Evolve
Capital Partners

Weekly Deals Update

Week Ending 03/16/18

SPECIALIZED INVESTMENT BANKERS AT THE INTERSECTION OF FINANCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Key Deals

M&A

Date	Target	Acquirer(s)	Sector	Amount ($mm)
3/15/18	ClearScore	experian.	Data & Analytics / IoT	$383
3/14/18	mosaic SMART DATA	JPMorganChase	Securities	NA
3/12/18	BOLDER Healthcare Solutions	Cognizant	Healthcare Tech	NA
3/8/18	Index	stripe	Payments	NA

Financing

Date	Target	Lead Investor	Sector	Amount ($mm)
3/15/18	Airtable	crv	Data & Analytics / IoT	$52
3/13/18	FUTURE · FINANCE	KCK	Specialty Finance / Alternative Lending	$49
3/9/18	CHETWOOD FINANCIAL LIMITED	Elliot Advisors	Bank Technology Solutions	$185

Preface

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

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. 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 or call (646) 688-2792.

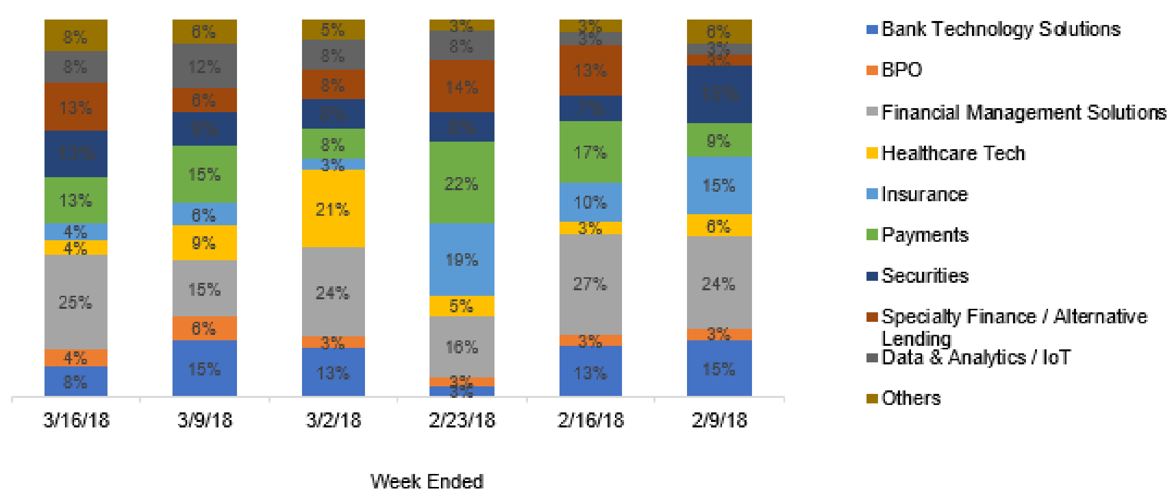
Sectors we cover at the intersection of finance and technology include:

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

Deals Count

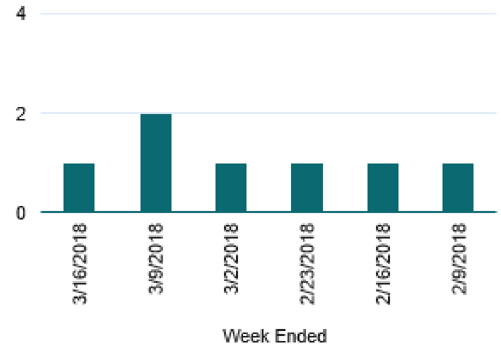
Sector	Number of Deals	% of Total
Bank Technology Solutions	2	7%
BPO	1	3%
Financial Management Solutions	6	20%
Healthcare Tech	2	7%
Insurance	1	3%
Payments	3	10%
Securities	3	10%
Specialty Finance / Alternative Lending	3	10%
Data & Analytics / IoT	5	17%
Others	4	13%
Total	**30**	**100%**

Sector-Wise Deals Breakdown



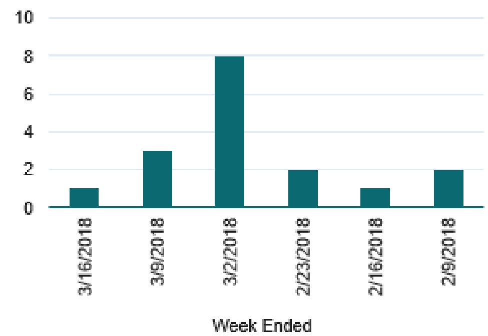
Bank Technology Solutions

BPO

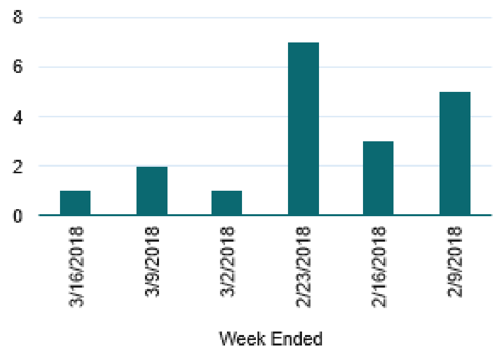


Financial Management Solutions

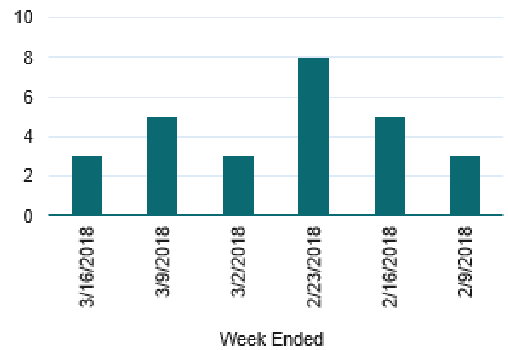
Healthcare Tech



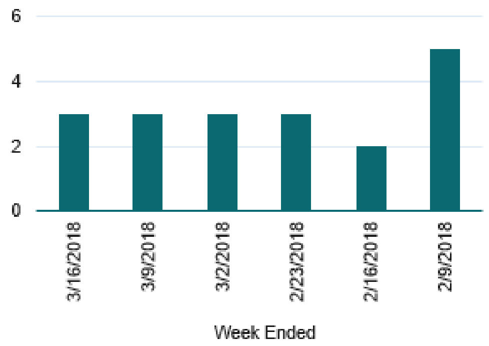
Insurance



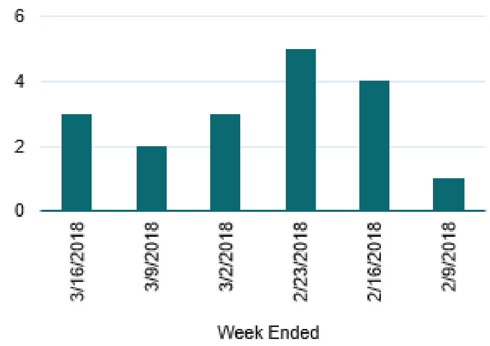
Payments



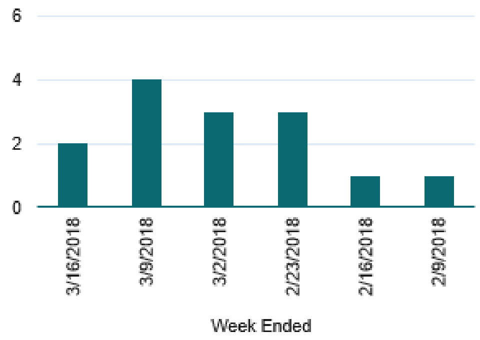
Securities



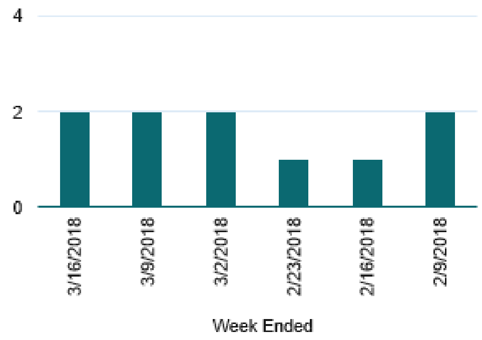
Speciality Finance / Alternative Lending



Data & Analytics / IoT



Others



BANK TECHNOLOGY SOLUTIONS

Why UK bank Tandem acquired personal finance startup Pariti

Bank Technology Solutions
3/13/18

The race to capture market share from U.K. incumbent banks just got a little more competitive. Tandem has made its second acquisition, a personal finance app called Pariti that the U.K. challenger bank plans to fold into its mobile app — which will be a much needed push as banks begin to view personal finance as a core element of the mobile banking experience. Terms of the deal were not disclosed.

“These moves only make sense if one accepts that they are way behind schedule versus Monzo and Starling — I expected them to be a challenger to those brands, and the opportunity is running away from them at the moment, since major banks are addressing it too,” said a fintech startup executive who asked not to be identified. “The strategy is not clear at all.”

The tie-up allows the challenger bank to stake out a competitive position against the likes of Monzo and Starling — both of which have developed personal finance tools of their own. Tandem has 25,000 customers and approximately $516 million in deposits, numbers boosted by its acquisition of Harrods Bank in August, which added a $279 million loan book and $418 million in deposits. App-only bank Monzo has more than 560,000 customers who have spent $1 billion, and Starling reportedly has “thousands of customers” on its platform.

