

Press Release August 23 1999

"A Yahoo System for Fonts"

Technology of FontExplorer@Web

Software basis and programming

The system is essentially based on Intershop 3.0 Enterprise, which in turn is based on Oracle. This means that the necessary basic functions for Online Shopping did not all have to be redeveloped from scratch. All the same, since the Intershop method is a Physical Goods Delivery system and not the required Electronic Software Distribution system (ESD), numerous further developments were necessary, all the more so because there was no ESD system obtainable "out of the box". Around the core of Intershop there are various subsystems in the program languages C, C PLUS PLUS, JAVA Bean, JAVA Script, PERL and Visual Basic. The proprietary search engine from the Linotype FontExplorer CD version also comes into use. This engine alone needed three years of development work. With it, the real-time matching of 8000 fonts times 80 search criteria is possible. FontExplorer@Web could therefore be described as a "Yahoo System for Fonts". The development time for the system was approximately 12 months.

Hardware and Web connection

The core system and the Oracle 8 database run on a SUN Enterprise 450 with 1350 Mhz CPU and 3 GB RAM. Available as Internet connections are 2 x 2 Megabits of fixed connectons, together with one of 128 kBits as AS network switched to three independent carriers. A line upgrade to 34 Megabits could be installed, if required, within one week. Internet bandwidths are directly available for DECIX Frankfurt and Mae East. A CISCO 7206 is used as Backbone Internet Router. The pure Internet WEB service runs on an Apache Internet Server on a DUAL Pentium 450 Mhz under LINUX. Servlets and Applets are processed in parallel on a Linux Cluster.

Operation and User-Interface

In order to present the system as attractively as possible from the operating point of view, JAVA 1.1 is used and supported on the different hardware platforms by a browser from Version 4.5 (Netscape Navigator or Internet Explorer). For Macintosh users (preferably from Mac OS 7.6) the use of JAVA 1.1 via Apple MRJ (current version 2.1.4) and Mozilla

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plug-in is recommended. The JAVA Virtual Machine with Macintosh is, according to our observation, slower than Windows PC. Independently of the performance of the hardware in use, however, operation is stable and the user is well served with upgrade requests.

Note: With the Macintosh, the sequence of installations is important! Users should first install the Browser (preferably Netscape) then the MRJ and then the Mozilla plug-in. On Windows PC the application with Browser from Version 4.5 runs without problems, and above all with the Internet Explorer 5.0 at high speed.

Usability of the system corresponds to the well-known Linotype Font-Explorer CD, with some Web-specific adaptations for the best operating convenience. Operator guidance can be intuitive, enabling a user to become familiar with FontExplorer@Web in a maximum of ten minutes.

New E-Commerce functions and USP

In Germany, FontExplorer@Web is, to our knowledge, at present the only the only ESD project with genuine online distribution. Its advantages may be summarized as follows:

1. Fonts are ideal for this form of distribution. As a data file, the product has an average size of 160 kB and can therefore be transferred on the fly if a step is missed by the user (search, payment, downloading).
2. Linotype Library has developed a genuine "Multi-Currency & Multipayment system". This means that the customer can choose between three currencies (USD, DEM, Euro, others in preparation) and can pay with any of the five leading credit cards in Germany or with an EC card plus PIN number.
3. Delivery takes place by downloading or (for customers with Firewall problems) as e-mail attachment. Conventional methods of delivery are also in preparation so that software products with large quantities of data can be distributed without problems.
4. For FontExplorer@Web, Intershop Enterprise software has been brought "live" into the Internet with Oracle connection for the first time. A whole range of Intershop modules have been newly programmed.
5. Linotype Library offers a LIVETIME download warranty, which means that even if the user's computer with the installed typefaces is irreparably damaged, he can still call up his fonts from his basket stored on Linotype Library LIVETIME. (This is not a standard feature of Intershop.)

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