Google Berlin 2023: New cloud region – better digital transformation, sovereignty

By Chris Schlueter Langdon, 2023-10-02

Hallo Germany! Berlin Google Cloud region is now open

In August 2023 Google Cloud opened a new region in Berlin-Brandenburg, the second region in Germany, and its 12th in Europe (Welt 2023). The new region serves Google Cloud customers with local cloud capacity to scale their workloads and satisfy important in-country disaster recovery requirements. It is part of Google Cloud's global network of 38 regions and 115 zones that bring cloud services to over 200 countries and territories worldwide: "The opening of the Berlin-Brandenburg region is great news for our joint solution with Google, as well as for Europe's digital sovereignty. Our unique proposition brings together European values for data and the innovative potential of Google's global network – and is growing it with a new cloud region," Adel Al-Saleh, Member of the Deutsche Telekom Board of Management and CEO of T-Systems (Wagner 2023).

Figure 1: Lectures, case studies, talks and an evening party at Berlin's Haubentaucher event location

T-Systems Sovereign Cloud powered by Google Cloud: Digital shift

For future growth, customers seek access to the innovative capabilities and scalability offered by the public cloud while being cautious about vendor lock-in and maintaining comprehensive control over their data. Thomas Kurian, CEO of Google Cloud, emphasized

their commitment to supporting Germany's digital transformation by prioritizing data privacy, security, and control—crucial aspects for European and German organizations embarking on digitalization (Leibiger 2021). The collaborative sovereign cloud solution with T-Systems International (TSI) aims to provide an additional layer of technical and operational measures, ensuring that German customers can uphold their data, operational, and software sovereignty requirements during this digital shift. This joint offering is managed by TSI, overseeing sovereignty controls such as encryption and identity management. In addition, TSI will exercise a control function over relevant parts of the German Google Cloud infrastructure. Any physical or virtual access to facilities in Germany will be under the supervision of TSI and Google Cloud. Figure 1, top row, shows Google's Wieland Holfelder, Vice President Engineering & Site Lead for Google's Engineering Center in Munich, together with TSI's Andreas Greis, Senior Vice President Google Powerhouse, celebrating the new region Berlin at Haubentaucher event location.
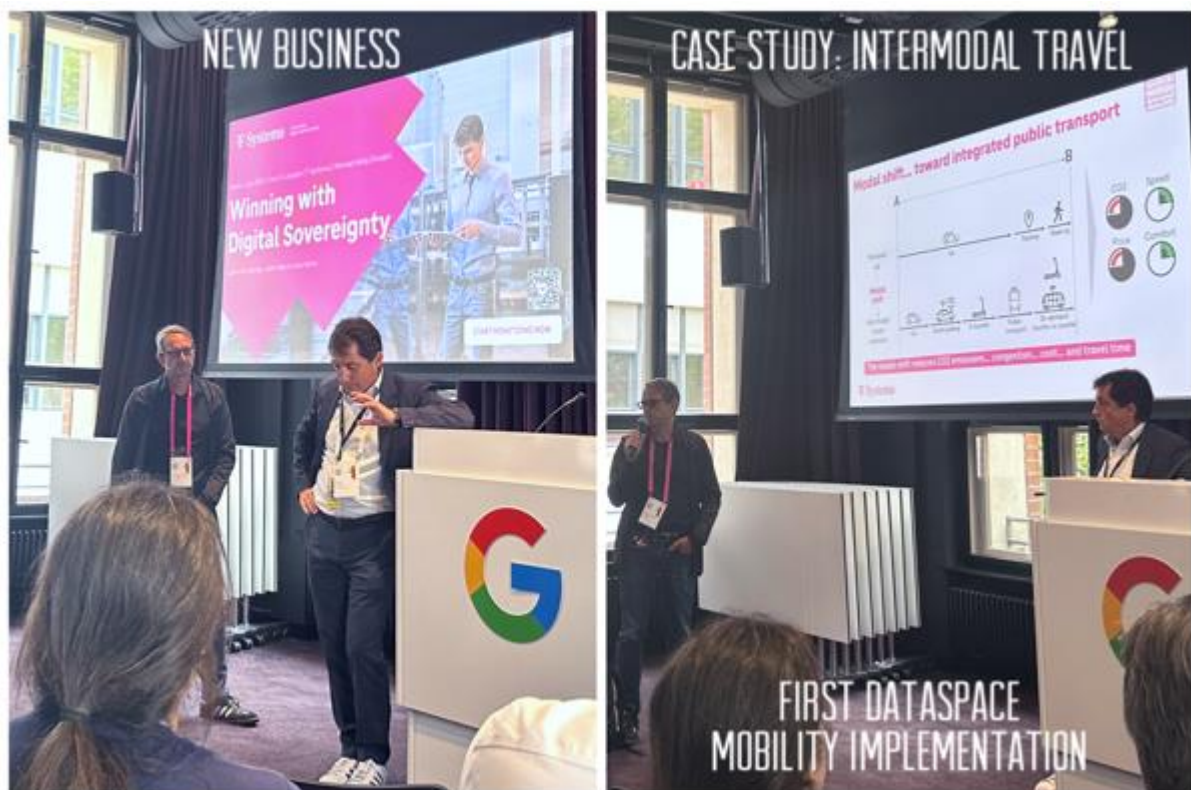

