



CASE STUDY IRISH PASSPORT OFFICE

PHOTO QA: PASSPORT FACIAL VALIDATION SERVICE

ISSUE

In 2016, the Irish Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade's Passport Office initiated a project to change the way Irish citizens were able to renew their passports. In the interest of improved customer service, on-line passport renewals via a website were to be introduced, including the ability for applicants to submit their own digital photos. This self-service process should not compromise photo quality, therefore a method would be required to assess photo image quality as per ISO 19794-5 standards on facial imaging, as well as the provision of feedback to applicants.

In March of 2017, Ireland introduced the Online Passport Application Service (OPAS), which permitted those over 18 years of age to renew their passports online from anywhere in the world. In late 2018, the ability to submit applications for children and infants was added to the Service.

SOLUTION

WorldReach received a contract to provide Photo Quality Assurance for the new Irish Online Passport Renewal process. This crucial service ensures that citizen-uploaded passport photos meet all ICAO Document 9303 image standards for Machine Readable Travel Documents (MRTDs).

WorldReach's involvement in the QA system built upon an existing WorldReach capability, while adding specific configurations to allow for optimum image size, a face find threshold, and to detect non-conformancies with international facial image standards. In 2019, an update to the system added specific calibrations for children and infants. To illustrate, specific configurations permit children under the age of two to have their mouths open in their passport photos in accordance with Irish Government policy. WorldReach, in conjunction with our Irish partner Absolute Graphics (AG2), recognised the benefit of providing easy-to-follow guidance back to applicants, to drastically reduce the amount of manual adjudication of passport applications based on poor quality photo submissions. WorldReach's experience with the configuration process for the photo QA software tool was critical in establishing an acceptable pass rate as well as completing a sufficient QA check.



ABOUT IRELAND

Population: 4.88 million
[2019 stats]

OFFICIAL NAME

Ireland/Republic of Ireland

INDUSTRY SECTOR

Passport and Secure ID

SERVICE DEPLOYED

Photo Quality Assurance – Passport Facial Validation Service



IRELAND



PROJECT FACTS

Contract Award: November 2016
Operational: March 2017

TECHNOLOGY DEVELOPMENT

Photo QA API
Dynamic Facial QA engine

EXTERNAL INTEGRATION

Irish Passport Office online passport application website

OPERATES ON

Windows IIS

Internal testing of the Photo QA system went relatively smoothly with a few identifiable issues to be addressed.

WorldReach and AG2 conducted a calibration test using over 2000 sample photos to improve performance of the technology in the Irish context. Together, WorldReach and AG2 implemented and continue to support the photo QA system.

In addition to allowing applicants to submit their own digital photos from home, another option is available. The Irish Passport Office has entered into agreements with photo-booth operators whereby passport applicants obtain a reference number for photos taken at a photo-booth. This reference number is subsequently entered in OPAS allowing the WorldReach system to transfer the photo directly from the photo-booth central server to OPAS. This service can also provide valuable feedback information to the photo-booth provider with respect to the performance of specific booths, which may indicate calibration or lighting adjustment is necessary.

REFERENCE

The launch of the Online Passport Application Service is one of the most significant innovations in customer service that this Department has delivered over the past fifteen years.

CHARLIE FLANAGAN TD Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade
from April 10, 2017

ABOUT WORLDREACH SOFTWARE CORPORATION

WorldReach Software helps ensure traveller safety and security globally through its systems for immigration, passport, border management, and consular organizations. Our innovative travel application and trademarked identity and document verification process, Know Your Traveller™ (KYT) helps improve the safety and security of international travellers and those living abroad. We supply passport/ePassport and eVisa/Electronic Travel Authorization issuance software worldwide. We are intimately familiar with the international technical standards for secure travel documents, based around ICAO Document 9303 and WorldReach staff are active participants in standards setting bodies for seamless borders, identity verification and identity documents as well as biometrics.



REACHING TRAVELLERS AND CITIZENS ABROAD

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