



# ABBYY Cloud Solution Helps Aetopia Modernise Directories for the Public Records Office of Northern Ireland

## Customer Overview



### Name

Aetopia

### Location

Belfast, Northern Ireland

### Industry

Digital Asset Management

### Web

[www.aetopia.com](http://www.aetopia.com)

## Challenge

- Vulnerable original documents
- Deterioration due to excessive use

## Solution

- Sequential scanning, digitisation, Cloud OCR and indexing
- Cloud-based Digital Asset Management

## Results

- Powerful online search
- Global accessibility
- Better archive management
- Improved customer service

The Public Records Office of Northern Ireland (PRONI) is the official archive for Northern Ireland. Its role is to preserve records of historical, social and cultural importance and make them available for the information, education and enjoyment of the public. PRONI has significantly re-vamped the Street Directories website with a radically new User Interface and the latest Cloud technologies from Aetopia and ABBYY.

## The Challenge

One of the most commonly used resources of the Public Records Office is the Street Directories that date from 1819 to 1900. These are valuable old books containing a listing of the names, addresses and occupations of the inhabitants of Northern Ireland as well as lists of commercial establishments operating in the cities and surrounding towns. They are a vital resource for historical and genealogical researchers and are an extremely useful source for all kinds of research such as tracing the location of a particular person or checking when a firm was in business. Genealogists can, for example, search for an address to find out who lived there many years ago.

These volumes, which were previously on open access in the PRONI Search Room, were very heavily used by the public. The paper in some of the volumes is very fragile and they are therefore at risk. Some pages had already been lost or damaged and further handling would have endangered their long-term preservation. Therefore, it was decided to scan the directories and to provide a search facility which would enable users to find key words in a section of a directory, in a particular directory or in any of the directories.

## The Solution

Recently PRONI embarked on a project to digitise every page in the directories (approximately 20,000) and put them online, allowing genealogy researchers around the globe to search on every single word. The scanned documents are stored on the Cloud using Aetopia's Digital Asset Management system, MediaCore, and every single word is digitised and positioned using ABBYY's latest Cloud OCR SDK running on Microsoft Windows Azure.

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Aidan McGrath, CEO of Aetopia

CEO of Aetopia. "An associated ISV who has used the ABBYY technology for many years recommended we look at ABBYY based on their reputation for the highest quality OCR."

In addition to a more friendly and intuitive user interface the new site now includes 'faceted searching' which allows users to explore the directory set by applying various filters. It is also possible to apply 'search equivalents' which allows readers to equate "Jas." with James or "Geo." with George, for example, so that if they search for one the other term is also returned. Individual search terms are highlighted and users can un-tick the individual search terms to refresh the search results instantly.

### The Results

The ABBYY Cloud OCR service was simple to integrate, effective, and fitted in well with Aetopia's architecture, particularly that there was no need to purchase additional servers to handle the OCR processing. The service scales on demand, a true advantage when a project calls for high volume processing in a short period or occasional peak loads occur. In addition to the excellent quality of OCR results ABBYY was also able to de-skew and improve the visual quality original scans, which was seen as a major benefit to PRONI. The detailed OCR positional information (provided as XML) was invaluable to the project, as it allowed the Aetopia team of developers to create a sophisticated 'Search Term Highlighting' feature for the Street Directories application, leading to extensive positive feedback from end users.

"The ABBYY developer account was easy to set up and the portal provided all the required documentation and assistance in getting started, including a downloadable sample code," says McGrath. "The pricing options suited us for PRONI Street Directories as it was a bulk process and we knew the exact number of documents that needed to be sent to ABBYY. ABBYY Cloud OCR has been a consistent win for us."

The Street Directories online system complements the existing databases and records which are available electronically, such as the Ulster Covenant, the Freeholders Records and the Wills Indexes. The next chapter in the continuing work of PRONI is to make more of its resources available online.

To access the directories: <http://streetdirectories.proni.gov.uk/>

### About ABBYY

ABBYY is a leading global provider of technologies and solutions that help businesses effectively action information.



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Street Directories

Results/Search Prev Result Next Result Page: 476-477 (Image 241 of 450 in Directory)

