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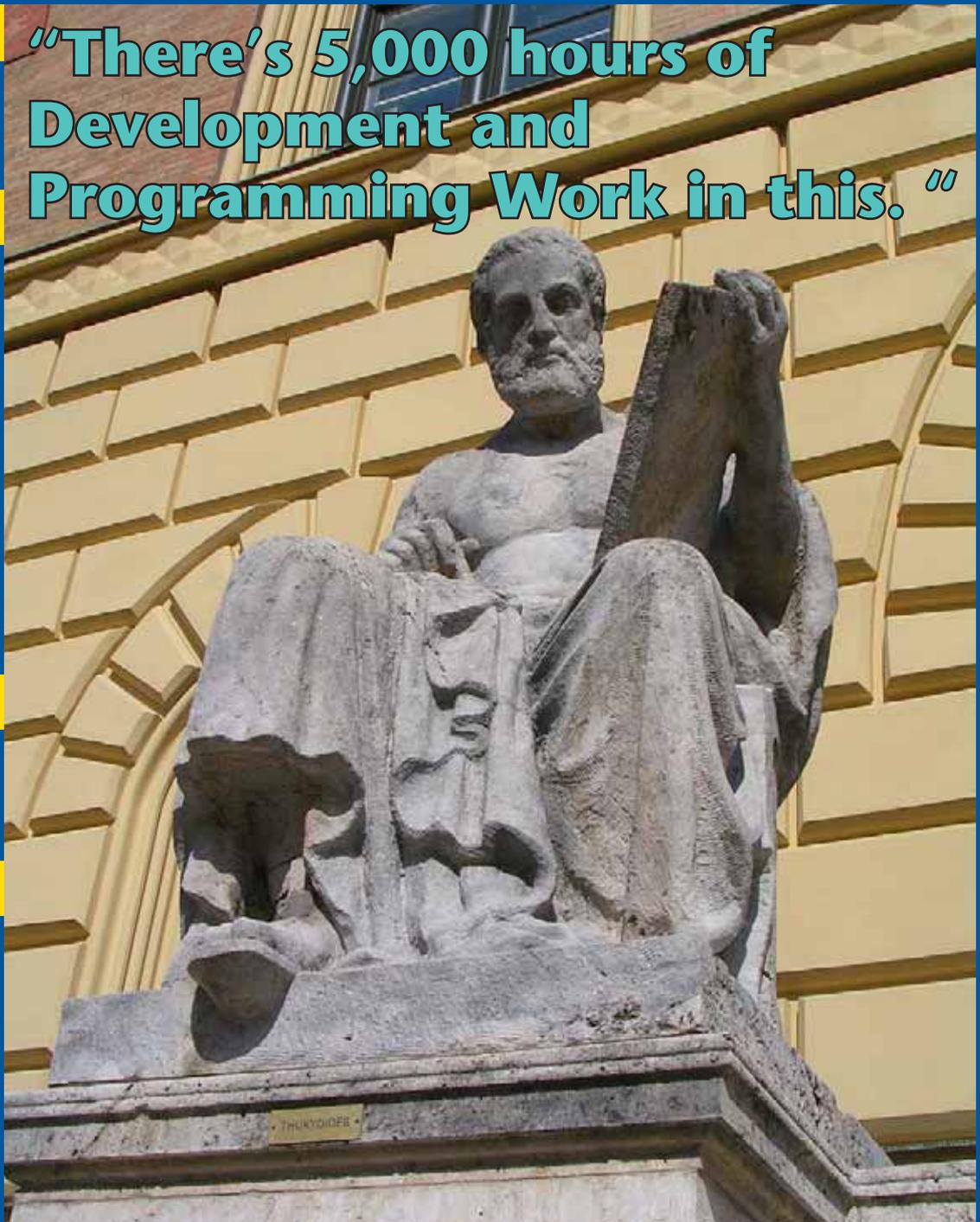
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**“There’s 5,000 hours of
Development and
Programming Work in this.”**



“There’s 5,000 hours of Development and Programming Work in this. ”

A chat on the terrace at ImageWare Components in Bonn

Angelika Beyreuther and Erwin König

On 15th July 2008. One of the few hot days this summer. We drive to Bonn to a meeting in the company ImageWare Components. There we are, sitting together on the sun terrace for a couple of hours: Rolf Rasche, Managing Director of ImageWare Components GmbH, his marketing manager Ulrike Weigelt, development manager Christian Reiner, and us from B.I.T.online who come from Wiesbaden. The BSB-Google-Digitisation Project and the role that ImageWare thereby played and is playing, is our theme.

