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Success Story: Amazon Products Feed (MrRat)

Shortly after Amazon.com opened up their world-class e-commerce system as a web service in 2002, Steven Barnes, aka MrRat, released an open source Perl script built around this new Application Program Interface (API). This script, now called Amazon Products Feed (APF), is one of the most feature rich and versatile applications using Amazon Web Services, being downloaded by webmasters more than 8,000 times per year.

MrRat's script makes it easy for developers and webmasters to consume the Amazon E-Commerce Service (Amazon ECS) and build a personalized online store utilizing Amazon's complete product catalog. Today, Amazon ECS features millions of products across 35 categories and Amazon's robust e-commerce functionality.

Amazon Products Feed (APF) has a simple interface that has allowed thousands of webmasters with no programming experience to install and use. It is customizable, scalable and easy to set-up. The APF script simply parses Amazon's XML feed to display search results in HTML for complete site integration. In many cases, the website visitor does not realize they are viewing products from Amazon.com - giving the site a seamless look and feel.

Developers can utilize APF in Perl and serve it on either Windows or Linux platforms. Webmasters can customize the script to search and display all Amazon products or products by category or by ASIN. Not only is the script comprehensive and secure, but the results are returned in a fast manner - a critical attribute for many webmasters. MrRat also provides a smaller version of this feed, APF Banner which serves one product at a time, best used as a rotating banner, like best-selling items.

Tens of thousands of webmasters around the world know MrRat by name and email him with thanks and praise. These webmasters have utilized MrRat's open source script to earn money. Using Amazon ECS and the Amazon Affiliate Program, webmasters can earn up to 8.5% commission from Amazon products sold through their site. MrRat's APF script is still

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free, despite its popularity and its commission-earning purpose. In exchange for major profits, MrRat is "left with the profit of enormous public relations goodwill."

In a 2006 post, MrRat states, "I didn't start this project with the goal of creating a customer base, it just happened. I did something for the benefit of others and I've gained something in the process."

While working as CTO of an e-commerce company, MrRat took up scripting to develop an online fraud detection system. With decades of programming experience behind him and a background in e-commerce and Internet security, MrRat is well aware of the challenges put on webmasters and has created this e-commerce script to address those needs.

MrRat continues to update APF as Amazon ECS releases new features or versions. Several newly added features include extended search functions, promotions, and personalized wish lists. The script serves sites across the globe as it is available in five languages across several international Amazon websites in the US, UK, Japan, France, Denmark, and Canada.

For more information about APF, visit <http://www.MrRat.com/aws/>

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