
Municipalities waste millions on software investments

According to a study by the Swiss consulting agency FDM&M, information technology costs for surveyed municipalities run 18% over budget on average. However, amongst those surveyed, there were indeed large differences: while some municipalities exceed their budgets by a great deal, others work very efficiently. The municipality of Ittigen displays, as winner, the ways in which IT costs can be significantly reduced.

Freiburg, 8 March 2007. According to a survey of Swiss municipalities, only about a third of those questioned have efficiently mastered the age of the internet. Some have overrun their planned costs by more than 30%, while others manage their costs very exactly. Almost half of the budgets of these communities is taken up by software. Due to lack of comprehension of the market, many of these municipalities choose the best-known software vendors, thereby missing the competitors offering the same performance at significantly more reasonable prices. More than half of these communities do not even put the contract up for bidding while searching for the proper software provider.

„Two thirds of the surveyed municipalities have optimization potential in the area of IT,“ says the CEO of FDM&M, Oliver Fiechter. The consulting firm calculated an efficiency indicator, which outputs how reasonably the IT investments by these municipalities are being used. Among the factors taken into account were IT budgets, the number of employees and computer workstations, the number of residents in the area, the amount of unplanned costs, the efficiency of the expenditures for software, and the satisfaction of employees with the selected software programs.

Of their IT budgets, the municipalities spend on average 14 percent on network infrastructure, 22 percent on hardware, 17 percent on personnel, and fully 47 percent on software.

Among communities with more than 10,000 residents, the municipality of Ittigen came in at first place. They see the use of standardized products whenever possible as a factor in their success: „With the use of standard

software, costs for us do not spin out of control, and services can be calculated exactly and in advance," remarked Markus Moog, IT Director of the district of Ittingen. So, for example, the community uses a portal, created with the standard software Intrexx Xtreme, from the vendor United Planet. „The costs for this portal were comparatively small and, with numerous completed templates, it was not necessary to reinvent the wheel," says Gregory Roth of the IT department. Currently, the community runs room reservations, meeting summary management, absence calendars, the booking and administration of service vehicles, documents management, and much more on the portal. Via access to the administrative database, key data will constantly be available in the portal. With these applications alone, the community of Ittingen has already saved enormous administrative costs.

Specially designed for the creation and administration of intranet portals, the German vendor United Planet, with their software, Intrexx Xtreme, have made available numerous completed templates and elements. This means that development targets will be, as a rule, much more quickly reached than with previous development solutions. With this, United Planet belongs to the market leaders in the sector of mid-size and public administrations in Germany and Switzerland, and now offers their solutions worldwide.

For the IT department of Markus Moog and Gregory Roth, these applications were not quite sufficient. They created with Intrexx Xtreme an application for the administration of IT inventory: in it, all components that are in use in the service center of the municipality are entered, with their characteristics, serial number, purchase date, and workstation. This allows the team to recognize immediately in the case of internal requests or problems the exact device in question, whether the warranty time is still in effect, or which errors have already come up in the past. With it, requests for the IT department are processed significantly quicker and more efficiently.

In addition to the adherence to all policies and the optimization of processes, the portal of the municipality of Ittigen also provides for a good working atmosphere: via the „News“ application, the employees are all

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kept up to speed. It informs them of special occasions and functions, and new employees will be duly introduced.

With it, the community of Ittigen stands far in advance of other villages and cities that have put off the electronic upgrade of their administrations for years. The example makes it especially clear that neither sorcery, nor a mammoth project is necessary. An optimized IT strategy requires only the proper software and the boldness to implement it.

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About United Planet

With Intrexx Xtreme, the software vendor United Planet is counted among the market leaders in the segment of private mid-size companies, public administrations, and organizations in Germany. With this sector-neutral standard software, intranets, enterprise portals, and web applications can be created and run with the most modern of functions extremely quickly. Creating a portal with Intrexx Xtreme can be made to exact specifications and can be constructed from already existing components. Several thousand businesses worldwide already run their business processes via an Intrexx portal and profit thereby from immense cost savings.

United Planet is one of the few software firms that specialize exclusively on the development of portal software. In addition to development at the head office at Freiburg, Germany, a wide-reaching network of partners and consultants stand ready to develop individual solutions to optimize business processes for customers.

As one of the founding members of the market segment of complete, “out-of-the-box” and inexpensive intranets, the now internationally active company is a technological leader with its Intrexx Xtreme software. This Java-based software is delivered completely on one DVD and runs on Windows, Linux, and Sun Solaris. Intrexx portals make it possible to integrate third-party data from ERP solutions from almost any vendor (SAP, Microsoft, Sage, etc.); a Business Adapter assumes control of data modeling and user management for the corresponding software.

The integration of a Process Manager into the newest version of Intrexx Xtreme software shows the central role that the portal software plays in an organization: out of the intranet of the past, the central processing hub of a business has developed. Out of the plain-looking browser interface with static contents, a living interface for all kinds of business applications and processes has sprung up. Quality, knowledge, and process management, as well as data administration, is just some of the many solutions ready today.

Intrexx and United Planet have received more than 15 awards and innovation prizes internationally.

For more information, visit www.intrexx.com.

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