Service Markets
“Markets for services, services for markets: both span a wide range of research challenges.”

Prof. Dr. Christof Weinhardt
Summary

Service markets are necessary for the efficient and effective trading of services. They integrate services created in an organization with services available externally. Marketplaces also offer their own services: for example, forecast markets provide information on customer expectations about an innovation.

There are numerous examples throughout Germany in which growth and employment from service markets are already visible. For this reason, cooperation between economic and academic sectors for the development, testing, and introduction of service marketplaces should be encouraged. They are of great significance for the future development of the German economy.

Important for businesses

Development of information and communication technologies extend and change services; in addition, in a service marketplace ICT hardware and software are themselves increasingly offered as services.

- Service markets provide an excellent opportunity not only to offer services but also to bundle services. However, these opportunities have also created a more competitive environment.
- Innovative service marketplaces utilize “mass knowledge.” For example, aggregate user evaluation of a new business idea can be very valuable to producers and intermediaries evaluating an innovation.
The increasing significance of the service sector is now undisputed. A general increase in services, diversification of services, and creation of innovative service concepts can be easily observed. Service markets are a natural next step in this process of development.

ICT advances have led to innovative services, and more specifically, to the creation of service marketplaces. Following a short survey of transformation within the service market, which Chris Anderson describes as responding to the “long tail” of demand, two types of new service markets will be presented. The first type - software and hardware as a service - shows that physical products are increasingly also services. The second service innovation – infrastructure as a service - describes how service markets themselves offer innovations.

I. Transformation of the market for services

Prior to the invention of swift information and telecommunication media, the market for services was regionally limited. Service providers had to be available where the service was to be provided, or the customer had to go to the service provider. Wider geographical distribution of services was prevented by the lack of cost-effective distribution.

Today, information and telecommunication technologies are widely available, and markets for services have began to conquer large geographical areas. It is possible for providers to offer services via the internet to a much larger clientele than was possible only a few years ago.

However, due to easier accessibility of information and dissolution of geographical limitations, service providers are now confronted with more intensive competition. Potential global competition puts pressure on prices due to transparency about offerings and the prices being asked for them. In addition, substitution of services is more likely because of innovative service providers operating at a great distance. A relevant example is the outsourcing of programming or assistance tasks, to low-wage countries such as India and China.

The result of swift and cost-effective internet access is that substantial parts of many companies’ value chains have been transformed. Even more interesting, this technological revolution has provided the first economically sound opportunity to market niche products through the utilization of internet portals, and thus new businesses have been formed.

The niche characteristics of many markets received virtually no consideration by business strategists until recently. Now, a new kind of business model, demonstrated by Amazon’s internet platform (www.amazon.com), offers great potential. Unlike offline bookstores with a relatively small number of bestsellers, amazon.com has a very extensive range of goods. Many of the books offered are only interesting for a small circle of readers, but the global demand is significant. The virtual market, when aggregated, is far larger than the physical market served by booksellers tied to a relatively limited number of physical locations. The difference is only made possible via the internet: the range of products available for sale is disconnected from physical storage possibilities and does not require retail space. The internet and modern ICT applications thus have changed the shape of available markets. The “long tail” of demand provides great potential for the development of new service markets.

II. New service markets

The potential of modern ICT for services goes much further than making services more widely available. Completely new service markets are opening, that are intrinsically a service in themselves. The use of software, hardware, and even infrastructures are not merely sold as services, but are increasingly developed by webs of providers that generate new independent capabilities.

Software as a service

It is now common practice to purchase software via the internet instead of acquiring it stored on a data medium. It is therefore not surprising, that utilizing software as a service available to demand is steadily increasing. Business webs support the organization of this type of demand-oriented utilization.

A suitable infrastructure is necessary to enable the compilation of, access to, and invoicing of individually performed services. An example of this type of market platform is Theseus-Texo, which is currently receiving support from the German Federal Ministry of Economics and Technology (BMWi) for a research project.
project that coordinates participation of 20 partners from German economic and academic circles.

