Section 8 Websites

Chapter 20 Distribution of standardized names: accessibility on the internet

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20.1 Introduction

When names have been collected and standardised the work is only half done. As long as the standardised names have not found their way to the public, all the work has been for nothing. The public needs to be informed of the standardised name forms, so that they are used. On the UNGEGN website (http://unstats.un.org/unsd/geoinfo/UNGEGN/geonames.html) there are links to all national websites from which the national geographical names databases can be accessed. We will discuss a number of them in order to get an overview of the way they operate and of their functionality.

20.2 Australia

Geoscience Australia, a department of the Australian Government, has a place name search option (http://www.ga.gov.au/map/names/) where one can type in geographical names which then are retrieved from the central database. A number of matching entries will then come up, with indication of their record ID, feature code, coordinates, status (are they official or not) and the state they are located in. On that basis, one can go to the entry looked for, and when clicking this, a detailed map with the looked-for entry comes up, with a locator map, feature ID and an indication of the topographical map sheets it can be found on.

20.3 Canada

Canada has 3 options, as the geographical names database can be accessed through three different sites, the national atlas (English: http://atlas.gc.ca/site/english/index.htm , the Canadian Geographical Names Database (http://www.nrcan.gc.ca/earth-sciences/geography/place-names/10786), and the Canadian Geographical Names Service (www4.rncan.gc.ca/search-place-names/unique/GBEIN). In all three cases, you will end up at Natural Resources Canada, Earth Sciences, where the option Geography leads to the Canadian Geographical Names button. When we go to the Geographical Names Search Service, we can type in names, coordinates, define rectangular areas or give unique name ID's; this last facility also provides the possibility to type in aboriginal characters. The results can be displayed according to different options, ordered according to feature type or region, and when the looked-for entry has been selected additional information is given, such as a feature identifier; also, the dates when the name changed status (and the institution responsible), for instance when it became official.

Figure 20-1 Result of a query for Kerfoot in Canada

The Canadian National Atlas site provides more ways of access to the names database, through its Toporama mapping tool, as a location may be found here by typing in a place name, a map number (national topographic system number), a postal code (FSA), a street address, street name, or map coordinates. When a name has been typed in, a list of entries will come up, providing access to search-matching place name results (with different locations and feature types).

20.4 Estonia

The Estonian place name database (KNAB), developed by the Institute of Estonian Languages EKI can be accessed through http://www.eki.ee/knab/knab.htm . The database also contains street names, names of institutions, companies and organizations, farms, administrative units and natural features next to the names of populated places. There are detailed photo and map options for showing the named feature in situ. As Estonian names in the past had their German and Russian variants, much attention is paid to languages of the place names. The database records inform on principal name forms and variant names, the status of the names and the respective decisions by local authorities (parish, county or town council, parliament), feature designation codes, present administrative

Query the Place Names Database of EKI

Geographical names of Estonia

Show:	Database field	Query
	(*ASCII!*) [?] **place name:**	dorpat
☑	[?] language code and labels:	
☑	[?] name source:	
	[?] record/name status:	any
	[?] designation code:	any
	[?] county:	all counties
	[?] municipality:	all municipalities
	[?] church parish:	all parishes
	[?] minor area:	
☑	geographical coordinates	range of latitudes: (57° 30' -- 59° 50') ' --- ' range of longitudes: (21° 40' -- 28° 20') ' --- '
☑	name variants	

The output is: ⦿ table ○ text   [Submit query] [Clear form]

