

Digital Flanders Reconnects Citizens With Their Data Through Inrupt's Solid Server

Inrupt and Digital Flanders' ongoing partnership grants secure data sharing through Solid Pods, creating greater value for organizations and Flanders' 6.5 million citizens

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About the Customer

Digital Flanders is the digital agency of the Flemish government and the digital partner for Flemish and local authorities. Focusing on digital transformation projects, Digital Flanders uses its in-house products and platforms, including front office, ICT, security, and data solutions to advance the government of tomorrow, today.

Challenge

As the European Union aimed to become an [attractive, secure, and dynamic data economy](#), the Government of Flanders was eager to become a central player in this new data infrastructure and a leader in secure data sharing, bolstering the Flemish economy and leading to new innovations.

In order to achieve this goal, Digital Flanders had to develop the strategy, architecture, and implementation for a new data ecosystem to support the data of Flanders' 6.5 million residents. The vision for this ecosystem is that it would stimulate opportunities for citizens and businesses alike while also building citizens' trust in sharing data in a secure and private manner. For such a new, innovative, and challenging project, Digital Flanders needed a partner savvy enough to build the software infrastructure paired with the expertise to guide them in building this new data ecosystem.

"Letting data flow is the key to giving our society and our economy a huge boost in the 2020s. But that requires trust." –[Flemish Prime Minister Jan Jambon](#)

Key challenges to helping data in Flanders flow smoothly included a lack of standardization, fear from citizens and companies around losing control of their data, and a lack of trust between citizens, companies, and governments regarding data.

Flanders has long been a pioneer in digital transformation, including discovering new ways to use data. 3.6% of Flanders' GDP was channeled into research and development in 2020, making Flanders the European leader concerning research and development expenditure relative to GDP. With this strong history of innovation, Flanders was perfectly positioned to create a new data infrastructure for its citizens.

Solution

With the ambitious goal of creating a secure data ecosystem and giving citizens control and transparency with their data, Digital Flanders chose to partner with Inrupt due to the strength of Inrupt's product portfolio, specifically the Enterprise Solid Server (ESS).

Built in partnership and in consideration of Flanders' use cases and needs, ESS can support the performance, scale, security, and compliance needs to establish the Solid Pod model for millions of citizens. The server establishes the infrastructure to make the ecosystem possible, giving oxygen to the Flemish economy by making data easier to exchange, and by building bridges between citizens, companies and associations for better cooperation. In 2021, Inrupt and Digital Flanders committed to a partnership to use Inrupt's Enterprise Solid Server to create a Solid ecosystem for the citizens of Flanders.

As the only Enterprise-grade Solid server in the world and a leader of the Solid specification development process, Inrupt is uniquely positioned to support governments and companies as they unlock higher quality and genuinely interoperable data, allowing these organizations to know their users better than ever before.

"We are really depending on Inrupt's ESS software. We are now using key features from the latest release like Access Grants and the decoupled WebID

service capability for service interactions where data consumers and data providers are interacting with a Solid Pod. As the only enterprise Solid implementation that is a secure and privacy-by-design built production ready server, it allows us to operate under demanding SLAs." –Enterprise Architect David Van Den Brande, Digital Flanders

Inrupt also provides global commercial product support, documentation of best practices, and developer and interoperability training. Through these efforts, Inrupt promotes the global adoption of Solid in order for users to share the data they want, and for organizations to unlock higher-quality data and preserve trust among all stakeholders.

Results

Digital Flanders is currently conducting a number of projects using Inrupt's Enterprise Solid Server to securely share data, including:

- **MyDigitalMove:** With a citizen's consent, MyDigitalMove takes data from the national register and places it in a personal data store. The citizen can then choose with which organizations they want to share their new address, fulfilling data compliance requirements and simplifying the moving process.
- **MyProfessionalData:** MyProfessional Data allows work-related data—such as an employee's place of residence, diplomas, salary slips and holiday certificates—to be shared with a new employer in a way that relieves the employee of the burden of transferring this data manually. The project also allows service providers to organize their processes more efficiently.

Digital Flanders has also established the Data Utility Company, which will explore the possibilities of providing services using personal data stores to organizations and governments outside of Flanders.

All 6.5 million citizens of Flanders will have the opportunity to activate their own data Pods. Citizens can choose which data they share, which organizations should have access to the data and for how long the data is shared. The data is stored in a standardized format that all participants in the Solid data ecosystem can use. Once users have activated their Pods, they can interact with Digital Flanders' pilot projects to better utilize their data.

By taking a pioneering role in creating a new data ecosystem with Inrupt and Solid, Flanders is poised to become one of the top European regions in data technology.