

Customer Case Study

HANS KOLB Wellpappe: tcACCESS connects Mainframe CICS to Windows and LINUX



HANS KOLB Wellpappe - Packed better with better packaging! Short and succinct is the promise to the customer as well as the claims to suppliers of the Memmingen based Packaging specialist.

For more than 70 years corrugated board packaging solutions are manufactured at three locations. Over the years, HANS Kolb Wellpappe (HKM) has established a name in the market for the development of numerous solutions with special corrugated boards. As diverse as the product portfolio is, the key to success for KOLB is: No compromise in the declared intent for quality and the steady urge for innovations and further developments.

BUSINESS BACKGROUND

The city of Memmingen is an urban treasure trove in the Swabian-Bavarian lowlands of the Alps. It is known for the ancient city gateways and towers. Memmingen is home of Hans Kolb Wellpappe GmbH & Co. KG (HKM). HKM was founded in 1933 and is one of the international leading companies in the sector of Packaging solutions.

SYSTEM PROFILE

HKM operates an IT that is based upon the IBM VSE/ESA operating system. The strategic applications have been developed in COBOL. Data stores are VSAM and DB2/VS. The bread and butter application is a CICS-based sales and marketing system. The user departments have access to a CITRIX Terminal Server to use the Windows Office and ADOBE applications. In addition to Windows HKM uses a Red-Hat Edition of LINUX. This system is home of the KIWIPLAN Supply Chain and Manufacturing Execution system and a CAD-system from Esko Graphics.

BUSINESS ISSUE

The employees of the sales department at HKM receive inquiries from customers and prospects about individual packaging solutions. To create an offer, the data was forwarded to product development at a different plant location in Buxheim. The CAD-System HKM-X from Esko Graphics was used to develop the solution and the data was sent back to sales.

TECHNOLOGY SOLUTION

Michael Bäuerle, CIO at HKM: "We have been a customer of B.O.S. and were interested to learn, what tcACCESS could offer to optimize our business processes. Among many interesting aspects about the integration of a mainframe into a Client/Server environment, the feature that caught our attention was the ability to start Windows and LINUX processes directly from a CICS application. We felt this could be major time-saver for us, compared to our process flows at the time."

Michael Bäuerle: "The process was time consuming and it was normal procedure that it took an average of 2 days until sales was in a position to raise the offer. We have been able to optimize this process with tcACCESS.

Today, sales can create the offer immediately after the customer has presented his requirements."

Karl-Heinz Abbold, Application Developer and in charge of the sales and marketing application: "Today, in CICS the sales representative inputs all relevant data into the system like package sizes, measurements, types and units. Using a program function key he can start a direct communication of the CICS application with the LINUX CAD-system. tcACCESS takes care of this communication."

A window is displayed, and the sales rep can use the graphical application to calculate and plan variations. When the process is completed, the CAD-system stores the final data into a MySQL database on the LINUX-machine. Next, tcACCESS sends the data back to the calling CICS application.

Karl-Heinz Abbold: "The communication between the CICS-application and the CAD-system is managed by the tcACCESS Listener component. The CICS program starts the CAD application and issues a SELECT statement to retrieve the data from the MySQL database. tcACCESS enables the CICS application to perform ODBC calls to directly access the MySQL database. Quite exciting technology!"

Similar implementations have been done during the testing period of tcACCESS.

Abbold: "Images of our product samples and printouts are stored on a dedicated server in the PDF-format. These images are now integrated into our CICS-applications with a push of a button. It is now also possible to monitor the process and execution of an order in the production. tcACCESS is the link between the CICS applications and the LINUX based KIWIPLAN-system. All of these new processes are very reliable and stable. We started to put the first applications into production in 2004."

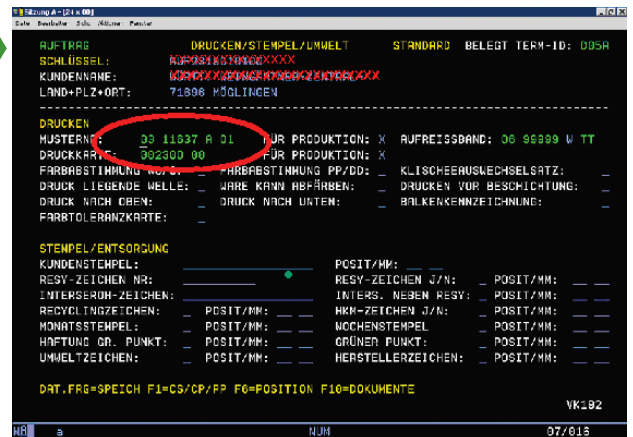
Michael Bäuerle concludes: "With tcACCESS, we have been able to optimize our internal business processes. Our mainframe has been transparently integrated into our Client/Server environment. We are glad to have a solid and competent partner, and we are looking forward to our future cooperation."



