# Building open digital infrastructures for public health

2 February 2025 – FOSDEM, Brussels









## **About**





### Bianca Kastl

Tech Lead / Product Owner GA-Lotse





# **Government Software: How to Open Source?**



### What does it need?

- Someone inside the government that encourages Open Source
- A good lawyer with experience in Open Source (procurement, contracts, licensing)
- Software providers that want to build solutions, not sell products







# **Public health departments**



## What do public health departments usually do?

- Public health protecting and improving people's health
- Usual topics
  - Infectious diseases (e.g. vaccinations, monitoring of outbreaks, hygiene supervision, HIV / STD)
  - Children and youth health (e.g. school entry examinations, dental examinations)
  - Health reports (e.g. for civil service officers)
  - Statistics about the health status of the population







## **Initial situation**



## The state of digital in Public Health in 2021

- Pandemic disclosed some data exchange problems between health departments
- Funding from the European Union (#NextGenerationEU)
- Cooperation between the health department Frankfurt (Main) and the ministry for social affairs in Hesse, Germany







# **Funding and Team**



## **Funding**

Budget of approx. 23 million Euro (NextGenerationEU) over three years

### **Team**

- Internal: 2 Product Owner, 3 developers, 1 data analyst, 1 team for non-technical tasks (controlling, finances, marketing, training etc.)
- External: up to 60 developers (cronn GmbH Bonn) in 11 teams, external security experts, data protection experts, accessibility experts, total up to 130 persons







# **Challenges**



## Why GA-Lotse is not a standard software task

- 25 health departments with a diverse set of business modules and different configurations (specialist applications)
- High bar for security and data protection
- Varying level of IT know-how in the various health departments
- Should be scalable and extensible
- Tight timeline (under one year from start coding to production)
- Entire project is controlled by people from within the public administration







# Concept



### **Core ideas**

- Embrace the federalism of the german government to build a federated system
- Decentralization on a centralized cloud environment
- Zero Trust
- Security by design and privacy by design
- DevSecOps approach
- Provided as SaaS