A sophisticated personal finance offering could help it carve out a position among digital challengers, and position Tandem to compete more effectively with larger institutions, said Aite senior analyst Ron van Wezel.

“The two companies seem to have a lot of overlap in their activities,” van Wezel said. “Both focus on account aggregation, giving the customer control over spending behavior and budgeting. This looks like a logical step to combine forces, scale up and compete with large incumbents that are developing similar offerings.”

Competition among personal finance startups is expected to tighten as U.K. and Europe-wide regulations that force banks to open up their application programming interfaces to third-parties come into force this year. Rather than partnering with other companies, the acquisition gives Tandem more control over how it builds develops its mobile banking app and user experience — which ultimately will distinguish it among a sea of similar apps.

“If you’re plugging a service into your mobile banking app that you consider core and you’re relying on a third party to create that differentiation, you can be stuck with whatever they decide to do,” said Celent analyst Stephen Greer. “If you’re acquiring and it’s going to become part of core offering, the benefit of that is the complete control over how you use — you can develop on top of it whatever kinds of features you want, and it gives a greater degree of control and additional levers to differentiate.”

Joining Tandem made better sense than selling to or partnering with a bank because innovation “can’t come out of a very large bank,” Pariti CEO Matthew Ford said in a recent interview. Pariti has worked with HSBC on an early version of its soon-to-be-released banking app, which aggregates customers’ bank account and credit card information to help customers budget and save. It has also partnered with Zopa and Lendable to offer customers loans. Ford will join Tandem along with the company’s chief technology officer Peter Townsend.

Tandem will inherit Pariti’s 95,000 users. The deal is the third major personal finance product announcement this year; in February the company upgraded its mobile experience to deliver personalized, data-driven insights and rolled out a cashback credit card.

http://www.tearsheet.co/modern-banking-experience/why-uk-bank-tandem-acquired-personal-finance-startup-pariti?utm_content=organic_tsfeed&utm_campaign=tsdis&utm_source=twitter&utm_medium=social

Chetwood Financial lands £150 million investment

Bank Technology Solutions

3/9/18

A newcomer to the UK banking space, Chetwood Financial, is to receive up to £150 million in investment from Elliott Advisors.

As reported earlier by FinTech Futures, Chetwood now also has a banking licence, adding to its existing authorisation for lending business.

The bank plans to launch its first consumer finance product in Q1 2018 – an "innovative" unsecured loan under the LiveLend brand.

Already in beta with its LiveLend loan, Chetwood says it is "a true challenger, given its move away from the typical banking model to a route of manufacturing bespoke products for customer groups who aren't being served".

Chetwood will operate on a new, cloud-based technology platform, Yobota. It elaborates: "The platform can house a range of standalone products, from lending to savings and more, which won't just fit the traditional financial services mould, but enable responsive and dynamic products, not yet seen in the industry."

Chetwood Financial and Yobota were founded in 2016 by ex-HSBC senior banker Andy Mielczarek and technology strategist Mark Jenkinson.

www.bankingtech.com/2018/03/chetwood-financial-lands-150m-investment/

BPO

MetaSource closes dividend recapitalization and debt refinancing

BPO

3/13/18

LaSalle Capital ("LaSalle") and its portfolio company, MetaSource ("MetaSource" or the "Company"), are pleased to announce the completion of a debt refinancing and dividend recapitalization. The transaction bolsters the Company's capital base, allowing it to continue its acquisition strategy while generating significant liquidity for shareholders. LaSalle remains the controlling shareholder post-transaction.

MetaSource, based in Draper, UT, is a technology-enabled BPaaS company with a focus on the financial services industry. MetaSource offers a full range of services, including business process management and content management solutions delivered via premise-based and SaaS-based platforms. The Company's proprietary technology solutions help customers achieve organizational efficiencies, streamline processes, and manage compliance risk.

Ryan Anthony, Partner at LaSalle and MetaSource board member stated, "We are pleased to have executed this transaction to generate returns for MetaSource shareholders and look forward to helping management through the next phase of growth." MetaSource's CEO, Adam Östhed, added, "We are excited to retain LaSalle as a strategic partner as our growth continues to accelerate." If you have questions regarding this transaction or would like to discuss other opportunities in the technology-enabled business services industry, please contact Ryan Anthony or Nick Christopher of LaSalle Capital at (312) 236-7041.

LaSalle Capital is a leading private equity firm with extensive experience in the lower middle market. We currently manage two funds totaling over $345 million in capital. LaSalle has a proven track record of partnering with management teams to increase value in our companies by providing strategic operating focus and driving growth organically and through acquisitions. We have domain expertise and investment focus in two industry sectors: food and beverage and technology-enabled business services.

https://www.pehub.com/2018/03/metasource-closes-dividend-recap-debt-refinancing/

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT SOLUTIONS

Salesforce e-commerce gets B2B boost with CloudCraze purchase

Financial Management Solutions
3/15/18

To improve its e-commerce offerings, the CRM company bought B2B commerce product CloudCraze for an undisclosed amount. The purchase will add B2B functionality.

In 2016, Salesforce spent nearly $3 billion on Demandware, and turned it into its Commerce Cloud.

But now Commerce Cloud is primarily B2C-focused and Salesforce e-commerce was missing a B2B component. To fill this void, Salesforce recently acquired CloudCraze to provide customers with a Salesforce B2B e-commerce product.

In this vendor-neutral guide explore how Salesforce and its AI platform, Einstein, are slated to extend the software's existing CRM functionality.

"There's a familiarity between Salesforce and CloudCraze, and it's built natively on the Salesforce platform," said John Bruno, a senior analyst at Forrester Research. "It's the only B2B e-commerce tool built natively and on the same technology powering Sales Cloud, Service Cloud."

B2B and B2C are two different buyers

On the surface, a novice may believe that the same technology that helps with B2C e-commerce should be able to accommodate B2B sales, but several factors differentiate B2B and B2C commerce.

"B2C and B2B markets are two different buyers," said R "Ray" Wang, principal analyst and founder of Constellation Research. "When businesses sell to other businesses, you have things like contacts and service-level agreements that aren't typical with B2C."

Additionally, while B2C e-commerce is traditionally a one-to-one relationship between the buyer and seller, sales reps working within B2B e-commerce often have a roster of employees to whom they are selling.

"The brand has to know who the individuals are at the account they're selling to, and that complicates things," Bruno said. "You might have employees responsible for identifying products and services they need, but oftentimes a purchase requires governance or approval."

By adding B2B capabilities to the Salesforce e-commerce platform, the CRM company is looking to capitalize on a market that is expected to reach $1.2 trillion by 2021, according to a Forrester report.

"You need that B2B piece if you're going to set up a commerce network or a trading network where buyers and suppliers come together," Wang said.

Bruno added that aspects like contract building, requests for quotes or other back-and-forth objectives "aren't really supported by B2C commerce platforms. B2B is a superset of B2C."

http://searchsalesforce.techtarget.com/news/252436946/Salesforce-e-commerce-gets-B2B-boost-with-CloudCraze-purchase

Pilot raises $15 million to bring bookkeeping into the modern era

Financial Management Solutions

3/15/18

The first time Waseem Daher, Jessica McKellar, and Jeff Arnold worked together on a startup, they built one that allowed administrators to patch security updates to a system without having to restart it.

So it might come as a bit of a surprise that the next big technical challenge the three MIT graduates want to tackle is bookkeeping. But after selling Ksplice to Oracle back in 2011, it was actually the financial software they had built internally that made the jaws of the finance teams at Oracle drop, Daher said. They had created a continuously-updating internal version of QuickBooks, keeping a close eye on their spending and accounting and not having do hire a bookkeeper to do so, out of pure frustration with the process. And today that's basically launching as Pilot, a startup that has now raised $15 million in a financing round led by Index Ventures.

When a company starts working with Pilot, the actual core experience on the customer side doesn't really change all that much: they still work with a human on the other end. But the bookkeeper from Pilot is working with the internal tools they have built to bring in the data from the company, organize it and structure it, and produce a set of books that are more accurate than someone might have produced than just doing it by hand. Customers will get the kinds of questions you might expect from a normal bookkeeper as they look to clarify what's happening, but in the end the process happens much more seamlessly. They can integrate directly with their existing services like Expensify or Gusto (or ask Pilot to help out with that) and then go from there.

That kind of human-software mix is something that's increasingly common in services businesses — like Pilot — as the tech industry figures out what should be automated and what should still be handled by a person. There are still a lot of things that a person can catch, but there's also the actual human relationship, which isn't a kind of repetitive task you'd want to automate with an algorithm. To begin, Pilot isn't trying to force companies to completely rip out their bookkeeping software and start from scratch, and instead start to collect the electronic information they already have.

"Uber's like that, the drivers are humans but the software makes them much more effective," Index Ventures' Mike Volpi said. "You can see it in a lot of applications where in IT support there's a few businesses like this, you troubleshoot using software, and when you can't you fix it pass it to humans. In customer service chats, a lot of times it's an AI, and when the questions get tricky enough it rolls over to humans. It's interesting because there are tasks which humans are fundamentally needed and there are tasks that are mundane that software can do and the human can avoid doing. It's an interesting thesis around this hybrid."

