

Reference project: Allianz Shared Infrastructure Services



Allianz Shared Infrastructure Services GmbH (ASIC) and Beta Systems implement a cross-platform document archiving system for banks and insurers

The Company

Allianz Shared Infrastructure Services GmbH (ASIC), is a wholly owned subsidiary of Allianz SE and the Allianz Group's IT service provider. The company owns one of Germany's largest online print shops.

Sector

IT services

Facts & Figures

Year of founding: 1998
Employees: about 1,500
Location: Unterföhring, Germany
Managing directors: Dr. Kurt Servatius, Chief Operating Officer; Dr. Markus T. Müller, Chief Technology Officer

The Challenge

ASIC needed to replace their heterogeneous log archiving and print output systems and provide the Allianz Group with a consistent product for all customer systems.

Products Employed

Beta 92, Beta 93, Beta Web Enabler

Benefits of the Beta Systems Solution

By integrating data generated in mainframe-based and distributed systems, Beta 93 can centrally manage all output information. At the same time, Beta 92 facilitates cross-platform archiving of job logs from host and client-server systems.

Competitive Advantage

The Beta Web Enabler empowers users to access documents and lists in each of the 50 host archives without mainframe know-how, which significantly eases the task load of all Allianz employees.

Allianz: Document Processing with Unparalleled Ease

A Beta Systems high-performance archive including a print management system has been easing the daily document handling burden of 5,000 Allianz Deutschland employees for some time now. It allows cross-platform management of host output lists and consistent archiving of job logs, lists and client/server documents. The interaction between the host systems and Beta Systems is specifically geared to support vast data volumes and a large number of users. Other key design goals included guaranteeing data integrity and providing high access security. The system's highlight is the integrated Beta Web Enabler, which makes it possible to access information locally, i.e., from any workstation across the company. This means that credit processors, credit examiners and applicants can search and view information related to their business case via the Web.

Konrad Erb has been working in the Mainframe Infrastructure Services business area of Allianz for 23 years. Over the years he has worked with quite a number of different output management and archiving applications. So his assessment that "our present Beta 92 and 93 software offers our employees at Allianz Group much more user-friendly technology than any of the previous solutions," is founded on personal experience.

Allianz Shared Infrastructure Services GmbH (ASIC), wholly owned subsidiary of Allianz SE, is the Allianz Group's IT service provider. In mid 2007, the legacy output management and job log archiving systems of the head office in Unterföhring, Germany, were replaced with a solution based on Beta 93 and Beta 92. One goal was to provide a consistent product for all customer systems across the Allianz Group.



Another reason was that the technology from Beta Systems offered numerous additional functions, most importantly access over the Web, a feature that 5,000 Allianz users benefit from day after day. And the fact that Beta Systems products had already been in use at the group's Dresdner Bank created additional synergies by helping to keep migration and training costs to a minimum.

Output management with Beta 93 means that Allianz can distribute lists and documents to any location throughout the group and archive them in an auditable manner. The software generates 80% of the Allianz Group's entire print output: centrally and decentralized, in the host environment as well as for insurance-related applications, SAP and other applications, from single documents through to bulk mailings. "Our central print center in Unterföhring processes about 700 million pages each year," says Karl Paul, Output Services Project Manager at ASIC.

No more Lengthy Printouts of Host Lists

Visibility is the magic word: Thanks to the new software, users can display any of the 700 million printed pages in digital form at their workplace, provided they have the required access permission. In the past, host lists filling many pages had to be printed out with the department printer since the Host-specific print format AFP is practically unreadable for normal users. Now we use the PDF converter of Beta 93, which allows us to provide all our employees with broad access to lists and documents. Every list from any application can be converted from the host-specific AFP print format into a PDF file and displayed at the push of a button.

Here the key advantage of the Beta Systems software comes into play: the Web Enabler. "We compared tools from many manufacturers and preferred Beta Systems' interface, because it offers the easiest configuration and performance by far," explains Reinhold Czypull, Head of the Mainframe Infrastructure Services department at ASIC.

Accessing 85 Million Documents over the Web

With the Web Enabler the entire office staff of the Allianz Group can access documents, lists and job logs archived in Beta 93 and Beta 92 via the Internet Explorer. Owing to PDF conversion, printouts are no longer necessary, but individual pages can be viewed on screen in press-ready format. This greatly extended the number of users since now no mainframe know-how is required to take a look at a host document. The Web Enabler offers a central access point to all host systems without the need to sign on separately. Konrad Erb puts it like this: "We are operating about 50 host archives, so if it takes a separate application to access each archive, the new system represents an enormous gain in efficiency."

This has changed the work routine of many Allianz employees. Previously, when an employee wanted to process a document on the PC, it first had to be retrieved from the archive, which was a complicated procedure. More often than not, mainframe know-how was an essential prerequisite. After logging in at the host, the list was printed to a file,



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Reinhold Czypull,
Head of Mainframe Infrastructure Services



then the “Personal Communications” dialog was used to transfer the file from the host to the own PC, and finally it was opened in Excel.