Theseus-Texo provides a platform that makes services tradable on the internet, composable into value-added services, and integrated into customized services (www.theseus-pro gramm.de/scenarios/en/texo). A possible utilization scenario involves software manufacturers. The Texo process, with standard components continuously provided by SAP, enables swift adaptation to new software requirements. Should, for example, a new environmental directive in Australia mean that an environmental index number has to be calculated for all products that are exported to this country, Theseus-Texo enables a specific company to find suppliers that can provide suitably certified software. The user then undertakes a search among these possible providers for a preferred solution with specific criteria. Once chosen, the selected application can be seamlessly integrated into an existing interface and operations can begin immediately. The user pays for each individual utilization of the needed new software instead of acquiring the software solution. Software thereby becomes an on-demand service—an illustration of a recently created new market, the service market for software.

**Infrastructure as a service**

IT infrastructure, which until recently was considered as a collection of hardware, has also become the focal point of new developments. Only a few years ago, the IT infrastructure of a company was designed to provide internal processing power for anticipated peak demand. Because meeting peak demand involves substantially greater resources than are necessary for normal operations, and peak demands do not occur frequently, this mode of operation proved to be extremely expensive. Until recently, however, temporary provision of processing capacity on demand was not imaginable.

Similarly, it was impossible to imagine offering hardware such as processors (clearly a product) as a service. Today, however, processor hours, or storage space per hour, are one of many available IT services. Processing power is not a product in itself, but is instead made available on demand as a service.

The term “cloud computing” or “on-demand computing” must be mentioned within this context. The term describes the invisible origin of various resources available to a user. If for example, a manager needs “152 processors with 1.3 TB storage capacity, WebSphere, DB2 and several SAP applications within three hours for a period of 60 minutes” those resources are made available on-demand via an interface to cloud computing (Leymann, 2008). Services from this kind of infrastructure offer great future potential for growth and employment as they enable not only the efficient operation of IT, but also the creation of innovative business models through the bundling of services.

It is beneficial to smaller businesses, in particular, since they are able on the one hand to develop new niches as infrastructure providers, and on the other hand, to react with greater flexibility to other market opportunities thanks to the availability of powerful computing capacity.

**III. A new trend: markets as forecast tools**

Information has always been valuable, available for a price from knowledgeable experts, and broadcast more generally in the form of newspapers, encyclopedias, and books. With

**Illustration:** forecast exchange STOCCER.
Hintergrund

The internet, however, these traditional providers are fading in importance. Instead of well specified providers and buyers, information is aggregated and users are anonymous. At the same time, there is a much greater possibility for individualization as users search for, and consume information, according to their own criteria.

The development of information markets means, that in addition to their function as a hub for exchanging products or services, service marketplaces can also offer their own services. A very interesting example of new service market capabilities is the effective forecast tool, known as prediction markets, which are also known as event markets, or decision markets. These markets are like exchanges. James Surowiecki’s book ‘The Wisdom of Crowds’ (2004) helps explain why they are potentially useful: aggregation of estimates from a large group is often a more successful predictor of a future event, than the opinion of a single expert.

An interesting forecast market was established at the University of Iowa in 1988 to predict the result of the US presidential election, based on the idea, that “voters don’t have any incentive to tell pollsters the truth. But, when their own money is on the line, people will act on information that affects the chances the candidates have of winning or losing an election” (Agrist, 1995). Still in operation today, The Iowa Electronic Markets (IEM) are operated by the faculty at the University of Iowa Henry B. Tippie College of Business, for research and teaching purposes. Participants can invest from 5 to 500 dollars. Payoffs depend on the outcome of various congressional, as well as presidential elections, and other economic events, such as policy decisions by the U.S. Federal Reserve. (http://www.biz.uiowa.edu/iem/)

A growing number of prediction markets have now been formed for other purposes. Personal expectations regarding the value a product prototype are an interesting example. The price of shares reflects investors’ expectations about the traded product, though in many cases, virtual shares are traded, and no money changes hands.

One attraction of prediction and other information markets, is that prediction is typically available at great speed, and is often surprisingly accurate. For example, only thirteen minutes after the Challenger Mission disaster, the financial market meted out massive punishment to a specific company. It took NASA over five months to establish the cause of the disaster, and therefore identify the responsible company – coincidentally, the very same company that had crashed on the stock market.

Trading in expectations: STOCCER

STOCCER (www.stoccer.de), an information and forecast stock exchange, was set up by the Universität Karlsruhe (TH) and the Frankfurt University with support from the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research. It is a virtual soccer stock exchange, utilized as an instrument to forecast future events.

