



Lift off in

Latin America

With Latin America on the verge of major growth in its government smart card sector could open smart card solutions be the key to ensuring issuers that their investments and infrastructures are safeguarded for the future?

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Across the world, governments are realizing the potential of smart card technology to aid in the cost-effective, flexible and secure deployment of national and government employee ID programs, healthcare, access control and other eGovernment initiatives. The global government smart card market is expected to experience a high growth rate in the short-term. This is due to the continued launch and expansion of large-scale

deployments of smart card-based national and government employee ID programs, such as those currently being rolled out in North America; ePassport initiatives, which are being driven by US Visa Waiver countries; and healthcare schemes of the kind which can be found across Europe and Asia.

Government smart cards

As outlined at the Smart Cards for Government and

Payments conference hosted by GlobalPlatform and the Smart Card Alliance in Mexico City in May, Latin America is among many regions witnessing the exponential expansion of its government smart card market.

Among all smart card markets in Latin America, including the much larger payments and SIM sectors, the government smart card sector is expected to grow at the fastest rate in the next four years. Health and social ser-

vice applications comprise the largest proportion of the Latin America government smart card market at present, closely followed by national ID programs. Smart driving licenses have been deployed in a number of Latin American countries, but these account for a relatively small percentage of the overall market, and ePassports, which are currently being trialed in Brazil, Mexico and Venezuela, considerably less.

Two of the largest Latin American smart card programs currently driving large smart card shipments within the region are the Brazilian Public Key Infrastructure (PKI) program and the Mexican healthcare card.

Major programs in Brazil and Mexico

In the case of Brazil, the National Institute of Information Technology - a federal agency linked to the Presidency of the Republic of Brazil - is spearheading a national Public Key Infrastructure program, known regionally as ICP Brasil. It was introduced by the Brazilian Government in 2002, which passed a law stating that any electronic document is legally binding if it is certified by ICP Brasil or any other PKI where the concerned parties agree on the validity of the document. Through the program, digital identity credentials are provided to citizens and corporations so that they can file electronically signed documents. The program is the

largest electronic digital credential program using smart cards and tokens in Latin America and aims to reduce paper-based administration by promoting and enabling eGovernment services.

Seguro Popular, a Mexican Government social security

organization, launched a national healthcare initiative in Mexico in the first quarter of 2006. It aimed to ensure a system where patient information was safely stored, citizens received the correct healthcare benefits, and paperwork was generally reduced. The organization's solution was to begin rolling out a smart card, eventually to be issued to 3.7 million Mexican families, which contained patient information, prescription details and an e-purse for healthcare subsidies. Every time a patient visits their doctor, they present their card - which can only be read by authorized healthcare professionals - and the information it contains can be viewed and updated in real time. The healthcare card is expected to reduce administration costs and reduce the risk of benefit fraud.

Many other deployments and pilots are underway throughout Latin America, supporting the observation that the government smart

card market is highly active throughout the region and will continue to grow rapidly in the near future.

So considering that the market is in the early stages of a massive growth period and that many potential new issuers are considering the

Open standards allow smart card programs to evolve with future strategic considerations and markets

deployment of smart card technology for eGovernment services for the first time, how can they ensure that their investments and infrastructures are safeguarded for the future?

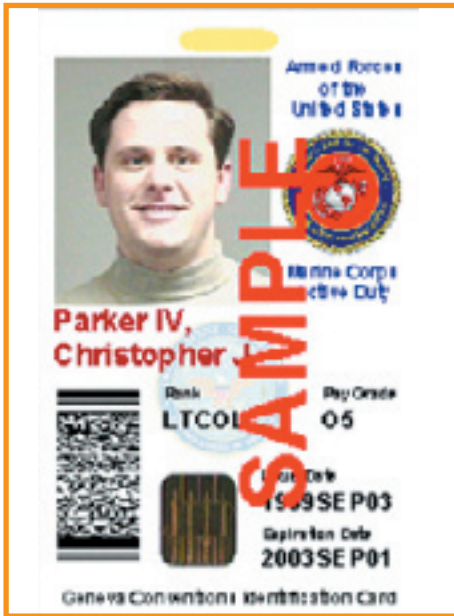
Open standards the key

The simple answer is to deploy a smart card infrastructure based on open and interoperable specifications. Issuers of solutions based

An ICP Brasil Public Key Infrastructure card. The program was introduced by the Brazilian government in 2002



on open specifications will have many advantages over those deploying proprietary products, including faster time to market, multi-sourc-



US Department of Defense Common Access Card (left); Mexican national health card (right)

ing opportunities leading to economies of scale, and the ability to form strategic 'on-card' partnerships with other government agencies or third parties. Open standards also provide flexibility for smart card programs to evolve in line with future strategic considerations and market requirements, ensuring that smart card programs do not become obsolete prematurely.

The GlobalPlatform Specifications have been incorporated within the ISO/IEC 7816-13 international standard series for smart cards, offering all users total assurance that their investment and technology is protected for the future.

A number of governments in various countries across the world have chosen to deploy solutions based on GlobalPlatform's open specifications. Among these is the US Government, which bases its Department of De-

fense (DoD) Common Access Cards (CAC) on open standards in order that the same card can be deployed across different agencies, in different locations, and for the purposes of both physical and logical access.

As of August 2006, over eleven million CAC cards had been issued on a decentralized basis at over 1,400 sites in 27 countries, at over 2,000 workstations. This is clearly a successful model, which illustrates the flexibility offered by interoperable smart card solutions.

Since the CAC deployment, GlobalPlatform has continued to work closely with the US Government and has formed a dedicated Government Task Force to extend the GlobalPlatform Messaging Specification to support the unique issuance requirements of the Personal Identity Verification (PIV) card for the US Federal Government. This work will bear relevance

beyond the US Government and confirms the importance and value of GlobalPlatform technology within large-scale eID programs at the very highest level.

Sharing the experiences of others

The growing increase in smart card shipments and the predictions being made by industry watchers suggest that Latin America is on the verge of huge growth in its government smart card sector.

By looking to share in the experiences and knowledge of other governments who have been through the same decision making processes and navigated their way through to the deployment of successful, open smart card solutions, Latin American governments can minimize their investment of both time and money, and ensure that the infrastructure they choose will be flexible enough to meet their needs, now and in the future. The numerous countries that have advocated the deployment of an open smart cards platform through their own national ID and other eGovernment programs (including Austria, Hong Kong, Macau, Morocco, Moscow, Poland, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, South Korea and the Sultanate of Oman) can provide a host of best-practice reference implementations for Latin American government agencies that wish to learn more about the benefits of open smart card solutions. ■