

X-FeatureComparison add-on module

for X-Cart 4.2.0

User Manual



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Thank you for choosing X-Cart software solutions!

1 General information

X-FeatureComparison is an X-Cart add-on module that enables your customers to use feature-based comparison service.

Unless a customer comes to your store with his mind set on a specific product, he is likely to browse and compare different products trying to determine which product will be right for him.

Feature-based comparison service facilitates the process of choosing the right thing by a customer: the user enters a desired combination of features, and the system then determines the product or products that provide that combination. For instance, if a customer is looking for a mobile phone, but is not yet sure as to its model, he can pick the desired mobile phone features (e.g., dual or triple band, light weight, replaceable covers, or programmable ringtones) and immediately buy the phone that matches the requirements. Visitors can also pick a product and compare it side by side with other products, so the customer can pick a product that he likes, and then compare other products against it to see if there are any better choices.

Using **X-FeatureComparison** module provides the store admin/provider users with the following abilities:

- to group products into product classes
- to define features specific to product classes
- to assign class-specific features to products
- to create multilingual names for product classes and class-specific features.
- to search for products by their product class

The customers get the ability:

- to search for products by features
- to compare products of the same class with one another

X- Feature Comparison is a reliable and up-to-date solution that makes your business competitive.

You can purchase it at www.x-cart.com.

2 Module Installation

To install the module you have to perform the following actions:

1. Download the module distributive (**x-fcomp-x.y.z.tgz**, where x,y,z are the numbers of the module version) from File Area.
2. Uncompress the **x-fcomp-x.y.z.tgz** file and copy the files to X-Cart directory.

Note: Please make sure you keep the directory structure during unpacking and uploading, otherwise some necessary files can be overwritten!

3. Run in the browser the installation script http://www.yourhost.com/xcart_dir/install-xfcomp.php
4. Enter your authentication code, accept conditions of the License Agreement and click **Next**.

Note. The authentication code is issued on completion of X-Cart installation. It is used to prevent unauthorized re-installation of X-Cart and to install X-Cart modules (if you decide to purchase them). If you forgot the code, you may look it up at any time in `include/install.php` file.

5. Installation script will copy the files and make all the necessary changes in the database.
6. After module Installation is completed, you need to log in as Admin and
 - enable Feature Comparison from the Modules section
 - set the module options in General settings/Feature Comparison options.

X-Cart Gold and Pro module installations do not differ.

3 Setting up Feature Comparison options

To set up the options affecting the work of Feature Comparison module in your store:

1. Select General settings from the Administration menu.
2. Click the Feature Comparison options link in the section menu.
3. Set up the following options:
 - **The product class image width in the product classes list:** set the desired image width in pixels.
 - **Enable adding products to comparison lists for further comparing:** Select this check box if you want to enable your customers to add products they want to compare to a special list appearing in the 'Comparison list' box in the menu column. If you leave this check box unselected, the link '[Add to comparison list](#)' will not be displayed, so there will be no way for your customers to use the 'Comparison list' box.
 - **The maximum number of products in the comparison list in the menu column:** Specify the maximum number of products which a customer will be allowed to add to the Comparison list.
 - **Maximum number of products which can be shown on the feature-based comparisons page and on the Product details page in the form of a select box:** If the quantity of products for comparison exceeds the number specified here, product selection will be done in a popup window: Specify the maximum number of products for comparison that will be able to appear in a select box.
 - **Maximum number of products which can be compared:** Specify the maximum number of products that a customer will be allowed to compare at a time.
4. Click **Save** to apply the changes.

4 Administrative interface

The administrative part of X-FeatureComparison module is handled by the store administrators and providers. In X-Cart GOLD the store admin/provider fully controls the work of the module. In X-Cart PRO providers adjust their store sections to work with the module, while the store admin regulates the work of the module in general (by adjusting the Feature Comparison options) and carries out the function of supervision which in case of necessity enables him to interfere and edit the providers' settings pertaining to the module.

After X-FeatureComparison module has been installed and configured, you need to use the store admin/provider interface to do the following:

1. Define product classes (types of products which can be compared).
2. For each of the defined product classes set up product class options, or features (parameters on the ground of which the products belonging to the class will be compared).
3. Assign appropriate product classes and product class options to the products in your store.

Note: In X-Cart PRO each of the store providers defines his own product classes (and features) and assigns these classes to his own products. Unless 'Single mode' is turned on, PRO providers are not allowed to edit the product classes defined by the other providers. Admin account users, however, can edit any product class irrespective of the class owner.

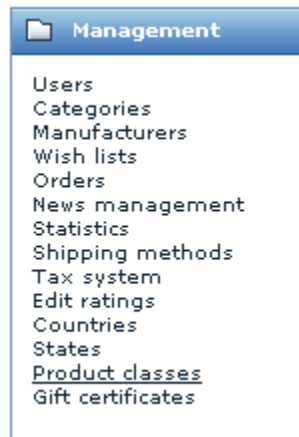
4.1 Adding, updating and deleting product classes

Product classes can be defined in the 'Product classes' section of the store.

X-Cart PRO providers can access this section by clicking the Product classes link in the Products menu.



X-Cart PRO admin and X-Cart GOLD admin/provider can access the same section via the Product classes link in the Management menu.



In the 'Product classes' section existing product classes appear in the 'Product classes' form.

To create a new product class:


1. Click the '[Add product class](#)' link in the section menu. The 'Add product class' form will appear.



2. If necessary, add an icon for the product class being created (Icons associated with product classes appear on the 'What are you looking for?' page in the customer area along with the product class titles):
 - a. Click on the 'Change image' button below the default 'No Image Available' picture. Confirm you desire to change the default image.
 - b. Use the 'Image selection' window to select the image file which you want to use as the product class icon.

- c. Click on **Apply**. The new image will appear in the 'Add product class' form, replacing the default 'No Image Available' image. (Please note that at this point the image is merely selected, not saved. It will be lost if you refresh the page.)

Add product class

Image 

The image will be saved after you click on "Add"


Product class *

Enabled ▼

OrderBy

3. Enter a title for the product class into the 'Product class' field.
4. Specify whether the class should be shown to the customers or not by selecting Yes or No from the 'Enabled' selectbox.
5. Specify the position number of the product class in the list of product classes ('OrderBy' field).

