

Ars Technica

The Art of Technology



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When Ken Fisher learned that his company's newly published book exceeded his projected sales for the first week by almost 400%, he and his staff were overjoyed. But his jubilation quickly simmered when he remembered an important fact - the orders needed to be fulfilled.



How were they going to ship nearly 800 books in one week? Enter Endicia.

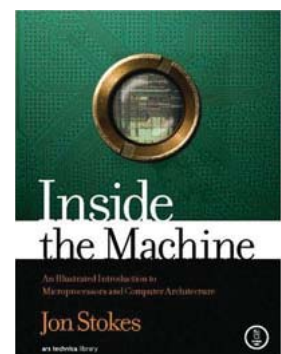
Background. Ken is the Editor in Chief of Ars Technica (rhymes with "cars"), an online magazine covering news and trends in the technology marketplace. Since 1998 "Ars", as it's affectionately known by its readers, has developed a loyal following of hardcore tech-enthusiasts and IT professionals. The key to Ars success is that the writing staff consider themselves "tech experts first and journalists second," Ken says.

The brand loyalty Ars has had as an online publication naturally led to them opening the Ars Emporium section on their site. Cool Ars swag such as logo hoodies and Sumo Wrestler stress relievers sold at a steady rate of about 2-3 items per day. Ken and his team would ship the orders as they came in using the free limited web based services offered by USPS or PayPal. It seemed like a quick and easy shipping solution for the handful of brand building products they offered.

Everything changed on Saturday December 2, 2006 when they added Inside The Machine by Ars Co-Founder, Jon Stokes to their shop inventory. The full-color illustrated hardcover book explores the architecture of microprocessors and how they operate. It's a highly technical book written in style that's easily digestible by gearheads and non-gearheads alike.

In the next 2 days they sold 400 copies and an additional 400 before Christmas. Ken needed to implement a new robust shipping solution to allow his team to fulfill the orders. It also needed to be extremely cost effective since they were shipping the books for free.

"It was quite scary," said Ken.



Endicia's Role. MonsterCommerce, who handles the online orders for Ars Emporium, recommended that Ken contact Endicia – since MonsterCommerce's software was already integrated with Endicia's postage service. After calling and working with an Endicia sales representative, Ken chose the best solution for Ars. Within the next three days Ars fulfilled all 800 orders.

It was actually pretty simple. Ken opened an Endicia Premium Account. With Endicia's software he was able to batch print labels that shared the same postage class and weight – this is how he divided the order list. He created a separate address book for each batch of orders, selected all the addresses in a book, and clicked "print."

All the labels were printed on a standard laser printer with Avery 5168 labels. Using simple customization, Ken was able to add the Ars logo to them. Ken states:

"The labels looked completely professional, yet we were utterly clueless about how we were going to ship these books two days before we signed up with Endicia."

The whole project was done in-house, literally. With pallets of books stacked in Ken's family room, it took the Ars team about 10 hours of actual work time to ship the orders. Their Endicia account was opened on December 14th and almost 800 orders were shipped by the evening of the 16th. Ken feels he saved at least \$500 and 20-25 hours of work by using Endicia.

The Future. Endicia is now the only way Ars ships their store orders. Copies of Inside The Machine are sold every day and order fulfillment has become a breeze. Ken says half-jokingly that he recently added a second title. "I'm now both the Editor-In-Chief and Head of the Shipping Department."

To learn more about Ars Technica, visit www.arstechnica.com.

