



PIM Guide

Professionally and Efficiently
Maintain Product Data in One Place



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What is a PIM System and What can it be Used for?

PIM is short for Product Information Management. They allow users to manage all important data in one central location. With product data becoming increasingly important in the course of digitalization, more and more businesses are recognizing the usefulness of central databases to collect, enrich and output data, known as PIM systems, or PIM software. PIM systems lead to improved workflows and better product data resulting in a more positive customer experience. Improving these factors can also lead to fewer customer complaints as well as lower costs.

Typical applications (use cases) are:

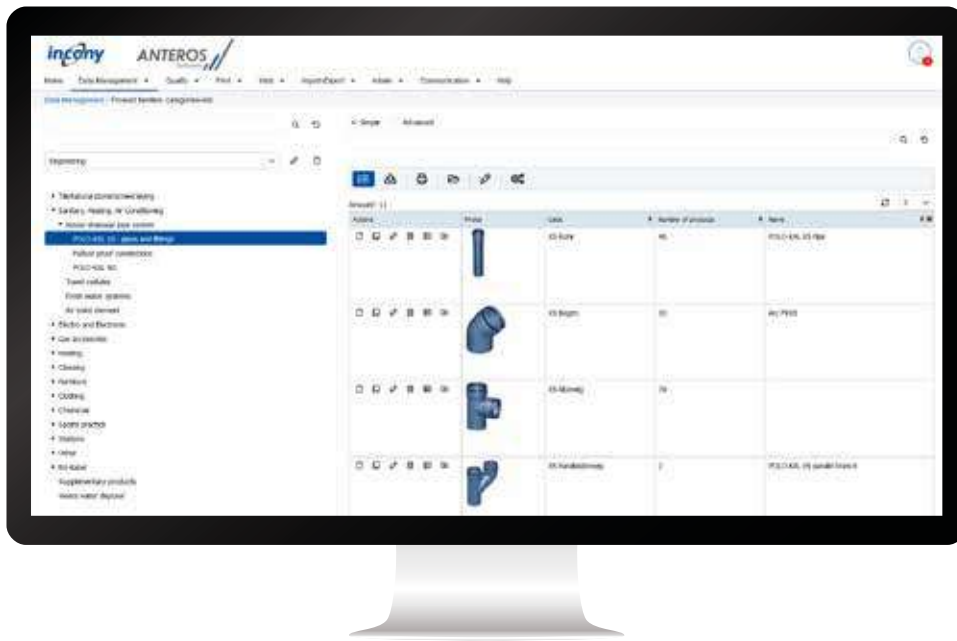
- 1 Overview of all product data, images and documents in one central location
- 2 Efficient product data maintenance
- 3 Import data from other systems and enrich it with additional data
- 4 Export product data for retailers, distributors, customers and partners, e.g. so that they can import these products into their own web stores or include data in price lists or catalogs
- 5 Set up ecommerce in the form of one or more of your own online shops built with your product data
- 6 Product data automatically input into catalogs, price lists, data sheets, labels, etc.
- 7 Apps based off of / filled with your product data



More and More Product Data for Ever More Purposes

Over 80 percent of the information that companies communicate to the industry and commerce is in relation to the products they offer.

Nowadays, digitalization has led to an increasing amount of product data that must be displayed.



More Sales Channels and Formats

Often, a business's own marketing / sales department, as well as by retailers and partners need product data in an increasing number of media and formats: for printed catalogs, extract catalogs, price lists, data sheets, websites, online catalogs, web shops, apps, exports to BMEcat, Datanorm, GAEB, Arge, to name a few.

More and More Products

In addition to the main products, other products such as spare parts, accessories, etc. are also regularly requested. Product ranges are also growing with the help of cooperation partners and acquisitions.

More Data on Products

In addition to product names and descriptions, photos and drawings, instructions, certificates, various technical characteristics, etc. are often also requested.

Multiple Languages

Many companies now sell their products internationally, keeping in mind product data in the customer's language enhances sales, having data in multiple languages is very important.

Product Data is Often Maintained on Multiple Different Platforms

Many businesses still manage their products and product data in a redundant manner, within numerous files and systems.

For example, master product data is kept in the merchandise management system, product sales data is rather kept in the print catalogs, data sheets, labels and websites, and sometimes even in Excel lists of some employees.