Add product class

Image 

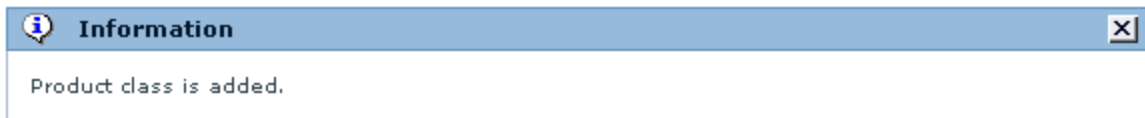
The image will be saved after you click on "Add"

Product class *

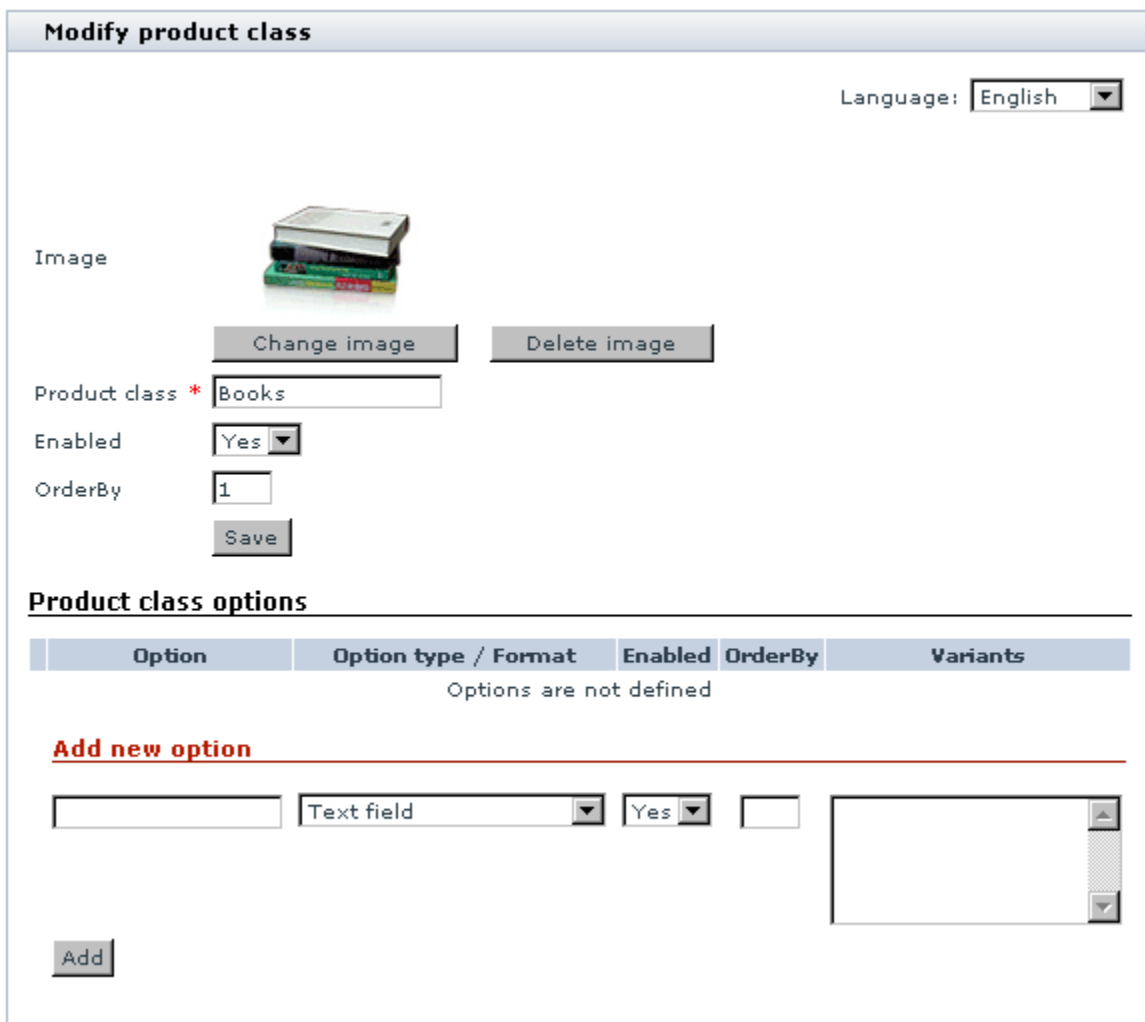
Enabled ▼

OrderBy

6. Click on 'Add'. As soon as the product class is created, you will be informed about it by a message in the 'Information' box.




After the creation of the new product class, you can see another form appearing in the place of the 'Add product class' form. This new form is titled 'Modify product class'.



Modify product class

Language: English

Image 

Product class *

Enabled

OrderBy

Product class options

Option	Option type / Format	Enabled	OrderBy	Variants
Options are not defined				

Add new option

This form allows you to modify the details of the product class you have just created (if necessary) and to

define product class options (features) for it. You can turn to modifying the product class details (image, title, availability, or OrderBy position number) and defining product class options (features) at once, or put it off till later (The 'Modify product class' form can be accessed at any time by clicking on the title of the product class which you want to modify in the 'Product classes' form). To find out how to modify a product class, please refer to the 'Modifying product classes' section of this User guide.

To add more product classes, use the '[Add product class](#)' link in the section menu.

To return to the list of product classes ('Product classes' form), click the '[Product classes list](#)' link in the section menu. You will see the product classes you created in the form of a list in the 'Product classes' form.

Product classes			
Check all / Uncheck all			
	Product class	Enabled	OrderBy
<input type="checkbox"/>	Books	Yes ▾	<input type="text" value="1"/>
<input type="button" value="Delete selected"/>		<input type="button" value="Update"/>	

The 'Product classes' form in X-Cart GOLD and in the Provider area of X-Cart PRO contains a 3-column table (PRODUCT CLASS / ENABLED / ORDERBY). In the Admin area of X-Cart PRO the table includes 4 columns (PRODUCT CLASS / ENABLED / ORDERBY / PROVIDER). The PROVIDER column allows the store admin to find out who created this or that product class.