Prior to Pilot, the team sold another company to Dropbox called Zulip, and spent some time at the company as it continued to scale up (Dropbox is now in the process of going public). Some of the challenge alone was somehow assembling a team that found some fascination with the intersection of accounting, machine learning and working directly with customers, but so far McKellar said that they've been able to put one together thus far. And, more importantly, now that they are starting to roll out their service they can start getting some perspective on the industry as a whole.

"I think people can get motivated by almost any problem if you know you're tackling a big problem for many people," McKellar said. "But there's quite a lot of subtlety to what we're building. The rules and principles of bookkeeping are well define but the real world is really messy, and designing the right systems to automate bookkeeping at scale is actually a tricky thing. We have an incredible engineering team that is able to tackle this with the right mindset it. The analogy you can draw is self-driving cars — that's a system normally done by a human, everyone understands what it takes to drive a car, what actions you should take. It's difficult for people to put into words, what are the rules given a set of inputs, but it needs to work and be reliable."

As more and more of this information comes in, and more and more companies start to work with Pilot, they can start spotting trends in the industry. For example, if a 17th SaaS business with a similar business model to other Pilot companies signs up, they could down the line take a look at their info and spot potential discrepancies based on anonymized trend data picked up from other comparables in the industry — or do a better job of spotting inefficiencies or others. And there are some obvious funnels for this already, like getting the right information for tax purposes to accountants.

There's going to be a lot of increasing activity in this space, though. Already you're seeing some funded projects like botkeeper, which are looking to find some ways to automate a bookkeeping service. There's nothing quite so formalized and an obvious tool that looks to take out QuickBooks (and, again, a lot of these seem to be playing nice for now), and there's always the chance that Intuit could try to take on the space itself. But at the end of the day, Volpi says it's based on the team that they've assembled — and that combination of humans and algorithms — that gives them a shot at succeeding.

Here's the rest of the investors in this round, since it's a long list: Patrick and John Collison, Drew Houston, Diane Greene, Frederic Kerrest, Hans Robertson, Adam D'Angelo, Paul English, Howard Lerman, Joshua Reeves, Tien Tzuo, as well as many others.

https://techcrunch.com/2018/03/14/pilot-raises-15m-to-bring-bookkeeping-into-the-modern-era/

Imply raises $13.3 million in Series A funding

Financial Management Solutions

3/15/18

Imply, a Millbrae, CA-based technology company focused on exploratory analytics, raises $13.3M in Series A funding.

The round was led by Andreessen Horowitz, with participation from Khosla Ventures. In conjunction with the funding, Martin Casado, General Partner at A16Z, and founder of Nicira Networks, will be joining Imply's board of directors.

The company will use the funds to accelerate the development of its operations analytics platform.

Co-founded by Fangjin Yang, CEO, Gian Merlino, CTO, and Vadim Ogievetsky, CPO, Imply provides an open event analytics platform, based on Druid, that can includes visualizations, and critical deployment, management, and security software, and can handle vast amounts of streaming and historical data, and explain why any data pattern exists.

The company has also announced general availability of Imply Cloud, a service created to make Druid/Imply easier to use and manage.

http://www.finsmes.com/2018/03/imply-raises-13-3m-in-series-a-funding.html

Palo Alto Networks to acquire Evident.io

Financial Management Solutions

3/14/18

Palo Alto Networks on Wednesday announced it's acquiring Evident.io, a cloud security and compliance firm, for $300 million in cash.

The deal is expected to close over Palo Alto's fiscal third quarter, and Evident.io's co-founders, Tim Prendergast and Justin Lundy, will join Palo Alto.

Evident.io is a leader in public cloud infrastructure security and will extend Palo Alto Networks' API-based security capabilities. Their combined capabilities will give customers continuous monitoring, storage security, and compliance validation and reporting.

"We believe enterprises will become even more cloud-centric in the future and require prevention methods that have been designed for the cloud," said Mark McLaughlin, chairman and CEO of Palo Alto Networks, in a statement.

"With Evident as part of our platform, Palo Alto Networks will be the only vendor that can deliver a holistic cloud offering to address the critical security needs of today's enterprise customers as they journey to the cloud," McLaughlin added.

http://www.zdnet.com/article/palo-alto-networks-to-acquire-evident-io/

Duff & Phelps to buy Kroll

Financial Management Solutions
3/13/18

Duff & Phelps, the global advisor that enables clients to protect, restore and maximize value, today announced that it has signed a definitive agreement to acquire Kroll, the global leader in complex investigations, security and cyber solutions. Terms of the transaction were not disclosed. Established in 1972, Kroll has an unparalleled record of helping clients manage compliance, navigate litigation and mitigate risk relating to fraud, impropriety and security threats. The transaction dramatically enhances the combined firm's broad suite of services in the areas of valuation, corporate finance, compliance, investigations, security and cyber solutions. Kroll will also significantly expand Duff & Phelps' global scale, most notably in Europe and Latin America. The combined organization will have nearly 3,500 employees located in 28 countries around the world.

Noah Gottdiener, Duff & Phelps Chief Executive Officer, said, "Bringing together these two world-class organizations will significantly expand our global scale, broaden our client offerings and create great opportunities for our colleagues. Both firms share a common culture and heritage of putting clients first, and the combination will only strengthen this commitment. I welcome our new colleagues to Duff & Phelps and look forward to joining forces to build one great team."

David Fontaine, Kroll Chief Executive Officer, added, "Duff & Phelps and Kroll nicely complement one another. Both companies have a rich and time-tested history of helping clients manage risk and make confident choices. Our respective clients will benefit from the combined organization's expanded geographic footprint and broadened service offerings. As a result of this union, the committed professionals that make Kroll such a special place to work will have new and exciting opportunities for growth. After spending time with Noah and his leadership team, it is evident to me that there is strong alignment in our respective organizations' values and cultures. My colleagues and I look forward to this next exciting chapter."

The transaction is expected to close during the second quarter of 2018, subject to customary closing conditions and regulatory approval. UBS Investment Bank and Goldman Sachs acted as financial advisors to Duff & Phelps and provided committed financing in support of the transaction. Kirkland & Ellis and Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom LLP acted as legal advisor to Duff & Phelps and Simpson Thacher & Bartlett acted as legal advisor to Kroll.

https://www.pehub.com/2018/03/duff-phelps-buy-kroll/

Comvest Partners acquires Engage2Excel

Financial Management Solutions

3/8/18

Comvest Partners ("Comvest") today announced the acquisition of Engage2Excel ("E2E"), a leading provider of employee recognition, sales incentives, talent acquisition and consumer loyalty solutions and services. Headquartered in Statesville, North Carolina, E2E's solutions focus on attracting, retaining, and engaging both employees and customers to increase productivity and profitability. E2E maintains relationships across a diversified client base ranging from Fortune 100 companies to small and medium-sized businesses.

"We are excited to partner with E2E and work with management to continue to grow and build upon the Company's strong position and momentum as a leader in the employee engagement space," said Matt Gullen, Partner at Comvest. "E2E provides its customers with high quality services to maximize employee satisfaction, retention and productivity, and we believe the industry will continue to experience strong tailwinds as organizations increasingly emphasize and expand their programs to attract, retain and develop talent."

"We look forward to partnering with Comvest," said Phil Stewart, CEO of E2E. "I am proud of the success we have had in building E2E into a market leader. I believe that Comvest's experience growing technology-enabled businesses and vision for E2E make them the ideal partner as we enter our next phase of growth."

E2E was advised by Lincoln International, Robert W. Baird, and Moore & Van Allen. Comvest was advised by Raymond James and McDermott Will & Emery.

https://globenewswire.com/news-release/2018/03/08/1418286/0/en/Comvest-Partners-Acquires-Engage2Excel.html

HEALTHCARE TECH

Cognizant to acquire Bolder Healthcare for undisclosed sum

Healthcare Tech

3/12/18

Cognizant on Monday said it will acquire US-based Bolder Healthcare Solutions for an undisclosed amount, a move that will help the IT firm further strengthen its play in the healthcare space.

Louisville, Kentucky-based Bolder is a privately-held provider of revenue cycle management (RCM) solutions to hospitals, physician practices and other specialist healthcare organisations in the US. The transaction is expected to close in the second quarter of 2018, subject to satisfaction of the closing conditions, including regulatory reviews, Cognizant said in a statement.

RCM software and processes integrate and automate healthcare administrative and medical data to ensure benefit eligibility and accurate billing and collections. This helps reduce the time between delivery of service to payment received. “Their (Bolder) RCM offerings will further expand Cognizant’s leading healthcare consulting, IT and business process services into more hospitals, hospital outpatient departments, physician practices, and other specialty care providers,” the statement said.

The acquisition will also enable Cognizant to expand its range of digital solutions across the healthcare value chain and address the large provider segment of the US healthcare market. As the healthcare industry continues to undergo significant transformation to a value-based care model, digital RCM services and solutions remove complexity and allow providers to streamline their operations, Cognizant executive vice-president and global head of healthcare Kaushik Bhaumik said.

“When combined with Cognizant’s broad set of offerings for payers and providers, Bolder Healthcare Solutions’ capabilities and experts will open new market opportunities as we enable more payers and providers to embrace outcome-based models and innovate with data analytics, cognitive computing and robotic process automation for more efficient management of their businesses and ultimately better patient outcomes,” he added.