Participating traders are soccer fans from around the world who trade virtual shares. For example, participants can submit their expectations regarding the result of the German premier league championship. The progress of trading is not influenced by support for the team, goodwill, sympathy or antipathy with a specific team, but instead, by predictions of match results and tournament rounds.

The aim of the soccer stock traders, as in a normal stock exchange, is the maximization of value through the skilled sale and purchase of virtual shares. The soccer share values result entirely from the trading of these shares, and therefore, reflect the expectations of participants.

Prediction markets

Prediction markets are speculative markets that allow bets on the outcome of specific events. Participants “trade shares of virtual stocks that represent bets on the outcomes of future market situations; the stocks’ value depends on the realization of those chosen market situations. When an outcome associated with a specific market situation occurs, each share of virtual stock receives a cash dividend” (Spann/Skiera, 2008). The market price reflects the aggregated expectations of participants and can therefore, be utilized to determine the probability of future events.
Professor Weinhardt, what is your research about?

Our research is focused on interdisciplinary observation, prototype implementation, and experimental analysis of electronic markets and services. We have addressed these topics in a variety of projects oriented towards “market engineering.”

We take an engineering approach to the design and support of electronic markets, using theories, methods, and tools from economic science, computer science, and law – these are the foundations of market engineering.

What topics are targeted in your research projects?

Our projects are all related to the topic of services. An example is the provision and operation of the already mentioned electronic markets, one of the services that we are researching in all its many facets, ranging from the business model and relevant regulations, to IT infrastructure in all its details and dependencies. Exciting challenges are thrown up in different operational fields of market mechanisms: our focus is on the financial, energy, and logistics sectors and in the utilization of market mechanisms for the allocation of calculating capacity in computing grids of clouds.

Further projects focus on issues of service design. In the Theseus beacon project, for example, we are investigating business models and innovation processes necessary to realize the “Internet of Services.” In the healthcare sector, we are more concerned with people-oriented services and their enhancement through modern IT. Our work is always aimed at well-grounded research but also the transfer of technology and knowledge from university to business practice. This functions best in close cooperation with partners in industrial and academic fields.

Which projects would you single out as practical examples for the establishment of service excellence with the support of the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF)?

Here I would like to particularly highlight three projects supported by BMBF. One of the projects that has been especially successful, is a project within the healthcare sector: The PerCoMed project, and the accompanying research assignment Stroke Angel, have been introduced into the daily operating routine of our hospital partners. Our group at the FZI was involved right from the start, and is now accompanying the introduction process. It is great to be able to see this success on a practical level.

A further project is Electronic Financial Trading (e-FIT), in which innovative concepts and market structures were investigated for both stock-exchange and off-exchange trading. Among the concepts researched in the project are user-specific configuration and the combination of markets, including innovative order types and trading with product bundles (bundle trading). In order to investigate and test such innovative concepts and new market structures, the prototype meet2trade was developed within the framework of this project.

The trading platform meet2trade was also utilized in the third project, STOCCER, which you’ve just described. This research project addresses the topics of information and forecasting markets, and was carried out by the Institute of Information Systems and Management, in cooperation with the Chair of Electronic Commerce at the Frankfurt University. In forecast markets, “ownership rights” in future events are defined and made marketable. Market participants trade these rights as “shares” according to their personal expectations – the prices of these shares reflect all estimations in information-efficient markets. It is possible to derive forecasts relating to future events from these market prices. Information markets are not only utilized as a forecast instrument, but also for the development and evaluation of services. For example, this type of instrument enables estimation of the market chances for a service in particular regions.
GEX® – the German Entrepreneurial Index – is the new Deutsche Börse index for medium-sized businesses introduced on January 3, 2005. It contains all “proprietor-dominated” companies listed in the Prime Standard at the FWB® Frankfurt Stock Exchange that have made their IPO not more than ten years ago. Currently, over 120 companies fulfill these criteria. They have been listed in the stock market for an average period of five years, and are still primarily in the hands of their founders, management, or supervisory boards.

