

Progress® Application Partner bendit GmbH is leveraging Progress® Sonic™ ESB to simplify the integration and flexible reuse of components using a standards-based SOA for its digipen solution and offering it as a server-based enterprise application or in a SaaS model.



CHALLENGE

bendit wanted to build a scalable mobile data acquisition solution with digital pens and paper that can support both small customers and large enterprise deployments.

SOLUTION

The company is leveraging Progress® Sonic™ ESB, Progress® Actional®, and Progress® DataXtend® Semantic Integrator to enable rapid and cost-effective integration of mobile data acquisition technology and enterprise applications.

WHY PROGRESS® SOFTWARE

The need to streamline integration with both hosted infrastructure and third-party enterprise applications required a proven integration solution that can easily combine and re-assemble services to meet changing requirements without disruption.

BENEFIT

bendit has scaled the solution to support over 200 customers, and is now expanding beyond Germany and offering it throughout Europe as a SaaS offering and as a solution that can be deployed at customer sites.

CASE STUDY

CAPITALIZING ON EMERGING TECHNOLOGY

bendit is a leading German solution provider for mobile data acquisition with digital pens and structured paper forms. This technology allows users to fill in paper forms, and a camera in a digital pen captures the information and automatically transfers it to backend systems as structured XML datasets.

The company's digipen solution is completely built as a native service-oriented architecture (SOA) implementation based on the Sonic ESB, which gives bendit a unique selling point in terms of flexibility, integration options, scalability, and availability. The offerings range from entry-level boxed products that are sold by T-Mobile vendors to custom, enterprise-class, high-availability solutions that are integrated with a customer's existing infrastructure.

Together with T-Mobile, T-Systems, Research in Motion, and other partners, bendit offers the digipen solution as dedicated enterprise server deployments or as a Software as a Service (SaaS) model where the back-end infrastructure is hosted by bendit. The company has already implemented the solution for over 200 different customers throughout Germany, and is preparing to work with other Progress Application Partners to extend the solution throughout Europe. Key to the scalability and integration capabilities of bendit's digipen solution is the incorporation of Sonic ESB, which provides bendit with the flexibility to host back-end services and offer digipen in a software as a service (SaaS) model or make it available to larger companies that want to integrate digipen with enterprise applications. bendit's customers are realizing major business advantages. For example:

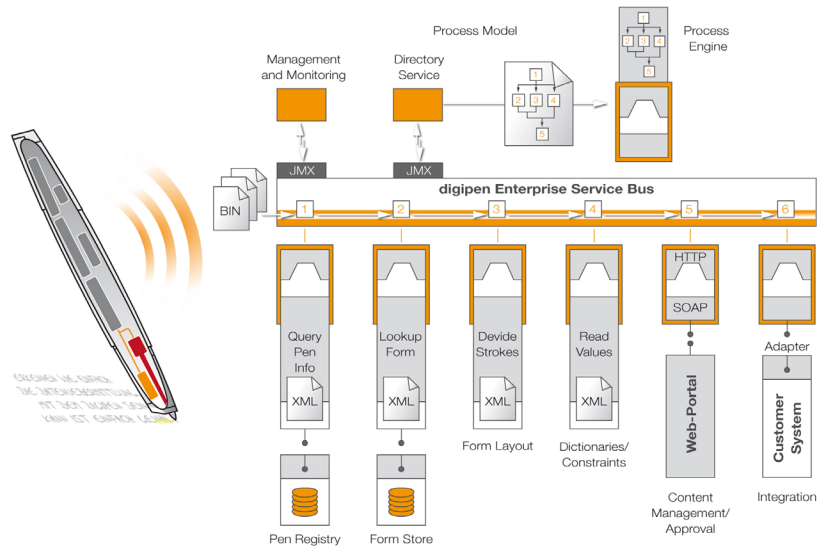
- > BLP Wiebe is one of Europe's largest railroad builders and has deployed digipens at construction sites. Workers fill out their timesheets with these digital pens, and the information is transmitted over cellular infrastructure to Wiebe's headquarters for generating payments. Wiebe now has immediate access to labor information and has shaved ten days off its payroll processing cycle.
- > Christoph Kroschke AG is a service provider for car registration. They use digipen to fill out car registration forms and to integrate with SAP. These solutions have significantly reduced the waiting time for car owners receiving registration documents, and the company has the additional advantage of invoicing its services faster.
- > CKS TYCO Fire & Security has used digipen together with mobile or local networks to speed up the processing of checklists filled out by doctors in cases of medical emergencies. The key advantage is that the captured data is already available in the hospitals before the ambulances arrive.

