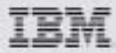


Daniel Altmann – The IBM cataloguer



Software Group



Daniel Altmann, Ancron

A complete catalogue, accessible to the customer, containing all of the more than 10,000 IBM software products and services was not available until recently. Daniel Altmann, 34, founder and managing director of Ancron, tackled the extensive IBM product range in 2007 and launched the first online portal for IBM software products. He was available for a short discussion, and explained how his company enables even small and medium-sized companies to have clear and easy access to the product range.

A Webshop was developed, through which all IBM software products and technologies can be bought or rented – the software license portal. Daniel Altmann explains the original idea which led to the construction of the platform.

Daniel Altmann: „It all started six years ago. I founded a community specialized in Lotus Notes for business partners, their competencies and their products. The idea behind it was that we wanted to sell products and undertake central, customer-oriented marketing. The idea for the license portal actually arose just a year ago. It was clear to me that these communities needed to be free of charge, i.e. they could not have a commercial background if they were to function. I therefore needed to find a way to finance them – this was the actual decisive point in the development of the IBM license portal.“

The core of the platform is the database, on which all information about all IBM products and technologies is stored. It was precisely the creation of this database that formed the great challenge, and which had to be tackled first of all. Daniel Altmann explains the development process.

Daniel Altmann: „We started with an Excel-based price list. We then considered which information could be relevant and important to the customer. After this, we started to build up a logic based on this. It was our aim to make the customer’s search for IBM products and prices as simple as possible.“

Over 1,000 working hours were invested in the creation of this database. Although many people considered this to be an impossibility, Daniel Altmann, the IBM cataloguer, overcame this challenge with great effort and perseverance.

Daniel Altmann: „The challenges lay primarily in the data structures and their construction. As you certainly know, the IBM price list has changed over the course of time. New products have been added; there are almost monthly acquisitions of new companies, which also need to be integrated. Given these conditions, it was important to create consistent data with which we can produce virtually perfect information.“

In addition to the software license portal, Ancron launched other portals for the IBM brands Lotus and WebSphere. Moreover, the company offers its customers appropriate consultancy services and cultivates intensive collaboration with other IBM business partners.

Daniel Altmann: „Our core business is dealing with information and software products. With the portals, we have created two possibilities for handling this business. On the one hand we sell solutions and resources for and with IBM business partners. On the other hand we offer IBM software. Over the past two years, we have created a partner network with approximately 500 companies. The portfolio comprises approximately 2,000 partner products.“

The seven-person team from Ancron is working intensively to develop the portals further, and to make them more attractive for the users. Finally, Daniel Altmann explains how his portals should be expanded and improved in the future.

Daniel Altmann: „In the future we will open up our portals significantly. Thereby, each partner, who offers products and services on enterprisecollaboration.de and enterprisebusinessintegration.de, will be able to manage them themselves. We will therefore only act as a hub or portal provider, and offer a free community on which customers and partners can come together and build up reciprocal business relationships. The knowledge from the over 1,000 software license portal users should be extracted and flow into the portal. The competencies of the users can consequently be given expression on the portal; they will be made available in a so-called ‚Social Media‘, which offers the visitor useful videos, links to presentations, links to Wikis etc. In addition, we will offer a special licensing Wiki which covers the most frequent questions. We will continue to include rankings with customer statements, references and also technical information in the portal. If a customer is interested in a product he can, for example, obtain information about beta releases. A significant step forward is the planned development of a Software Advisor, which helps the customer to find the right software within the IBM world, and which also indicates his optimal path to licensing.“



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