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Looking beyond accounting

Future-oriented government is more than just a new accounting system, says Oliver Couvigny

The situation of the German local government reform process, which has been in progress for almost two decades, could not be more diverse. While many districts, cities and communities have successfully modernised their systems and changed to the new double-entry accounting system, others are only just beginning. In contrast, others see the step to double-entry as an interim goal. For them, progressive themes to improve workflows and to increase transparency have already become their focus – administrative modernisation is the key and not just a change in bookkeeping style. The interplay and transport of information and the associated processes is also increasingly gaining in significance.

Therefore, the diverse world of information and processes with changing links and connections requires a software manufacturer like INFOMA to look beyond accounting. INFOMA has always been committed to a clear future, and a user-oriented corporate and product strategy. It is essential to position future themes early on through knowledge and development and realising new solutions through dialogue with local authorities. INFOMA offers more than a modern accounting system; our financial system is increasingly playing a central role in municipal IT, becoming a hub for information and processes.

In the context of integration, workflow, management and control, the key technologies and processes are available in new products. This

includes document management and analysis and control systems to master networking, connect worlds, develop information effectively, transport within workflows and, in so doing, exploit optimisation potentials, which a document management system facilitates. However, use of such a tool in local authorities is currently much too rare.

INFOMA supports authorities that want to implement sensible information and process management with an integrated document management system. Existing or new documents can be integrated automatically, managed efficiently and handled in a task-oriented manner with revision-proof archiving. The benefits are shorter and paper-free lead and processing times; reduced expenditure and transparent cases; simpler compliance with legislation and guidelines; higher quality and process security. The work is also much easier for staff and public service is improved, as cases can be found immediately and information given out just as quickly.

The heart of INFOMA's document management system is the integrated workflow and service architecture. There are three services that form the basis of this system. The import and migration service ensures automated consolidation of heterogeneous data sources and documents in one platform. The file and case handling service facilitates management, processing, testing, publication and searching. The revision-proof archiving service creates the

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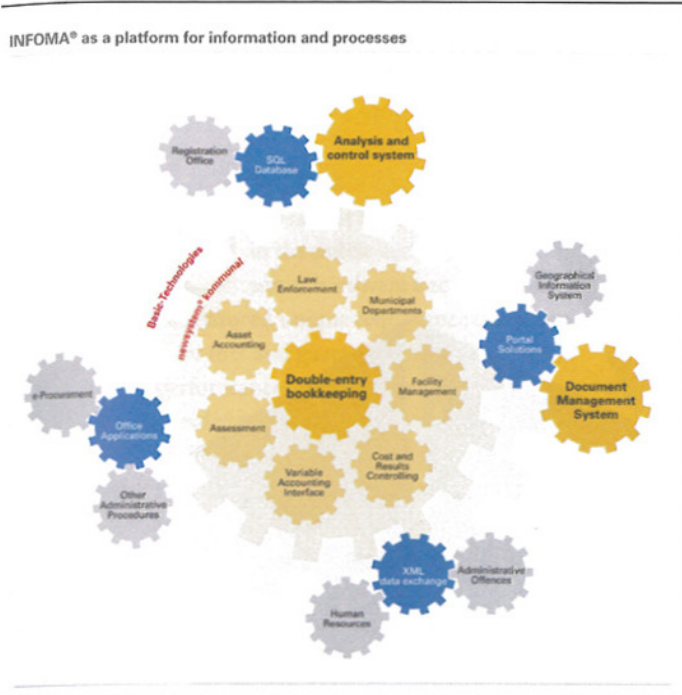
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conversion. They merely exchange the classic entry style for the double-entry bookkeeping style with no parallel changes to organisation and workflows. Whilst the figures from the financing system offer more transparency than before, the clarity and the connections are not clear. This can only be achieved with a consistent business intelligence solution. Therefore, INFOMA has developed the integrated analysis and control system, which facilitates powerful situation analysis. It also provides the basis for administrative control.

The INFOMA system goes far beyond the reporting system of a financial process. Prognoses and trends that reveal developments and, in so doing, enable authorities to react, are much more important. The aim is to establish strategic controlling alongside pure financial controlling.

The key to bridging operational activity and administrative strategy lies in the integrated, four-layer architecture across all user levels. All users have specific tools tailored to their individual information requirements at their fingertips. However, tools and associated information levels are not isolated. Connected across all levels, they facilitate navigation in all directions, as well as universal analysis and control.

In light of the current rapid changes in demographics, technology, the economy and society and despite the administrative reforms that have already been completed, German local authorities need to ask themselves what further steps they need to take to be equipped for the future. INFOMA continually develops its range of products and services with commitment, a readiness to invest and knowledge of the themes that will be the focus of future local government planning – and, thus, is a reliable and innovative partner of local authorities.

basis for diverse storage and archiving systems.

In a growing number of local authorities, greater transparency is a top priority. However, traditional management based purely on operational data or financial figures will no longer meet these requirements. A direct connection between operational measures and management strategy on a standardised and central information and control platform is needed. All relevant municipal areas of activity have to be taken into account. Thus, policy and management can develop the appeal of the local area together, to adjust behaviour to the demographic, social, societal and economic changes.

In terms of a modernisation tool, however, local authorities often stick to double-entry



Oliver Couvigny studied mechanical and industrial engineering. He joined FRITZ & MACZIOL: INFOMA as a consultant in 1997, he then moved to proxy at INFOMA in 2002 and was finally named as managing director in 2005. As managing director, Oliver is responsible for municipal business.