GEX is therefore an indicator of the value development of medium-sized businesses on the stock exchange. It increases the visibility of stock exchange-listed, medium-sized companies, and augments the indices of the DAX® family. Companies not listed, but with similar dimensions to GEX companies, can utilize the new index as a benchmark for capital available from the market. For investors, GEX issues clear statements on the relative performance of medium-sized businesses.

Major entry criteria

- GEX consists of German companies that are listed in the Prime Standard of the FWB Frankfurt Stock Exchange.
- GEX companies must be proprietor-dominated; this means that management boards, members of the supervisory board, or their families must possess between 25% and 75% of voting rights.
- The IPO of these companies must have taken place less than ten years ago - even in the case of established firms.

Source: www.deutsche-boerse.com
Index for Family-Owned Businesses:
On a High

Since the introduction of GEX, developed by the Technische Universität München in January 2005, the index has broken all records and has even outperformed DAX, the dominant German shares index. What makes GEX so successful, and why was it developed by scientists at a research university?

“We nurture an extremely intensive professional dialogue with the Deutsche Börse in Frankfurt” reports Ann-Kristin Achleitner, KfW Endowed Chair in Entrepreneurial Finance, and academic director of CEFS (Center for Entrepreneurial and Financial Studies) at the TUM Business School. “The stock exchange climate deteriorated drastically following the internet hype. In 2003, the third year with no IPO (and the longest) in German history since 1871, we considered how we could make the stock market more attractive for investors. The challenge was simply to help a group of proprietor-managed companies listed on the stock exchange, which up until now had been sidelined in the charts, to achieve a higher profile.”

Up until this point, the opinion in stock exchange circles was that proprietor-managed companies were not very attractive for investors. The reason typically given, was that the “Herr-im-Haus” mentality destroyed any form of innovative investment strategy. In the meantime however, a significant change had occurred in the market. Investors were fleeced of billions in the accounting scandals at Enron, Worldcom, and similar high-flyers. A sense of responsibility was suddenly a more attractive attribute of investment targets, and investors were ready to see proprietor-managed companies in a new light.

The idea behind corporate governance regulations, which emerged from behavior at Enron and similar companies with glowing assurances about their responsible conduct, appeared to correspond more comfortably with the proprietor-led medium sized company. “Anyone making decisions that affect his own capital, will give substantially greater consideration to the long-term positive and negative implications of investments” comments Christoph Kaserer, Chair of Financial Management and Capital Markets at the TUM Business School, and also an academic director at CEFS. He should know. Since the beginning of the 1990s, long before the foundations of good corporate governance became at all visible to the public eye in Germany, Kaserer has studied the connection between proprietor dominance, corporate governance, and performance.

Medium-sized innovative companies represent the backbone of the German economy. They display particularly high growth potential and create an above-average number of jobs, but are, nevertheless often undercapitalized. To enable these companies to gain growth capital via the stock market, two solutions were possible: either a new market segment could be created with different entry conditions, or alternatively, a new share index could be created. The CFES academics opted for a new index, because they believed information was the necessary focal point to revitalize the market.

Share indices measure the performance of particular market sectors; in addition to value enhancement, these also trace the increase of capital stock through dividends. GEX displays the performance of medium-sized innovative businesses during their transformation from proprietor-owned firm to publicly-owned company, as growth financing plays a prominent role for these companies during this phase. For this reason, only companies with an IPO within the last ten years, that are listed in the Prime Standard of the Frankfurt Stock Exchange, and substantially owned by the family, are included in GEX.

Although GEX was initially the target of criticism from investment companies that feared trading losses due to too much illiquidity, the index has developed into an ‘over performer.’ Introduced in January 2005, by May 2006 the value of the GEX increased by 84.9 percent. In comparison, the heavyweight DAX and the TecDAX indices achieved around half as much growth with + 42.8 and + 43.6 percent respectively.

Alongside the average growth in market turnover of listed companies during the years 2004 and 2005 of only 33 percent in DAX (and a drop of 14 percent in TecDAX), GEX made news with a figure of +156 percent, thereby fulfilling the founders’ hopes about the link between greater public awareness and increased liquidity.

In 2005, professors Ann-Kristin Achleitner and Christoph Kaserer received the Initiative Prize from the Stiftung Industrieforschung (Foundation for Industrial Research) for their conception of GEX and the exemplary public-private partnership between the Deutsche Börse AG and CEFS at the Technische Universität München (TUM).