Name	labels	source	status	parallel or principal name	code	co.	min.	parish	minor area
Dorpat [KNR]	de, sv OBS		VAR	Tartu linn	a2, p10; #I1795	TA	Trt	(Trt)	
coordinates: 58°22'48"N : 26°43'21"E Maa-amet GeoNames									
Dorpatstraße · [KNR]	de	Tln1942j	VAR	Tartu maantee	u1	HR	Tln	(Tln)	K, L: KO, MA, TP, KE, JU, SP, ÜJ, ÜL, MÕ
name variants: Show all variants separately									
Dorpat, Station · [KNR]	de	Ri1909	VAR	Tartu raudteejaam	s4J	TA	Trt	(Trt)	VK: Vaksali 6
name variants: Show all variants separately									
Dorpatsche Straße · [KNR]	de	Llc1915	VAR	Tartu tn	u1	LV	Räv	Räk (Räv)	KV, PA
name variants: Show all variants separately									
Dorpat, Kreis · [KNR]	de	Ri1909	VAR	Tartumaa	a1. #H78	TA			
name variants: Show all variants separately									
Dorpat-St. Marien, Kirchspiel	de	Ri1909	VAR	Tartu-Maarja kihelkond	a9	TA		TA: TMr	
name variants: Show all variants separately									
Marien, Kirchspiel Dorpat St.	de		VAR	Tartu-Maarja kihelkond	a9	TA		TA: TMr	
name variants: Show all variants separately									
Dorpat-St. Marien, Pastorat	de	EM1994	HIST	Tartu-Maarja kirkus	p4ms	TA	Trt	TMr (Trt)	KL
coordinates: 58°22'34"N : 26°42'57"E Maa-amet GeoNames									
name variants: Show all variants separately									

Figure 20-2 Query and entries for Dorpat in the Estonian place name website.

division, and geographical coordinates. The database also contains information not included in the website, such as data on the temporal extension of the names, short textual descriptions of the object, use of locative cases, names of superior features, comparisons to other names and historical background information). The website, which can also be accessed in English and Russian, also provides information for named features outside Estonia (with more place names from adjoining

countries than from countries further away); according to the description they will specially collect names for linguistic minorities, such as the Basque, Chechen and Udmurt.

20.5 Finland

The Finnish national names website, found at (http://kansalaisen.karttapaikka.fi/kartanhaku/osoitehaku.html?lang=en-GB), has the option to query by address, by place name, by map sheet number and by
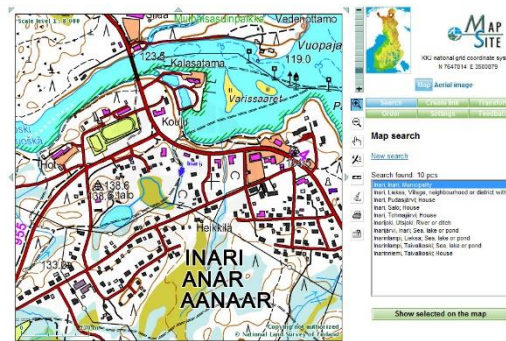
Figure 20-3 Answer for a query of Inari (with its Sami variant names) on the Finnish Place name server

coordinates. When queried by place name, a list of matching answers will come up, with their feature codes and province, giving access to a large scale cartographic representation. This map is very clear and has reproduction-like quality. A layer with cadastral information can be added to the map. Instead of maps, satellite images can also be opted for.

20.6 France

In France, the Géoportail (http://www.geoportail.fr/) provides geographic and cartographic information delivered by the Institut Géographique National (IGN). The names part of this website is displayed against a

map or satellite imagery background which can be customised, rendering at will the transport network, land use, heights, hydrography, public services and administrative boundaries. It can also be customised temporally, as the *Carte de Cassini* (1750s) or the *Carte de l'Etat Major 1:40 000* (1860s) can be chosen as map background, thus allowing a check whether the place name spellings have changed over time. The various homonyms are differentiated between by adding the departments they are situated in; highlighting an entry will lead to a large scale photographic or cartographic representation of the named object.

20.7 Germany

As for Germany, a new Gazetteer- web service was developed by the Federal Agency for Cartography and Geodesy (Bundesanstalt für Kartographie und Geodäsie or BKG) in co-operation with the German Permanent Committee on Geographical Names (StAGN) in autumn 2006. This (Gazetteer-) web service is based on a Web Feature Service (WFS) and thus compliant to the respective Open Geospatial Consortium (OGC) specification. The homepage (http://www.geodatenzentrum.de/geodaten/gdz_rahmen.gdz_div?gdz_spr=eng&gdz_user_id=0) accesses both Geographical names and a Historical place names option. The first one provides the content of the single database called Geographical Names of Germany (GN-DE) comprising also geographical names in the Sorbian and Frisian languages. Here, names can be entered (with wildcards), and those that answer the query will be listed in a table, also informing about the coordinates, feature type, coordinates, size, height, number of inhabitants, language and status of the name, with a map reference which, when clicked on, will lead to a large scale portrayal of the named object.

