Introducing Groningen
Welcome in the city of Groningen, welcome at the DUO office and at Groningen University’s landmark Academy Building.

We are very pleased to receive you here. Groningen is a typical college town, and where we stand, we are in the heart of it. I mean this literally, for we are in the city centre, where a number of faculties have settled and students follow a wide variety of degree programs.

DUO as part of Groningen
Our organization, DUO, is very much part of this student life. DUO started officially on January 2010, after a merger of the Informatie Beheer Groep (IB-Groep) and the Centrale Financiën Instellingen (CFI). Both organizations managed a wide variety of educational data.

Both organizations were in charge of educational funding and financing. The IB-Groep worked for students, CFI worked for educational institutions. Considering the affinity of activities, a merger was only logical. Our corporate video will tell you more about our organization as it is now.

Constantly improving DUO’s service level
An important objective of the merger which led to the Dienst Uitvoering Onderwijs has been, and still is, to improve our service. By joining forces and knowledge, we want to make things easier for our customers. One way of doing that is by giving the customer easy access to his own data. DUO has a wealth of educational data at its disposal. We want to present the customer’s own data in an accessible manner and make the data easy to use.

Enter the Diploma register …
The Diploma register is an important landmark on this road. But of course this register should not be viewed as an isolated thing. It only gains significance when we succeed in connecting it to other registers, worldwide.

Connections matter
What counts is reaching the critical mass which gives it true added value. I would like to make a comparison with the telephone. A little over 150 years ago, the principle of telephoning was invented. A marvellous discovery, but its use was not immediately recognised. After all, who were you going to call? A telephone was a very complicated device, and quite expensive as well. Hence only few people could afford one. Over the years, the use of the telephone increased, and so did its added value. It did not take long before a telephone exchange became necessary to coordinate all phone calls – first manually, then automatically.

So does innovation
In Holland, in Amsterdam, the Dutch Bell Telephone Company opened on June 1st, 1881, with 49 fixed connections. Halfway through the nineties of the previous century, our country had 7 million fixed connections. The rest is history. Fixed became mobile. And nowadays, life without a cell phone is inconceivable. The cell phone has become much more than “just a telephone”.

A plea for global networks
Time and borders seem to be falling away more and more, because we can connect with one another anywhere, anytime – with sound and vision. The connection with a student data depository is easily made. It all starts with one separate administration on the level of the institution of education. Important, but with limited applicability. Its value increases with the
number of connections. From administration to company register, from company register to a system of registers. From a national system to a global network.

**Scaling things up**

In other words: one national, complete, and reliable register is a great landmark. A global network of digital depositories is a revolution. Its importance is invaluable when students, institutions and employers all have global access to data, regardless of geographical frontiers. The will to succeed is evident – your presence here today is proof of that. At the end of this seminar we will ratify this intention by signing the declaration on Digital Student Data Depositories Worldwide. As the text indicates, it is about gaining critical mass in order to make a difference worldwide. We are very proud to be allowed to contribute our share. The next two days, we will share our Diploma Register with you. In a way it is a scoop for you. The register has not yet been formally launched, this will happen after the summer. We are proud to show you this ‘sneak preview’.

We hope these two days in Groningen will be a meaningful step towards establishing connections.