



PRESS RELEASE

DIGITAL INHERITANCE: STUDY OF AN ITALIAN PROTOCOL FOR MANAGING ON-LINE LEGACIES

Milan, 4 December 2014 - Personal data, files held locally or in the cloud, investments managed online, blogs and social profiles do not only have an emotional value but also an economic one. Providing citizens with tools for the proper management of their personal online data and outlining possible solutions to the issue of property inheritance and virtual content thus becomes an ever more pressing necessity. This was discussed today in Milan at the conference: "**Digital Identity and Inheritance. State of the Art and Possible Solutions for the Public**"- organised by the Center on International Markets, Money and Regulation at the Luigi Bocconi University, with the National Council of Notaries and Prof. Oreste Pollicino of RULES Bocconi. The event was attended by, among others, Stefano Rodotà, coordinator of the committee for the drafting of the Internet "Bill of Rights"; Tom Smedinghoff, chair of the American Bar Association Identity Management Legal Task Force, and Alessandra Poggiani, Director of the Agency for a Digital Italy.

The Italian Notariat has been taking an interest in the problem of digital inheritance since 2007 when it published a study defining an operational framework for the subject. On the other hand the big network operators are gradually putting down deeper roots in the countries where their users are located. It is now possible to work towards a dialogue at the local level, based on Italian law, which is why the Notariat has promoted such an initiative together with Professor Oreste Pollicino, with a manifesto circulated on medialaws.eu (www.medialaws.eu/manifesto-identita-ed-eredita-digitale/) which was followed by the setting up of a working group that has already been joined by Google, Microsoft, the Bocconi University and the law firm Portolano Cavallo.

Today's event represents the first fruits of this working group that aims to come up with joint solutions to two issues:

- **Digital identity.** On the internet, identity is a flexible concept, but sometimes it is desirable (for reasons, broadly, of accountability) that certain operations be linked to a physical identity that has been fully ascertained. Among the various initiatives being considered is an awareness campaign to help citizens in the proper use of their accounts and knowledge of the information stored there.
- **Digital legacy.** In the digital age it becomes necessary to determine the fate of one's virtual property, given that online data services are often not based in Italy and so are subject to foreign laws. Obliging a US operator to follow the rules of Italian succession is not an easy exercise. The working group therefore proposes to develop a protocol to assist the heirs of a deceased user in relations with the operator, in order to facilitate access to the online resources of the deceased. Notaries, with their widespread presence throughout the country, are ready to act as liaison between the citizen and the operators, by submitting to the latter the information required under an agreed IT procedure, in order to reduce costs and waiting times as much as possible. The Italian solution could also be a pilot project for the rest of Europe.



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According to a survey by McAfee (July 2014) the average value overall of virtual property recorded on our digital devices amounts to \$35,000. At the top of the list are personal memories, photos and videos with a value of \$17,065. There follow personal information (medical, financial, etc.) with a value of \$6,400, information of a professional nature with a value of \$4,381, information on projects and hobbies with a value of \$3,318, personal communications worth \$2,147 and finally recreational and entertainment files with a value of \$1,721. Furthermore, 72% of users are at risk of identity theft or online fraud; 55% store digital content on devices that are impossible to recreate or repurchase; and 31% are at risk of theft or loss of the device.

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