The historic place names section (http://www.geodatenzentrum.de/geodaten/gdz_rahmen.gdz_div?gdz_spr=deu&gdz_akt_zeile=3&gdz_anz_zeile

=5&gdz_user_id=0) informs about the German names of areas formerly (between 1900 and 1945) under German jurisdiction, and allows German civil servants to search for the pre-1945 birthplaces of German citizens.

20.8 Iran

The national geographical names data base of Iran (http://gndb.ncc.org.ir/Pages/EnglishSearch.aspx?d=bBuyOT3PST4LFMPpuL3K10yEAoc7ce4B&r=yrqgaicm) allows for the input of a name in Roman characters as well, with the possibility to select feature types and geographical divisions like provinces, counties and districts. A list of matching names will come up, in Arabic and Roman script, with feature types. Clicking a name will highlight its location on the accompanying map, and can also provide additional information, like coordinates, both transcribed and transliterated Roman name
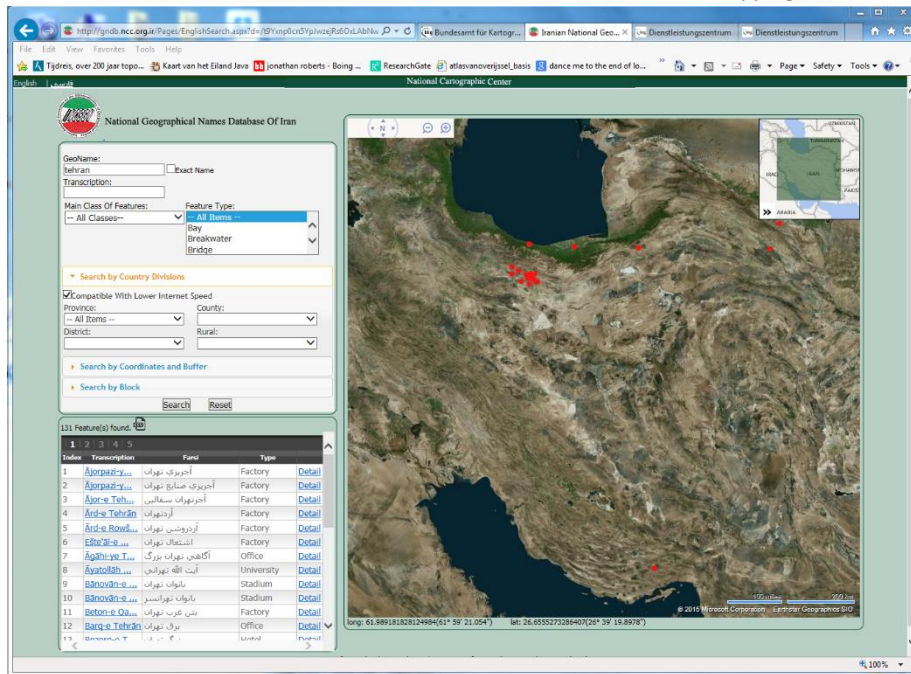

Figure 20-4 Part of all the names containing Tehran, on the Iranian name server.

versions, height information, etc. It is also possible to search names by coordinates with a buffer and by block. In the latter case, all the names on a particular map sheet will come up. The alphabetic sequence of the names delivered is that of the Arabic alphabet.

20.9 Ireland

Fiontar, the Irish Language School of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences of Dublin City University, has created the *Placenames Database of Ireland* (Logainm) in collaboration with the Placenames Branch (Ministry of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht). This is a database for archival records and place names. Its website (http://www.logainm.ie/en/) is aimed at journalists and translators, students and the public at large. Launched in 2008 it was later extended with sound files, mapping tools, Irish-English and reverse translation options, scanned images of archival records, and tools to explain Irish generics in place names. In figure 20-5 an example is given of the distribution of one of the Irish generics, drom (English: Ridge) over the island. There is ongoing cooperation between Logainm.ie and the Northern Ireland Place-Name Project

(http://www.placenamesni.org/index.php) to create

Figure 20-5 Distribution map for a generic, from the Irish place name server.

links between the two databases for shared place names. Place names can be entered into the search box, either in English or in Irish, and results will pop up as clickable pins on the map and also as a list below the map. By clicking a pin on the map or a name on the list underneath, more results will appear.

A special aspect of the Irish name server is the clickable map on the home page. Here one can click on any of the counties in the island, and then a list pops up of all the features named there, with their numbers. In Country Kerry for instance there would be 66 named bridges and 45 promontories, and by clicking a category, all the items in it will be displayed by clickable red points on the map, as in figure 20-6.

