

CASE STUDY: WCI Steel



WCI Steel, Inc., an integrated flat-rolled steel producer based in **Warren, Ohio**, is a leader in the custom steel market. It specializes in producing high-quality custom carbon, alloy and electrical steel products and offers approximately 185 grades of high-quality steel.

Its large customer base includes automotive manufacturers, pipe and tube fabricators, steel service centers, construction industries, cold-roll strip converters as well as appliance and electrical equipment manufacturers. Just some of the many end uses for WCI Steel products include car bumpers and side door intrusion beams, garden tools, golf club shafts, aircraft parts and culverts for the construction industry.

WCI Steel [www.wcisteel.com] was formed as an independent steel company in 1988. However, the plant's steelmaking heritage in Warren, OH dates back all the way to **1912**, when the **Trumbull Steel Company** first began making steel on the site where WCI now stands.

WCI Steel's market leadership role is a direct result of its consistently high product quality standards, commitment to customer satisfaction and its wide range of product capabilities. Its success when it comes to customer satisfaction is amply testified by its **# 1** ranking in **1999** for customer service and on-time delivery by the Jacobson Survey – the industry's leading voice on such matters.

To maintain this ranking, WCI is continually striving to improve the level of service it delivers its customer base. This ResQNet **ResQPortal** [[August 2000 Newsletter & page 4](#)] case study deals with WCI's latest initiative to provide even better and faster service to its customers.



WCI Steel's Basic Oxygen Furnace where molten iron from the blast furnace is changed into liquid steel at the rate of 160,000 tons of steel a month.

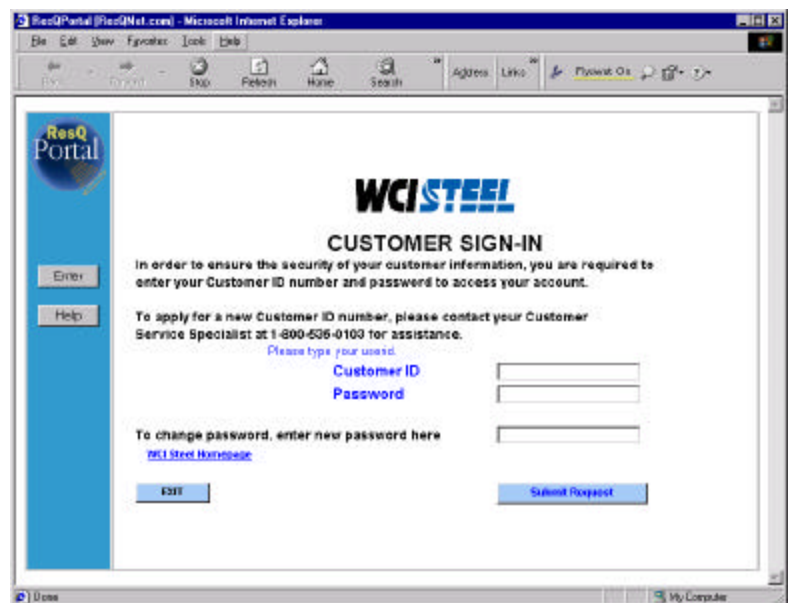
source: WCI Steel

Online Order Status

WCI's customers need regular, up to-date information on the production and delivery status of their orders. Until the ResQPortal-based system was implemented, there was no online system through which customers could obtain this information. Customer order status information is understandably confidential and sensitive and WCI would only consider an online system that would provide guaranteed end-to-end security with password-protected access.

WCI also wanted to ensure that any online system they implemented would also be extremely user friendly. Prior to the advent of the online order information status system, customers had to rely on telephone calls and faxes to get the information they needed.

The customer order tracking application is mainframe resident and is maintained on an 'outsourced' basis by **Computer Sciences**



