A solution for process-oriented document production

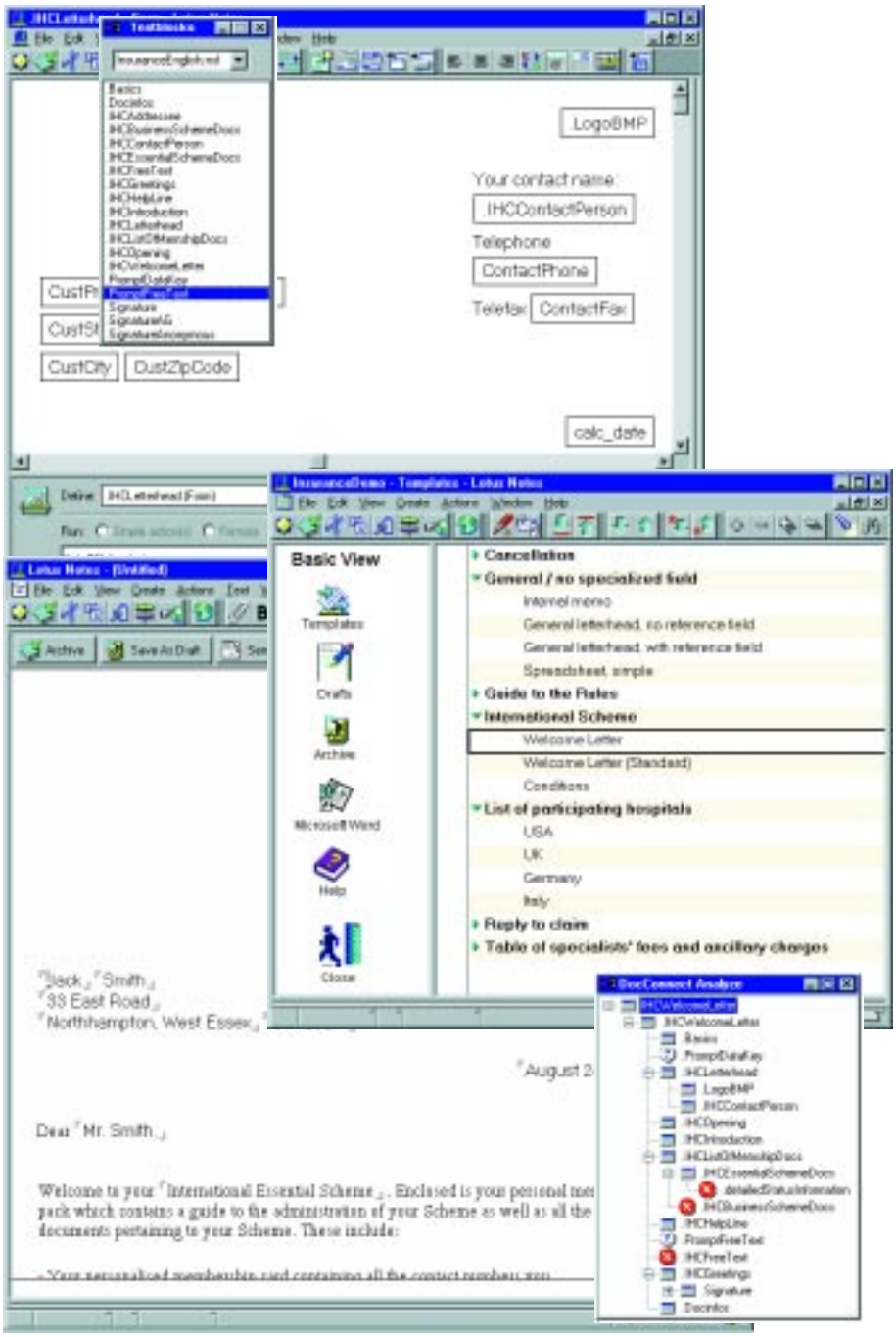
IBM

DocumentConnect

Highlights

- **Dynamic document production with building blocks**
- **Easy to use for the end user and the administrator**
- **Integration of data from relational databases or other sources**
- **Access to DocumentConnect via Lotus Notes, Web browser, or existing business applications**
- **Security through protected text blocks and hierarchical access control**
- **Protection of your investments: coexistence with and migration of your existing systems**
- **Supported platforms: Windows NT, Windows 95, OS/2, AIX, OS/400, OS/390**

Curious? Read on!



