Rocket software

LV 1871

Improving user experience by integrating COBOL with Java

Lebensversicherung von 1871 a. G. München (LV 1871) is an innovative insurer providing a range of life, disability, pension and income protection policies. Located in Munich, Germany, LV 1871 employs 450 staff and works with over 9,000 partners, with revenues totaling $715 million annually.

At a Glance

Industry: Financial Services.

Location: Munich, Germany.

Challenge: Removing technical restrictions and improving services to keep up with the pace of digitization.

Challenge

With over 670,000 insurance policies to manage, LV 1871 knew they needed to provide clerks and developers with industry-standard, intuitive tools, yet felt increasingly challenged to innovate their existing systems quicky and cost-efficiently.

Rainer Midderhoff, Head of Application Development & IT Security Officer at LV 1871, explains: "We were unable to provide lean workflows for efficient software development easily with our existing COBOL setup."

To enhance developer productivity, the company set its sights on optimizing its tooling and IT management processes. "Without integrated workflows, improving the experience for staff was time-consuming. Technical limitations locked us into outdated solutions running out of support, posing a potential business risk that we wanted to eliminate to improve resiliency," says Rainer Midderhoff.

The Challenge

LV 1871 needed to optimize its tooling and IT management processes to improve the experience for developers, while mitigating future risk.

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"We gained a future-proof solution to take advantage of new Java technologies while refactoring business-critical COBOL logic. This protects our investments in COBOL code while providing all the benefits of an industry-standard modern development environment. The solution allows us to leverage decades' worth of proven COBOL logic and move to new Java-based services faster."

RAINER MIDDERHOFF
Head of Application Development & IT Security
LV 1871

Solution

At the heart of LV 1871 is its central life insurance inventory management system, critical to keeping track of all contracts. Rainer Midderhoff elaborates: "We've refined the system over many years, and the COBOL business logic works extremely well. Our goal was to increase flexibility and use the data in new ways, especially with a Java environment, so we could improve internal functionalities and enrich the user experience."

The decision was made to migrate the life insurance inventory to a more cost-efficient platform — from IBM® VSE running on an IBM® zSystems® mainframe — and completely redesign the frontend of the application using Java®.

"Rewriting over 900 programs wasn't an option — we needed a quick, easy and inexpensive way of leveraging the COBOL logic we'd optimized over the decades in newly-developed Java applications," explains Rainer Midderhoff.

To further increase productivity, LV 1871 replaced its IBM® VisualAge® development environment with a leading modernization solution for distributed applications: Rocket® Visual COBOL® for Eclipse®. "Not only did Rocket Visual COBOL for Eclipse meet all our technical requirements, it also offered the widest range of features," says Rainer Midderhoff.

By compiling COBOL code to Java bytecode, developers can re-use valuable business logic in a Java environment and write features and web services in Java — all without sacrificing the stability and reliability of the original COBOL code.

The Solution

A top solution for modernizing distributed COBOL apps, empowering developers to enhance functionality and user experience using existing COBOL code.

Results

Now equipped with Rocket Visual COBOL for Eclipse, LV 1871 is future-ready and able to deliver new features and services, quickly and cost-effectively.

"Working with Rocket Visual COBOL for Eclipse, developers can extend the functionality of existing applications gradually and smoothly integrate them with new Java technology — which was difficult before," comments Rainer Midderhoff.

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Dr. Peter Baetz, Project Manager and Developer at LV 1871, adds: "Previously, colleagues would print out code to navigate large files more easily. With Rocket Visual COBOL for Eclipse, they benefit from all the handy tools of a modern development environment, including advanced search across many files. The integrated debugging capability helps us to work seamlessly across COBOL and Java code."

LV 1871 has also minimized business risk with the Rocket Software solution. Rainer Midderhoff remarks: "By modernizing our application stack, we streamlined operations and can take advantage of the most current features, releases and security patches."

He concludes: "Rocket Visual COBOL for Eclipse has helped us reduce technical debt and increase flexibility, preparing us for future business challenges. Today, we use, maintain and update fewer different tools, helping our developers to increase productivity and deliver state-of-the-art services to staff.
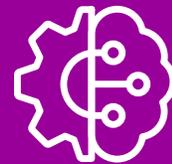
Impact

Faster Development and Delivery

By integrating COBOL code with the industry-standard IDE and Java, developers can confidently enhance mission-critical applications, automate routine tasks, and focus on delivering new business value, faster.

Protected Investments

With Rocket Visual COBOL for Eclipse, LV 1871 protected its investments by extending the functionality of existing applications through new Java technology.

Reduced Risk

Use of Rocket Visual COBOL minimized disruption and business risk during modernization, taking advantage of the most current features, releases and security patches.

Modernization. Without Disruption.™

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