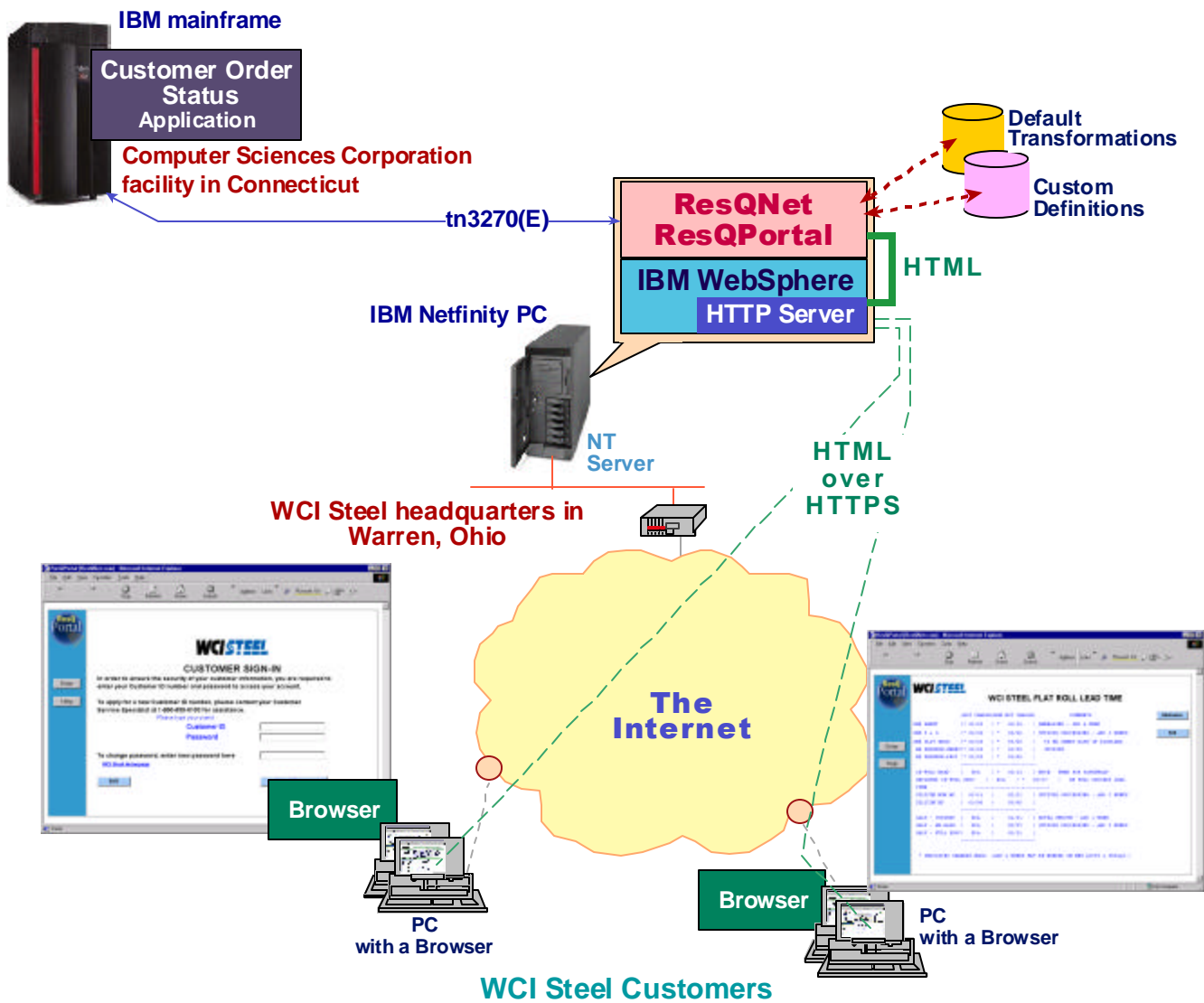
WCI Steel's ResQPortal 'front-ended' customer sign-on screen to their mainframe resident order status application

Corporation (CSC) – www.csc.com – on one of their IBM **S/390** mainframes in Connecticut. What WCI thus needed was a proven Web-to-host solution that would meet their stringent security needs and in addition would enable them to easily revitalize the 3270 ‘green’ screen interface to the mainframe application to be user friendly, intuitive and welcoming. ResQPortal, with its acclaimed user interface reengineering capabilities, was an obvious choice.

It was CSC that discovered and recommended ResQPortal to WCI Steel management. **Mr. Jack Little**, a CSC Application Manager, was responsible for evaluating and then implementing the ResQPortal-based solution.

Mr. Little is full of praise for ResQPortal: *“Works very well. Ideal for Web enabling mainframe applications. Not very complex to use. ResQPortal has a lot of potential.”* These comments from Mr. Little just echo and reaffirm the same ‘ease-of-use’ and reliability themes always mentioned by ResQNet customers.

WCI Steel’s new on-line order status system allows registered customers to access their orders via a ResQPortal-powered “point and click” interface. The access to the online system is via WCI Steel’s standard Web site – albeit only invocable by pre-authorized users. Using this service, WCI’s customers can gain up to-date access to pertinent and valuable



The overall architecture of the WCI Steel online customer order status system with Java-based ResQPortal, in this case, running on an NT Server on top of IBM’s WebSphere App. Server and HTTP Server

order information, such as the amount of material produced, material location, approximate processing time and estimated delivery. The online information thus presented to customers is retrieved from WCI's operations control 'mill database' in real-time. Hence the information on the on-line order status is dynamically updated as the material processes through the WCI mill. Using the online system, customers can also check the latest, up-to-date product lead times to assist them in scheduling and placing future orders.

The Bottom Line

Mr. Dave Howard, VP of Commercial at WCI Steel, is responsible for all WCI customer services – and as such also this online order status system. Needless to say, Mr. Howard is

delighted with the new system and has this to say about ResQPortal: "Met all our expectations. Performs very well. Easily customizable. Gave us a very user friendly system. These three factors, along with security and single password log-on were some of our main selection criteria. Now around 350 of our customers regularly use the system. The online system has been active as of September 2000 and we have had no problems."

Yet another representative, real-life Web-to-host case study that clearly demonstrates the power and potential of leading solutions like ResQPortal.



WCI's famous blast furnace which converts, per the basic tenants of steelmaking, a precise mixture of coke, iron ore and limestone into molten iron, at a rate averaging 4,000 tons of molten iron a day.

source: WCI Steel

ResQPortal revitalized mainframe screens at WCI Steel

