List & Label with German Automobile Trust

List & Label –
by Professionals for Professionals

The German Automobile Trust/Deutsche Automobil Treuhand GmbH (DAT), established in 1931, is the world's oldest institution for market research in the automotive industry. It provides information on nearly the entire lifecycle of automobiles, in particular for processes to calculate damage, assess used vehicles, examine exhaust emissions and forecast the remaining value. The SilverDAT software solution, the so-called information center for the European automobile industry, is used, for instance, by car dealerships, experts and insurances as a calculation basis for establishing a vehicle's remaining value. The DAT developers integrated numerous reporting functions with the help of List & Label.

A Few lines of Code for High-performance Functions

Developed under C/C++ with Visual Studio 6, SilverDat II with more than 20,000 installations throughout Europe is the best known data and information system for the automotive industry, and, due to its modular design, also the most efficient in almost all areas of the sector. With List & Label, DAT developers had found a tool in 1998, which allowed them to enhance SilverDAT II with just a few lines of code to include highly efficient functionalities for data printouts, e.g. reports, labels, forms, etc. They came across List & Label during product research, and soon decided in favor of the tool made in Constance/Germany: its licensing model allows developers to provide end users with List & Label as part of the software package without additional license fee. The availability of language components for foreign European countries and the stability of the product also convinced the professionals.

Facts

Organization:
German Automobile Trust/
Deutsche Automobil Treuhand (DAT)
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Sector: Automotive, traffic + transport
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Location: Ostfildern / Germany
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Web: www.dat.de
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Task: Integration of reporting functions in SilverDAT II
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Solution: combit List & Label
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Success: Quick, professional data output for the end user, and minimal programming effort for the developer
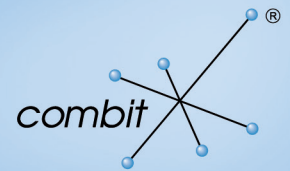
Programming Examples Make Familiarization Easy

„We have young, committed employees who have the ability to quickly get used to new topics. The examples provided by combit are also very good for familiarizing with List & Label. The options we had been looking for were provided here, e.g. the graphic visualisation of list data via chart objects and Excel exports." Manfred Haist, head of the main development department at DAT, remembers: „Before 1998 we had a self-developed report generator in use. But we had to concede that this was not sufficient for professional use, i.e. further development would have been far too expensive and complex. For this reason, we opted for List & Label and focused on our core competence again." The users of SilverDAT II can output quickly and professionally via the integrated List & Label Designer vehicle assessments, offers, price tags, stock lists, sales lists, evaluations, orders, purchaser agreements and master data. Additional flexibility allows you to integrate high-performance designer objects, such as RTF, bar codes, tables, diagrams, charts or OLE objects as well as data exports in any format. List & Label is controlled via import libraries and the .NET component. Thanks to this support, List & Label also integrates seamlessly into Microsoft developer environment projects.

Microsoft Development Environments

„We have been using List & Label in our Windows application since 1998, and can therefore look back on a long and successful cooperation with combit. The upgrade to our current version incurred only a minimum of additional programming effort, and we were able to update our application and include additional functions very quickly," says Manfred Haist. He sees the strengths of List & Label in the wide range of export formats provided, the bar code support and quick integration of this tool in existing applications by way of data binding. „Anyone faced with selecting a development tool should definitely compare products offered by market leaders and select a manufacturer with sufficient experience and a good reputation in the industry," advises Manfred Haist. In order to safeguard continued development of the application, he believes that any requirements that might arise in future should be discussed with

the tool manufacturer, as well as the tool's long-term cost/benefit ratio. Competent advice and support services are of paramount importance to him, and he feels that these are guaranteed with combit: „Their support team reacts quickly and with professionalism. During our migration to the latest version of List & Label, for example, we reported a problem that was remedied shortly after in a service release." DAT developers are currently working on providing users with subreports and multi table options. The routine will associate tables and subtables and even several unrelated tables to produce well-presented, hierarchical analyses. Specific commands, with which database tables, their interrelationships and any sort options are registered in List & Label, simplify the handling of relational tables in the Designer. „We are planning to use crosstab tables for our statistical data analyses," adds Haist in terms of DAT's future plans with List & Label. Crosstab table objects allow for multi-dimensional, flexible data evaluation.

Web Reporting for Mobile Access

In addition to the desktop application, DAT provides its customers with an Eclipse-based online version of SilverDAT II, which was developed with Java. Customers have the option to use it either as a supplement or exclusively. List & Label is a standard component of the SilverDAT II online version as well. "Our customers will therefore have the same reporting and print options with all SilverDAT products. The latest List & Label version will be used in both versions, which means that our clients will have all the latest features to work with. Since we can look back on several years of experience with List & Label, our project manager has needed no external support during the implementation phase thus far," reports Mainfred Haist.

„Our additional programming efforts were minimal."
Manfred Haist, DAT

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