Product classes				
Check all / Uncheck all				
	Product class	Enabled	OrderBy	Provider
<input type="checkbox"/>	Books	Yes ▾	<input type="text" value="1"/>	admin
<input type="checkbox"/>	Cd disks	Yes ▾	<input type="text" value="2"/>	admin
<input type="checkbox"/>	T-Shirts	Yes ▾	<input type="text" value="3"/>	admin
<input type="checkbox"/>	Mobile phones	Yes ▾	<input type="text" value="4"/>	provider
<input type="checkbox"/>	Cameras	Yes ▾	<input type="text" value="5"/>	provider
<input type="button" value="Delete selected"/>		<input type="button" value="Update"/>		

You can change the availability status of your product classes and the order in which they are displayed right in the 'Product classes' form. To do so, select Yes or No from the ENABLED selectbox, change the

product class position number in the OrderBy field opposite the title of the appropriate product class and click on **Update**. The changes will be saved.

To delete a product class, select the check box next to the title of the product class you would like to delete and click on '[Delete selected](#)'. The product class will be removed from the list. (You can use the [Check all](#) / [Uncheck all](#) links to select or unselect all the check boxes).

4.2 Modifying product classes

Modification of a product class is done immediately after its creation (when the 'Modify product class' form is displayed automatically) or later (by calling on the 'Modify product class' form with a click on a product class title in the 'Product classes' list). In any case, the 'Modify product class' form can be used for editing the product class details defined at the time of the class creation and for defining product class options (features) characteristic of the class.

4.2.1 Modifying product class details


To modify the details of a product class:

1. Open the 'Modify product class' form.

Modify product class

Language: English ▼

Image



Change image
Delete image

Product class * Books

Enabled Yes ▼

OrderBy 1

Save

Product class options

Option	Option type / Format	Enabled	OrderBy	Variants
Options are not defined				

Add new option

Text field

Yes

Add

2. If necessary, change or delete the class icon.

To change the icon, click on the '**Change image**' button, select the image with which you want to replace the old one and click on '**Apply**'. The new image will appear in the 'Modify product class' form. (Please note that at this point the image is merely selected, not saved. It will be lost if you refresh the page.)

To delete the icon, click on the '**Delete image**' button.

3. If necessary, change the product class title, availability status and OrderBy position number.

4. Click on '**Save**'.

4.2.2 Managing product class options (features)

To define product class options (features):

1. Open the 'Modify product class' form. Scroll down to the 'Product class options' section of the form.

Product class options

Option	Option type / Format	Enabled	OrderBy	Variants
Options are not defined				


Add new option

Text field

2. Use the 'Add new option' subsection to add product class options:
 - a. Enter a name for the new option (OPTION column).
 - b. Use the selectbox in the OPTION TYPE /FORMAT column to select the option type (Please refer to the 'Notes on options types' section of this User guide to get information about the types of product class options).
 - c. Select Yes or No from the selectbox in the ENABLED column to specify whether the feature should be displayed to customers or not.
 - d. Enter a position number of the option in the list of product class options (ORDERBY column).
 - e. If applicable, specify available variants for the option being created: enter the variant names in a column, each variant starting from a new line (VARIANTS column).
 - f. Click on '**Add**'. The option will be created and added to the list of options in the 'Product class options' section of the form.
 - g. If applicable, specify the format in which concrete values of the option should be displayed (OPTION TYPE /FORMAT column, below the option type selectbox). Click on '**Update**'.
 - h. Repeat steps a-h to add more product class options.

Modify product class

Language: English ▼

Image 

Product class *

Enabled Yes ▼

OrderBy

Product class options

	Option	Option type / Format	Enabled	OrderBy	Variants
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input style="width: 100%;" type="text" value="Catalog idx"/>	Text field ▼ <input style="width: 100%;" type="text" value="Input box"/> ▼	Yes ▼	<input style="width: 30px;" type="text" value="1"/>	-
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input style="width: 100%;" type="text" value="Cover type"/>	Single option selector ▼	Yes ▼	<input style="width: 30px;" type="text" value="2"/>	Soft Hard Lux
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input style="width: 100%;" type="text" value="Publisher"/>	Text field ▼ <input style="width: 100%;" type="text" value="Input box"/> ▼	Yes ▼	<input style="width: 30px;" type="text" value="3"/>	-
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input style="width: 100%;" type="text" value="Pages"/>	Numeric field ▼ <input style="width: 100%;" type="text" value="1000000"/> ▼	Yes ▼	<input style="width: 30px;" type="text" value="4"/>	-
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input style="width: 100%;" type="text" value="With CD"/>	Boolean field ▼	Yes ▼	<input style="width: 30px;" type="text" value="5"/>	-
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input style="width: 100%;" type="text" value="Language"/>	Multiple option selector ▼	Yes ▼	<input style="width: 30px;" type="text" value="6"/>	Russian English German French

Add new option

Text field ▼

Yes ▼

To delete product class options (features):

1. In the 'Product class options' section of the 'Modify product class' form select the check boxes next to the names of the product class options which you want to delete.
2. Click on '**Delete selected options**'.

To modify product class options (features):

1. In the 'Product class options' section of the 'Modify product class' form change the necessary product class options' settings.
2. Click on '**Update**'.

To modify the variants of a product class option:

1. In the 'Product class options' section of the 'Modify product class' form click on the option variants which you want to modify. The 'Variants setup' box will appear below.

1000000

<input type="checkbox"/>	With CD	Boolean field	Yes	5	-
<input type="checkbox"/>	Language	Multiple option selector	Yes	6	Russian English German French

Variants setup ✖

Russian

English

German

French

Delete selected variants Update

Add variant

Add

Delete selected options Update

Add new option

Text field Yes

2. Use the 'Variants setup' box to modify the contents of the variants section:

- a. To rename one or more of the existing variants, change the names of the variants you want to rename and click on **'Update'**.
- b. To delete one or more of the existing variants, select the check boxes next to the names of the variants you want to delete and click on **'Delete selected variants'**.
- c. To add a new variant to the list, enter a name for the new variant in the 'Add variant' subsection and click on **'Add'**.

3. Click on the X ('Close' sign) in the top right corner of the 'Variants setup' box. The box will be closed.

In a multilingual store, names of product classes, product class options and option variants can be entered in different languages.

