



**Evolve**  
Capital Partners

## **Weekly News Update**

Week Ending 9/8/17

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## Preface

Each week, Evolve Capital Partners compiles relevant news and press releases across the finance and technology sectors. We analyze publicly available information and source each article. We also release a weekly summary of M&A and financing transactions.

Evolve Capital Partners is a specialized investment bank focused on businesses serving industries at the intersection of finance and technology. We are a dedicated, creative, and fully independent investment bank that advises private and public companies on merger, divestiture and acquisition transactions, and capital raising through private placements. Founded in 2012, we are based in New York.

You can learn more about us at [www.evolve-capital.com](http://www.evolve-capital.com). We post past weekly transaction and news updates on our website, plus in-depth industry research reports.

To contact us, please email [admin@evolve-capital.com](mailto:admin@evolve-capital.com) or call (646) 688-2792.

### Sectors we cover at the intersection of finance and technology include:

 Bank Tech / Solutions	 Healthcare Tech	 Securities
 BPO	 Insurance	 Alternate Lending / Specialty Finance
 Financial Management Solutions	 Payments	 Data & Analytics / IoT

## News Count

Sector	Number of News	% of Total
Bank Tech / Solutions	7	15%
BPO	3	6%
Financial Management Solutions	3	6%
Healthcare Tech	4	9%
Insurance	4	9%
Payments	12	26%
Securities	3	6%
Specialty Finance / Alternative Lending	4	9%
Data & Analytics / IoT	3	6%
Others	4	9%
<b>Total</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>100%</b>



# **BANK TECH / SOLUTIONS**

## Aussie banks unveil new fintech features

### Bank Tech / Solutions

9/4/17

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Two Australian banks unveiled updates to their banking services with ANZ Bank launching a voice-based identity service for mobile banking and National Australia Bank (NAB) debuting a chatbot for its business banking service.

The Voice ID service, developed in partnership with biometrics firm Nuance, enables ANZ customers to make payments of more than A\$1000 (or BPAY payments of more than A\$10,000) via their mobile using voice recognition.

“Customers increasingly want the convenience of banking on their digital devices and this solution delivers that with the added level of voice biometric security,” said managing director, Customer Experience and Digital Channels, Peter Dalton. “This will be particularly good news for our small business customers who regularly need to make payments of more than \$1000 on the go and will only need their voice to authorise those transactions.”

Meanwhile NAB is piloting a chatbot described as a “digital virtual banker” for its business customers.

According to the bank, the virtual assistant can provide answers to more than 13,000 variations on 200 questions based on information taken from genuine customer enquiries. It is currently focused on queries related to business credit and debit cards.

“Our research shows that two thirds of Australian SMEs cite dealing with administrative tasks as taking a lot of effort, and our customers desperately want to spend more time on their business and less time on dealing with admin tasks,” said NAB chief operating officer Antony Cahill.

Cahill said that the bank plans to continue developing its chatbot over the coming months and to add to the knowledge bank used to drive its decision-making.

[https://www.finextra.com/newsarticle/31027/aussie-banks-unveil-new-fintech-features?utm\\_medium=dailynewsletter&utm\\_source=2017-9-5](https://www.finextra.com/newsarticle/31027/aussie-banks-unveil-new-fintech-features?utm_medium=dailynewsletter&utm_source=2017-9-5)

## Challenger bank Redwood takes tech to the cloud

### Bank Tech / Solutions

9/5/17

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Redwood Bank, a new SME-focused bank in the UK, has opted for a cloud-based banking platform.

The front-to-back office solution is supplied by a local fintech firm, DPR Consulting. It is hosted in a private cloud. Redwood Bank declined to confirm its choice of technology provider. Banking Technology also contacted DPR but received no response.

“Redwood Bank’s ability to acquire a full banking licence and launch within 12 months of application can be attributed to implementing a 100% cloud based digital strategy,” the bank tells Banking Technology.

DPR Consulting is a well-established player in the UK’s banking technology space, traditionally known for its front office software for domestic retail banks, building societies, mortgage companies and other lenders. A few years ago it extended its front-end solution to the back office, supporting core processing functions.

There are a handful of takers of this new core banking system, to Banking Technology’s knowledge. Among them are Masthaven Bank (another recently launched challenger bank) and Cambridge Building Society.

DPR Consulting’s customers in the front-office tech space include Metro Bank, OneSavings Bank, Aldemore Bank, Precise Mortgages (part of Charter Court Financial Services), Fleet Mortgages and West Bromwich Building Society.

<http://www.bankingtech.com/964912/challenger-bank-redwood-takes-tech-to-the-cloud/>

## Atom Bank targets German retail savings market

### Bank Tech / Solutions

9/6/17

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British app-only bank Atom is making a move into the German market through partnership with local startup Deposit Solutions.

The partnership lets Atom offer Germans fixed savings products, diversifying its deposit base to Europe's largest savings market without having to set up any additional retail infrastructure.

Hamburg-based Deposit Solutions is building a B2B-based open architecture platform for retail deposits across Europe, offering a platform over which European banks can list and sell their savings products.

Atom has been at forefront of the UK digital challenger bank revolution. It received its banking license in June 2015 and launched operations in April 2016, offering two fixed-saver accounts and secured business lending for SMEs.

But, despite raising £83 million earlier this year, the startup has been forced to put plans to offer current accounts on ice as it faces up to a slew of new regulations over the next year, making the move to Germany a welcome new source of business.

Mark Mullen, CEO, Atom, says: "Access to the German market has been carefully considered in order to give us an additional stream to increase deposits to aid our next stage of growth. We remain committed to building a low-cost business model and offering customers simple, transparent and innovative products and services to help them manage their finances with ease."

[https://www.finextra.com/newsarticle/31036/atom-bank-targets-german-retail-savings-market?utm\\_medium=dailynewsletter&utm\\_source=2017-9-7](https://www.finextra.com/newsarticle/31036/atom-bank-targets-german-retail-savings-market?utm_medium=dailynewsletter&utm_source=2017-9-7)

## New EC rules could enable banks to increase their software spending

### Bank Tech / Solutions

9/6/17

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European banks under siege from digital challengers and sophisticated cyber attackers could face some relief from a possible change in accounting rules that will enable them to spend more on new software. A Reuters report states that European Commission is considering a change to banking rules in line with the US which could free up more than €20bn in capital for IT investment

The current rules list spending on software as a 'cost' rather than an 'investment'. This means that banks have to set aside capital to cover any software expenditure, which is estimated to be roughly half of banks' total technology spend.

European banks have long lobbied for such a change in order to help fend off the challenge from fintech upstarts able to invest in new software and up to now the Commission has resisted, including a planned overhaul of banking rules last year.

However, the Commission's position appears to have changed. "The Commission services are in a dialogue with stakeholders to gain a better understanding of the interaction between accounting and prudential treatment of software," a European Commission spokeswoman told Reuters. "We will envisage appropriate action if needed."

Such action would be widely welcomed by Europe's banks that not only face competition from fintech challengers but also have to finance the digital transformation of their infrastructure and bolster their defences against ever more sophisticated cyber-attacks. "It would help immensely if the Commission recognised the importance of this issue," said Wim Mijs, head of the European Banking Federation.

Expenditure on software is estimated to be roughly half of banks' total digital investment and should the rules be amended to mirror the US, it would free up more than €20bn according to one banking lobbyist cited by Reuters. A report from consultant Celent forecast that European banks would spend more than €60bn on IT and software this year.

Banks argue that software is a key component of their business due to growing customer demand for mobile payments and online banking services. and as the software becomes more bank-specific, it increases in value and therefore should be classified as capital in the same way as other tangible assets like buildings or hardware. Meanwhile the European Banking Authority has warned that any changes should be treated "with the highest caution" given that it would lower their capital ratio which could increase risk.

[https://www.finextra.com/newsarticle/31035/new-ec-rules-could-enable-banks-to-increase-their-software-spending?utm\\_medium=dailynewsletter&utm\\_source=2017-9-7](https://www.finextra.com/newsarticle/31035/new-ec-rules-could-enable-banks-to-increase-their-software-spending?utm_medium=dailynewsletter&utm_source=2017-9-7)

## Saffron Building Society swaps Sopra's MSS for DPR Consulting's new core banking system

Bank Tech / Solutions

9/6/17

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UK-based Saffron Building Society is modernizing its technology with DPR Consulting. On the way out is the legacy MSS core processing solution, supplied by Sopra Banking Software.

DPR is already supplying its front-end lendtech to Saffron Building Society. The technology is now being extended to support all main back office functions of the building society's savings and mortgages business lines.

This is a new core banking system, developed by DPR a few years ago, and Saffron Building Society is among its first takers.

Others include Cambridge Building Society and two start-up banks, Masthaven Bank and Redwood Bank.

Saffron Building Society has its history dating back to the mid-1800s. It is a regional player with branches throughout the England counties of Essex, Hertfordshire and Suffolk. It has over £1 billion in assets and targets consumers and businesses. Its products comprise savings, financial advice, loans, mortgages and insurance.

[http://www.bankingtech.com/968642/saffron-building-society-swaps-sopras-mss-for-dpr-consultings-new-core-banking-system/?utm\\_source=rss&utm\\_medium=rss&utm\\_campaign=saffron-building-society-swaps-sopras-mss-for-dpr-consultings-new-core-banking-system](http://www.bankingtech.com/968642/saffron-building-society-swaps-sopras-mss-for-dpr-consultings-new-core-banking-system/?utm_source=rss&utm_medium=rss&utm_campaign=saffron-building-society-swaps-sopras-mss-for-dpr-consultings-new-core-banking-system)

## Mobile-only bank N26 employs Mambu's SaaS banking engine

### Bank Tech / Solutions

9/7/17

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Mambu, the SaaS banking engine, today announced that its innovative solution is being used by N26 to allow the Berlin-based mobile bank to integrate systems and quickly bring services to market in support of its growth strategy.

Before N26 was granted a full banking licence in July last year, it used the services of a partner bank and then migrated to its own platform in late 2016. Since then their customer base has grown by 500%, helping them reach the 500,000-customer mark in August 2017.

“Mambu allowed us to cut our core operating costs drastically by minimising our IT resource requirements, helping us create the FinTech hub to meet the needs of our experience focused customers,” said Gino Cordt, Chief Technology Officer at N26. “Mambu’s ease of integration, flexibility and time to market has helped us to give our customers an unrivalled, technology-driven mobile banking experience,” he said.

The Mambu implementation went live in October last year and enabled N26 to migrate all of its customers over to the bank. Mambu’s current account and overdraft functionalities were also enhanced to support the bank’s transactional needs. The solution’s SaaS model and regular release programme means all of their customers benefit from these enhancements.

“Mambu is excited to be working with N26 as they are realising the true potential of mobile-first banking,” said Eugene Danilkis, co-founder and CEO of Mambu. “By putting customer experience at the centre of their strategy, they have created an app which gives their customers a truly simple banking experience. This is a great example of how retail banking can be redesigned in the 21st century,” he said. N26 also launched a loan product on the Mambu platform in February 2017.

[https://www.finextra.com/pressarticle/70589/mobile-only-bank-n26-employs-mambus-saas-banking-engine?utm\\_medium=dailynewsletter&utm\\_source=2017-9-8](https://www.finextra.com/pressarticle/70589/mobile-only-bank-n26-employs-mambus-saas-banking-engine?utm_medium=dailynewsletter&utm_source=2017-9-8)

## KBC Bank Ireland introduces app-based account opening

### Bank Tech / Solutions

9/7/17

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KBC Bank Ireland, Ireland's digital-first bank, has launched a ground-breaking new mobile app for new customers. KBC's app is the first of its kind, and works by allowing customers to open, activate and use their bank account at any time, within just five minutes.

Completely unique to the Irish market, the app's official launch follows months of development and testing with consumers here. The result is the fastest, easiest way to open a new bank account, paper-free.

The app is the latest in a series of product developments from KBC's Innovation Hub in Dublin, where digital solutions are being created and tested for customers in Ireland and for rollout across other KBC markets in Central Europe. The Innovation Hub is part of KBC Group's €1.5 billion investment in digital transformation.

The app is available for both Apple and Android TM devices, and works in five easy steps: -

- Download and open the KBC app. Enter your name, mobile phone number, date of birth and mother's maiden name;
- KBC will text you an activation code which you enter when prompted, along with your own personal security code;
- Take a photograph of your driving licence, clearly displaying your photograph and address;
- Take a selfie;
- Confirm your personal details and legal questions... and add your digital debit card to Apple or Android Pay TM.

A unique customer feature of the app is the Instant Digital Debit Card that is sent straight to the customer's phone the minute the account is opened. It means customers don't have to wait days for a physical debit card to arrive before their account can be used. In another first for KBC customers, the app prompts the addition of their debit card instantly to their Digital Wallet. It means that Apple or Android Pay is ready to use with the account immediately. To prove the point, KBC is giving €5 to every new Current Account opened via the app that will be available to spend immediately.

So innovative is the development, KBC's app has already attracted interest from some of the world's largest tech companies, including the digital benchmarking agency 11: FS, the global payments provider TSYS, as well as Google (see details below).

KBC Bank Ireland’s Director of Innovation, Eddie Dillon, said: “We’re excited to launch KBC’s new mobile app which removes the perceived hassle, paperwork and time involved in opening a new bank account. We have co-designed this new capability with Irish consumers and are confident it represents a new market standard in personalized digital banking. Consumers will be amazed at just how quick and easy it is to use, and there’s €5 for every new Current Account holder to see for themselves.”

“We’ve been developing and testing the app from our Innovation Hub here in Dublin. Using KBC’s open IT platform meant we could collaborate with fintech partners to finesse different elements of the app. For customers, it means we’ve whittled down the time to open a new active bank account from over a week to just 5 minutes, entirely paper-free. It’s never been easier or more attractive to bank at KBC, and we’re excited for future developments to come.”

KBC Group designated Ireland as the Group’s digital frontrunner. The country’s young population, growing digital economy and high mobile penetration rates makes it the ideal testbed for new and innovative digital developments in personal banking.

KBC Bank Ireland is already the first bank in Ireland to offer both Apple Pay and Android Pay. In a further development, it has been revealed that KBC will be the first bank in Ireland to offer payments via Fitbit. Latest statistics show that 78,000 customer payments were made via Android Pay and Apple Pay in the first half of the year alone, with six out of 10 KBC Current Accounts now opened via digital channels.

