Actinic Version 9

Release Notes

Actinic Software Limited

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Version: 0.5

Revision History

Revision	Date	Author	Comments
0.1	22/02/2007	Chris Dicken	Initial version prepared
0.2	10/04/2008	Chris Dicken	Updated to 9.0.1
0.3	01/05/2008	Chris Dicken	Updated to 9.0.2
0.4	23/05/2008	Chris Dicken	Updated with Synchronisation Server fixes in 9.0.2
0.5	08/09/2008	Chris Dicken	Updated to 9.0.3

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1 Version 9 Release History

1.1 Changes in 9.0.3

A 'Publish Current Page' feature has been added to the 'Web' menu and to the right-click menu for sections. This will just generate and upload one page, rather than trying to upload everything. AC9-1314

Actinic now uses multiple threads for uploading, so uploading takes place at the same time as generation. This dramatically decreases upload time for large stores. AC9-1507

The upload process now compresses upload data and then decompresses it on the server (if the Archive:Zip Perl module has been installed on the server). This can have a significant impact on upload time. AC9-1526

The handling of user-definable variables set at the top level has been reworked to significantly improve the generation time of the store. AC9-1315, AC9-1436

If extended information pages for duplicate products have the same name as the master product ones, they are no longer generated. AC9-1633

The generation of search index files has been speeded up. AC9-1509

When using 'Auto-Generate Product References' Actinic now creates new products much quicker in large sites. AC9-1370

Startup progress has now been added to the splash screen AC9-1407

There are now options on Business Settings | Order Processing for Tax Point Date, and also changes in the reports to support this. AC9-1379, AC9-1380

You will no longer receive a crash when you export a site snapshot after importing a design snapshots. AC9-1399

The location snapshots are saved to no longer continually reverts to 'SiteBackups'. AC9-1398

A crash is no longer encountered when exporting a snapshot when you have 'File Content' variables that link to files containing Actinic variables. AC9-1591

Meta tags for brochure pages now appear correctly AC9-2057

Crashes are no longer received when exporting snapshots after making changes to the content categories. AC9-1114

The 'Shipped Percentage' is now correctly maintained when editing an order after it has been placed. AC9-1603

Keyboard shortcuts for adding products and choices now work without you having to click on the content tree first. AC9-920

ProductCostPriceRaw and ProductCostPriceFormatted are now both available in product layouts. AC9-1444

The Stylesheet panel now resizes correctly in the Design tab. AC9-1506

The push button grid no longer generates JavaScript errors if the product references contain special characters. AC9-1349

Tweaking the hierarchical export file and re-importing it no longer generates 'Wrong number of fields' error messages. AC9-1350

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Sorting orders on total cost now works correctly. AC9-1424
Transaction reports now include all component prices correctly. AC9-1305
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1.3   Changes in 9.0.1

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1.4   Changes in 9.0.0

New features in v9 of Actinic Catalog, Business and Designer can be found in "Description of Changes to Actinic Since Version 8" (below).

2 Introduction

2.1 About the Actinic Ecommerce Application

Actinic Ecommerce (referred to as 'Actinic') is a desktop Windows program which enables you to design and publish an illustrated, on-line catalogue, take secure, encrypted orders over the Internet, and process these orders in-house.

Actinic V9 continues to require minimal resources to build a successful store. All you need is a dial-up account with an ISP (preferably a broadband connection) and a web site with CGI access capability.

With the enhancements made in v9, Actinic Catalog remains the most comprehensive low-cost ecommerce solution available today. Actinic Catalog includes everything a small business needs to design, build and control its own secure web store.

Actinic Business delivers a more productive environment for users who have a reasonably high volume of sales going through their store and who wish to further automate their ecommerce procedures. It is also aimed at suppliers who deal online with other businesses (B2B) as well as retailers who want to give regular customers a more personalised service. Actinic Business builds on the comprehensive features in Catalog and allows the online merchant to integrate ecommerce into other existing business systems to create a true e-business.

Actinic Designer offers a set of easy to use and flexible tools to enable internet professionals to create highly functional ecommerce sites on behalf of their clients. It offers multiple, unlimited site creation and licensing and integration with Macromedia Dreamweaver enabling external design of the store pages. This product is primarily a site design tool, but it provides all the tools for order processing and the related features such as mailing list generation for demonstration purposes.

Actinic Catalog and Business Clients provide a cost effective route for ecommerce professionals who use Designer to deliver Actinic functionality (without the web design capability) to their clients.

Actinic Business Plus delivers all the features of Business along with the capability to create multiple sites that can take orders. This product is primarily for merchants or designers who operate more than 1 store. It also allows multiple users on these sites to maintain the store and process orders.

Version 9 is an upgrade from Version 8.