To enter multilingual names:

1. Select the necessary language from the Language selectbox in the top right corner of the 'Modify product class' form. The page will be refreshed and the product class title, product class options and option variants fields will be emptied allowing place for you to enter new names in the selected language.
2. Enter the product class name into the 'Product class' field and click on '**Save**'.
3. Provide names for the product class options and click on '**Update**'.
4. Click on each of the option variants links, provide new names for the variants and click on '**Update**'.
5. If you need more languages, repeat steps 1-5.

4.2.3 Notes on option types

X-FeatureComparison module supports the following option types:

- Text field
- Single option selector
- Multiple option selector
- Numeric field
- Boolean field
- Date field

These types determine the way in which providers and customers will be able to input data into the fields corresponding to product class options.

Text field is a simple text field into which custom text can be entered. Any characters entered into a field of this type are regarded as text. This option type requires the option field format to be specified (Input box or Text area, depending on the amount of text that needs to be entered).

Single option selector is a field displaying a predefined set of values from which only one can be selected. This option type requires variants to be provided.

Multiple option selector is a field displaying a predefined set of values from which several values can be selected. This option type requires variants to be provided.

Numeric field is a field that allows users to enter numeric values so they are treated as numbers (which allows customers to search for products using number ranges). This option type requires the option field format to be specified.

Boolean field is a field from which only one of the two values can be chosen: Yes or No (signifies presence or absence of some feature).

Date field is a field that allows users to enter dates (customers can search for products using date ranges). This option type requires the option field format to be specified.

4.3 Assigning product classes to products

After the necessary product classes have been defined, they need to be assigned to the products for which you want to allow comparison.

Note: It is not necessary that all the products in the store have a product class: assign product classes only to the products which can be compared.

To assign a product class to some product:

1. Find the product and open it for modification.
2. Click the 'Product class' link in the section menu.

Main page :: [Product management](#) :: [Javascript \(Definitive Guide\)](#)


Product management Javascript (Definitive Guide)

In this section:	See also:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Product details • International descriptions • Product options • Wholesale prices • Upselling links • Detailed images • Customer Reviews • Product class 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Search for products • Add product • Categories • Manufacturers • Orders

Product class

Product details

Product images

<p>Image:</p> <div style="border: 1px solid #ccc; width: 100px; height: 100px; margin: 10px auto; text-align: center; line-height: 100px;">No image available</div> <p style="text-align: center;">No image uploaded</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><input type="button" value="Upload image"/></p>	<p>Thumbnail:</p> <div style="text-align: right; margin-bottom: 5px;">Need help?</div> <div style="text-align: center;">  </div> <p style="text-align: center;">125x158, 13 kb (recommended size: 50x50-150x150)</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><input type="button" value="Change thumbnail"/></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><input type="button" value="Delete thumbnail"/></p>
--	--

Product owner

'Assign product class' form will appear. As the product has not been assigned to any product class yet, 'Undefined' appears in the 'Product class' selectbox.

Management

- Users
- Categories
- Manufacturers
- Wish lists
- Orders
- News management
- Statistics
- Shipping methods
- Tax system
- Edit ratings
- Countries
- States
- Product classes
- Gift certificates

Administration

- Summary
- DB backup/restore
- Import/Export
- Membership levels
- Credit card types
- Titles
- Edit templates
- Files
- General settings
- Images location
- Languages
- Webmaster mode
- Modules
- Payment methods

Main page :: Product management :: Javascript (Definitive Guide)

Product management Javascript (Definitive Guide)

In this section:	See also:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Product details• International descriptions• Product options• Wholesale prices• Upselling links• Detailed images• Customer Reviews• Product class	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Search for products• Add product• Categories• Manufacturers• Orders

Assign product class

Product class:

- Use the selectbox to select the product class to which you want the product being modified to be assigned.

Assign product class

Product class:

- Click on **'Apply'**. The product class will be assigned. The 'Product class options' form will appear below the 'Assign product class' form (The set of fields in the 'Product class options' form corresponds to the product class selected for the product).

Product class options

Catalog idx:

Cover type:

Publisher:

Pages:

With CD:

Language:
English
German
French

To select more than one entry, hold 'Ctrl' key while clicking on them with your mouse. To unselect, hold 'Ctrl' and click on the selected items again.

5. Use the option fields in the 'Product class options' form to assign the necessary option values to the product being modified.

Product class options

Catalog idx:

Cover type:

Publisher:

Pages:

With CD:

Language:
English
German
French

To select more than one entry, hold 'Ctrl' key while clicking on them with your mouse. To unselect, hold 'Ctrl' and click on the selected items again.

6. Click on '**Update**'. The changes will be applied.

4.4 Searching for products with defined product classes

The store administrator can search for products by product classes. When X-FeatureComparison module is installed and enabled and at least one product class has been created, the 'Advanced search options' section of the search form in the Admin area includes 'Product classes' field. This field is a selectbox from which you can select the product class to which the product being searched for belongs.

More search options

Search in category:

as Main category Additional category

also search in subcategories

Manufacturers:

SKU:

Product ID#:

Price (\$): -

Quantity: -

Weight (lbs): -

Availability:

Product classes:

Free shipping:

Global discounts:

Minimum order quantity:

List price:

Shipping freight:

Tax exempt:

Low limit in stock:

[Reset filter](#)

4.5 Importing/Exporting data

Import/Export procedures in X-Cart

X-Cart 4.1.x features export and import of almost all X-Cart data types. Export and import procedures facilitate the updating of your store data and allow you to consistently transfer data when upgrading your store or moving it to a new location.

Basic information is available in the Reference Manual for X-Cart shopping cart software, v. 4.2.0: on export procedures - section "Exporting Data", import procedures - in the section "Importing Data".

Detailed information on X-Cart import and export can be found in the Import/Export Guide for X-Cart v4.1.x (available for download from <http://www.x-cart.com/manuals.html>).

4.5.1 FeatureComparison: CSV Format

Classes of products are imported/exported through the section [PRODUCT_CLASSES].

