



Identity Management for eGovernment

Braunschweig increases the efficiency of its administrative processes

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Automating routine tasks

The City of Braunschweig is using Identity Management from Siemens to keep its Web-based citizen information system up-to-date. And with the latest version of this solution, Braunschweig is also providing greater security for sensitive information and enabling better data quality.

The City of Braunschweig and the challenge

Braunschweig is a prosperous city. Largely unnoticed by the German public, Lower Saxony's second-largest city (with a population of about 240,000) has established itself as a site for top-flight international research. The 15 leading research institutions in the city include the Institute for eBusiness of Braunschweig/Wolfenbüttel University of Applied Science, one of Germany's national competence centers for eGovernment.

The Braunschweig city administration is also playing a pioneering role in this sector. "A major step down the road to eGovernment is our knowledge database in the Internet," says Dr. Jürgen Willner, Head of Information and Communication Technology in the city administration. The city's services and organizational units are presented in about 650 entries at www.braunschweig.de/waswowie

Each entry collates all the information of importance for a particular service, such as what documents are required for an application, the costs, application deadlines, opening hours of the responsible department and the contact persons.

The goal is to give the residents of the city online access to the most important information – quickly, comprehensively and around-the-clock – and thus to help them avoid unnecessary visits to public offices.

To make certain that this "Guide Through the Maze of Bureaucracy," as it is called, is always up-to-date, all information on employees, phone numbers, e-mail addresses and street addresses of offices is not incorporated manually, but imported automatically from an array of databases.

A metadirectory acts as a clearing house, collecting data from the different sources – e.g. a human resources database, the user management system for phone systems and the PC network or building management system – before consolidating it and making it available again to every connected application in real time.

The Solution: A consistent directory

"Changes are entered just once and then automatically replicated in all connected directories," explains Sven Rethmann, head of Braunschweig's IT hotline and administrator of the metadirectory solution. That means that the individual departments no longer need to worry about the availability of information relevant throughout the organization, but only that of the data relating to them. The metadirectory leaves the data where it is generated and belongs. And yet, with the help of synchronization and replication tools, there emerges a logically consistent, globally available directory.



If a city employee leaves and another person fills the post, the information given on the city's Internet portal, in the electronic phone directory or in the user management system for workplace computers is also updated as soon as the new entries are made in the HR database. And given that there are some 3,800 employees, 2,600 networked PCs, 70 servers and about 300 pieces of real estate, quite a few changes are made every day. "750 to 1,000 change jobs a month," is the figure estimated by Rethmann's deputy Ralf Romaker. The manual assignment of user rights, creation of new phone numbers or correction of addresses after a move would take too long and tie up considerable staff capacity.

That is why the city began the search for a solution for wide-scale automation of these processes in 2003. "There were many criteria that played a role in our choice," recalls Romaker. For example, the solution had to support the query standard LDAP (Lightweight Directory Access Protocol) and the directory server standard X.500.

Finally, after a thorough assessment of the individual products, DirXcompact from Siemens – the entry-solution at the time – was selected. More and more applications were integrated in the metadirectory in several stages and the software updated.

By installing the latest version of DirX Identity, Braunschweig is now taking a giant leap forward, from a simple directory service to identity management. This involves the creation and maintenance of identities, administration of authorizations and policies, user and access management and access control. The foundation for all this is laid by defined responsibilities, rules, policies and roles at the organization. On this basis, users are assigned global rights or bundles of permissions for using applications and services. Identity Management makes certain that these permissions are granted, denied, revoked and monitored dynamically.

The benefit: Better quality of data

"If we want to handle our work with the same number of employees – and our strained budgets tell us we have no alternative – we have to automate routine processes on a large scale," says Dr. Jürgen Willner. That is why Braunschweig plans to leverage the possibilities offered by DirX Identity more strongly in the future. While authorization for network access or a new phone number used to be applied for in writing and manually approved by supervisors, this process is to be handled electronically in the future.

"That will not only reduce our workload and the time employees have to wait – it can also be documented seamlessly," notes Sven Rethmann. That is important when it comes to accessing sensitive information, for example. The value of the better quality of data is difficult to measure in euros and cents. Still, the clear lesson learned in Braunschweig is that the city's IT department can now cope with far more tasks of a more complex nature in a shorter time and with the same number of employees.



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The business unit Identity Management and Biometrics provides products and services for identity and access management (IAM) and biometrics.

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