- > One of the largest shipyards in Germany, Meyerwerft, is using digipen for different checklist forms as part of their production and quality assurance processes. The data captured all around the construction areas is automatically transferred to the planning office and actions like ordering spare parts can be initiated faster.

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— Hauke Ernst
Chief Executive Officer
bendit GmbH

Hauke Ernst, Chief Executive Officer of bendit, said, “Sonic ESB provides us with flexible integration options that we can present to customers to win new business. Smaller deployments that need only a couple of dozen digipens usually prefer the SaaS business model because we will host the back-end infrastructure and offer them a turnkey solution. But larger deployments will want to integrate the digipen solution directly into their existing infrastructure, and they can leverage Sonic ESB to integrate directly with their existing applications.”



SELECTING THE RIGHT ESB

bendit is an early adopter of Sonic ESB, and initially selected Sonic ESB in 2003. An enterprise service bus (ESB) is software infrastructure that simplifies the integration and flexible reuse of business components within a service-oriented architecture (SOA). An ESB provides a dependable and scalable infrastructure that connects disparate applications and IT resources, mediates their incompatibilities, orchestrates their interactions, and makes them broadly available as services for additional uses.

In most organizations, technological heterogeneity is more the rule than the exception. To integrate applications within an SOA, it is necessary to both span new service-enabled applications as well as existing applications. An enterprise service bus simplifies connection of new applications, Web services, and hundreds of other technologies, including batch files, application servers, legacy middleware products and packaged applications.

“Customers capturing mobile data always want to make sure that data winds up in their back-end systems,” said Ernst. “Sonic ESB is based on industry standards, and it was important that we could use our existing skills in Java and other development technologies. We saw that digital pen technology would offer tremendous advantages to customers but that capturing the information was not enough. Customers needed the ability to easily integrate this information with existing applications and business processes. We evaluated available messaging systems and realized that Sonic ESB would provide a reliable backbone framework for our digital pen technology. We selected Sonic ESB because of its proven integration capabilities with the goal of capturing mobile data as services that could be integrated with our own applications as well as with the applications of our customers.”



OFFERING BOTH SAAS AND ENTERPRISE-HOSTED SOLUTIONS

bendit initially offered digipen as a product offering, but over time worked with Progress to make it available as a SaaS solution as well.

Since bendit also provides consulting services to its customers, the company derives additional revenue from integrating digipen with the existing infrastructure of large customers. “Small customers can avoid the licensing costs and integration challenges of building out internal infrastructure by selecting our SaaS offering,” said Ernst. “The integration capabilities of Sonic ESB allow us to profitably support small deployments while also supporting robust enterprise implementations.”

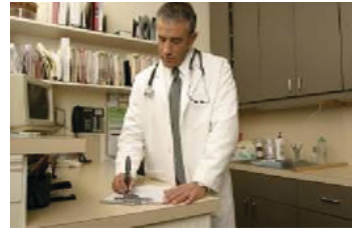
He continued, “SaaS removes a barrier to entry for small customers because they can immediately benefit from an initial implementation without investing heavily in software integration. They can avoid having to license Sonic ESB themselves, and mobile data entries will be sent to our infrastructure as services, which we will feed to their internal applications. SaaS allows us to offer a packaged solution that enables customers to automate existing business processes to improve customer service and streamline operations.”

Conversely, larger customers generally prefer to process the mobile data internally. “Companies with larger mobile pen deployments tend to prefer the economics of hosting the applications internally,” Ernst explained. “They license Sonic ESB and integrate the mobile data with existing applications, and for many of these customers we provide consulting services to help them integrate the mobile data with existing applications and business processes.”

Sonic ESB provides bendit with the flexibility to pursue both small opportunities and large enterprise deployments. The company is now in the Top 10 of T-Mobile’s qualified partners in Germany, and bendit is the market leader for digital pen technology in Germany.

According to Ernst, “Sonic ESB allows us to scale our solutions to meet the needs of our customers. We can’t assume that every customer is starting with a million dollar deal so we help customers start small through our SaaS model and then help them bring the solution in-house when it becomes economically beneficial to them. We can help our customers perform the crossover analysis, and we often derive consulting revenues from helping successful customers shift from a SaaS model to hosting the infrastructure internally.”

