

Morpho's next wave of innovative biometrics in Africa

Morpho (Safran), supplier of biometric identification and security solutions, has clearly shown its intention to continue to dominate the African market. Morpho says it plans to aggressively capture the untapped markets in the rest of Africa.

The company recently showcased MorphoWave in South Africa, the next wave of innovative biometrics and the market's first biometric access solution featuring high-speed touchless fingerprint matching.

Tapping the African market



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Guillaume Lefevre, Morpho VP Market Development and Sales, is upbeat about the speedy adoption of biometrics throughout the African continent. "There is a new wave of consumer applications that will drive innovation, vendors in this space will have to adapt or die. Morpho's consistent ability to advance the security industry with groundbreaking biometric technology and unrivalled performance is seen in MorphoWave."

He says Ideco, Morpho's local premier partner, was instrumental in establishing a strong presence in South Africa - the gateway into Africa. "Not only do our strategies complement each other, but Ideco really understands the African markets. We would like to grow this partnership and start penetrating new untapped markets on the continent."

Global smartphone trends influence growth of biometrics

Speaking about global trends, Lefevre says smartphones have emerged as the new frontier of growth for fingerprint biometrics. "The significant increase in the adoption of biometric technologies in smartphones is largely due to factors such as growing concerns over data integrity and security among mobile users, rising popularity of mobile wallet concept for accomplishing banking and financial transactions, and move towards mobile cloud computing."

In 2014, the top smartphone vendors all launched products with biometrics. According to a report by IHS Technology Research, shipments of fingerprint enabled handsets and tablets will reach 1.4 billion in 2020. The integration of biometrics into smartphones has gone from being a trend to becoming the norm.

"We have seen some important milestones for the adoption of biometrics. Apple's new iPhone and iPad devices all have fingerprint readers and it also launched payments services with secure identity verification through fingerprint technology. Huawei, one of the world's leading smartphone vendors, was first to launch an Android phone with a fingerprint touch sensor. Since then, others like Samsung have followed," he explains.

Biometrics needed for secure payment and information channels

As e-commerce continues to grow, fingerprint technology will become an important technology to protect consumers from fraud, hacking and identify theft. Mobile payment services using fingerprint authentication will continue to spread quickly and gain approval among consumers.

Manufacturers will open up fingerprint technology for App developers, such as in Samsung's SDK Pass and most recently in Apple's iOS 8. This will lead to a strong growth of apps that use fingerprints as a means of identity verification. However, convenience will continue to drive the demand among consumers. Although swipe sensors are more cost effective, the user experience of touch sensors are superior and we will see more and more vendors opting for touch sensors, not only on the high-end devices.

Lefevre says as smartphones evolve and become more advanced, the requirements of small hardware components become even greater. "Touch sensors will continue to decrease in size, which poses large technological challenges on especially fingerprint software to ensure a great user experience with high security."

"Since the introduction of biometrics and fingerprint technology into smartphones, we are seeing the convenience of the technology driving consumer demand. The security aspect of fingerprint technology will become even more important as more services and functionality are tied to your finger. This will put higher demand on fingerprint software to deliver both convenience and high security," he concludes.

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