

# IMMOBILIENSCOUT24 RENTAL REFERENCE SERVICE

The Scout24 group of companies helps their clients to make some of the biggest decisions in their lives. Their services include providing an all-round service with regard to property and the search for a new car to personal finance and wealth management.

ImmobilienScout24 (IS24) is the part of the business that is responsible for property services. It provides all services “all around property – Rund um die Immobilien” from rental through to purchase, financing, removal and tools to make the overall removal experience much easier. Each month, IS24 assists more than eight million people by providing a variety of services and innovative products to their clients.

Innovation and continual improvement are common goals for both IS24 and Objectivity. These common aims, along with an established working relationship, have helped to drive the development of one such recently launched service for rentals, the Rental Reference Service.

## THE CHALLENGE

Historically, when a tenant moves from one rented apartment to another, they must obtain a reference from their previous landlord. The reference primarily provides evidence that, during their rental contract, the tenant has paid their rent in a timely manner. Obtaining these references is often difficult and time consuming. This can lead to delays when processing a new rental application. A move to a new flat/house can be stressful enough without having to request and compile qualifying data, for the new landlord or bank.

IS24 wanted to find a way to help people to move as quickly and easily as possible. Their idea was to create an online service that provides this financial information for new landlords. In this way, tenants can focus on finding the right accommodation instead of getting tied up with many administrative tasks.

## OUR ACTIONS

Objectivity worked closely with IS24 to create the Rental Reference Service. Available as part of Scout24’s property portal, this service creates rental payment reports for its users. This project was completed using the agile development method Scrum with short, 2-week development iterations, to allow for prompt and regular

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### KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

- Tenants may generate reports without their previous landlords’ involvement.
- IS24 act as a trusted third party, adding credibility to the information.
- Tenants may choose specifically which information to provide. In other words, they may select only transactions relating to accommodation.
- The time to generate and submit reference document is significantly reduced.

### TECHNOLOGY

- Java
- Spring Boot
- AngularJS
- MongoDB
- REST

feedback from IS24 and their customers in order to continually improve the service. A UX (user-experience) engineer helped to create an intuitive and compelling experience for end users. This allows the service to be used without training or extensive documentation.

The Rental Reference Service uses HBCI (Home Banking Computer Interface). This is an independent specification that allows systems to communicate with banks in a safe and secure way. This platform is compatible with most German banks and consequently available to the vast majority of the rental market.

## DATA SECURITY

Customer data security was a prime concern from the very start. Data is not stored anywhere except on the servers of the account holders bank and is only available when specifically requested. A security expert helped to create a robust design that protects sensitive client data.

IS24 and Objectivity will continue to monitor end user feedback and usage patterns with a view to improving the service over time. Releasing the service early promotes prompt and effective feedback whilst providing a real benefit to its customers.

## THE RESULTS

The Rental Reference Service is now live and helping customers to generate appropriate financial reports. It is available, free of charge, to people who register on IS24's real estate portal. The service allows users to specifically tailor the contents of the report to suit their requirements.

With a secure and carefully managed service, IS24 acts as a trusted 3rd party. This gives landlords the confidence they need to ensure new tenants are able to meet financial commitments before signing a new lease/rental contract. Each report contains a unique code that enables new landlords to verify its accuracy and authenticity.

The Rental Reference Service eases the burden of moving to a new property/flat. It gives people more control to manage their own affairs without relying on previous landlords and other third parties. It can significantly reduce the effort to provide important information that must accompany rental applications in the German marketplace. This can mean the difference between losing out on a great opportunity or finding the ideal new home for prospective tenants and their families.

IS24 has been successfully working with Objectivity since they were selected as a dual vendor partner in April 2013. They grew a functioning team of 6 new and existing experienced Agile (Java) developers in the near-shoring market within 3 months to work within the "NewBiz" unit which trials new ideas and brings them to quick fruition, taking care that the service is safe & secure. In September 2013 Objectivity was tasked with building a second team for the core portal, which was completed in record time. Their flexibility and willingness to serve (the client/"Client first") is remarkable. To date Objectivity has 2 teams of 7 and 8 developers plus a Scrum master and tribe master, and continues to challenge the mature Agile set-up in is24 with new ideas! – keep up the good work.

Michael Bere  
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