

Award-winning service for electric mobility

When a new machine is launched onto the market, it has to be accompanied by technical documentation. Lawmakers want it that way – and so do customers. That's why Berlin start-up eROCKIT GmbH hired the gds group to put together an instruction manual for its innovative, pedal-controlled electric motorcycle. The result was an award-winning user manual.

Whether a user manual, instruction manual, or assembly instructions, the objective of any technical documentation is to guarantee that users can handle a product safely and efficiently. Keeping the user safe is the main point. This is even more important when it comes to high-speed vehicles in road traffic like the eROCKIT. The innovative electric bike is meant to be

the bike goes – up to a max speed of 80 km/h. Stefan Gulas's idea has come to maturity since its invention in 2005. The first prototype was finalized in 2009. When the eROCKIT first became ready for market in 2011, no one thought of making a user manual – until gds offered itself as a partner and put together the instructions using its software docuglobe.



Minimizing liability risks for manufacturers

Technical documentation has a serious background for manufacturing companies. It is mandatory according to EU directives such as the Machinery Directive. The manufacturer was originally uncertain which directives applied to the bike/motorcycle. But just to be on the safe side, eROCKIT had CE-compliant documentation put together. A company that brings machines subject to EU directives to market without manuals could even face a sales ban. Even more serious, it is also exposed to high liability risks without an operating or user manual at market launch. Manufacturers have been liable for damage occurring from the use of a product since the burden of proof was reversed in the late 1980's. The user manual is intended to minimize this risk as well.

the first in a new category of vehicle – the human hybrid, an electric motorcycle operated like a bicycle. Speed is controlled not by an accelerator throttle but by foot pedals. The faster the driver pedals, the faster

Furthermore, eROCKIT wanted to use documentation to fulfill European CE and US ANSI requirements as another quality feature of the hybrid.

Target group decisive for tonality

“In light of the legal requirements, we’re glad that qualified gds experts in creating technical documentation were helping us out,” says Ulrike Czekay, Project Leader for the user manual at eROCKIT. “Of course we know every detail of our vehicle, but now we had to communicate the information logically and in line with legal requirements.” With the expertise of its technical writers, gds took over creating the manual entirely. Two gds employees tested the innovative hybrid motorcycle on site, researched the backgrounds, and translated the product’s mechanics to the editorial environment. With their wealth of experience, they focused on the technical and safety-relevant details of the ride – combined with a risk assessment. To meet CE and ANSI standards, gds packed the documentation with the relevant required safety information. The company made sure to cover both American and European jurisdiction at the same time by applying a consistent structure.

docuglobe enables efficient document management

Even a simple document structure, like a Word document, for example, would have been enough to create a user manual for eROCKIT. But there were other projects on the agenda for the two companies: gds took over production of a user app, with a workshop manual to follow. So the Berliners were one step ahead on creating the user manual thanks to the help of their service provider, gds, and gds’ own software, docuglobe. This is a content management system that allows users to work efficiently and across documents using the Microsoft Word editor. It structures documentation in modules, which has the following advantage: If a company creates documentation for multiple products, then when any change in legislation occurs that affects all of the products, it no longer has to apply corrections to each file. It just has to edit one module that is integrated into all of the documentation created. eROCKIT GmbH has already felt the benefits of the incredible amount of time this saves.

“docuprice” inclusive

The result of the collaboration between eROCKIT and gds has already won a prize: The European Association for Technical Communication – tekomp e.V. – Europe’s biggest association for technical communication, gave the company its Documentation Award in 2012. The prize happened to be the fourth of its kind for gds at the time.