MICROSOFT WINDOWS NT

Microsoft Windows 95

OS/2

DocumentConnect description

Many business processes create documents. These documents are either printed and mailed to customers or they are distributed in some other way. In most cases content and layout are defined by the process already in place, or by corporate design guidelines, or both. The data contained is different and, in the end, the data defines the content also. The use of predefined document templates, building blocks, and built-in logic results in:

- High productivity
- Automation
- Control and legal security

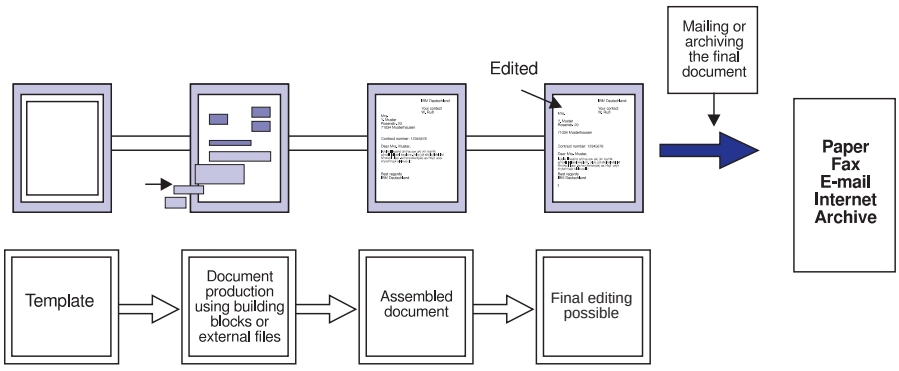
This is where DocumentConnect comes into play, a solution for process-oriented document production.

DocumentConnect is based on Lotus Notes and processes building blocks. Building blocks are predefined elements consisting of text, images, or other objects. They are either defined in Lotus Notes as Forms or stored externally, for example, as SGML files. The resulting documents can be printed and mailed or processed electronically.
(→ "DocumentConnect as the solution")

The document production with DocumentConnect can be initiated either in Lotus Notes, via a Web browser, or within business applications. In doing so, external data from relational databases or other sources as well as user-prompted data can be integrated into the composition process. The user prompt is possible during the document composition not only in Lotus Notes but also via the Web browser. The documents are assembled automatically while the document production runs in the background without the necessity to start Lotus Notes.
(→ "DocumentConnect design")

In designing DocumentConnect, emphasis was placed on easy handling and high flexibility. In order to define document templates and building blocks, the only knowledge needed is on Lotus Notes. With the help of Lotus Notes Navigators and Views the user interface can be freely defined. For the user-prompt dialog just ordinary Lotus Notes Forms are used as input masks. Even Lotus Notes Actions can be used in building blocks, which makes it easy to integrate DocumentConnect in the workflow.

DocumentConnect as the solution



DocumentConnect What advantages does it offer?

For management

Stay competitive through future technology.
High productivity and legal security: Enterprise wide introduction of standardized document templates.
Save time and money with a highly efficient document production process.
Investment protection:

- Programs to analyze existing building blocks
- Semiautomatic conversion of existing building blocks
- Ability to use existing parameter determination programs or other applications on the host

Cost savings: Administrator and end user do not need any special education other than Lotus Notes knowledge.

For the end user

The end user accesses DocumentConnect through Lotus Notes, via a Web browser, or directly from his business application:

- User-friendly handling
- Flexible data input

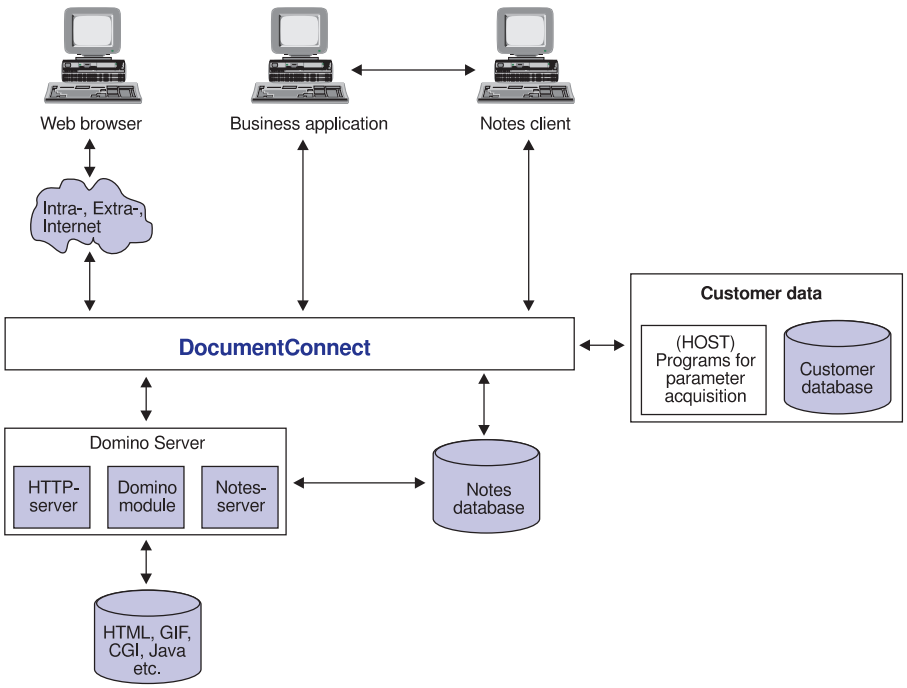
The end user has access to predefined building blocks, databases, or external data. Viewing, manual postprocessing, and printing of the final document can take place in:

