No forwarding address? Find it on RISER

January 19 2009

(PhysOrg.com) -- Mobility is good. But it has created a logistical nightmare when people leave no forwarding address. A European project has risen to the challenge with a one-stop shop for finding Europeans on the move.

People get lost all the time. Europeans have taken to free mobility with gusto and move regularly within their home state and abroad. Sometimes they forget to tell their service providers.

Until now, locating people who have forgotten to forward their address has been a big hassle. Most European countries have their own civil registry, where it is mandatory for a citizen to register their address. It is a one-stop shop where business can request the new address of a particular customer.

But each country usually has different rules governing who can request information, how they go about it, and what information they receive. And civil registries are one of the most commonly used public services.

Looking for somebody's new address in one country is tough enough, but doing it in several countries at once is bordering on madness.

Peculiar particularities

Not any more. The eTEN-funded RISER Initial Deployment (ID) has created a web portal that allows users to look up information in many countries at once. And the service takes care of all the peculiar rules

particular to each country.

RISER stands for Registry Information Service on European Residents and since the service went online it has become very popular with businesses looking for lost clients. There are currently 120,000 requests made to civil registries around Europe through the RISER service, and that number is set to rise dramatically as the service expands and becomes more widely known.

"Right now, our service covers eight countries, but we expect that to grow to 19 over the next few years," explains Hendrik Tamm, coordinator of the RISER project. The system uses powerful web software, created in java, to negotiate the many intricate, bureaucratic steps required to access this sensitive information.

Data protection

Data protection, too, is a special consideration of the project. "We pass the request to the relevant national authority and then transmit the response to the client, but we do not store information, and the transmission is securely protected at each end. Data protection is a big concern and it consumed a lot of the time we spent on the project," notes Tamm.

But developing a system that could transmit queries in a way that the different civil registries could accept was the largest job facing the project. "It sounds easy - requesting through one portal all of the civil registries in Europe - but it was not that simple," reveals Tamm.

"Europe's data protection is harmonised, and that works very well, but Europe's civil registries are not harmonised, and that is quite a challenge," says Tamm.

There are different types of information stored by different registries, and they are stored in different ways. In some cases, there are special rules for accessing the registries - for example, companies must register with them before they can request information. Some of the registries are even still using paper, so that adds another layer of complexity, he explains.

Tricky task

It was a tricky task, but one that RISER pulled off well. The service is popular and users are very positive about it. Now the group will spend time building on their user base and rolling out the service to other countries across the European Union.

"The service is there to help business, and it does that because the system is easy to use; we take care of the complexity," remarks Tamm.

"But it is also intended to foster more international business operations - something it is doing. Thanks to the eTEN funding, we were able to set up a sustainable business that will provide a real service to the European economy which will enable greater integration and co-operation," he concludes.

The RISER ID project received funding from the eTEN Programme for market validation and deployment.

RISER eTEN project: www.riserid.eu/

Provided by ICT Results

Citation: No forwarding address? Find it on RISER (2009, January 19) retrieved 19 July 2024 from https://phys.org/news/2009-01-forwarding-riser.html