Figure 20-6 Distribution of all promontories in County Kerry, Ireland, with one of them clicked.

20.10 New Zealand

The website for accessing New Zealand place names has the url http://www.linz.govt.nz/regulatory/place-names/find-place-name . The production of the
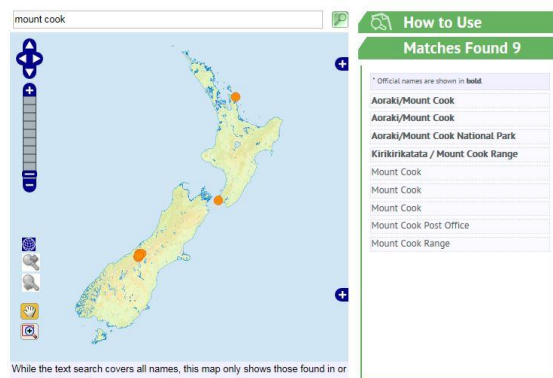

Figure 20-7 Dual names from the New Zealand gazetteer

Gazetteer, on which this website is based is described in another chapter in this manual, by Wendy Shaw of the New Zealand Geographic Board. This body, housed at Land Information New Zealand (LINZ) collects, adopts,

approves (or assigns, alters and discontinues) and validates names. When adopted the names are listed in the New Zealand Gazetteer, with information on their status, feature class, coordinates, a short description of the feature, its extent, and – and this is not often found in these name servers – something on the history of the named object or origin and meaning of the name. File and archive references will be added if possible.

Special name categories are dual names, alternative names and recorded names. In dual names, the community has expressed its recognition of the special historical and cultural significance of both original Māori and non-Māori names, as for instance Aoraki / Mount Cook. They would be inseparable on official documents. For names from the alternative name category this special historical and cultural significance for the community is also valid, but they may be separated, in the sense that only one of them may be selected.

Names from the 'Recorded names' category have not officially been approved as yet. However, they have been cited in at least two publicly available authoritative sources. It may simply be the case that NZGB has not had the time as yet to validate them, or that they are beyond the jurisdiction of NZGB, as is the case for names for homesteads, roads, streets, tracks and lighthouses.

20.11 Norway

On the website
http://norgeskart.no/ssr/#5/378604/7226208

Norwegian geographical names can be found; The search can be done with the names, with coordinates, bounding boxes or street addresses. The map will show the points that match the queried name, and by clicking them additional information will pop up: language and status of the name (and date of change of status), feature class of the named object, and ID. The maps on this site can also display all names, categorised according to their language (Norwegian and several Sami languages), to their name type (administrative, cadastral, physical, hydrographical, coastal, vegetation and other names), and to their status (authorized and non-authorized names.
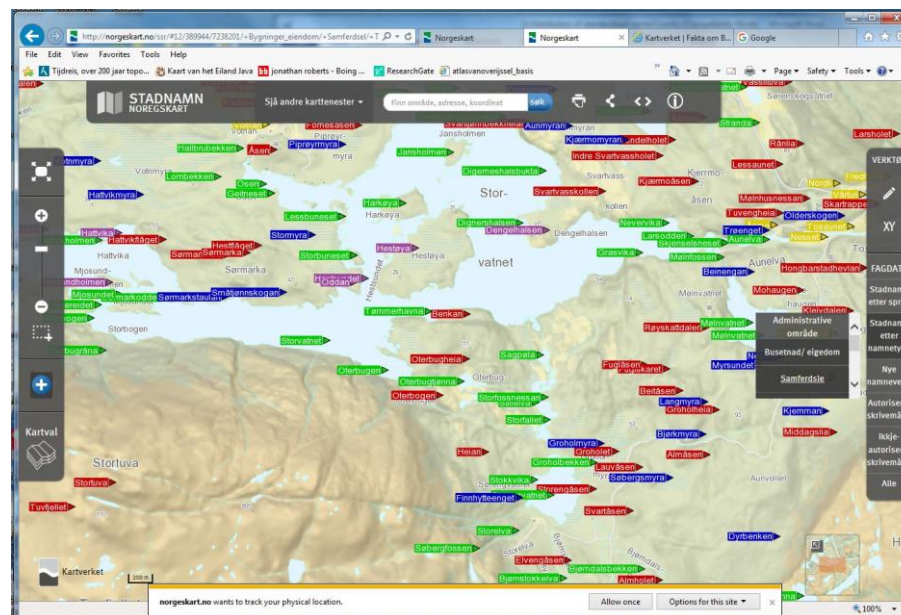

Figure 20-8 All place names, colour-coded according to feature-type, on the Norwegian names server

The names can also be projected on older map series, so that one may see as well whether any changes have been applied. Additional names data provided are the municipality the named object belongs to, and its UTM zone.

