

Numen Europe is digitising Land Registry records at the Belgian Federal Public Finances Department (FPS Finance)

Eight million pages scanned and indexed: this is the great feat achieved by Numen Europe on behalf of the General Administration of Heritage Documentation at the FPS. Thanks to this successful project, the Land Registry's oldest records will soon be available in a digital format.

Up until 2001, the 48 Land Registry offices in Belgium conserved all their paper registers. These registers contain information relating to mortgage certificates that the Land Registry issues mainly to notaries, bailiffs and bankers. The Land Registry publishes transfers of real estate and constituted mortgages, and is required to store and make this information available for a minimum of thirty years.

Each Land Registry office consults its paper records at least two till three hundred times a day. In order to easily access information dating before 2001, the General Administration of Heritage Documentation at the FPS Finance therefore decided to digitise its oldest records. Following a public call for tenders, the contract was awarded by FPS Finance to Numen Europe, expert in the processing of data and sensitive documents. The company set up four mobile scanning units and managed to limit the project duration to 18 months.

45,000 books, 8 million pages, 2.5km of archives

The registers that Numen Europe was assigned to digitise stretched for over 2,500 meters: they accounted for eight million pages size A2 (double A3 pages), taken from more than 45,000 books. Each mobile Numen Europe team was equipped with a scanning unit - housed in a mobile office - consisting of three large format scanners. Numen Europe set up these mobile units in close proximity to the Land Registry offices, for example on the parking lot.

"In addition to scanning itself, we also need to take care of planning and logistics," says Serge Micaelian, Operations Director at Numen Europe. "This not only implies ensuring electricity supply and security of the mobile units, but also the fact that it is quintessential not to impact the services provided by the Land Registry. "Within a 30 minutes' delay scanned records, have to be available for consultation in the Land Registry office again. Numen Europe collated the results of the scanning process in a new central database. For storing images, FPS Finance has opted for an object store with IBM FileNet P8, within SPF's data center.

Digitising and indexing tools of the highest quality

Numen Europe's large format scanners were able to automatically scan the records, without having to remove any pages or causing any damage. Each double A3 colour scan generates a PDF/A-2b file, approximately 800kB in size. This format is especially designed for archiving scanned documents. Parallel to this, Numen Europe also indexed the documents. The company software recognised over 360 million characters and captured 20 million indexes. Serge Micaelian: "We have achieved a result of exceptionally high quality. During the indexing process, we obtained a margin of error below 1/20,000."

Digitised records ensure legal certainty

The digitised registers are a back-up of their paper originals. These records are now protected against theft, loss or damage by fire or water. "It is a legal warranty," said Johan Espeel, programme manager at FPS Finance. "Without records, there is no legal proof. In addition, the reconstruction of damaged or lost records is time consuming and costly." Moreover, the Land Registry can reduce the size of their storage facilities, as the paper registers are now more quickly transferred to the State Archives.

Digitisation allows mortgage officers to offer a faster service

The main benefit to come from this project is the faster service now provided by the Land Registry. "Via a secure connection with the central database, Land Registry staff has access to digitised and indexed documents relating to their own area of responsibility," explains Mick Rosseel, project manager at FPS Finance. "They no longer have to get up and fetch the heavy registers on the shelves to consult the paper documents. This is timesaving, increases operational efficiency and provides a better service at the Land Registry."

Tags: digitisation, indexing, scanning, electronic archiving, digitisation of heritage documents, OCR, Numen Europe, FPS Finance

About Numen Europe

Numen Europe was founded under the name of Infotechnique in December 1994 and was part of the Olivetti group. In June, 2011, the company became part of the Numen Group (specialising in the outsourcing of services) with a view to boosting its expertise in the processing of data and sensitive documents and to enhance its international scope. In light of its geographical location, Numen Europe has continued to grow in a multilingual environment. The company offers its clients - financial institutions, industries, public and international institutions - full control over the whole of the production chain and use of documents: scanning, OCR, capture, indexing, structuring, composition, editing, validation, conservation and multi-channel distribution. Numen Europe positions itself across the whole of the document processing chain regardless of the original medium and format used. This is achieved through an organisation centred around four areas:

- Document Process Outsourcing
- Electronic archiving
- Editorial services
- Digitisation of heritage documents

www.numeneurope.com

For more information: www.numeneurope.com

Press contact:

Frédérique Jacobs

Communication

Numen Europe

Tel: + 32 479 429 636

Email : frederique.jacobs@jacobs-pr.com