



photo: CITTI-Handelsgesellschaft

Convenient Online Shopping at [www.citti24.de](http://www.citti24.de)

# Shop Systems – Self-Reliance is the Name of the Game

By Dr. Stefan Buschner

*While e-business enjoys a two-digit growth rate and is making one jump in profit after another, retailers are not making any progress. So what is more natural for a large trading company than to open an Internet shop?*

This is a question the CITTI Handelsgesellschaft mbH & Co. KG has already answered, because they have been running an online shop for their wholesale customers for some time. The challenge now was to connect end customers of CITTI to the online offering. But how to achieve this? Buy an existing online shopping solution? Have it programmed by an external service provider? Or should they try it themselves?

Option 1 was no option as there was no off-the-shelf online shopping solution which fulfilled CITTI's stringent criteria:

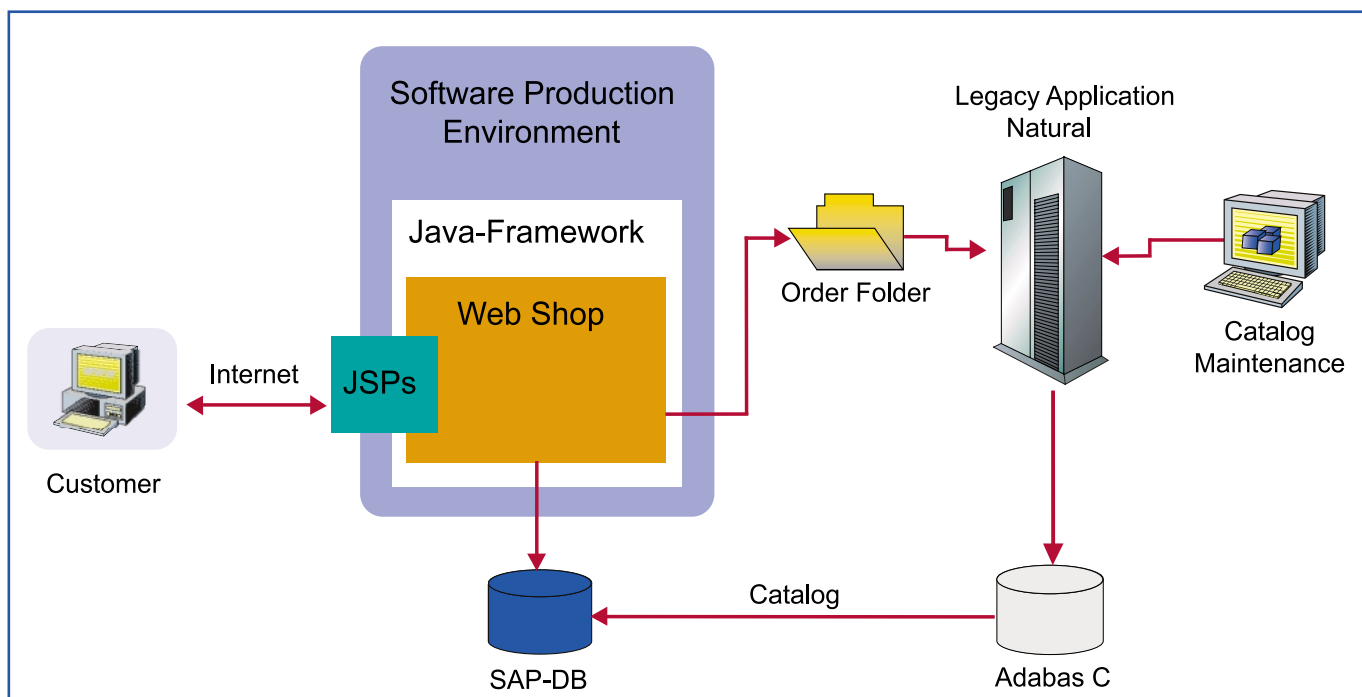
- The shop must maintain high performance even given the

extremely large range of the CITTI catalog,

- net prices must be calculated to three decimal places, and
- the company's customer-friendliness must be mirrored on the Internet.

The last point is the most telling. CITTI offers its customers price optimization which must also be available online. For instance, if a customer buys six bottles of wine of one type instead of taking a case of six, then he will probably think that there has been a miscalculation – to his own advantage – when paying. The lower price of the bottles by the case is used. This is still true for purchases of seven bottles – and for all seven bottles.

So option 2 was also ruled out, because programming all these rules would be expensive. Besides, CITTI already has an experienced IT department in-house. But did they really want to do everything themselves? Especially since the company's IT has most of its experience in Natural, and the jump to Internet technologies with object orientation, Java, JSPs, and servlet engines would indeed be a large one. The strategy was as simple as it was safe: a homegrown custom solution with professional support was the answer. For the professional support, MaK DATA SYSTEM was engaged. MaK DATA SYSTEM designed the software production environment and introduced a Java framework. Then the initial conditions were analyzed. It turned



graphic: MaK DATA SYSTEM

*Architecture of CITTI-Online Shop*

out that the article maintenance and order processing of the Natural system could be used for the online shop as well. All that needed to be done was to find the right interfaces to accept the articles and then return the orders from the shop. This was done using an SAP database and the file system, so no expensive middleware needed to be installed. Then the object-oriented software architecture was determined, and the shop pro-

grammed with coaching from MaK DATA SYSTEM.

CITTI can be proud of the result. Customers from Kiel and the surrounding area can place orders at [www.citti24.de](http://www.citti24.de). If they want to save on delivery costs, they can pick up their orders themselves without having to enter the crowded store – their orders are packed and ready to pick up.

Self-reliance is the name of the game – for shops as well as for the customers.

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