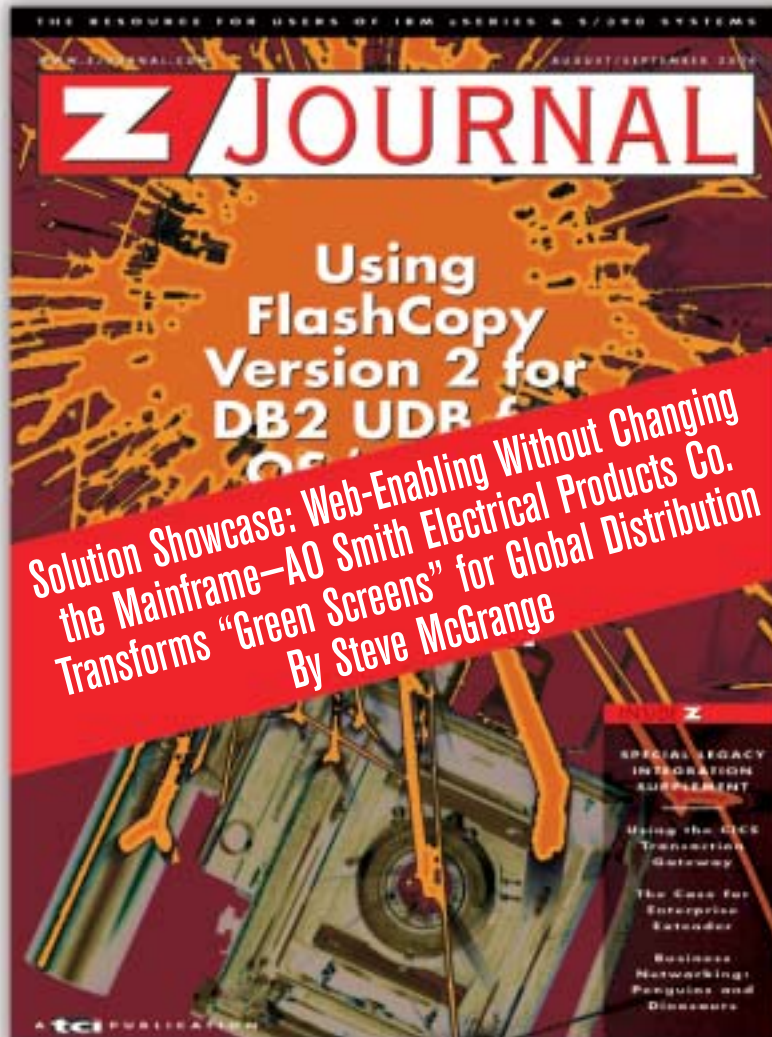


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Web-Enabling Without Changing the Mainframe

AO Smith Electrical Products Co. Transforms "Green Screens" for Global Distribution

The edict of "don't change anything on the mainframe!" presents a major challenge for IT professionals seeking to improve processes and application capabilities—especially certain business procedures that are heavily reliant on CICS, IMS or transactional applications that run under these systems.

But AO Smith Electrical Products Co. found a way to substantially improve the delivery and presentation of mainframe applications, provide Web-based functionality for stodgy "green-screen" systems, simplify employee learning curves, and even translate cryptic mainframe terminology into the spoken language without changing a line of code for any mainframe system or application.

"We've created a hybrid environment where the mainframe provides data and processing power and the PC desktop is leveraged to provide intelligent information processing with a familiar interface," says Mike Milling, AO Smith manager of Computer Operations and Tech Support. "Helping transform our legacy environment into custom applications is z/Web-Host from illustro Systems."

z/Web-Host easily transforms any 3270 application into Web-browser applications that anyone can access and understand while, at AO Smith, ensuring all transformed screens adhere to divisional standards. "We had a standard interface and z/Web-Host allowed us to maintain that standard no matter where the application was going to be accessed," says Milling.

Easy Implementation Attracts AO Smith's Attention

In addition to the ability of z/Web-Host to create new screens that conformed to existing standards, Milling feels that the ability to fully manipulate data on the new screens was a key selling point. "I've seen 3270 emulation and protocol converters but z/Web-Host goes way beyond that functionality," he says. "With z/Web-Host we can custom design any screen we want, using HTML tools; we can add tags, drop-downs, hints and tutorials, and combine HTML and JavaScript capabilities in conjunction with mainframe application logic. We've done this for our COPICS manufacturing application and have transformed it dramatically."

z/Web-Host can also help simplify applications for users. For example, an AO Smith Bill of Materials application once required users to toggle through as many as 50 different green screens to complete entry and information processing. After transforming the application with z/Web-Host into a handful of screens—and in some cases, depending on the required process, a single screen—users of the application can get more work done, faster. "We can also tag field names with true descriptions and are no longer limited to the mainframe



3270 screen size limitation," says Milling.

Additionally, z/Web-Host has enabled the company to quickly—and successfully—incorporate access for their peers in China. "Not only can the true descriptions be in English, we can convert them into any language we need," Milling emphasizes. "This allows us to put all presentations, instructions and anything else that needs to be localized into the language of that region. It substantially reduces the learning curve around the world." And it does it without impacting the proven, working mainframe applications.

AO Smith uses a standard Web template that has the desired look and feel of the new Web interface. Then, z/Web-Host merges the original 3270 data dynamically to create new Web-browser output. This makes the process easily affordable with skills that are readily available. "We can hire Web designers anytime we want," says Milling. "It's much more difficult to find mainframe programmers to make changes to support a mainframe-to-Web project."

z/Web-Host runs native on z/OS-OS/390 or VSE/ESA. z/Web-Host is part of the z/Ware family of products that also includes z/XML-Host, which provides transformation of 3270 application data into XML documents for use with Web Services. **Z**

The z/Ware products are available from illustro Systems International, LLC, 1950 Stemmons Freeway, Suite 5001, Dallas, TX 75207. North America 866-445-5878; outside North America 214-800-8900; Website: www.illustro.com.