Pali Bhat, VP of Payments Products, Google said: “We’re excited to have worked with KBC to bring the simplicity and security of mobile payments to more KBC customers. Through the Android Pay API, we are able to offer KBC customers a very fast and easy experience in activating new and existing bank accounts for mobile payments.”

Meaghan Johnson, Research Director from 11: FS said: “We capture best in class customer journeys on our 11: FS Pulse platform, and from what we’ve seen to date, KBC’s new app and customer journey offers a complete end-to-end customer journey that is a true example of a digital service, rather than a digitised journey. Today, customers no longer wait days for a product or service they’ve bought online, so why should they wait a week for an ATM card before they can be up and running with their bank account?

KBC is changing that, and we particularly like the use of Messenger as part of the onboarding process. It provides a welcome change from the traditional, and often clunky, multipage journeys of more traditional banks. KBC has tapped into something special here to encourage customers to switch in the market, and I can’t wait to see what comes next.”

Karim Ahmad, Executive Vice President of Global Product and Innovation at TSYS, said: “TSYS is delighted to have partnered with KBC Bank Ireland to launch Ireland’s first instant digital debit card. As a leading global payments provider, we can say with confidence that KBC Bank Ireland has created a cutting-edge account opening and card production process, and delivered a

seamless product experience for personal banking customers. We're committed to supporting KBC on their digital journey, and all clients, as demand for the digitalisation of cards and payments intensifies worldwide."

[https://www.finextra.com/pressarticle/70605/kbc-bank-ireland-introduces-app-based-account-opening?utm\\_medium=dailynewsletter&utm\\_source=2017-9-8](https://www.finextra.com/pressarticle/70605/kbc-bank-ireland-introduces-app-based-account-opening?utm_medium=dailynewsletter&utm_source=2017-9-8)



**BPO**

## IBM launches new storage software to simplify data protection

BPO

8/23/17

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IBM today announced a new data protection software that is easy to set up, easy to manage and helps simplify data recovery. IBM Spectrum Protect(TM) Plus can be set up quickly making data protection available in as little as one hour.

IBM Spectrum Protect Plus is offered for two different deployment options, either as a stand-alone software installed into virtualized environments or as an integrated function with IBM's market leading Spectrum Protect software, which can be used by large enterprise clients with diverse data protection and availability requirements. Further, IBM Spectrum Protect's hybrid cloud capabilities can rapidly move data from on-premises back-end storage to public or private clouds.

IBM Spectrum Protect Plus provides data availability using snapshot technology for rapid backup, recovery and data management. Designed to be used by virtual machines (VM) and application administrators, it also provides data clone functionality to support and automate DevOps workflows. Unlike other data availability solutions, IBM Spectrum Protect Plus also has data protection and monitoring based upon automated Service Level Agreements to provide backup status and support retention compliance.

"IBM has been a leader in data protection for many years, so it should come as no surprise that as production platforms and business expectations continue to evolve, so would the IBM offerings," said Jason Buffington, Principal Analyst at the Enterprise Strategy Group. "IBM Spectrum Protect Plus is aimed to address a few of the most critical data protection challenges facing IT organizations of all sizes: Virtualization and Recovery Agility. With its SLA-centric design, organizations have a refreshingly new and compelling alternative for modern data protection and availability."

Specifically designed for virtual machine (VM) environments to support daily administration and deliver robust data protection, IBM Spectrum Protect Plus rapidly deploys without agents and features a simple, role-based user interface (UI) with intuitive global search for fast recovery.

"Without availability data is little more than an obligation. IBM Spectrum Protect Plus has been designed for easy setup, easy management and easy recovery that puts the emphasis of data control and management where it needs to be for end users," said Ed Walsh, general manager, IBM Storage and Software Defined Infrastructure. "The result is simplified backup administration through a single platform, which is especially important for VM-focused data backup, archive, and retention."

<http://www.barrons.com/articles/PR-CO-20170823-906416>

## Atos signs agreement with OCF DATA to sell its Atos Bullion server range

BPO

9/5/17

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Atos today announced it has signed a channel partner agreement with OCF DATA Limited to resell the Atos Bullion server range to NHS trusts and higher education institutions as well as to companies in the manufacturing and utilities sectors in the UK.

OCF DATA specialises in integrating management information with business processes and will now place the powerful SAP and Oracle certified 8 to 16 sockets x86 Bullion servers at the centre of its data analytics offering.

Atos solutions are a highly differentiated value offer. Their modularity, high performance and flexible functionality make them the ideal product for high performance in-memory computing analytics solutions.

Atos is one of few companies worldwide delivering a certified platform over 8CPU, also fully certified by SAP and Oracle. Bullion servers are creating a new industry standard for High-End Enterprise Computing, capable of providing real-time value for fast-increasing data volumes.

Andy Grant, Head of Big Data and HPC, Atos UK&I said: “We are delighted to be working with OCF DATA to bring the capabilities of Bullion Big Data servers to new market sectors. Whether it is for large scale virtualisation, high performance data analytics or in-memory computing the Bullion architecture delivers market leading price performance and RAS capabilities, helping organisations manage their costs.”

OCF DATA Director Cliff Brereton said of the partnership: “This is an exciting opportunity for us to deliver the world-class Atos infrastructure technology to IT departments, where this will form the core infrastructure of an organisation’s internal data services. Whether it is running enterprise databases, managing and exploiting data lakes or improving the performance of JAVA applications, these solutions will improve performance, reduce licence costs, footprint and power costs over existing in-house deployments.”

<https://www.hpcwire.com/off-the-wire/atos-signs-agreement-ocf-data-sell-bullion-high-end-servers/>

## The ai Corporation partners with Quattro for fraud detection

BPO

9/7/17

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The ai Corporation (ai), an FCA approved expert in fraud and risk management, today announced that it will be partnering with Quattro, a leading fraud detection and prevention services provider, as part of its continued global expansion and to satisfy the increasing demand for its unique fraud and risk management solutions in the USA

The partnership will link robust real-time fraud detection and prevention expertise, with highly reliable behavioural analytics and dynamic rule management to combat fraud threats, maximize revenue and attain competitive advantage for its users.

The ai Corporation's partnership with Quattro will strengthen the business's presence in the USA. Enabling financial institutions of all sizes to adopt The ai Corporation's unique machine-learning technology and its rules engine RiskNet®, in conjunction with Quattro's best of breed payment processing and analytics capabilities.

Nick Walker, The ai Corporation's Regional Director for the USA, explains: "Our partnership with Quattro is a significant step forward for ai. Expanding on our existing business in the Americas and providing a full-service solution for the banking community to mitigate risk or fraud across any channel. Between The ai Corporation and Quattro, we will be providing the technology and the human skills for analytic and review purposes. So, it is a true example of man and machine in the fight against fraud."

Mr Raman Roy, Chairman and Managing Director at Quattro says, "Quattro has been at the forefront in providing best-in-breed payments and transaction processing services to Banks in the United States for more than 10 years. Through our partnership with The ai Corporation, we will be able to introduce its innovative artificial intelligence and machine learning models to more financial institutions."

Dr Mark Goldspink, CEO of The ai Corporation, says: "Modern fraudsters have evolved their ability to detect vulnerabilities in systems and are shifting their targets to those weak links. They are using new tactics too – distributed networks, big data and the dark web to locate vulnerabilities and maximise the associated risk. Fraudsters are also devising multidimensional tactics that inflict damage by sequentially compromising more than one point of vulnerability.

"A.I., more specifically machine learning, can help organisations combat fraud in ways that just weren't previously possible. It is an exciting time for businesses, with disruptive opportunities in virtually every market sector. Our 'best of breed' payment solutions are designed to takes the fight to fraudsters, irrespective of the channel, while helping our clients grow profitably. Between Quattro and ourselves, our team of experts cover the full spectrum of risk management and business analytics across the globe."

The ai Corporation has existing partnerships in the US with a number of leading acquirers, issuers and processors.

ai's SmartSuite of machine-learning technology gives banks the opportunity to simply write their own rule sets into any fraud platform, including ai's rules engine RiskNet®. By using machine-learning, banks can automate their fraud prevention, mitigating ACH fraud regardless of how it is perpetrated including account takeover, 'man in the middle' fraud and/or social engineering.

SmartScore, one of six products within ai's SmartSuite, creates neural models using artificial intelligence and automated machine-learning techniques, to recognise patterns and trends in fraud. Providing transaction risk scores to be used in conjunction with user-defined rules and parameter-mapping.

With its unique multi model capabilities, SmartScore® enables users to create Neural Models specific to a fraud type, customer segment or payment method, including ACH. By constantly refreshing the data available, SmartScore provides an up to date and accurate risk score based on current trends, ensuring that RiskNet® or any third-party fraud platform users are not reviewing unnecessary alerts.

[https://www.finextra.com/pressarticle/70595/the-ai-corporation-partners-with-quatrrro-for-fraud-detection?utm\\_medium=dailynewsletter&utm\\_source=2017-9-8](https://www.finextra.com/pressarticle/70595/the-ai-corporation-partners-with-quatrrro-for-fraud-detection?utm_medium=dailynewsletter&utm_source=2017-9-8)



# FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT SOLUTIONS

## BCU goes live on Microsoft Azure with the Temenos Lifecycle Management Suite

### Financial Management Solutions

8/29/17

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Temenos, the software specialist for banking and finance, today announces that Baxter Credit Union (BCU) has successfully implemented the Lifecycle Management Suite in Microsoft Azure. The implementation, which included the Collection, Service, and Loan Origination modules, incorporated an upgrade spanning four major releases, as well as the inaugural launch of the Lifecycle Management Suite in the Cloud.

Jeff Johnson, CIO, BCU, commented: “We have a strategic initiative in place to move all of our technology into the Cloud. Since BCU uses the Lifecycle Management Suite frequently as part of our day-to-day activities, we felt it was necessary to explore hosting our technology on Microsoft Azure. We are already well embedded with Azure, so they were a natural choice. We are looking forward to benefitting from the ability to scale more efficiently, reduce system response time, enhance disaster recovery abilities and run on optimally-sized hardware.”

The project spanned nine months, with significant testing from all parties in order to confirm both the functionality of the technology in previously untested waters, and the security of the system in a new environment. The decision to move the Lifecycle Management Suite to Azure has also allowed BCU to reduce IT overhead. Moving forward, the credit union will be able to focus their time and effort on optimizing and providing the best products and services.

Emily Steele, COO of North America, Temenos, stated: We are thrilled to announce the successful completion of this project. The teams at BCU, Temenos and Microsoft invested a lot of time and energy to ensure that all of the security and functional features of the system went live without any unplanned interruption to BCU’s service. The successful completion of this project is not only a testament to the longevity of the technology, but also to our strong relationship with BCU. We look forward to continuing to push the boundaries of possibility with both BCU and Microsoft, and continuing to propel the Lifecycle Management Suite to the forefront of financial technology.”

David Koscheski, Director, US Financial Services Industry for Microsoft Corp., added: “Microsoft and Temenos work together with financial institutions around the world, and BCU is taking advantage of the scale and efficiencies gained by combining Temenos technology powered by Microsoft Azure. We are thrilled to see the results of our work with Temenos come to fruition and we look forward to collaborating on more projects in the future.

<https://www.temenos.com/en/news-and-events/news/20172/august/bcu-goes-live-on-microsoft-azure-with-the-temenos-lifecycle-management-suite/>

## Kempen ousts legacy reporting tech in favour of Simcorp Coric

### Financial Management Solutions

9/4/17

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Kempen, a €49.5 billion asset manager in the Netherlands, is replacing its legacy client reporting solution with Simcorp Coric.

Simcorp explains: “Following a review of existing processes, Kempen identified a number of inefficiencies, including high levels of manual processing, low operational agility, and a lack of proper report governance.

“Having examined relevant solutions in the market, Kempen found Simcorp Coric to be the optimal solution to address these inefficiencies.”

Erik Luttenberg, COO at Kempen, says Simcorp’s “technical expertise and track record in replacing legacy reporting solutions were decisive factors in our selection”.

In addition to the front-end solution for client reporting, Kempen will also use Simcorp’s production control dashboards to provide management oversight of the report production process.

According to Simcorp, in the last 18 months, five firms have selected its Coric solution to upgrade their client reporting and replace incumbent technology.

The solution stems from a London-based company, Equipos, which was purchased by Simcorp in early 2014 for €10 million.

The two companies had a long-standing partnership by then. The Coric Client Communications Suite was already brought into the Simcorp portfolio, marketed and sold as Simcorp Dimension Report Book Manager.

At the time of the acquisition, Equipos had around 70 Coric clients, in the institutional asset management and private wealth sectors. Prior to the deal, Simcorp held a 20% stake in Equipos’ share capital.

Simcorp intended to offer Coric both on a standalone basis and fully integrated with its middle-to-back office system, Simcorp Dimension.

[http://www.bankingtech.com/968402/kempen-ousts-legacy-reporting-tech-in-favour-of-simcorp-coric/?utm\\_source=rss&utm\\_medium=rss&utm\\_campaign=kempen-ousts-legacy-reporting-tech-in-favour-of-simcorp-coric](http://www.bankingtech.com/968402/kempen-ousts-legacy-reporting-tech-in-favour-of-simcorp-coric/?utm_source=rss&utm_medium=rss&utm_campaign=kempen-ousts-legacy-reporting-tech-in-favour-of-simcorp-coric)

## Lloyds Bank's new bookkeeping service is a keeper

### Financial Management Solutions

9/6/17

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Lloyds Bank has launched a new service to help businesses manage their bookkeeping without manual intervention.

Called Lloyds Bank Direct Bank Feed it allows clients to receive their statement information directly into their accounting software – “eliminating the need for businesses to manually input their bank statements and reduce the time spent reconciling accounts”.

Steve Everett, head of product and propositions, global transaction banking at Lloyds Bank Commercial Banking, says: “Our clients have told us that daily accounting tasks can take up significant amounts of time, which could be better spent in their business.”

Lloyds says previously businesses would work through the manual process of uploading a file from their online banking system, or in some cases use unauthorised third party software with the “inherent security risks that it brings”.

The bank says businesses interested in registering for this service should contact their accountancy software provider for more information.