- Lotus Notes
- A word processor
- Web browser

In distributing the final documents the user has a variety of possibilities to choose from, for example, via paper, fax, Internet, e-mail and so on.

The end user can store his personal documents in his own archive database.

DocumentConnect design



For the administrator

The whole administration is based on the standard functionality of Lotus Notes. The administrator can easily and freely design building blocks without the need of programming:

- All the design elements provided by Lotus Notes can be used for the contents of the building blocks
- The building blocks can be freely arranged
- Recursion of the building blocks is not limited
- Defining the building blocks through composition- and micro-logic
- Access to external data

References to external sources are possible:

- Files, for example, external building blocks as SGML files
- EDM systems (Electronic Document Management systems), for example, domino.doc

The administrator is free to design the user interface in Lotus Notes and the Web browser through:

- Easy categorization of document templates
- The use of Lotus Notes Navigators
- The free and easy definition of the input masks

DocumentConnect functions

The key features of DocumentConnect are:

- A system for process-oriented document production with dynamic document templates: The structure and contents of the documents are determined during document assembly through composition- and micro-logic.
- Access to external data from relational databases or other sources. Easy access to data at every step of the composition process via standard interfaces.
- Easy definition of building blocks: Just use the standard design features of Lotus Notes.
- The user is prompted for additional data: Easy creation of input masks by using Lotus Notes design features for Forms - just create a Lotus Notes Form and use it as input mask.
- Building blocks may contain other building blocks. The recursion level is not limited. This results in a high re-used potential.
- Internal and external elements: Building blocks may be in Lotus Notes or can be retrieved from external sources, for example, the file system or an Electronic Document Management system.
- Dynamical feature definition: An administrator can easily define new features for processing the final document. The Lotus Notes Actions and corresponding functions can be defined as text blocks. Use different features for different document templates.
- 100% automation: The document assembly can be started from any program. Lotus Notes does not have to be started.

- Document assembly can run on the Domino server.

- Internet connection: Start the composition process from any Web browser. Prompt the user for additional input data using the browser without creating specific web input masks. Edit nonprotected areas and view the final document in the browser. Store the final document on the Domino server.

- Control over content and data: The administrator can define text elements and fields that cannot be modified by the end user.

- Security and control is guaranteed by the Lotus Notes hierarchical access control, audit trails and cryptography.

- Easy to use for the end user and the administrator.

- Built in features for processing the final document:
  - Save it as draft for later completion.
  - Store it in a Lotus Notes archive database with full text search. This archive database, together with Lotus Notes agents, can be used to move documents to corporate archives.
  - Export the document to other formats (Microsoft Word, Lotus WordPro, AFP, PostScript).
  - Send it as e-mail or fax.

- Multimedia enabled: Use images, audio, and video.

- DocumentConnect can be used in conjunction with IBM's Application Support Facility (ASF). This function protects customer investments in host applications as well as in printing and mailing hardware:
  - ASF resources can be accessed and modified by the administrator, in particular: Parameter Definitions and Document Definitions.
  - DocumentConnect can invoke ASF mainframe functions and thus use Parameter Determination Programs and other host applications.
  - DocumentConnect can function as an ASF Client for document composition on the host and individual text entry on the workstation. This function is also available for mobile users. Lotus Notes mechanisms are used to "replicate" composition and print requests to ASF for later central processing and printing.
  - AFP data stream can be created on the workstation and passed to ASF for postprocessing.

- Migration from existing systems, for example, ASF or M/Text, are part of the design.

The following operating systems are supported:

For the Lotus Domino server:
Microsoft Windows NT, IBM OS/2 Warp, AIX, OS/390, OS/400

For the Lotus Notes Client (Version 4.5 or better):
Microsoft Windows NT or Windows 95, IBM OS/2 Warp, AIX

For the Browser Client:
Any operating system that supports Web browser

This solution and the corresponding adjustments for the customer can be offered within the scope of a service offering.
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