

Welcome App Germany

A success story from Dresden: From the first digital refugee helper in Dresden to a German-wide integration system for migrants

Providing support with regard to orientation and integration for migrants and refugees has been recognized as a common challenge in Germany. Therefore, Heinrich & Reuter Solutions GmbH (HeiReS[®]) launched the Welcome App Germany, a Microsoft Azure-powered system that provides a place for migrants in all German regions. The app provides help for migrants and refugees who are getting oriented to Germany.

In the summer of 2015, HeiReS[®] introduced, in cooperation with Saxonia Systems AG, Welcome App Dresden, HeiReS' first digital smartphone app to support refugees in Germany. Welcome App Germany was built on the success of Welcome App Dresden, and launched on October 3, 2015, the Day of German Unity.

Welcome App Germany is free of charge for its users and is available for Android, iOS, and Windows – as a mobile solution for smartphones and tablets, and for desktop PCs. The information within the app is provided in several languages.

The system has been transformed from an app into a professional universal software system and has been continuously developed and steadily improved by HeiReS[®]. The app not only supports refugees and migrants, but also volunteers, authorities in cities and counties, and providers of language and integration classes. Soon the app will be extended with German phrases to support language learning.

“The first step of voluntary integration consists of understanding information with the help of digital media. The second step is dialogue and concrete interaction with local counterparts within communities. The third step can lead to a positive multicultural coexistence through a better understanding of others and a sense of togetherness,” said Peggy Reuter-Heinrich, HeiReS[®] CEO and UX-designer.



Since its launch in October 2015, more than 25 cities and counties have included local information and contacts in Welcome App Germany. Germany's capital city, Berlin was recently added in September 2016. HeiReS[®] has developed a content management system which was provided to integrated municipalities while offering full offline functionality for the app utilizing its content.

The system is well established and highly valued by municipalities and its various users. The app has even attracted attention beyond Germany's borders, having been mentioned as an example of German digital transformation at a global Microsoft partner conference in Toronto.

Achim Dettweiler, director, Microsoft Visual Studio Product Marketing, Microsoft Corp., said, "Knowing from my own experience how hard integration into a new country can be, I really love what HeiReS has created. The Welcome App Germany project, using Visual Studio for cross-platform development and Microsoft Azure for the cloud backend, provides extremely helpful information for both migrants and helpers. I can't wait to see how they will evolve the app."

HeiReS[®] has participated as a partner and speaker at the 2nd Future Congress Migration & Integration at the federal press office in Berlin on 20/21 September 2016 to emphasize the relevance of the Welcome App Germany.

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