

Success Story

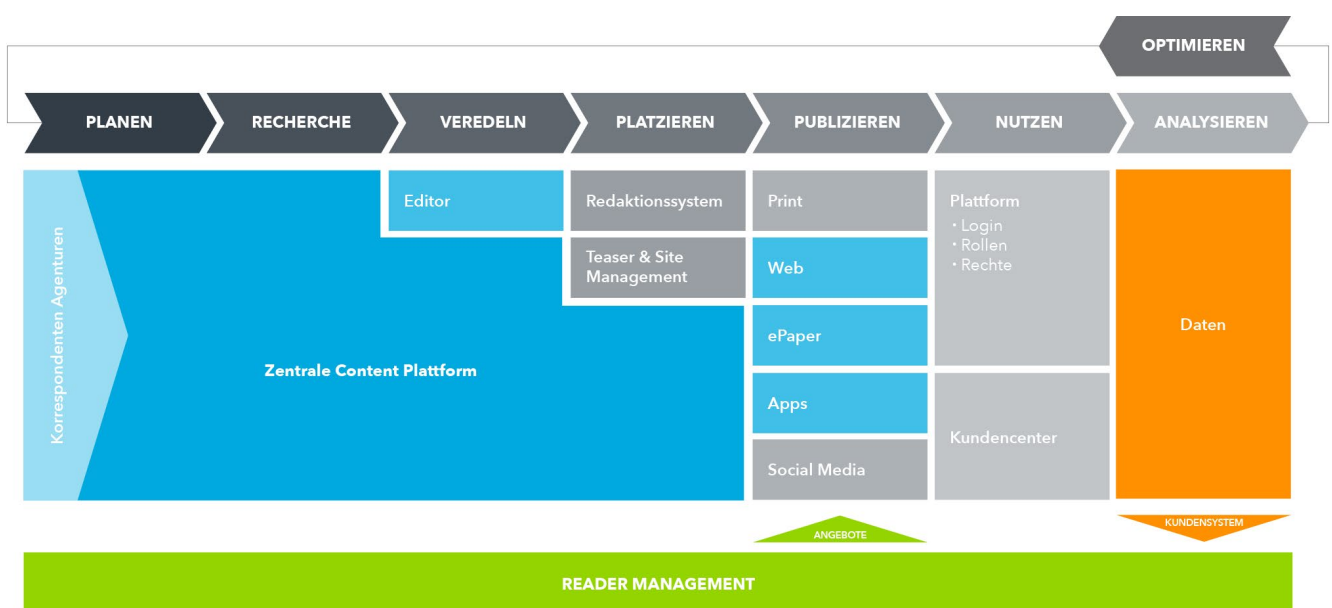
An E-Paper that Never Sleeps:

Innovative, cloud-based digital-publishing technologies from Berlin

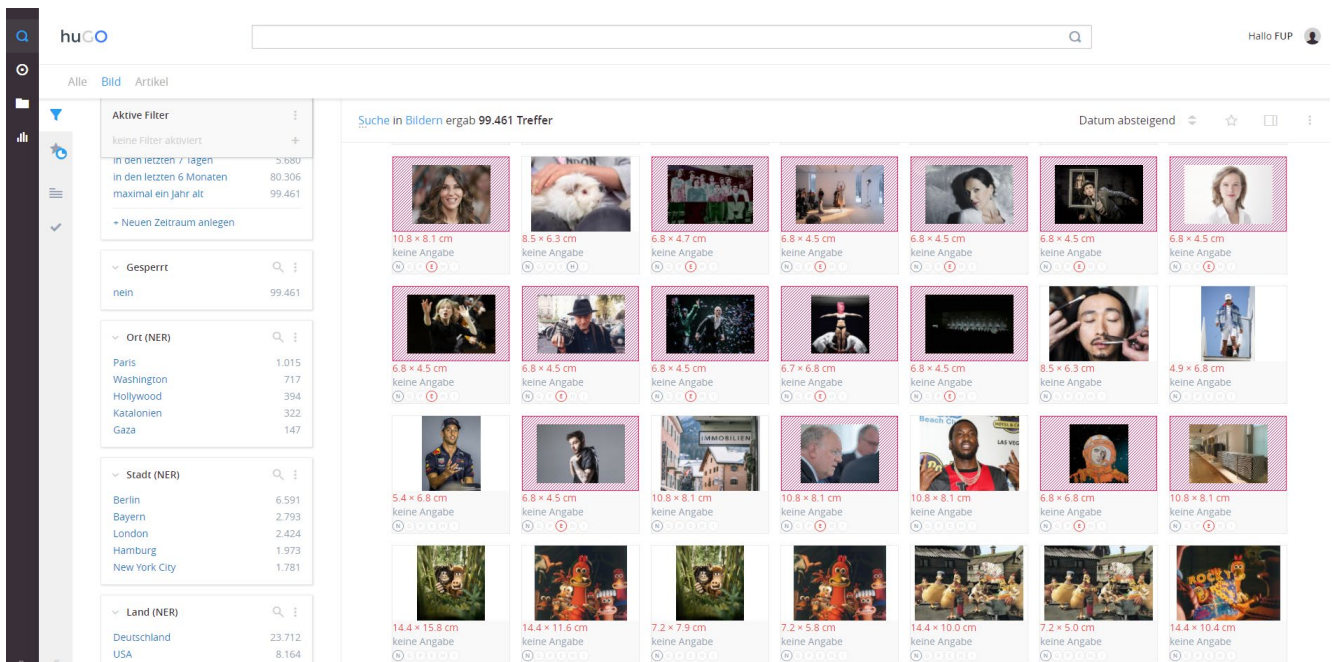
Managing and monetizing digital editorial content effectively – a challenge that even the major publishing firms still stumble against. The Sternwald Group, a Berlin-based special service provider for digital publishing, specializes in finding solutions to this problem. The focal point here is the company’s own digital asset management system huGO+, based on the cloud infrastructure of 1&1 IONOS, which powers the system.