2.1.1 New Product Range

Actinic has merged Actinic Business Multi-Site and Actinic Business Multi-User into one single package – Actinic Business Plus. When you first license an Actinic Business Plus site, you will be asked whether you want to allow more than one user to access the site. If you choose to do this, the mult-user abilities will be activated. This option can be activated at any time from the 'File | Multi-User Options' menu.

The Actinic product range is now as follows:

For web designers and their clients

- Designer
- Business Plus
- Catalog Client
- Business Client

For Merchants

- Express
- Catalog
- Business
- Business Plus

2.2 Description of Changes to Actinic Since Version 8

2.2.1 Tax Inclusive Pricing

- You can now change your store into 'Tax Inclusive Mode', which means you can enter your prices including tax and Actinic will separate out the tax online. This is activated from 'Business Settings | Tax'.

2.2.2 'New Order' Form

- Actinic Business, Business Plus and Actinic Designer users (not Actinic Catalog) have a 'New Order' tab, which allows them to enter new orders into the software quickly. This speeds up the process of taking orders over the phone.

2.2.3 Product Options Wizard

- There is now a wizard to step you through setting up a set of basic choice dependent prices, which can be stock monitored. This is activated from the 'Product Options' panel within your products.

2.2.4 Start Here Panel

- When you first start the software, you will see a 'Start Here' panel that links to pages of information about editing content, setting up the store and design. It includes links to relevant help topics and also a 'Design Wizard' to help with store site creation.

2.2.5 Re-written Help System

- The help system is now full of 'How Do I' style help topics, accessed by clicking the new 'How Do I' buttons, which are throughout the software.

2.2.6 Google Analytics

- It is possible to activate Google Analytics tracking of your visitors by going to 'Marketing | Google Analytics' and entering your Google Analytics username.

2.2.7 Design Wizard

- The 'Design Wizard' (accessed via the 'Start Here' panel) is a way of setting up the header areas and sidebars of your designs with the elements you want, appearing how you want, with the colours that you want. It will apply a basic theme customised to suit your requirements.

2.2.8 Design Snapshot

- Designers can now create a snapshot that only contains design elements (library contents, relevant images/files, colour scheme, site options settings) via 'Design | Export Design Snapshot'. This can be imported by going to 'File | Import Design'. Importing this file does not affect contents, Business Settings or orders.

2.2.9 Postcode Lookup

- There is now the ability to link your online Actinic store with a post-code lookup ability powered by 'Postcode Anywhere'. This is accessed via the 'Address Lookup' tab in 'Business Settings'. Business and Business Plus users can also user this ability on the 'New Order' tab when creating new orders.

2.2.10 Design enhancements

- There are now 'Split/Code/Design' buttons on the 'Design' tab to change the arrangement of the panels quickly.

- There is also a 'breadcrumb trail' of layouts to show you the layouts that are 'above' the layout you are looking at in the design

2.2.11 Order Processing Enhancements

- You can rearrange the columns in the 'Orders' tab.

- A 'Next Action Date' field has been added for keeping track of what needs to happen when.

2.2.12 Improved EPOS Link

- The performance of EPOS link has been improved, and it is also possible to transfer details of completed orders to Actinic EPOS for common reporting.

2.2.13 Other Enhancements

- The default arrangement of the panels in Actinic has been changed in order to allow more room for viewing data in 1024x768 resolutions.

- Content dialogues (i.e. products, sections, Site Options etc.) have now had tabs replaced by panels, accessed via a vertical list.

- Error messages in the software have now been re-written to make them easier to understand.

2.3   System Requirements

2.3.1   Merchant PC

- Microsoft Windows XP or Vista

- 512 MB RAM (XP)/ 1 GB RAM (Vista)

- At least 120 MB available on the hard disk

- Intel Pentium 4, Intel Centrino, Intel Xeon, or Intel Core™ Duo (or compatible) processor

- Broadband or dial-up access to the Internet

- Internet Explorer version 6

- Minimum screen resolution of 1024x768 pixels (anything less and Actinic will not be displayed wholly within your screen)

- Best viewed using a 65536 colour (or better) display

2.3.2   Web site

Your ISP must be running Windows NT, 2000, 2003 or UNIX, and provide Perl 5 or better, and a user writeable CGI directory.

All products now require a set of Perl files called 'MD5'. These files implement encryption/decryption, which is required to support logging in to online customer accounts. Actinic Products include a local copy of MD5, however for improved performance, Actinic recommend that the ISP be asked to install "Digest-MD5", version 2.09 or later.

2.3.3   Actinic FreeTrial Compatibility

Compatible with FreeTrial hosts running script id nnnnnnnnn.

3   Installation Details

3.1   Multiple Installations of Actinic

Like previous releases of Actinic, it is not possible to install two copies of v9 on the same PC. However, once a copy of v9 has been installed and licensed, new sites can be licensed and maintained using the single software instance.