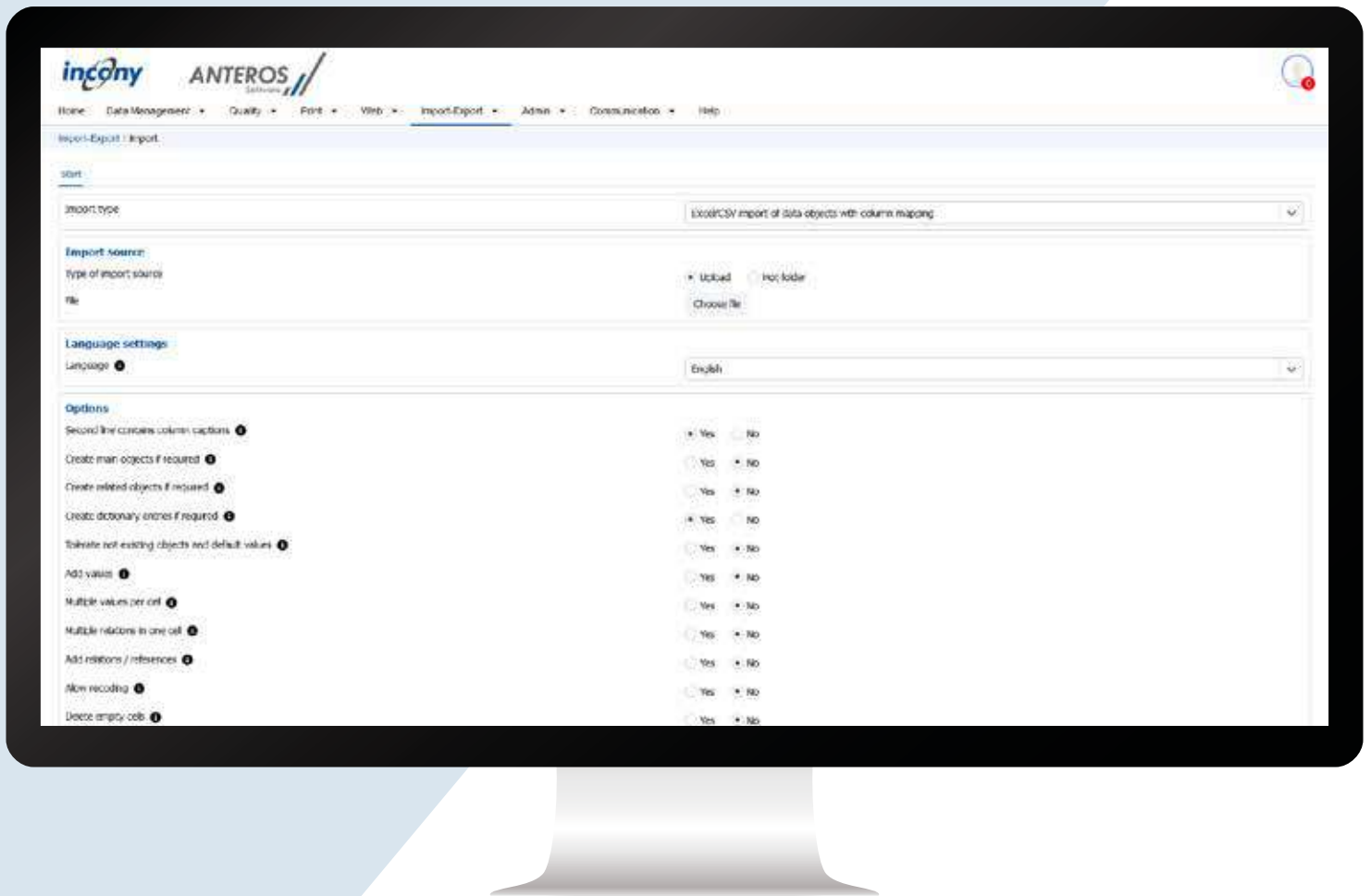
When a business has to maintain product data on these „islands“, this not only means a huge waste of resources (having to input changes on each and every platform), it is only human to accidentally forget to change something on one of the numerous platforms or channels, leading to some of the data to be incorrect, or out-dated.



