

LIGHT^{est} project to build a global trust infrastructure that enables electronic transactions in a wide variety of applications

An ever increasing number of transactions are conducted virtually over the Internet. How can you be sure that the person making the transaction is who they say they are? The EU-funded project LIGHT^{est} addresses this issue by creating a global trust infrastructure. It will provide a solution that allows one to distinguish legitimate identities from frauds. This is key in being able to bring an efficiency of electronic transactions to a wide application field ranging from simple verification of electronic signatures, over eProcurement, eJustice, eHealth, and law enforcement, up to the verification of trust in sensors and devices in the Internet of Things.

Traditionally, we often knew our business partners personally, which meant that impersonation and fraud were uncommon. Whether regarding the single European market place or on a Global scale, there is an increasing amount of electronic transactions that are becoming a part of peoples everyday lives, where decisions on establishing who is on the other end of the transaction is important. Clearly, it is necessary to have assistance from authorities to certify trustworthy electronic identities. This has already been done. For example, the EC and Member States have legally binding electronic signatures. But how can we query such authorities in a secure manner? With the current lack of a worldwide standard for publishing and querying trust information, this would be a prohibitively complex leading to verifiers having to deal with a high number of formats and protocols.

The EU-funded LIGHT^{est} project attempts to solve this problem by building a global trust infrastructure where arbitrary authorities can publish their trust information. Setting up a global infrastructure is an ambitious objective; however, given the already existing infrastructure, organization, governance and security standards of the Internet Domain Name System, it is with confidence that this is possible. The EC and Member States can use this to publish lists of qualified trust services, as business registrars and authorities can in health, law enforcement and justice. In the private sector, this can be used to establish trust in inter-banking, international trade, shipping, business reputation and credit rating. Companies, administrations, and citizens can then use LIGHT^{est} open source software to easily query this trust information to verify trust in simple signed documents or multi-faceted complex transactions.

The three-year LIGHT^{est} project starts on September 1st and has an estimated cost of almost 9 Million Euros. It is partially funded by the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under G.A. No. 700321. The LIGHT^{est} consortium consists of 14 partners from 9 European countries and is coordinated by Fraunhofer-Gesellschaft. To reach out beyond Europe, LIGHT^{est} attempts to build up a global community based on international standards and open source software.

The partners are ATOS (ES), Time Lex (BE), Technische Universität Graz (AU), EEMA (BE), G&D (DE), Danmarks tekniske Universitet (DK), TUBITAK (TR), Universität Stuttgart (DE), Open Identity Exchange (GB), NLNet Labs (NL), CORREOS (ES), IBM Danmark (DK) and Globalsign (FI). The Fraunhofer IAO provides the vision and architecture for the project and is responsible for both, its management and the technical coordination.

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