IDEMIA

5 takeaways from Identity Week 2019

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IDENTITY

POSTED ON 06.25.19

IDENTITY WEEK – three days of conference and exhibition, combining the previously separate events Digital:ID, Planet Biometrics and Secure Document World, and exploring the complete spectrum of the identity lifecycle. The organizers promised a lot:

"Our world-class event aims to help create a more secure world, where trusted identity solutions enable governments and commercial organizations to provide citizens, employees, customers and consumers with a multitude of services, entitlements and opportunities to transact in a seamless, yet secure manner." This is quite a mouthful, so you can imagine that I was very curious to discover what the speakers and exhibitors would bring to the table at Identity Week 2019. Here are my five takeaways from this interesting week:

» Documents are not dead

1

In contrast to what some might advertise and contrary to the impression you could get when reading headlines in the relevant trade press, traditional documents are very much alive! Digital and mobile identities are here to stay for good, but in addition to physical documents. In many countries getting long-established, traditional processes ready for a **full digitization** will take time. Many great advances have been made already – the Nordic countries have the incredibly high penetration rate of over 90% for their eID cards – but other countries are still at the beginning of that journey. In the meantime, topics around securing the identity through optimized traditional documents stay on top of the agenda. IDEMIA, for example, presented at the event on the rising threat of morphing. Facial morphing is the process of blending two faces together, resulting in a fabricated photo that contains the facial features of both the original people. This enables the fraudster to create a Fraudulently Obtained Genuine (FOG) document with a false identity. Advanced security features that protect ID photos from forgery can be one part of the solution.

2   Seamless everywhere

We have heard about the idea of Seamless Travel for a while now, but what really struck me last week is that we are now going way beyond the travel ecosystem. Seamless lifestyle is the new tagline that summarizes all innovations where biometrics empower us to interact, pay, connect and travel in ways we had never imaged only ten years ago. However, this interconnected world has its challenges too. As in the case of traditional ID documents, securing the data that allow for a seamless lifestyle has been the topic of several discussions at Identity Week. Finding a way of facilitating convenience while at the same time ensuring highest security standards is a challenge not only for the dream of paperless border crossing. Another key question that came up in one of the roundtables was the one we so often hear these days: "Who owns the data and therefore takes responsibility for it?" We are far from answering this as an

》 industry, but I feel together we are certainly on the right track.

3 》 Machines – a helping hand, but not the boss

Convenience was not just a central issue with regard to the individual citizen or traveler. Several discussions were also based on technology that supports the work of ID document authenticators in general. How can fraud be detected more easily? How can we ensure to spend the appropriate amount of time on the critical cases while at the same time enabling legitimate access for others? Border Control is an easy example for this. During the discussions, it became clear that standardization of security features for better machine readability of the documents might not be possible in general. Certainly though, machines need to keep up with newly invented security features to ensure we maximize the potential created by this innovation. As we have seen with fingerprints, one solution could be the standardization of or at least an alignment between providers to ensure these new features can be treated by the relevant machines in the same way. One key message remains either way – and this was actually confirmed by a former border guard on stage: Machines are expected to assist and speed up the border management process. However, the ultimate decision if someone is not allowed to enter or leave a country will be taken with the human involved. A reassuring message for many, I am sure.

4 》 Governments as central platform for the nation's digitization program

For some this might sound obvious, but the key role governments will have to play to make a digitization program actually a success was again confirmed when I was listening to the presentation from Charlotte Jacoby, Division Head at Denmark's Agency for Digitization. As mentioned already, the Nordic countries have had an enormous success story with their eID cards and they received many questions from the audience around what they think was the reason behind these high penetration rates. Of course, there is never only one success factor, but the speakers confirmed that a key element was to have the private sector on-board. In both Norway and Denmark, the banking sector was working very closely with the government to maximize the opportunities the digital ID can bring to both their customers and the private sector. Citizens were ultimately convinced through different use cases the government could offer. Creating this platform for engagement with the private sector seems critical. The interesting side effect here is that the government suddenly plays a much more interesting, life-enhancing role for its citizens than it might have done in the past.

5 》 Authentication first – design second

Last but not least, with IDEMIA being one of the world's leading producers of identity documents, I will certainly take back the following message to our teams: Design the document with the authentication method in mind. This plead from one of the speakers is really close to my heart. The speaker explained that as authenticator he often has the feeling that producers create amazingly **secure ID documents** and only in a second step think about how the authenticity can actually be checked. Turning the process upside down and first think about the best, most innovative and user-friendly ways to **check the authenticity of a document** and then design the document and its security features around it would make a real difference, according to this user. Certainly some food for thought for our industry.

I am already very much looking forward to Identity Week 2020 and to further enlightening discussions with clients and peers.