PIM systems allow product data to be maintained centrally and thereby far more efficiently.



PIM Systems for Central Product Data Maintenance, with Cross-Media Features

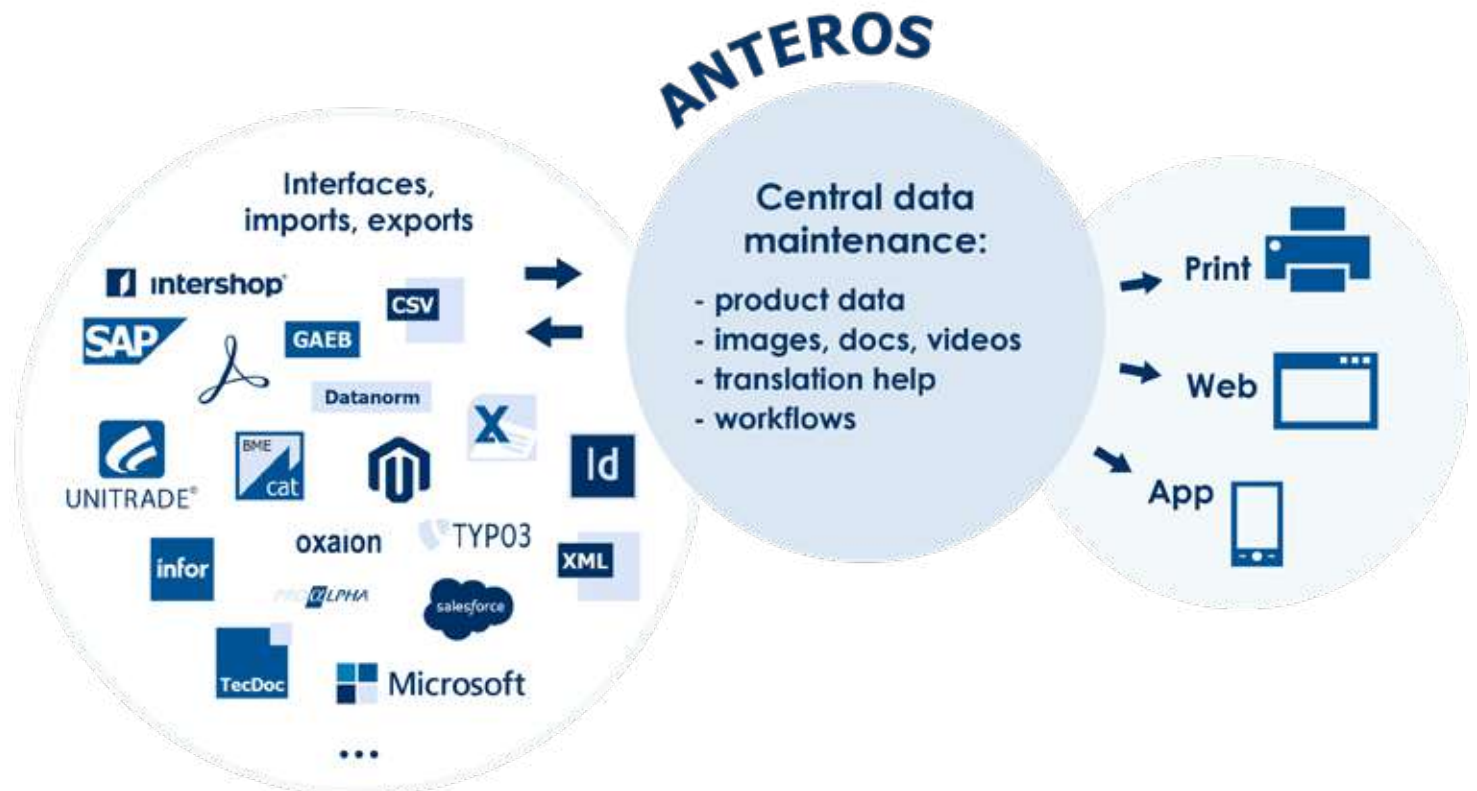


Product Information Management (PIM) systems make it possible to centrally manage data in a database. Existing data from different systems can be imported either once or on a regular basis (e.g. master data from the ERP system or technical data from Excel lists, ...) and

supplemented with additional product data such as marketing texts, images, videos, translations or other characteristic data via maintenance pages. This central data can then be used in various application areas, such as ecommerce, online shops, dealer exports or product catalogs.

