

HIS' SMART DECISION OF MOVING OUT OF TECHNOLOGY OBSOLESCENCE THROUGH ARTINSOFT'S INFORMIX 4GL TO JAVA MIGRATION SOLUTION

"ArtinSoft has given us the opportunity to dramatically improve the services that Universities can provide in support of the students. Using Freedom® to migrate our old system across a paradigm shift to a leading edge language has saved a great deal of money and development time for us. ArtinSoft has a truly impressive service to offer any public or private sector organization. I did not believe what they could do until I saw it with my own eyes – a remarkable scientific breakthrough."

– Dr Bernard Hartung, Deputy Director, Hochschul Informations System

HIS (Hochschul-Informations-System GmbH) is a strategically important organization who develops mission critical software applications for the Higher Education sector in Germany. "It is the combination of Java and Informix's Java-optimized database platform which will enable HIS to deliver its strategy to develop its higher education operations for the foreseeable future," explained Wilfried Schramm, responsible of Java developments for HIS. "What was really exciting about this migration project was ArtinSoft's ability to migrate our system from a procedural Informix® 4GL language paradigm direct to the fully maintainable object-oriented paradigm of Java. Initially, I was skeptical that such a transformation was technically feasible. Up until now, I had always thought such a change was impossible. ArtinSoft's Freedom® programming language migration service has thrown out the now dated concept that business logic could not be recycled unless it was exhaustively re-written or customized on an out-of-the-shelf package. We challenged ArtinSoft to recycle our business logic using their proprietary process. Not only did they complete the project with impressive speed but the quality of Java produced was excellent. This conversion to Java project would have tied up our resources for months. I also like the idea that our existing 4GL programmers can migrate to the Java environment. After all, they are the experts in the system and their knowledge is very valuable to us."

To achieve its objectives, HIS specified the following target architecture:

- Programming language: Java
- Database: Informix IDS2000
- IDE: Borland JBuilder 3.5
- Operating system: Windows NT

Key project Issues

"The systems developed by HIS are used in many of the Universities and Higher Education establishments in Germany", said Rod MacKenzie-Shannon, ArtinSoft's Director of Services. "These systems are critical to the success of the services that are provided by the Universities to their student and staff population. In addition, it is hoped that the systems can be subsequently developed to web-enable some of the core processes such as student registration. Such important systems need to be truly robust, requiring the minimum of maintenance. So the

migration of their existing Informix 4GL system to a more modern programming language such as Java has enabled their application to be more flexibly deployed to meet the constantly changing needs of the Education sector. What we have done is to transform the HIS application to enable significant operational expansion of their system, the re-use of business logic objects and to upgrade the University support systems throughout Germany. HIS has been able to concentrate their resources on adding value to their system instead of taking months, if not man years of development time recreating their existing logic and testing it."

Future benefits

Dr Hartung expresses excitement about the new opportunities that will be open to HIS in the future: "Now that we are in the Java environment, the cost of deployment can be kept to a minimum, particularly as any 'entry level' desktop hardware can be used. We can also reduce the number of languages we had to support to run the old system. Now that it is in Java, our application can be re-architected much more readily, including the more efficient distribution of middleware and driving Java into the engine to optimize transaction performance. ArtinSoft has acted as a very valuable bridge from the older sunseting to the latest sunrise technologies, including the database, in a single, simple step. I am very pleased with the way that ArtinSoft and Informix worked closely together to create a world-beating solution in an astoundingly short time."

About HIS Hochschul-Informationssystem

HIS is a highly respected software house operating on behalf of the German government to develop the applications necessary for the productive and efficient operation of University services systems. Currently, HIS provides applications for tasks such as managing student enrollment and services, organization of tests and exams, personnel and finances for universities throughout Germany. Furthermore, HIS installs, maintains and updates the systems. Part of HIS's mission is to ensure that universities have access to and are provided with the best technologies and solutions to meet the increasing needs of a highly dynamic education sector in Germany.

For more information, visit the HIS Web site at www.his.de