



REFERENCE

tv.tv.de – Delivery of configurable portal solution based on open source portal components

In order to offer business partners such as Kabel Deutschland, for example, a range of television services, tv.tv Services decided to develop an easy to configure portal enabling tv.tv staff to integrate individual program services directly into the online experience world of their customers. Consequently, exclusive use of open source portal components was made as basic technologies.

Demands made on a “do-it-yourself” portal for technical laypersons

In comparison with other portal projects, the special aspect of this project scope consisted in creating optimal system user convenience for the responsible department at tv.tv Services. “We told mgm that we need a solution that our team can use immediately and without external support”, as Tassilo Raesig, Head of Production and Operations at tv.tv Services, recalls the first talks with mgm. This entailed the following in particular:

- Technical administration (such as the provision of an individualized portal version for business partners) must be able to be executed independently by the tv.tv team and only drawing on HTML proficiency.
- It must be possible to flexibly integrate editorial content (such as help functions, additional information on individual program points) into the solution.

As business critical component for own and external customers, the portal had to meet additional requirements:

- High production reliability must be ensured in order to implement changes with a minimum of downtime.
- Ensuring technical scalability for more than 200 page impressions per second.
- The dissemination of the tv.tv solution must not be limited by commercial aspects (such as licenses).

tv.tv.de
alles andere ist nur fernsehen

“The mgm team was quick to understand our wishes and in spite of the tight time frame they brought our system into production in a highly professional and reliable manner.”

Tassilo Raesig

Head of Production and Operations
at tv.tv Services

tv.tv Services GmbH ranks among the leading European EPG (Electronic Program Guide) providers and has been part of the SONY Group since 2003. The company fields an online television magazine that targets general public viewers and business customers. With the help of the magazine, users of digital television recording devices (such as set top boxes and TV cards for example) can program their reception in such way as to record their selected television programs any time and any place.

Scalable architecture without frills

In view of the business requirements of tvtv Services, a classic portal platform was not an option. Instead, a lean architecture with selected open source components was defined.

The solution is mainly based on the components of Axis as web service framework as well as Hibernate for O/R mapping. In addition, Velocity as template engine is harnessed for the dynamically generated TV program pages, for example. Thanks to the intelligent combination of these components in combination with the easy to learn administration environment the respective department was already able to define new program contents independently on the portal (the dynamic pages of the portal) after a ten-minute introduction. openEdit as content management system (CMS) was chosen as the technical component for the creation of editorial contents. In addition to intuitive operability, the integration capabilities and the file based content repository were the technical reasons for this choice.

In order to be able to cope with a high access volume, an Apache web server was installed upstream of the application server (Tomcat).



Figure 1

mgm competence

After presenting the results of the requirements analysis in the "Business Portal" Competence Center at mgm, the assigned team defined a scalable architecture as well as the components for their realization as presented before and their required technical integration level. On this foundation, a small mgm development team implemented the business logic on the portal.

In order to achieve the desired flexibility, all of the elements of the HTML pages (Velocity Templates, CSS files, JavaScript files, etc.) are stored in a database so that changes of the pages can be rapidly issued, also in cluster operations. All of the changes can be safely replicated from the test environment to the production environment.

Customer satisfaction

Shortly after the on-time delivery and the go live of the portal environment the tvtv team was able to perform daily work independently. This task scope includes layout changes, navigation adjustments or the addition of new contents.

In the case of new business partners – acting as key growth drivers of tvtv's business – tvtv Services is also able to independently forge productive connections by way of individual configurations within a matter of a few days.

“The mgm team was quick to understand our wishes and in spite of the tight time frame brought our system into production in a highly professional and reliable manner“, Tassilo Raesig sums up the joint project success.

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references@mgm-tp.com