[http://www.bankingtech.com/970962/lloyds-banks-new-bookkeeping-service-is-a-keeper/?utm\\_source=rss&utm\\_medium=rss&utm\\_campaign=lloyds-banks-new-bookkeeping-service-is-a-keeper](http://www.bankingtech.com/970962/lloyds-banks-new-bookkeeping-service-is-a-keeper/?utm_source=rss&utm_medium=rss&utm_campaign=lloyds-banks-new-bookkeeping-service-is-a-keeper)



# HEALTHCARE TECH

## EHR vendors and provider groups want more details on the definition of information blocking

### Healthcare Tech

8/30/17

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A group of health IT and provider organizations want federal officials to issue a proposed rule clarifying the definition of information blocking and the subsequent approach from enforcement officials.

Led by Health IT Now, the group of 13 stakeholders, including the American Academy of Family Physicians, the American Medical Informatics Association (AMIA) and several prominent EHR vendors, recommended that the Department of Health and Human Services clarify its definition of information blocking, which is prohibited under the 21st Century Cures Act.

“We understand that implementing these provisions will require a nuanced approach and believe the best first step for the administration in implementing these provisions is to gain broad stakeholder input,” the groups said in a letter (PDF) to Donald Rucker, M.D., the national coordinator for the Office of the National Coordinator for Health IT, HHS Inspector General Daniel Levinson.

Under the law signed by President Barack Obama in December, the Office of Inspector General can investigate and fine companies and providers that engaged in information blocking up to \$1 million per violation.

Given the potential enforcement implications, the group proposed a discussion session in September to iron out questions like:

- What “reasonable” business practices do not constitute information blocking?
- What constitutes “special effort” in eliminating blocking and promoting interoperability?
- How should patient access be measured?
- What constitutes a “complete record”?

Defining information blocking is one of several priorities under ONC’s new administration, although it will have to do so without a dedicated privacy office. The agency plans to eliminate its Chief Privacy Officer with a potential \$22 million budget cut in 2018, and instead lean on the Office for Civil Rights for support.

Meanwhile, one doctor has called for an end to the “shameful” practice of information blocking that interferes with patient care. And a prominent health IT researcher blamed information blocking equally on providers, vendors and policymakers.

<http://www.fiercehealthcare.com/regulatory/ehr-vendors-provider-groups-want-more-details-definition-information-blocking>

## Making voice technology part of healthcare

### Healthcare Tech

9/1/17

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Orbita CEO Bill Rogers has a relative with dementia. As dementia patients often do, she repeats a lot of the same questions, and it drives her aging husband crazy. But there's someone who's happy to answer those questions as many times as she asks, and she never gets impatient. That person's name? Alexa.

Voice-activated technology has a lot of potential in healthcare. There are cost and time savings to be reaped, vitals to be tracked and medication reminders to be issued. Proponents believe that voice tech can help the same number of professionals give better care to a greater number of people. But some of the benefits, such as what Amazon's virtual assistant has done for Rogers' relative, can't be quantified.

So, just what does the healthcare world stand to gain, and what will it take to see greater adoption of voice-activated tech in the space? Industry professionals weigh in.

To date, voice technology in healthcare is mostly being used to automate call routing and self-service tasks. It can connect callers with the right department and save them from long hold times or repeating their query to multiple agents. It can help them find the nearest pharmacy to fill a prescription or get medical testing done the same day. This is the low-hanging fruit of voice tech in healthcare.

While the patient experience benefits are clear, and perhaps greater than the financial savings, there are some small cost savings taking place in this scenario. Next Caller Director of Customer Success Tim Prugar said it costs an average of \$0.30 per call to manually identify the caller. If a healthcare agent can bypass that part of the conversation and get straight to the meat of it, those savings do add up, Prugar said.

Orbita takes it a step further by using voice tech for remote patient monitoring, medication adherence, chronic care management and patient education. Combined with other IoT devices like blood pressure sensors, scales or respiratory trainers, this tech can really be a powerful tool, said Rogers.

It can also take some of the pressure off family members and caregivers, he explained. When a smart device is tracking things like pain level and mobility, medication adherence, blood pressure movements and other stats, it frees up family members to connect with their loved one instead of spending the whole visit asking about the illness. So, in a roundabout way, it's a supporter not just of the patient's physical health, but of his/her mental and emotional wellbeing (and those of the people around him/her) as well.

Then, there are those who are really having fun with voice tech – like Alegeus, which taught its voice assistant Emma to tell wry jokes between explaining how consumers’ health plans work, and like Catalia Health’s Mabu, a physical bot that blinks and builds relationships with the patients it serves. Mabu uses artificial intelligence blended with psychology and medical expertise to help patients with ongoing illnesses navigate their conditions.

Home healthcare workers have to visit their patients monthly, weekly or even daily, but with help from a voice-activated assistant like Mabu, they could (and do) provide more focused care to a greater number of people, with the assistant handling some of the routine functions like talking the patient through taking their medicine or completing physical therapy exercises.

Doctors can’t stand over patients at all hours to ensure these things are done, and done correctly, said founder and CEO Dr. Cory Kidd. Augmenting professional care with an AI-powered robot can fuel better treatment compliance while also saving healthcare systems from having to hire more employees, or increase the hours and salaries of existing ones.

“Voice assistants will never fully replace human interface,” Rogers said. Flat out. At the same time, though, “voice is making rapid progress as the third wave of the internet, with websites coming first, then mobile apps. I fully expect the application and opportunities with voice to be bigger than those.”

When it comes to handling phone calls, there’s no denying that automation can make the process faster and more efficient in some cases.

However, if the customer wants to know what to do after the diagnosis, why his copay is so high, or anything else of a complex and sensitive nature — Cogito Chief of Customer Success Douglas Kim calls them “moment of truth interactions” — then a human, not a robot, still needs to address that topic. That’s not a chatbot exchange; that’s a phone call. And that goes for all generations, said Kim — millennials as much as boomers and retirees.

In terms of an at-home voice assistant like Mabu, Dr. Kidd said, “These technologies are not replacements for human care. They are not designed to do everything patient care requires; they are simply focused on keeping patients on the therapies recommended by doctors. Voice-activated technologies cannot have open-ended conversations.”

Finally, across the board, the Achilles heel of voice tech is accuracy. Quality is important, said Kim, but if a patient asks the voice-activated assistant to find the closest MRI center and the top three results are closed, then the patient loses trust in the platform — and loses it fast. It doesn’t take much, Kim said, for people to give up on a bot that can’t seem to do its job.

Dr. Kidd notes that voice technology has come a long way but still has a long way to go. Better voice-to-text comprehension is possible — and, indeed, necessary if this tool is going to be of use in the healthcare sector. Getting the accuracy where it needs to be (in terms of both comprehension and data) will be no small feat, but according to Prugar, the greatest threat in this brave new world is going to be security.

“Fraudsters love the phone channel,” said Prugar. Fraudsters can spoof numbers and social engineer the call to access sensitive medical records and other personal identifying data that they can use for account takeover, identity theft or synthetic identity construction. To combat this, Prugar said organizations will need to implement real-time authentication like anti-spoofing technology, dynamic blacklists and voice biometrics.

The final component of voice tech acceptance is going to be hardest to control, and that’s the people.

“Across the industry, many are putting out chatbots and Alexa interfaces, but call volume is spiking 15 to 20 percent across the board,” said Kim. “You cannot, as a healthcare provider or payer, be in a position of dictating to customers how they should interact with you. You need to be ready to receive your customer service requests across all the different channels that they demand.”

In other words, if people don’t want it, they don’t want it. The tech has to be good enough that consumers want to use it.

Rogers agreed. “Consumer acceptance is significant,” he said. “Think about a time when people said, ‘I’ll never need a website,’ or ‘My flip phone is fine. Why would I need a smart phone?’ Adoption will come, and with it, the need for creating voice skills.”

The final hurdle? “We don’t know how it’s going to be regulated by the FDA,” noted Dr. Kidd. “The FDA has recently created a new unit focused on digital health, but it will be a few years before we know how it shapes up for voice activation specifically, since all FDA regulations pass through Congress.” Even if people love it, there’s no guarantee that Alexa will narrate our future medical experiences.

<http://www.pymnts.com/voice-activation/2017/voice-assistant-iot-healthcare-allies/>

## Yale integrates EHR with Connecticut's Prescription Monitoring System

### Healthcare Tech

9/7/17

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Yale New Haven Health and Yale School of Medicine have launched a partnership with the State of Connecticut and Appriss Health, a Louisville, KY-based technology vendor, to use health IT tools to better identify, prevent and manage substance use disorder.

The collaboration integrates Yale's patient electronic health record system (EHR) with the Connecticut Prescription Monitoring and Reporting System (CPMRS), a tool designed to help providers reduce prescription misuse, addiction, and overdoses. It enables Yale physicians and other prescribers to readily obtain critical information regarding opioid prescriptions and other medications so they can safely manage treatment and comply with state regulations, according to a press release.

Although Connecticut has had a valuable database of opioid and other controlled prescription information, the stand-alone system is considered cumbersome and has created barriers to clinicians' use. Physicians have had to access separate systems with different logins, requiring a break in busy workflows.

Appriss Health reports that the collaboration with Yale New Haven Health will enable the integration of prescription drug monitoring program (PDMP) information directly into EHRs via Appriss Health's NarxCare solution. NarxCare is an in-workflow, PDMP information, advanced analytics, tools and technology solution that aids clinical decision-making and increases access to treatment, improves patient engagement, and enables care coordination. The new integrated system allows physicians logged into Yale's Epic EHR to quickly identify patients at high risk for adverse events and overdose.

"Our physicians throughout Yale New Haven Health will now have the critical information they need to make the best prescribing and medical decisions to improve the safety of our patients," Allen Hsiao, M.D., chief medical information officer, and associate professor of Pediatrics and of Emergency Medicine at Yale School of Medicine.

"This partnership and integration is one strategy in our Connecticut Opioid Response (CORE) initiative to reduce deaths from opioid overdoses in the state and improve the use of the CPMRS thereby enhancing safe prescribing," Gail D'Onofrio, M.D., chief of Emergency Services at Yale New Haven Health, chair of Yale Medicine Operations Committee, and professor and chair of Emergency Medicine at Yale School of Medicine.

<https://www.healthcare-informatics.com/news-item/ehr/yale-new-haven-health-integrates-ehr-connecticut-s-prescription-monitoring-system>

## IBM and MIT to invest \$240 million with a focus on healthcare decision support and analytics

### Healthcare Tech

9/7/17

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Continuing its aggressive push into artificial intelligence in healthcare and elsewhere, IBM is working with MIT to invest \$240 million over the next ten years in a collaborative laboratory environment dedicated to machine learning, cognitive computing, and deep learning research.

“I am delighted by this new collaboration,” said MIT President L. Rafael Reif. “True breakthroughs are often the result of fresh thinking inspired by new kinds of research teams. The combined MIT and IBM talent dedicated to this new effort will bring formidable power to a field with staggering potential to advance knowledge and help solve important challenges.”

Co-located with the IBM Watson Health and IBM Security headquarters in Boston, Massachusetts, the new lab is just steps away from the MIT campus, allowing more than 100 AI scientists, students, and researchers to explore innovative ways to apply emerging AI technology to a variety of industries.

“The field of artificial intelligence has experienced incredible growth and progress over the past decade. Yet today’s AI systems, as remarkable as they are, will require new innovations to tackle increasingly difficult real-world problems to improve our work and lives,” says John Kelly III, IBM senior vice president, Cognitive Solutions and Research.

“The extremely broad and deep technical capabilities and talent at MIT and IBM are unmatched, and will lead the field of AI for at least the next decade.”

Healthcare diagnostics and clinical decision support are among the lab’s top priorities. Researchers will also investigate improvements to cybersecurity and consider the ethical and economic impacts of integrating advanced data analytics tools and technologies into society.

“AI is everywhere,” said Anantha Chandrakasan, the dean of MIT’s School of Engineering, who will co-chair the lab with Dario Gil, IBM Research VP of AI and IBM Q.

“It’s used in just about every domain you can think of and is central to diverse fields, from image and speech recognition, to machine learning for disease detection, to drug discovery, to financial modeling for global trade.”

Researchers will focus on several key areas of development, including exploring quantum computing, imaging analytics, and creating advanced algorithms that can solve complex problems and accomplish highly specialized tasks.

“There are some particular targets we have in mind, including being able to detect cancer (e.g., by using AI with imaging in radiology to automatically detect breast cancer) well before we do now,” said Chandrakasan.

“This new collaboration will also provide a framework for aggregating knowledge from different domains. For example, a method that we use for cancer detection might also be useful in detecting other diseases, or the tools we develop to enable this might end up being useful in a non-biomedical context.”

Oncology has been a primary field of exploration for IBM Watson Health, which has seen promising results in terms of accuracy and sensitivity among early pilots and trials.

The new lab will aim to improve these capabilities by offering research opportunities to students, start-ups, and members of the MIT academic community.

“This new collaboration will bring together researchers working on the core algorithms and devices that make such applications possible, enabling the pursuit of jointly defined projects,” said Chandrakasan. “We will focus on basic research and applications, but with new resources and colleagues and tremendous access to real-world data and computational power.”

<https://healthitanalytics.com/news/240m-ibm-mit-artificial-intelligence-lab-has-healthcare-focus>



# INSURANCE

## Hylant partners with Ohio and Michigan-based insurance agencies

### Insurance

9/5/17

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Hylant, based in Toledo, Ohio, has entered into a strategic partnership with Pinkney-Perry Insurance Agency Inc., one of the oldest and largest minority-owned insurance agencies in Ohio, and Camryn Insurance Service LLC, a wholly owned subsidiary of Comer Holdings LLC in Detroit, Mich.

Through this partnership, the companies will continue to meet the insurance and risk management needs of companies across the United States, including those that value minority business enterprise spend considerations.

Since its beginning in 1961, Pinkney-Perry has been a 100 percent minority-owned and -operated insurance and financial services company. Incorporated in Ohio in 1965, it is the oldest and largest minority-owned insurance agency in the state. From its humble beginnings as a writer of primarily homeowners, auto and life insurance, Pinkney-Perry has evolved to one of Ohio's premier business insurance agencies.

Camryn Insurance Services LLC was formed in 2013 as a property and casualty agency with headquarters in Southfield, Mich. Camryn is one of a group of companies owned by Comer Holdings LLC.

