

Intelligent ID

Software Developer Finds a Better Way to Deliver Services



About Intelligent ID

Established in 2008, Intelligent ID (iid) is a software service provider, which provides an electronic identity authentication solution, giving customers the ability to remotely authenticate the identity, age and status of individuals along with the IT devices they are using. This helps organisations to communicate and transact with individuals in a safe, compliant and responsible manner. The solutions and associated services that iid offers are designed to help an organisation to combat the risks of fraud, money laundering and identity theft while improving compliance and customer acquisition.

A Highly Available Service

As a start-up business working in the security sector, it is critical for iid that all IT systems are up and running 24/7 so that authentication of identities and transactions can take place whenever their customers require. With customers ranging from the online gaming, financial services, retail and recruitment sector, each business has a different driver for carrying out stringent checks on a person's identity. Using their own in-house developed software, iid subscribes to different data resources ranging from the electoral roll, post office register to the deceased and birth register to authenticate an identity.

Harvey Flather, CEO, wants to guarantee operational effectiveness at all times in order to cope with the pressures of peaks and troughs in demand. To do this in a cost effective way, however, is always a challenge. Harvey explains: "For

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many organisations, identity verification is now a requirement, so that they can comply with FSA or PCI DSS regulations. I must be confident that our system is robust and reliable. Providing an 'always-on' service is the cornerstone of our business ethos and we simply can't afford to suffer any downtime."

Flexing Our Systems for Peak Usage

Harvey continues: "The main challenge we face as a business is one of scalability. We have customers that are dependent on our service being available any time, day or night. We also have customers that may see a dramatic spike in activity on a particular day, and we have to be fully prepared and make sure that the capacity is available to cope with the additional traffic. A bookmaker customer may require our solution to verify up to 60,000 identities an hour on high-demand days such as the Grand National, but then the next morning it could be reduced to two an hour. So, you can begin to imagine the challenges that we face in having systems that can easily manage these spikes in traffic without suffering an outage."

Finding Help at the Right Time

Initially, iid began by hosting their solution in-house but this proved to be not only prohibitive from a cost perspective, but also extremely labour intensive which caused a distraction to other more strategic parts of the business. They also experienced resiliency issues with the existing communication links and didn't have the redundancy in the set-up that they would need to complement a truly effective delivery platform for their services.

Harvey recalls his earlier attempt to do everything in-house: “We recognised early on that we had to find a better way to deliver our services than trying to do everything ourselves. We didn’t want the cost and distraction that creating our own delivery platform would mean and the negative impact this would have on our business. I think it had the potential to hold back the development work on our solutions, as well as our financial growth, if we did not get this right. Making the right decision meant finding a partner with the infrastructure already in place that would allow us to deliver our services. Star convinced us that they had a platform to host our solution on that was robust, secure, resilient and cost effective”.

Reducing Cost & Risk Through Partnership

Harvey continues: “From the outset what I wanted was to find a partner who would listen to us, and in so doing gain an understanding of our business requirements, before coming back and offering us a solution which may or may not meet our needs. Star took a consultative approach and weren’t focussing on just trying to sell us rack space or a solution that wouldn’t benefit us. Star took the time to come in and sit down with us, asked all the right questions and seemed genuinely interested in what they could do to help us. This meant that I felt more confident dealing with them and trusted that they had come up with the right answers to our business challenges.”

A Delivery Platform Fit for Customer Demands

The team at iid had a clear criteria and Harvey guided them through this decision: “Finding a platform that was able to cope with a spike in activity was our priority, but whilst we wanted this ‘burstable’ capacity, we also didn’t want to pay the earth for it. Star’s solution means we benefit from only paying for what we use, for example, we don’t want to have to pay for the maximum capacity in periods when it was rarely being used. This ‘pay-as-you-use’ model from Star seamlessly integrates into our business model and gives us greater financial freedom.”

“I can’t tell you what a relief it is for me not to have to worry about signing off purchases for more hardware and software, and then concerning myself with who was going to look after everything outside of normal business hours. Had we continued to host our own solution we would have needed to employ at least two network administrators to manage the

platform. With Star, we don’t have to worry about any of the management headaches; we can simply focus on serving the needs of our customers.”

A Hosting Solution with Compliance Built in

Following the provisioning of the virtual servers in Star’s UK based data centre facility, iid has also found additional benefits from partnering with a provider whose services are already PCI DSS accredited. “We are regularly engaged with financial services organisations and one of the prerequisites within this sector is PCI DSS compliance from “end to end”. Financial Service Authority regulations state that this is a ‘must have’. Fortunately some of Star’s services are PCI DSS accredited and this meant we are able to meet these regulatory compliance and our customers’ requirements,” says Harvey.

Looking ahead

As the business continues to grow, Harvey and the team at iid will continue to benefit from having a robust, secure and managed platform from which to deliver their solutions, giving them the room to focus their time and resources on improving their services and growing the business. Harvey concludes: “We know we can rely on Star to provide us with a robust and resilient service 24/7/365. They have really taken the time to understand our business and provide a service which addresses our needs.”

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