



European Bank for Fund Services Chooses DataDirect for Migration to .NET Platform

Goal: In migrating applications to Microsoft .NET platform, needed high-performance data connectivity while reducing maintenance requirements.

Why they chose DataDirect: Provided high-performance and stable data access to Oracle, which they were able to rapidly implement.

Business benefits: As part of the flexible .NET platform, DataDirect gives ebase a future-oriented technological base that allows them to address new business requirements quickly.

Technical benefits: No client software installation is required, which reduces maintenance requirements. Also offers better security and performance than alternative options.

1-800-876-3101

For more information, go to:
www.datadirect.com

For more information on ebase, go to:
www.ebase.com

Business

The European Bank for Fund Services GmbH (ebase) was founded in 2002 as a subsidiary of Cominvest. Cominvest is the result of the fusion of ADIG Investment GmbH and Commerzinvest. The parent company of ebase and Cominvest is the Commerzbank AG.

Ebase is one of the largest service platforms for fund sales and a neutral partner for fund procurement and custody. It is exclusively active in the B2B sector. The partners of ebase are prestigious names in the financial services sector: capital asset companies which outsource their product custody services to ebase as well as funds outlets (broker pools, asset managers and insurance companies) which use ebase as a custodian on a product-independent basis.

Challenge

ebase has been operating three Internet applications to date. They wanted to consolidate these applications into one system to achieve an increase in flexibility and performance while reducing maintenance requirements. A further challenge was to provide the application with a new, future-oriented technological base that would ensure its long-term operation.

Background

Since 2000, applications have been developed for sales partners, for the Commerzbank sales department and for end customers. These applications have grown successively, eventually reaching their limits in terms of upgrade potential and performance. With the system reaching maturity, new requirements could only be incorporated at increasing costs and decreasing speed.

At the same time, external circumstances have also changed. A hotly-contested market for service platforms has developed: In 2002, apart from ebase, over a dozen other providers crowded into this market. Established fund sales outlets sought transaction management partners (service platforms for fund sales). Platforms demonstrated their range of services and had to promise a series of new features in order to both keep existing partners and win new ones. For the three Internet applications surviving to this date, this meant implementing extensions such as comprehensive reporting, web warehousing and the option for co-branding (customization of the application).

The above scenario was accompanied by a marked downturn in the financial markets that still continues today. The overall caution of investors also prompted them to return to high-quality consultation with regard to funds transactions. The demand for more consulting has also brought with it increased demands on the systems used. Set against a background of ever tighter IT budgets, this represents an enormous challenge.

Any decision on how to proceed further was to give meaningful consideration to the investments made until now, a point that cannot be

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underestimated. Existing resources – such as hardware, software and employee skills – should be reusable.

Solution

To be able to achieve medium-term savings and respond to future requirements faster and with the best possible efficiency, it was decided to replace all previous applications with a new system based on Microsoft's .NET platform. To meet the sometimes contradictory objectives given above, the applications had to be completely redeveloped while still having recourse to as many proven and familiar features as possible. This was achieved as follows:

- The existing applications based on VB 6 and ASP (Active Server Pages) were migrated to C# and ASP.NET on the platform of Microsoft's new .NET-Framework.
- A database portal based on the .NET technology was created. To make access to the Oracle DBMS (database management system) faster, ebase decided to use DataDirect Technologies' Connect for .NET 100% managed provider. This significantly enhanced data access without a change of hardware.
- Improved maintenance and expandability are the result of, among other things, the proven Microsoft Visual Studio.NET development environment in combination with Windows XP Professional. Specially hardened Windows 2000 servers with Internet Information Server (IIS 5) and .NET Framework are used as server platforms.

Staffing

With regard to the implementation of the project, ebase decided to work with CSC Ploenzke, a leading management consulting company with considerable experience in systems design and e-business integration as well as know-how regarding design, planning, implementing and deployment of extensive and complex .NET Web applications.

Results/ROI

1. Within 4 months, the existing 3 applications (for end customers, sales partners and Commerzbank) were consolidated into one stable, scalable, easily-maintained, integrated portal application and additional new functions were incorporated. The former applications based on VB 6 and ASP were successfully replaced by C# und ASP. NET.
2. A portal (Internet, intranet) was created as an integration basis.
3. The systems takes into account flexible definitions of workflows: changes in the page sequences can be carried out by an ebase administrator while the system is running. Operational maintenance can be carried out by ebase employees without recourse to developers.
4. The application represents an up-to-date and upgradeable environment.
5. Rapidly implemented, high-performance and stable data access to the Oracle DB in the backend is achieved with the aid of DataDirect Technologies' Connect for .NET provider (replacement of ADO and OLE DB).

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6. A simple deployment to the application servers in the secure server net could be attained by means of an MSI file (Installer Package).
7. The online platform is now modular and customisable. In other words, ebase also has to ensure online that the legal stocks of the individual sales partners are uniquely encoded to them with regard to individual accounts, account items, types and variants. Therefore, the data are segregated using different depot types and variants. A simple CMS (Content Management System) was individually developed to manage news, links to forms and the order shop. The contents are displayed in a rules-based, customised view.
8. The texts in the menus and the page contents are multilingual.
9. Reporting functionality was realized by the integration of Crystal Reports.

Next Steps

The following requirements will be implemented in the next development stage of the application:

- Online account statements, additional and more detailed reports (special query parameters), further broker-related sales information,
- Upgraded version of the portal with functions for sales support,
- Establishment of web services for premium cooperation partners.