20.12 Sweden

http://kso.lantmateriet.se/# shows the location of place names on the map, as well as their language, province, municipality, coordinates and name type. The site provides extra functionality relevant for names research, as it also can show all the names that begin or end with a specific letter string or have them in the middle. Figure 20-9 shows a map of Blekinge province with all the geographical names there ending in –borg.

Figure 20-9 Names search result on the Swedish names server

20.13 United Kingdom

Ordnance Survey (OS) geo-referenced street dataset ("National Street Gazetteer" (NSG)) can be accessed at http://www.thensg.org.uk/iansg/welcome.htm, while the place name search can be effectuated at http://www.getamap.ordnancesurveyleisure.co.uk/; they each provide different numbers of matches to the queries, most being given by the explore site. As with the other sites shown, the place name search functionality is part of a service allowing the customers to find the proper map they want to buy. The added functionality here is that also map-related services are provided, such as walking tours. Find a route, create a route, blogs about the routes, are all related services here.

20.14 United States

The USGS Geographic Names Information System (GNIS) of the US Board on Geographic Names allows one to query or download domestic or foreign names. For querying the domestic name server, a feature name can be entered (restricting the search by entering features, IDs, states or counties can speed up the search process) and as a result a table of all the names matching the
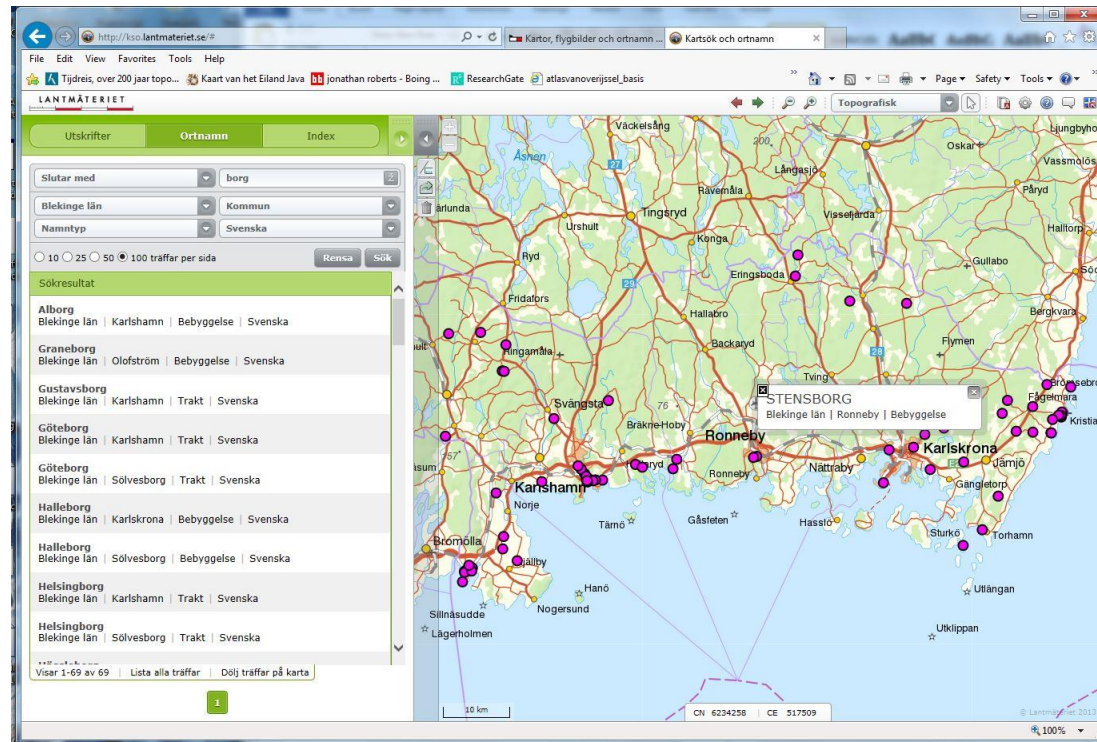
Feature Query Results

