

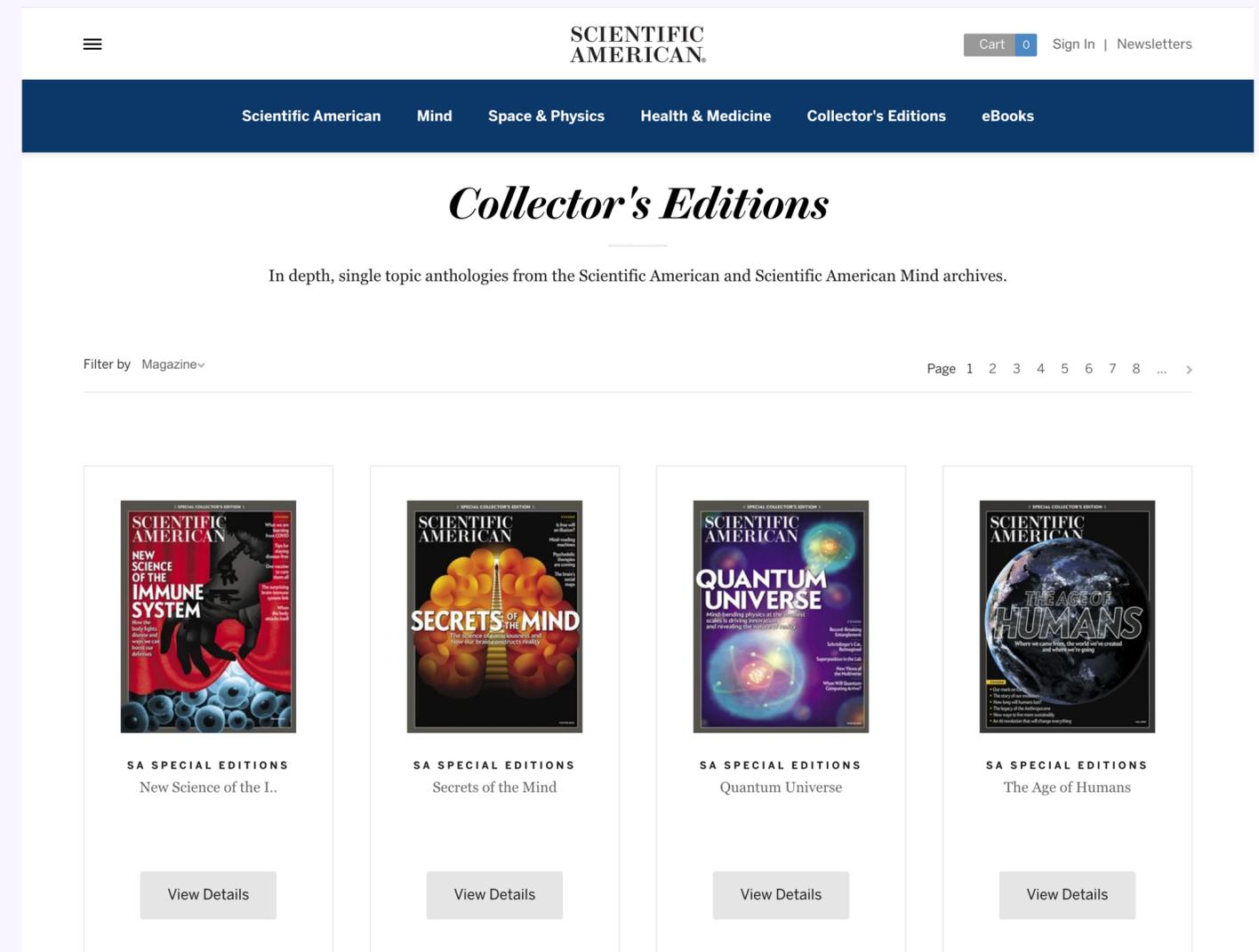
Scientific American

This is no ordinary magazine. Scientific American is the oldest continuously published magazine in the United States.

The Background

Founded in 1845, it is read in print by over 3.5 million people worldwide and has over 3.8 million unique visitors to its website each month! There are some incredible articles to be found over the last 167 years and new, exciting content generated every day. The problem that Scientific American faced was that managing and selling this content, both online and in print, was difficult and inefficient through their existing legacy systems.

Like any company, Scientific American has very specific business requirements; ways that they promote, price, fulfill and report products. The problem for them, and most other eCommerce businesses, is that legacy solutions are not designed with flexibility in the architecture to meet business requirements. Instead they must change their processes to fit into the product.