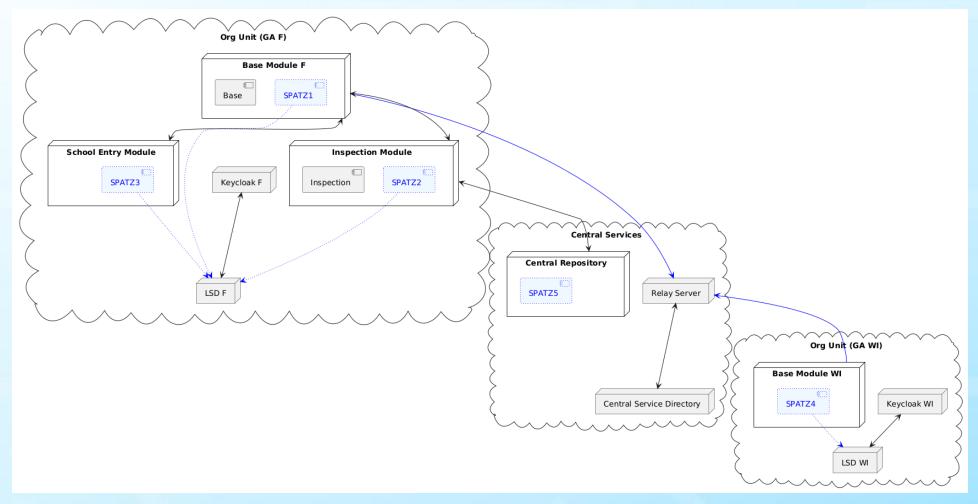






## **Service Mesh**





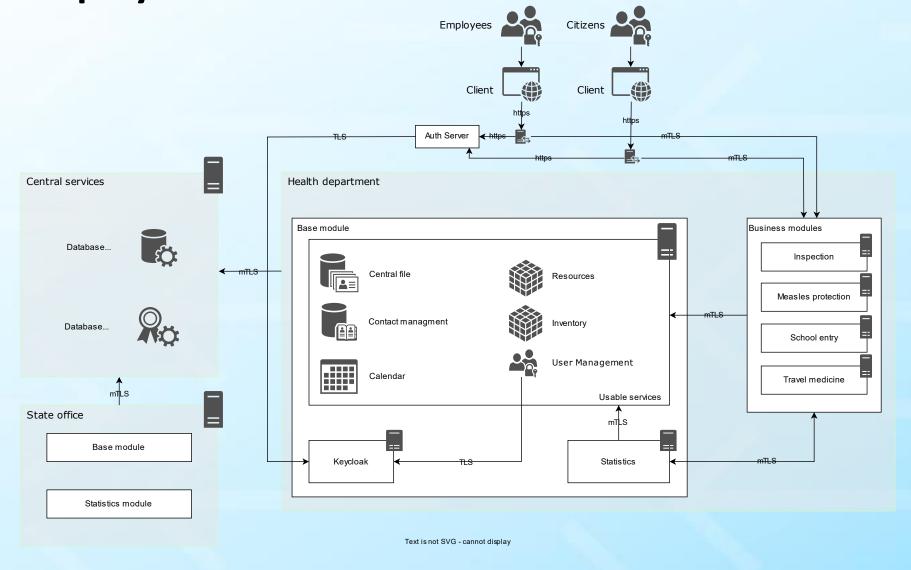






# **Deployment View**







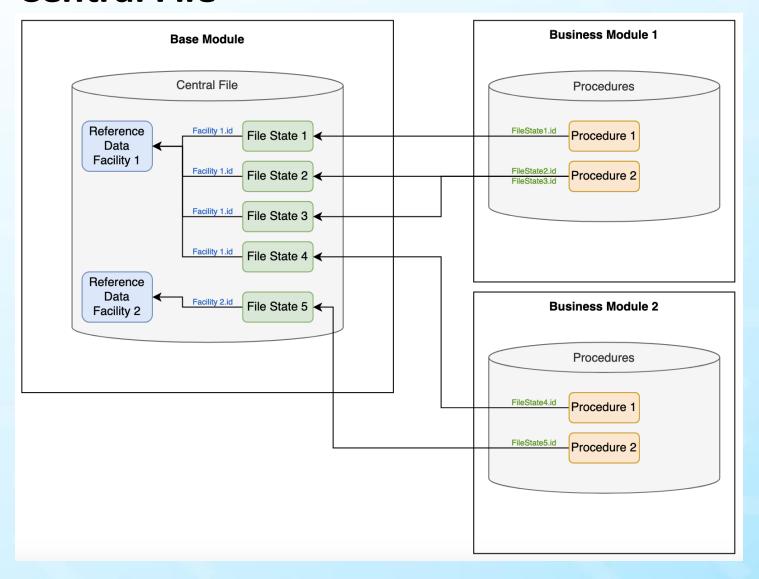




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## **Central File**











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## **Orchestration**



## Handling of all the services

- Managed Kubernetes on top of OpenShift
- Central Services for shared services
- Up to 21 modules per health department in the service mesh
- Separate database instances (up to 8 Postgres instances per health
- department currently)
- Caching of user sessions (Redis)
- 3 Reverse proxies (Nginx)











