



Cham District Administrative Office

To create a one-stop government presence online, Cham District Administrative Office and LivingData developed an electronic forms solution based on the Adobe® Intelligent Document Platform

Cham District Administrative Office

- A cross-level public authority administering both state and community business
 - Size: 360 employees
 - Location: Cham, Germany
 - Founded: 1972
- www.landkreis-cham.de

Industry Government

Solutions

- Government Online
- Constituent Self-Service
- Forms Management

Products Used

- Adobe Acrobat®
- Adobe Reader®
- Adobe Form Designer
- Adobe Document Server for Reader Extensions

In Partnership with LivingData GmbH

- Information technology supplier for public services
 - Size: 35 employees
 - Location: Munich, Germany
 - Founded: 1997
- www.livingdata.de

Organization Profile

The Bavarian County Association and state authority is responsible for 39 communities, including 6 urban centers and 5 markets. Approximately 360 employees serve the needs of the businesses and more than 130,000 citizens in the county. Within association, the Cham District Administrative Office is the first local authority to give its citizens the option of filling out forms online, and saving the forms and the information entered. In a pilot project, the 250 forms used by the council were migrated to the Adobe Intelligent Document Platform. The innovative pilot project was implemented with LivingData GmbH, an Adobe partner based in Munich, Germany. LivingData has four offices in Bavaria that supply IT services to the public sector, focusing mainly on the implementation of document management solutions for government.

Challenges Faced

Implement e-government

As part of the CitizenServiceNET project, Cham citizens have a broad range of governmental services and forms available to them online. The aim is to map all services for the administrative district onto a digital landscape and make them easier to use. Document management plays an important role, since nearly all interactions are form-based. As a result, for years the Cham District Administrative Office has sought a solution that would enable it to offer not only electronic forms, but also more comprehensive e-government services.

Improve service while reducing costs

Almost all local authorities have the same problem: despite a static or decreasing workforce and reduced budgets, more administrative responsibility is being assigned at the municipal level. At the same time, municipalities try to provide better service to increase public satisfaction and make the area more attractive. "Without using technology to reduce the work involved, these requirements simply cannot be met," says Gerhard Schmidt, head of the IT organization in the Cham Administrative District. "By using intelligent forms, we have the opportunity to improve service and still stay within budget."

Provide a solution for Bavaria's local governments

What was required was a Web-based solution that could be used not just in Cham, but also in public administrations elsewhere. Open platforms, the use of familiar standards, and implementation of the most up-to-date technologies were essential. In addition, the solution had to be flexible, so that it could be used by other public services with minimal changes. Providing online access to forms was a key area, since most of the forms used by the local governments are identical across the federal state, and therefore could be shared.

“Using the Adobe solutions, we can provide a digital service for our citizens at a realistic cost level. The Adobe solutions play a central role in how we implement our e-government platform.”

Gerhard Schmidt,
Head of the IT organization,
Cham Administrative District

Success Strategy

Working closely with LivingData, the Cham District created an electronic forms (eForms) service built around Adobe Reader software and Adobe Document Server for Reader Extensions. The eForms are designed with Adobe Form Designer, which is easy to use and has outstanding library functions. The product is so efficient that a single Cham employee can create and manage the forms. Once a form has been created, data specific to the public authority, such as the address of the recipient or the name of the reference official, can be retrieved from the Cham District’s database and be merged into the form.

At the local level, Adobe solutions were first used to transform existing static Adobe Portable Document Format (PDF) forms into intelligent documents. The documents are transferred to the Bavarian official network and the appropriate permissions are added, such as the ability to use digital signatures or save the form to a local computer.

Finally, the forms are made available online for download 24 hours a day. Using only the free Adobe Reader software, users can open the forms, fill them out, and save them, including the data that was entered, without the constituent needing additional software.

Benefits

- Reduced the workload of civil servants
- Streamlined the workflow and decreased costs
- Created an open platform for all local authorities

The Cham District Authority has over 250 different forms online, and its Web-based service has struck a timely chord with its citizens, who download the forms more than 1,500 times a month. Advanced functions such as automatic plausibility checks, default entries for fields, and automatically calculated fields will be integrated into the forms in the future, making them easier to fill in, preventing input errors, and reducing the time required to process the form. Combining all these factors, intelligent Adobe PDF forms lead to substantial savings.

The Adobe Intelligent Document Platform and Adobe Reader software offer a technology base for e-government. Experience from other projects has shown that using intelligent Adobe PDF forms can lead to substantial savings—up to 50% per form. As soon as the digital signature is established, the data will be exported directly from Adobe PDF into a digital workflow so the process can be further optimized.

Other localities can also benefit from this development. All of the experience from the Cham pilot project, including the software required and the forms that can be used across the state, are available from LivingData as a full-service package. Rudolf Obenhuber, general manager of LivingData GmbH, sums up his company’s strategy as follows: “Using the Adobe technology platform, we can quickly create a tailor-made, cost-efficient platform that meets e-government requirements.” Soon after the Cham pilot project began, five other counties in Bavaria began to digitize their forms.

“Our goal is reduce the number of times citizens have to visit their municipal offices by making full use of state-of-the art information technology,” says Theo Zellner, member of the Cham County Council and president of the Council of Bavarian Counties.

Schmidt concludes, “Using the Adobe solutions, we can provide a digital service for our citizens at a realistic cost level. The Adobe solutions play a central role in how we implement our e-government platform.”

