The *new* Ultimate Chart System Version 2012

Introduction

Ultimate is an automated system for collating retail sales data into charts that can be published privately and in the media. The system accepts automated feeds from physical, download and streaming vendors. The new version of Ultimate is believed to be the first chart system anywhere to combine sales of all three formats into integrated sales charts.

Now with added Streaming!
The 2012 version of Ultimate seamlessly integrates streaming data with traditional formats.

The Ultimate system is entirely web hosted and operates in real time. It moves the metrics computation into the 'cloud', bringing unparalleled flexibility to both users (trade associations and manufacturers) and contributors (retailers and media partners).

Reducing cost of ownership

Ultimate is a software engine that allows trade associations and territorial bodies to compile their own proprietarily chart content for supply to members, supplier groups, media, and others. The content generated by Ultimate is entirely the property of the end user organisation.

Much of the cost of ownership in traditional chart systems is tied up in elaborate IT procedures for harvesting and collating content. Unfortunately these procedures often require expensive support infrastructures at both ends of each link and are sometimes impenetrable to end users. While Ultimate can also employ traditional data transfer technologies, it sidesteps this issue in most cases by allowing participants to subscribe, and obtain, content using simple formats like industry standard spreadsheets.

This 'de-mystifying' of the data submission process has an important and sometimes unexpected benefit: Instead of being isolated from the content submission process, end users can actually 'take ownership' of the process and the data submitted by it. This change in emphasis has a strong effect both on the quality of data submitted and on the cost of operating the process. End users are able to participate in the chart production process in a way that simply isn't possible in traditional systems. By 'empowering' contributors and end users alike, Ultimate strongly reduces the need for costly centralized management and IT infrastructure.
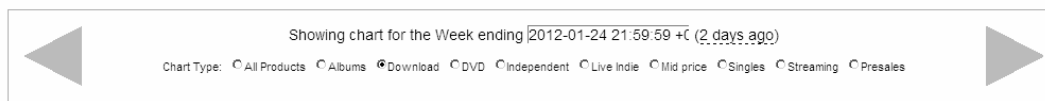
Result presentation
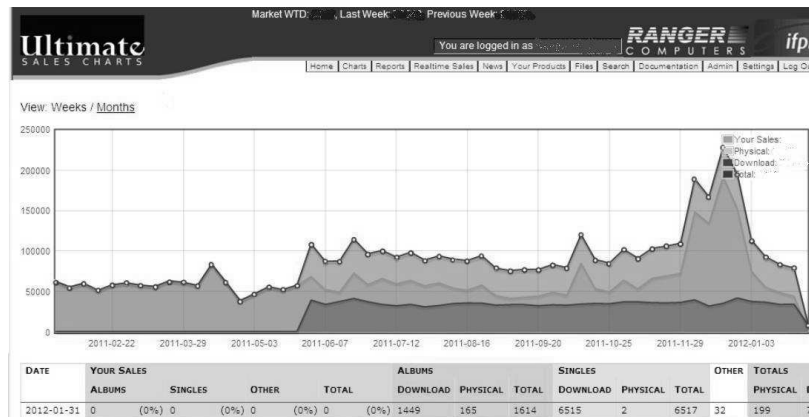
Ultimate provides access to a number of different user types. Each user type enjoys specific privileges appropriate to their situation. All users are able to view the total market size and a rolling chart of week–on–week sales.

Administrators are able to view the entire chart process in real time as contributions flow in from retailers, vendors and others. Chart content is accumulated on a weekly or other basis in a series of prototype, or 'work in progress' charts. These so-called 'WIP' charts allow administrators to view the submitted content prior to publication and make any necessary corrections. Because these charts work in real time, administrators can spot any developing problems with the content as they happen, rather than waiting for the end of the chart process.

Once approved, Charts are published with a single button click.

Ultimate holds a complete record of published charts and any previous chart can be recovered through a simple calendar interface. If a chart needs to be recalled because of some unidentified issue (an item being disqualified because of a breach of chart rules for instance) the chart can quickly be returned to the 'WIP' state and edited.

