



photo: MaK DATA SYSTEM

Landing stage Seegarten

Maritime IT Solution for Improved Passenger Information

Up-to-the-minute Online Schedules for the Kiel Fjord Ferry Line with VERS

By Isabel Vollmann

MaK DATA SYSTEM has implemented an up-to-the-minute online schedule adapted to current traffic and weather conditions, for the Schlepp- and Fährgesellschaft Kiel (SFK, Kiel tug and ferry company). Fjord ship passengers can view the schedule on digital displays at the main landing stages, or via the Internet. This allows SFK to increase customer friendliness, making better planning possible for commuters and tourists. The Kiel IT service provider developed the online schedule based on the maritime solution "Vessel Event and Reporting System" (VERS).

When Axel Ruhnau makes his way to work each morning, he goes to the nearby ferry dock in Laboe. From there, he uses the "Fördedampfer" ("fjord steamer"), which takes him to Kiel-Friedrichsort. His workplace is there, at MaK DATA SYSTEM.

Like Axel Ruhnau, many commuters use the ships, which directly connect the west and east shores of the Kiel Fjord, for a short daily trip to the office. For tourists, too, the fjord steamer is a practical mode of transport, for instance for a day trip to the Kiel

Outer Bay. The operator of these passenger ships is the Schlepp- und Fährgesellschaft Kiel (SFK, Kiel tug and ferry company). Earlier this year, the SFK set the goal of optimizing their service for passengers of the fjord ferries by offering a minute-by-minute online schedule.

Success in Bus Operations as Good Example

The dynamic passenger information system for bus operations of the Kieler Verkehrsgesellschaft (Kiel public transport service) served as a model for the project. Here, passengers are informed at all times of current departure times by displays at the most important bus stops. The system also includes temporary schedule changes, for example those resulting from detours or traffic conditions. Customer satisfaction has improved enormously.

MaK DATA SYSTEM Responsible for Technical Implementation

"We wanted to offer our own customers the same kind of convenience. Changed departure times can always occur due to unforeseeable factors like higher traffic density from commercial shipping on the Kiel Fjord. So we entrusted MaK DATA SYSTEM

About the Schlepp- und Fährgesellschaft Kiel

The Schlepp- und Fährgesellschaft Kiel provides fjord and tug shipping, holiday and charter trips. SFK exists since 1996, and previously was the shipping department of the former Kieler Verkehrs-AG. It is a 100% subsidiary of V.V.I.P. Kiel GmbH.

The fjord ferry line operates from the Kiel Train Station to Laboe. In

the summer months, moreover, the fjord ships also travel to the beaches of Falckenstein, Schilksee, and Strande. The SFK operates another ferry line on the Schwentine River from the Kiel Landeshaus (Schleswig-Holstein Parliament) to Dietrichsdorf.

www.sfk-kiel.de

with the task of developing an online schedule which always shows the current departure times," explains Andreas Schulz, CEO of Schlepp- und Fährgesellschaft Kiel.

The start of the project was in May of 2006. The online schedule was already in successful test operation

in its full scope. The final introduction is planned for the beginning of next year.

The new online schedule is displayed on special display panels at the main docks across from the Kiel main train station and in Laboe. Extension to additional docks is planned.

FÄHRLINIEN

ONLINE-FAHRPLAN

ACHTUNG TESTBETRIEB

Zurück in die Anlegerauswahl Hilfe

Ankünfte und Abfahrten am Anleger: **Bahnhof**

Aktuelle Uhrzeit: 14:52:38 Plan erstellt um: 14:52:34

Ziel	Fähre	Ankunftszeit Bahnhof	Abfahrtszeit Bahnhof
Laboe	HEIKENDORF		15:05
Anleger		Ankunftszeit	
Seegarten		15:09	
Reventou		15:16	
Bellevue		15:23	
Moenkeberg		15:30	
Moeltenort		15:42	
Friedrichsort		15:49	
Falckenstein		15:59	
Laboe		16:06	
Anleger		Ankunftszeit	
Laboe	LABOE	16:03	16:15
Anleger		Ankunftszeit	
Laboe	LABOE	17:08	17:00
Anleger		Ankunftszeit	
Laboe	LABOE	18:01	17:00
Anleger		Ankunftszeit	
Strande	HEIKENDORF	17:21	17:40
Anleger		Ankunftszeit	
Schilksee		18:58	
Strande		19:03	
Anleger		Ankunftszeit	
Laboe	LABOE	18:26	19:04
Anleger		Ankunftszeit	
Laboe	LABOE	19:04	19:04

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Screenshot from the new SFK online schedule



AIS

AIS stands for Automatic Ship Identification System (Universal Shipborne Automatic Identification System). With AIS, ships can identify themselves and give relevant static, trip-related, and dynamic data for various land-based stations.

The process of data exchange is a global standard and works anywhere in the world. Vehicles equipped with AIS onboard equipment from different manufacturers can recognize one another on the open sea.

Gudrun Reimer now can give exact information about actual departure times at ticket sales.

In the Internet, the online schedule is available at www.skf-kiel.de, with additional functions like the route and docks desired, including current ship movements, on a dynamic route card available to any passenger.

Advantages at a Glance

The online schedule takes the influence of current traffic, weather conditions, and longer boarding and disembarkation times for high passenger traffic into account when determining the travel times and routes of the passenger ships.

For instance, if the SFK uses additional ships during the Kieler Woche, their schedules will be calculated immediately based on their current positions, and provided to the passengers.

This type of interaction with passengers places SFK firmly in the lead in Germany. "Passengers can optimize their own time planning by checking the currently calculated departure times. MaK DATA SYSTEM developed and introduced this new service for us quickly and reliably," says Andreas Schulz.

Maritime IT Solution VERS Enables Online Schedule

The basis of the online schedule is the Vessel Event & Reporting System (VERS) developed by MaK

DATA SYSTEM. It enables the integration of processes in the maritime economy.

For the online schedule, VERS integrates information about the current

Integration Solution VERS

VERS offers customized event management based on process-relevant information. "Just in time", desired processes are started and required information provided:

- The VERS receiving module supplies information about exact ship positions and movements.
- The VERS event configurator collects all information needed. Based on that information, arbitrary conditions can be defined, required processes started and necessary information provided.

- The VERS report configurator generates an overview of defined events and running processes.

The IT solution, developed by MaK DATA SYSTEM, comes with a Web interface for the event and report configuration modules. Event services for process control run on a central server.

The integration of processes and information is performed using Web services or by direct access at the database level. Access to legacy applications or databases is possible using Attunity Connect.

Improved Service Offer Results in a Clearly Gain of Customer Contentment

position and speed of the ferries with the expected schedule of the SFK. VERS can calculate the current arrival and departure times at the ferry docks. The result is prepared graphically and displayed on a Web interface in the form of a schedule. In addition, the positions of the ships

are shown on a ferry line overview. The calculation of the online schedule is supported by the AIS (Automatic Identification System) technology established in the maritime industry. Ships use AIS to identify themselves and send static, trip-related, and dynamic data.

With the online schedule, MaK DATA SYSTEM has developed another innovative solution for the maritime industry. In this case, the beneficiaries are the tourists and commuters of Kiel, like Axel Ruhnau. Now, he can check the online schedule to get exact details of when his ferry can take him home for the evening.

From the right: Dieter Kluge, manager, Andreas Schulz, director (both Schlepp- und Fährgesellschaft Kiel), Ulf Helmke, project manager (MaK DATA SYSTEM) at landing stage Neumühlen

◆ www.makdata.de/vers



photos: MaK DATA SYSTEM

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