Cognizant’s revenues from its healthcare business grew about 12% year-on-year and stood at $1.12 billion (29.4% of the quarter’s revenues) for the October-December 2017 period. It had acquired TriZetto Corporation in 2014 to boost its revenues from the healthcare space. Last year, it acquired TMG Health among a slew of acquisitions.

http://www.livemint.com/Companies/xluY8pkzs6lhR2NgbdIwtK/Cognizant-to-acquire-Bolder-Healthcare.html

Maple raises $4 million in funding to advance virtual healthcare in Canada

Healthcare Tech

3/9/18

Maple is Canada's only app providing patients with 24/7 on-demand access to doctors by secure text or video for advice, diagnosis, and prescriptions. Since launching just over a year ago, Maple has rapidly grown its network of doctors and patients to service eight provinces and two territories across Canada.

The company recently raised an additional $4 million in Series A funding from a group of strategic investors to further support Maple's growth and expansion.

The MaRS Investment Accelerator Fund, Ontario's most active seed fund focused on early stage technology companies, participated in the oversubscribed round led by a large private corporation with expertise in medical cost containment and operations, as well as Jeff Fettes, co-founder of 24-7 Intouch.

"Despite having access to some of the best quality care, Canadians have some of the longest wait times in the developed world. Maple's solution can offer significant relief for the overtaxed health care system," says Michelle McBane, senior investment director at MaRS IAF. "In addition to impacting the wellbeing of Canadian patients, Maple's solution impacts our economy, reducing time off work for doctor's visits and getting patients on the path to recovery sooner."

With nearly 20,000 patients and more than 100 Canadian licensed doctors on the platform, Maple promises patients a live chat or video visit within 5 minutes day or night – the shortest wait time for a doctor in Canada's virtual care industry.

"We initially launched Maple as another option for patients to get fast and convenient access to a doctor after-hours, right from their smartphone or computer. The feedback has been overwhelmingly positive and the demand for our service is rapidly growing – not just from patients, but also from employers, insurers, hospitals and more. We believe every Canadian needs to have access to this type of service," said Dr. Brett Belchetz, co-founder and CEO at Maple.

Currently the majority of provincial health plans do not cover patients for online or telephone consultations with doctors.

Maple will use the new capital to make the service accessible to as many Canadians as possible, by continuing to build its distribution network of employers, benefit providers and insurers.

Sun Life Financial, one of Canada's largest insurers, recently partnered with Maple to make virtual healthcare more accessible to its clients. Dave Jones, SVP of Group Benefits says "Virtual care adds a new layer of access and convenience to the health care ecosystem. We're excited to be connecting with companies like Maple, as we work to provide Canadians with innovative solutions that can help them live healthier lives." Read the Sun Life Financial announcement for more information.

https://www.newswire.ca/news-releases/maple-raises-4-million-in-funding-to-advance-virtual-healthcare-in-canada-676359863.html

INSURANCE

Servion aquires Zurich-based insurance tech provider Innoveo

Insurance
3/6/18

Everstone Group-backed Servion Global Solutions has acquired Zurich-based cloud software provider focused on insurance tech Innoveo (formerly Pactera Switzerland).

The deal is for around $20 million, said sources familiar with the development. The acquisition aligns with Servion's future roadmap to develop a portfolio of industry-specific niches as it morphs into an integrated platform player offering end-to-end customer experience management, a departure from its evolution as a voice interaction expert.

Innoveo is Servion's second acquisition, after it bought US-based tech company 5by5Networks more than a decade ago. Innoveo's flagship Skye technology suite accelerates insurance product launch cycles. It is said to be ten times faster than conventional hard-coded solutions. "The Innoveo acquisition will give us a strong foothold in the insurance tech space in Continental Europe and North America besides other geographies. It's complementary to what we are already doing," said Sameet Gupte, CEO of Servion Group. Its Skye solution also offers omni-channel digital capabilities, as well as improved agent and consumer user experience. Servion, which clocked $75 million in revenue, offers consulting, implementing and managing CEM (customer experience management) solutions for 600 organizations. It manages over 10 billion customer interactions in more than 60 countries.

Innoveo will be the latest addition to its portfolio of industry-specific platforms such as ServIntuit and ServInsight. Headquartered in Zurich, it has subsidiaries in Budapest and Hong Kong. It has 50 employees. Innoveo, founded in 2007, offers solutions for general insurance to life, health and accident for commercial and retail customers.

Gupte said Servion is growing at a scorching pace and this year could prove to be a landmark year for the firm as it is set to cross the $100 million revenue mark. "Some four years ago we had laid out a strategy to double our revenue. We are on track to achieve that," he said. He also said revenue per employee has gone up 15%-20% in 2017-18 compared to the preceding year. Last year, the India-focused private equity firm Everstone increased its investment in Servion to around $74 million.

https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/business/india-business/servion-aquires-zurich-based-insurance-tech-provider-innoveo/articleshow/63183454.cms

PAYMENTS

Nordic Capital buys majority stake in online payments firm Trustly

Payments

3/15/18

Private equity group Nordic Capital has struck a deal to acquire a majority stake in Swedish online payments provider Trustly. Financial terms were not disclosed, although the agreement is rumoured to value Trustly at around EUR700 million.

Trustly's largest shareholder Bridgepoint Development Capital will dispose of its full equity interest, but management, founders and investment company Alfvén & Didrikson will remain "significant" shareholders.

Trustly offers cross-border payments to and from consumer bank accounts at over 3000 banks in 29 European markets and connects businesses and consumers within e-commerce, travel, gaming and financial services.

Founded in 2008, the firm now has 190 staffers at its headquarters in Stockholm and offices in Spain, Malta, Germany and the UK.

The deal comes as PSD2 forces banks to open up their systems to the likes of Trustly, providing an attractive opportunity for investors. According to the Financial Times, Nordic Capital saw off competition from, among others, General Atlantic.

Oscar Berglund, CEO, Trustly, says: "The shift towards online banking based payment solutions is only in its infancy and we are looking forward to continuing to innovate and execute so as to make it easier, safer and quicker for both consumers and merchants to make payments online."

https://www.finextra.com/newsarticle/31812/nordic-capital-buys-majority-stake-in-online-payments-firm-trustly?utm_medium=dailynewsletter&utm_source=2018-3-15&member=93489

AmEx Ventures invests in EverCompliant

Payments

3/14/18

EverCompliant, the pioneer of Electronic Money Laundering Detection and Prevention (also known as Transaction Laundering), announced a strategic investment from American Express Ventures, which joins existing investors Arbor Ventures, Carmel Ventures, StarFarm Ventures and Nyca Partners.

EverCompliant will use the funds to ramp up its team and continue to optimize and develop new technology.

Transaction Laundering occurs when a fraudster uses a legitimate online merchant account to funnel illegal transactions through a merchant processor, online marketplace or other merchant service provider. The continued growth of online commerce has created more opportunities for illicit players to use legitimate online storefronts to mask their identities, leading to an increase in Transaction Laundering.

EverCompliant's automated detection capabilities enable merchant service providers to identify and eliminate unknown and fraudulent merchants. Continual monitoring and verification of third-party identities helps merchant service providers prevent the processing of fraudulent transactions, reducing the risk of chargebacks, financial losses and damage to their reputation. EverCompliant's research shows that, on average, there are 6%-10% additional unknown and unregistered merchants over the size of a merchant service provider's known portfolio, who are illegally committing Transaction Laundering. This phenomenon amounts to nearly $500 billion a year worldwide. These transactions may involve illegal goods sold by unregistered merchants, demonstrating that Transaction Laundering fraud is a growing issue for the payments industry.

"We are thrilled that American Express has decided to invest in our company," said Ron Teicher, CEO of EverCompliant. "Their investment shines a spotlight on a growing problem in the payments industry. Having a strong relationship with this global payments network, paired with our continuous merchant risk management capabilities, will equip the industry with what they need to combat this new form of money laundering."

"EverCompliant's technology is helping merchant acquirers, payment aggregators and other service providers prevent bad actors from infiltrating their systems and ensure only legitimate transactions get processed," said Harshul Sanghi, Managing Partner of American Express Ventures, the strategic investment group of American Express. "As more commerce shifts online, the need for advanced solutions that can help payment service providers fight fraudulent transactions will continue to grow. We look forward to helping EverCompliant as it addresses increased demand for its technology."

EverCompliant's customers currently include some of the largest institutions across North America, Europe, and Asia, who collectively monitor millions of merchants within their platform. The company's proprietary and highly-effective method for uncovering Transaction Laundering has fueled a growing demand among merchant service providers and yielded a 300%+ increase in company growth in 2017.

https://www.finextra.com/pressarticle/73023/amex-ventures-invests-in-evercompliant

$9 billion Stripe just bought a payments startup backed by Eric Schmidt as it goes after even larger customers

Payments

3/8/18

Stripe, the $9 billion payments processing startup, has purchased Index - an in-store payments startup backed by former Google CEO Eric Schmidt's venture capital firm Innovation Endeavors. Index provides software for in-store payments systems, like the PIN pads that you probably already use to pay with a debit or credit card at your local Target or pharmacy. Its biggest claim-to-fame is that its software for PIN pads can read a chip card in under a second, making for faster checkouts.

Index and its software offerings will be integrated with Stripe, so that customers can manage and secure both physical and digital credit card payments from one place - and centralize all that data, too. Now, Stripe can tell its new breed of large customers that it can handle all kinds of payments.