Ultra Commerce has taken the exact opposite approach to providing an eCommerce solution. We engineered Ultra Commerce to be flexible from day one; to accommodate the unique ways that businesses promote, sell, deliver and report product sales, and to integrate with external systems.

The Scientific American team conducted a thorough review of the Ultra Commerce platform including running real-life scenarios in a development environment. The web team at Scientific American was able to see and understand how the system had been designed, the framework used, and how easy it might be to scale and support.

After several months of evaluation, Scientific American decided to move forward with a new content management system connected to Ultra Commerce for eCommerce functionality. Through a tight collaboration, the Ultra Commerce team worked alongside the technical team from Scientific American to provide consulting and support on the build and implementation process. With a seamless team experience, the entire migration of content and eCommerce launch was accomplished in only 6 months.

Some of the key elements of the Ultra solution:

Integrations

Integrations with legacy systems are a critical component of every eCommerce implementation. Trying to determine the best workflow of data and tackling the technical challenges take a lot of time, effort and expertise. Two important integrations for the Scientific American project were CDS, their legacy fulfillment system, and content management system.

Highlights:

- **Real time access to paywall content in multiple formats such as browser-based content, web exclusives, PDF, and Tablet for iPad.**
- **The entire Scientific American archive is now available for access – over 167 years of content at a user’s fingertips.**



Ultra Commerce has allowed us over the year to evolve how our products are marketed and sold. They put the power to create products in the hands of the marketing people who are selling them.

Angela Cesaro, Senior Product Manager

CDS

The Scientific American project posed a challenging integration with their existing fulfillment system, CDS. Although Ultra was handling the delivery of digital and tablet access products, CDS is still handling fulfillment of Print Subscriptions. Since users can have multiple subscriptions at once, the sharing of account data in a seamless manner was critical. The integration with CDS was complicated by the fact that it involved exchanging data with multiple CDS products.

Some highlights of the integration between Ultra and CDS include:

- Allows for account registrations based on existing CDS subscriber info like name and email.
- Pulls in existing subscriptions to give web and iPad access to CDS subscribers.
- Automatically sends new subscription orders in real time to the CDS fulfillment systems, including the ability to “gift” subscriptions.
- Ultra Commerce engineered and delivered admin-facing helper applications to easily manage data discrepancies between the two systems.

We also built user-facing management tools for members to update & suspend their CDS subscriptions. The Ultra integration extended CDS

functionality by allowing one user to have multiple subscriptions by maintaining multiple CDS accounts for a single web or iPad user.

Content Management System (CMS)

Ultra Commerce provides a seamless integration into a new content management system. The integration includes the sync of content from the CMS to Ultra Commerce, allowing Scientific American to choose any page and mark that page as restricted by purchase or subscription. If the page (or file) is restricted by purchase, then a product is created in Ultra Commerce and access to that page is handled like a normal eCommerce product. If access is restricted by Subscription, then access is determined by the price and terms of the subscription the user purchases.

Flexibility

Product Types

The Ultra eCommerce system gives Scientific American the ability to create and sell unique product types such: content access, subscriptions (print and digital) and merchandise.

Content Access

Scientific American can sell individual magazine issues separate from subscriptions. The integration between the content management system and Ultra Commerce allows them to sell any content as a product, bundle, or subscription – something that Scientific American had not been able to do in the past.

Subscriptions

Ultra Commerce subscription configuration flexibility allows site administrators to define the specific benefits for each subscription. Scientific American can define the benefits for each subscription, allowing access to digital products, print products, tablet products, or a combination of products. They can also define the terms of the subscription.

There are 18 different Subscription Benefits defined for Scientific American, including benefits for mobile devices, digital, Scientific American Mind, digital only access and more.

Attributes

Ultra allows site administrators to extend the data associated with products, accounts, subscriptions and orders. These extended attributes can be any type of field and are available throughout the application (both front and back-end) for customization of views, advanced search/display and reporting.

Customer Support

Ultra has the tools to help Scientific American customer support better service subscribers from within the Ultra Commerce administration dashboard.

Search & Reporting

From any section within the Ultra Commerce admin, customer support can do a text search and receive a result set that includes products, brands, promotions, orders and more. The entire dataset is available for reporting, analytics, data view and export. With a full coverage API, the development and web team at Scientific American can build their own tools or integrations to access any of the eCommerce datasets.