Performance statistics serve as a good example: Users lacking the needed host skills or who wanted to avoid the hassle of importing the data simply entered the last figures from the host list in their Excel data sheet – manually. Today users can directly access the Beta 93 archive with the Web Enabler and then save the list to their PC with the “Save as” command or directly import it into Microsoft Excel.

Daily Tasks Are Greatly Simplified

This is a representative scenario since most colleagues want to open data transferred from the host to their PC in Excel for further processing. The Web Enabler has greatly streamlined the process, turning this multi-step workflow into an easy, one-stop task. “As a result, many users have changed the way they work. They are much more productive since there is no longer the need to print out lists or

send them around via the interoffice mail system,” says Konrad Erb. And the benefits also work the other way around: The Web Enabler provides an upload function that allows users to load any document into the Beta 93 archive from their PC.


As an additional feature, Beta Systems implemented the automatic e-mail dispatch of a document from Beta 93, either as a text or PDF file or as a message informing the recipient that a list has been generated, including a link to the corresponding URL. Documents and lists can also be sent as e-mail attachments directly from within Web Enabler, which automatically calls up the e-mail program, generates a message and attaches the file(s).

Job Logs from all Platforms Centrally Archived in Beta 92

In addition to the lists and documents in Beta 93, there are also the job logs from host and server systems of the ‘open world’, meaning Windows, Linux, AIX, SAP and so on. Before introducing the new solution, ASIC

did not have a consistent method for archiving job logs in the non-main-frame environment. “With Beta 92 we now have a central tool for job logs from any platform used in the corporation,” says Reinhold Czypull. While we also archived job logs in the past, accessing the documents used to be quite complicated. If a developer required a job log, the colleague from production first had to locate and then provide the list. Now the Web Enabler facilitates central and comfortable access.

ASIC operates Beta 92 and 93 as autonomous systems, but they do communicate with each other. Jobs in applications generate log data and logs archived in Beta 92, while Beta 93 prepares the resulting lists and documents for printing and at the same time archives them. Beta 92 is used for four different archives at ASIC, one each for normal host job logs, client-server job logs, compile lists and release tools. Also, when checking a job log in Beta 92, users can directly jump to the corresponding Beta 93 list.



“Beta 93 is the central document archive and output management system for Allianz Deutschland and soon also for the European regional subsidiaries. We handle 80% of the group’s print output using the system.”

Karl Paul,
Output Services Project Manager



Beta 92 and Beta 93 Improve Compliance Management at Allianz

Like many other companies, the Allianz Group is required to meet the regulations of the Sarbanes-Oxley Act (SOX). In order to be able to document business processes in a comprehensive and transparent manner, access to audit-related data is required, such as those stored in the Beta 92 log or Beta 93 list archive. Thanks to the system developed by ASIC, Allianz is now able to meet this requirement 100%. "Our Beta systems act as central nodes within the SOX processes, allowing us to operate in full compliance with regulations," says a satisfied Reinhold Czypull.

European Rollout in the Works

The Beta System solution operated by ASIC is used by the employees of ADAG Allianz Deutschland AG and Dresdner Bank. To date the European subsidiaries of Allianz SE have been handling output management and archiving independently. But this is set to change: The group plans to control these tasks centrally in

Unterföhring in the future, which is why the system is currently being prepared for Europe-wide access, including implementing the required hardware. The first regional subsidiary to be connected to the central Beta Systems technology is Allianz UK in 2008, with other regional offices to follow suit in close succession. Konrad Erb: "We are designing Beta 93 such that it can be used at all European offices as a Web application, centrally supported with our hardware."

Key Figures

- Print pages generated each year: 700 million
- Daily scheduled jobs: 160,000
- Total users in the corporation: 5,000

Beta Systems Software AG – Agility Integrated

Beta Systems Software AG develops high-quality software products and solutions for the safe and reliable processing of large quantities of data. The core business segments of Beta Systems comprise document processing and IT user management, data center services as well as compliance solutions. Also, the Beta 4Agility Suite offers large corporations new integration products to make their IT and business processes more agile. The solution simplifies automation of data and document processing and increases the IT's overall security and performance.

Beta Systems was founded in 1983, has been listed on the stock exchange since 1997 and employs a staff of more than 600. Company headquarters are located in Berlin. Beta Systems is an internationally active company with competence centers in Augsburg, Cologne and Calgary as well as 18 subsidiaries and numerous partner businesses. Beta Systems' global customer base of more than 1,300 customers with over 3,000 operating installations includes major corporations in the fields of financial services, general industry and IT services in Germany, Europe and the USA.

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"The Beta Systems software offers our employees at Allianz Group much more user-friendly technology than any of the previous solutions. And the function range covers everything we need."

Konrad Erb
Mainframe Infrastructure Services Project Manager