"We really believe so much in the value of integrated technology," Stripe CFO Will Gaybrick tells Business Insider.

Terms of the deal were not disclosed, though Stripe confirms the majority of Index employees have been offered new roles after the deal closes.

Over its six-year life, Index raised $26 million from investors including Innovation Endeavors, Khosla Ventures, and General Catalyst. It was founded by Jonathan Wall and Marc Freed-Finnegan, former key executives for the Google Wallet payments processing product.

It might be tempting to think of Index as a competitor to Jack Dorsey's $19.8 billion Square, which also provides point-of-sale software and hardware. But while Square itself builds card readers, cash registers, and other hardware, Index is all software, helping stores get more out of the sales systems they already own, and manage their devices.

Indeed, Stripe says that the purchase of Index isn't so much about physical retail. Instead, Stripe says, it's a reflection of the company's growth. Early on in its lifespan, Stripe was best known as the payments processor of choice for small-but-growing startups. Now, it's moving towards larger, more deep-pocketed enterprise customers.

To that end, Stripe is also announcing today a trio of new, large customers: Allianz, the German insurance titan valued at about $103 billion USD; Booking.com, the flagship subsidiary of $103 billion Booking Holdings (formerly Priceline); and Zillow, the $6.75 billion real estate search engine.

Those new accounts join flagship Stripe customers including Amazon, Facebook, SAP, and the NFL, all of whom use Stripe for at least some of their payments processing. Tech startups like Lyft, Slack, and Kickstarter have also been long-time Stripe customers.

"Traditionally, [Stripe has] been associated with these high-growth startups," says Jordan McKee, a principal analyst with 451 Research. Now, as evidenced by the Index buy, though, "you see Stripe getting pulled upmarket."

Why Index?

The big idea behind the Index buy is that larger customers have some kind of physical presence, or at least want the option of opening some kind of store one day. Consider how prescription eyewear company (and Stripe customer) Warby Parker started as an online-only business and eventually opened boutiques across the United States.

Meanwhile, Stripe has so far specialized only in online commerce, making it easy for an app or website to accept payments via a credit card or a digital wallet like Apple Pay or Google Pay. More recently, Stripe has invested in new technologies to then analyze all those payments for possible fraud, or otherwise sift the data for useful insights.

With Index and Stripe integrated, it means customers will be have their physical and digital payments data, all in one place. Index even offers tools for the IT department to manage and maintain the PIN pads and other sales hardware. Stripe had built similar systems before, but only as one-off, non-scalable projects for certain large customers.

https://www.businessinsider.in/9-billion-Stripe-just-bought-a-payments-startup-backed-by-Eric-Schmidt-as-it-goes-after-even-larger-customers/articleshow/63224114.cms

SECURITIES

Jack Dorsey is among backers of blockchain start-up Lightning Labs

Securities

3/15/18

Lightning Labs, which specializes in a technology that can potentially make bitcoin cheaper and faster to use for transactions, announced it has raised seed financing of $2.5 million. The investors include Jack Dorsey, CEO of Square and Twitter; David Sacks, former COO of PayPal; Bill Lee, angel investor in Tesla and SpaceX; Jacqueline Reses, head of Square Capital; and Charlie Lee, creator of litecoin.

Lightning Labs CEO Elizabeth Stark says Lightning functions as a software layer that sits on top of the bitcoin network.

"If bitcoin is like a decentralized savings account, Lightning is a decentralized checking account where users can send money instantly," Stark told CNBC.

This week was the first Lightning beta release on the bitcoin network. "Lightning will be rolled out first to advanced users and developers … and then broader users," Stark said.

Bitcoin bull Dan Ciotoli of Bespoke Investment Group said earlier this year his bitcoin target of $20,000 to $30,000 was contingent on a number factors, including the integration of the Lightning network. Ciotoli told CNBC in January that bitcoin's high transaction cost is one of its main flaws. Slow processing times is one reason the bitcoin community issued a software fork that resulted in the creation of bitcoin cash, seen by many as bitcoin's cousin.

A number of bitcoin holders told CNBC that the bitcoin network is not only slow but expensive.
"One thing we've learned is that it can be hard to predict bitcoin fees in advance, and there may be large swings, so having a solution like Lightning with very low fees on the network is key," said Stark. "You still pay on-chain bitcoin fees when getting on or off of Lightning, but that may happen infrequently, like once a month or year."

"Further, Lightning can allow users to take advantage of low bitcoin fees when they are cheap, while often avoiding fees when they're high, thus actually helping to stabilize on-chain bitcoin fees in the future," Stark said.

https://www.cnbc.com/2018/03/15/jack-dorsey-among-backers-of-blockchain-start-up-lightning-labs.html

TA Associates takes majority stake in Confluence

Securities

3/14/18

TA Associates, a leading global growth private equity firm, today announced that it has completed a majority investment in Confluence, a global leader in investment data management automation for regulatory, investor communications and performance reporting.

Financial terms of the transaction were not disclosed.

Founded in 1991, Confluence is a financial services data management software platform that offers mission-critical regulatory, investor communications and performance reporting solutions to the global asset management industry. The company serves several of the top global fund administrators and asset managers, and over 90% of the United States mutual fund market. Confluence is uniquely positioned as the only unified data-driven software platform that enables asset managers and global and regional fund administrators to automate various communications and reporting to shareholders and regulators. The company is headquartered in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania with additional locations in Brussels, Dublin, London, Ho Chi Minh City, Luxembourg and San Francisco.

“We have closely followed the success and development of Confluence for over a dozen years and have been impressed with the company’s long-term vision and global expansion,” said Jonathan W. Meeks, a Managing Director at TA Associates who will join the Confluence Board of Directors. “Utilizing its proprietary software and service offerings and with a seasoned and talented management team, Confluence has proven its ability to deliver significant operational value to its long-tenured clients, many of which are the world’s top asset managers and fund administrators. It is an honor to be partnering with the entire Confluence team and we look forward to leveraging our deep experience and resources to help the company accelerate its growth.”

“Since our founding, Confluence has strived to create and deliver automated solutions that enable asset managers and third-party administrators to consolidate and leverage data across their business operations,” said Mark Evans, Chairman, Chief Executive Officer and President of Confluence. “TA’s investment represents a unique opportunity to partner with a firm that generates key growth initiatives, and maintains a longstanding track record within the financial technology and software sectors. We are very pleased to have TA on board as an investor and look forward to a close collaboration in building significant additional value in Confluence.”

Confluence estimates the financial services data management software market to be over $1 billion, which includes over $250 million in identifiable whitespace opportunity. In late 2016, the Securities and Exchange Commission implemented major initiatives impacting mutual funds, including reporting modernization for investment firms. As a result of these regulatory overhauls, fund administrators and asset managers servicing or managing more than 80% of all ’40 Act funds have selected the Confluence platform to prepare and file their SEC modernization filings.

“As asset managers adjust to comply with the increasing data aggregation and processing requirements, we see this as an attractive time to enter into a niche market at an early stage,” said Kenneth T. Schiciano, a Managing Director at TA Associates who will also join the Confluence Board of Directors. “Confluence has invested a tremendous amount of time and resources to optimize productivity and control, which we expect will lead to organic growth opportunities to further scale the business. We are delighted that Confluence, which we believe to be the market standard in performance, financial and regulatory reporting, has chosen to partner with TA and look forward to helping the company execute its strategic vision.”

Goodwin provided legal counsel to TA Associates. Jones Day provided legal counsel and Raymond James served as financial advisor to Confluence.

https://www.finextra.com/pressarticle/73014/ta-associates-takes-majority-stake-in-confluence?utm_medium=dailynewsletter&utm_source=2018-3-15&member=93489

JPMorgan takes stake in data visualistion startup Mosaic Smart Data

Securities

3/14/18

JPMorgan has taken a stake in UK-based data visualisation outfit Mosaic Smart Data, a graduate of the bank's 'In-Residence' startup programme.

The firm's technology uses algorithms to sift through data from fragmented fixed income markets and present the outcomes in a real-time customisable dashboard to help sales staff better visualise and anticipate client activity.

Mosaic Smart Data was the first graduate from the bank's In-Residence startup programme, in which startups work side-by-side with the bank over a six-month period to address specific business challenges. The bank signed a multi-year contract with the firm late last year to deploy its data platform across its rates desks globally.

The firm says it plans to use the undisclosed minority investment to expand its data platform into new asset classes.

Warren Rabin, the head of macro sales in America from JPMorgan says: "We are investing in our salesforce, and technology is part of that investment. These investments in people and technology reinforce our commitment to putting clients first in every aspect of our business."

https://www.finextra.com/newsarticle/31805/jpmorgan-takes-stake-in-data-visualistion-startup-mosaic--smart-data?utm_medium=dailynewsletter&utm_source=2018-3-15&member=93489

SPECIALTY FINANCE / ALTERNATIVE LENDING

Future Finance closes €40 million investment round

Specialty Finance / Alternative Lending

3/13/18

Future Finance, Europe's leading private student lender, recently closed a €40 million Series C round of venture capital financing. The internal round was led by KCK with participation from S-Cubed, Invus, Fenway Summers and other existing shareholders.

Future Finance has now raised nearly €90 million in equity and £150 million in debt. More importantly, Future Finance has funded over £60 million in loans to deserving students.

