HEIDISQL

Ansgar Becker has been developing a lean database client using Delphi since 1999. In the beginning it was only meant for MySQL, but over the years HeidiSQL has established itself worldwide as a very popular and frequently used OpenSource tool, as have SQL Server, PostgreSQL, and SQLite.

APPLICATION

HeidiSQL

DEVELOPER

Ansgar Becker

GENRE

Management Client for Database Systems

- MySql, MariaDB
- SQL Server
- PostgreSQL
- SQLite

USED TOOLS

Delphi, VCL

> " HeidiSQL would never have progressed so fast without the new features of Delphi. The diverse components of the VCL offer lean solutions for many practical purposes.
>
> – Ansgar Becker

CHALLENGE

In 1998, the author and web developer was not satisfied with the programs available to him at that time to manage a MySQL server. The desire arose to visualize the database structures as intuitively as possible. Due to school knowledge in Turbo Pascal, the Delphi 3 license of the employer, and the still very young Internet, a whole world of possibilities was available to him. At the same time, Matthias Fichtner published his Delphi translation of the mysql.h header file. With this, the first connections to the MySQL server were established. Equipped with these prerequisites, a customized user interface had to be designed and implemented. Since then, the Delphi Form-Designer and the endless possibilities of the VCL have inspired Becker again and again to improve usability.

> " The self-explanatory Pascal language has inspired me for 30 years. It is a high-level language with natural elements, which is very easy to learn and always a welcome change for me as a web developer.
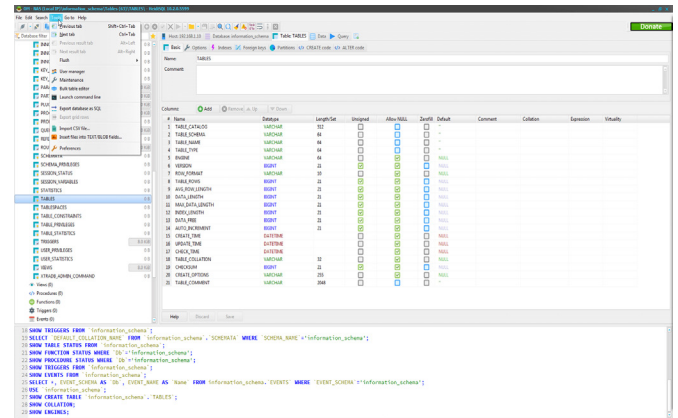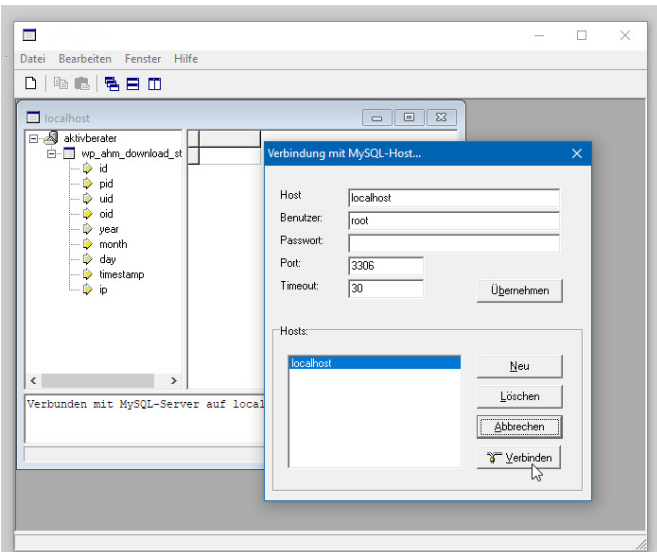>
> – Ansgar Becker

APPLICATION

The first published versions were offered as freeware starting in 1999, but at that time under a different name.
Many users quickly recognized the advantages of a local application over a web browser application: except for the server-dependent connection speed, the application was extremely fast to use. In addition, the interface offered an intuitive display of the otherwise abstract database contents. Even users without any database knowledge could suddenly look behind the scenes of their servers without any additional tools.

2000: One of the first HeidiSQL versions had only distant resemblance to the current version. At first the application offered only rudimentary functions but already gave a very good overview.

2006: Becker decided to put the source code of HeidiSQL under the OpenSource license GPLv2. This disclosure was an important milestone and put HeidiSQL in the growing world of open software. There were also many practical advantages because the code could now be easily viewed, commented on, and under certain conditions codeveloped by others. In December 2006 the new edition, v3.0, was released under the not-so-serious code name "Bugfree Weasel."

2009: In April, version 4.0 was released with a redesigned user administration, which was based on the then new VCL component TComboboxEx. A portable mode was introduced for version 5.0 in April 2010. The mode is activated by an enclosed text file with a special name.

2012: In February, version 7.0 was released, which now also allowed connections to the Microsoft SQL Server. The Delphi dbGo components were used for this, which made a fast and simple implementation possible. v8.0 brought a multilingual surface on multiple user requests. Since then, translations have been managed on Transifex and compiled into the application using the DXGetText freely available for Delphi. Since v9.0, HeidiSQL also connects to PostgreSQL servers.

2020: SQLite support followed in v11.0 in early 2020. HeidiSQL has become a versatile tool for many developers. The screens have become larger, and the space gained is used sensibly depending on the work task.

Future: With further Delphi versions, Becker plans to implement further features. Among other things, the consideration exists to support InterBase/FireBird as further databases.

WHY DELPHI?

Delphi offers a well-thought-out concept with the graphical form designer and the components that can be configured by mouse, in which the developer always finds him- or herself in the role of the user. In addition there is a fast compiler and a well-preconfigured IDE, which leaves hardly anything out.

Modern features like support for high-resolution screens and styles/themes make the applications responsive and stylish.

With every Delphi update, Embarcadero has incorporated countless improvements, so it really makes sense to stay current on this.

New features and bug fixes have often been relevant for HeidiSQL, so they have always improved there as well.

FACTS AND NUMBERS

- Over 200,000 users (based on the voluntary tracking feature)
- 35 official versions released so far
- User interface in English and 49 other languages by about 200 translators
- 2 active codevelopers until 2010 and 20 further developers with small code contributions
- Version control on Git (-hub) https://github.com/HeidiSQL/HeidiSQL, with over 6,000 commits
- Over 60,000 lines of Pascal code (excluding third-party components)
- Over 10,000 working hours of the main developer

> " It also seems that there's a fair amount of assembly in the Delphi libraries here and there. Looks like the Borland people have made an effort to optimize many parts of the VCL. "
>
> – David from Denmark, 2007, former co-developer

ONLINE DEMO

In this Youtube Video you can see an online demo and an interview with Ansgar Becker (in German language with subtitles) about the current release of HeidiSQL. You will also learn about the unusual origin of the product name.

HeidiSQL website
Downloads, Forum, Help and donation info can be found under:
https://www.heidisql.com/

HeidiSQL
Online Demo

> " HeidiSQL is the best program that I found all-over the internet: easy to use, user friendly, perfect functionality... "
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> – Ketan from India, Nov. 2000