Format

!FCLASSID - product class ID

!CLASS - product class name

!AVAIL - activeness indicator (Y - this class is active, empty value - inactive class)

!IMAGE - the path to the imported image for this class

!ORDERBY - product class number

Required fields

!CLASS

Classes international names are imported/exported through the section [MULTILANGUAGE_PRODUCT_CLASSES]

Format

!CLASS - product class name (conf. [PRODUCT_CLASSES])

!CODE - language code (for example: US)

!CLASS_NAME - class international name

Required fields

!CLASS

!CODE

!CLASS_NAME

Features specific to product classes are imported/exported through the section [PRODUCT_CLASS_OPTIONS]

Format

!CLASS - product class name (conf. [PRODUCT_CLASSES])

!OPTIONID - product class option unique ID

!OPTION - option name

!TYPE - option type ("T" - text field, "S" - select box, "N" - numeric, "B" - Boolean, "D" - date, "M" - multiple select box)

!FORMAT - option format (for example, a text field can have 2 formats: I - input field, T - text field).

!VARIANTS - possible value variants for the fields which suppose selecting a value

!AVAIL - activeness indicator

!ORDERBY - number

Required fields

!CLASS

!OPTION

Option international names are imported/exported through the section [MULTILANGUAGE_PRODUCT_CLASS_OPTIONS]

Format

!CLASS - product class name

!OPTION - product class option name

!CODE - language code (for example: US).

!OPTION_NAME - option international name

Required fields

!CLASS

!OPTION

!CODE

!OPTION_NAME

Products related to a product class are imported/exported through the section [PRODUCT_FEATURE_VALUES]

Format

!PRODUCTID - unique product ID

!PRODUCTCODE - product SKU number

!PRODUCT - product name

!CLASS - product class number

!OPTION - option name

!VALUE - option value for the given product

Required fields

!CLASS

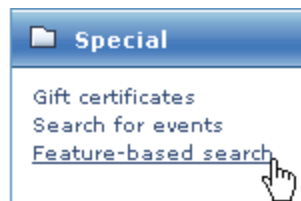
!OPTION

5 Customer interface

5.1 Using feature-based search

Feature-based search allows your customers to find products within defined product classes by certain features specific to these products.

To use feature-based search, your customers need to click the Feature-based search link in the Special menu.



Clicking this link opens the 'What are you looking for?' page where your customers can select the type of products they are interested in (in fact, the customers select one of the product classes defined in the admin/provider interface). For example, if the classes are named 'Books', 'CD disks' and 'T-shirts', and the customer is looking for a book, he should select 'Books' by clicking on the appropriate link or icon.



After selecting the desired product class, the customer will be provided with a form in which he will be able to specify parameters for feature-based search (If the selected product class is 'Books', the form will be called 'Books features').

Select features

Note: It is not necessary to fill out all the fields. You can specify values only for the features relevant to you.

ISBN:

Cover type:

Publisher:

Pages: From:
Through:

With CD:

Language:

To select more than one entry, hold 'Ctrl' key while clicking on them with your mouse. To unselect, hold 'Ctrl' and click on the selected items again.

The set of fields in the form will vary from one product class to another, depending on the product class options (features) assigned to different classes in the admin interface. The customer only needs to provide values for the fields relevant to his search and to submit the form.

The products found by the search query will be displayed in the 'Products' list.

The screenshot shows the X-Cart 4.2.0 user interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with links for Home, Shopping Cart, and Contact Us. Below this is a search bar and a language selector set to English. The main content area is divided into several sections:

- Categories:** A sidebar menu listing various product categories such as Books, CD - DVD - Video, Computer hardware, Electronics, Games and toys, Gifts, Household, Men's clothes, Software, and Sport.
- Bestsellers:** A list of top-selling products, including 'Baldur's Gate 2 Expansion: Throne of Bhaal', 'Lord of the Rings Board Game', 'New Masters of Flash', 'Photoshop 6 Down and Dirty Tricks', and 'Palm OS M125'.
- Manufacturers:** A list of manufacturers, including 'ExampleBooks' and 'ExampleHousehold'.
- Special:** A section for special offers, including 'Gift certificates' and 'Feature-based search'.
- Products:** The main content area displays two products for comparison:
 - Adobe Photoshop 5.5 Classroom (SKU: SKU63):** A book with a 'CLASSROOM IN A BOOK' cover. The price is \$45.95 (€39.98), a 25% discount from the market price of \$61.27. It includes a 'See details' link, a 'Check to compare' checkbox, a 'Buy Now' button, and an 'Add to wish list' link.
 - Flash 5 for Windows and Macintosh (SKU: SKU10):** A book with a 'FLASH FOR WINDOWS & MACINTOSH' cover. The price is \$59.99 (€52.19), a 25% discount from the market price of \$79.99. It also includes a 'See details' link, a 'Check to compare' checkbox, a 'Buy Now' button, and an 'Add to wish list' link.
- Your cart:** A sidebar on the right showing 'Cart is empty' with links for 'View cart', 'Checkout', 'Wish list', and 'Orders history'.
- Authentication:** A sidebar on the right with a login form (Username, Password), 'Log in' and 'Register' buttons, and a 'Recover password' link.

The found products can then be compared with one another.

5.2 Selecting products for comparison

In X-FeatureComparison module customers can compare products assigned to the same product class (In other words, customers can compare a photo camera with another photo camera, but they cannot compare a photo camera with a book).

Customers select the products they want to be compared and then the module juxtaposes the selected products in the form of a table (the so-called 'Product features chart'). The Product features chart allows your customers to compare products by separate features (the features by which products can be compared are defined by admin/provider for each product class individually).

The module offers three alternative ways in which a customer can go about adding products to the Product

features chart:

1. The first of the three ways is as simple as selecting the 'Compare' check boxes next to the products which need to be compared and adding them directly to the Product features chart with one click on the 'Compare selected' link.

The screenshot shows a web page for an e-commerce site. At the top right, there is a 'Printable version' link. The main content area is titled 'Internet' and contains a 'Products' section. The products are sorted by 'SKU'. There are two product listings:

- New Masters of Flash** (SKU: SKU65): Description: 'Learning by doing is always good, especially if you have good role models to follow. As part of the publisher's "Showing It" series, this book brings together 19 of the most innovative designers who are working in motion graphics, and gives them lots of page room to talk about their work in general.' Price: \$59.99 (€52.19), Market price: \$79.99, save 25%. Quantity: 1. Buttons: 'Compare selected', 'Add to comparison list', 'Buy Now', 'Add to wish list'.
- Professional Java Server Programming** (SKU: SKU66): Description: 'Wrox specializes in books written by programmers, for programmers. Professional Java Server Programming, a volume on developing Java-based Web applications, is no different. All the 12 authors are developers and consultants — including some who've been part of Sun's own Java team.' Price: \$47.99 (€41.75), Market price: \$69.99, save 25%. Quantity: 1. Buttons: 'Check to compare', 'See details'.