Menü einklappen

### **Guten Tag**

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- **(b)** Kennzahlen

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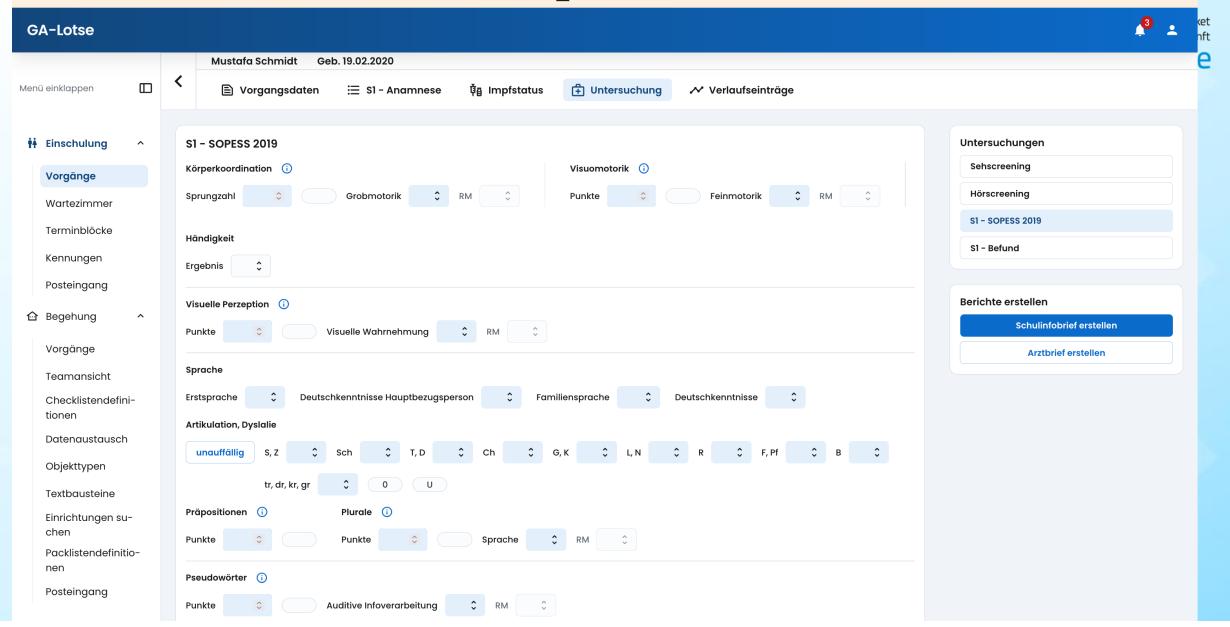
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#### **GA-Lotse**





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₩ Zahnärztl. Dienst ^

Prophylaxen

Kinder

🖰 Amtsärztl. Dienst 🗸

Ø DSGVO

♣ Benutzer

Ressourcen

🗘 Inventar

Kontakte

#### **(b)** Kennzahlen

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Open Data

☑ Posteingang

**II.** Statistik

#### Kennzahlen

Alle Vorgänge

Offen / Entwurf



Abgebrochen 0



Letzte 12 Monate

#### Begehung

Тур 🕶	Alle Vorgänge	Offen / Entwurf	in Bearbeitung	Erledigt	Abgebrochen	Dauer
Begehung	11	2	4	5	0	0 Sekunden

#### Masernschutzimpfung

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#### Einschulungsuntersuchung

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Entwurf Schulliste	9	9	0	0	0	-
Entwurf Bürgeramtsliste	36	36	0	0	0	-
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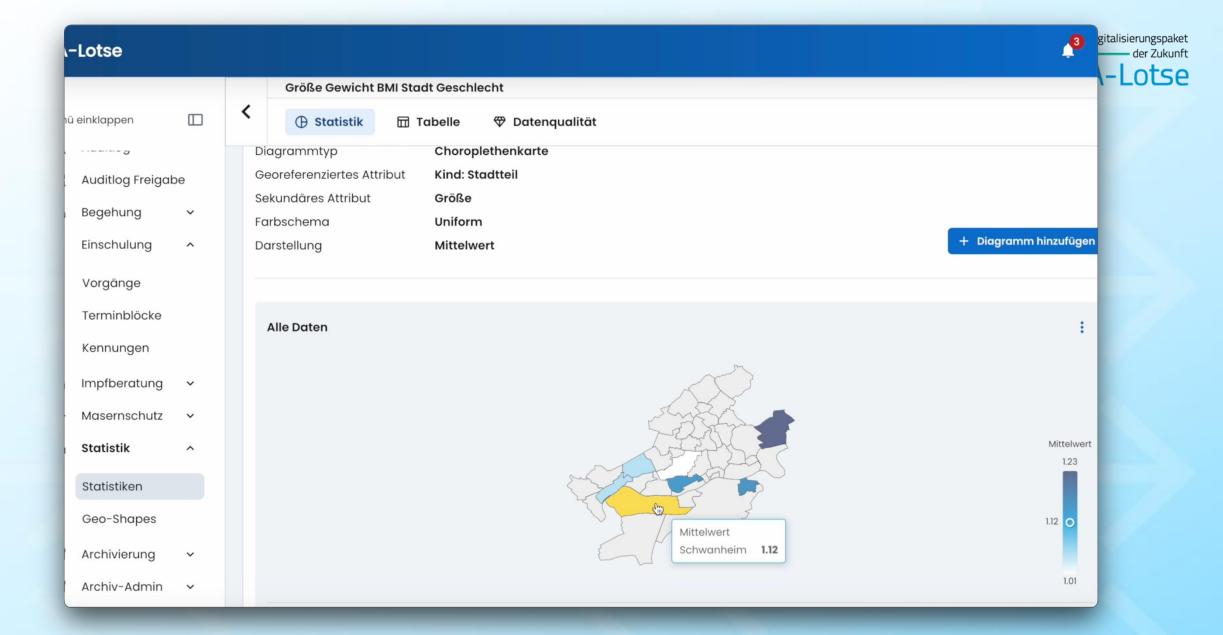
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**Privatperson** Unte

