Case Study:

Partner Integration with the zen Platform

The Europäische Reiseversicherung AG is the market leader for travel insurance in Germany and has been selling travel insurance for more than 80 years. With a sales volume of EUR 385 million in 2002 and 740 employees across Europe, the Europäische Reiseversicherung stakes its claim to being the quality leader among Germany's travel insurers. One of its strategic goals is attaining innovation leadership in e-commerce.

The online marketing of insurance policies using the zen Platform was to be extended to the numerous partners of Europäische Reiseversicherung. This did not only require the existing sales application to be extended to include different data interfaces for each of the partners, but also, the partners needed to be able to integrate the application visually. This was no problem for the zen Platform the basic idea of which it is to implement and manage extremely flexible applications efficiently.

Starting Point

The partners of Europäische Reiseversicherung include more than 17'000 travel agencies, tour operators, airlines and tourist businesses. Via traditional sales channels they generate a large part of Europäische Reiseversicherung's turnover. The plan was to integrate these partners into the online insurance marketing system, e.g. by linking the partners' own internet sites to the online marketing application of Europäische Reiseversicherung. The requirements regarding the linkage with the insurance marketing system were just as diverse as the partners' sizes and businesses. They included everything from a simple link and transfer of the partner identification to the seamless integration with the partners' online presence and internal booking processes.

Objectives

The zen application for the online insurance marketing system was to be integrated smoothly and without visual disruption into the internet presence of the partners in the form of a module. This way, for the end customer the sale of the insurance policy would become a component of the partner website, while the application is actually transparently executed by the zen Platform at Europäische Reiseversicherung. In addition to that, insurance-related data collected during the trip booking process would be transmitted to the zen application for the sale of insurance policies.

Another idea was to enable the integration of the online insurance marketing system into the internal booking processes of the partners without visualization. For that purpose, not only the data entry, but also the output of data was to be effected with the help of interfaces.

In detail, the interface of the zen application for insurance marketing had to meet the following requirements:

- The minimum requirement included transmitting the partner identification to the zen application so that partner bookings can be assigned unambiguously.

- The maximum requirement included transmitting all insurance-related data via CGI or XML interface.

- For each partner, a possibility of providing a different depth of integration and different types of interfaces was required. Individual partners were to be provided additional functionalities, e.g. alternative ways of retrieving insurances certificates, automatic notifications of the partner's back-office systems, etc.

The visual integration had to meet the following objectives:

- In view of the large number of partners, an application had to be provided which allowed each of the partners to adapt the design of the online insurance marketing system independently.

- In addition to matching the colouring on an HTML level, the icons and buttons of the zen applications also needed to be able to be adapted to the partner's choice of colours.

Solution

The zen Platform has a native processing capability with respect to CGI and XML data which already covers all transmission formats necessary for connecting the partners. In order to define a new interface, you simply add a new entry point to the sales process to the modelled workflow of the zen application and connect it with the existing data model. Moreover you can easily extend the data and workflow model to implement additional partner-specific functionalities. The zen Platform offers many services which easily meet the partner's requirements such as the asynchronous notification of their back-office systems.

The IT staff of Europäische Reiseversicherung created its own zen application for visual integration which enables its partners to adapt the look of the online insurance marketing system to the design of their own website. This also takes into account graphic elements such as icons and buttons which can be coloured during runtime and adapted to the language of the partner's internet presence using the Button Render System (brs). For increase efficiency a cache is provided.

The connection of 17'000 partners having different requirements and interfaces, the integration with reservation processes, the visual integration into the partners' websites – all this was quickly achieved and effectively managed using the zen Platform and brs, allowing the Europäische Reiseversicherung to fully satisfy the needs of its partners.

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