



**8th International Trade Fair for Distribution,
Materials Handling and Information Flow
2 to 4 March 2010, Stuttgart Trade Fair Centre**

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Press Release

FORUM: Warehouse Management on tap Will the first professional WMS be on Amazon in 2010?

**Tuesday, 2 March from 11.00 am to 12.30 pm, Forum I – Hall 1
Organisation: Fraunhofer Institute for Material Flow and Logistics IML**

NOTE: simultaneous translation into English

The title pages of the trade press are prophesying it: cloud computing is the future. What effect will this trend have on the logistics sector and how can providers and users of logistics software benefit from it? These and other questions will be looked into by Fraunhofer IML on 2 March 2010 at LogiMAT 2010 in Stuttgart.

Cloud computing enables the web-based application of WMS, thus opening up new opportunities for the market. In a nutshell: IT will be on tap in the future. Just like server rooms, software packages will disappear into the cloud. Put simply, this means that no more investment in servers and storage capacity will be required, instead virtual servers will be rented. The Internet acts as a mainframe computer, linking software systems, services and providers with customers. It provides an IT infrastructure which adapts flexibly to individual requirements.

As confusing as this vision may sound, its implementation is not far away. The first providers are already offering full WMS, based on SAP EWM, as software on tap. Large operators are also putting their faith in the new technology and are working feverishly on a new generation of software. Professional WMS can be rented for a few hundred euros per month – a revolution in logistics. Now the only question left unanswered is when the first WMS will land in the electronic shopping cart.

“Fraunhofer IML is demonstrating exemplary pioneering work when it comes to converting this development into a market-ready innovation,” stresses Dr Stephan Scholtissek, managing director at Accenture, the management consultancy, outsourcing and technology services company. It is working with the innovation cluster ‘Logistics Mall – Cloud Computing for Logistics’ on a virtual shopping centre, which will bring together software providers and users, and logistics companies. This will appeal to small and medium-sized businesses in particular, because they will be able to compile the software they require from different components and only pay for the functions that they use. This service can already be billed monthly, which means that even small businesses can use state-of-the-art WMS technologies.

The benefits are obvious: lower costs, less outlay and a larger clientele. Up to now it has only been possible for a company to optimise its storage by costly restructuring of the logistical processes. Such projects generally take 12-18 months, while their useful life is often only 6-8

years. The negative cost-benefit ratio is cancelled out by using the new generation of software.

The future is promising. The developments are only just starting, but in a few years the WMS market will develop from a specialist market to a mass market. Professor Dr Michael ten Hompel, Director of the Fraunhofer IML in Dortmund, and holder of the chair of Transportation and Warehousing at the University of Dortmund, is including this innovative topic in the discussions at LogiMAT 2010. This will give international exhibitors from industrial, commercial and service companies interesting perspectives and insights into a current and trendsetting subject.

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Note: The company and the institute organising the forum are responsible for the editorial content of this press release.