The left sidebar contains navigation menus: 'Categories' (Books, CD - DVD - Video, Computer hardware, Electronics, Games and toys, Gifts, Household, Men's clothes, Software, Sport), 'Bestsellers' (1. Baldur's Gate 2 Expansion: Throne of Bhaal, 2. Lord of the Rings Board Game, 3. New Masters of Flash, 4. Photoshop 6 Down and Dirty Tricks, 5. Palm OS M125), 'Manufacturers' (ExampleBooks, ExampleHousehold), and 'Special'.

The right sidebar contains 'Your cart' (Cart is empty, View cart, Checkout, Wish list, Orders history) and 'Authentication' (Username, Password, Log in, Register, Recover password).

Note: The maximum number of products which a customer is allowed to select for comparison is defined in the General settings/Feature Comparison options section of the administrative interface ('Maximum number of products which can be compared')

If the customer selects for comparison products which belong to different product classes, he will receive a warning message in the 'Product classes' form prompting him to select just one class with which he would like to continue working.

Product classes

 The products selected for comparison are of different classes and cannot be compared. Please select the product class within which you would like to compare products.

Books

Adobe Photoshop 5.5 Classroom
Flash 5 for Windows and Macintosh

[Compare](#)


Cd disks

Bach's Goldberg Variations

[Compare](#)

To compare the products within this product class, the customer needs to click the 'Compare' link corresponding to it.

2. The second way involves using the so-called 'Comparison list'. While browsing the Products list, a customer selects the 'Compare' check boxes next to the products which need to be compared and, by clicking the 'Add to comparison list' link, adds them to the 'Comparison list' (A special box appearing in the menu column in which a list of products selected for comparison can be stored until the customer requests the operation of product comparison to be carried out. The empty 'Comparison list' is not displayed).

Printable version 

Your Company Name :: Books :: Internet

Categories

- ▶ Books
- ▶ CD - DVD - Video
- ▶ Computer hardware
- ▶ Electronics
- ▶ Games and toys
- ▶ Gifts
- ▶ Household
- ▶ Men's clothes
- ▶ Software
- ▶ Sport

Bestsellers

1. Saldur's Gate 2 Expansion: Throne of Bhaal
2. Lord of the Rings Board Game
3. New Masters of Flash
4. Photoshop 6 Down and Dirty Tricks
5. Palm OS M125

Manufacturers


- ExampleBooks
- ExampleHousehold

Special

Internet

Products Sort by: [SKU](#) [Product](#) [Price](#) ▲ [Default](#)

Result pages: 1 2 ▶



New Masters of Flash


SKU: SKU65

Learning by doing is always good, especially if you have good role models to follow. As part of the publisher's "Showing It" series, this book brings together 19 of the most innovative designers who are working in motion graphics, and gives them lots of page room to talk about their work in general.

Our price: \$59.99 (€52.19)
Market price: ~~\$79.99~~, **save 25%**

Check to compare

Quantity



Professional Java Server Programming

SKU: SKU66

Wrox specializes in books written by programmers, for programmers. Professional Java Server Programming, a volume on developing Java-based Web applications, is no different. All the 12 authors are developers and consultants – including some who've been part of Sun's own Java team.

Our price: \$47.99 (€41.75)
Market price: ~~\$69.99~~, **save 25%**

Check to compare

Quantity

Comparison list

Books

New Masters of Flash ✕

Your cart

Cart is empty

View cart
Checkout
Wish list
Orders history

Authentication

Username

Password

[Recover password](#)

Another way a customer can add a product to the 'Comparison list' is by going to the product details page of some product and clicking on the 'Add to comparison list' link there.

Your Company Name :: Books :: Internet :: New Masters of Flash

Categories

- ▶ Books
- ▶ CD - DVD - Video
- ▶ Computer hardware
- ▶ Electronics
- ▶ Games and toys
- ▶ Gifts
- ▶ Household
- ▶ Men's clothes
- ▶ Software
- ▶ Sport


Bestsellers

1. Baldur's Gate 2 Expansion: Throne of Bhaal
2. Lord of the Rings Board Game
3. New Masters of Flash
4. Photoshop 6 Down and Dirty Tricks
5. Palm OS M125

Manufacturers

- ExampleBooks
- ExampleHousehold

New Masters of Flash



Learning by doing is always good, especially if you have good role models to follow. As part of the publisher's "Showing It" series, this book brings together 19 of the most innovative designers who are working in motion graphics, and gives them lots of page room to talk about their work in general.

Details

SKU	SKU65
Quantity in stock	94 item(s) available
Weight	1.00 lbs
ISBN	123456
Cover type	Soft
Publisher	Press
Pages	123
With CD	No
Language	English

Price: **\$59.99** (€52.19)

Options

Choose cover type:

Quantity:

[Add to cart](#) [Add to wish list](#)

[Add to comparison list](#)

[Product comparison](#)



Comparison list

Books

New Masters of Flash X

[Compare](#)

[Clear list](#)

Your cart

Cart is empty

[View cart](#)

[Checkout](#)

[Wish list](#)

[Orders history](#)

Authentication

Username

Password

[Log in](#) [Register](#)

[Recover password](#)

If the products selected for comparison belong to different product classes, the Comparison list will be divided into sections, so each of the involved product classes has its separate comparison list.



The Comparison list is completely editable, so your customers are allowed not only to add products to the list, but to remove some or all of the products from the list. To remove a specific product from the Comparison list, a customer needs to click on the red X sign next to the name of the product in the list. To remove all the products from the Comparison list (or from a section of the Comparison list), a customer needs to click the **'Clear list'** link at the bottom of the list (or below the corresponding section of the Comparison list).

To compare the products contained in the Comparison list (or in a section of the Comparison list), a customer needs to click the **'Compare'** link at the bottom of the list (or below the corresponding section of the Comparison list). The products will be transferred to the Product features chart where the customer will be able to compare them.

