

J.A. MAJORS DEVELOPS CUSTOM WEB SITES IN WEEKS – AND AT HALF THE COST

Challenge

J.A. Majors Company builds custom retail Web sites for its customers to sell entertainment products, such as books and movies. These custom sites must make buying products easy, and the sites must be reliable – open for business 24/7. Majors wants to build these Web sites faster to increase revenue opportunities.

Solution

A Software AG customer since 1990, Majors has developed all inventory, ordering and credit card systems in Adabas and Natural. Majors uses Natural Business Services to leverage these proven systems. The result: Majors can write the front-end of Web sites in Java and use dependable back-end logic – for example, how an item is added to an online shopping cart – that was built using Adabas and Natural.

Benefits

- New sites are launched in weeks rather than months
- Reduced development costs by 50%
- Increase of 30% in sales through Majors Web channel in less than one year – expected to more than double by end of 2008
- Savings of tens of thousands of dollars on training costs
- Reduced risks – new Web sites are built with proven, high-performance Adabas and Natural-built systems on the back end
- Increased productivity – a lean staff can build more sites faster

J.A. MAJORS
HEALTH SCIENCE, PROFESSIONAL & TRADE BOOKS
A Baker & Taylor Company

J.A. Majors Company is an entertainment product distributor of books, music, movies and games. The company is the largest distributor of health science, scientific and technical publications from all publishers. It specializes in online ordering, same-day shipping and premier customer service. In business since 1909, Majors is headquartered in Dallas, Texas, U.S.

Get there faster.™

“Now we can launch a new custom Web site fast – in one month – and we can use the back-end logic we had already built using Adabas and Natural.”

Robert Bevis | Developer | J.A. Majors Company

Need a good book – or a great Web site? Majors can help

Shopped online for a book, music or movie lately? You may have visited a custom Web site built by J.A. Majors. The company, headquartered in Dallas, Texas, creates retail Web sites branded to look uniquely like the online retailer that sells entertainment products. (For an example, go to www.virginmega.com).

Thanks to Software AG Natural Business Services, Majors builds these custom sites in weeks. They're powered by Web services on top of Natural Business Services on top of Adabas and Natural. The Web sites have a front-end written in Java and utilize Web services generated by Natural Business Services that integrate with the Adabas/Natural back-end systems.

Java developers don't need to know Natural to build these Web sites yet Majors benefits by cost effectively re-using the proven functionality it has developed over many years. Natural Business Services provide a Java-like layer over Adabas and Natural so that Java programmers can work in a familiar environment to quickly produce custom Web sites.

Bringing Java and Natural together

Here's how a transaction works: When a customer decides to buy a product on a Web site, the Java front-end invokes a Web service to ensure the product is in stock by inquiring against the inventory system built in Adabas/Natural. Once the order has been placed, the Java front-end invokes another Web service to create the order in the order system and, in turn, invokes yet a third Web service to process the payment via the credit card processing systems, also built in Adabas/Natural. With this approach, each Web service encapsulates a business process, which can be re-used as needed in future applications.

Developing new sites – faster

By using Natural Business Services, Majors has been able to:

- Reduce development time to just weeks
- Re-use its existing HP-UX, Adabas/Natural infrastructure
- Reduce manual coding to access existing functionality implemented in Natural
- Build re-usable processes to further reduce development time
- Create sites that are flexible and easy to update

In one year, Majors has developed two custom retail sites and hundreds of other custom library and retail bookstore sites with a team of only three full-time Natural programmers and two Web programmers. Because this new service-oriented model is easier to maintain, Majors plans to develop all new sites as well as convert its wholesale business and previously developed sites onto it.

Satisfying customers – at less cost

Majors can now pursue new business opportunities with the confidence that new custom Web sites can be delivered on time and on budget. Customers are satisfied with well-designed Web sites that are developed quickly and allow for easy and reliable browsing and ordering.

Natural Business Services hide the complexities of the process for Java developers so they don't need Natural skills to accomplish their work. Majors estimates this capability has saved tens of thousands of dollars in training costs. Natural programmers can continue to use Natural and Java developers can use the language they know. Neither needs to train on the other language.

Building on existing IT assets

Majors originally chose Adabas because it offers a high-performance data management system and

chose Natural because of its ease of use. Software AG continues to offer new enhancements to Adabas and Natural so that Majors can build on its Software AG investments to meet new requirements and to expand its offerings.

For example, with new embedded HTTP support in the latest version of Natural, Majors can accept branded gift cards as a payment option. That credit card processing interface can be built easily and cost effectively in house.

KEY COMPONENTS

Natural and Adabas

Used to build all inventory, ordering and credit card systems

Natural Business Services

Enables Majors to leverage existing back-end logic – and deliver custom Web sites in a fraction of the time it took before.

ABOUT SOFTWARE AG

Software AG is the world's largest independent provider of Business Infrastructure Software. Our 4,000 global customers achieve measurable business results by modernizing and automating their IT systems and rapidly building new systems and processes to meet growing business demands.

Our industry-leading product portfolio includes best-in-class solutions for managing data, enabling service-oriented architecture, and improving business processes. By combining proven technology with industry expertise and best practices, our customers improve and differentiate their businesses – faster.

Software AG – Get There Faster

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