For most print media, the democratization of the Internet after the turn of the millennium was anything but a blessing.

Ever since, print runs have been plummeting along with sales figures and proceeds from advertising. Many decision-makers at publishing firms and other companies that produce editorial content now face a mammoth task. To get back to long-term growth, it is ultimately necessary not just to survive digitalization,



Picture 1: Sternwald 360 Degree Publishing



Picture 2: Sternwald huGO Media Asset Interface

but to make a profit from it – but how? Corporate publishing now faces a similar question: what can be done to get people to read and appreciate the employee or customer magazine?

Digital publishing solution provider Sternwald, established in Berlin in 2002, is addressing these questions. Sternwald now has five locations in Germany and around 70 employees – and counting. The company's long reference list contains some of the largest publishing firms in Germany and Switzerland along with prestigious large companies and SMEs. Bastian Metz, IT project manager and team leader at Sternwald, sums up his company's role thus:

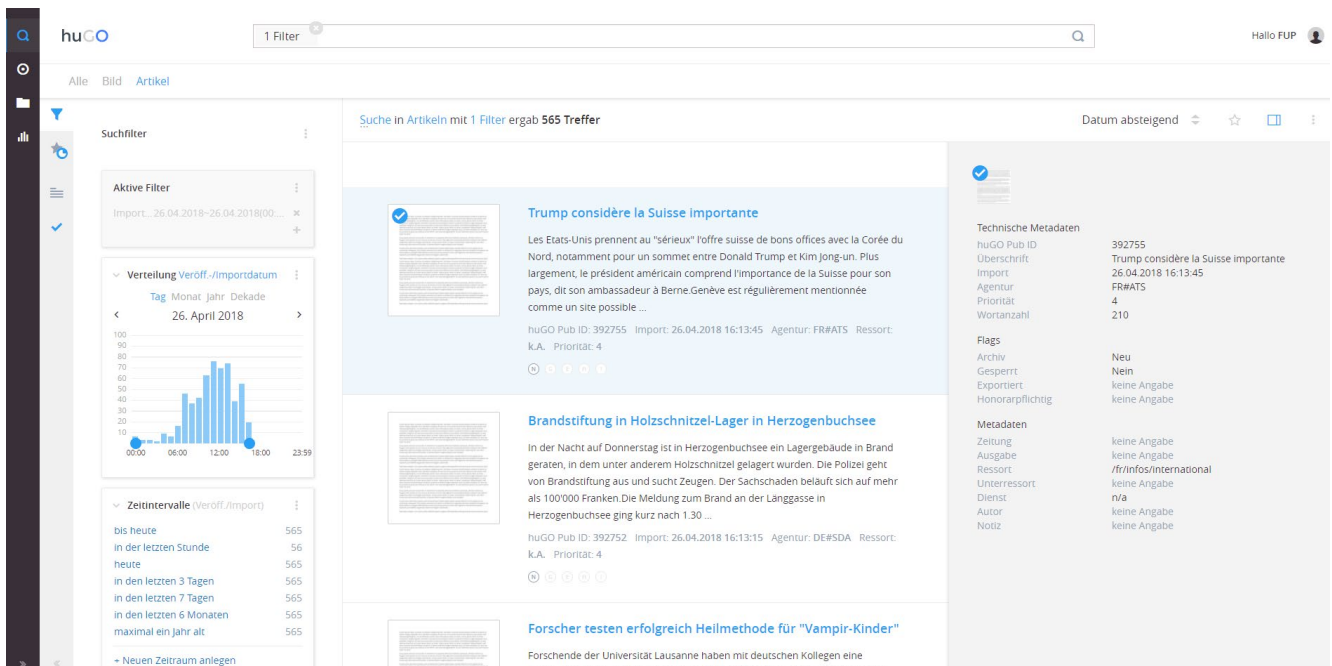
„We are committed to giving customers comprehensive support in digital publishing. That starts with collection and management of content and extends to distribution and delivery to readers, apps, or partners. We call this approach “360° publishing.” In other words, we analyze the customer structure and utilization habits, develop a concept, and implement it, from the workflow for the journalist through to front-end design and the implementation of proven and proprietary software such as huGO+.“