This capital raise will support Future Finance's effort to scale and hire top talent in London, Dublin, and Chicago. Hiring will focus on top software engineering and data science/analytics talent, which will be critical to the growth and innovation of Future Finance.

On closing the Series C funding round, CEO Alex King commented, "This raise marks an important point in Future Finance's growth trajectory. €40 million represents a serious commitment from our investors and acknowledgement of the explosive potential of the UK student lending market."

Margo Doyle, Chief Investment Officer at S-Cubed Capital, added, "We have been impressed with what the new management team has accomplished in a year. The recent addition of Jeff Jackson as CFO/Head of Capital Markets really compliments the team given Jeff's prior work experience at Goldman Sachs and 20-years in the student lending market. We look forward to further supporting Future Finance as the new management team continues to scale the business, hire top engineering and analytics talent, add new features and launch new products."

https://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/future-finance-closes-40-million-investment-round-300612711.html

BondMason equity funding round oversubscribed by 50 per cent

Specialty Finance / Alternative Lending

3/13/18

BondMason's latest investment fundraising round raised GBP1.85 million, to drive the growth of the business and fulfil the company's vision to enable more investors to access returns from direct lending.

The direct lending market in the UK is continuing to come of age, offering investors the potential to deliver attractive risk-adjusted returns with lower volatility compared to equity capital markets. This was marked by another record year of growth for direct lending in 2017.

Recognising this, the team at BondMason took the decision to raise another round of investment funding to fuel the continued expansion of the business.

Stephen Findlay, CEO of BondMason, says: "We've received significant interest from both new and existing shareholders for this fundraising, which represents a strong endorsement of our business strategy. The round was oversubscribed by 50 per cent.

"We're delighted to announce that Seneca Partners and Par Equity led the investment round - two of the UK's leading EIS investment managers. We're also excited to have a number of private investors participating in the round as well. This is a key milestone for the business and marks the next chapter in our journey.

"The growth of BondMason has trebled over the last 12 months – with a strong focus on client service, we look forward to taking this momentum forward. We will expand our product offering to enable clients to achieve a broader selection of attractive risk-adjusted returns, during these low interest times".

Since 2015, the team at BondMason has enabled a total investment of GBP35 million across 6,000 curated lending opportunities, consistently resulting in average gross returns of 8 per cent pa resulting in clients receiving in excess of GBP1 million of interest payments to date.

The funding round will enable BondMason to improve the service further, through the launch of new products, including a suite of Fixed Term Bonds and an IF ISA later in the year. There will also be an enhanced user experience of the platform, improved client dashboard functionality, and development of the SIPP and SSAS Service alongside both current and new partners.

Since 2015, BondMason has invested heavily in building its investment team and processes, as well as building a market-leading technology and operations platform. BondMason will continue its investment in these areas, and will start to expand its Growth Strategy, with the aim to reach a wider audience of investors through various marketing, sales and distribution channels.

Findlay says: "The vision is to bring the BondMason proposition to life by developing our brand awareness and client engagement, and by ultimately raising our profile and share of voice in both the direct lending market and wider investment arena. Our role is to enable more investors to access direct lending as a complimentary asset class, enhancing their overall investment strategy.

"We will work closely with other participants in the financial services sector, such as IFAs and Wealth Managers, as well as continue to serve clients directly. "

Leading the investment round is Seneca Partners, a leading UK investor specialising in the provision of capital to small and medium sized companies.

John Davies, Investment Director, says: "At Seneca, we invest in growth opportunities where we are able to deliver returns for our investors. BondMason is a great example of the types of businesses we like to work with. Stephen Findlay and the team have established an exceptional, soundly managed business and we're excited about the prospect of helping the company to achieve their growth potential."

Those sentiments are backed by Par Equity, which has supported BondMason since it was established in 2015.

Marcus Henderson, Investment Manager, says: "From the start we recognised the high growth potential of BondMason. Our primary interest is in companies that are innovative and do things in new and better ways, and so gain competitive advantage. That is BondMason to a tee. The first-class management team, led by extensive investment expertise, combined with technical innovation, and a fresh approach, is exactly what we look for when we consider investing in a company."

Findlay says: "We owe a big thank you to every member of our community, clients, partners, and especially our team, who all believe in our mission. They are all, in some way, helping clients to get a great return on their money, enabling BondMason to become the UK's go-to direct lending service for both investors and their advisors. Our passion and commitment has driven our success so far and we're excited about continuing to deliver a great service to clients, and to take the business to the next level."

https://www.privateequitywire.co.uk/2018/03/13/262128/bondmason-equity-funding-round-oversubscribed-50-cent

GTR Ventures invests in five trade fintechs: Tradeteq, eFundSME, Culum Capital, IncomLend

Specialty Finance / Alternative Lending

3/12/18

GTR Ventures, an investment and venture platform that is specializing in the global trade and supply chain financing sector, has announced investments in five Fintechs based in the UK and Asia: Tradeteq, Trade Finance Market, Culum Capital, eFundSME and Incomlend.

Launched in September 2017 with offices in London, Singapore and Hong Kong, GTR Ventures will work with their portfolio companies and build their businesses via global expansion, development of new products such as trade finance indices, and connections to a global marketplace for digital trade finance assets. GTR says their equity positions collectively value the Fintech firms at USD $50 million. These deals are indicative of a “strong pipeline of transactions” as GTR expects to back additional Fintechs in the trade financing industry.

Rupert Sayer, CEO of GTR Ventures, said the rapidly changing landscape in global trade creates opportunities for investors;

“As our debut deals show, GTR Ventures is uniquely positioned to identify exceptional investments and, through partnerships and alliances, build a global network that will shape the future of both trade and trade finance.”

These four digital trade lenders and a platform for institutional investors to access global trade instruments have reportedly facilitated over US$160 million of trade loan deals since their inception. GTR Ventures expects additional investments with five more deals and global partnerships in the next quarter.

Kelvin Tan, CIO of GTR Ventures explained that the global trade sector is transforming with digitization and data-driven infrastructure connecting diverse players across the physical and financial aspects of trade.

“The founders behind Tradeteq, Trade Finance Market, Culum Capital, eFundSME and Incomlend, are driving that change by using technology and data analytics to mitigate risks, make lending more efficient and close the trade finance gap,” said Tan. “Our vision is to work with these companies and build strategic first-mover stakes in the future of trade.”

Trade finance is enormous. The opportunity for forward thinking platforms to disrupt the US$ 16 trillion global trade business is huge. Additionally, GTR says some 30% of global trade, or US$5 trillion, is under-financed. This trade finance gap presents an opportunity for debt and equity investors. While returns from trade have traditionally come from providers of debt capital, the emergence of “Tradetechs” presents a new opportunity for private equity and other investors looking to diversify.

"We are excited to partner with GTR Ventures as Tradeteq continues to grow," said Christoph Gugelmann, CEO of UK-headquartered Tradeteq. "This partnership will help us expand our reach to all players within the trade ecosystem and consolidate our European bases while expanding to markets in Asia, including Singapore, Hong Kong, Shanghai and Tokyo."

https://www.crowdfundinsider.com/2018/03/129789-gtr-ventures-invests-five-trade-fintechs-tradeteq-efundsme-culum-capital-trade-finance-market/

DATA & ANALYTICS / IoT

Airtable raises $52 million to give non-coders tools to build complex software

Data & Analytics / IoT

3/15/18

A massive company probably has plenty of engineers on staff and the resources to build a complex backbone of interconnected information that can contain tons of data and make acting on it easy — but for smaller companies, and for those that aren't technical, those tools aren't very accessible.

That's what convinced Howie Liu to create Airtable, a startup that looks to turn what seems like just a normal spreadsheet into a robust database tool, hiding the complexity of what's happening in the background while those without any programming experience create intricate systems to get their work done. Today, they're trying to take that one step further with a new tool called Blocks, a set of mix-and-match operations like SMS and integrating maps that users can just drop into their systems. Think of it as a way to give a small business owner with a non-technical background to meticulously track all the performance activity across, say, a network of food trucks by just entering a bunch of dollar values and dropping in one of these tools.

"We really want to take this power you have in software creation and 'consumerize' that into a form anyone can use," Liu said. "At the same time, from a business standpoint, we saw this bigger opportunity underneath the low-code app platforms in general. Those platforms solve the needs of heavyweight expensive use cases where you have a budget and have a lot of time. I would position Airtable making a leap toward a graphical user interface, versus a lot of products that are admin driven."

Liu said the company has raised an additional $52 million in financing in a round led by CRV and Caffeinated Capital, with participation from Freestyle Ventures and Slow Ventures. All this is going toward a way to build a system that is trying to abstract out even the process of programming itself, though there's always going to be some limited scope as to how custom of a system you can actually make with what amounts to a set of logic operation legos. That being said, the goal here is to boil down all of the most common sets of operations with the long tail left to the average programmers (and larger enterprises often have these kinds of highly-customized needs).

All this is coming at a time when businesses are increasingly chasing the long tail of small- to medium-sized businesses, the ones that aren't really on the grid but represent a massive market opportunity. Those businesses also probably don't have the kinds of resources to hire engineers while companies like Google or Facebook are camping out on college campuses looking to snap up students graduating with technical majors. That's part of the reason why Excel had become so popular trying to abstract out a lot of complex operations necessary to run a business, but at the same time, Liu said that kind of philosophy should be able to be taken a step further.

