Locally developed software to safeguard social grant recipients' data

JOHANNESBURG — Black-owned cybersecurity experts Magix Africa and Dataproof, together with local biometric authentication specialists Fides Cloud Technologies, are now verifying and managing social grant recipients' identification data for the South African Post Office (SAPO).

The Magix Africa consortium won a major SAPO procurement bid in March 2018 to provide a multi-modal biometric verification engine. This system securely manages and biometrically verifies grant recipients' data to prevent fraud and ensure that the right recipients receive their grants and cards.

Magix Africa and Fides had tight deadlines to implement a solution that integrated with the South African Social Security Agency (SASSA) and SAPO systems so as to biometrically verify recipients at around 4 500 branches.

Over several years, Fides has fine-tuned its locally developed, biometric authentication software to meet local and international conditions, which include the ability to verify data over slow internet connections and long distances. Dubbed the 'TrustedVault', the technology can also be deployed and scaled rapidly, either in the cloud or on-premise.

A number of large financial services organisations and health care providers, both in the public and private sectors, are among current users of the Fides system. The technology solution is further fully compliant with the Protection of Personal Information Act (POPI).

"Our entity and software engineers are locally based and have developed solutions for a market that they know intimately well," says Kevin Wotshela, Managing Director of Magix Africa.

"We have the know-how and a multi-modal biometric solution built for our local market. We offer a real-time cloud service solution that no-one else has in the market and which can be deployed anywhere in the world," Wotshela adds.

SAPO together with SASSA will primarily use Magix Africa and Fides' ability to verify grant recipients' data using just their fingerprints. But the multi-modal nature of the solution means that SAPO and SASSA can ultimately also verify recipients according to other biometric technology, such as palm print and facial recognition.

To verify grant recipients' identities, Fides has been deployed as a private cloud at SAPO's two data centre environments in Centurion and Pretoria. These two large-scale data centres service the entire country.

After a successful pilot phase across 12 sites, the system went live early this month, says Hedley Hurwitz, Managing Director for Fides Cloud Technologies.

Hurwitz says the agile nature of Fides' technology is a key reason why it was able to service SAPO at such short notice.

"When it comes to specialised technologies like authenticating an identity, no company or organisation today can afford to launch a two-year project to develop software internally and then expect to keep pace with the market. Therefore, aggregating capability and making it available in a service model, so that developers can quickly plug in various services and create a bespoke application, is really where the space is headed. Fides enables organisations to quickly introduce authentication and integrity of identity into all their internal and external processes," says Hurwitz.

"SAPO had the vision to make use of this and understood exactly how and where the biometric services would be consumed within their process framework," Hurwitz adds.

Craig Hills, Project Manager for Magix Africa consortium, says: "From a Magix Africa perspective, it has been an impressive engagement with SAPO. Their dedication to the project, and tireless efforts, have made it possible for us to meet our deadlines."

About Magix Africa

Magix Africa is a black-owned South African company which delivers comprehensive and trusted cybercrime defence and detection services to address, manage, and contain the risks posed through the misuse of applications, or other IT information assets, by employees and/or third parties. Magix Africa has an in-depth understanding of how application fraud and money laundering is perpetrated through exploiting vulnerabilities in application frameworks, process and identity management. For more information, visit www.magix.co.za

About Fides Cloud Technologies

Fides is a technology company focused on delivering cloud-based identity solutions. Fides helps prove - either through background screening checks, authentication measures and/or biometrics - that the person you are in contact with is in fact the correct individual. Fides aggregates a number of Identity verification and identity management services to provide a single trusted identity service, always accessible and fully audited. For more information, visit www.fidescloud.co.za

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