Every section of Ultra has a keyword search and search/filtering within each column of the listings, allowing users to get the information they need quickly.

Comments

Comments are available throughout Ultra, allowing customer support to leave detailed information about the history of elements like:

- Customer Orders
- Vendor Orders
- Customer Accounts

Account and Order Management

All the details for an individual account or order are available on one screen giving the customer support team everything they need at a quick glance.

Email Communication

Ultra allows Scientific American to create email triggers based on almost any user action on the site, and then customize the communication that is sent. Customer support can also manually trigger specific emails from within the admin. For instance, from an order detail page in Ultra, support can choose to send an order confirmation email, and customize the email before it is sent.

Marketing

Beyond the technology platform and administration functionality, Ultra provides Scientific American with marketing tools which can be used to gain more flexibility, speed to market and marketing intelligence than ever before.

Promotions

The Scientific American marketing team can now use the Ultra promotion engine to deliver promotions through a number of different methods. They can create promotions on individual landing pages, offers for specified products, offer site-wide promotions, or a combination. The marketing team now has the flexibility to promote and market offers as the business requires.

Landing Pages

With a custom integration between the content management system and Ultra Commerce, the Scientific American team can take advantage of expanding landing pages and marketing page functionality.

The landing pages are linked directly to dynamic products and product content within Ultra Commerce. Based on selections and products, administrators can choose from several preset configuration to generate unique landing pages or work with the in-house design team at Scientific American to create custom designs and layouts. Typically,

in order to create a custom landing page, a marketer would need to bring together a designer and developer to link a design to an e-commerce platform. With Ultra, the Scientific American team can custom landing page templates and tie those pages directly to products and promotions within Ultra.

The screenshot shows the Scientific American cart page. At the top right, there is a navigation bar with the Scientific American logo, a cart icon showing 2 items, and links for Sign In and Newsletters. Below the navigation bar, a message states "You have 2 items in your cart. Subtotal: \$36.98".

	Price	Quantity	Item Total
Revolutions in Science <small>Remove</small>	\$6.99	1	\$6.99
Scientific American Digital & 4 Year Archive Subscription <small>Remove</small> Annual <i>Scientific American</i> Digital Subscription includes: access online and in our iOS/Android apps for phones/tablets. Subscription includes 4-year rolling archive accessible in the apps and online/PDF. Scientific American Digital Subscription User's Guide This is a gift <input type="checkbox"/>	\$29.99	1	\$23.99
Subtotal (excluding item tax)			36.98
Promotion discount			-6.00
Order Total			30.98

Below the cart items, there is a summary section with a "Promo Code: earth22" and a note: "Save 20% on a Scientific American Digital & 4 Year Archive Subscription." with a "Remove" link.

At the bottom of the cart, there are two buttons: "Continue Shopping" and "Proceed to Checkout".

