

Deutsche Post

Deutsche Post uses Adobe® solutions and the Web to enable reliable printing of pre-paid stamps for parcel delivery

DEUTSCHE POST AG

www.deutschepost.de

www.stampit.de

Deutsche Post  World Net

MAIL EXPRESS LOGISTICS FINANCE

INDUSTRY

- Business and consumer services
- Postal services

CHALLENGES

- Offer customers enhanced online services, including generating pre-paid stamps
- Deliver online services that are easy to use for customers and require no specialized software
- Ensure quality and security of prepaid stamps generated online by customers

SOLUTION

- Document generation
 - Deutsche Post enables customers to generate and print quality, legally compliant stamps for posting on letters and parcels with Adobe solutions

RESULTS

- Enhanced constituent services with easier access to Web-based stamping solution
- Laid flexible, powerful foundation for rolling out additional online stamping services in the future
- Provided additional revenue stream for Deutsche Post

The “stamp” is the tip of the iceberg

Online auction house eBay has revolutionized trading in goods for business clients and private customers. Until actual shipment, all stages of the online auction—from price quotes through bargaining to payment processing—take place over the Web. If it were also possible to ship traded goods as a parcel or letter via the Internet the digital workflow would be perfect. However, as this is not possible, international logistics service providers such as Deutsche Post World Net take care of shipment and delivery of postal consignments. Deutsche Post and Adobe Systems recently introduced STAMPIT WEB, allowing customers in Germany to securely generate pre-paid stamps for letters or parcels from their home PCs and printers.

With the bundled logistics skills of its trademarks Deutsche Post, DHL, and Postbank, the Deutsche Post World Net Group offer services and customer-specific solutions for managing and transporting goods, information, and payment. In 1995, Deutsche Post World Net Group converted from a public agency to a joint-stock company with headquarters in Bonn, Germany.

The basis for the quality and reliability offered by the company today is its modern infrastructure and the specialized knowledge of 380,000 staff working in 220 countries.

Every day, Deutsche Post deals with over 70 million parcels, many of which are materials used in Direct Marketing campaigns. Where letters are concerned, Deutsche Post is the leading service provider in Europe.

Internet stamping: simple, safe, and swift

Normally, customers go to the post office to buy stamps and then place them on letters or parcels before dropping them into mailboxes. However, in the age of digital business and e-commerce, there are now simpler, more convenient alternatives for customers. In 2001, Deutsche Post was the first European postal contractor to introduce a new way of stamping, an option that is currently used on more than 80,000 PCs.

STAMPIT, the PC stamping software from Deutsche Post, allows users to perform fast and safe stamping of their mail using home PCs. The less expensive variant, STAMPIT HOME, has been available to smaller business clients and private customers since 2004. Until this time, it was always necessary for users to install software at home and to produce the stamp directly on their PC.

With the increased shift of transactions to the Web, Deutsche Post faced the challenge of providing a completely Web-based stamping solution. In cooperation with Adobe Systems Incorporated, Deutsche Post extended the service to include a Web-based solution that offers the same security features as PC-based STAMPIT solutions. Regardless of the opening hours of post office branches, STAMPIT WEB users can stamp their letters and parcels online without having to install special software. All they need is free Adobe Reader® software, a standard Internet browser, and a printer.

Adobe Reader software is already deployed on more than 800 million computers worldwide and comes standard on most PCs purchased today. The Adobe software solution fulfils two key requirements for Deutsche Post: security and correct positioning of electronic stamps printed on envelopes. “It is necessary to print the stamp with all other data in exactly the right position, particularly when using sheets of labels”, explains Bernd Meyer, product manager responsible for marketing services at Deutsche Post. “Unlike other solutions we tested, there is no problem with this when using Adobe Reader software.”

“Adobe solutions comply with our requirements for secure and proper printing of stamps using STAMPIT WEB. With Adobe, we want to further develop innovative technology in the online stamping sector.”

Bernd Meyer,
Product manager, Marketing Services,
Deutsche Post

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Adobe solutions also met the stringent security requirements of Deutsche Post. Adobe Reader Extensions Server allows the postal service to generate intelligent documents in Adobe Portable Document Format (PDF). The documents can be exchanged freely with external users without having to install special costly software. The Adobe software offers a Web-based interface that Deutsche Post can use to quickly embed rights of use and security features in PDF files. When users open the PDF file, special functions are enabled in Adobe Reader. With STAMPIT WEB Adobe Reader is used to automatically open a PDF in a separate window of the Internet browser and to print it directly. Once printing has taken place, the Adobe Reader print function is disabled and cannot be repeated.

“Adobe solutions comply with our requirements for secure and proper printing of stamps using STAMPIT WEB,” says Meyer. “With Adobe, we want to further develop innovative technology in the online stamping sector. With Adobe Reader, we can also build on standard software available on virtually all PCs worldwide.”



Stamping from an online postage account

To use STAMPIT WEB the customer needs to register on the Internet. This involves setting up a personal postage account that is credited by the customer for postage and can be used to pay for stamping. The purchased postage credit is charged to a customer's account by direct debit. In the introductory phase, this facility is available only to users of eBay.

To stamp an item for mailing, a customer transfers the necessary details from the auction via eBay, adds the product (letter, parcel, goods shipment), and specifies the print medium. eBay then transfers data to STAMPIT WEB. Using the data, Adobe Form Server produces a preview of the stamp in HTML, which customers can view and check in their Web browsers. When the postage is printed, the postage account is debited with the relevant amount and a matrix code generated. This detail is used by the Adobe solution, along with the address and other data, to create a consignment label in PDF. Printing takes place when the stamp is open in Adobe Reader software.

Strategic cooperation

The joint STAMPIT WEB project between Deutsche Post and Adobe Systems was set up in a matter of months. Just two weeks after the program started almost 2,000 eBay vendors registered for the service. In the future, Adobe and Deutsche Post are planning further development of the service and product scope. “Given the high level of market penetration and recognition, Adobe Systems is a key strategic partner for us,” explains Meyer. “We want to make use of our shared know-how to further develop innovative technology in the online stamping sector.”

SYSTEMS AT A GLANCE

- Adobe Reader
- Adobe Form Server
- Adobe Reader Extensions Server

Better by Adobe.™

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