

Free State of Saxony

Micro Focus® IDOL enables fast, accurate searches of the German state's information repositories, including geodata, websites, and historical archives.



Overview

The Free State of Saxony is a German state with a population of 4.05 million people. Working with T-Systems, the Saxon State Chancellery introduced the Micro Focus IDOL search solution to provide citizens, administrative departments, and businesses with fast access to information. This includes information available through its websites, geodata repositories, and over 1,000 years of historical archives.

Challenge

Complex Administration

Like most governments, the Free State of Saxony responds to many information requests from its citizens.

"With Micro Focus, we are well-positioned to meet the diverse requirements of the different administrative departments. The Micro Focus IDOL solution is reliable, future-proof, and a safe investment. It is incredibly flexible, meaning we can use it in a broad range of applications."

DIETMAR GATTWINKEL

Consultant
Saxon IT Services

The Saxon State Chancellery previously used a central search solution to respond to these requests. This system integrated with its OpenText content management software and other information systems.

"Right from the start, we wanted to have a search engine that could be used with all our systems and services, so that we wouldn't have to develop a range of search technologies that would require the user to maintain particular knowledge and expertise," says Dietmar Gattwinkel, a former Saxon State Chancellery consultant and now in charge of the base components of the search engines at Saxon IT Services.

However, the Saxon State Chancellery encountered difficulties administering the search solution as it used it to provide searches on a growing number of websites. Additionally, each department was responsible for procuring, implementing, and administering their own search solutions, but there were few employees with the expertise to do this.

Solution

Archiving Software

The Saxon State Chancellery chose the Micro Focus IDOL search solution, which met its need for a configurable system that delivered accurate results quickly.



sachsen.de

At a Glance

Industry

Government

Location

Saxony, Germany

Challenge

The Saxon State Chancellery needed a central solution to search a wide range of information quickly and accurately.

Products and Services

Micro Focus IDOL

Results

- + Indexes millions of records quickly and provides relevant search results
- + Reduces costs by allowing different departments to customize the solution for their needs
- + Future-proofs investment in search, because Micro Focus will update IDOL to solve future search challenges

"We needed search software that could be specifically configured to meet the particular needs of the administrative departments. The search results needed to be better or at least as good as the leading internet search engines in terms of both recall and precision," says Gattwinkel. Recall refers to how likely a document can be located, while precision refers to how relevant the document is to the searcher's request.

"We also wanted a future-proof solution that would allow us to search information and file types in the future that we couldn't even imagine existing at the time," Gattwinkel explains. IDOL's position in Gartner's Magic Quadrant also reassured the organization.

Micro Focus's partner, T-Systems, had in-depth knowledge of IDOL and experience working on similar projects. It also had German-speaking employees. "This meant that we could be sure that we had the right general partner for all of the projects associated with the search solution," says Gattwinkel.

Results

Streamlined Administration

It took less than a year to implement IDOL, which Gattwinkel regards as very fast. T-Systems integrated IDOL with the Saxon State Chancellery's IT systems, created a front end, connected databases, and tested the software. IDOL's connectors made implementation easier.

IDOL was initially used for searches conducted on the Free State of Saxony's websites. This included 150 internet portals under the sachsen.de domain, such as the Minister President's site (ministerpraesident.sachsen.de) and the Amt24 service portal (amt24.sachsen.de), which provides online administrative services for citizens. Every night, the IDOL web crawler indexes most of the sachsen.de portals, indexing changes to more than 100,000 documents.

IDOL's flexibility allows it to be used for multiple search applications. "Developing the website search system was a flagship project for us. Now that we have it, we can, as the central service provider for the Free State of Saxony's administrative departments, provide very effective, reliable, centralized search solutions

tailored to suit the individual needs of the websites, as well as for internal searches," explains Gattwinkel.

Improved Access to Data

Gattwinkel says IDOL has improved information recall and the precision of searches conducted on the Free State of Saxony's websites.

In addition to indexing government websites, IDOL also allows citizens, politicians, administrative departments, and businesses to search Saxony's geodata portal, geoportal.sachsen.de. For example, they can ask: "Is my house located in a river's flood plain?", "Where are the planned industrial areas in a particular region?", or "Where are the wind farms located, and where is there more wind-energy potential?"

IDOL supplies answers to these questions by searching around 3.6 million data records, including web services, files, cartographic data, and standard office documents such as presentations and PDF files. The information is supplied by the Staatsbetrieb Geobasisinformation und Vermessung Sachsen (Saxon State Spatial Data and Land Survey Corporation).

"The search engine dealt with this magnificently, it was a very positive surprise for us," says Gattwinkel. "The Staatsbetrieb Geobasisinformation und Vermessung Sachsen is very satisfied with the search solution, particularly the speed."

IDOL will also allow archivists to search through the metadata records of the Saxon State Archive. The archive contains around 110 kilometers of documents covering nearly 1,100 years of Saxon, German, and European history and is available at five locations. With around 15,000 visitors to the archive and approximately 10,000 written information requests per year, the Saxon State Archive is one of the top three most-used state archives in Germany.

Gattwinkel says the greatest challenge was balancing old archival methods, also called Tektonik, with modern search practices. For centuries, archivists have arranged items in groups, departments, or collections, according to their provenance, time period, or topic. But users are not always aware of this.

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"This balancing act between Tektonik and modern, convenient searching, as well as between the vocabulary used by the specialists and the citizens, was no trivial matter," says Gattwinkel. "With the help of Micro Focus IDOL, we can now make searching the Free State's archives easy and convenient for citizens, experts, scientists, and anyone else who wants to do so," says Gattwinkel. More than 1.5 million data records are indexed using IDOL.

Future-Proofed Search Capabilities

IDOL will also help the Saxon State Chancellery meet future search challenges. For example, the Saxon State Chancellery is considering the use of IDOL to allow video searching.

"The solution is very reliable, future-proof, and a safe investment. Due to its high degree of flexibility, we can adapt it to suit a wide range of applications," says Gattwinkel.

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