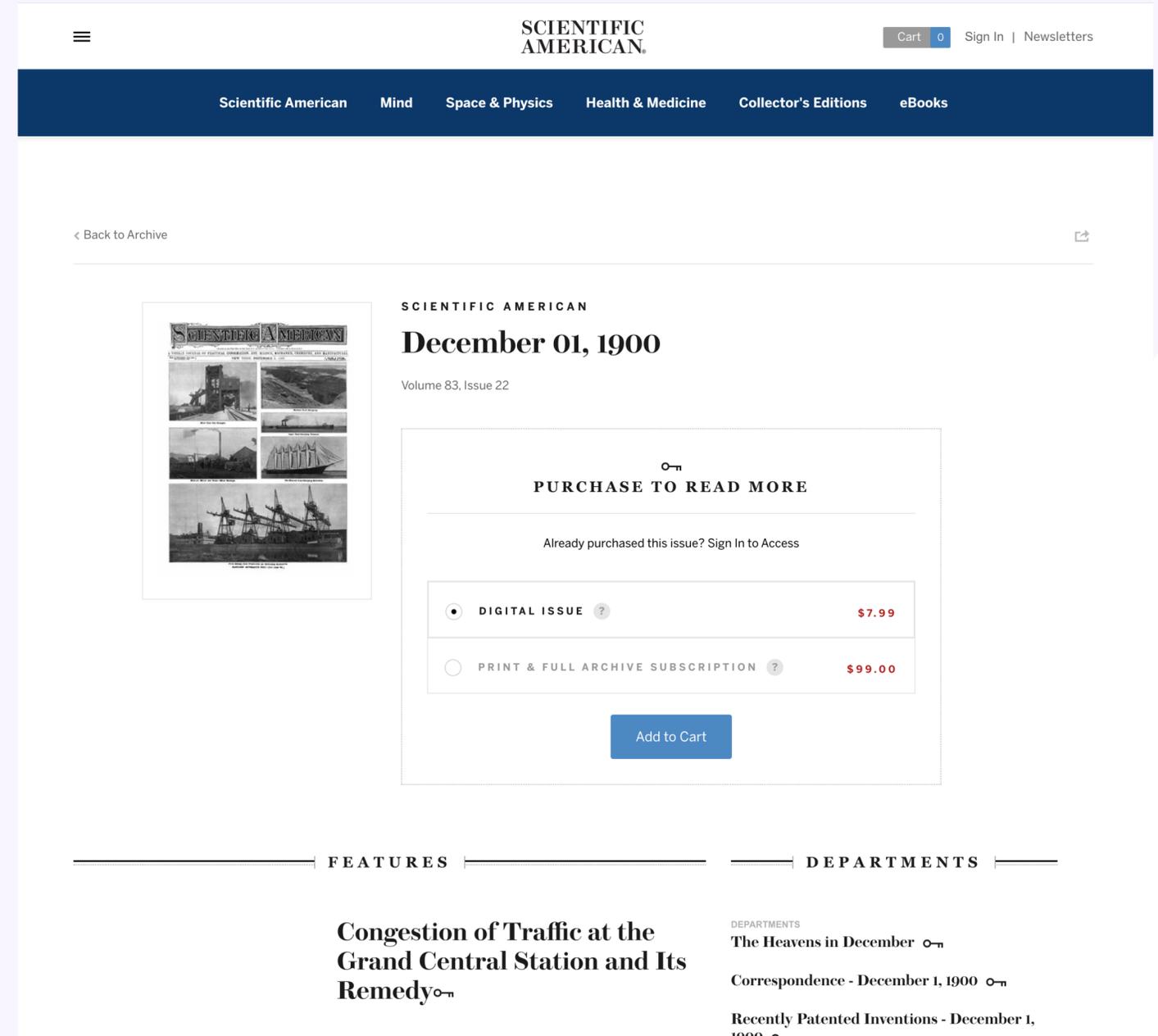
On the right side of the cart, there is a "SPECIAL OFFER" banner for "THE KEY TO QUANTUM COMPUTING". Below the banner, the text reads: "Upgrade your subscription! GET Scientific American Print & Full Archive Subscription. For only (\$69.01) more!" with an "Upgrade" button.

Reporting

The built-in reporting engine provides a framework for Scientific American to create any number of reports related to sales, promotions, orders, returns, CC transactions, etc. These reports can be customized by adding different dimensions and metrics to the output and choosing a date range. You can also compare date ranges. The reports can be saved or exported.

Tech Stack

The Scientific American project is taking advantage of two powerful modern web-based hosted applications to deliver pages and manage eCommerce. The content management system is delivering over 150,000 pages of content and allowing Scientific American editors and marketers to easily add and manage content assets. Ultra Commerce, and its close integration with the content management system, provides an enterprise-level application for the management of products, promotions, accounts, and orders.



Close Collaboration

Project Management

The entire project team (including Ultra Commerce and Scientific American) consisted of close to 30 people, working on various pieces of the project, in multiple locations in the US, over a 6 month period. A central point of communications, messages, files and tasks was used as well as communication through Skype, IM and phone as needed. Each team had a project manager that managed the day-to-day tasks and the backlog.

Sprints

The entire project was broken down into twelve, two-week sprints over a 6-month period. It was an aggressive timeline that was watched closely through daily internal stand-ups and weekly team meetings to address any specific concerns.

- The most important result of the project is that Scientific American has a system that works for their business, supporting their content management, marketing, eCommerce and customer support needs.
- With Ultra they have a platform that is scalable and flexible, allowing Scientific American to meet new challenges as the market evolves and new opportunities arise.
- With an API-based commerce platform, Scientific American can utilize internal resources or look to the Ultra community to lead new development efforts.
- Ultra provides Scientific American subscribers with real time access to paywall content in multiple formats such as browser-based content, web exclusives, PDF, and Tablet for iPad.
- For the first time ever, the entire Scientific American archive is now available for access – that’s over 167 years of content at a user’s fingertips, not to mention the new opportunities that presents for the Scientific American marketing team.
- The ability to get quick to market of timely content through a straightforward interface and integration of Ultra Commerce with the content management system.