Hylant was founded in 1935 and is a full-service insurance brokerage with 14 offices in Ohio, Michigan, Illinois, Indiana, Tennessee and Florida. As a member of the Worldwide Broker Network, Hylant offers complete risk management services, employee benefits brokerage and consultation, loss control, healthcare management and insurance solutions for businesses and individuals.

<http://www.insurancejournal.com/news/midwest/2017/09/05/463362.htm>

## Gen Re and iXledger partner on blockchain venture

### Insurance

9/5/17

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Gen Re has partnered with London-based vendor iXledger to develop a blockchain platform for its life and health insurance clients.

The objective is to develop early use cases that both leverage the girth of data available to carriers and offer regulators transparency. The project will initially focus on the UK, with the potential to expand to other markets, including the rest of Europe, Asia and the U.S.

"We are very pleased to have established this strategic collaboration with iXledger to create transformative solutions that better serve the needs of our clients," said Ross Campbell, Gen Re's chief underwriter, life/health Research & development, in a statement.

Gen Re, which also serves P&C insurers, recently partnered with four other carriers to launch a new innovation lab in Cologne, Germany. The lab is focused on creating new solutions for carriers using data science and other digital technologies. The venture, dubbed InsurLab, is open to insurers, startups and related service providers.

<https://www.dig-in.com/news/gen-re-ixledger-partner-on-blockchain-venture>

## EY launches new blockchain platform for marine insurance

### Insurance

9/6/17

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EY and Guardtime announce the world's first blockchain platform for the marine insurance sector. The platform launches in collaboration with A.P. Møller-Maersk A/S, ACORD, Microsoft, MS Amlin, Willis Towers Watson and XL Catlin and after a 20-week proof of concept.

The blockchain platform — built on Microsoft Azure global cloud technology — is positioned to provide significant value to the insurance industry and is planned to be implemented from 2018 onward. The first of its kind in the insurance industry, the platform's initial phased rollout will involve deploying the benefits of blockchain for end-to-end use across the marine industry.

The global blockchain platform connects clients, brokers, insurers and third parties to distributed common ledgers that capture data about identities, risk and exposures, and integrates this information with insurance contracts. The platform's capabilities include the ability to create and maintain asset data from multiple parties; to link data to policy contracts; to receive and act upon information that results in a pricing or a business process change; to connect client assets, transactions and payments; and to capture and validate up-to-date first notification or loss data.

Shaun Crawford, EY Global Insurance Leader, says: "Blockchain's potential to transform the insurance ecosystem has always been clear. What we have done is to move forward from potential to reality. This solution is the first to apply blockchain's transparency, security and standardization to marine insurance and is ready for commercial use. We look forward to deploying this technology across the marine insurance industry and are exploring how these findings and insights will be applied to other specialty insurance markets and beyond."

The blockchain platform supports the marine insurance industry to address the challenges of its complex international ecosystem involving multiple parties, long paper chains and duplication, high transaction volumes and significant levels of reconciliation — all potentially preventing transparency, compliance and accurate exposure management. The blockchain platform connects disparate data and processes to address and mitigate the issues associated with reconciliation and error applicability.

Lars Henneberg, A.P. Møller-Maersk A/S Head of Risk and Insurance, says: "It is a priority for us to leverage technology to streamline and automate our interaction with the insurance market. Insurance transactions are currently far too tedious and frictional. The distance between risk and capital is simply too far. Blockchain technology has the potential to facilitate the desired development that is long overdue."

Insurers can use this blockchain platform to improve their capital and gain efficiencies, with increased transparency and reduced manual data entry or reconciliation and administration costs.

Mike Gault, Guardtime CEO, says: “The KSI® blockchain stack is a proven technology for securing the physical, software and information supply chains that enterprises rely on for the integrity of their businesses. We are thrilled to be collaborating with EY to expand the number of real-world customer problems solved with our technology. Guardtime’s technology and deep domain knowledge from EY represents a formidable combination for customers looking to solve hard problems with blockchain technology.”

### **Blockchain set to transform the insurance sector, say industry participants**

Bill Pieroni, President and CEO at the global insurance industry organization, ACORD, says: “We are excited to collaborate with EY on this innovative blockchain solution for the insurance industry. This first-of-a-kind effort has the potential to dramatically reduce time, cost and risk across the entire insurance value chain. ACORD looks forward to working together to help our members realize the benefits associated with blockchain.”

Mark Russinovich, Chief Technology Officer, Microsoft Azure, says: “Microsoft believes blockchain is a transformational technology with the ability to significantly reduce the friction of doing business, especially streamlining business processes shared across multiple organizations. Marine insurance is a prime example of a complex business process that can be optimized with blockchain. We remain committed to bringing blockchain to the enterprise, and are glad to work with EY, Guardtime and other industry experts to develop and deploy blockchain solutions powered by Microsoft Azure.”

Dr. Paul Taffinder, Director of Strategy and Innovation, MS Amlin, says: “We started this work in 2016 with an intuitive belief that blockchain technology could transform the marine insurance market. We are excited that we are already in a position to test a practical platform through which we will be transacting business in a completely new way. It’s part of our MS Amlin EDGE program to seize advantage through tactical and more radical opportunities for digital disruption and business model innovation.”

Simon Gaffney, Chief Data Officer, Willis Towers Watson, says: “Redesigning the insurance process is critical for the evolution of our industry. This initiative has the potential to streamline and simplify insurance transaction efficiency using new technologies, an essential development for the insurance industry.”

Martin Henley, Chief Information Officer, XL Catlin, says: “This successful proof of concept is ground breaking. While the insurance industry has been looking at blockchain as a way to disrupt some of its processes and become more efficient, this will lead to ‘real-life’ innovations. We will learn from those and apply them to other insurance segments — and ultimately better delivery for our clients across the industry.”

[https://www.finextra.com/pressarticle/70563/ey-launches-new-blockchain-platform-for-marine-insurance?utm\\_medium=dailynewsletter&utm\\_source=2017-9-7](https://www.finextra.com/pressarticle/70563/ey-launches-new-blockchain-platform-for-marine-insurance?utm_medium=dailynewsletter&utm_source=2017-9-7)

## Swiss Re bets AI can help workers cope with complexity of reinsurance

### Insurance

9/7/17

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Swiss Re AG is betting that technology can assist its people with more and more of the work at the heart of its reinsurance business, searching documents for relevant information and saving them time.

The 154-year-old company, which provides risk analysis and other services to insurance companies, corporations and public-sector clients, has assembled a team of more than 100 data scientists and experts in artificial intelligence who are creating software-based digital agents that can read documents on their own and surface relevant information to employees.

“We enable the user to focus on the most value-adding work and not just finding information in documents,” said Rainer Baumann, head of group digital and information services.

The software applications act as a more sophisticated form of search, powered in part by a subfield of artificial intelligence called natural language processing, in yet another example of how technology and people are working together in new ways, Dr. Baumann said.

For example, a risk expert can use a particular text analytics application to search for a topic such as “fire detection” in a contract that is hundreds of pages long. The tool will highlight relevant paragraphs in the document, such as where and what type of fire sensors are deployed throughout the building and other areas related to the topic.

The company is also piloting voice-enabled commands, so that an employee can speak the search terms instead of typing them.

The team at the Zurich-based company has created about 20 advanced text analytics software applications since 2013.

The applications allow many of the company’s approximately 14,000 workers to quickly identify relevant information instead of having to read through hundreds of pages of documents, such as insurance contracts, risk reports and claims reports

Employees using the applications have more time to do important work, such as crucial risk analysis for insurers in various sectors ranging from property insurance to marine insurance and life and health insurance, he said.

The team dedicated to developing the advanced text analytics applications is part of Swiss Re’s Competence Center for Digital and Smart Analytics, which was developed four years ago, Dr. Baumann said.

Many of these experts are tasked with developing so-called ontologies, or frameworks that a piece of software uses to ensure that the meaning of words is understood in context, Dr. Baumann said.

Another text analytics application can explore documents to find specific legal language in reinsurance contracts. The tool would search for all clauses in all contracts that are related in meaning to, for example, the phrase “a collateral to be deposited in a local bank” even if some of the words are slightly different but have similar meanings.

Dr. Baumann declined to share metrics on how worker productivity has improved after using the various text analytics tools.

The company also plans to use text analytics capabilities from Israeli-based startup Harmon.ie, Dr. Baumann said. Harmon.ie in August introduced a text analytics feature, powered by artificial intelligence. The startup says the feature, called Collage, automatically identifies and analyzes information in cloud-based apps such as Microsoft Corp.’s Office 365 and SharePoint and organizes it by specific topics, or projects. Workers can then see all the relevant project-based information in one Harmon.ie platform rather than toggling between multiple apps to find relevant information, the startup says.

“We’ll also look into that capability and then it’s the choice of the user which features and capabilities they use for what kind of work, (so that) they can optimize their knowledge work throughout the day,” Dr. Baumann said.

<https://blogs.wsj.com/cio/2017/09/07/swiss-re-bets-ai-can-help-workers-cope-with-complexity-of-reinsurance/>



# PAYMENTS

## Paysafe plans to deliver a unified service beyond today's omnichannel world

### Payments

8/30/17

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In order to compete in the marketplace, ISOs and agents are going to have to adapt and learn to navigate the rapid tech-driven needs of their merchants based on the consumer demand.

Omnichannel is cited as the leading digital priority for 22 percent of retailers, providing consumers with a unified, connected experience across all channels they shop. It's all about the continuity of customer experience, whether the encounter is in-store, online, mobile, telephone, or catalog. Paysafe offers a robust full-service omnichannel solution combined with B2B and B2C expertise.

Paysafe's omnichannel payment solutions give all businesses, large and small, the ability to have big-box retailer features, seamlessly integrating in-store, online, mobile, social and other channels with data analytics, all on our proprietary payment platform. Merchants are able to stay connected with their customers throughout the buying journey, even when a sale starts in one channel and finishes in another.

The big question facing the payments industry is, how do we replace the set of tools that support omnichannel strategies today, with a global solution for the future that will allow merchants to grow exponentially? "Paysafe has been focused on this question for two decades, growing organically and by acquisition to the point where we now offer a pretty amazing portfolio of products and services under one umbrella. Paysafe's recent acquisition of MCPS is the latest iteration of that strategy – another step towards a universal payments platform that genuinely expands our POS activities across offline, online and mobile platforms and enhances our scalability within the North American payments ecosystem," said Paysafe COO Danny Chazonoff.

Omnichannel solutions transform the customer experience, no matter where or how consumers shop, to boost sales, enhance customer relationships and optimize resources. What was the 'norm' for payment processors in the past will not sustain future growth. Balancing personalized customer service and leveraging new payments technology is key. The consumer lifestyle is evolving to where customers are constantly on –the-go. Yes, consumers expect fast service, but they also want access to the payment option of their choice, across all channels.

"Our ultimate objective is the constant evolution of our product offering, to stay ahead of payments trends and anticipate consumer demand. Our integration with Paysafe is the culmination of this central business strategy. We genuinely offer support for every payment scenario under one roof," according to Todd Linden, CEO of Paysafe Payments Processing, North America.

The future is a truly omnichannel experience with a single set of solutions for every payment channel. Paysafe gives merchants and partners the freedom to focus solely on their core

business and consumers the ability to pay whenever and wherever they want. The future is here and the future is Paysafe.

[http://www.digitaltransactions.net/news/story/Delivering-a-Unified-Service-Beyond-Today\\_s-Omnichannel-World](http://www.digitaltransactions.net/news/story/Delivering-a-Unified-Service-Beyond-Today_s-Omnichannel-World)

## American Express introduces new mobile app feature to pay for card purchases

### Payments

8/31/17

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American Express is rolling out a new mobile feature, Pay It Plan It, across all eligible U.S. consumer credit and co-branded cards. The feature gives card holders two new ways to pay for the things they buy, according to a press release.

With Pay It, card holders use the American Express app to select smaller purchases and pay that purchase amount right away with a tap. With purchases over \$100 users can choose to make monthly payments, ranging from three to 24 months, with a fixed fee and no interest.

Card holders can also continue to pay their bill at the end of the month, either the minimum due, the full amount or anything in between, just as they normally do. No matter which way a consumer chooses to pay, they can earn rewards and build credit, according to the release.

"We are thrilled to provide American Express Card Members new, flexible ways to pay for their purchases," said Kartik Mani, head of global consumer lending at American Express, in the release. "Pay It was inspired by card members who prefer making multiple payments throughout the month. Now we've made it even easier to do this in our app. For larger purchases, we developed Plan It to give card members another way to pay over time with a 'no surprises' plan that offers transparent, monthly payments for a fixed fee."

<https://www.mobilepaymentstoday.com/news/amex-intros-new-mobile-app-feature-to-pay-for-card-purchases/>

## TixTrack adds Apple Pay to mobile ticketing system

### Payments

8/31/17

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TixTrack, a provider of ticket software products, has integrated Apple Pay into Nliven, the company's mobile-first ticketing system.

TixTrack introduced Nliven to in January 2016 as a way for venues, promoters and sports teams to take control of all ticketing needs while also providing consumers with a first-class buying experience, according to a press release. In addition to Apple Pay, the system also features a fully interactive 3D-view from any seat as well as clear, color-coded pricing.

"Integrating with Apple Pay is part of our broader strategy to make it as easy as possible for consumers to purchase via mobile," Steven Sunshine, CEO of TixTrack, said in the release. "We'll continue to roll out new features and integrations in the coming months that serve that goal."

[https://www.mobilepaymentstoday.com/news/tixtrack-adds-apple-pay-to-mobile-ticketing-system/?utm\\_source=Email\\_marketing&utm\\_campaign=emnaMPT09012017120003&cmp=1&utm\\_medium=HTMLEmail](https://www.mobilepaymentstoday.com/news/tixtrack-adds-apple-pay-to-mobile-ticketing-system/?utm_source=Email_marketing&utm_campaign=emnaMPT09012017120003&cmp=1&utm_medium=HTMLEmail)

## equensWorldline signs up three Dutch banks for instant payments projects

### Payments

9/4/17

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Bezons, Worldline, a European leader in the payments and transactional services industry announces that its subsidiary, equensWorldline SE, was selected by three major banks in the Netherlands as their infrastructure provider for Instant Payments.

