirectory
- Google Base / Google Products
- Paid on Results
- Play Trade
- PriceGrabber
- PriceRunner
- ShareASale
- Shopping.com
- Shopzilla
- WebGains

However, most of these will not work straight out of the box because you may need to set up Custom Fields in Virtuemart.

Virtuemart Custom Fields

The exact settings for the custom fields will depend on the requirements for that particular field. However, for most uses, a “string” custom field set up as admin-only, will usually suffice.



Custom Field

Custom Field Type:

Title:

Published: No Yes

Parent:

Cart Attribute: No Yes

Description:

Default:

Tooltip:

Layout position:

Admin only: No Yes

It should be noted that the “Default” field is limited to 255 characters. When specifying “Is a List”, the Default field is used to store the values of the dropdown list, and under these circumstances, 255 characters may not be enough. If you need to store more options for your list, you’ll need to go to the #_virtuemart_customs table in the database and change the “custom_value” column from CHAR(255) to something bigger like VARCHAR(4095). You’ll then need to find the row in the #_virtuemart_customs table corresponding to your new custom field and manually insert your dropdown options (separated with a ‘;’) into the custom_value column.

Once you have created your custom field, you will need to add it and configure it for each product (although you can specify a default value in the feed itself – see below).

Once you have completed this process, you can now update the Product Feed settings. So, Go back to the Product Feed Manager and click on the feed you want to set up. The field(s) which needs configuring will typically be set to “Fixed Value” with a fixed value something like “Create a new product type for this field, use the Google taxonomy”. You can now change this field to the appropriate Custom Field which will now have appeared in the dropdown list, and you can change the Fixed Value to an appropriate default value (if there is one) or just leave it blank.



Single category per product: No Yes

Exclude Out of Stock Products: No Yes

Shopper Group for prices:

Published: No Yes

Fields

Field	Fixed Value / Custom Field Default Value	Column Name	Quote	Strip HTML	Sequence
<input type="text" value="product_sku"/>		<input type="text" value="id"/>	No <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/>	No <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/>	1 <input type="text"/> ▲ ▼ ✖
<input type="text" value="product_name (Translatable)"/>		<input type="text" value="title"/>	No <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/>	No <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/>	2 <input type="text"/> ▲ ▼ ✖
<input type="text" value="product_desc (Translatable)"/>		<input type="text" value="description"/>	No <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/>	No <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/>	3 <input type="text"/> ▲ ▼ ✖
<input type="text" value="Full Category Taxonomy"/>		<input type="text" value="product_type"/>	No <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/>	No <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/>	4 <input type="text"/> ▲ ▼ ✖
<input type="text" value="Product URL"/>		<input type="text" value="link"/>	No <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/>	No <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/>	5 <input type="text"/> ▲ ▼ ✖
<input type="text" value="google_category"/>		<input type="text" value="google_product_category"/>	No <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/>	No <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/>	6 <input type="text"/> ▲ ▼ ✖
<input type="text" value="Product Image URL"/>		<input type="text" value="image_link"/>	No <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/>	No <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/>	7 <input type="text"/> ▲ ▼ ✖
<input type="text" value="Fixed Value"/>	<input type="text" value="new"/>	<input type="text" value="condition"/>	No <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/>	No <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/>	8 <input type="text"/> ▲ ▼ ✖



Troubleshooting

Product feed contains no products

Some of the pre-configured product feed formats contain a Manufacturer > mf_name field. If you have not configured your Virtuemart installation to use “Manufacturers”, this will result in an empty product feed.

You should either create a default Manufacturer in Virtuemart and assign all of the products to this Manufacturer, or change this field in your product feeds to a Fixed Value.

I can download the product feed, but some other companies can't

This is a problem where a SEF URL component such as sh404SEF is installed and is redirecting the product feed URLs to search engine friendly equivalents. This is fine for your browser when you download it, and is fine for most automated software run by the external companies. However, some of these companies (such as PriceGrabber) are running less sophisticated software which does not understand URL redirects.

To get around this problem, simply configure your SEF URL component to skip the OpenGlobal Virtuemart Product Feeds component.

Clicking the save button takes me back to the Joomla Control Panel and nothing is saved

This has been seen on web servers with strict mod_security or Suhosin settings which are blocking the configuration form for feeds with long configurations. This may be due to the form length, or number of fields. You will either need to increase your mod_security/Suhosin settings to accommodate the long configurations, or remove some columns from your feed.