"If you look at cloud, you have Amazon's [cloud infrastructure] EC2, which abstracted the hardware level and you can build on existing machine intelligence," Liu said. "Then, you get the OS level and up. Containers, Heroku, and other tools have extracted away the operation level complexity. But you have to write the app and modal logic. Our goal is to go a big leap forward on top of that and abstract out the app code layer. You should be able to directly use our interface, and blocks, all these plug and play lego pieces that give you more dynamic functionality — whether a map view or an integration with Twilio."

And, really, all these platforms like Twilio have tried to make themselves pretty friendly to coding beginners as-is. Twilio has a lot of really good documentation for first-time developers to learn to use their platforms. But Airtable hopes to serve as a way to interconnect all these things in a complex web, creating a relational database behind the scenes that users can operate on in a more simplistic matter that's still accurate, fast, and reliable.

https://techcrunch.com/2018/03/15/airtable-raises-52m-to-give-non-coders-tools-to-build-complex-software/

Experian agrees to acquire ClearScore

Data & Analytics / IoT

3/14/18

Experian, the global information services company, is pleased to announce that it has agreed to acquire ClearScore. ClearScore is an innovative UK consumer organisation that matches individuals to personal financial products, offering free credit reports, scores and personal financial education, both online and through mobile devices.

Brian Cassin, Chief Executive Officer of Experian said: "In acquiring ClearScore, we will take another important step in our strategy to extend the services we provide to UK consumers. Our goal is to provide more choice and greater convenience to individuals who want access to personal financial products at the best prices, while also making it easier for credit providers to offer better, more tailored offers to consumers. We look forward to welcoming the ClearScore team to Experian and to including the ClearScore brand as part of our broader offer."

ClearScore provides free access to credit reports and scores and introduces consumers to personal financial products and offers which are best suited to their individual circumstances. These include offers for credit cards, loans, mortgages, car loans and other services. To date, ClearScore has enrolled over 6 million members in the UK through its free membership model.

The UK market for introducing consumers to financial products is large and is growing rapidly. Spend is also shifting rapidly to online channels as a more accessible and effective way to present offers to people seeking credit. Experian is uniquely placed for this evolution, with its best-in-class data, scores and analytics, which are used to determine a consumer's eligibility and ability to afford a loan.

The acquisition of ClearScore will combine two well-known, high growth UK consumer brands, both of which will be retained. It will also bring together two businesses with complementary assets and skills to improve outcomes for consumers. We expect ClearScore to benefit from Experian's broad data assets, analytical capabilities and distribution, while Experian will benefit from ClearScore's skill in developing services which are appealing and easy to use, as well as an agile culture accomplished at keeping its membership engaged. In addition, ClearScore will help to accelerate our ambitions to provide services to consumers internationally, having recently launched a service in South Africa.

https://www.finextra.com/pressarticle/73049/experian-agrees-to-acquire-clearscore/retail

Vestigo Ventures backs Digital Assets Data's seed round

Data & Analytics / IoT

3/14/18

Vestigo Ventures, an early-stage venture capital firm focused on fintech, announced today it has made a seed investment in Digital Assets Data, a company that seeks to bring data, information and transparency to cryptoassets, including currencies, platforms, applications, side chains, security tokens, and initial coin offers (ICOs) through subscription services to hedge funds and other institutional investors.

The funds raised will be used by Digital Assets Data to scale its technology and programming operations. The company was recently launched by successful serial entrepreneur Mike Alfred, the Co-founder and former Chief Executive Officer of BrightScope, and his brother Eddie Alfred, along with Jason Yates, former Chief Technology Officer of BrightScope. Founded in 2008, BrightScope (recently acquired by Strategic Insight) is a fintech and data company that delivers enterprise-grade SaaS solutions to many of the world's largest asset managers and helped pioneer an industry-standard rating for 401k plan quality.

"You don't have to be in fintech to be aware of the hyper-growth of cryptocurrencies and other cryptoassets. Digital Assets Data is the only company focused on delivering much needed transparency and structure to the nascent and rapidly-changing industry," said Mark Casady, general partner of Vestigo Ventures, who will serve on Digital Assets Data's Advisory Board. "The mission of Vestigo is to back companies developing technology infrastructure for the financial services industry, and equally, investing in people that have both the vision and ability to succeed; the team from Digital Assets Data checks all the boxes. We are confident Mike and his team will be successful in launching a data platform that becomes a standard for the industry and ultimately improves liquidity of cryptoassets."

"As cryptoassets continue to gain momentum, financial institutions will require specialized tools that allow them to successfully navigate what is currently an opaque market environment," said Mike Alfred, CEO and co-founder of Digital Assets Data. "Vestigo understands the void Digital Assets Data fills, as well as our team's track record and desire to grow another strong and defensible business."

Alfred continued, "The access Vestigo provides is unparalleled and will enable us to rapidly expand and bring Digital Assets Data's products and services to the C-suite of financial services institutions trying to effectively position themselves in cryptoassets and ICOs."

https://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/vestigo-ventures-backs-digital-assets-datas-seed-round-300613604.html

Wipro to divest hosted data centre services business to Ensono for $405 million

Data & Analytics / IoT

3/14/18

India's third largest software services firm Wipro on Wednesday said it has signed a definitive agreement to divest its hosted data centre services business to Ensono for $405 million.

The deal will see transition of eight data centres and over 900 employees of the hosted data centre services business to Ensono, Wipro said in a statement.

"The acquisition significantly expands Ensono's geographic footprint and global service capabilities, taking the company one step closer to achieving its vision of helping clients harness the power of hybrid IT to transform their businesses on a global scale," it added.

Wipro and Ensono have also signed a long-term partnership agreement to jointly address the hybrid IT requirements of Wipro's new and existing enterprise customers.

As part of the agreement, Wipro will make a strategic investment of $55 million in Ensono's combined entity.

The hosted data centre services business is one of the three businesses that became a part of Wipro when the Bengaluru-based firm had acquired Infocrossing Inc in 2007.

The other two businesses -- Medicare & Medicaid services in the health insurance space and ERP implementation services -- have been integrated with other Wipro businesses and are not part of this divestment, the statement said.

"This partnership will enhance the global data centre footprint and expand the available talent pool which will give us economies of scale and allow us to offer end-to-end capabilities in the infrastructure space, better than ever before," Wipro Senior Vice President (Global Infrastructure Services) Kiran Desai said.

Ensono, which provides hybrid IT services, will be able to double in size and increase its annualised revenue to be in excess of $550 million through the acquisition.

"This is the third acquisition in less than three years for Ensono... We are increasing our geographic presence by expanding our data centre operations in Germany, UK and the US, as well as establishing an operational presence in India," Ensono CEO Jeff VonDeylen said.

The acquisition, subject to customary closing conditions and regulatory approvals, is expected to close in the quarter ending June 2018.

The standalone revenue of the data centre business was $241 million for FY2016-17 -- 2.9 per cent of Wipro's consolidated revenues for FY16-17). The net worth of the business was Rs 24.25 billion (net of cash and debt), Wipro said in a BSE filing.

Ensono is a portfolio company of Charlesbank Capital Partners and M/C Partners. The privately-held company has offices in the US, the UK, Poland and Germany, and has over 1000 employees. Its revenue stood at $285 million for the year ended December 2017.

http://www.business-standard.com/article/companies/wipro-to-divest-hosted-data-centre-services-business-to-ensono-for-405-mn-118031401039_1.html

Voci Technologies attracts $8 million Series B

Data & Analytics / IoT

3/12/18

Voci Technologies Incorporated (Voci), the leading provider of enterprise speech-to-text transcription and analytics, today announced the close of its $8M Series B Round. The Series B round was led by Grotech Ventures (Grotech) and Harbert Growth Partners (Harbert). Voci plans to use this capital to accelerate sales and marketing while continuing its focus on delivering best-in-class technology for businesses seeking insights from their voice-based customer interactions.

Voci, a Carnegie Mellon spinoff, is the leading provider of software that delivers actionable insights from recorded or live voice. Its patented technology employs Artificial Intelligence (AI) and deep learning algorithms to deliver highly accurate transcriptions, as well as insights related to gender, sentiment, emotion, and speaker biometrics. Voci can process up to 150 hours of speech in 1 hour on a single 1u machine.

Jonathan Diedrich, Director Customer Communication at Check Into Cash stated: “Customer experience is very important to our company’s success, and Voci has allowed us to turn the recorded audio from our customer interactions from an obligatory cost into a true asset. Voci’s advanced technology, completeness, and open architecture allows us to deploy speech analytics on our own terms. With Voci, we are able to take all audio from our retail environment, which has no skills-based routing, and bucket those calls into specific subsets for auditing and review. This allows us to find the data immediately, a function that was impossible in the time prior to using Voci.”

Steve Fredrick, General Partner at Grotech Ventures, said: “Most companies are sitting on a gold mine of audio recordings that can deliver monetizable insights to sales, marketing, operations and compliance leaders. Limited and inflexible technologies have prohibited these insights from being surfaced, and Voci is delivering technology that changes the way people think about speech analytics.”

“Speech analytics has been out-of-reach for most companies and departments due to heavy fixed costs and ongoing services requirements”, said Tom Roberts, General Partner at Harbert Growth Partners. “Voci delivers insights to virtually every department that relies on voice-based customer interactions by combining fast and accurate transcription with a flexible and open architecture.”