This collaboration facilitates the next step in the process of realizing a real-time payment system. In Europe, several preparations are being made for Instant Payments, but the pace and the method vary per country. The Netherlands is one of the first countries that started the development of these real-time payments.

equensWorldline will provide a new European and global payments infrastructure that allows payments to be processed instantly so that the recipient immediately receives the money. These real-time payments will be available around the clock, 365 days a year, including weekends and holidays. This means that it will always immediately be clear whether a transfer from the payer to the recipient has succeeded. That is beneficial to consumers who can immediately have their purchase, but also for merchants who receive the money instantly. Instant Payments therefore provide a better cash flow and reduced risk for businesses.

Payment services provider equensWorldline is on schedule to deliver the infrastructure for Instant Payments on time. "The program to deliver Instant Payments in the Netherlands is well underway, and with the choice of an infrastructure provider, the three major banks took a huge step," explains Alessandro Baroni, CMO equensWorldline. "At equensWorldline, we are ready. The development of the infrastructure is completed and the results of the tests we have performed to date are looking good."

The next step is to connect the three large Dutch banks to equensWorldline's infrastructure. The projects to achieve this have been started and are progressing prosperously. According to the plans of the Dutch banking community, the first Instant Payments will be processed in 2019 when the full roll-out will take place so that real-time payments become a reality in the Netherlands.

Bart van de Sande, head of Operations Transaction Banking ABN AMRO: "The best seamless payment experience; that is what ABN AMRO wants to offer its customers. As we expect Instant Payments to become the 'new normal', we will deliver this new service as fast as possible. We are delighted that equensWorldline is one of our partners in realizing our ambition."

Roel Popping, Director Payments ING Nederland: "Instant Payments are the future in payments and ING wants to offer a superior solution to its customers. We selected equensWorldline because of their positive track record and flexibility in supporting the Dutch market."

“Real-time is the future of payments processing and we need to offer our customers superior solutions that keep us competitive with the new entrants in financial services,” said Erik Kwakkel, Executive Vice President Payment Services, Rabobank. “We selected equensWorldline because its solution offers the high performance and availability capabilities we seek, while it is cost efficient and also has the flexibility to support the requirements in the Dutch community”

Michael Steinbach, CEO of equensWorldline: “By expanding our portfolio with this complete Instant Payment service, we demonstrate our continued focus to cater for the full spectrum of our clients’ current and future needs. This seamlessly fits our European strategy, aimed at supporting our clients in the challenges they are facing in the rapidly developing European, and more and more, global payments market, in which responsiveness, customer value and the capability to innovate are of the essence.”

[https://www.finextra.com/pressarticle/70535/equensworldline-signs-up-three-dutch-banks-for-instant-payments-projects?utm\\_medium=dailynewsletter&utm\\_source=2017-9-5](https://www.finextra.com/pressarticle/70535/equensworldline-signs-up-three-dutch-banks-for-instant-payments-projects?utm_medium=dailynewsletter&utm_source=2017-9-5)

## mPOS provider SumUp launches European expansion programme

### Payments

9/5/17

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SumUp, the leading mobile point-of-sale provider, launches its service in 15 new European countries and expands to a total of 31 countries on three continents.

As of today, small business owners in Finland, Greece, Lithuania, Norway and Slovenia and can take card payments with their phone and the SumUp Air card reader without any monthly fees or contractual obligations. The rollout in Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Luxembourg, Malta and Slovakia will be completed by the end of October.

This major global expansion doubles the number of markets SumUp operates in and will further push the company's growth. SumUp reached profitability last summer, exceeded \$100 million in annual revenue and currently processes more than 100,000 card transactions every day. Serving cafés, beauty salons and mobile businesses in 31 countries on three continents with more than 500 employees globally, SumUp underscores its position as global leader in card acceptance.

Daniel Klein, CEO of SumUp said: "We want to help business owners in our 15 new markets to grow their business - offline and online. Across Eastern Europe, we see a strong shift in payment behaviour from cash to card. While the UK is close to saturated with 80% of all transactions made by card, for SumUp's new countries, the share of card transactions is closer to 25% and growing rapidly from less than 15% only five years ago." He adds: "We are very excited that today's expansion will further boost our new merchant growth. More than 2,000 businesses join SumUp every single day. The global expansion will accelerate our growth further."

SumUp also plans to scale existing partnerships across the new markets. The company has successfully built a strong partnership portfolio across Europe, including Metro Cash & Carry, Unicredit, UBS, Tupperware and mytaxi. Strategic partnerships with big players in the 15 new markets will be announced soon.

[https://www.finextra.com/pressarticle/70542/mpos-provider-sumup-launches-european-expansion-programme?utm\\_medium=dailynewsletter&utm\\_source=2017-9-6](https://www.finextra.com/pressarticle/70542/mpos-provider-sumup-launches-european-expansion-programme?utm_medium=dailynewsletter&utm_source=2017-9-6)

## WorldFirst launches payments platform for online marketplace sellers

### Payments

9/5/17

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The World Account, a new international payments platform from UK-based FinTech WorldFirst, goes live for online marketplace sellers today.

Providing an alternative to traditional international banking for businesses who operate across different currencies, World Account makes the process of international trade cheaper and easier.

Using World Account, online sellers can open multiple local currency accounts – initially in GBP, USD, EUR and CAD – for free enabling them to send, hold and receive funds in different currencies. Online sellers will now be able to receive payments in euros, for example, and either hold them in their account until such time as they need to pay a supplier in euros or make international payments out and benefit from WorldFirst's great exchange rates.

World Account will put an end to slow international payments, expensive transfers and the endless delays and complexities commonly encountered by businesses trying to open overseas bank accounts. The exciting new platform will help ambitious online sellers to easily access overseas bank accounts to compete better with local businesses across the globe.

It is free to open a World Account with WorldFirst and users can manage their international earnings and payments online – either using WorldFirst Online or the brand-new app. Using the online platform, users can view balances, make international payments and transfer money between their GBP, USD, EUR and CAD accounts with instant FX transfers.

Commenting on the launch, Jonathan Quin, Co-founder and CEO at WorldFirst said: "It's really exciting to say that the World Account is now live. We strongly believe that this is the future of payments for small businesses and online sellers trading internationally and will become the world's most flexible financial platform as we build on the foundation that this gives us.

The messages from the small businesses that we work with has been clear; they wanted a simpler, faster and cheaper way to manage their money when doing business internationally – and that's what we've created. Working with some high-profile and long-standing banking partners, we're able to give our clients access to the local currency accounts, great rates and frictionless functionality they need to grow their business.

With the World Account, they've finally got a platform that supports their business growth internationally, whether they're a one-man band or a multinational operation"

World Account is launching as a free service with no hidden fees or charges on FX transfers or to open or maintain the currency platform. Similarly, there is no maximum on transfer values or

deposit limits. The new platform is available both online and through a newly launched mobile app to online marketplace sellers today with a wider launch for all businesses planned imminently.

Additional functionality and more currency accounts including the Japanese yen, Australian dollar, Singapore dollar, New Zealand dollar and Hong Kong dollar will be supported over the coming months.

[https://www.finextra.com/pressarticle/70545/worldfirst-launches-payments-platform-for-online-marketplace-sellers?utm\\_medium=dailynewsletter&utm\\_source=2017-9-6](https://www.finextra.com/pressarticle/70545/worldfirst-launches-payments-platform-for-online-marketplace-sellers?utm_medium=dailynewsletter&utm_source=2017-9-6)

## TerraPay secures regulatory approval to launch cross-border money transfers in South Africa

### Payments

9/5/17

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TerraPay, the world's first mobile payments switch, announced today that it has successfully obtained regulatory approval from South African Reserve Bank to launch cross-border money transfer services in South Africa. This makes TerraPay the 5th company to be licensed as a category three Authorised Dealer in Foreign Exchange with limited authority, also known as ADLA 3, to conduct low-value international money transfers in the country.

TerraPay is building global payments infrastructure for low-value cross-border transactions. The service interconnects mobile wallet service providers, financial institutions and money transfer operators in key send and receive markets. The license enables the company to enter into cross-border low-value person-to-person payments in South Africa.

The South Africa market is highly complementary to TerraPay's international money transfer network in Africa, Europe and Middle East countries. In the initial roll-out, TerraPay would enable cross-border money transfers from South Africa to mobile wallets in Zimbabwe, Nigeria, Mozambique and Uganda.

According to the World Bank, the global average cost of sending remittances was 7.43% of the amount sent by remitting customers. For remittances sent from South Africa, the average cost was 16.71%; more than double of the global average.

Mr. Ambar Sur, Founder & CEO of TerraPay said, "As per a report from FinMark trust, the bulk of remittance flows from South Africa are destined for Zimbabwe, Mozambique and Lesotho, with 85% of all migrants originating from these countries. Moreover, almost 70% of transfers to these countries are conducted informally, since the high cost of formal money transfers is a major barrier to accessing formal remittance channels. TerraPay is taking an aim to solve this problem of the migrants, by facilitating instant and cost-effective low-value money transfers to mobile wallets. We are now open for business in South Africa and are actively looking to build strategic partnerships to further expand our footprint in the Southern Africa region."

South Africa is a major send as well as a receive market. Apart from sending remittances to all neighbouring Southern African countries, the country also receives remittances from UK, Australia and US. TerraPay's global network is expected to support the growing demand for instant transfers in the region.

<http://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/terrapay-secures-regulatory-approval-from-south-african-reserve-bank-to-launch-cross-border-money-transfers-in-south-africa-642727293.html>

## PAX enters the French payment terminal market

### Payments

9/5/17

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PAX Technology Limited one of the world's leading electronic payment terminals solutions providers, and Novelpay SA, a regional channel partner for PAX in France and several other European markets, will jointly introduce their new offering for the French market at Paris Retail Week on September 19th next.

Mark O'Flynn, Sales Director for PAX said: "We are delighted to be officially launching PAX in France at the Paris Retail Week show and look forward to showcasing our innovative Android-based countertop and mobile ECR solutions with integrated payment which will enable French merchants to implement sophisticated omni-channel solutions based on an open platform."

France has always been known as an innovation leader in the payments industry, and PAX's beautifully designed A920 Android tablet and E-Series new generation cash register products will enable French acquirers and value-added service companies to create compelling solutions for merchants.

Jean-Paul Hildebrandt, CEO of Novelpay added: "There is strong untapped demand in France for the integration of merchant service applications with card payments on an open platform, and Novelpay is proud to have invested significant time and resources to bring these solutions to market."

The wide portfolio of Linux and Android based PAX terminals are available to French acquirers and merchants running either the CB5.5 or NEXO protocols and are fully supported by the PAXSTORE Amazon Web Services hosted software distribution platform.

Andrew Wu, VP EMEA for PAX said: "With PAX success proven in many other European countries, we are delighted to be finally entering the French market in partnership with Novelpay and believe that France's acquirers and merchants will be soon benefitting from our innovative portfolio of solutions."

Jack Lu, CEO for PAX concluded: "Europe continues to be an important region for PAX, where we will continue to focus on developing our solution offering and network of customers and partners."

<http://markets.businessinsider.com/news/stocks/PAX-Enters-French-Payment-Terminal-Market-With-Android-Solutions-1002336199>

## BofA mobile app upgrade boosts personalization

### Payments

9/6/17

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Bank of America today announced a series of updates to its award-winning mobile app to further customize the user experience and continue its investment in innovation that improves the financial lives of its customers.

“With 23 million mobile customers and growing, improving the customer experience is always a top priority,” said Michelle Moore, head of digital banking at Bank of America. “By taking a customer-first approach to innovation, we continuously raise the bar to deliver new, personalized experiences that make it easier for customers to achieve their financial goals.”

The newest mobile enhancements include:

- **Mobile dashboard:** Accessible from the home screen, the dashboard feature allows customers to customize tiles to the features they use most, including Account Balances, Card Rewards, Spending and Budgeting Tool, FICO® Scores, Mobile Alerts, BankAmeriDeals and Zelle™ person-to-person (P2P) payments. This one-screen view will help give customers a quick snapshot of their finances all in one place.
- **Goal-Setting Tool:** In partnership with Better Money Habits®, the new Goal-Setting Tool will begin rolling out this month. Customers will be able to create personalized savings goals with names, pictures and target amounts so they can watch their progress along the way and prioritize funds accordingly.
- **A new way to get cash at ATMs:** Bank of America has one of the largest cardless-enabled ATM networks with 10,000 ATMs and growing, and our customers can now start an ATM withdrawal directly from their mobile banking app. Customers simply log into the app and select the desired amount to withdraw. When they arrive at the ATM, they can either use their smartphone or debit card, enter their PIN, and a personalized screen will display asking the customer if they are here to complete the withdrawal, which eliminates four steps at the ATM. In addition, new capabilities have recently been added to contactless ATMs, including the ability to check balances, transfer funds, make deposits and credit card payments and, later this month, the ability to change your PIN.

Bank of America is also improving the online experience for our customers with:

- **Improved Online Bill Pay experience:** Customers will begin to enjoy a streamlined Online Bill Pay experience over the next few months that will enable them to more easily and quickly access and pay their bills. Some key enhancements include:
- An improved experience that puts the most common tasks all on one page and additional Pay To account logos displayed for quicker payee identification.
- Better bill management capabilities, such as the ability to put Pay To accounts in groups and the addition of a list of recent payments.

- A more accessible and easy-to-use process to add or edit automatic payment plans.
- Redesigned home page: Bank of America is rolling out a redesigned home page ([www.bankofamerica.com](http://www.bankofamerica.com)) that provides customers a personalized and engaging experience, with a more modern look and feel. This new page will be optimized to provide ease of use, no matter the device used to access it.

With 23 million active mobile users and growing, Bank of America's mobile banking platform is an evolving source of increased customer engagement and satisfaction. During the second quarter of 2017, mobile banking customers logged into their accounts 1 billion times, or approximately 47 times per user. During that same period, customers made more than 30 million mobile bill payments and nearly 11 million P2P transfers, a growth of 89 percent over 2016. Customers also used their mobile devices to deposit more than 340,000 checks daily and redeem over 1 million credit card cash and travel rewards. More customers are opening new accounts through mobile, with sales increasing by 47 percent over the past year.

[https://www.finextra.com/pressarticle/70579/bofa-mobile-app-upgrade-boosts-personalisation?utm\\_medium=dailynewsletter&utm\\_source=2017-9-7](https://www.finextra.com/pressarticle/70579/bofa-mobile-app-upgrade-boosts-personalisation?utm_medium=dailynewsletter&utm_source=2017-9-7)

## solarisBank enlists SIA for contactless payment cards in Germany

### Payments

9/6/17

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solarisBank, a German banking platform with a full banking license, has chosen SIA, a company specializing in the processing of electronic payments, to support the launch of new contactless debit cards and to contribute to the development of electronic payment solutions.