Unternehmen



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**Einschulungsuntersuchung** ~

Reisemedizinische Beratung 🗸

Amtsärztlicher Dienst 🗸

### **Mein Termin**

Mein Bereich verlassen [→

### Verfügbare Termine

(i) Terminverschiebung Sie können Ihren Termin noch 2 Mal verschieben.

Sonntag, 16. Februar

07:15

Sonntag, 23. Februar

Mittwoch, 12. März



Name

Paul Winter

📥 Geburtstag

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29.01.2020

Termin verbindlich buchen

Zurück







# **Integrations**



### **Matrix**

- One homeserver for every GA-Lotse instance
- SSO in combination with Keycloak
- Evaluation of deeper integration into the administration of cases (internal communication, external communication etc.)
- In the process of getting evaluated as a official TI-Messenger client / service (gematik)





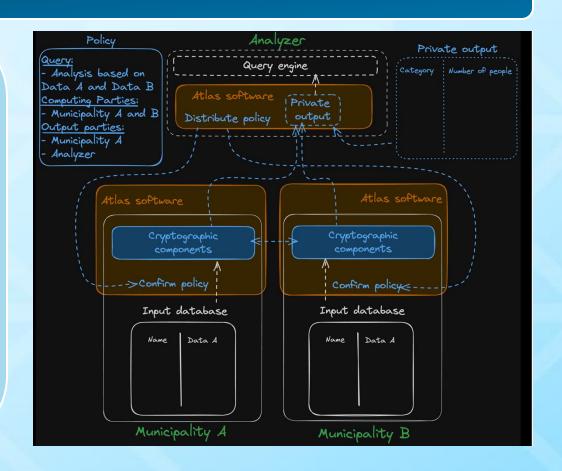


# **Experimental**



## **Secure Multiparty Computation**

- Business modules are currently heavily isolated
- **Evaluation of Secure Multiparty** Computation for privacy preserving data linkage across business modules
- Cooperation with Project ATLAS (Polyteia, HPI, Sine Foundation, and others, Funding BMBF)









# Licensing



# **Dual Licensing**

Base components are permissive.

(Apache License, Version 2.0)

Enables other actors in the government to build their own applications on top of that platform.

All business modules are copyleft (AGPLv3).

The market for specialist applications for public health currently only has proprietary solutions.







## **Tech Stack**



## **Selection**

- Infrastructure
  - Docker, Kubernetes, Postgres, Redis
- Backend
  - Keycloak, nginx, Synapse, Grafana, Grafana Loki, Liquibase, Spring Boot, Hibernate ...
- Frontend
  - node.js, next.js, Joy UI ...
- Supply Chain
  - Sigstore, Dependency-Track







# How does Open Source help to improve digitalisation?



### A look into the future

- GA-Lotse was a software project for one federal state (Hesse) only at the start
- Right now, Bavaria is building a new business module for water quality on top of it
- Bavaria has built a citizen portal to connect to the GA-Lotse backend
- Different talks with various federal states in Germany (advantage: same codebase, freedom of operation, modularity)







# Repository



**Documentation** 



Find us on OpenCoDE









## **Contact**



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