Showing chart for the Week ending 2012-01-24 21:59:59 +0 (2 days ago)

Chart Type: ○ All Products ○ Albums ● Download ○ DVD ○ Independent ○ Live Indie ○ Mid price ○ Singles ○ Streaming ○ Presales

Download Chart
Week ending 2012-01-24

Key
1 Chart Position
2 Previous Week's Position
★ Highest Entry
★ New Entry

Download as Excel Spreadsheet
Edit this chart

1	Robin - **Frontside Ollie**		51 32	LMFAO - **Party Rock Anthem**	
Universal Music 2 weeks in chart			Universal Music 31 weeks in chart		
2 1	Adele - **Rolling In the Deep**		52 86	Emeli Sandé - **Heaven**	
XL Beggars 50 weeks in chart			Virgin UK		
3 2	Adele - **Someone Like You**		52 45	Sean Paul - **Got 2 Luv U (feat. Alexis Jordan)**	
XL Beggars 16 weeks in chart			Warner Music 7 weeks in chart		

Retailers can view the content that they have submitted and compare it with the whole market. They are provided with a dedicated 'Own Product' page that ranks their own sales in the form of a personal chart that can often provide sales analysis faster than their own internal management system!

Vendors (Manufacturers, Labels, Distributors and others supplying product to the market) can view sales of their own products. This real time snapshot of sales as they happen provides far faster and more accurate information than is available by other means. It enables vendors to spot issues that otherwise might only come to light on publication of the charts, such as errors in the metadata that cause items to be incorrectly listed or excluded entirely.

Media users are provided with access to the published charts so that they can reproduce or abstract the content into their own vehicles. Charts are provided with additional analysis such as previous week's positions, movement indicators and other data that makes the content ready for public distribution.

Data Feeds can be provided to automatically populate end user websites and other types of media. Ultimate can also be supplied with a public-facing website allowing the published charts and chart history to be viewed by consumers.

Access from anywhere

End users can access the system from anywhere using conventional computer terminals, cell-phones and tablets like Apple's iPad. Prior to publication, metrics are presented to suitably Authorised users in the form of 'work in progress' data where they can be reviewed and amended as required. Standard facilities include the ability to identify 'mystery' products through the system's built in catalogue data and through direct links to popular search engines. Similar products can be combined in an instant for a single sales position by an intuitive drag n' drop procedure.

'Multi channel' metrics

The retail world is ever evolving, with new sales channels emerging continually. Ultimate gives special emphasis to the process of combining sales for items in different formats, combining both physical and electronic versions of the same product for a shared chart position as an example. This is achieved through Ultimate's unparalleled flexibility in holding descriptions of items in their native form, while allowing them to share a common chart identity.

Territorial Flexibility

Ultimate has been designed to compile sales data for individual territories. It is also able to integrate results for districts or regions where there may be different policies for reporting periods or sales qualifying rules. Ultimate can achieve this because it retains all inputted data in the native format as supplied, allowing it to make multiple analyses of common data using different rules as required.

Security

Ultimate provides information for use by both Vendors and Retailers. Built in security features mean that contributors are only able to view information relating to their own products, not those of their competitors. However, all parties can view the sales of their products in relation to the total market size.

Ultimate is hosted on secure web servers and is designed to give a high degree of security to both users and contributors of information. Security options include SSL (Secure Socket Layer) for web pages and TLS (Transport Layer Security) with optional mutual authentication to verify a user's identity. Optional hardware keys are also available. Access can be restricted to specific IP addresses or to specific computers as required. Each user is given a secure login.

Access to Ultimate is logged in an audit trail which records the history of each user's login activity, including the IP address used. All user's login rights can be managed in real time by administrators, who can add, edit, or remove accounts or access rights as needed.

Summary

Ultimate provides trade associations, retail groupings, distributors and other parties with a reliable and affordable method of collating sales data and presenting the results. The system is unique in its ability to acquire sales data from across the entire range of retailing, from the largest established chains to the smallest independent operations and spanning physical, download and streaming formats.

Ultimate is highly customisable and uses the latest technologies to provide users with flexibility and responsiveness to new and evolving requirements. While incorporating high levels of security, Ultimate allows many stakeholders in the data to have appropriate levels of access, ranging from allowing individual retailers to check their own daily sales right through to trade associations whose role is to monitor an entire marketplace.

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About Ranger: Ranger Computers Ltd have supplied retail automation technology to the entertainment industry since 1993. The company collects independent retail sales data in the UK and Ireland and supplies record chart services to members of IFPI.