3.2   Co-existence with earlier versions

If you have an earlier version installed, they will be unaffected by the installation of v9 if you choose not to upgrade. Use of a second website to 'evaluate' the upgrade is permitted within the terms of the licence agreement so long as you do not operate both sites concurrently to take live orders.

If you have an existing installation of v9 you will be offered the choice of upgrading it.

V9 requires a different authorisation key to earlier versions.

4   Upgrading from Previous Versions of Actinic

If you have a web site using an earlier version of Actinic, this site has to be upgraded to v9. v9 uses the same design architecture as v8, which is very different from previous versions (v7 and earlier).

4.1   Upgrading from v8

There are instructions for this in the main help in v9. Just install a standard v9 and then go to 'Application Settings | Upgrading to New Versions' in the main help when you are ready to do the upgrade.

4.2   Upgrading from v7 and earlier

An automated upgrader will convert your old site(s) to the new architecture, but it is recommended that you familiarise yourself with the new design concepts and features in case you have to make a few manual changes after the automated upgrade. The upgrader will handle the bulk of the changes for you. A few changes may be reported by the upgrader as needing attention but you will need to make the changes manually. Finally you will need to check through the appearance and operation of the upgraded site to make sure it is as you expect. A few manual amendments may also be required here.

For these reasons it is recommended that you do the following:

1. Install v9 without upgrading your existing site(s) and familiarise yourself with the new v9 design concepts and features. The design elements you are used to in v7 and earlier are not quite the same in v9. Templates have been replaced by layouts and layout selectors. Themes have now become independent sets of layouts, images and button sets. Your existing site image files get upgraded to custom themes and button sets (called something similar to 'Best Seller of Site1 upgraded from version 7.0.6.0.0.0.GBGA' etc) – this happens even if you had not modified them. Some v7 themes have been retired but this doesn't not prevent your site upgrading satisfactorily.

2. Upgrade your site and check it carefully in a test environment. There are three ways of upgrading an earlier version site:

    a. During the initial installation of v9, the installer program will ask you if you wish to upgrade an existing site. All previous versions of Actinic can be upgraded this way.

    b. If you have already installed v9, you can still run the v9 installer. This is the file called 'setup.exe' that came on the CD or in the download file. Again it will ask you if you wish to upgrade an existing site. All previous versions of Actinic can be upgraded this way.

    c. Alternatively you can export a snapshot from your earlier version site. Then startup v9 and import the snapshot into a v9 site. This only works on v6 or higher sites. Snapshot upgrades will not work with v5 or v4.

    In cases (a) and (b) ensure that you close your previous copy of Actinic before running the installer. The full site upgrade will only take place when you start up v9 and use the relevant site.

    Your earlier version installation will be unaffected by the upgrade process.

3. The upgrade may produce some log files (it will tell you). These are placed in the Actinic v9\upgrader\"sitename" folder and called something similar to ScriptUpgrades 8.0.0.0.0.0.GEXA.log and DesignTextUpgrades8.0.0.0.0.0.GEXA.log. The former lists any changes you made to Perl scripts. These changes are not automatically applied by the upgrader so you may have to manually reapply these changes to the new v9 scripts. The scripts haven't changed much in v9 so this should be fairly straightforward. The DesignTextUpgrades log contains changes you made to certain items of design text, typically ones with embedded HTML. With each change in the log there is a suggested action you should take to apply a similar change in v9.

4. The next thing to do is go to the Design menu and choose the Check Coding Errors option. This will produce a report of all coding problems that may cause problems when generating your web site. Double-clicking on an error message will take you to the offending code in a layout.

5. Keep a careful record of all changes you make as you will need to reapply them later in the process.

6. Once you have fixed up any script changes, design text changes and coding errors it is time to test whether the site appears and functions as you would expect. One way of testing is to go to 'Web | Switch to Test Mode'. When you next upload, Actinic will upload your store pages to a sub-folder called 'test' within the 'acatalog' folder online.

7. If you find areas where the upgrade has not given the same appearance or functionality as you had previously, and then firstly see whether these are small issues that you can correct yourself.

8. If you have issues with the upgrade that you are unable to resolve manually and then call Actinic Support who may either guide you through the necessary changes or possibly give you new upgrade instruction files. In this latter case you will need to reapply the upgrade.

9. When you feel confident that the upgrader (together with any small changes you need to make yourself) has satisfactorily upgraded your site it is then time to do the upgrade for real. Within your currently live copy of Actinic, download all the outstanding orders from your website. If you have a large volume of sales, you may want to go to 'Settings | Business Settings | Orders' and tick where it says 'Suspended' and upload. This will replace all your 'Add to Cart' buttons with a message saying 'CATALOG SUSPENDED'. After suspending online ordering, wait half an hour and download orders again to ensure there are none up there. This eliminates the risk of any orders being lost during the upgrade. Finally then repeat the upgrade and changes so that this time you have an up-to-date set of orders transferred together latest stock levels etc.

