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New system provides those legal documents online

By Garland M. Baker
Special to A.M. Costa Rica

There is nothing more frustrating in Costa Rica than to go to a bank, government agency or some store for a company purchase and the clerk asks: “Do you have a personería jurídica?”

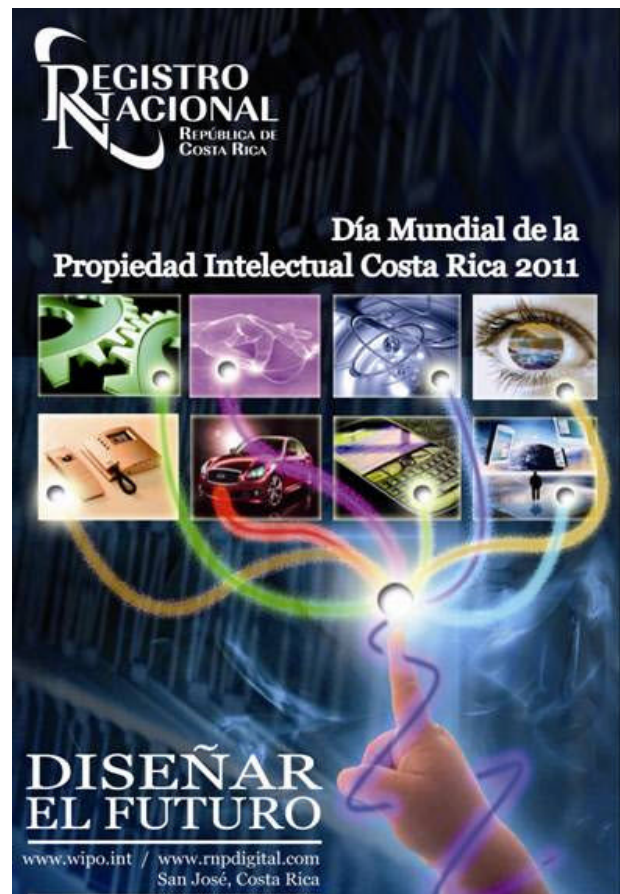
The personería juridical is a legal document used in most Latin American countries to prove legal capacity or legal representation, mostly for companies, but there are certificaciones de poder, certifications of power — that are basically the same thing.

In the past, the only way to get one of these documents was to go to an attorney and pay him or her around \$20. The attorney would print one on their fancy legal paper. A couple of years ago, the Registro Nacional allowed people to go directly to its offices and get a similar document for around 1,300 colons or \$2.75 at the current exchange rate. A big difference from \$20.

However, most people hate standing in the lines at the Registro Nacional and end up sending a messenger or using a messenger service. In the end this turns out costing about the same.

Now there is something new. And, most importantly it works, and it works great. The Registro Nacional has started something called the Registro Nacional Digital – the digital national registry.

Amazing, the digital system does work and it is easy to use if one can use a computer.



Here is the rundown for anyone needing a personería jurídica and a multitude of other documents provided by the system:

Direct your browser here (<http://www.rnpdigital.go.cr>). In the middle of the page to on the right there is a box that states “Obtenga Certificaciones Digitales 24 horas del

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dia 7 dias a la semana.” This translates to “Get Digital Certifications 24 hours a day 7 days a week.”

Click on that box. On the top left there is a box that states “Registrarse por primera vez.” This translates into “Register for the first time.” The registration is a breeze. One is asked for only basic information, first name, last name, telephone number, email and a password. Once one registers, the system will send an email almost instantly. The test registration email for this article took 15 seconds to arrive.

There it is, no more fees to lawyers or long lines at the Registro Nacional. One can get mercantile and property information, personería jurídicas, and believe it or not even catastros plat maps.

The system uses a very basic cart layout. The price for most documents is 2,500 colons plus tax or 2,798.50 which translates into \$5.65 at today’s exchange rate. Some items are a bit more expensive. Compared to paying a lawyer or sending a messenger to get the documents one needs at the Registro Nacional, the system is convenient and saves money.

The system can be used for more than one item at a time, too. All payments are done by credit card. The shopping cart keeps a running total of purchases and does the math

Documents obtained at the Registro Nacional Digital are good for 15 days. They are provided in the worldwide PDF (portable document format) file system. Once the document is downloaded onto a computer, it is also sent to the email of record so it can be used over and over again.

This means the same document can be used for a variety of business without buying it again during the 15 days. This in itself is a real money saver.

The recipient can verify the document. The document provided by the Registro Nacional Digital has a key-code number that looks something like this “RNPDIGITAL- 123456-2011.”

Anyone questioning the document can access the same Web site and go to the section on the top right hand side of the page and click on “verificación de certificaciones” – verification of certifications. The person questioning the document puts in the key-code number and the same exact document appears.

The world is turning quickly into a digital and live in the cloud world. Costa Rica is keeping up. The country is now also working hard on a new system called the Poder Judicial Digital, the digital judicial power. In a preliminary look, the system looks almost as good as the Registro Nacional Digital.

All this progress in Costa Rica is a bit frightening. It seems to be working. There is still one area that needs some serious help, the tax department. That Web site is still cryptic and does not work well most of the time. Their system to file tax returns using EDDI still does not work with Windows 7.

Garland M. Baker is a 38-year resident and naturalized citizen of Costa Rica who provides multidisciplinary professional services to the international community. Reach him at info@crexpertise.com. Baker has undertaken the research leading to these series of articles in conjunction with A.M. Costa Rica. Find the collection at <http://crexpertise.info>, a complimentary reprint is available at the end of each article. Copyright 2010, use without permission prohibited.

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