

# The MIDRAS (Micro Data Remote Access System) project in Finland

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# The MIDRAS project

- **From June 2009 – April 2011**
- **Financed by the Ministry of Education**
- **Project group**
  - IT Center for Science - CSC
  - Finnish Information Centre for Register Research - ReTKi
- **Steering group**
  - Ministry of Education, Statistics Finland, National Institution for Health and Welfare, Social Insurance Institution, CSC and ReTKi
- **Aim**
  - The aim of the MIDRAS project has been to find out how register-based research and the availability of register data can be made more effective with the help of remote access
- **Outcome**
  - A pilot remote access system
  - Final report
  - Technical report

# Problems faced in register research

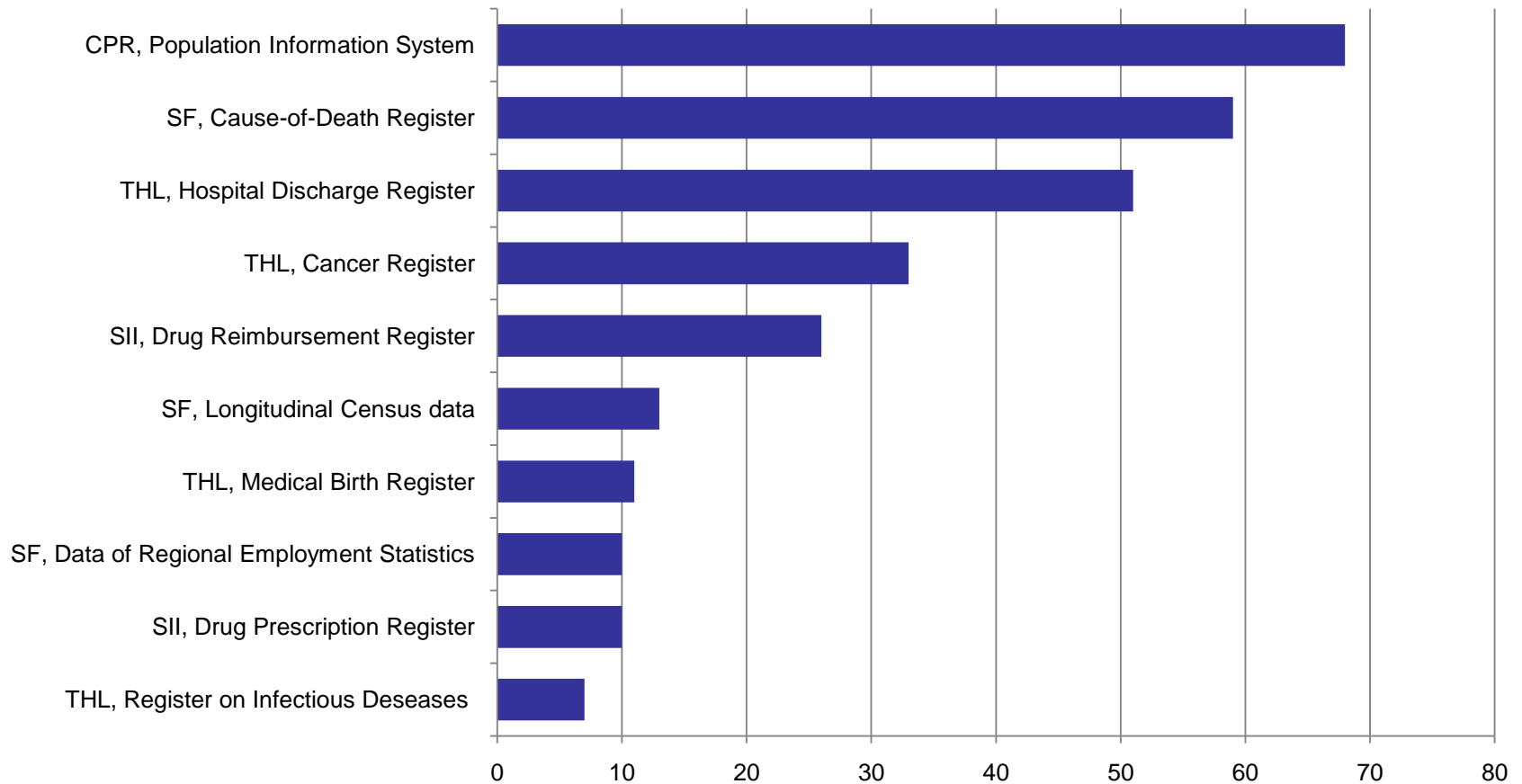
## Point of view of researchers

- Time consuming processes in order to receive a research permit and/or register data
- Several different register keepers with different praxis
- Shortcoming of register documentation (meta data)
- Not possible to receive best possible data
  - Statistics Act - anonymization of data
- High price tag on some data
- Slow production process

## Point of view of register organizations

- ◇ Resources for researcher services are limited
- ◇ Statistics Act calls for anonymization of data
- ◇ Data security risk when delivering confidential data on CD, USB
- ◇ No commonly used standards for meta data
- ◇ Researchers poor knowledge of the data and inadequate permit applications

