

21st century tools in education.

HTW Berlin optimizes forms management using Adobe Experience Cloud.



**Hochschule für Technik
und Wirtschaft Berlin**

University of Applied Sciences

"It's not about making inefficient business processes more tolerable through automation. It's about fundamentally optimizing our processes."

Ralf Weller, Head of the University Computing Center, HTW Berlin

SOLUTION

Adobe Experience Cloud including the Adobe Experience Manager solution within Adobe Marketing Cloud

RESULTS



Accelerates processes with **ELECTRONIC WORKFLOWS**



Improves efficiency with **DYNAMIC FORMS**



Provides university-wide **STANDARD** for forms management



Integrates heterogeneous **BACK-END SYSTEMS**



Hochschule für Technik und Wirtschaft (HTW) Berlin

Founded in: 1994

Number of students: 13,355 (2016)

Berlin, Germany

www.htw-berlin.de

eggs unimedia

www.eggs.de

CHALLENGES

- Automate processes in heterogeneous IT environment
- Optimize university's administrative processes
- Offer improved user experiences across devices
- Enable departments to automate their own forms processes, including adopting electronic signatures

USE CASE

- Digital Service Enrollment

Electronic workflows increase efficiency

As Berlin's largest university for applied sciences with more than 13,000 students and approximately 570 employees, HTW Berlin offers 70 programs in the areas of technology, computer science, economics, culture, and design. The range of subjects includes classic disciplines such as mechanical engineering, computer science, automotive technology, and business administration, as well as new courses in facility management and game design.

Forms play an important role at universities, creating a way for students and employees to interface with the university. The forms are often created independently by departments to organize certain administrative tasks. "Our project starts out as a university-wide process that will gradually be converted into electronic workflows," says Ralf Weller, Head of the University Computing Center at HTW Berlin. Adobe Experience Manager Forms facilitates the implementation of form-based workflows that are not covered by campus management or ERP systems.

"As a university of applied sciences, we don't just teach the methods of digitalization, we put them into practice," says Weller when explaining the eForm project. Today's students are digital natives. They expect to be able to initiate processes at any time and on any device.

Advancing digitalization at the university

The University Computer Center started out by providing dynamic, PDF-based forms. "We looked for a solution in which eForms could be automatically adapted as they are filled in to address all requirements," says Gottfried Junghanns, Head of the Campus Management Team at HTW Berlin. For example, when the questions on an application for a semester's leave reveal that certain requirements are not met, permission to complete and submit the form is not given.

One of the main requirements of HTW Berlin was for electronic forms to work in nearly all workstations without the need to install additional software. The university already utilized Adobe Acrobat Reader DC as a trusted tool for editing PDF documents. The intelligent forms and document templates can be created using Adobe Experience Manager Forms Designer, which offers drag-and-drop capabilities and does not require comprehensive technical expertise. It is part of the integrated development environment within Adobe Experience Manager Forms Workbench, which facilitates preparing business rules and optimizes them via tests.

"University management requires forms. They used to be on paper, now they are digital, and tomorrow they will be automated and integrated with IT systems and be available on all devices," says Weller.



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In the meantime, HTW Berlin has licensed Adobe Experience Manager Forms Server, which facilitates managing complex workflows based on adaptive forms. The forms appear in a browser and the display is automatically adapted to the end user’s device. Adobe Experience Manager Forms Server provides the form with the fields ideally ordered and sized, whether they are displayed on a smart phone, tablet, or desktop computer.

The dynamic forms are easy to use based on a range of standard user functions and have an appearance that conforms to the university’s design guidelines. “There’s no need to constantly reinvent the wheel in each department,” says Junghanns. He explained that the uniform user appearance and integrated accuracy controls have made it easier for students to fill in forms. It has also resulted in fewer questions, which reduces support costs.

The electronic workflows project also became the topic of a bachelor’s thesis. It focused on developing a business process optimization procedure that utilizes workflow simulations as a tool for analysis. It also analyzed various technology platforms to determine which ones could best meet the university’s needs. The thesis determined Adobe Experience Manager Forms to be the best integration solution on the market.

“It’s not about making inefficient business processes more tolerable through automation. It’s about fundamentally optimizing processes,” says Weller.

eForms reduce administration

Some day-to-day processes will continue to be covered by the campus management system. These include allocating lecture and classroom facilities or posting exam results. Adobe Experience Manager Forms supports the digitalization of processes that arise on an ad-hoc basis, as well as those that are of limited duration, or ones that are not covered by other systems. These include invoicing teaching assignments, applications for master studies, or awarding of the Deutschlandstipendium. “These processes offer great potential for increasing efficiency,” confirms Weller.

Invoicing teaching assignments is a good example. Previously, that process was carried out manually, which required a lot of work and was prone to error. Today, this is done via an automated workflow. The completed teaching hours and the agreed upon rates are pulled from the administration system and fed into the invoicing form. The lecturer receives the pre-filled form, makes any justified changes or additions, and sends it back digitally.



SOLUTION AT A GLANCE

Adobe Experience Cloud, including:

Adobe Marketing Cloud

- Adobe Experience Manager
- Forms

For more information

www.adobe.com/marketing-cloud/experience-manager/forms-document-management.html



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Flexible design of process endpoints

After installing the technical infrastructure for Adobe Experience Manager Forms, and establishing a smooth data exchange with the university's HIS and ERP system, MACH, via interfaces with the campus management system, the time came to increase the number of dynamic forms from the university departments. To do this, important processes were defined that involve a large number of users and could be reproduced in digital workflows. For example one workflow involved an organizational process that students could initiate to accompany a final thesis.

This complex process involved working with experts from eggs unimedia in Munich Germany to create a procedural model and prototype that could be tested and optimized. Weak points could be recognized and remedied before the process went live. "The good thing about the Adobe solution is that it is adaptive and flexible," says Junghanns. This enables the initiation of electronic forms by students, directly in the self-service portal.

The capabilities of Adobe Experience Manager Forms to create adaptive forms will be used even more in the future. Electronic signatures is also important for the university. For sensitive exam documents or certifications, it is important to have a binding electronic signature, after which it becomes impossible to alter the document.

"A big advantage of Adobe Experience Manager Forms is in the fact that the eForms and workflows are easy to configure based on standard components," explains Junghanns. Adobe Experience Manager offers a range of important capabilities. Junghanns lists several such features, including centralized administration of forms in the form portal, signing and validating of documents, streamlined workflows, and document protection or document output. The use of Adobe Experience Manager Forms still has a long future at HTW Berlin.