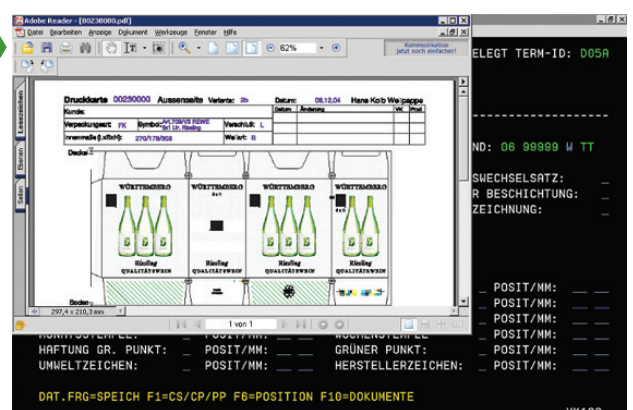
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Application Example for the HKM

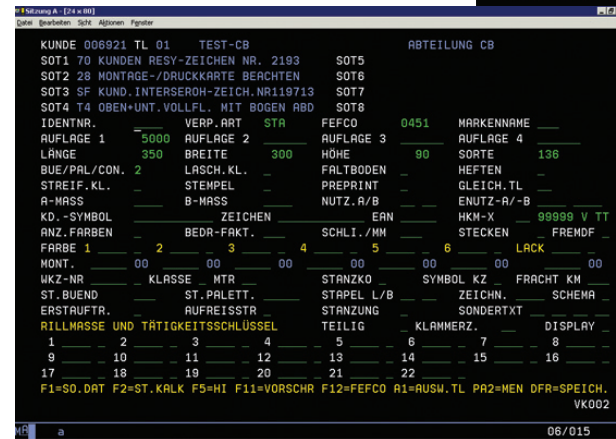
A sales representative uses a CICS 3270 application. The screen cursor is positioned on the item number. Hitting a PF-key automatically loads the corresponding PDF-file and displays the image with the CICS application.



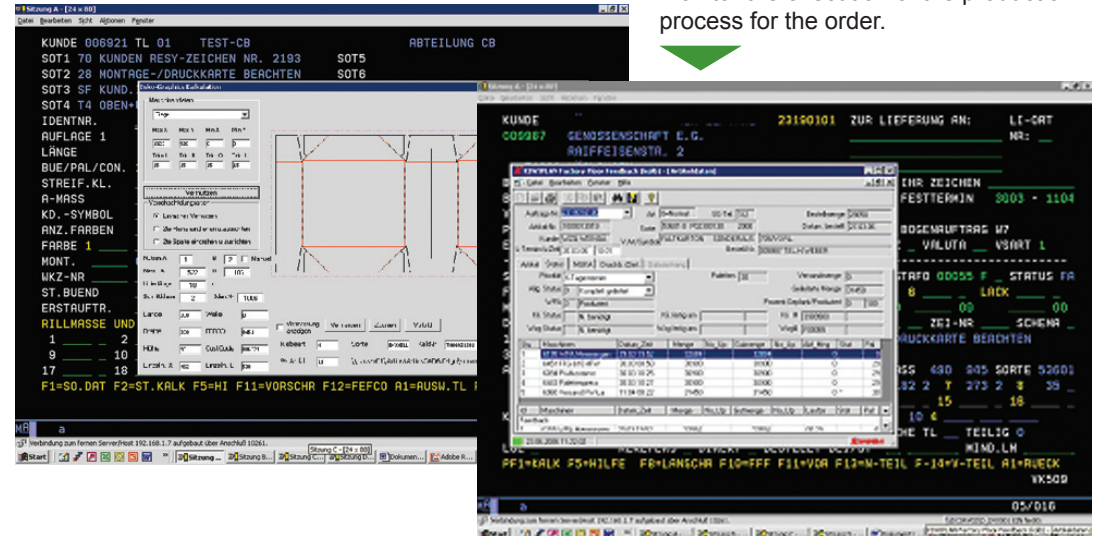
Customer requests are input to a CICS application and are automatically passed to the LINUX CAD-system through tcACCESS.



tcACCESS starts the CAD-system, the salesperson can make adjustments to the figures and the final data is stored into a MySQL-database. The CICS application uses ODBC to read the database and displays the data as part of the 3270-screen.



The example below shows a CICS transaction calling the LINUX based KIWIPLAN system to control and monitor the execution of the production process for the order.



ABOUT TREEHOUSE SOFTWARE

Treehouse Software is a B.O.S. partner, offering the most comprehensive and flexible portfolio of solutions available anywhere for integration, replication, and migration of data between mainframe sources and any target, application or platform; and virtually any mainframe application modernization project. Using ETL, CDC and SQL/XML technologies, we connect your enterprise—from anything to anything. We offer software and services that enable mainframe customers to leverage their investments in legacy systems—employing virtually any data source—with data integration, data warehousing, modernization and conversion, Service-Oriented Architectures, and other new technologies.

Treehouse Software, Inc.
2605 Nicholson Road, Suite 1230
Sewickley, PA 15143 U.S.A.
Phone: 724.759.7070
Fax: 724.759.7067
Email: sales@treehouse.com
Website: www.treehouse.com