

Faculty of Information Technology
MONASH University

IMS5024 Information Modelling, Semester 2, 2005

Assignment 2: Ralphs' book exchange

Ralph's Book Exchange is a type of e-business exchange that does business entirely on the Internet. The company acts as a clearinghouse for both buyers and sellers of used books.

For a person to offer books for sale, he/she must register with Ralph's Book Exchange. The person must provide a current physical address and telephone number, as well as a current e-mail address. The system will then maintain an open account for this person. Access to the system as a seller is through a secure, authenticated portal.

A seller can list books on the system through a special Internet form. Information required includes all the pertinent information about the book, its category, its general condition and the asking price. A seller may list as many books as desired. The system maintains an index of all books in the system so the buyers can use the search engine to search for books. The search engine allows searches by title, author, category, and keyword.

People wanting to buy books come to the site and search for the books they want. When they decide to buy, they must open an account with a credit card to pay for the books. The system maintains all of this information on secure servers.

When a request to purchase is made, along with the payment, Ralph's Book Exchange sends an e-mail notice to the seller of the book that was chosen. It also marks the book as sold. The system maintains an open order until it receives notice that the books have been shipped. Once the seller receives notice that a listed book has been sold, he/she must notify the buyer, via e-mail within 48 hours that the purchase is noted. Shipment of the order must be made within 24 hours after the seller send the notification e-mail. The seller sends a notification to both the buyer and Ralph's Book Exchange when the shipment is made.

After receiving notice of shipment, Ralph's Book Exchange maintains the order in a shipped status. At the end of each month, a check is mailed to each seller for the book orders that have been in a shipped status for 30 days. The 30-day waiting period is to allow the buyer to notify Ralph's Book Exchange if the shipment does not arrive for some reason, or if the book is not in the same condition as advertised. Ralph's Book Exchange also takes a 10% of the payment price as fee. The 10% fee is subtracted from the cheque that is sent to the seller.

The buyers can, if they desire, enter a service code for the seller. The service code is an indication of how well the seller is servicing book purchases. Some sellers are very active and use Ralph's Book Exchange as a major outlet for selling books. So, a service code is an important indicator to potential buyers.

Ralph started the small business in a regional area in Victoria. He has now been so successful that he wants to expand the service to the whole of Australia and internationally as well. For international transactions a currency converter has to be added. The new activities for Ralph's Book Exchange have to be implemented with the new information system that has to be developed. These are not future requirements, but requirements for the current system.