Establishing Remote Access to Confidential German Micro Labor Market Data

Jörg Heining[1,2] and Stefan Bender[1]
[1] Institute for Employment Research (IAB), Nuremberg, Germany,
[2] Corresponding author: Jörg Heining, e-mail: joerg.heining@iab.de

Abstract

By implementing the 'Research Data Center – in Research Data Center' (RDC-in-RDC) approach, the Research Data Center (FDZ) of the German Federal Employment Agency (BA) at the Institute for Employment Research (IAB) in Nuremberg, Germany established for the first time remote access to confidential micro data in Germany. Remote data access systems, which allow researchers to access, evaluate and to see restricted micro data from their home desktop computer at any time, have not been implemented by a German Research Data Center (RDC) so far. Legal concerns, especially the problem of access control are reasons why German RDCs are not able to offer the research community these true remote access systems. The RDC-in-RDC approach overcomes these problems and may therefore be regarded as a first step towards true remote access in Germany. It may furthermore serve as a blue print for an intensified international data sharing. The basic idea is to allow remote access from designated institutions with comparable standards but locations other than Nuremberg. A thin client computer is used as an interface to establish a secure communication link to a server in Germany where the data are stored and processed. The connection to Germany is encrypted by using Citrix Software and a Citrix server. In a first step, remote access to FDZ data was established at four sites in Germany and one site in the US. In 2013, this remote access network will be expanded to more sites in Europe and the US. The RDC-in-RDC approach represents a change of paradigms in two respects. First, data access will be decentralized and data access is disseminated instead of data. Second, the dissemination of micro data is no longer restricted to national borders.

Keywords: Confidential Micro Data, Remote Data Access, International Data Sharing