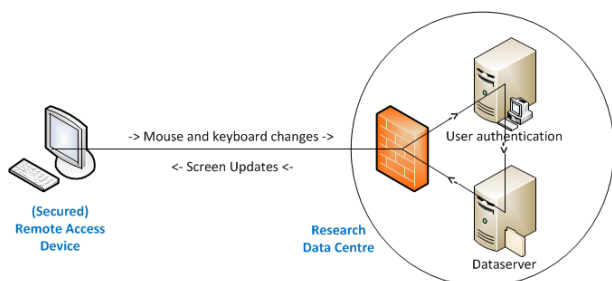


State of the Art of Remote Access Systems

As part of the activity carried out under its WP4, DwB drafted a report that provides an overview of the state of the art of remote access systems in the social sciences. The findings focus on eight National Statistical Institutes (NSI) and data archives out of seven European Countries. The provided information on the remote access system facilities is based on a survey about technical details of the existing solutions (Carried out December 2011 until January 2012 and May 2012).

For this report, Remote Access is defined as “any kind of terminal or desktop solution that uses a secured connection to the servers of the respective data provider, whereby the user can see the real, highly-detailed and confidential microdata” – a specific Remote Access solution also known as remote desktop. Confidential microdata refers to individual information which are subject to confidentiality clauses.



Remote Access Provider Institutions in Europe

Consulted institutions as listed in Table 1 are based in Denmark, United Kingdom, Sweden, Slovenia, Netherlands, France and Germany and are described more closely in the report. There are many other remote desktop solutions in Europe; provided by, e.g., research institutions and universities. The eight queried institutions represent all the remote desktop solutions in place in the European Statistical System (ESS) and the Consortium of European Social Science Data Archives (CESSDA) – valid 2012.

Table 1. Contacted Remote Access system providers

Institution	Country	Function
Statistics Denmark	Denmark	National Statistical Institute
Office for National Statistics	United Kingdom	National Statistical Institute
Statistics Sweden	Sweden	National Statistical Institute
Statistics Slovenia	Slovenia	National Statistical Institute
Statistics Netherlands	Netherlands	National Statistical Institute
UK Data Archive – Secure Data Service	United Kingdom	Data Archive
Secure remote access centre (CASD)	France	National Statistical Institute and Data Archive
Research Data Centre of the German Federal Employment Agency at the Institute for Employment Research	Germany	Other statistical Institute

Remote access systems have been increasingly developed in the European research area over the 10 last years. It is noticeable that these solutions have influenced each other and have produced new innovations. A case-by-case description of the Remote Access solutions is given in the D4.1 report.

State of the art as starting point for improved access

Although there are commonalities of all studied Remote Access Solutions such as accreditation process for data access, encryption of remote connections, output checking and others there are significant differences due to national data security issues, organizational and technical architecture of institutions.

Therefore this is an excellent starting point for institutions who wish to create a new remote access facility to provide access to microdata. It gives an overview which different models can be used as a basis. The overview of the report shows that the access to microdata can be made in many ways and an improvement to access to microdata across Europe has to be made in the light of the knowledge of the underlying technical and organizational solutions in the pursuit of harmonisation across the EU.

Outlook

It is evident that the list of remote access centres will grow within the next years and that running solutions will be adjusted to new technical developments. It is a time of significant change as technology develops, providing additional opportunities for safe data access.

The report about “the state of the art of remote access systems” act as basis for DwB deliverable 4.2 which proposed a European Remote Access Network (EuRAN) to improve international research and access to microdata.

The full report D4.1 can be downloaded from the list of DwB deliverables:

<http://www.dwbproject.org/about/deliverables.html>