What are the Benefits of a PIM System?

Internal benefits

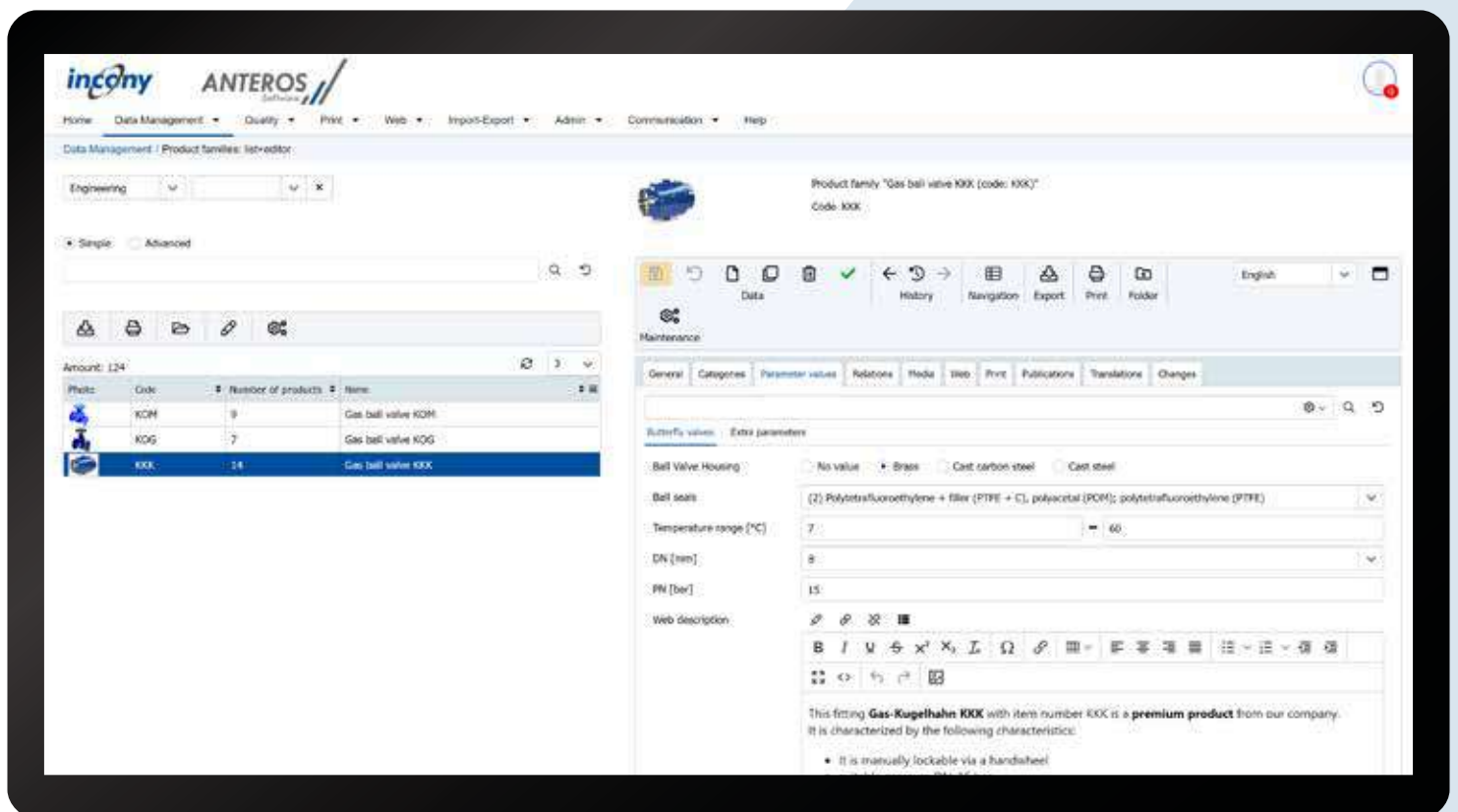


- 1 Complete overview of the entire international product portfolio
- 2 Significantly less time and effort spent searching for product information by all employees
- 3 „Single Point of Truth“: Employees can be assured that correct, complete, current and consistent information is gathered in one place. Furthermore, all employees in all national companies have the exact same information at the same time.
- 4 Considerably more efficient maintenance of product data
- 5 More flexible and faster preparation of product data for sales and product management inquiries



