1. HEY B2B MANUFACTURERS, WHO IS VISITING YOUR PRODUCT CATALOG?

I wrote recently about using web analytics to understand how visitors to a B2B manufacturer's website used the on-line product catalog.

One of our goals was understanding who visits the catalog. When we're able to, we try to segment visitors to product catalogs based upon what they download. This is often a pretty useful method of identifying important sub-segments of catalog users.

When we analyze downloads, we may see several different segments of catalog users:

- **Shoppers** look for pre-sale information (product specs, engineering drawings, models, etc.) that helps them decide if a specific product is what they need.
- **Designers** look at multiple products that are used together or integrated to create a system of some sort.
- **Buyers** need to know pricing, availability, shipping lead time, and where to buy.
- **Installers** need information about how to install, deploy, or configure the product after it was purchased but before it can be used.
- **End users** need information on how to use the product to get their work done.
- **Owners** need information about how to upgrade the product, buy accessories or consumables, or get warranty service.
- **Service providers** need information about how to maintain, troubleshoot, or repair the product after it was purchased, and get replacement parts.

The reality today is that product catalogs aren't built for all these users – they're built primarily for shoppers and buyers. At best, manufacturers link downloads to the product pages to support the rest (usually PDFs of manuals).

Manufacturers – you can do better. You can improve the design of product pages to support all of these personas. You can implement analytics to measure how you're doing. And you can do *way* better than PDFs to support installers, end users, and service providers – you can deliver this content in apps and interactive formats that help people do their jobs better.