With this agreement, starting from now, SIA's technology platform will manage the processing of transactions made using payment cards issued by solarisBank for its clients.

The infrastructure, supporting the launch of new NFC debit cards, will include an advanced service for the prevention and management of fraud, disputes and chargebacks. Among the innovative functions, there is also the 3-D Secure authentication tool for all online transactions and soon the possibility for the owner to manage the configuration of his or her cards in a simple manner via Internet.

SIA will also shortly make available to solarisBank more products and services like payment cards in other currencies and issuing in various countries.

“With its experience and know-how, SIA is a great partner for solarisBank to launch state of the art payment cards. The partnership is representative of our approach of including first-class companies on our banking platform. We're excited to start serving our partners with our new card product and look forward to expanding our partnership with SIA into the development of further electronic payment solutions”, says Jörg Howein, Chief Product Officer of solarisBank AG.

“We are especially proud of the agreement with solarisBank which represents a further confirmation of our role as trusted technology partner in Germany, where we have already realized significant projects with major financial institutions”, commented Cristina Astore, Director of SIA's International Division. “We are certain that the proven competence in the payments system and e-money sector, together with the innovation that has always characterized SIA, are a perfect match for solarisBank's banking platform profile”.

[https://www.finextra.com/pressarticle/70577/solarisbank-enlists-sia-for-contactless-payment-cards-in-germany?utm\\_medium=dailynewsletter&utm\\_source=2017-9-7](https://www.finextra.com/pressarticle/70577/solarisbank-enlists-sia-for-contactless-payment-cards-in-germany?utm_medium=dailynewsletter&utm_source=2017-9-7)

## BNP Paribas exports nexo standards across 14 European countries

### Payments

9/6/17

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French bank BNP Paribas wants to help merchants “kiss goodbye” the costly, time-consuming and complex task of managing multiple, incompatible domestic acceptance systems.

It plans to accomplish that for merchants in 14 European countries by deploying nexo’s acquirer payment acceptance messaging protocol, reports Paybefore.

Nexo standards is a Brussels-based global association “dedicated to removing the barriers present in today’s fragmented global card payment acceptance ecosystem”.

Implementing nexo messaging protocols and specifications, which adhere to ISO 20022 standards, gives BNP Paribas merchant customers a globally harmonized payment acceptance infrastructure.

BNP Paribas will deploy the messaging protocol across Germany, Austria, Belgium, Spain, France, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, the UK Slovenia and Switzerland.

The move follows years of the bank’s work to develop a pan-European payment acquisition service for Visa and Mastercard transactions. This service enables merchants to aggregate their electronic payment flows and deploy a homogeneous solution in all countries, realizing significant implementation and operational cost efficiencies as a result, according to announcement.

The service also enables the bank to standardize its monitoring and reconciliation procedures, improving the customer experience through a higher degree of customization. Now, the exchange of payment acceptance data throughout the service is performed using nexo’s open, and universally applicable messaging protocols.

“Nexo and BNP Paribas are demonstrating how the adoption of global payment acceptance standards can greatly facilitate interoperability between different systems worldwide, enabling huge economies of scale,” says Arnaud Crouzet, general secretary, nexo standards.

The implementation will enable BNP Paribas merchant customers to expand into new territories “faster and easier” and to roll out new and innovative payment types quickly, while reducing costs, he adds.

[http://www.bankingtech.com/970722/bnp-paribas-exports-nexo-standards-across-14-european-countries/?utm\\_source=rss&utm\\_medium=rss&utm\\_campaign=bnp-paribas-exports-nexo-standards-across-14-european-countries](http://www.bankingtech.com/970722/bnp-paribas-exports-nexo-standards-across-14-european-countries/?utm_source=rss&utm_medium=rss&utm_campaign=bnp-paribas-exports-nexo-standards-across-14-european-countries)

## Global Processing Services announces support for Apple Pay Payments

9/7/17

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Global Processing Services (GPS), a leading payments processor, now supports Apple Pay using Mastercard Digital Enablement Service (MDES).

Apple Pay is now available to all clients using the pioneering GPS Apex platform. Apple Pay is transforming mobile payments with an easy, secure and private way to pay that's fast and convenient.

MDES is a tokenisation solution that integrates with Programme Managers to offer Apple Pay to cardholders so they can make secure mobile payments in stores, in app and on the web using their iPhone, iPad or Apple Watch.

“Our clients are innovators who are keen to offer these services to their customers, so we're delighted to be able to offer Apple Pay to our clients today,” said Suresh Vaghjiani, Managing Director, GPS. “Our platform supports quick, simple and secure payment options. The introduction of Apple Pay is just one of the transformational mobile payments solutions that is delivering a better experience for the end user.”

Security and privacy is at the core of Apple Pay. When you use a credit or debit card with Apple Pay, the actual card numbers are not stored on the device, nor on Apple servers. Instead, a unique Device Account Number is assigned, encrypted and securely stored in the Secure Element on your device. Each transaction is authorized with a one-time unique dynamic security code.

“We have seen a surge in interest for mobile payments since Apple Pay entered the market,” continued Suresh.

“With MDES, we are future-proofing the GPS Apex platform by enabling us to easily add additional token requestors and offer a global standard that operates worldwide.”

Apple Pay is easy to set up and users will continue to receive all of the rewards and benefits offered by credit and debit cards. In stores, Apple Pay works with iPhone SE, iPhone 6 and later, and Apple Watch.

Online shopping in apps and on websites accepting Apple Pay is as simple as the touch of a finger with Touch ID, so there's no need to manually fill out lengthy account forms or repeatedly type in shipping and billing information.

When paying for goods and services on the go in apps or Safari, Apple Pay works with iPhone 6 and later, iPhone SE, iPad Pro, iPad Air 2, and iPad mini 3 and later. You can also use Apple Pay

in Safari on any Mac introduced in or after 2012 running macOS Sierra and confirm the payment with iPhone 6 or later or Apple Watch, or with Touch ID on the new MacBook Pro.

[https://www.finextra.com/pressarticle/70593/global-processing-services-announces-support-for-apple-pay?utm\\_medium=dailynewsletter&utm\\_source=2017-9-8](https://www.finextra.com/pressarticle/70593/global-processing-services-announces-support-for-apple-pay?utm_medium=dailynewsletter&utm_source=2017-9-8)



**SECURITIES**

## Nippon Life becomes first non-bank to settle currency trades via CLS

### Securities

9/5/17

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CLS Group (CLS), a leading provider of risk mitigation and operational services for the global foreign exchange (FX) market, today announced the first Japanese non-bank financial institution (NBF1) to join the CLS system via third-party access.

Nippon Life Insurance Company, Japan's leading life insurance company in terms of net profit, is now settling FX transactions in CLS via its settlement bank. In addition to reduced settlement risk, it will also benefit from streamlined trading operations, as well as liquidity benefits from netting that lower transaction costs while boosting trading and counterparty limit management efficiencies that support business growth opportunities.

Japan is one of the world's largest centers for currency trading and a crucial hub for the Asian FX community. The Japanese FX market accounts for 6.1% of global over-the-counter FX turnover. In recent years it has benefitted from a significant increase in cross-border currency flow and foreign direct investment, but this has also increased exposure within a wider range of market participants including funds and their counterparties.

The addition of Nippon Life marks another milestone in the continued growth of CLS participation across Asia. Last year Samsung Securities, a leading South Korean securities company, which became the first NBF1 to become a third-party participant in South Korea, was joined by three more of the largest securities brokers and one fund in 2017. Third-party participation globally accounts for approximately 22% of the total value settled in CLS, and there was a 12% increase in the number of third-party participants using the service in the Asia Pacific region in 2016.

Rachael Hoey, Head of Asia at CLS, comments: "Adoption of PvP settlement by non-bank financial institutions is a crucial part of CLS's strategy, aimed at ensuring risk is mitigated across the diverse FX market segments. Participation ensures more consistent and robust risk management standards for all market participants, important in supporting cross border investment and trading growth in the Japanese currency market.

"The addition of Nippon Life demonstrates the rising demand from the non-bank community to access CLS's risk mitigation services. Our plans include further work to support diverse participation and deliver the unique benefits of CLS to a wider pool of counterparties."

[https://www.finextra.com/pressarticle/70548/nippon-life-becomes-first-non-bank-to-settle-currency-trades-via-cls?utm\\_medium=dailynewsletter&utm\\_source=2017-9-6](https://www.finextra.com/pressarticle/70548/nippon-life-becomes-first-non-bank-to-settle-currency-trades-via-cls?utm_medium=dailynewsletter&utm_source=2017-9-6)

## Nasdaq taps machine learning tech for Nordic markets surveillance

### Securities

9/6/17

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Nasdaq, Inc. has announced it has successfully deployed machine learning technology across its entire Nasdaq Nordic markets-Stockholm, Copenhagen, Helsinki, Iceland-- to bolster its market surveillance efforts.

Nasdaq's SMARTS, in collaboration with the Nasdaq Nordic Market Surveillance team, has implemented machine learning within its surveillance technology to analyze abnormal market events and their subsequent categorization by surveillance analysts across the Nordic markets. The aim of these algorithms is to predict which actions analysts are likely to take based upon their handling of historical activity as well as discover new relationships within the data--thereby strengthening Nasdaq Nordic's surveillance mechanism to detect market abuse. The next stage will be to integrate machine learning technology into the SMARTS offering for exchange and regulator clients worldwide.

"This project marks an important milestone in the use of machine learning in the capital markets," said Tony Sio, Head of Exchange & Regulator Surveillance, Market Technology, Nasdaq. "By closely collaborating with the Nasdaq Nordic surveillance team, we have been able to build unique algorithms that have improved the efficiency and effectiveness of monitoring our own markets. At the same time, we are progressing on a broader machine learning strategy and exploring other applications of this technology to strengthen the surveillance process for markets worldwide."

The machine learning capabilities will initially be used to prioritize the surveillance workflow. The technology predicts the likelihood that the event will lead to an action by an analyst. This will particularly help in situations where work load is high, such as during the opening and closing of the markets. The new prioritization ranking is then used to complement traditional quality controls in relation to alert handling, which then enables surveillance officers to identify outliers where the actual handling of alerts has differed from the prediction of the algorithm. Lastly, the existing alert designs will be evaluated based upon new relationships or rules revealed by the machine learning technology and redesigned and improved accordingly.

"This will be one of the earliest applications of machine learning leveraged as an integral part of the surveillance process within the exchange surveillance space," said Joakim Strid, Head of European Surveillance, Nasdaq. "As a market operator, we have always strived to be at the forefront of embracing and applying emerging technologies that will strengthen the integrity of our markets. We look forward to continuing our collaboration with the SMARTS team in further building our machine learning capabilities in our market surveillance endeavours."

As the industry benchmark for real-time and T+1 cross-market surveillance platforms, Nasdaq's SMARTS surveillance technology automates the detection, investigation and analysis of

potentially abusive or disorderly trading, to help improve the overall efficiency of the surveillance organization and reduce cost, even as market complexity and new regulations increase. These solutions are used to power monitoring for more than 45 marketplaces, 17 regulators and 140+ market participants, including several buy-side institutions, across 65 countries.

[https://www.finextra.com/pressarticle/70574/nasdaq-taps-machine-learning-tech-for-nordic-markets-surveillance?utm\\_medium=dailynewsletter&utm\\_source=2017-9-7](https://www.finextra.com/pressarticle/70574/nasdaq-taps-machine-learning-tech-for-nordic-markets-surveillance?utm_medium=dailynewsletter&utm_source=2017-9-7)

## US banks partner with robo advisers

### Securities

9/6/17

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As automated wealth tech grows, US banks are partnering with robo-advisers rather than create their own. US regional bank Citizens Financial Group is offering its clients access to automated wealth management through a partnership with robo-adviser SigFig Wealth Management.

It's the latest US bank to partner with a robo-advice firm as automated investing options increase and the first regional bank in the US to offer wealth tech services.

"We think SpeciFi is a game-changing service that will make investing more accessible to a larger set of customers, while providing an entirely personalized and integrated banking and investing experience," said John Bahnken, president of Citizens Bank Wealth Management. "This represents another example of our promise to provide customers with tailored solutions that help them reach their potential."

The Providence, Rhode Island-based firm will integrate the wealth advice services with its current banking platforms so users can access their banking and investing accounts in one place. The service has a minimum investing amount of \$5,000 and claims management fees will be "roughly half the typical cost of a traditionally managed account."

Called the SpeciFi, the platform will also allow customers to set up automatic contributions from their Citizen's Bank account. Like most robo-advice services, the portfolios are personalized for each client and monitored and rebalanced to match with individual's goals and risk tolerance. Users will also get access to a financial adviser for one-on-one consultations.

It's not the only bank that is doing business with SigFig. UBS Group AG and Wells Fargo have also announced partnerships with the platform and their services are expected to go live in the coming months.

[http://www.altfi.com/article/3462\\_us\\_banks\\_partner\\_with\\_robo\\_advisers](http://www.altfi.com/article/3462_us_banks_partner_with_robo_advisers)



# **SPECIALTY FINANCE / ALTERNATE LENDING**

## Peerform is back with an interesting new investment partner, Random Forest Capital

Alternate Lending / Specialty Finance

8/31/17

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I first wrote about Peerform way back in 2010 when they began life as Lendfolio. Even though they are not that well known beyond marketplace lending enthusiasts they are in fact the third oldest platform still operating in the US – behind Prosper and Lending Club.

I haven't covered Peerform for almost three years so when their founder Mikael Rapaport contacted me recently I was curious to find out what they had been up to. It turns out a lot has happened at Peerform since 2014.

Late last year Strategic Financial Solutions (SFS) a leading debt settlement company, acquired Peerform and they have been building out new product offerings.

SFS looked at many marketplace lending platforms before deciding to acquire Peerform. They were impressed by their underwriting and regulatory sophistication, their strong brand presence online, their low customer acquisition costs and how they had been frugal with the capital they had raised.

Peerform has been online since 2010 and so have an established web presence. Because of this they get a great deal of free traffic from Google – appearing on the first page of results for many popular search terms. This alone made them a very attractive acquisition target for a company like SFS.