Enabling Optimum Use of Media Assets

huGO+ is a proprietary development of Sternwald and was launched back in 2004. It is now one of the leading digital asset management systems (DAM) on the market and forms the basis for Sternwald's data technology as an on-premises and, increasingly, cloud solution.

The software's core task could not be simpler: pooling assets centrally in the form of texts, images, or videos and making it easy for the editorial teams to find them and use them directly with no further adaptations. An editorial team usually has a wealth of usable media (assets) in-house. However, they are often scattered across various in-house servers or cloud platforms, making them almost unusable for day-to-day editorial work. As a result, a significant proportion of the assets cannot be reused – and ultimately cannot be monetized. This is where huGO+ steps in to perform its core task of accelerating and simplifying the search for content for the editorial team.

At the heart of the software is sophisticated technology that allows even more than content gathering, searching, and provision.



Picture 3: Sternwald huGO User Interface

- For instance, everything relating to the sale of content can be handled with the huGO Checkout module. This also includes registration of new customers and documentation for accounting.
- By contrast, the huGO Reporter module is used for straightforward uploading of content to the central huGO database and replaces all other channels such as e-mail, FTP, or web upload. The content is converted to a uniform data format as soon as it is received. Among other things, this makes it possible create long, high-quality photo galleries quickly and easily.

Rules can be created with huGO+ so that breaking news from a news agency is automatically fed into the database on publication, for instance. What is more, reader behavior can be extensively analyzed with huGO+ in order to make a medium more reader-friendly and ultimately more successful.

In addition, huGO+ provides a wide range of state-of-the-art tools for creating modern e-papers with special API interfaces that ensure that they are constantly up-to-date instead of being frozen at a certain information level like their print counterparts.

And there are also opportunities to integrate social-media platforms and community feeds. This opens up attractive possibilities for commercial media as well as for employee and customer magazines, because companies can constantly communicate the very latest information and messages to employees and customers in this way, thus strengthening attachment to the company. Last but not least, they create an impression among readers through the e-paper format, which is technologically advanced yet also reader-friendly, as has been known for many years.

Powered from the Cloud

Nowadays, all these processes are based on a powerful and constantly growing cloud infrastructure on which Sternwald hosts the huGO databases of its customers. This involves a staggering volume of data, as Bastian Metz explained: "In total, we are currently hosting around seventeen million media assets in our virtual cloud data centers. Around 150,000 new media assets are added each day, and twice that amount if it is a busy news day. In addition, customers perform around 35,000 searches each day."

Sternwald moved the vast majority of its IT systems to the cloud about a year ago. Before this, Sternwald hosted the databases in on-premises data centers, but as orders mounted, the company increasingly had to contend with the classic problems of local hosting: heavily restricted scalability, little flexibility, and cumbersome, resource-intensive, ultimately expensive procurement of new hardware.

„From the outset, we did a great deal of work with cloud applications, so we have been familiar with the advantages of the cloud for some time. In addition, we have always positioned ourselves externally as a progressive, technically forward-looking company. Eventually, our customers realized that maintenance and upkeep of local hardware was becoming too complex and therefore expensive, and once concerns about security and availability were overcome, there was no doubt that we would move the whole infrastructure to the cloud.“

At the beginning of 2017, Sternwald finally started looking for a suitable service provider for Infrastructure as a Service (IaaS):

„It was important for us to migrate our infrastructure to the cloud as easily as possible, and also to ensure the scalability and performance that we need for our data-intensive services in particular – while meeting strict data-protection requirements.“

After a two-month evaluation phase, the contract went to Berlin-based IaaS cloud computing provider 1&1 IONOS Cloud GmbH, which impressed Sternwald by actually exceeding its requirements. Bastian Metz commented:

„With the Data Center Designer, the Enterprise Cloud of 1&1 IONOS has a tool in place that won us over straight away because it can easily be used to build up and expand a data center. No other provider offers anything like it. Also, right from the test phase, whenever there have been specific technical challenges, we have been impressed by how easy it is to make personal contact with a qualified employee from Professional Services or

Support who actually gives us expert help around the clock until the problem is finally resolved.“

Bastian Metz

IT project manager and IT team leader at Sternwald

Sternwald now operates seven virtual data centers on the Enterprise Cloud. Combined, they use more than 260 CPU cores, 850 GB RAM, and a storage volume of over 40 terabytes.