# Mostly used registers in doctoral dissertations 2005 - 2009



# MIDRAS requirements

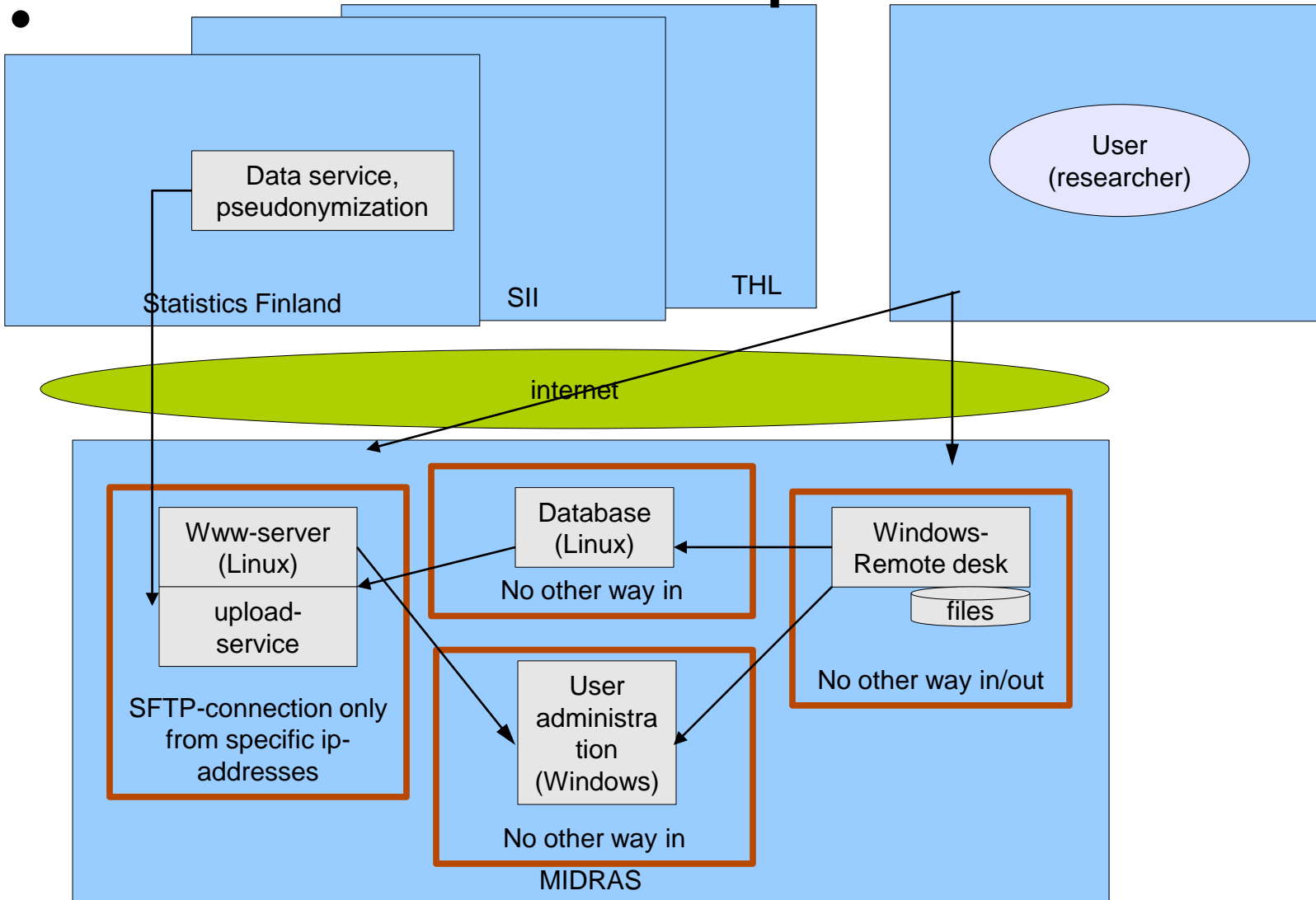
## Point of view of researchers

- Reliable
- Extensive ( data, meta data, programs)
- Well defined, fast permit application process
- Flexible
  - Can be used at different computers without regard to time and place
- User friendly
- Effective
- Moderate prices
- Interactive

## Point of view of register organizations

- ◇ Secure
- ◇ Adjustable
- ◇ Compatible
- ◇ Interactive
- ◇ Cost efficient
- ◇ Funding

# MIDRAS pilot



## MIDRAS VISION

*A national remote access system through which confidential microdata belonging to the authorities can be used extensively, securely, cost-effectively and easily for research.*

**Researcher**

**MIDRAS-remote access system**

Services that require permit

- Remote desktop for analysing data (programs and tools)
- Separated server space for data and metadata
- Output service for results, Input service for researcher's data

Services that require registration

- Centralized digital permit application service

Public services

- Data catalogue
- Helpdesk for research and tuition

Interface service for data and meta data,

Administration services for user rights

Organiza  
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- Commonly agreed metadata standards

- Data warehouse

- Archive of multiple user files



## So what now.....

- Final report to be handed over to the Ministry of Education
- Working group appointed by the Ministry of Finance on 31 May 2010 for 'Co-development of the MIDRAS and Statistics Finland's on-line remote access systems' sitting until June 30th, 2011
  - Tasks:
    - Find possibilities for co-development of Statistics Finland's and MIDRAS remote access projects
    - Propose an administrative model for a remote access system
    - Propose a plan for obtaining resources and funding for implementing and maintaining the system
  - Circulation of proposals for comments ( late summer 2011)  
-> too late for the budget for 2012
- Funding:
  - SITRA, TEKES, Academy of Finland, Ministry ( which one)?