Sonic ESB provides bendit with the flexibility to position its solutions appropriately based on customer requirements. "Small accounts interested in digipen are very interested in getting the results of mobile data integration quickly without the need to invest in application development, new servers, and software licenses," said Ernst. We can just send them configured pens and paper worksheets and let them start a pilot project immediately. They care less about the technologies involved and are focused on the immediate business benefits. Once they realize success with a pilot project, they often expand their use of digipens and become larger accounts for us."



He continued, "But larger prospects are extremely interested in scalability and reliability. We position digipen as a turnkey solution for smaller prospective customers, and for larger prospects we highlight the advantages of our enterprise service bus and how they can deploy reliable and scalable mobile pen solutions that will seamlessly integrate with their existing application infrastructure. This creates opportunities for us to sell our integration services, and it also creates opportunities for Progress to sell Sonic ESB licenses to our largest customers. We work closely with Progress in Germany to help larger customers build the internal infrastructure to support digipen deployments."

"Working with Progress through the years has helped us grow our business and gain a leadership position in our market."

— Hauke Ernst

LEVERAGING ADDITIONAL PROGRESS PRODUCTS

bendit developed the solution throughout 2003 and implemented its first Sonic ESB deployment in 2004. The company now leverages the Progress® Sonic™ Integration Workbench for development, which is an Eclipse-based SOA toolset to model, configure, test, and deploy processes and services using products in the Sonic ESB product family. bendit also leverages the Progress® Sonic™ BPEL Server to add standards-based service orchestration to the intelligent routing capabilities of Sonic ESB.

The Sonic BPEL Server improves developer productivity by simplifying the building, testing, and deployment of sophisticated service orchestration that integrates with heterogeneous end-points. The company also relies on Progress® Sonic™ Deployment Manager, an installation and configuration tool that helps project teams streamline incremental development and rollout of large-scale Sonic product deployments.

bendit also leverages Progress Actional to help large enterprise customers benefit from SOA governance and the ability to connect computing resources across and beyond enterprise boundaries according to policies, and Progress DataXtend Semantic Integrator to validate data exchanges between systems based on business rules.

Actional is offered to customers who want to define and control specific service level agreements (SLAs) on end-to-end respond times and other policies. In addition, Actional is used to extract statistics and key business indicators from the processed data.

While analyzing potential digipen use cases over the past years, bendit has identified a number of typical form applications in different industries. At the same time, particular industry data formats have emerged, such as the SID for telco or HL7 for healthcare. bendit is currently looking at the potential to support these industry standards. Working with DataXtend Semantic Integrator helps bendit define a portfolio of standard forms and map the form fields to the standards to define validations and deploy these mappings as services on the ESB.

"We've been a Progress Application Partner for about five years, and Progress has helped us build our SaaS business model and develop solutions that fit both the smallest and largest customers," said Ernst. "We rely on Progress technologies to drive our back-end infrastructure and leverage our digipen technology to support new applications. Progress also has a very strong German presence that has helped us gain a technology leadership position in Germany and Progress will help us expand our distribution capabilities to offer digipen solutions throughout Europe."

EXPANDING THE SOLUTION THROUGHOUT EUROPE

Due to the success of digipen the last couple of years, bendit is broadening its distribution to offer digipen throughout Europe. bendit is planning to leverage its relationships with T-Mobile and Research in Motion to expand European distribution. According to Ernst, "Communications is critical to remote data solutions, and we are investigating further partnerships opportunities with T-Mobile. Blackberry's are often used to provide transport from the remote location back to the application infrastructure, so we're also looking to build relationships with other Research in Motion business partners to expand our coverage and address new European markets with both our SaaS and enterprise-hosted solutions."

"We plan to also work with other Progress Application Partners to integrate digipen so they can add mobile data entry to their applications," said Ernst. "We're now actively looking for other Progress Application Partners throughout Europe who are anxious to add digital pens to their solutions to enable mobile data entry and data collection. Working with Progress through the years has helped us grow our business and gain a leadership position in our market, and our close relationship with Progress in Germany will expand so we can work with Progress and its Application Partners throughout Europe to address new market opportunities."

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ABOUT PROGRESS SOFTWARE

Progress Software Corporation (NASDAQ: PRGS) provides application infrastructure software for the development, deployment, integration and management of business applications. Our goal is to maximize the benefits of information technology while minimizing its complexity and total cost of ownership. Progress can be reached at +1-781-280-4000.

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