

Residents' registration at the Rectory

The Catholic Church not only consists of the Pope and more than 900 million Christians around the world. Similar to the states of the Federal Republic of Germany, the Roman-Catholic Church is organized in bishoprics and dioceses for which a bishop bears responsibility.

Germany has 27 bishoprics. One of them is the Bishopric of Mainz with approximately 814 000 Catholics. The Bishopric of Mainz covers an area of 7692 square kilometers inside the states of Hesse and Rhineland-Palatinate (including the city of Bad Wimpfen in Baden-Wuerttemberg). Larger cities in the bishopric include the cities of Mainz, Gießen, Offenbach, Darmstadt and Worms.



The electronic Residents' Registration application of the Bishopric of Mainz maintains the church registration data of a total of 13 million people in 9000 parishes. tcACCESS provides the bridge between the rectory and the data processing department.

The data processing department of the Bishopric of Mainz is located in the inner city of Mainz. It operates an IBM-system running VM/VSE 2.4. The data needed by the registration application is stored in ADABAS/C*. NATURAL* is being used as a programming language. The online applications run under COMPLETE*. The application "Residents' registration at the Rectory (MIP)" is being used by 12 bishoprics in Germany. "MIP enables the rectories to access all relevant residents' data which is of importance for the church and to save official acts like baptisms, weddings, communion and confirmation." Günter Morschhäuser, Manager data processing, gives a brief summary about MIP. Today, the data needed by MIP will be transferred from the municipal residents' registration offices. Transfer methods vary from different media to electronic transfer to the data center of the Bishopric of Mainz. Once the data has been received, it will become part of a global data pool and will be assigned to the individual rectories. The rectories now have automatic access to their data, they can apply updates and have access to program updates. Günter Morschhäuser: "It was our intention to use the advantages, which are offered by new technologies like the Internet"

The first contact to B.O.S. was established at the end of 2000. tcACCESS has been installed for a demonstration. Günter Schilling, system-programmer: "We had to install tcACCESS into a CICS partition. B.O.S. helped us to do that and we didn't encounter any problems." The developers were impressed how easily they could access their ADABAS files using ODBC. Günter Morschhäuser: "We gathered additional information about tcACCESS at a road-show in Stuttgart. After the show we put tcACCESS on trial." Right at the beginning of the trial period a prototype has been developed, which accessed ADABAS files from a Web application. "Our specific requirement was performance." Peter Jouaux, application developer

describes the requirements. The ADABAS files use various Descriptors, Sub- and Super-descriptors to allow indexed access. Peter Jouaux: "Our existing NATURAL programs used FIND instructions with S1/S2 commands. This guaranteed an extremely fast access to the data. This method of access also had to be performed with the SQL based access provided by tcACCESS. We have discussed this with the development team of B.O.S. and this functionality was implemented into tcACCESS shortly."

Development for the Web application e-mip started in August 2001. Several components are already available on the Internet or will be made available shortly. "For instance, a visitor of our web site can find out to what rectory he belongs to." Jacek Debinski, like Peter Jouaux one of the developers, describes the new application. "For the rectories e-mip is a fully secured system. The access uses HTTPS and the rectory can only access their individual data."

The e-mip components, which can be accessed over the Internet, enable the rectory to perform complex queries and statistical analysis. Peter Jouaux: "Nearly 3000 rectories within the 12 bishoprics can use the application. We developed the application in ASP using *Microsoft Visual Interdev*. It is hosted on a WINDOWS NT/2000-system running the Internet Information Server. The ODBC-Server component of tcACCESS is the gateway to our ADABAS files. We didn't require any host knowledge for the development of the application."

"We have been extremely pleased with the support provided by the vendor. B.O.S. always has been a competent partner. Not like other call centers, where you need to get a trouble ticket first and hopefully would be called back later. B.O.S. always reacted very fast."

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