

## CASE STUDY



L SCAN Guardian

### Application Environments:

- Identity Verification System

### Business Benefits:

- Rapid fingerprint capture and turnaround for background checks
- Economical biometric data capture
- Easy-to-use portable livescan system

### Products:

- L SCAN Guardian<sup>®</sup>

### Pull Quote:

“Guardian is a mature product that has been reliable and provides the capability to record finger scans effectively and efficiently.”

- Andrew Pestell,  
former Head of Procurement,  
UKvisas

## Britain's Borders Strengthened Using Biometric Technology

### Challenge of Granting Biometric Visas

As a leading financial center, the United Kingdom attracts a growing number of travelers each year. The UK has experienced a rise in the number of visa applications it receives—up from 1,750,000 in 2002 to more than 2,500,000 in 2007/08. To keep pace, the United Kingdom Border Agency International Group (UKBAIG) was established to strengthen national borders and protect citizens against those attempting to enter the UK illegally.

The UKBAIG, formerly known as UKvisas, enables the country's authorities to check individuals before they begin their journey. The program authorizes the capture and recording of travelers' biometric information.

Capturing high-quality biometric data from each visa applicant is critical to the success of the program. Therefore, the inclusion of biometric identity verification technology is a cornerstone of the program, currently operational in UK embassies and consulates worldwide. By recording biometric information through fingerprint capture, UKBAIG can verify an individual's identity at the earliest point of entry.

### Solution to Capture Unique Attributes

UKBAIG selected Cross Match L SCAN Guardian to facilitate ten-print capture to help establish individuals' identities. “Fingerprints are now an integral part of the visa application process. Fingerprints are captured through the use of Cross Match hardware technology, which is now deployed worldwide,” says Andrew Pestell, former head of procurement for UKvisas. “This technology helps us to check against UK government records to identify if the individual is already known to the UK immigration authorities. Fixing a person's identity through this biometric technology helps to improve the quality of entry clearance decisions to the UK and such control measures play a key part in our contribution to the Border and Immigration Agency's strategic objective of strengthening our borders.”

A state-of-the-art fingerprint capture device, Guardian produces forensic-quality images, thereby eliminating the need for paper-based methods.

# Britain's Borders Strengthened Using Biometric Technology

## **Solution to Capture Unique Attributes (continued)**

The compact Guardian includes features such as patented auto capture capability and Perfect Roll™ technology, making it ideal for foolproof fingerprint acquisition in high-volume processing environments, such as visa issuance and border control. The device collects quality fingerprints in just a few seconds, and meets international standards that comply with government requirements in many countries.

When applicants apply for a UK visa, Guardian captures fingerprints in 3 easy steps. First, the applicant places the four flat fingers from the left hand on the Guardian livescan system. Then the applicant places both thumbs on the device and finally, the four flat fingers from the right hand are scanned. Supporting this straightforward process are Guardian's unique features, such as illuminated pictograms that guide the enrollment process and auto capture feedback that indicates image quality.

The fingerprint images are then scanned and checked against government records—establishing an applicant's identity and immigration history to improve the quality of entry clearance decisions. "The Guardian fingerprint scanner supplied by Cross Match Technologies is a mature product that has been deployed operationally by more than one government organization," says Pestell.

"The product has been found to be operationally reliable and provides the capability to record good-quality finger scans from applicants effectively and efficiently."

## **Benefits of the UKBAIG Program**

As the first EU country to collect biometric data in the form of ten fingerprints and a digital photo from every visa applicant, the UK is regarded as a pioneer in biometric and identity management techniques.

Since the system relies on biometric techniques, it can detect individuals who have previously been refused a visa—even if they apply in a different name or at another visa section. The UKBAIG program is also able to identify individuals who have come to the attention of the police in the UK, thereby allowing the authorities to check these individuals and, if necessary, deny them access to the country. Against a backdrop of global terrorism, organized crime and illegal immigration, biometric identity verification has helped to prevent visa shopping and has empowered the UK to provide visas only to individuals who have a legitimate right to receive them.

Since the introduction of the first UK biometric visas, over five thousand applicants have been detected while attempting to immigrate illegally to the UK. Fingerprints taken as part of the visa application process are

checked against UK Government records to determine if the individual is already known to UKBA. With Guardian, more than 26,000 sets of fingerprints have been matched quickly and successfully to individuals of concern; thereby, proving the effectiveness of biometric background checks.

UKBAIG now manages 155 operations worldwide. Currently, more than 100 nationalities covering 75 percent of the world's population require a visa to enter the UK. As of January, 2008, more than 3.6 million sets of fingerprints had been collected by UKBAIG, of which 26,000 matched prints already held in the UK. This has helped the government to quickly refuse visa applications for individuals who could represent a security threat.

In recognition, UKBAIG gained a Charter Mark—the UK government's national standard for customer service excellence—for its operation in New York, the first overseas visa office to achieve the award in its own right. Furthermore, in March, 2007, a cabinet office review of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office also praised the project.

Pestell concludes: "UKBAIG is a world-leading service with real innovation, driven by customer needs, as exemplified in New Delhi and Lagos where service quality and efficiency have improved significantly."

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