Customer Spotlight: Web Enabling by fecher
Thriving in Business with a Modernized Solution

After a successful Web Enabling project, the financial solution SASKIA.H2R expands its reach to new user groups

SASKIA has a remarkable history. Founded over 30 years ago as Kommunale Informationsverarbeitung Südsachsen, the company developed leading HKR and IFR financial software for public administration in Germany. Its success prompted a rebranding to SASKIA Informations-Systeme GmbH in 2001, a strategic partnership with KISA in 2006, and an acquisition by Robotron Datenbank-Software GmbH in 2014. By 2022, it was time for another transformation: the front-end of SASKIA's flagship solution, originally migrated to .NET by fecher in 2011, needed to be converted from a traditional WinForms application into a modern web-based interface. Once again, fecher supported this transformation with a Web Enabling project that was successfully completed by the end of 2023. The new generation of the software, named SASKIA.H2R, was launched in Spring 2024.

"Functionally, our software leaves nothing to be desired," says Ralf Köhler, Head of Software Development at SASKIA. With 30 years of continuous development, the solution meets the financial management needs of counties, cities, and municipalities—from basic invoicing and property tax assessments to comprehensive double-entry accounting. However, the dated user interface increasingly

As an IT specialist headquartered in Chemnitz, Germany, SASKIA Informations-Systeme GmbH, founded in 1993, supports over 400 municipal administrations and public authorities.

hindered its market appeal. "We struggled to make a strong first impression in pitches and presentations," Köhler admits.

By early 2022, SASKIA launched an evaluation project to assess the effort required to transition its .NET-based solution, developed in C#, to a browser-based front-end. "Web technology was a non-negotiable. Returning to a desktop interface was simply not an option," explains Köhler. While Angular was initially considered, the team soon abandoned their efforts with the framework. "Angular is widely regarded as a standard and offers

good potential, but it is also highly complex," Köhler explains. "Neither the performance nor the developer productivity met the standards we were used to or required moving forward. On top of that, finding developers proficient in these specific technologies is quite difficult on the job market."

Accelerating the Shift to the Web

With approximately 1.8 million lines of code and over 1,500 forms, rewriting the front-end from scratch would have consumed far too many resources. "We would have needed to work in parallel for years just to get back to the functionality we currently have," explains Köhler. "To ensure full functionality and keep the transition timeline as short as possible, porting was the only practical choice for us."

fecher, a specialist in application modernization that had already migrated the software from Gupta to .NET in 2011, offered the perfect solution. A Web Enabling process would convert the existing WinForms interfaces into web-ready components using the Wisej.NET framework, largely through automation. This would allow the application to run in a web browser while retaining its full functionality. Simultaneously, a redesign of the user interface was planned. The result would be a true web application with a modern look and feel, supporting not only Windows but all major client platforms.

"We had already worked with fecher in 2011 for our migration to .NET and were extremely satisfied with the results," Köhler notes. "Wisej.NET convinced us because it allowed us to continue developing in C# using Visual Studio, minimizing the learning curve for our team." The management team and Robotron, as stakeholders, also appreciated fecher's fixed-price guarantee and timeline assurance. "This

approach eliminated any risks for us and allowed our team to focus on continuing development during the project," Köhler explains.

Ralf Köhler, Head of Software Development at SASKIA

A Collaborative Effort for Success

The project kicked off in November 2022, with completion scheduled for September 2023. After receiving the source code in January, fecher's team began converting the interface using a tool-based approach supplemented by manual adjustments. By February, a functional prototype was operational. To support testing, SASKIA's team created numerous screen recordings demonstrating how the application was used, which fecher later utilized to validate the functionality of the new solution.

"It was characteristic of the project that we worked hand in hand and jointly sought solutions," Köhler emphasizes. "For all of us, efficiency, simplicity, and

maintainability were always the priorities." He cites the grid functionality as an example: "We initially considered using a third-party component library because it was both functionally and visually appealing. However, during tests with just 30,000 records, it became clear that the grid would not perform reliably under the typical loads we experience. Together with fecher, we decided to use Wisej.NET's built-in grid. While its functionality isn't quite as extensive, we can be confident it will perform well even with large datasets."

SASKIA.H2R: Advanced financial software with familiar functionality and state-of-the-art web technology.

This close partnership extended to the testing phase, where SASKIA's team often resolved issues directly within fecher's code repository. "Granting us early access to the repository was a significant gesture of trust," says Köhler. "Our long-standing relationship allowed for this seamless collaboration."

Mid-Project Redesign

An interim challenge arose during the project when the decision was made to position labels above input fields in the web interface. "We initially made this decision somewhat spontaneously, and in 80% of cases, it was the best solution," Köhler recalls. "However, it caused significant issues for screens with a large number of input fields." As a result, all affected forms had to be manually adjusted. Turning necessity into an advantage, the team decided to implement a two-month redesign phase. "This delayed the project schedule slightly, but the results were more than worth it," Köhler notes. The teams from fecher and SASKIA worked hand in hand to swiftly complete these additional tasks, ensuring success.

A Future-Proof Solution

The revamped SASKIA.H2R debuted in Spring 2024 during a customer roadshow. "For existing users, the priority was maintaining familiarity," Köhler explains. The new web interface preserves keyboard navigation and replicates the desktop layout while offering a modern look and feel. "Unlike simplified mobile apps, public sector employees need full visibility and control, often working with 30 fields at a time. Wisej.NET is perfect for such transactional web applications."

Sales and marketing teams are equally pleased. "A fresh interface resonates with new generations of employees who expect modern standards," says Köhler. "And in presentations, a sleek design is an undeniable advantage."

Looking ahead, Köhler envisions scenarios such as using mobile devices for tasks like inventory management or as point-of-sale terminals, which can

fecher.

now be directly supported by the web interface. He also does not rule out the possibility of integrating Linux workstations in the long term.

What matters most to Köhler is that his team can continue developing with their usual level of productivity. "Together with fecher, we have created a modern solution that allows us to avoid the complexities of web development entirely," he concludes with satisfaction.

The first customers experienced the new SASKIA.H2R software generation at a roadshow in spring 2024.

fecher.