### The Belfast And Province Of Ulster Directory 1865

prev image next image

476	ALPHABETICAL DIRECTORY.	477
Summit J., manager in Ladbroke, Brothers--8, Eglington street		Thompson, R. W., provision dealer and grocer, 28 and 49, Hill street
James, cooper, 71, Eliza street		Thompson, Robert, book-binder, 8, Hepburn street
Thompson, Will., blacksmith, 10, Eliza street		Thompson, Alex., gardener, 62, Ten line
Mrs. W., 19, Fourth street		Thompson, Robert, tailor, Wingate street--3, Malma place, Lichburn road
Robert, iron-lapper, 34, Henry street		Thompson, Thomas, of McClinton & Thompson, 25, Academy street--2, Lonsdale street
Wm., scriber, 134, Old Lodge street		Thompson, Will. J., 78, Meadow street
Miss, dress-maker, 44, North Queen street		Thompson, Henry, grocer, 24, Arden street
Wm., iron-lapper, 5, Russell street		Thompson, Francis, Anders place, Ballymaclogh
Francis, grocer, 71, Shankhill road		Thompson, Miss, black printer, 5, Ballykyle street
& McCann, second hand manufacturers, 1, Thompson's entry, Inverhill street		Thompson, Samuel, book-printer, 25, Ballykyle street
D. D., spirit dealer, 20 & 21, Clifton street		Thompson, John, cooper, 11, Callaghan street
Andrew, plumber, 66, Victoria street		James, clerk, Callaghan street
Wm. & Co., Brown square ironery, iron-foundry, machine makers and engineers, 22 & 24, Brown square and 75, Townsend street		Thompson, John, cooper, 21, Charles street South
Wm., 1, Brown square		E. J., commercial traveller, 25, College street
Thompson, J., Brown square		J. H., of Richard Hill & Co., Donegal street--Whitabbey
Thompson, J., Wellington place		Miss, 30, Red street
James, cooper, 14, Callaghan street		Thompson, Samuel, plumber, 4, Grosvenor street
George, haberdasher, 5, Humeau's court		Alley, silk-merchant, 20, Green street
George, watch dealer, Old road, Dalrymple street		Thompson, John, grocer, 42, Henry street
J. in Harbour-office, 127, York street		Thompson, John, cooper, 9, Nelson street
M. in New street--41, Victoria place, Great Victoria street		Andrew, provision store, 67, Little Patrick street
James, grocer, 38, Verner street		Thompson, Thomas, watchmaker, 23, Peck's hill
James, baker and flour merchant, 41, North street		Miss, silk-binder, 20, Malma place
James M., insurance agent, 18, Corporation street--Fairview, Cross road		Miss, dress-maker, 50, Tully street
John, shoemaker, 25, Little Donegal street--Pinnac's street		Miss M. J., school teacher, Westmore street Pinnac's National school
John, grocer and spirit dealer, 42, Hill street		James, grocer, 49, Wexley street
James, iron merchant, 28, Crossin place, Crossin road		David, surveyor, 21, Wandford street
Joseph, grocer and spirit dealer, 54 and 55, North Thomas street and 14, George's street		Thomas, valuer, 24, Meadow street
Miss, 10, Donegal street		Wm., cabinet-maker and scolding yard, 41, Mill street
E. in Richardson, Row, 4 O'Connell--5, Wilton terrace		Mrs., grocer, 74, Arden street
John, general manufacturer, 41, Crossin street		Samuel, teacher of St. John's Parochial schools--4, Elmiston street
John, clerk, 125, Angleside terrace		Thompson, R. spirit dealer, 23, Talbot street
Miss, secretary to Harbour Commissioners--Garden Hill, Old Corporation road		Deaghrty, grocer, 25, Verner street
Wm., grocer and publican, 27 and 29, Ardarailla street		Thompson, Thomas, machanic, 21, McCleary street
C. C., coach and stationary merchant, 7, Donegal place--Lion Cottage, Eastonbury road		Wm., iron-merchant, 18, Lonsdale street
M. iron-merchant, 16, Arden street		Thompson, Thomas, coach trimmer, 5, King street
W. C., engineer, draughtsman and copper-plate printer, 39, Callaghan street		Miss, linen, 40, Red street
Miss, dress-maker, 14, Callaghan street		J. Cooper, 41, Little Patrick street
Wm., reporter, 14, Callaghan street		Thompson, John, hat and cap manufacturer, 23, Crossin court
George, clerk, 24, Clifton street		Thompson, John, watchmaker, 40, 33, Humeau street
Thomas, teacher, 65, Clifton street		Thompson, James, civil engineer and surveyor, professor in Queen's college
Thompson, R. S., 145, Donegal street		Thompson, Captain Robert, J.P., Captain
James, carpenter, 11, Bishop street		Thompson, Samuel, watchmaker, local-director of Provincial Bank, 1, Corporation street--14, University square
John, haberdasher, 24, Great Edward street		Thompson, John, J.P., Director of Belfast Bank--London
E. S. J., grocer and spirit dealer, 24, Crossin street		Thompson, Charles, of Hamilton, Mayor, & Thompson, Corporation street
Miss E., proprietor of Pinnac's Parochial School, Henry street		Thompson, Miss, milliner, 40, 30, Fenchurch street
		Thompson, Miss, bonnet-maker, 20, Clifton street

Show highlights for

- John
- William
- Thompson

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