Translated from: „Spektrum der Wissenschaft, 2006, supplement „Lernen und Wissen – Forschen und Handeln“, Author: Gudrun Kosche
Conclusion

The practical examples and research projects we have described underline the importance and potential of service marketplaces. These descriptions suggest the need for further development of knowledge in this area, e.g. through an intensified transfer of research results to company practice and continuous joint learning.

Platforms for the trading of services as developed through the Theseus project also suggest directions for further development of the service economy in Germany. In addition to increasing employment as they grow, these platforms are likely to become a market standard, offering great potential for export. Forecast markets for example, can support strategic decision-making in companies and therefore also improve the allocation of resources. Companies are advised to undertake an active exchange of experiences with research channels to enable them to take swift advantage of this, and other service innovations.

The already visible positive effects of service markets should encourage the political sector to intensify efforts to support these efforts. It is important for Germany to press ahead with fundamental research concerning information and communication technologies. Advances in these foundations must be subsequently transformed into concrete questions about utilization. The potential of service marketplaces for Germany can only be tapped if a continuous dialogue and joint learning process between academic and economic sectors is encouraged and supported.
Hot Spots of Service Markets
Cologne Laboratory for Economic Research

Understanding markets with laboratory help

A new academic discipline, "experimental economic research", was established at the Cologne Laboratory for Economic Research at the University of Cologne. Its network of 32 computers is one of the largest and most modern of its type in Europe. Economic trade can be simulated and observed here in exact controlled situations. This permits major conclusions to be formulated concerning the nature of economic behavior, and the achievement potential of markets and other economic institutions.

Prof. Dr. Axel Ockenfels is the director of the laboratory. He has received numerous awards, including the Leibniz Prize from the German Research Foundation (2005) and the Philip Morris Prize (2007). His working group in Cologne considers a variety of important questions with the aid of innovative experimental techniques and game theory methods. For example: What ‘rules of the game’ lead to efficient trade in internet auctions, supply markets, and negotiations? Can ‘intelligent’ markets replace administrative procedures in infrastructural industries (energy, transport, and transportation)? To what extent can economic decisions be influenced and controlled by institutional framework conditions?

Experimental findings on these and other subjects are of great significance for the understanding of economic and social trading in almost all areas of life. The new laboratory is able to build bridges between modern economic theory and practice and between the various disciplines taught in the economic and social science faculty.

STOCCER

Market for expectations

The STOCCER project, addressing information and forecast stock exchanges, was set up with support from the BMBF at the Universität Karlsruhe (TH) and the Frankfurt University.

STOCCER.de is a virtual soccer stock exchange which is utilized as a forecast instrument, i.e. for the forecasting of future events. The participants trade virtual shares in STOCCER, for example German premier league teams, and submit their expectations regarding the result of the German championship through sale and purchase. The progress of trading is not influenced by support for the team, goodwill or sympathy or antipathy with a specific team, but instead by the predictions of match results and tournament rounds.

The aim of the soccer stock traders is as in a normal stock exchange, the maximization of their depot value through the skilled sale and purchase of virtual shares. The soccer share values result entirely from the trading of these shares and therefore, through the expectations of participants.
Spreadshirt (sprd.net AG)

A market for small retailers

Spreadshirt enables its online platform users to design and order clothing; it is, also simple for these users to establish their own label, and offer their creations in the spreadshirt store. All that is necessary to open an individual store is an internet connection and data with graphics or logos that will be utilized as motives. Spreadshirt will undertake the remaining steps necessary for the sale of the products on the internet, including storage, production, dispatch, and handling of payments.

Three hundred thousand Internet users – individuals, firms, clubs, and professional artists – already operate stores online, and have access to over 90 products. The range includes T-shirts, bags, and jackets. The desired product can be decorated with an offered motif or text with just a few clicks. Spreadshirt also provides a central marketplace in which users can offer their latest motives and products without opening an individual store.

Contact

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www.spreadshirt.net
Hitflip Media Trading GmbH

P2P – media marketplace

Hitflip, a young and swiftly growing company, operates Europe’s largest P2P exchange platform for media products (DVDs, games, CDs, books, and audio books). The company currently has 275,000 members in Germany, Austria, and the UK. Hitflip’s aim is to enable members to easily and inexpensively exchange media products.

