

# LaBarge Weinstein Quarterly Newsletter - Winter 2020

An Update from LaBarge Weinstein - January 2020



## Featured Article

### *WorldReach Software*



#### ***How a small innovative Canadian firm delivered the world's largest mobile Identity and Document Verification system of its kind for the UK Government***

Few outside the realm of International Government Citizen Services Agencies have even heard of them. This unassuming group of dedicated subject matter experts and senior developers continue to land and execute global contracts of a scale that is highly unusual for an SME. Just how do they do it?

#### **A World of Experience**

[WorldReach Software](#) was founded in 1998 after a five-year software development partnership with Canada's Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT), as it was then called. As WorldReach's international government client list grew, they quickly gained a reputation as a highly trusted government partner and advisor specializing in consular assistance including crises, passport and visa travel document issuance solutions. In essence, improving the safety, security and facilitation of international travellers and delivery of citizen services worldwide. This was their primary focus until five years ago when they looked for new growth opportunities.

The company has been providing 24/7 mission-critical systems to Ministries of Foreign Affairs, Immigration, Passport and Border agencies for more than twenty years. They are experts in the international technical standards for secure travel documents, based around the ICAO Document 9303 international standard for national level machine-readable travel documents, as well as emerging best practices. With technical process innovation as their mantra, WorldReach staff are active participants in standards-setting bodies for identity documents, seamless travel and biometrics.

WorldReach chose to apply its expertise to create a new process for remote Identity and ID Document Verification (IDV) by aiming for the nexus of the burgeoning growth of smartphones as a mobile platform and the steadily increasing volume of ePassports (chipped passports issued since 2014 by Canada). In effect turning your own smartphone into an ePassport reader and taking the next step to verify the person in much the same way as an e-Gate or e-Kiosk would do using facial biometrics. With help from the Government of Canada's (GoC) Canadian Safety and Security Program and the sponsorship of IRCC and CBSA, WorldReach was able to refine and test its technology and new innovative process with the real world input of immigration and border officials via several technology demonstration projects aiming at seamless borders for lower risk screened travellers. This work continues today with several partners aiming for modernized air and land borders.

## **Brexit and the Urgent Push for Remote Identity and Document Verification**

To support the United Kingdom's plans to leave the European Union the EU Settlement Scheme (EUSS) was conceived by the UK Home Office. It was created to allow EU nationals living in the UK to apply for settled status, a type of permanent residency. Under the EU Settlement Scheme, applicants are required to complete three key steps: prove their identity, confirm five years of UK residency and declare any criminal convictions. As the Home Office did not want to process up to four million applications through traditional brick-and-mortar offices or via mail-in, they sought out an efficient and effective digital solution to achieve end to end digital service delivery under the UK Visa and Immigration mandate to provide EUSS options.

As the result of a competitive procurement process, WorldReach Software was selected in October 2017 to support the front-end identity verification components of the Settlement Scheme through the development, integration and testing phases. This digital service, based on WorldReach's new IdentityReach™ service and Know Your Traveller™ platform, allows an eligible applicant to remotely read and authenticate their ePassports using a smartphone app, and performs biometric facial matching and liveness detection to assess if they are the rightful holder of the document. In September 2018, WorldReach Software was awarded a multi-year +£20M contract with the UK Home Office for the operation and management of the digital verification capability supporting the EU Settlement Scheme.

IdentityReach includes the reading and verification of the ePassport chip's security features to authenticate the legitimacy of their identity documents. Facial matching is done using the secure reference image from the ePassport chip compared to a live selfie from the smartphone camera, and genuine presence (also known as liveness detection) is applied to mitigate attempts at identity fraud.

This "EU Exit: ID Document Check" app, on Android or iOS smartphone, assists applicants in promptly and securely confirming their identities without the applicant being required to submit their documents to the Home Office by mail or in person. This was also the very first iOS App in production that reads ePassport chips via Near Field Communication (NFC) on the iPhone version 7 and higher.

Public beta testing of the EU Settlement Scheme, including the EU Exit: ID Document Check app, took place from January, 21, 2019 until March 29, 2019 with the public launch on March 30, 2019.

## By the Numbers



On January 15, 2020, the UK Home Office announced that more than 2.8 Million applications to the EU Settlement Scheme had been completed to date.

**95%** of the EU Exit: ID Document Check applicants were able to use the app to prove their identity successfully.

**85%** of applicants were able to prove their identity using the app in under 10 minutes.

**79%** of an initial feedback survey indicated that proving their identity through the app was either very easy or fairly easy (a further 7% found it neither difficult nor easy).

Don't be surprised if 2020 is the year [WorldReach Software](#) becomes the world's worst kept secret.