Enter Random Forest Capital. They are a new investment management firm started last year with a focus on data science and machine learning. They love taking masses of unstructured data and not only making sense of this data but finding new predictive power in this data.

Kevin Farrelly and Austin Trombley (formerly of Prosper) are the co-founders and both have an obsession with data. This is what led them to Peerform. They wanted to partner with a platform that could give them far more than the hundred or so standard data points from the main bureaus. Peerform overhauled their APIs to be able to pull in thousands of data attributes and millions of data points for analysis.

The team at Random Forest was able to build proprietary credit models using this new data which they said was more data than is available from any other marketplace lending platform today. As Kevin pointed out, “the money will go where the data is”.

What they also appreciated about Peerform was that they allowed active selection of loans. Most platforms today don't allow active selection from institutional investors but Peerform encourages

it. They also buy some of their own loans in the marketplace and hold the assets on their balance sheet.

While Random Forest has invested in the regular unsecured consumer loans they like the access they can get to a unique product, the debt negotiation loans. Random Forest is the first outside investor to buy these loans and because this is not a standard product there was a unique data challenge in building models for these loans. But that is their core competency and while they have only been buying loans for a short time they like what they have seen so far.

Random Forest also invests in other asset classes beyond consumer credit. They have positions in secured auto, fix and flip real estate and secured commercial debt – bringing their unique data science skills to each asset class.

While many of the early challengers to Lending Club and Prosper are no longer around Peerform is still going strong. In fact, they are one of the few platforms that have been acquired and are thriving inside their new parent.

They have become a hybrid platform using their marketplace and balance sheet to grow their lending operation. Their deal with Random Forest is an innovative one and the new loan products they are bringing to market are unique in the industry. Peerform has clearly blazed some new trails and they are now a company to watch.

<https://www.lendacademy.com/peerform-back-interesting-new-investment-partner-random-forest-capital/>

## Credit unions embrace fintech as loans flood in through Facebook

Alternate Lending / Specialty Finance

8/31/17

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Credit Unions around Ireland have entered the FinTech arena, with some credit unions reporting a 10-fold interaction with younger adult members since they began rolling out digital loan service initiatives earlier this year.

Since its launch, the "Facebook Loan" initiative has already been a huge success for several credit unions throughout the country – now accounting for up to 15pc to 20pc in loan enquiries per month for some credit unions.

Key aspects of the new digital lending initiative involve a 30-second enquiry online, followed by call-backs from dedicated lending officers to ensure all the terms and conditions are explained and agreed.

Following an initial successful pilot project, this has now become an established channel for credit unions, with close to half of consumers using the facility to take out a loan never having borrowed from a credit union before.

In a move to drive the FinTech agenda forward, the Solution Centre, which is managed by the Credit Union Development Association (CUDA), is holding an event tomorrow in conjunction with Enterprise Ireland, at the Spencer Hotel in Dublin to provide those in Ireland's credit union sector with an opportunity to meet some of the global leaders in FinTech.

The aim of the event is for those in the credit union sector to get an understanding of how Solution Centre innovations can enable credit unions to offer a "market-leading" member experience.

The move comes following a survey of 1,000 people throughout Ireland which found that approximately one in two people would prefer to apply for access to credit with a lending institution using an online channel such as Facebook if given the choice, rather than attending the branch and meeting with a bank or credit union employee.

"It's clear the movement's leading credit unions have embarked on a transformative digital journey," Kevin Johnson, CEO of CUDA and the Solution Centre, said.

<http://www.independent.ie/business/personal-finance/credit-unions-embrace-fintech-as-loans-flood-in-through-facebook-36086974.html>

## Auto-bid or manual lending: What P2P lenders are choosing?

### Alternate Lending / Specialty Finance

9/1/17

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FUNDING Circle's upcoming shift away from manual lending will soon mean the three biggest peer-to-peer lenders in the UK only offer auto-bid options, but there is still plenty of choice for investors still looking to self-select their loans.

The manual versus auto-bid debate is important in P2P as it dictates the level of due diligence and diversification an investor will need to conduct.

All platforms will still need to check and approve borrowers, but auto-bidding allows an investor to let the platform spread risk and do adequate due diligence, whereas a lender selecting their own loans will also need to take on some responsibility to ensure they are not over-exposed to one business.

From 18 September, Funding Circle will join the two other P2P heavyweights Zopa and RateSetter in offering auto-bid options. Investors will simply choose the rates they want and their level of risk and their money will automatically be allocated.

This system is also followed by consumer lender LendingWorks and property P2P platform Landbay.

Rates vary from 3.75 per cent on Landbay to 5.7 per cent on RateSetter, or will reach 7.5 per cent once Funding Circle rejigs its offering later this month.

But other platforms still offer manual options, with higher returns. This will mean investors have to take more responsibility for diversification and checking up on the business they are investing in.

Secured business lender Folk2Folk lets investors choose the location of businesses and particular sectors, although this may mean they struggle to place their funds. It offers returns of 5.5 per cent of 6.5 per cent a year depending on the loan-to-value.

Similarly, business lenders ThinCats and ArchOver will let investors choose loans and offer 8.5 per and up to nine per cent respectively.

Alternatively, other business platforms such as Crowdstacker are offering individual projects at 6.5 per cent, or investors could earn up to 13 per cent by selecting their own business loans on MoneyThing.

There are also property P2P lenders such as Lendy and LandlordInvest that let investors choose loans, offering up to 12 per cent.

Investors can select their own renewable energy projects, earning eight to 12 per cent on Abundance, or can get the best of both with Assetz Capital, which provides business loans with both an auto-bid and manual option.

There is still plenty of choice to invest in P2P both automatically and manually, but whichever route is taken, investors will still need to take responsibility to ensure they still understand what they are investing in and how much risk they are taking.

<http://www.p2pfinancenews.co.uk/2017/09/01/p2p-manual-lending-auto-lending/>

## P2P lender Fellow Finance launches in Germany

### Alternate Lending / Specialty Finance

9/7/17

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A peer-to-peer lending platform Fellow Finance is now open for borrowers in Germany. Wirecard Bank supports the Finnish FinTech company Fellow Finance to enter and provide a digital infrastructure for the German financial market.

Wirecard Bank will place their German full banking license at the Fellow Finance's disposal and in addition enabling a completely digital credit process.

The market volume of German alternative online financial services grew enormously between 2013 and 2015. In peer-to-peer consumer lending alone, there was year-on-year growth of 95%. Peer-to-peer lending is becoming an increasingly attractive alternative to classic lending procedures for both private individuals and investors.

Jouni Hintikka, CEO at Fellow Finance, says: "We are looking forward to working with advanced Wirecard Bank as a co-operation partner in the future. We are proud of the entry into the German market after having already proven our business model in Finland and Poland. This is again one step of making Fellow Finance the biggest consumer and business lending platform in Europe and proves the scalability and flexibility of our platform."

Thorsten Holten, Executive Vice President Sales Financial Institution and FinTech Europe, adds: "Gaining Fellow Finance as a customer means that we can expand on our collaboration in the area of alternative lending with the aid of an international partner. With our expertise in the areas of banking and regulations, we help FinTech companies such as Fellow Finance to enter the market in the best way possible as well as to quickly and easily internationalise their business."

In future, Wirecard Bank will support Fellow Finance in the scoring of potential borrowers and carrying out payment transactions. This means that end consumers in Germany will be able to quickly apply and raise a loan in competitive interest rate.

[https://www.finextra.com/pressarticle/70591/p2p-lender-fellow-finance-launches-in-germany?utm\\_medium=dailynewsletter&utm\\_source=2017-9-8](https://www.finextra.com/pressarticle/70591/p2p-lender-fellow-finance-launches-in-germany?utm_medium=dailynewsletter&utm_source=2017-9-8)



# **DATA & ANALYTICS / IoT**

## Fast-growing online commerce giant Mercado Libre migrates to Teradata IntelliCloud

Data & Analytics / IoT

8/30/17

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Teradata, the leading data and analytics company, announced today that Mercado Libre, the fast-growing online commerce marketplace that leads the industry in Latin America, has completed migration of its active data warehouse ecosystem to Teradata IntelliCloud, the newest generation of Teradata's secure managed cloud offering that provides data and analytic software as a service (SaaS).

The data ecosystem at Mercado Libre runs on Teradata IntelliFlex, the company's flagship enterprise data warehouse platform. By leveraging the same software, training, tools and ecosystem applications that Teradata customers have already invested in for their on-premises systems, IntelliCloud ensures 100 percent software consistency while increasing business agility and boosting focus on data-driven analytic insights that have meaningful business outcomes.

Mercado Libre, which hosts online commerce platforms in 18 countries with more than 3,500 searches per second, has 182 million customers and 70,000 queries running per hour. Analysts from different Business Units access data loaded in real-time to generate insights, which requires a massive data ecosystem to efficiently and seamlessly manage huge data volumes.

"The magnitude of our fast-growing business marketplace, payment system -- and the resulting volume of high-concurrency, mixed-workload, and complex queries -- has required data management power that other platforms could not handle," said Adrián Quilis, Business Intelligence Senior Manager, Mercado Libre.

"We are pleased with our decision to migrate from an on-premises platform to Teradata IntelliCloud on IntelliFlex. This has accelerated our business decision-making, our response time to our customers and users, and it provides the agility and elasticity we need when we have sudden, spiking demands for additional processing."

The cloud deployment went very smoothly and for this reason Mercado Libre is also testing and experimenting with additional Teradata products, such as Teradata QueryGrid(TM), Quilis added. He foresees business growth to continue at levels over the past few years and expects the size of the data ecosystem to more than double in the near future.

Rapid growth in cloud adoption is creating increased demand for cloud and cloud services. In a recent announcement, Oliver Ratzesberger, Executive Vice President and Chief Product Officer of Teradata, said that by 2020, "90 percent of our customers expect to have a hybrid cloud environment -- and more than 85 percent expect to buy 'as a service' for data warehousing."

Mercado Libre will share details of its cloud migration at the annual Teradata PARTNERS Conference in Anaheim, California, on Tuesday, October 24 at 9 am. The speakers will be Adrián

Quilis and Martin Di Santo, who support the Mercado Libre data warehouse. All are encouraged to attend.

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/PR-CO-20170830-906518>

## Oracle expands IoT Cloud portfolio

### Data & Analytics / IoT

8/31/17

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Oracle today announced significant enhancements to the Oracle Internet of Things (IoT) Cloud. The offering now features built-in artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning that powers Digital Twin and Digital Thread capabilities. As such, customers and partners can quickly gain operation-wide visibility and leverage predictive insights from connected assets. These insights can increase deployment times, reduce costs, improve business outcomes, and accelerate new market opportunities. Combining the power of Oracle IoT Cloud and enterprise applications, Oracle also introduced new industry solutions for digital field service, smart connected factories, and digital fleet management.

"IoT holds the potential to transform today's siloed operations into a modern, interconnected, digital set of workflows with real-time visibility and responsiveness," said Bhagat Nainani, group vice president, IoT Applications at Oracle. "Oracle continues to push the boundaries of IoT to help our customers significantly simplify their IoT deployments. By receiving real-time data streams enhanced with predictive insights, they can reach new levels of intelligence and a much quicker realization of ROI."

Today's expansion follows the recent introduction of new Oracle IoT Cloud Applications for asset monitoring, connected workforce, fleet monitoring, and production monitoring. Also, in the past six months alone, Oracle has more than tripled its IoT application ecosystem of device and systems integration partners. Oracle IoT Cloud is offered both as software-as-a-service (SaaS) applications, as well as platform-as-a-service (PaaS) offerings, enabling a high degree of adaptability for even the most demanding implementations.

"Hitachi Consulting is constantly looking for industry leaders like Oracle to help clients and prospects harness the power of data and IoT to optimize operational and financial performance, outpace their competition and solve significant business problems," said Garth Carter, vice president North America Sales, Hitachi Consulting. "Our longstanding, strategic relationship with Oracle delivers industrial IoT solutions to digitize the physical world for manufacturing, energy, and transportation. In particular, Hitachi is leveraging Oracle IoT Applications -- asset monitoring and production monitoring -- that are uniquely engineered to meet specific industry and functional needs. These applications have a depth of OT, IT and IoT functionality that no competitor can match."

#### **New capabilities introduced today include:**

- Digital Twin is a digital representation of a physical asset or equipment that enhances traditional analytics approaches. The object model includes multi-faceted views into current, historical, and predictive data, as well as operational and behavioral dimensions of that asset. This enables remote users to not only monitor the health of that asset to prevent failures before they occur, but also to run simulations of "what-if" scenarios in the

context of the business processes. With Digital Twin, organizations have a new operational paradigm to interact with the physical world, allowing lower operational and capital expenditures, minimizing downtime, and optimizing asset performance.

- Supply Chain practitioners have spent millions of dollars in implementing SCM and ERP systems, but most often, data is manually fed into these systems. Digital Thread is a connected business process framework that leverages IoT and creates a "system of systems" by connecting traditionally siloed elements in real-time throughout the digital supply chain. By providing an end-to-end view of an asset throughout the entire manufacturing lifecycle, Digital Thread seamlessly bridges the entire supply chain process--from product design and order fulfillment, to manufacturing and product life cycle management, to warehousing and transportation, to logistics and procurement.
- Built-in AI and machine learning features are now fully integrated across Oracle's IoT solutions portfolio. These technologies leverage machine data in the context of business data from applications, such as manufacturing, maintenance, service, and logistics. The built-in operational analytics help detect anomalies, predict equipment failures, and recommend the best course of action. They also provide the intelligence needed to evolve capabilities to increase effectiveness and experiences of applications.
- Oracle IoT industry solutions help customers reimagine and innovate business solutions for the connected, intelligent, context-aware, digital enterprise.

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/PR-CO-20170831-908035>

## Google gives enterprises a private on-ramp to its cloud

Data & Analytics / IoT

9/7/17

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Google today launched a new networking option for large enterprises that want to connect their private networks directly to its cloud. These new dedicated interconnects, which are now in beta, allow businesses to set up a highly available, high-bandwidth network connection to the Google Cloud Platform for their data intensive or latency-sensitive services.

This service goes a step further than Google's existing solutions like its Google Cloud VPN service, which allows businesses to create a secure tunnel between their private networks and the Google cloud. Google notes that those connections have a capacity of about 1.5 to 3 Gbps and traffic obviously travels over the public Internet.