“We are thrilled to be partnering with Grotech and Harbert”, said Anthony Gadient CEO of Voci Technologies. “This influx of capital will accelerate our goal of being the world’s premier solution for speech-to-text transcription in terms of capacity, quality and scalability.

https://www.pehub.com/2018/03/voci-technologies-attracts-8-mln-series-b/

OTHERS

Luminate Security emerges from stealth with $14 million in funding

Others

3/15/18

Luminate Security today emerged from stealth and announced a total of $14 million in combined Series A and seed round funding. Luminate is backed by U.S. Venture Partners and Aleph Venture Capital, along with the ScaleUp program of Microsoft for startups.

Luminate was founded in January, 2017, and has spent the last 14 months developing and deploying its software. The company's founders are cyber security veterans Ofer Smadari, Leonid Belkind, and Eldad Livni, who played senior roles in some of Israel's most innovative security and infrastructure companies, including Check Point Software Technologies and Adallom, which was acquired by Microsoft.

Unlike traditional security solutions, Luminate enables IT operations to move at the speed of digital business requirements and to integrate seamlessly with existing IT tools. Employees can safely access any corporate resources from any device while IT and security teams gain a comprehensive security governance framework, effectively eliminating risks of attacks on their resources.

The company, which is headquartered in Israel and Silicon Valley, plans to use the funding to expand its operations in the U.S. and to develop its channels and customer base.

https://newscenter.io/2018/03/luminate-security-emerges-stealth-14-million-funding/

Solebit secures $11 million in Series A funding led by ClearSky Security

Others

3/14/18

Solebit, a transformative cyber security company delivering ground-breaking and the most effective evasion proof approach to the identification and prevention of zero-day malware and unknown threats, today announced the closing of an $11 million Series A funding round led by ClearSky Security.

Solebit will leverage these funds to accelerate adoption and deployment of the SoleGATE Security Platform, and immediate growth in sales and marketing capabilities as Solebit establishes its new global headquarters in Silicon Valley, California. Additional investors participating in this funding round include MassMutual Ventures and Glilot Capital Partners.

Targeted attacks continue to grow at an exponential pace through a variety of vectors. Other than Solebit's patented technology, there are no other commercially available technologies and approaches in the market today that enable evasion-proof real-time detection and prevention of embedded malicious code.

"Solebit provides the most effective, real-time, and accurate cyber-attack prevention platform that is incredibly simple to use, integrate and manage," said Peter Kuper, Managing Director, ClearSky Security. "As organizations struggle to better manage risk against unknown threats, Solebit is ideally positioned to be a trusted partner to both enterprise and large-scale security vendors as they contend with ever increasingly sophisticated attackers. We are confident that Solebit has identified an attractive growth market that is currently suffering from ineffective sandbox technologies. Our investment will augment Solebit's world-class team of engineering, sales and customer care professionals to further promote its standing amongst the world's great cyber security companies."

Most modern cyber-attacks use data files to take advantage of vulnerabilities and active content (macros, JavaScript, etc.) to deliver malicious code into the organization. The SoleGATE Security Platform is anchored by DvC™, a patented, real-time, signature-less engine, which conclusively identifies malware threats regardless of evasion technique, file type, operating system, and client-side application whether on-premise or in the cloud.

The Solebit engine processes millions of transactions every day and does not rely on heuristics, patterns or behaviors, which makes it evasion-proof for today's modern attacks and future ready as well.

"Attackers still possess the edge, particularly in zero-day attacks, despite considerable security investment," said Boris Vaynberg, CEO of Solebit. "DvC™ assumes that there is no legitimate reason for executable code to be present in any data file. DvC™ also accurately identifies and blocks malicious active content using advanced flow analysis, de-obfuscation techniques and deep content evaluation, to reveal threat intent within any data file covering machine, operating system and application levels, thereby rendering such sandbox-evading malware harmless to the enterprise."

https://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/solebit-secures-11-million-in-series-a-funding-led-by-clearsky-security-300613654.html

Moogsoft secures $40 million in Series D funding

Others

3/13/18

Moogsoft, a leading provider of artificial intelligence for IT operations (AIOps), today announced $40 million in Series D funding led by Goldman Sachs Growth Equity, with participation from existing investors including HCL, Northgate Capital, Redpoint Ventures, Singtel Innov8, STTelemedia and Wing VC. This round brings Moogsoft's total funding to $90 million. Funds will be used to scale sales and marketing to meet global demand as well as R&D investment for new product development and continued innovation in their core AIOps platform.

In 2017, Moogsoft more than doubled revenue and saw the onboarding of key customers from across the Global Fortune 500. In addition to closing its fourth round of funding, Moogsoft has also recently released over 15 updates to their AIOps platform, bringing to market innovative new features such as Real-Time Service Dashboards, Collaborative Team-Based Workflows, Algorithmic Clustering Engine, Probable Root Cause Analysis, and a Mobile version. To date, Moogsoft has been awarded six patents and have filed for over 40 additional patent applications for their inventions.

"We are enormously excited to welcome Goldman Sachs Growth Equity as a partner as we dive headlong into the future of IT operations and service assurance," said Phil Tee, chairman, CEO and co-founder of Moogsoft. "Moogsoft's purpose-built AIOps platform is in production in the world's most complex IT environments and is fundamentally transforming the way enterprise operations teams work. We have the intention to be the primary supplier of service assurance software for the new digital economy. With new products, additional capability in AIOps, and with significant investments in sales and marketing, Moogsoft is set to lead the next phase of the digital revolution."

Gartner Research defines AIOps platforms as software systems that combine big data and AI or machine learning functionality to enhance and partially replace a broad range of IT operations processes and tasks, including availability and performance monitoring, event correlation and analysis, IT service management, and automation. In their 2017 Market Guide for AIOps Platforms, Gartner predicts that, by 2022, 40 percent of all large enterprises will combine big data and machine learning functionality to support and partially replace monitoring, service desk and automation processes and tasks, up from five percent in 2017.

"We have followed the Moogsoft story closely over the past several years, and have been consistently impressed with their thoughtfulness around product development and ability to deliver such a compelling value proposition to customers managing some of the most complex IT operations in the world. By leveraging intelligent algorithms to deliver true machine learning, Moogsoft's platform addresses the human scalability challenges of using legacy rules-based monitoring technology in increasingly distributed and complicated IT environments," said Jason Kreuziger, a Vice President in Goldman Sachs' Merchant Banking Division, who will join the

Moogsoft board of directors in connection with the investment. “We are excited to partner with a world-class management team that has deep domain expertise and a track-record of success in this market and look forward to working with them to help further scale Moogsoft going forward.”

https://venturebeat.com/2018/03/13/moogsoft-secures-40-million-in-series-d-funding/

Behavioral biometrics company BioCatch closes $30 million round

Others

3/12/18

Behavioral biometrics provider BioCatch today announced it has closed a $30 million financing round led by Maverick Ventures with additional participation from American Express Ventures, NexStar Partners, Kreos Capital, CreditEase, OurCrowd, JANVEST Capital and other existing investors.

“BioCatch helps to answer the question, ‘who are you’ in an online world where fraudsters operate with the legitimate credentials of others, making it very hard to distinguish them from authorized users,” said Howard Edelstein, BioCatch CEO. “We take pride in the track record we have amassed and the role that we play as an integral part of our clients’ identity strategy. This strategy cuts across the digital ecosystem, from stopping fraud in real-time to preventing fake accounts from being opened in the first place, all while enabling a seamless user experience.”

“BioCatch’s robust behavioral analytics platform is helping companies identify and stop fraudulent activity without sacrificing the user experience for legitimate customers,” said Harshul Sanghi, managing partner of Amex Ventures, the strategic investment group within American Express. “The demand for organizations to strike that balance will only increase as digital engagement with their customers grows, and cyber threats become more sophisticated. We’re excited to support BioCatch as it works to expand its capabilities and help organizations, including American Express, address this critical need.”

Founded by experts in big data, machine learning and artificial intelligence, BioCatch set out to address the next generation of cyber threats by focusing on the behavior of the fraudster as opposed to adding new endpoint security layers. BioCatch proactively collects and analyzes more than 2,000 parameters to generate user profiles and model different types of genuine and malicious behavior. The platform addresses a wide range of threats at login and beyond by identifying malware, robotic activity, social engineering (phishing, etc.) and other cyber threats, which is a differentiator from traditional fraud approaches and other behavioral biometrics providers.

BioCatch monitors more than 5 billion transactions per month and generates real-time alerts when behavioral anomalies are detected, stopping fraud at the source and reducing the significant operational costs associated with managing it.

“BioCatch has made its mark as behavioral biometrics emerges as a key component in driving authentication and fraud strategies today. Their technology helps minimize friction for the end user, working passively in the background, eliminating the trade-off that has been made to date between security and the user experience,” said Julie Conroy, research director of Aite Group’s retail banking & payments practice. “Practitioners are being hit from multiple directions – ever changing cyber threats, new regulations and open banking requirements, global trends towards real-time and faster payments, and customer demands for more functionality in the digital channel. Whether in banking, insurance, cryptocurrency, P2P payments, healthcare, government or otherwise, enterprises large and small are all facing the same identity challenges"

https://www.banklesstimes.com/2018/03/12/behavioral-biometrics-company-biocatch-closes-30m-round/