Click the feature name for details and to access map services
Click any column name to sort the list ascending ▲ or descending ▼

Feature Name ▼	ID	Class	County	State	Latitude	Longitude	Ele(ft)	Map	BGN Date	Entry Date
West Batavia Cemetery	420782	Cemetery	Kane	IL	415025N	0881843W	702	Aurora North	-	15-JAN-1980
Tri - City Ambulance - Batavia 2	2673792	Building	Kane	IL	415046N	0881957W	725	Aurora North	-	26-OCT-2011
Tri - City Ambulance - Batavia 1	2673856	Building	Kane	IL	415104N	0881734W	718	Aurora North	-	26-OCT-2011
Township of Batavia	428640	Civil	Kane	IL	415005N	0881858W	702	Aurora North	-	01-SEP-1995
East Cemetery	407599	Cemetery	Kane	IL	415141N	0881821W	722	Aurora North	-	30-SEP-1999
Congregational Church of Batavia	1998721	Church	Kane	IL	415056N	0881844W	712	Aurora North	-	30-SEP-1999
City of Batavia	2394077	Civil	Kane	IL	415056N	0881830W	666	Aurora North	-	27-FEB-2008
Batavia Wastewater Treatment Facility	2352366	Locale	Kane	IL	415043N	0881831W	659	Aurora North	-	18-SEP-2007
Batavia Senior High School	1816208	School	Kane	IL	415053N	0881948W	732	Aurora North	-	25-MAR-1999
Batavia Post Office	1816207	Post Office	Kane	IL	415059N	0881830W	669	Aurora North	-	25-MAR-1999
Batavia Middle School	1816206	School	Kane	IL	415057N	0881840W	709	Aurora North	-	25-MAR-1999
Batavia Landmark United Methodist Church	1998718	Church	Kane	IL	415101N	0881841W	709	Aurora North	-	30-SEP-1999
Batavia Junction	1771669	Populated Place	DuPage	IL	414743N	0881426W	735	Naperville	-	07-JAN-1998
Batavia Fire Department Station 2	2681947	Building	Kane	IL	415046N	0881957W	725	Aurora North	-	30-JUL-2011
Batavia Fire Department Station 1	2682077	Building	Kane	IL	415104N	0881734W	718	Aurora North	-	30-JUL-2011

row(s) 1 - 15 of 19 ▼ ⊕

Figure 20-10 Result for the query for the toponym Batavia in Illinois state, on the US domestic names server.

query shows up, with info on ID, feature class, county, state, coordinates, elevation (in m or feet), and the map sheet on which the named object can be found. Clicking on the name will lead to additional coordinate information and mention of variant names.

20.15 Overview

Most name servers are related to the national mapping agency. A number of them have as a prime function to find the necessary maps, but some have more extended functionality for scientific purposes (giving more information about the name (etymology, history) or their variants. Several countries have the option to go for historic map series as map background, so that the past orthographies of the queried names can be studied. The Irish site has special attention for generics and their distribution over the island, the Canadian site has special scripts for allowing Inuktitut names to be rendered, as does the Estonian site which also allows for input in Cyrillic characters. Nearly all of them are linked to a map option where the named object can be seen on the map or on a satellite image. These maps or images can be customised, adding information layers at will. The information provided for the names sometimes extends to providing their ID numbers, and dates when they were standardised or entered into the names database.

Many of the sites also allow for downloading the names, in total or per administrative area or bounding box/coordinates.

Depending on the language characteristics additional information is needed, for example in Estonia, the name Talinn would be different depending on its use in a sentence (I am coming from Talinn, going to Talinn or living in Talinn) would have different case ending and thus the locative case is also mentioned.

Some countries have extended the names information to areas beyond their current borders, in order to allow for administrative purposes. Many of the countries have also the option to use English next to their native language, to allow for use by the international community – this is especially admirable when it involves the use of another script – as for instance on the Iranian website where both Arabian and Roman scripts are used.

Finally, some websites also mention variant names – this may not seem to help the standardisation process at first sight, but it actually helps to identify the standardised name version, as by entering the variant name, the official spelling will be found.