

Case Study

**Secure and
easy access
with a branded
authenticator app**

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Building a future we can all trust



The challenge

“Not all of our patients have the capacity to remember their user-names and passwords, but security and privacy are vital in a sensitive environment such as ours,” says Irma de Puijker, Head of Automation at Philadelphia’s Information & Automation (I&A) department.

“However, SMS passcodes are not only expensive but also complicated to use. So, we looked for a two-factor login solution that was both very accessible and highly secure. And what is safer and simpler than your own face?” she says.

Philadelphia had been in touch with Thales as early as 2016, when our stand-alone White Label Authenticator App was recommended by the organisation’s digital-library supplier. “Our mindset wasn’t ready yet,” Irma explains. “We were still adamant for the solution to be on-premise, but that proved to be too much of a technical and organisational challenge.

The number of external parties involved in our value chain simply made it too complex to succeed. At the time, our reservations against the cloud may have been justified, but the market has strongly developed since. That’s why, in 2019, we decided to go SaaS with Thales, in the process eliminating several links in the chain. From that moment on, the project quickly gathered speed.”

When the two parties originally met, Thales was the only vendor offering face recognition as a means of authentication. Yet, by 2019, that situation had changed. Still, Philadelphia wanted to stick with Thales. “Thales’ White Label Authenticator App is invisible to our users,” says Irma, “as it’s fully integrated into our corporate identity. Also, we had built a strong relationship and gained mutual trust in that initial on-premise stage of the project. Thales has a strong presence in financial services but showed a very determined commitment to succeed in healthcare too. We wanted to offer them the opportunity to prove their worth.”

The solution

The cloud version of Philadelphia’s login app was implemented in less than three months and rolled out in April 2020. It proved to be an instant hit. Onboarding is done through a one-off username/ password login, followed by the second-factor authentication through a choice of face recognition (the default option), fingerprint or a PIN code.

Philadelphia

After that, users can log on to the system simply by scanning QR code on the portal’s login page with their smartphone. Face recognition and the QR code suffice in any login attempt following the initial onboarding process.

The I&A department was the first to test the app before it was piloted by Philadelphia’s back-office staff and at several care locations. ‘Staff members as well as caregivers reacted very positively—they found the app very easy to use, and I fully agree’, says Irma. ‘Its implementation was a huge success, and I myself use the app every day. Still, we were worried about the adoption by our patients and by some of our less IT-savvy caregivers and volunteers. So, to promote a successful adoption, we developed several campaign tools such as an easy-to-understand manual and an animated video, and requested Thales to support us in that. On the day of the launch, we also opened a dedicated service desk, just to be sure.’

“ Thales’ service has been top-notch. They have proved themselves to be dependable, supportive experts on the subject of authentication. They fit in well with our aim to lead the way in our industry.”

– Irma de Puijker, Head of automation – Philadelphia Care Foundation

The result

In the end, Philadelphia’s fears proved unjustified. ‘We’ve had very little in the way of complaints’, Irma explains. “And this happened right in the middle of the first wave of the COVID-19 pandemic and almost simultaneously with a huge Citrix update. We were able to phase down the service desk very quickly, proving that the adoption was a big success.”

"We were hoping to reach most of our caregivers and volunteers from the start", Irma continues, "and soon we reached a preliminary total of 8,000 app downloads on a total of 6,300 workers and 7,500 patients. If we add all family members, other client representatives and external partners, we may at one time reach a total of 50,000 users. Our SMS passcode platform is still in use, but we aim to dismantle that as a next step to increase adoption." And that's especially interesting from a financial point of view. With the current usage, we save €10,000 per month due to the use of biometrics instead of SMS codes.

With the app now in full use, Philadelphia has found that its burden on management and operation is close to zero. "Since our launch, we've gone through our first large update, and nobody noticed a thing!" says Irma with a smile. Thales' service has been top-notch—they've proved themselves to be dependable, supportive experts on the subject of authentication. They fit in well with our aim to lead the way in our industry."

Philadelphia has now involved Thales to help them explore the options of creating a full-scale Identity & Access Management (IAM) environment. As Irma states, "We're not of the kind to automatically surrender to the big tech companies of the world. We have lots of trust in the way Thales acts as a company, and we value their opinion."

About Philadelphia

Philadelphia Care Foundation is a Dutch healthcare organisation that provides tailored care as well as daily living and workplace support to mentally challenged people. The company currently operates around 500 locations throughout The Netherlands.

As a leader in technology-assisted care, Philadelphia has pioneered the use of domotics and robotics in a healthcare environment. As early as 2015 it created a role-defined user platform providing caregivers, volunteers, patients, their families and representatives, as well as external parties, access to vital information.

In 2020, Philadelphia made access even easier and more secure by introducing face recognition and two-factor authentication. Thales was happy to provide the technology.

About Thales

Today's businesses and governments depend on the cloud, data and software to deliver trusted digital services. That is why the most recognized brands and organizations around the world, rely on Thales to help them protect sensitive information and software wherever it is created, stored or accessed – from the cloud and data centers to devices and across networks. As the global leader in data security, identity & access management, and software licensing, our solutions enable organizations to move to the cloud securely, achieve compliance with confidence, create more value from their software and deliver seamless digital experiences for millions of consumers every day.

>60% usage

More than 60% of all Philadelphia workers and clients prefer to access via the app

10,000 E savings

A monthly saving of 10,000 E due to the use of biometrics instead of SMS codes

0 Operation

Philadelphia has found that its burden on management and operation is close to zero