Hitflip’s success depends upon sophisticated technology, which required substantial investment. The platform developed is safe, stable, and enables almost unlimited scalability. A complex matching process takes numerous factors into consideration in order to aggregate members’ wishes in real-time and match them with available products. The platform currently offers over 750,000 individual articles.

Hitflip members also profit from the Hitflip guarantee. Should problems occur during the exchange process, Hitflip steps in and remunerates members for any losses incurred. Due to cooperation with a series of content partners, including Amazon, available products are always up-to-date.

Deutsche Börse AG

GEX – German Entrepreneurial Index

GEX® is the new Deutsche Börse index for medium-sized businesses which was introduced on January 3, 2005 and contains all “proprietor-dominated” companies that are listed in the Prime Standard at the FWB® Frankfurt Stock Exchange, and which have made their IPO not more than ten years ago. Currently, over 120 companies of all dimensions fulfill these criteria. Below the level of blue chips – DAX® und MDAX® - there are numerous companies which are to a large extent in the hands of their founders, management, or supervisory boards. These companies have been listed in the stock exchange for an average period of five years. The GEX is therefore, an indicator for the value development of medium-sized businesses on the stock exchange, and, augments the indices of the DAX® family.

Major entry criteria

- The companies must be listed in the Prime Standard of the FWB Frankfurt Stock Exchange

Opportunities for market participants

The GEX increases the visibility of stock exchange-listed, medium-sized companies within the capital market. Companies with similar dimensions to GEX companies can utilize the new index for medium-sized businesses as a benchmark for their potential on the stock exchange. GEX also serves as a new source for derivative products, and as an investment showcase for emitters of certificates. For investors, GEX issues clear statements on the performance of medium-sized businesses.

Major entry criteria

- GEX companies must be proprietor-dominated; this means that management boards, members of the supervisory board, or their families must possess between 25% and 75% of voting rights.
- The IPO of these firms must have taken place less than ten years ago – even in the case of established firms.
rent a scientist GmbH

Scientists marketing their services

In the ivory tower, jokes are still being made about this young company, chiefly due to the provoking company name “rent a scientist.” For many university researchers, the name has connotations of rental cars, and this is exactly what the company founders in Regensburg had in mind. The three doctors of chemistry – Raimund Brotzak, Georg Maier, and Robert Nusko – went freelance in 1995 as rental scientists. The team was complemented by Adi Parzl, a business school graduate and former Siemens manager, as a fourth partner in 2000.

‘Rent a scientist’ has now expanded to include eleven academic thinkers, including biologists, physicists, textile engineers, and business experts. They operate in all sectors and technological areas, and are a recognized source of specialists for innovation, including implementation of new ideas into successful products. They are hired not only by medium-sized companies without their own research departments, but also by major industrial companies and think-tanks throughout Germany.

The Regensburg scientists have received several innovation prizes and are responsible for over 100 patent and utility patterns as well as brand name registrations. Numerous articles in national media and television programs have spread the word about the innovative rent a scientist company model throughout the whole of Germany, and beyond our borders.

ED Gesellschaft für Expertenwissen mbH

Marketing the experience of an expert generation

Erfahrung Deutschland (ED) is a large network of retired, high-flying professionals. The company has been procuring the valuable knowledge managers since 2005. Over 5,000 listed experts, with a combined total of approximately 280,000 years of highly qualified experience from a wide variety of areas and functions, are available to clients. The network provides an innovative solution to the current acute shortage of highly skilled staff in Germany. Qualified specialists are also a flexible operational resource that can help a company meet changing global demands.

Retired experts and managers, who have made above-average contributions during their long professional careers, can register free of charge in the databank of the expert network at www.erfahrung-deutschland.de. Interested companies requiring short-term know-how for individual projects, can make their enquiries directly at Erfahrung Deutschland as well.

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EnBW Vertriebs- und Servicegesellschaft mbH

On the path to intelligent energy management

The intelligent electricity meter heralds independent energy management. For the first time, modern meter technology can be combined with the possibilities provided by the internet. The meter is linked to the internet via a DSL connection, conveying data at regular intervals to a protected area on the energy company’s server. The customer – even when on the move or on holiday – can evaluate usage by viewing password-protected data via the internet. The computer screen displays current power and consumption data around the clock. The data can be compared on the basis of days, weeks, or months. This permits instant monitoring of individual consumption and comparison with previous time intervals.