10. Once you are happy the store is working correctly, you can switch out of test mode (if you used that approach for testing) and put the site live. To put your site live:

    • Go into your new site, and double-check that you are going to upload to the correct location by checking 'Advanced | Network Setup'. These settings should be identical to the settings in your old site.

    • Go to 'Web | Refresh Website' to upload the site.

    • Once it has uploaded successfully, go to 'Business Settings | Ordering' and un-tick 'Suspended' in order to make the site active again (if you ticked this box earlier).

    • You can now update the site by going to 'Web | Update Website'.

5   Instructions for Use

5.1   Main Help

Actinic comes with extensive and integrated help. You can press the F1 key on your keyboard at any time to display the main help file. You can also click on the '?' button at the top right hand corner of each window and then click on an individual field on the screen to get specific, context sensitive, help. Use the Help menu for a complete explanation of using Actinic, including configuration details and creating the online store at your web site.

5.2   Starter Guide

The 'Getting Started Guide' can be accessed via 'Help | Starter Guide' option in Actinic. It is a PDF file designed to introduce the salient features of Actinic, and help you work through how to use them. They are a very good way to become familiar with the key features of Actinic.

To access this guide, a copy of Adobe Acrobat Reader needs to be installed on your machine – this is available from http://www.adobe.com/ or http://www.adobe.co.uk/.

6   Technical Data

6.1   Release Version Details

6.1.1   Installation directory structure

Actinic v9	The default installation directory. Holds files common to all sites, such as reports and help files.
BACKUP	Any non site-specific files replaced during the installation are placed here.
Backup *version*	Files from an earlier version site that have been upgraded
Extensions	Files related to any software extensions e.g. Actinic Assistant for Dreamweaver
Formats	Holds various default styles.
NavigatorSkins	The files and configuration details of the Navigator.
Themes	The files that constitute the themes, available via the 'Design	Themes' menu option.
OCCUpgrade	Installation directory for the Payment Service Providers install program. Contains the master files. On startup, Actinic copies the relevant files to the current site.
Original	The master set of general files used when sites are created.
SiteBackups	Default location of all site and theme backups
SSLUpgrade	Installation directory for the Shared SSL Service Providers install program. Contains the master files. On startup, copies the relevant files to the current site.
Starter Guide	The browser-based introduction to the functionality.
Upgrade *version*	Theme files associated with any upgraded sites
My Documents	
Actinic v9	
Sites	Locates all licensed sites.
Site1	Default site after installation.

6.1.2   File version numbers

Catalog.exe 9.0.3.0 hello

The main application program.

ConnectionWizard.dll Error! Not a valid filename.Supporting file for the Network configuration wizard.

ActDiagnose.exe EDFA

ActDiagnostics.dll EDFA

A diagnostic and problem solving tool. Do not use unless instructed to do so by Actinic's technical support staff.

ActShipHand.ocx FFFA

An ActiveX control for configuring shipping and handling.

OCCControl.ocx EDFA

AuthNetOCX.ocx EDFA

DHOCCControl.ocx EDFA

WUPayCash.ocx EDFA

ISControl.ocx EDFA

6.2   Install program version numbers

ECSetup.exe hello

Installs Actinic.

PSPSetup.exe hello

Installs the supported online payment service providers.

SSLSetup.exe hello

Installs Shared SSL Service Providers.

Mdac_typ.exe 2.6

Microsoft data access installer. Ensures all ODBC-related drivers are correctly installed.

Jet40SP3_Comp.exe

Microsoft Access database engine (JET) update. Ensures all JET-related drivers are correctly installed.

6.3   Restrictions

6.3.1   Installing Database Components

"Microsoft Data Access Components" (MDAC) and the Access Jet engine are provided on the installation CD. They are installed as part of the normal installation process but can be skipped by user selection.   If they aren't installed then certain database operations within Actinic may fail meaning that normal operation isn't possible.

6.3.2   MD5 calculation

Actinic Business and Developer install their own MD5 script and uses it if it can't find the MD5 Perl module installed on the web server. If the MD5 Perl module is already installed then it is used instead of Actinic's.

Actinic's MD5 implementation is slower than the Perl module implementation (because it has to be written in Perl) so we recommend the ISP install the Perl module for improved browser performance.

6.3.3   Internet Explorer earlier than version 6

Actinic v9 uses some facilities provided in libraries installed with Internet Explorer. In particular, Internet Explorer version 6 or later must be installed otherwise the software may fail to run properly. You may receive the error message:

"Error Starting Program - The Catalog.exe file is missing export WININET.DLL:FtpCommandA" if you don't have Internet Explorer version 6 or later installed.