A Growth Driver

The move to the cloud infrastructure had direct positive impacts on business processes at Sternwald:

„The Enterprise Cloud gives us the scalability, security, and performance that we need so that we can now accept orders that we previously needed to turn down. We can once more focus fully on enhancing and implementing huGO+ because we can rely on the Enterprise Cloud.“

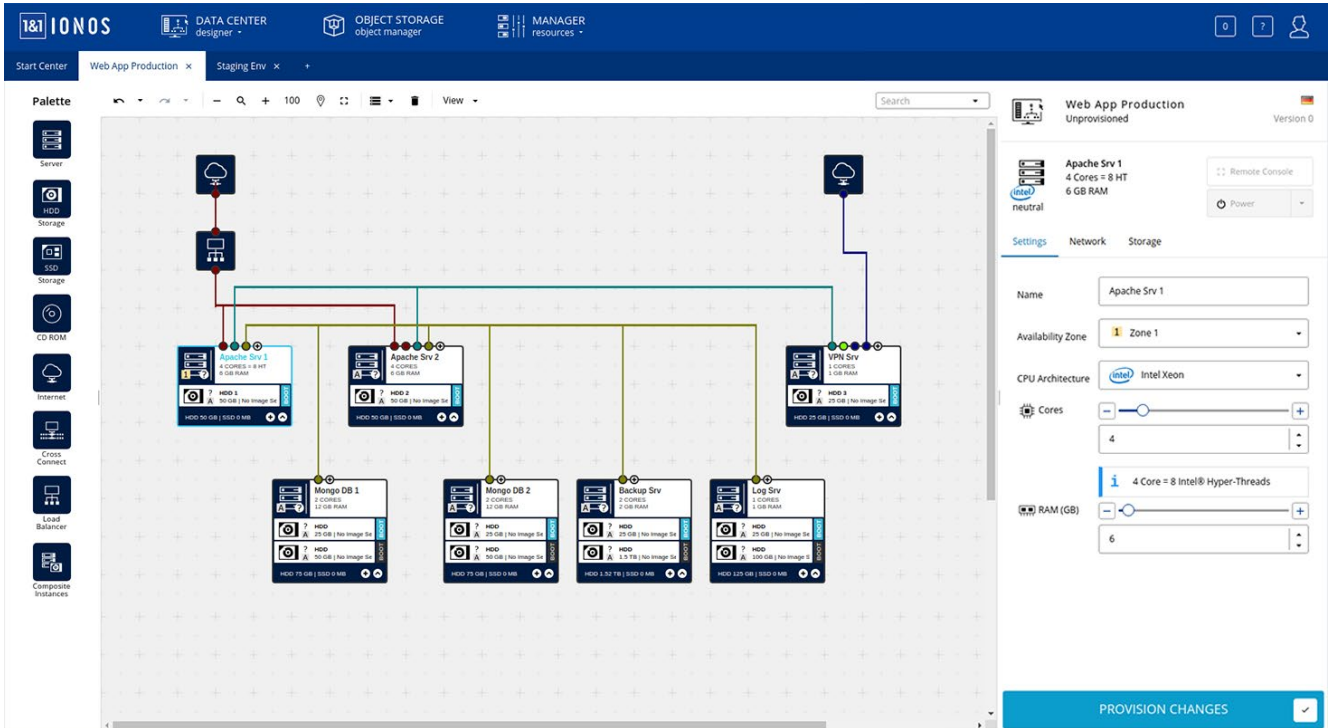
Bastian Metz

IT project manager and IT team leader at Sternwald

About 1&1 IONOS

With more than eight million customer contracts, 1&1 IONOS is the leading European provider of cloud infrastructure, cloud services, and hosting services. From VPS and bare-metal servers all the way to high-end IaaS solutions: 1&1 IONOS offers SMEs and large companies all the products they need to set up their hybrid or multi-cloud environment and is the only IaaS cloud computing provider that has its own code stack in Germany. 1&1 IONOS operates one of the world's largest and highest-quality IT infrastructures with over 90,000 servers. In the Cloud Vendor Universe from Crisp Research, 1&1 IONOS has repeatedly been named one of the leading providers of cloud platforms.

The Enterprise Cloud by 1&1 IONOS is the “Cloud – Made in Germany” with a data protection-compliant IaaS platform developed in-house for companies, system vendors/integrators, and managed service providers. It is flexibly scalable and provides free 24/7 support by qualified system administrators.



Picture 4: Data Center Designer (DCD)

During operation, the capacity of all components can be adapted to current requirements through live vertical upscaling.

1&1 IONOS was established in 2018 after the merger of 1&1 Internet and Berlin-based IaaS provider ProfitBricks and is part of the listed United Internet AG.

Further information:
www.ionos.com/pro/enterprise-cloud/

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