External benefits

- 1 Complete, up-to-date and consistent source of information for retailers and partners
- 2 Multi-channel strategy support for using product data in various print documents, web catalogs, web shops and apps
- 3 Utilization of all cross-selling potential by defining product combinations
- 4 Easier cooperation with logistics companies
- 5 Flexible and fast preparation of product data for all inquiries from sales and product management



Important Features of Well Designed PIM Systems:

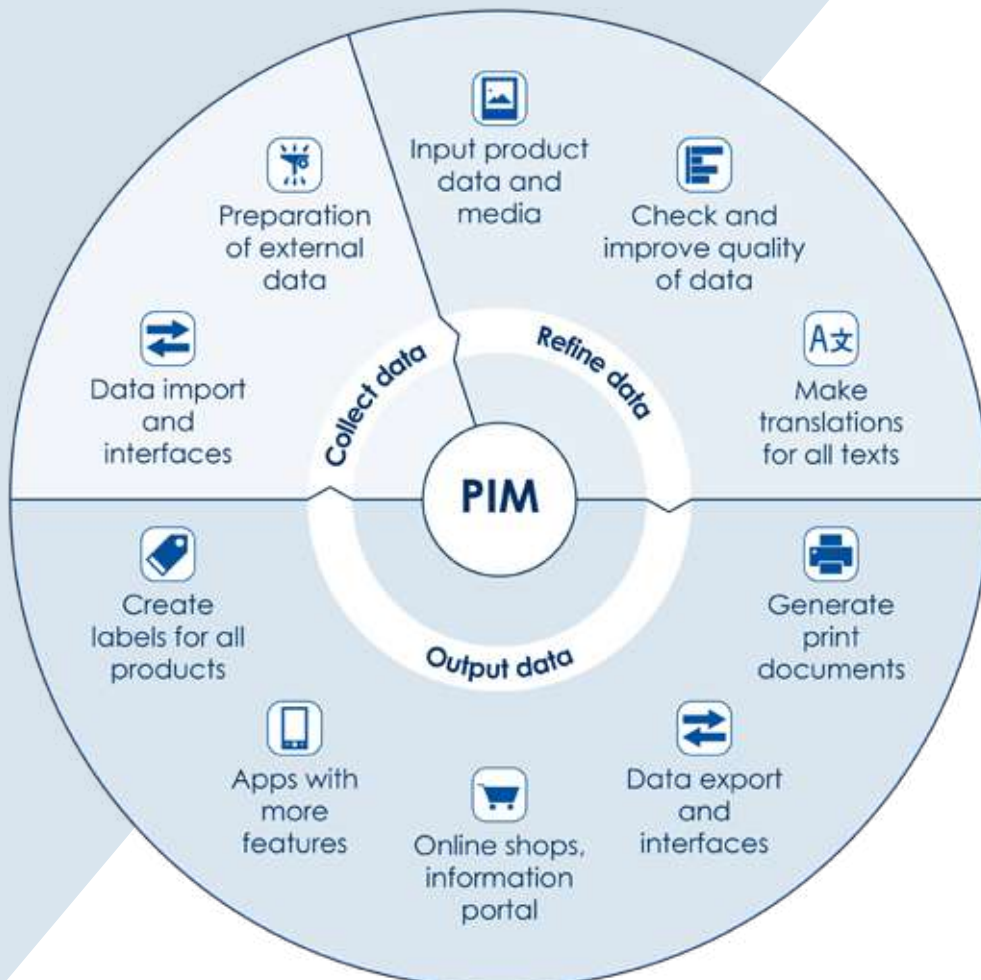
Interfaces and Importing



If you maintain some of your product data in other systems, e.g. article numbers, names and prices in your ERP system, then it is important that you can transfer this data to the PIM system via import or interfaces.

PIM systems offer various import formats such as CSV, Excel, BMEcat XML, GOM XML, TecDoc TAF in order to transfer data changes from other systems at fixed times (e.g. at night). Some also have interfaces to import data changes on demand from, e.g. via SOAP or REST web services. Systems often differ in terms of

how easy it is to configure an import or interface to the system. In this regard, it is worth inquiring about customer testimonials to discover their experiences with a particular PIM system.





