



Border Management After the Pandemic

The urgent need for remote
and touchless identity services



ENTRUST
SECURING A WORLD IN MOTION

INTRODUCTION

Reimagining border management

The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted almost every aspect of contemporary life. Immigration and border management are no exception. Border agencies are looking urgently to the biometrics industry for remote and touchless services.

These agencies are very aware of their role in national economies: an efficient and secure process before, at, and after the border is essential for both trade and tourism. Sooner rather than later, health restrictions will begin to lift and international travel will start to show signs of recovery. But that recovery will depend in part on the ability of border agencies to respond to the legitimate concerns of travelers.

High on the list of traveler concerns will be: Am I required to wait in close proximity with other travelers, and am I required to use touch devices (such as kiosks, eGates, and fingerprint readers) immediately after other travelers? This is where the biometrics industry must step up with new and innovative solutions.

At Entrust, we offer an identity and document verification (IDV) service designed for the specific needs of immigration and border agencies, and other service providers in the travel continuum. Our platform – Identity Verification as a Service (IDVaaS) – combines the power of smartphones to read a passport chip via NFC (near-field communication) with the latest in facial recognition technology. This includes not just an instant facial match between selfie and passport, but also a genuine presence test to prevent spoofing.

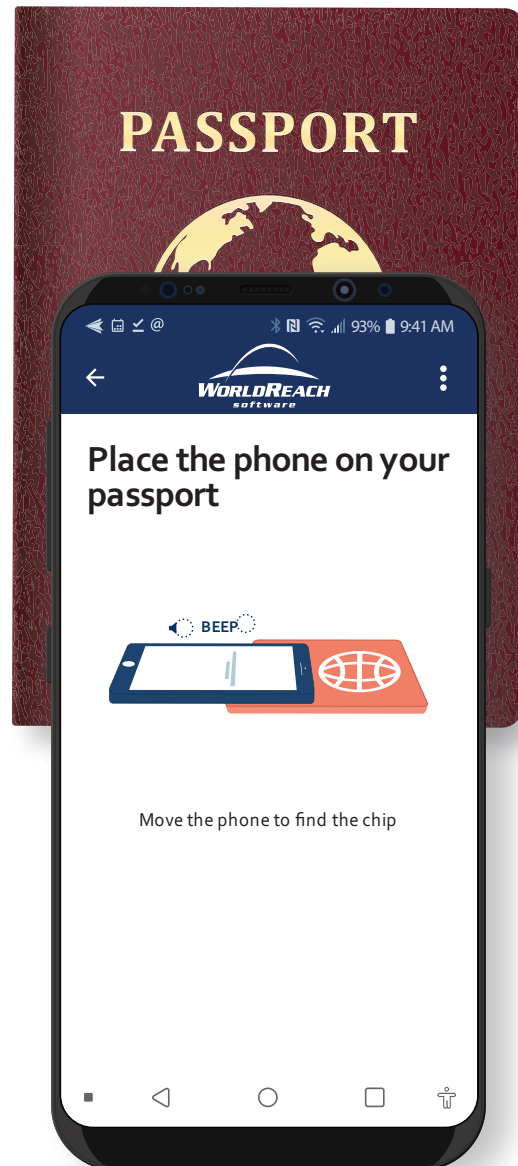
Any client agency using this service can have confidence that a genuine document has been presented and that it has not been lost or stolen. They can also be sure that the traveler is a real, live person who is the rightful holder of the document. And all this can be achieved remotely, without the traveler needing to be seen in person.

IDVaaS in action in the UK

Entrust's IDV service is already in production at high volume in the real world: It has been used since early 2019 by the UK Home Office as the first step in the highly innovative EU Settlement Scheme. At that time an estimated 3.5 to 4 million EU nationals living in the UK were expected to register with the Home Office for a new "settled status," in order to continue living and working in the UK following its departure from the EU.

The deadline for the EU Settlement Scheme was June 2021. As of June 30, 2021, the Home Office announced that - after only a year since launching the scheme - more than 5 million applicants had already applied successfully. And an overwhelming majority of those applying did so remotely, through the digital route that allows them to verify their identity with no in-person visit and no mailing of hard copy documents.

Equally important, the large majority of those choosing the digital route completed it successfully, without assistance, in just a few minutes. This compares favorably with similar remote digital onboarding processes in other sectors, including financial services, where there is often a high drop-out rate.



Chain of Trust use case in Canada

In Canada, a similar approach is being explored by Canada Border Services Agency as part of an innovative concept called Chain of Trust, in which biographic and biometric data captured early in the travel continuum is combined with dynamic risk assessment to determine the appropriate channel for each passenger at the border. The ultimate aim is to achieve zero wait time and touchless border experience for eligible, low-risk travelers, via the use of biometric corridors.

Looking ahead

Thanks to this real-world experience, Entrust has been presented with some urgent challenges in recent months, as border agencies begin to wrestle with their strategies for pandemic recovery. These challenges include:

- How can a border process heavily dependent on the use of touch-screen kiosks or eGates adapt to the post-pandemic world in which many travelers will demand a touchless alternative?
- How can a visa application system based on the in-person enrollment of fingerprints in visa application centers respond to travelers' expectations for a fully digital, remote process?

A significant part of the answer to these questions lies in innovations based on the fully remote, digital IDV process described above. Instead of requiring newly arrived travelers to stand in a line with others and use a touch-screen kiosk and/or an eGate, why not allow them to enroll their information in advance of arrival, on their own smartphone, and grant access based on a touchless facial match at the border?

And instead of expecting visa applicants to travel to an application center and wait with others to enroll their biometrics, why not allow them to submit the information remotely, from home, using a mobile device?



Adopting a collaborative approach

The technologies required to do this are already available. But it is not enough for biometric vendors to sell components to government agencies and then go on our way. That is a recipe for failure, when government can least afford it.

Our experience deploying these services successfully in real-world, mission-critical environments tells us that two other elements, besides good technology, are vital:

- We in the industry must understand the end business results that client agencies are seeking, not just in terms of compliance with security standards, but also in terms of operational success, including the expected rate of take-up of digital routes versus other options.
- In order to deliver that success, we must be prepared to work with client agencies not just on the technology required but also on the whole user process, to ensure that the innovations we are promoting can be understood and successfully navigated by the traveling public. In other words, a unified, cross-component approach at the workflow level is required.

For many, this is a difficult time. It is also a time in which innovations that might have been explored in the medium term are required right now.

At Entrust, we believe that immigration and border management systems can and will contribute to pandemic recovery globally by adopting new processes that support the remote and touchless use of biometrics. We in the industry have an obligation to work collaboratively with agencies and partners to make that happen.

For more information

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ABOUT ENTRUST CORPORATION

Entrust keeps the world moving safely by enabling trusted identities, payments, and data protection. Today more than ever, people demand seamless, secure experiences, whether they're crossing borders, making a purchase, accessing e-government services, or logging into corporate networks. Entrust offers an unmatched breadth of digital security and credential issuance solutions at the very heart of all these interactions. With more than 2,500 colleagues, a network of global partners, and customers in over 150 countries, it's no wonder the world's most entrusted organizations trust us.

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