Note: If you want to enable the Comparison list for your customers, please select the *'Display the list of products to be compared in the menu column'* option in the General settings/Feature Comparison options section of the administrative interface. Do not forget to set the Comparison list capacity (*'The maximum number of products in the comparison list in the menu column'* option).

3. The third way allows adding pairs of products to the Product features chart: a customer can go to the product details page of some product and request comparing this product with some other product of the

same product class. The product with which the initially chosen product will be compared is selected from a selectbox on the product details page. Both the products (the one whose product details are displayed and the one selected from the list in the select box) are added to the Product features chart when the customer clicks the **'Product comparison'** link next to the select box.

The screenshot displays a product page for 'New Masters of Flash'. The page is divided into several sections:

- Categories:** A sidebar menu with options like Books, CD - DVD - Video, Computer hardware, Electronics, Games and toys, Gifts, Household, Men's clothes, Software, and Sport.
- Bestsellers:** A list of top-selling products, including 'Baldur's Gate 2 Expansion: Throne of Bhaal' and 'Lord of the Rings Board Game'.
- Manufacturers:** A list of manufacturers, including 'ExampleBooks' and 'ExampleHousehold'.
- Product Details:** The main content area for 'New Masters of Flash'. It includes a product image, a description, a 'SAVE 25%' badge, and a table of details:

SKU	SKU65
Quantity in stock	94 item(s) available
Weight	1.00 lbs
ISBN	123456
Cover type	Soft
Publisher	Press
Pages	123
With CD	No
Language	English
- Options:** A section for selecting cover type (Soft) and quantity (1).
- Actions:** Buttons for 'Add to cart', 'Add to wish list', and 'Add to comparison list'.
- Comparison:** A dropdown menu showing 'Flash 5 for Windows and Macin' and a 'Product comparison' link.
- Comparison list:** A sidebar showing the current comparison list with 'New Masters of Flash' and buttons for 'Compare' and 'Clear list'.
- Your cart:** A sidebar showing 'Cart is empty' and links for 'View cart', 'Checkout', 'Wish list', and 'Orders history'.
- Authentication:** A sidebar with fields for 'Username' and 'Password', and buttons for 'Log in' and 'Register'. A 'Recover password' link is also present.




Note: More products of the same product class can then be added one by one to the Product features chart using the select box below the Product features chart.

Note: The maximum number of products which can appear in selectboxes can be defined in the General settings/Feature Comparison options section of the administrative interface ('Maximum number of products which can be shown on the feature-based comparisons page and on the Product details page in the form of a select box. If the quantity of products for comparison exceeds the number specified here, product selection will be done in a popup window').



5.3 Comparing products

No matter what method was used for selecting the products for comparison, they finally appear in the Product features chart.

Product features chart




Sort by: [SKU](#) [Product](#) ▲ [Price](#)

Product features	Products		
	<input type="checkbox"/> Adobe Photoshop 5.5 Classroom Price: \$45.95	<input type="checkbox"/> Flash 5 for Windows and Macintosh Price: \$59.99	<input type="checkbox"/> New Masters of Flash Price: \$59.99
<input type="checkbox"/> Catalog idx	654321987	321654987	654123654
<input type="checkbox"/> Cover type	Hard	Soft	Soft
<input type="checkbox"/> Publisher	Dialectics	Dialectics	Piter Press
<input type="checkbox"/> Pages	460	318	250
<input type="checkbox"/> With CD	✓	✗	✗
<input type="checkbox"/> Language	German	English German	English
	Buy Now	Buy Now	Buy Now
 Remove selected features	 Remove selected products		
<input type="text" value="Photoshop 6 Down and Dirty T"/>	Add product		



The 'Product features' column displays a list of features by which the selected products are compared. The 'Products' section displays the products which are compared. According to the default chart layout, product features are displayed vertically and products are displayed horizontally.

If the customer believes some feature is not essential for the comparison, he can remove this feature from the chart. To remove a feature, the customer needs to select the check box next to it and to click the 'Remove selected features' link at the bottom of the 'Product features' column.

Product features chart








Sort by: [SKU](#) [Product](#) ▲ [Price](#)

Product features	Products		
	<input type="checkbox"/> Adobe Photoshop 5.5 Classroom Price: \$45.95	<input type="checkbox"/> Flash 5 for Windows and Macintosh Price: \$59.99	<input type="checkbox"/> New Masters of Flash Price: \$59.99
<input type="checkbox"/> Catalog idx	654321987	321654987	654123654
<input type="checkbox"/> Cover type	Hard	Soft	Soft
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Publisher	Dialectics	Dialectics	Piter Press
<input type="checkbox"/> Pages	460	318	250
<input type="checkbox"/> With CD	✓	✗	✗
<input type="checkbox"/> Language	German	English German	English
	Buy Now	Buy Now	Buy Now
 Remove selected features	 Remove selected products		
<input type="text" value="Photoshop 6 Down and Dirty T"/>	Add product		



The removed features are excluded from the chart, however, they appear above the chart in the form of links from which they can be restored. The customer can restore any of the removed features at any time by clicking the 'Removed features' links corresponding to these features.

Product features chart



Removed features: [Publisher](#)

Sort by: [SKU](#) [Product](#) ▲ [Price](#)

Product features	Products		
	<input type="checkbox"/> Adobe Photoshop 5.5 Classroom Price: \$45.95	<input type="checkbox"/> Flash 5 for Windows and Macintosh Price: \$59.99	<input type="checkbox"/> New Masters of Flash Price: \$59.99
<input type="checkbox"/> Catalog idx	654321987	321654987	654123654
<input type="checkbox"/> Cover type	Hard	Soft	Soft
<input type="checkbox"/> Pages	460	318	250
<input type="checkbox"/> With CD	✓	✗	✗
<input type="checkbox"/> Language	German	English German	English
	Buy Now	Buy Now	Buy Now
 Remove selected features	 Remove selected products		
<input type="text" value="Photoshop 6 Down and Dirty T"/>	Add product		



If needed, the customer can exclude one or more products from the chart. To remove a product, the customer needs to select the check box next to the name of the product and to click the 'Remove selected products' link at the bottom of the 'Products' section of the chart.