In February 2007 Google and the BSB originally got together within the framework of a Public Private Partnership, to digitise approx. one million books and to make them available online. To tell the truth, and of course with an unbiased opinion, a damned good idea! But there are supposed to be so many exciting issues entwined in this first industrial mass-digitisation in German library circles – that by less secretiveness just wouldn’t exist! – and so we are, to say the least a little bit curious, whether we can get something sensational up and running. To put things straight and say it in advance: this is not the case. Even on this sunny summer day we don’t hear anything about the technical details of the Google-BSB-Project and know just as much, or just as little about the applied scan technology – despite the fact that we really couldn’t understand anything anyway, what in today’s light can actually be secretive about a scan process, whether with a robot or manually! We do actually accept that Google wouldn’t really like to present their own hardware and software solutions to the general public at large. What else can we possibly do? And that the digitisation is actually taking place in space rented by Google “within the boundaries of the Free State of Bavaria”, well really we knew all that before and one thing is sure, if we had wanted – relying on so much “Investigative Journalism”! – find out a few more details. Of course, those involved in the meeting who most likely knew more than



The development team leader Christian Reiner vividly tells about the many questions which presented themselves when elaborating the detailed concept: What has to be and how to be storable? What degree of freedom has to be programmed-in? How can we program for the exception? Where do we write that the book doesn’t exist?

us, kept strictly to the agreed-upon “Confidentiality”. Despite all that, it was an interesting afternoon.

As a result of the tried, tested and trustworthy mutual cooperation with other common projects, the BSB, in light of this major project, decided for working together with ImageWare. Rolf Rasche and Christian Reiner put into words what this major project means for their company.

Following closure of the BSB-Google-contract in February 2007, both participated in a workshop in the BSB on 27th/28th April 2007, whereby the demands on the whole workflow were made more precise. Then they were in “Stand-by-Mode”. On 1st July 2007, the company from Bonn got the contract, to get the workflow management ready for the major project with the prerequisite of being ready for production on 1st April 2008.

“Everything has to be up and running within half a year”, says Rolf Rasche. That means for the whole company whose staff excluding Christian Reiner had not been fully trained up till the signing of the contract and therefore not fully prepared: requiring full-concentration on the project and guaranteed success for the project. The challenge: one million books have to be prepared and processed in a pre-assigned project operating time – and at the end returned to their places undamaged. Rolf Rasche asked us how many full-digitisations we thought existed in Europe with the thought in the back of our heads that digitisation only started about ten years ago. We just about hit the mark with a guess of 300,000 full-digitisations – not bad for a guess really! Now we are talking about one million books, all of which have to be digitised within the short space of time speci-

fied by Google. Scanning has been taking place since the beginning of summer. What can be noticed is that those involved in the project are very keen – and it promises to remain exciting.

Rasche: “We knew because of our experience, that we can get this somewhat large amount of work done, when we concentrate on the logistics alone”. Rasche appointed six of his developers to the pilot project which took up more than 5,000 hours development and programming work. That doesn’t cover initial costs, says the businessman – but it paves the way for follow-up orders.

The partners from ImageWare and BSB speak highly of good collaboration. They are all pleased and happy to be working closely together on this pilot project in the same boat. Those involved in the project in the BSB supplied the ImageWare developers precise objectives and together they made the decision for a new software system, built upon MyBib from ImageWare and ZEND, the Central Indexing and Verification Database of the Bavarian State Library, and further developed from the Munich Digitisation Center of the BSB and ImageWare to a tool for driving mass-digitisation projects. Originally conceived as hosting solution, the new system can be further used via Google cooperation. “We have thereby created a gravitation core”, explained Rolf Rasche describing the new tool. Through the cooperative approach we have created

» **Who can ignore the fact that there are large, German enterprises, who will realise – one day – it will make sense as an investment in the future? Rightly so, because educational sponsoring of this type would be a win-win situation for the images of participating companies!**

a fundament whereby every library has the opportunity to participate in the future. As the logistics of procedure and speed determine the digitisation and Google constantly seeking replenishment, the workflow has to function perfectly. Planning fine-tuning of the concept took up quite a few development hours and gave Christian Reiner food for thought, in view of all the sophistication “the system has to remain easy to maintain”. The development team leader in his reports mentioned many questions which presented themselves: What has to be and how to be storable? What degree



“We knew because of our experience, that we can get this somewhat large amount of work done, when we concentrate on the logistics alone,” describes the Managing Director Rolf Rasche the “feeling” at the beginning of this mammoth project.

of freedom has to be programmed-in? How can we program for the exception? Where do we write that the book doesn’t exist? His boss added to the complexes, every librarian’s known theme- the so-called “Supplements”: Even these, with all their irregularities, have to be able to be kept evaluable. – And it’s exactly these exceptions that make programming expensive. (Many other details which also came to light in our chat on the terrace, will be gone into in more detail in the specialist article on pages 267-273.)

Eventually we start to philosophise about available and non-available money. Rolf Rasche speaks his own mind and anger about the Federal State Bank affairs over the last few months: “Billions of Euros were gambled away!” – If only 10% of the money, no!, even only 1% of that money, had been given to libraries, just think what projects could have been started! Back down to earth again to almost reality we speak about digitisation projects as possible educational sponsoring. Who can ignore the fact that there are large, German enterprises, who will realise – one day – it will make sense as an investment in the future? Rightly so, because educational sponsoring of this type would be a win-win situation for the images of participating companies!

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