Figure 2: Google's Michael Kollig & Telekom's Chris Langdon with first digital sovereignty case study

New business with digital sovereignty protection: First success stories

Nothing demonstrates success quite like a compelling first case study, so Google extended an invitation to Deutsche Telekom's TSI to collaboratively showcase the tangible business impact of safeguarding data sovereignty using a real-world scenario. Michael Kollig, Director Customer Engineering EMEA North at Google Cloud, and Prof. Dr. Chris Schlueter Langdon, TSI Data Analytics Executive and Catena-X Product Manager, took to the stage to present how data sharing networks or so called "dataspaces", born from novel data sovereignty protection solutions, can facilitate **modal shift**. This shift entails transitioning from personal car trips to faster intermodal travel from point A to point B involving public transport and micro-mobility like scooters and shuttles. Faster trips require more seamless travel chains,

which in turn need data chains for better connections across different modes of transportation and companies. Herein lies the significance of data sharing fortified by digital sovereignty protection: competitors and partners, even if they don't inherently trust each other, can place their **trust in a peer-to-peer data transaction**, retaining the authority to control data rights. Consequently, this engenders data chains, which in turn provide the data fuel for new super-apps. A remarkable illustration of this is an intermodal travel planning app demonstrator developed in the **„RealLab Hamburg" laboratory** of the German Federal Government's National Platform for Mobility (NPM) with funding from the German Federal Ministry for Digital and Transport. This app was trialed with live data from mobility providers within RealLabHH, including Hamburger Hochbahn AG, Sixt, and Tier Mobility, and at the launch of the system by visitors to the ITS World Congress in Hamburg. The result of better data? **30% faster travel speeds and less CO2 emissions**. In 2022, RealLabHH was awarded the "Real Laboratory Innovation Prize" by the Federal Ministry of Economics and Climate Action (link). Presently, TSI stands as a provider of connectivity solutions, facilitating companies to become part of such data sharing networks or dataspaces, based on T-Systems Sovereign Cloud powered by Google Cloud.

Learn more from this pioneering mobility project

- **What:** Official RealLab Hamburg report excerpt, link (RealLabHH 2022)
- **Better performance:** Faster travel, easier to use, link (Schlueter Langdon et al. 2021)
- **How:** Customer journeys, system architecture, link (Schlueter Langdon & Eckert 2022)
- Business model shift: Selling public transport by the seat, link (Schlueter Langdon 2021)

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