



itim 

# WHSmith

Customer Story

**WHSmith boosts productivity after expanding use of itim's automated invoice matching technology across its growing retail business**



**WHSmith, the £1.2bn retailer with over 1,400 stores, has just completed a rollout of automated invoice matching software across its expanding international business.**

**After using itim's Didos invoice matching solution in its UK High Street business to seamlessly process invoices, the retailer decided to roll out the Didos technology to also cover its 800+ UK travel and international stores.**

**The challenge**

Paul Johnson, Finance Systems Manager at WHSmith, says that it uses the Didos invoice matching system to match invoices to deliveries to “ensure that we are paying for stock we have actually received at the contracted price.”

By using itim's software, the process has been simplified and, using the automated technology, we are able to manage over 10,000 invoices a week across a far greater international retail enterprise.

Around three-quarters of all supplier invoices correspond to what has been delivered, at the correct cost. These are matched by Didos automatically and passed on for payment without requiring human intervention. However, approximately 2,500 invoices a week are flagged up by the system – along with the reason for the discrepancy – and highlighted to the correct person for action. This may result in a buyer, for example, having to check with a supplier why the invoice price is £6 a unit instead of £5 as agreed; or, asking for proof of delivery when the stock invoiced doesn't agree to what has been updated in the store or warehouse.

**“Didos points us in the right direction, flagging which invoices need further attention. With so many invoices and products being delivered daily, we simply don't have the time to go through absolutely everything manually.”**

Paul Johnson  
Finance Systems Manager

**The solution**

Didos raises any necessary queries and sends debit notes to suppliers requesting refunds for pricing errors, missing stock or returns.

“Didos also gives us the ability to generate proof of delivery letters to suppliers in situations where we have quantity discrepancies,” says Johnson. “Where we find that we are correct, the debit noting functionality makes it very easy to claim money back from suppliers. Stock returns are also now handled through Didos, which simplifies everything and makes our job so much easier.”

Approximately eighty percent of invoices are processed directly into the system from suppliers via EDI (Electronic Data Interchange, a standardised process for exchanging information between trading partners). The rest are entered manually through user-friendly functions in Didos. “When we started opening stores in Australia, they worked in isolation and used the invoice matching functionality within their legacy ERP solution,” says Johnson.



“We decided to integrate it with Didos for invoice matching and now the situation is much improved. We also took the opportunity to move the bigger suppliers onto the EDI PLUS service, which enables full integration for all supplier invoices and eliminates the need to handle large amounts of paper.”

**“EDI PLUS handled the whole process for us: contacting suppliers, testing and, now they are live, passing the EDI invoices seamlessly from the suppliers into Didos.”**

Itim has even developed a Retail Accounting module to cover specific aspects of the WHSmith business: notably, accumulating statistics on the retail performance in its network of travel and overseas stores, where sales of food products, for example, present unique challenges. For instance, Johnson explains that fresh produce needs to be on the shelves in less than twenty minutes, so delivery administration tasks can't take priority.

### The benefits

Thanks to using itim's Retail Accounting software, WHSmith can now reliably monitor stock and shrinkage levels against items where stores are unable to update stock deliveries fast enough. This, says Johnson, is often due to the sheer number of deliveries or the fast turnaround of having to immediately put stock out on sale the moment it comes in.

### Customer Profile — WHSmith

**£1.2 billion**

approximate annual revenue

**1,400 +**

stores

**520,000 +**

supplier invoices a year

### Challenge

Matching 10,000 supplier invoices a week (across 3 continents) to ensure the company is only paying for the goods it has received and at the agreed price.

### Solution

Itim's Invoice Matching solution was chosen to automatically match invoices against delivery notes (in multiple currencies), send debit notes to suppliers for overcharges and flag issues for efficient resolution.

### Results

WHSmith can now seamlessly process over half a million invoices a year with over 75% of invoices matched and processed without human intervention, significantly boosting productivity.

Last month, the company added multicurrency capabilities so that it can seamlessly process invoices across different regions, whether in Singapore Dollars, or Euros. It has also invested in a new feature that allows buyers to quickly address any pricing discrepancies by simply uploading responses into an online spreadsheet.

**“We chose Didos because it had the richest functionality of the products on the market and because we liked itim’s consultative approach,” says Johnson. “That was twenty years ago. Since then, we have built up a very strong working relationship. Itim have always been flexible and responsive to our needs as we continue to expand and streamline our business.”**