Entry and Maintenance



Once basic data has been imported, further product data is added in the PIM, e.g. marketing texts that are not maintained in the ERP system, these are assigned to product categories and added to product relationships. Technical industries in particular find it important to enter technical characteristics in a structured manner, e.g. parameters such as temperature range, dimensions or pressure, as this can significantly improve the efficiency of daily data maintenance.

Text Translation



If you export your products to multiple countries, it may be important to prepare the product data not only in English but also in other languages as well. After all, sales documents with product data in the customer's own language boost sales! However, translating texts can take varying amounts of time and effort in a PIM system. Without translation support, you always have to keep track of what information has been changed in order to be on top of translation into the other languages. Translation support in the PIM can significantly reduce this effort.

The technologically leading PIM system ANTEROS has particular strengths in this regard and offers various data types, nesting of parameters, calculation of parameters based on others (e.g. volume based on length, width, height or a web description based on fixed text modules and parameters) and much more.

Some PIM systems have an integrated translation module, while others connect third-party translation systems via interfaces. Integrated translation modules usually make it possible to list all texts that have either not yet been translated or whose main text has changed.

The translation module by the technology-leading system ANTEROS also uses colors to mark any changes that were made to relevant texts since the last translation. The translator or the national business can either enter the translations into

Workflows



Workflows allow you to configure your own processes in the PIM system. Thus, you can control the gradual work of different people on the product data specifically via workflow states, state transitions, authorizations and actions. In the PIM software ANTEROS you can create workflows yourself in a graphical editor, transfer them to the PIM (deploy) and then perform workflow-controlled work.

ANTEROS can be used directly or use an Excel export to make any translations within an Excel document and subsequently import and release the edited file.

Important Features of Well Designed PIM Systems:

