

DAB bank AG – The “Direkt Anlage Bank” Alfresco Gold Partner Cenit Ag Uses Alfresco as a Basis for Document Management, Collaboration and Fully Digitized Processes

Based in Munich, DAB bank AG is Germany’s first discount broker. As a direct customer service bank, it offers a comprehensive range of services focusing on investment growth and safety using securities. Its products provide solutions for savers, investors and traders. In business banking, DAB bank is a partner for investment firms, fund managers, financial consultants as well as banks and savings and loan institutions.

Challenge

In order to meet future challenges fully prepared and with continued flexibility, DAB planned to introduce the SOA BPM platform as a new foundation technology for the enterprise. The goal was to use a single centralized platform to map complex processes from now on. All process-related documents were to be managed with a powerful document management system.

The first project deployed in the new environment consisted of a B2B customer process: Telephone trade transactions with brokers and other business partners. All order data have to be captured in some kind of ticket. Along with additional documentation, such as order confirmation from trading centers, DAB staff then forwards this data for processing. Of particular importance for a financial institution is to store all documents in compliance with audit-proof requirements.

Until now the process was conducted primarily with hard copies where all documents were printed and filed in folders. Even though DAB bank already has an electronic archive available (IBM FileNet Image Services), it was unable to utilize it for this process, because of architectural concerns.

The new system had to meet several challenging requirements:

- Efficient implementation of new applications and processes
- Agility to change existing processes
- Stability, scalability, performance, cluster capability and ease of administration
- Flexibility in system maintenance (execution of changes, testing, deployment)
- Low operating costs while considering all costs for licensing, support and ongoing maintenance
- Capability to be integrated into the existing system environment
- Capability for further architectural development
- Control and monitoring via a single centralized process engine

Solution

In order to select the appropriate document management system or enterprise content management system, DAB requested the support of CENIT AG, an experienced partner in enterprise information management. Initially, the companies investigated the following solutions for optimized usage given the existing requirements, i.e., IBM FileNet Image Services, IBM FileNet P8 Content Manager, Alfresco and Microsoft Sharepoint.



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Alfresco emerged rather quickly as the best solution due to its integration capabilities and especially due to its CMIS default interface. The Alfresco platform, integrated via CMIS, proved to be a perfect match for the standard DAB technology stack (Linux, Tomcat, Java). Its modular architecture ensures superb scalability and is also very easy to install. Another benefit for DAB and CENIT was the ease with which all required features could be configured. As for implementing the B2B process, the open source solution offered yet another plus.

As a standalone option, Activiti is the foundation for the SOA BPM platform at this time. At the same time, Activity is the integrated Alfresco component, which will serve to implement document-related workflows, e.g. release processes.

After choosing Alfresco as their ECM platform, CENIT assisted DAB with planning, implementing, configuring and customizing the new Alfresco system. The technical integration of Alfresco into the SOA platform was facilitated by the CMIS interface and required very little effort. DAB's industry specific requirements were essentially covered by Alfresco's standard functionality which meant minimal customization. CENIT customized Alfresco Enterprise 4 to meet company specific security requirements and assisted in the setup of rights for the site creation. The user interface Alfresco Share was also tailored exactly to DAB bank's requirements, for instance by creating a specific search form.

ECM experts at CENIT were able to make rapid progress on the project. The lack of an existing system requiring replacement and not having to migrate any documents proved to be a great benefit. Due to the smooth execution of design and configuration of the Alfresco system, the bank was able to deploy the new document management system in just two months.

Results

- Smooth technical integration using a CMIS interface
- Few customization tasks
- Substitution of current processes based on hard copies with fully digitized B2B trading processes
- Archiving and managing 50 to 100 new documents daily
- Simplified search in documents stored audit-proof
- More transparency and control over closed and active processes
- Connecting ten people in a B2B trading process

DAB has been using the Alfresco ECM platform in full production since June 2012. The workflow for a selected process in the security commission trade is now being controlled via the new SOA BPM platform based on Activiti. At present, ten people are working on the electronic documents within the new system. Searches for current or closed transactions are conducted using the customized search form in Alfresco Share. You can search for documents using either meta data or full text.

This provides DAB with significant advantages. The bank is now able to handle the process including all documents electronically, thus eliminating the paper-based workflow. Staff members save time by being able to search stored documents quickly and thoroughly. This increases transparency and control of all closed and active processes.

Based on our experience so far, we can strongly recommend Alfresco, especially its open architecture and its support of common standards.

— Karl Brandner, IT architect at DAB bank AG