

Connecting here. To there.

Zurich Switzerland concentrates on its core businesses of life and non-life insurance and investment solutions. Whether private individuals, small or medium-sized businesses or international groups, whether motor insurance, investment products or the assessment of complex risks – Zurich Switzerland puts the customers and their need for security, retirement provision and wealth accumulation first.



Zurich Switzerland is a business unit of Zurich Financial Services Group, one of the world's largest insurance and financial services companies. Zurich Financial Services Group traces its roots back more than 125 years. Today Zurich Financial Services Group is one of the major financial services providers in the world.

The Servicezentrum Informatik (SZ Informatik) is responsible for the data processing requirements of Zurich Switzerland. Approx. 700 employees at SZ Informatik guarantee that the multiple activities and services of a modern data processing environment will be taken care of. IBM Mainframes hosting the OS390 Operating System are in use. The company data is stored in IMS-, and DB2-Data bases, VSAM, sequential files and PDS libraries. Windows NT with MS-Office products, Lotus Notes and SAP/R3 are the strategic components at the client side. The favourite programming language on the Mainframe is COBOL in conjunction with Delta. Visual Basic for Applications and JAVA are the programming languages used to develop the PC based applications.

Alpina, a member of the Zurich Group, was looking for a solution to integrate the Mainframe data. The objective was to offer "flexible data" to MS-EXCEL spreadsheets or MS-ACCESS tables, allowing the end user departments to intuitively create their own reports in a short period of time. Contacts were established to Software Vendors, which presented their products and solutions. tcACCESS was presented by CENOBIT AG, the Swiss partner of B.O.S. Main focus was placed on the easy and uncomplicated integration of Mainframe data via ODBC as well as the powerful functions of the selective and structured file transfer capabilities.

The decision was made to purchase tcACCESS from B.O.S., in München-Haar, Germany.

The implementation of tcACCESS was done during 1999. "In the meantime different end user departments use applications, which are based upon tcACCESS" says Mrs. Neva Richoz, Application Developer at SZ Informatik. She is one of 3 developers working with tcACCESS. "It was exciting to me, how easily I could access really complex IMS-structures" Mrs. Richoz remembers.

Multiple applications are now in production:

- An MS-EXCEL-application performs statistical and profitability analysis based on the accumulated claims payments per customer. Base for this analysis is data directly derived from VSAM files and IMS-data bases. A Visual Basic for Applications macro directly reads the Mainframe data using the tcACCESS ODBC component.
- Based on the Swiss Traffic Law (Schweizer Strassenverkehrsgesetzes SVG), reports must be created which analyse the tax based on motor insurance policies. The VB application directly accesses DB2-Tables using tcACCESS.
- Analysis about Claims data is another tcACCESS project. Information stored in sequential files, and VSAM files joined with IMS-segments and a MS-ACCESS table are being processed. "This application was a challenge, because we had to process approximately 180.000 records. The performance of tcACCESS really surprised us and we are enthusiastic about it" Neva Richoz passes a positive judgement.

tcACCESS proves a success at Zurich Switzerland. Additional applications are in the pipeline. The motto "Connecting here. To there." also relates to the use of tcACCESS:

Transparent access to Mainframe data from
Client/Server-Applications.

"Working with tcACCESS is a lot of fun. One does not have to be a Mainframe expert to access the data, focus can be put on the development efforts".

Neva Richoz and tcACCESS, an unbeatable team.

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