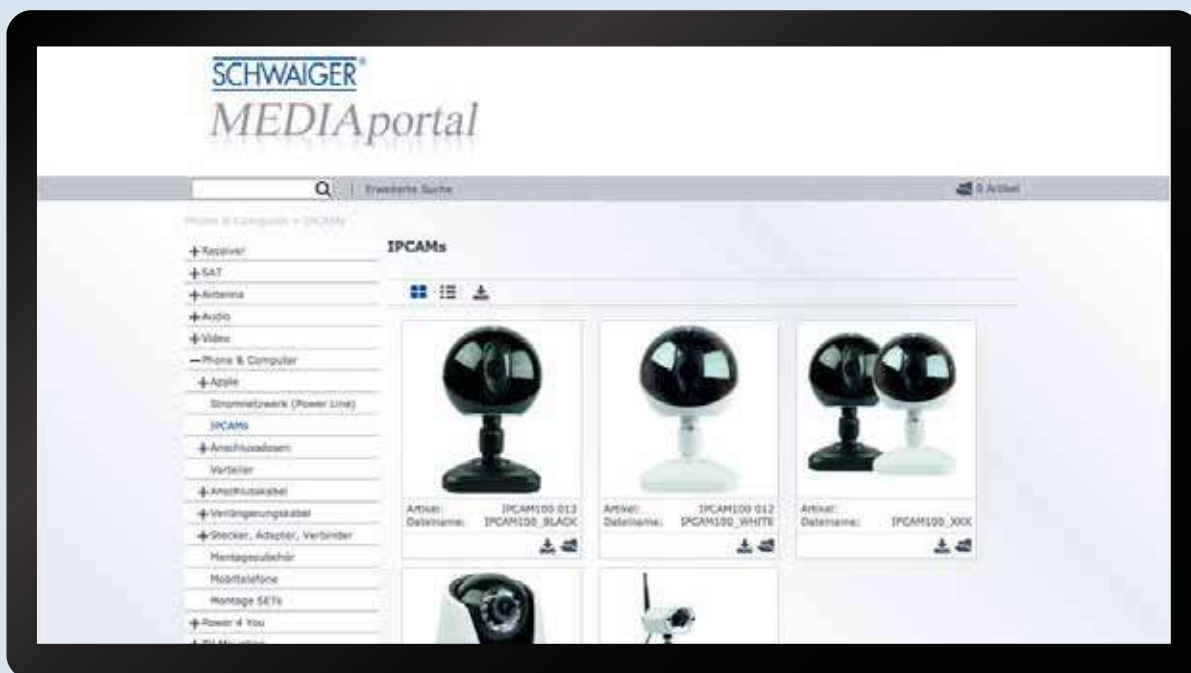
Maintenance of Media Data



Images such as product photos or drawings, as well as documents in the form of safety instructions, operating manuals or videos, also provide important information about a product. Product images and accompanying documents are becoming an increasingly important for customers' purchasing decisions when navigating an online shop. Product images are also helpful for catalogs and price lists, allowing customers to quickly and intuitively find the information they need.

Some PIM software has an integrated media database for images and documents, while others connect third-party systems via interfaces. Integrated media databases only require images to be uploaded one time in print quality, and then they automatically generate other formats, e.g. web-size and -mini or images in Amazon format.

This makes the process of displaying small product images in the PIM lists much faster, and the system can also directly use the image variants for web shops or generated product catalogs - images do not have to be regenerated for each use.

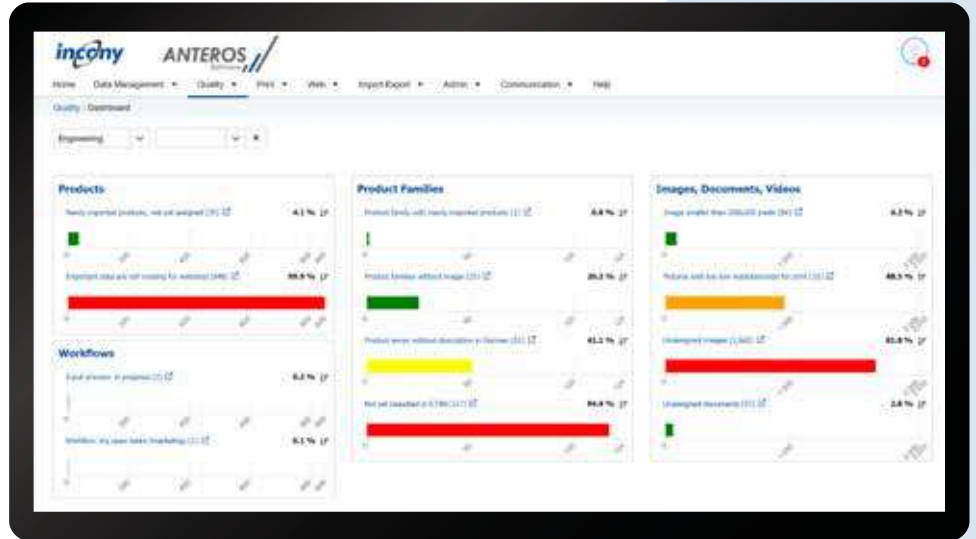




Quality Control



Some PIM systems offer functions to specifically check and improve the quality of the product data. This becomes even more important when you manage more and more data in the PIM system or want to transfer data from suppliers into the PIM. In these systems, you can often create test criteria or test reports yourself to check the quality of the product data, images or documents, e.g. whether marketing texts have already been entered in German and English or at least one image is linked per image. The inspection results can be arranged neatly in a dashboard. This way, you can not only monitor the quality of your data, but also specifically jump into relevant objects in order to improve the data.



A few systems (such as ANTEROS.qm) also offer so-called quality gates, which make it much easier to achieve milestones by regularly monitoring intermediate results. When combined, quality reports and the dashboard can be used to accommodate staged

input of data by a team, in which, for example, one employee is responsible for the marketing data and another for the technical characteristics.

Export



In order to give your product data to your retailers and partners in a suitable format, e.g. for your own web shop or catalog, you should check which formats you consider suitable. The formats vary from industry to industry. For example, formats such as Datanorm and GAEB are relevant for construction suppliers, Arge for the SHK industry

or TecDoc for automotive suppliers. In addition to the actual data exchange format, data for a standard classification such as ETIM, eClass or Proficlass is also frequently requested. Even though there are many standards here, it is often the case that several standards or standard versions are relevant. This requires extensive consultation

with your partners and, if necessary, a competent PIM service provider. The INCONY team has been active in this field for more than 20 years.