The intelligent electricity meter is currently being tested with 1000 pioneer customers in Baden-Württemberg. The EnBW subsidiary Yello, is also testing prototypes with 1000 trial customers in other locations. The intelligent electricity meter primarily enables transparency, permitting all users to monitor their current consumption. If, for example, a washing machine is being operated in the home, the progress curve/watt total will rise according to machine consumption, permitting the monitoring of electricity consumption and resulting costs of each individual appliance. Additionally, the proportion of CO₂ emissions for each household is indicated.

Why is transparency so important? Many citizens give high priority to environmental protection, and are aware of how to save energy, but do not know how effective they are. A significant reason, is that existing meters are hidden in dark basements, and are normally only read once a year. Consumers find it hard, or even impossible, to see how to control individual consumption, and this prevents making a connection between utilization habits and ultimate costs. If the meter were visible daily, it might trigger a rethinking process. The first customers to operate intelligent electricity meters have reported precisely this effect; they are significantly more aware of their electricity consumption. Many are amazed, for example, at how much electricity is used by appliances in stand-by mode. A meter that reviews these, and other details, really helps save energy, and protect the environment.

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Besser Betreut GmbH

Betreut.de – online market leader for reliable babysitters

Betreut.de offers parents of young children the opportunity to find an appropriate babysitter who is available at short notice. This is valuable for situations in which normal childcare services are not available – for example, when parents have an appointment that cannot be postponed, or have to go shopping. Only a few clicks are necessary to show parents hundreds of profiles from which they can select a babysitter. Numerous important criteria reduce the range of selection to achieve the best possible match. The data set is so detailed, it even lists sitters who have experience with twins.

Registration, the submitting of requests, and viewing babysitter profiles, are all free of charge on the completely advertisement-free portal. As childcare is a matter of absolute trust, all babysitters must meet numerous requirements before they are added to the babysitter list. Parents can also submit evaluations for babysitters they have used, which can be viewed by all users.

Further services offered by Besser Betreut include, coaching for school pupils, and care of the elderly. The portal is the online market leader for the provision of family and household-related care services. Betreut.de is also offered by several Germany companies, as a benefit for their employees.

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Stuttgart Stock Exchange
Share trading for private investors

Over the last twelve years, the stock exchange, in Stuttgart, has been a pioneer in the development and professionalization of share trading. The company specializes in private investors, and it serves with an innovation culture. It was established by Stuttgart Stock Exchange in 1995. At that time, the stock exchange had around 2.7 percent of the German trading floor. Stuttgart Stock Exchange introduced a reference market model – the first in Germany stock exchanges. For private investors, this ensured a maximum of price stability through the best price principle. Orders are placed in markets with the greatest liquidity.

Further innovations targeting private investors followed: for example non-spread trading in the 30 DAX values reduces the implicit transaction costs for private investor orders to a maximum rate. Stuttgart Stock Exchange was a pioneer in the market with this idea, which was adopted by all other trading floors.

In 2007 and 2008, Stuttgart Stock Exchange introduced electronic trading for all share groups, ensuring as the first floor-trading stock exchange, that the level of transaction fees can be exactly calculated prior to order processing.

With the introduction of the trade segment EUWAX, Stuttgart Stock Exchange positioned itself successfully in the trading of securitized derivatives, and introduced new quality standards for investors with the EUWAX regulations. Today, Stuttgart Stock Exchange is the leading private investor stock exchange and European market leader, within the area of securitized derivatives. The turnover market proportion in the German floor-trading stock exchange sector has been increased from 2.7 to 45 percent.

Contact
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Spirofrog – Start Your Global Career GmbH
A marketplace for students

Spirofrog is an international career platform for students searching for jobs during, or after their studies. Companies can publish current practical training opportunities, student trainee places, diploma theses, master theses, and graduate places for young professionals in the job databank. They are additionally represented by a company profile and their logo. An applicant databank enables users to search for the right candidate both nationally, and internationally. Spirofrog has national and international firms as its customers, and can recruit top candidates through its intensive cooperation with renowned education establishments – in Germany and abroad.

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