The dedicated interconnect offers a direct line to Google's network with up to 80 Gbps in bandwidth, but traffic isn't encrypted and enterprises need to install the required routing equipment in their colocation facilities. Google recommends that companies that want to make use of this service opt for using application-level encryption or their own VPN service. You can't use the Google Cloud VPN on top of a dedicated connection. In addition, Google also long offered a service called "carrier peering."

If all of this sounds familiar, it may be because Google also long offered a service called Carrier Peering to give people a faster on-ramp to its cloud (to confuse things, this was previously called "interconnect..."). Google tells me that the major difference here is that a Dedicated Interconnect lets you create a network extension with private IPs and that it comes with an SLA. Carrier Peering provides peering of public IPs and doesn't offer an SLA.

To use this new interconnect service, a user's network also has to meet Google's own network in one of Google's supported co-location facilities (there are currently about 35 of these, with most of them in the northern hemisphere).

Google offers enterprises a 99.9 percent SLA, as long as they run two interconnects for redundancy purposes. That number goes up to 99.99 percent with four links in two different metro areas.

All of this obviously doesn't come cheap. Every interconnect costs \$1,700 per 10 Gb Ethernet circuit (with a maximum of eight connections). Assuming three connections and about 20 TB of egress traffic, that'll quickly cost an enterprise over \$10,000 — but then, if you're the kind of enterprise that needs this, that's probably not a lot of money to you.

<https://techcrunch.com/2017/09/07/google-gives-enterprises-a-private-on-ramp-to-its-cloud/>

**OTHERS**

## Adapt, automate and accelerate: AI and the future of SME lending

Others

8/30/17

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All companies make poor decisions from time to time. Often, a company's refusal to embrace a disruptive technology in favor of tried-and-true traditional methods, doesn't turn out well. Think of Kodak, the once-great imaging empire, inventing the first digital camera in 1975 but deciding not to sell it right away for fear that it would cannibalize film sales. The company filed for bankruptcy in 2012 and now operates as a black-and-white negative of its former glory. Similarly, for a financial institution (FI), a failure to implement new technologies for lending to small and medium enterprises (SMEs) can mean a dim future.

One of the struggles when lending to an SME is the cost that goes into making a lending decision. It is estimated that at regional and community banks, \$4-5K in operational costs go into processing each loan under \$100K, leaving very little margin for bad loan decisions. In fact, these small loans take nearly as much time and manpower to process as much bigger loans. This is where automation and artificial intelligence (AI) can come into play.

Intelligent automation can be integrated with legacy systems to create robotic workflows from the customer to back office processing. These robots take the routine, repetitive processes, such as performing credit checks and consolidating data across multiple accounts, and make them both more efficient and effective. What was once a very tedious process of new customer onboarding communication between a loan applicant and a bank employee can be replaced by highly personalized interactions based on individual activity post opening.

These robots can speed traditional loan documentation and collection from weeks to a matter of days, all without having to replace or change the existing systems. The customer onboarding and KYC processes can be greatly enhanced from an experience, quality, and cost standpoint. This intelligent automation can drastically reduce a bank's operational costs of processing an SME loan.

Individually, SME loans tend to be riskier given their higher variance in performance. The lack of standardized financial reporting required with an SME loan compared to larger accounts is one of the reasons predicting loan performance for SMEs is more difficult. How do you predict the performance of similar businesses where, say, one is set up as an LLC and the other as a C Corp? This is another area where robotics and AI can be leveraged. In addition to increased speed and accuracy, the robots can be programmed to use data to perform predictive analytics.

This is where things get really interesting from a lending perspective. Unlike traditional models of underwriting, which focus on only a handful of credit attributes, machine learning can analyze thousands of data points from various sources, which allows for a bank to model credit risk for SMEs more accurately than ever before. These machine learning techniques are able to radically

outperform traditional scorecards in SME lending. In the not-distant future, a bank could use robots and predictive AI to 100% automate lending decisions in cases where the SME is under a certain amount and the predictive analytics give the applicant a certain baseline score.

Digitizing a bank's processes through intelligent automation, combined with machine learning and artificial intelligence, will soon no longer be optional for banks to stay competitive in the future. Online lending platforms touting near-instant loan approval continue to encroach on the role of traditional FIs in the SME loan market. A bank refusing to pivot toward the use of AI in making better, faster lending decisions may not be on par with shelving the digital camera, but it's pretty close.

<https://letstalkpayments.com/adapt-automate-accelerate-ai-future-of-sme-lending/>

## Perseus seeks to shield German SMEs from cyber threats

### Others

9/5/17

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Berlin-based cybersecurity start-up Perseus is seeking to become a legend for the country's SME market with a "one-stop solution".

According to fintech incubator FinLeap, which is behind the venture, more than 70% of German companies were affected by cybercrime activities within the last two years, but only one out of ten SMEs holds an insurance policy that covers the resulting damages. Because Perseus offers a platform, it can connect services and offer "best-of-fit" tech solutions.

Perseus co-founder and MD Inna Leontenkova says the service concept can be compared to German automotive clubs: "We aim to support SMEs that deal with large amounts of personal data, and have been under pressure from increasing numbers of cyberattacks recently like WannaCry or Petya. Most risk exposure comes from small things that employees do incorrectly, so we focus on prevention – the human side of cybersecurity. Our training focusses especially on employees. The membership model is an easy solution and economies of scale allow us to keep the fee low."

There is no specific date yet, but it also plans to add an industry-specific cyber insurance proposition to its portfolio of services.

Perseus was founded this year by Leontenkova, Sven Weizenegger (also MD) and Steffen Teske. Leontenkova was a founding member of FinLeap's digital insurance platform Element. Weizenegger has worked at online lender Kreditech. While Teske has worked for BT in Germany and is currently VP Central Europe and Benelux for messaging platform LivePerson.

The name of the new company, as you probably guessed, is a reference to "the Perseus legend, a hero in Greek mythology" and is a "strong metaphor for protection and security".

<http://www.bankingtech.com/970402/perseus-start-up-seeks-to-shield-german-smes-from-cyber-threats/>

## Fern Software launches new open API fintech strategy

### Others

9/6/17

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Fern Software is opening up its Abacus HUB Cloud platform to third parties. End users can now build a customised core banking system from the library of apps available and deliver more flexible and responsive services to their clients.

This is the first time APIs have been made available in this way to third parties to offer new and disruptive apps to credit unions and other financial services providers in the UK & Ireland. This open approach to collaboration is unique to this market.

“Abacus HUB, hosted in the cloud, is the future of Credit Union financial services software,” said John McGucken, General Manager at Fern Software, Belfast. “I am very excited to launch our Abacus HUB strategy as it brings something completely different to the marketplace. Creating a platform that enables the Credit Union community to build on top of our trusted solutions and services will not only reduce their costs, it will also facilitate open collaboration, agility and innovation.” Karen Bennett, Manager of Enterprise Credit Union, Liverpool, said: “With the continued improvements delivered by Fern, we are confident we can offer more services, maintain growth and streamline current processes for all involved. One of the key advantages of Fern, they work in tandem with ourselves to deliver the excellent services my membership expects.

“As the technology and business needs of credit unions are changing, there is a growing need for all key players to collaborate across payments, mobile and online services,” said Eamon Scullin, CEO.” Fern Software is building a continuous innovation environment that will add value to the credit unions and create new member services for all generations. Abacus HUB is already deployed in three sites with more in the pipeline. It marks the next step in the Fern Software fintech journey.”

A recent McKinsey & Company paper reports: “Adopting a cloud-based solution allows digital players to scale up their cost structure along with revenues, thus achieving a faster breakeven point.” Abacus HUB in the cloud, ties closely to this approach, encouraging collaboration across the whole financial services ecosystem. Fern is working with selected fintech partners to deliver a complete integrated solution. Fern is facilitating the development of third-party apps which will be available via the AbacusStore portal.

Throughout the UK and Ireland, expanding credit unions have signed up to the Fern Abacus Hub cloud solution, which incorporates the new regulatory standards - including GDPR and the 4th Directive. Existing apps, using the open APIs, include credit rating, debit cards, SMS texting, e-Signature, Online Join & Borrow, mobile, etc.

<https://www.finextra.com/pressarticle/70567/fern-software-launches-new-open-api-fintech-strategy>

## Fintech gains traction as businesses embrace alternative banking and financial solutions

### Others

9/6/17

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Financial technology, or FINTECH, has established new platforms for many businesses and companies. With improved capabilities, firms are catching on to alternative forms of banking that offer automation of various financial processes ranging from payments to billing and invoicing. It's especially useful in the modern world, where transactions are more often done electronically. FINTECH is not limited to the financial services industry, however. Sectors from logistics and shipping, to high-risk ones such as the cannabis industry are finding electronic wallets and mobile apps more practical than traditional financial services. Global Payout, Inc. (OTC: GOHE) (GOHE Profile) is serving such needs with B2B financial automation solutions through its Global Reserve Platform, while also affording access to bitcoin via its MoneyTrac, Inc. ('MTRAC') subsidiary. Bitcoin Services (OTC: BTSC) is a big player in the evolving FINTECH arena, as is BTCS, Inc. (OTC: BTCS). Industry behemoths such as Apple, Inc. (NASDAQ: AAPL) and Alphabet, Inc. (NASDAQ: GOOG) are taking FINTECH to new levels on both the business and consumer fronts.

Global Payout, Inc. (OTC: GOHE) makes payment solutions available to clients around the world, serving the needs of everything from commercial enterprises to government institutions. Its Global Reserve Platform is a web-based banking platform that includes everything domestic, foreign exchange, and international payment service providers need to conduct financial transactions. It handles online banking, compliance, mobile wallets, card management, biometric payments, authentication, merchant payment processing, bill payments and more, while also offering core and traditional banking products. Global Payout's primary focus in this area is logistics, in addition to small to medium size companies, banking, and travel firms.

MTRAC provides FINTECH solutions to alternative and high-risk markets, such as cannabis, allowing businesses to manage virtual currency and handle cash flow logistics while bypassing traditional banks.

"Since there is an inability to access commercial banks for merchant bank accounts, we feel it is imperative to focus on currency alternatives such as bitcoin to service cannabis industry transactions. Furthermore, our payment system is completely ready for use. It will not require a great deal of time or money to incorporate bitcoin into the equation," Hancock stated in a previous news release.

A business development agreement between MTRAC and PotSaver further demonstrates MTRAC's broader strategy to take advantage of new market opportunities. Based in Southern California, PotSaver is a community periodical that serves local shops and dispensaries in the region's medical and recreational cannabis industry, providing listings on discounted cannabis products. This partnership provides MTRAC the opportunity to increase brand awareness in the cannabis industry and potentially grow its revenue stream.

"With the medical and recreational cannabis industry growing at an unprecedented rate in California, we are determined to be conscious of the multiple opportunities that currently exist, or that we can create for MoneyTrac to further expand its brand throughout the industry as well as tap into every available revenue source possible," Vanessa Luna, COO of MoneyTrac, stated in the news release.

"This agreement with PotSaver is an excellent opportunity for us to offer the industry-specific business development expertise we have acquired to help further PotSaver's go-to-market strategy, while simultaneously creating a new source of revenue for our company as we continue to expand our own brand throughout the industry."

MTRAC's developments play a supportive role in Global Payout's overarching mission in FINTECH. Global Payout began by offering prepaid card services and a payment platform for businesses in different countries, but improvements in 2016 added additional functions now seen in its Global Reserve Platform. Blockchain technology, such as that familiarized by Bitcoin Services (OTC: BTSC), is part of the system, giving various industries the benefits of FINTECH on a much broader scale.

Bitcoin Services is a cryptocurrency leader offering an escrow service, a neutral third-party that serves buyers and sellers during online transactions. Verification processes are run by bitcoin mining services, so transactions are always properly validated and secured. The company's role in FINTECH has been a key one since its incorporation in 1997, especially since it is a major player in the development and sale of blockchain software.

Another player in FINTECH and blockchain/digital currency is BTCS, Inc. In August 2017, BTCS announced the signing of a letter of intent to merge with Blockchain Global Limited. A merger would give access to the Australian company's bitcoin exchange, transaction verification services, and start-up accelerator program that provides fledgling business with access to blockchain technologies and applications. Consulting and advisory services are also offered, such as those supporting crowd-sourced blockchain token sales. In a recent letter to shareholders, BTCS mentions the 300 percent surge in bitcoin over a year, and that this boost and the involvement of large organizations demonstrates the mainstream acceptance of digital FINTECH assets. It plans to participate in strategic market purchases, make initial coin offerings, and resume transaction verification services to expand its digital asset portfolio.

Innovative offerings by FINTECH companies are fueling activity not just in the commercial sector. Some of them, such as Global Payout's MTRAC solution, are being used to offer advanced payment solutions to consumer-facing companies.

Online purchasing solutions enabled by similar systems include Apple Pay from Apple, Inc. (NASDAQ: AAPL). Consumers can pay for items with credit and debit cards on their mobile devices, and can do so on the same platform even while in a store. One just needs to hold their iPhone or Apple watch up to a reader for it to work. Customers can pay within apps as well, make

donations, or shop online. The service can be used at many major retail chains and websites, and to donate to a range of nonprofit organizations. It extends the value of FINTECH to consumers who shop at electronics, clothing, pharmaceutical, toy, and general stores; gas stations; restaurants; and who stay at hotels.

Alphabet, Inc is also vested in the consumer FINTECH segment. Google Wallet allows for automatic cash transfer; users can send money to anyone using the app. Their email address and phone number are all that is needed. The product is useful in a variety of settings, from splitting the bill at a restaurant to planning trips and purchasing group gifts, as well as making commercial transactions. Transferring cash is possible for payment of any service, especially for sole proprietors. That puts FINTECH in the hands of anybody who wishes to make a transaction online or via digital devices or methods. The service is available in the U.S. and the UK, although users can't yet transfer funds between countries.

FINTECH companies and services are enabling business and consumer transactions that can be managed digitally, without going through a bank. These afford simpler, faster and increasingly convenient options and enable business to be conducted more freely in high-risk industries that are tightly regulated by traditional financial institutions. FINTECH is gaining value at many different levels. Logistics companies are catching on because it streamlines shipping operations, while companies such as Apple and Google are extending digital payment technologies to consumers, giving FINTECH a nearly limitless market reach. The rapid growth of bitcoin and blockchain technology is also clear evidence that digital B2B and consumer payment solutions have significant upside potential.

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