Product features chart

Removed features: [Publisher](#)

Sort by: [SKU](#) [Product](#) ▲ [Price](#)

Product features	Products		
	<input type="checkbox"/> Adobe Photoshop 5.5 Classroom Price: \$45.95	<input type="checkbox"/> Flash 5 for Windows and Macintosh Price: \$59.99	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> New Masters of Flash Price: \$59.99
<input type="checkbox"/> Catalog idx	654321987	321654987	654123654
<input type="checkbox"/> Cover type	Hard	Soft	Soft
<input type="checkbox"/> Pages	460	318	250
<input type="checkbox"/> With CD	✓	✗	✗
<input type="checkbox"/> Language	German	English German	English
	Buy Now	Buy Now	Buy Now
 Remove selected features	 Remove selected products		
<input type="text" value="Photoshop 6 Down and Dirty T"/>	Add product		

The removed product is excluded from the chart, however, it is added to the list of products in the selectbox below the chart and it can be restored from the selectbox at any time.

Product features chart

Removed features: [Publisher](#)

Sort by: [SKU](#) [Product](#) ▲ [Price](#)

Product features	Products	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Adobe Photoshop 5.5 Classroom Price: \$45.95	<input type="checkbox"/> Flash 5 for Windows and Macintosh Price: \$59.99
<input type="checkbox"/> Catalog idx	654321987	321654987
<input type="checkbox"/> Cover type	Hard	Soft
<input type="checkbox"/> Pages	460	318
<input type="checkbox"/> With CD	✓	✗
<input type="checkbox"/> Language	German	English German
	Buy Now	Buy Now
Remove selected features	Remove selected products	

[Add product](#)

- Photoshop 6 Down and Dirty Tricks
- Professional Java Server Programming
- Microsoft FrontPage 2000
- New Masters of Flash
- HTML 4 for the World Wide Web
- Dreamweaver 3 Bible: Gold Edition
- Designing Web Usability
- Javascript (Definitive Guide)

To restore a removed product from the selectbox or to add a new product to the chart, select the necessary product from the selectbox and click on the '**Add product**' button.

Product features chart

Removed features: [Publisher](#)




Sort by: [SKU](#) [Product](#) ▲ [Price](#)

Product features	Products	
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Adobe Photoshop 5.5 Classroom Price: \$45.95	Flash 5 for Windows and Macintosh Price: \$59.99
<input type="checkbox"/> Catalog idx	654321987	321654987
<input type="checkbox"/> Cover type	Hard	Soft
<input type="checkbox"/> Pages	460	318
<input type="checkbox"/> With CD	✓	✗
<input type="checkbox"/> Language	German	English German
	Buy Now	Buy Now
Remove selected features	Remove selected products	
<input type="text" value="New Masters of Flash"/> ▼	Add product	



Note: The maximum number of products which can appear in the selectbox can be defined in the General settings/Feature Comparison options section of the administrative interface ('Maximum number of products which can be shown on the feature-based comparisons page and on the Product details page in the form of a select box. If the quantity of products for comparison exceeds the number specified here, product selection will be done in a popup window').




When some feature is common for all the products displayed in the chart (for example, all the books have the same publisher), this feature is displayed against a lighter background, so the whole line is highlighted, which makes the similarity more conspicuous.

Product features chart








Sort by: [SKU](#) [Product](#) ▲ [Price](#)



Product features	Products	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Adobe Photoshop 5.5 Classroom Price: \$45.95	<input type="checkbox"/> Flash 5 for Windows and Macintosh Price: \$59.99
<input type="checkbox"/> Catalog idx	654321987	321654987
<input type="checkbox"/> Cover type	Hard	Soft
<input type="checkbox"/> Publisher	Dialectics	Dialectics
<input type="checkbox"/> Pages	460	318
<input type="checkbox"/> With CD	✓	✗
<input type="checkbox"/> Language	German	English German
	Buy Now	Buy Now
 Remove selected features	 Remove selected products	
<input type="text" value="Photoshop 6 Down and Dirty T"/>	Add product	


For convenience the customer can hide the features common for all the products in the chart, so that only the differences are shown. To conceal all the similarities, the customer needs to click on the  icon. The lines with the 'common' features will be removed from the chart. The look of the icon will also be changed: . Clicking the  icon, the customer can restore the lines showing similarities in the chart.

Product features chart






Sort by: [SKU](#) [Product](#) ▲ [Price](#)

Product features	Products	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Adobe Photoshop 5.5 Classroom Price: \$45.95	<input type="checkbox"/> Flash 5 for Windows and Macintosh Price: \$59.99
<input type="checkbox"/> Catalog idx	654321987	321654987
<input type="checkbox"/> Cover type	Hard	Soft
<input type="checkbox"/> Pages	460	318
<input type="checkbox"/> With CD	✓	✗
<input type="checkbox"/> Language	German	English German
	Buy Now	Buy Now
 Remove selected features	 Remove selected products	
<input type="text" value="Photoshop 6 Down and Dirty T"/>	Add product	



Sometimes it may be convenient to rearrange the Product features chart so that the product names are displayed vertically (in a column), and the product features are displayed horizontally next to them (in other words, to flip the coordinate vectors of the chart). This functionality turns out especially helpful if the number of products being compared is much greater than the number of involved features (Great numbers of products make the chart too wide to fit into the screen. Arranging the products vertically can help the customer to deal with the problem). To flip the coordinate vectors, the customer needs to click the  icon.

Product features chart




Sort by: [SKU](#) [Product](#) ▲ [Price](#)

Products	Product features					
	<input type="checkbox"/> Catalog idx	<input type="checkbox"/> Cover type	<input type="checkbox"/> Pages	<input type="checkbox"/> With CD	<input type="checkbox"/> Language	
<input type="checkbox"/> Adobe Photoshop 5.5 Classroom Price: \$45.95	654321987	Hard	460	✓	German	Buy Now
<input type="checkbox"/> Flash 5 for Windows and Macintosh Price: \$59.99	321654987	Soft	318	✗	English German	Buy Now

 [Remove selected products](#)  [Remove selected features](#)

[Add product](#)

Clicking the same icon once again reverts the chart to its original state.

If flipping the chart vectors still does not help to make the process of working with the chart any better, the customer can resort to getting the module to display the whole chart in a separate window, so that the chart can be scrolled separately without having to scroll the whole store page. To get the chart to be displayed in a separate window, the customer needs to click on the  icon.

X-FeatureComparison add-on module for X-Cart 4.2.0. User manual.

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