Important Features of Well Designed PIM Systems:

Some PIM Systems also Offer Cross Media Functions:



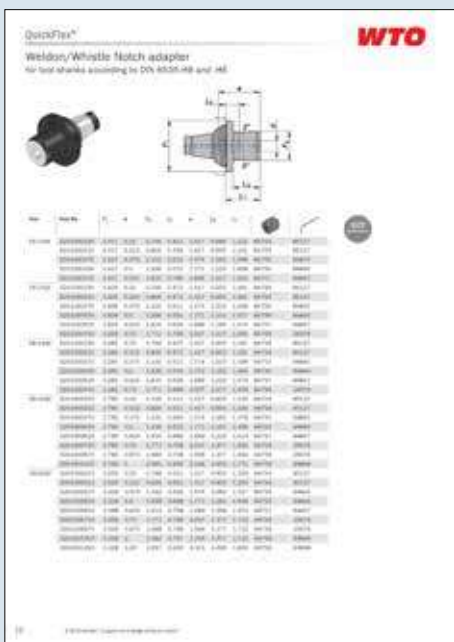
Sales documents such as catalogs, price lists and data sheets are all still important in the age of digitization. Not all companies provide printed versions of these documents to their customers anymore, but rather offer them digitally, e.g., as PDF files. Many PIM systems offer features to create these print documents with product data from the PIM in a fully or partially automated way. A general distinction is made between two technologies:

Database Publishing via InDesign

Product data and images are transferred to InDesign via an interface, where these are presented using templates and then manually converted into the final format (e.g. empty columns are deleted, texts are moved up, etc.). Even though post-processing can take several weeks, this approach is still more time-saving than manually typesetting catalogs and price lists in InDesign.

Print at the Touch of a Button

Here the print engine is fully integrated in the PIM system and enables the generation of print catalogs without a typesetting system such as InDesign. While some offer simple report generators while the layout is very rudimentary, the technology-leading PIM engine ANTEROS.print enables even complex technical catalogs to be generated at the push of a button. Industrial companies such as Schaeffler and TMD now also use this print engine for new product catalogs or excerpt catalogs for partners via an extranet application with just one click.

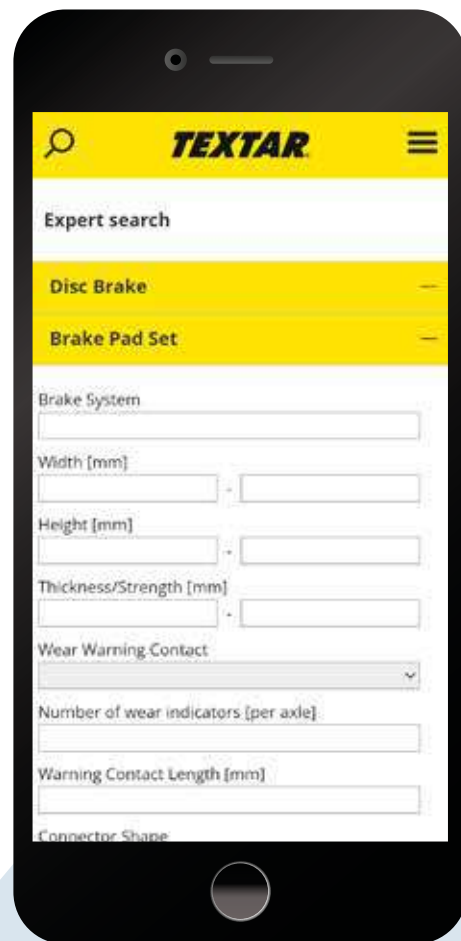




Apps



A few suppliers also offer an app with which their customers can specifically search for their products, compare them and then request or order them. ANTEROS offers the webshop functions not only for Android and iOS, but can also be customized as required, e.g. with a photo function to find the right product in the shop with the photographed spare part.



Web



In order to use the centrally maintained product data and images from your PIM for ecommerce such as websites, online catalogs, online shops or product portals, all PIM systems offer interfaces to ecommerce and shop systems, such as Shopware, Intershop, Magento, ... Some also have their own ecommerce module, like ANTEROS. web, which can be fully integrated into your ERP system (SAP, Navision, ABAS, Infor, ...) via a web service interface.



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