

## **Aerospace and Defense Technology Alert.**

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### **MORE EFFICIENT SCREENING OF AIRPORT STAFF**

In early 2011, the US Transportation Security Administration (TSA) released a Request for Proposals (RFP) to provide aviation channeling services. Channeling services are used by the aviation community to screen personnel working in the industry. The TSA required that the solutions meet the technical requirements for submission and management of biometric and biographic data from the aviation community to TSA and returning the results while at the same time meeting the Department of Homeland Security/TSA security requirements.

One of the successful responses to that RFP is Designated Aviation Channeling (DAC) services developed by Telos Identity Management Solutions LLC of Ashburn, Virginia. Known as Telos ID, and 60% owned by parent Telos Corporation, the Virginia company specializes in developing identity protection and management solutions for the military, other agencies in the federal government's National Security community, and commercial enterprises. Telos ID solutions and services offer control of physical access to military bases, office buildings, disaster sites, airports and other facilities, as well as control of logical access to databases, host systems, and other IT resources.

Telos ID is one of three vendors selected by the Transportation Security Administration to provide airports and airlines with aviation channeling services and is the first to be certified under the agreement announced by TSA last year. Most recently, Telos ID's DAC services were selected by Bob Hope Airport in Burbank, California. "In addition to supporting the Department of Defense's identity and biometric programs for over a decade, Telos ID has designed and operated an FBI channeling program that is similar to the requirements of TSA's RFP," noted Dawn E. Lucini, director, business development, aviation security, Telos ID. "We felt this put Telos ID in a strong position to provide a quality solution. We submitted a bid and were selected by TSA as one of the three Designated Aviation Channeling (DAC) providers," said Lucini.

Thomas Ayers, director of engineering, Telos ID, explained that the DAC function is to provide an interface between the TSA and the aviation community. "On one side we have TSA, with detailed technical, security, and policy requirements that must be met by our system. On the other side we have airports, airlines, and general aviation, which each have their own policies, operational and security requirements, as well as their need to comply with TSA and other agency requirements," said Ayers.

The duo stated that when their company started working with TSA, they quickly found that the administration had assembled a well-qualified technical and program

management team with a positive attitude about providing a quality solution. "We also found the aviation community was very open to working with vendors and very happy to provide input, recommendations and background on what had worked well and not so well in the past," said Lucini. "The challenge of having two sets of customers quickly turned into an asset. The development still had its challenges, but we were very pleased that in just over a year, we completed the development, testing and security assessment, which resulted in Telos ID being the first of the selected vendors to meet the new requirements and receive our Authority to Operate (ATO) under the new contract requirements."

The DAC providers facilitate the submission of biometric and biographic information to TSA for security assessments and the receipt of results. Telos ID provides customers an integrated solution. The system was designed with flexibility and the understanding that airports, airlines, and general aviation are each unique, but all must meet TSA requirements. Customers can select options, such as the use of applicant or signatory portals, which allow the applicant or employer to enter much of the required information, providing labor savings to the airports. Airport security personnel can focus on verifying the information rather than data entry.

For the collection of fingerprints, the system supports the use of hardware and software customers are likely to already have. However, there is also a Web-based fingerprint capture solution that integrates the fingerprint process, eliminating the need for the purchase of third party software to capture fingerprints. The Web-based capture has several advantages. Operators no longer need to work in two different systems, a fingerprint system from one vendor and the DAC from another. Additionally, the system supports both roll and flat fingerprint collection with a simple drop down selection (no need to schedule a service call to have the system reconfigured).

"Airport security personnel have told us security threat assessments were sometimes delayed because additional documentation was required," remarked Ayers. "In most cases, they knew what documents would be needed by TSA to complete the security assessment, but the documents had to be submitted separately. We added a feature that allows the uploading of the documents at the time of the original submission. This results in significant improvement in approval times for many applicants."

In addition to these advantages, customers at the Bob Hope Airport, as well as Sacramento International Airport in California, Indianapolis International Airport in Indiana, Tampa International Airport in Florida, and Dallas/Fort Worth International Airport in Texas also benefit from the immediate cost reconciliation that the Telos ID solution offers. "Rather than requiring prepayments in an impress account, we bill customers monthly for actual use," explained Lucini.

Designing the DAC services reaffirmed that the integration of disparate systems is always a challenge, yet increasingly necessary to achieve the flexibility, scalability, and functionality required by all of Telos ID's customers, said the duo. Among the trends that Telos ID has observed in developing aviation threat assessment solutions are ever-

increasing requirements for integrated solutions. Many customers today have manual processes for submission of personnel for security background checks, security training, badge processing, parking access, and physical access to facilities. Both for security and efficiency, quality integrated solutions are needed at a price that fits into ever-slimming budgets, according to Lucini and Ayers.

"Looking forward, we believe we'll see consolidation of the many types of background checks required by the Federal Government into a single application and process leading to greater efficiencies in vetting individuals who require clearances or access to secured areas at commercial, federal, and joint-use facilities," said Lucini.

"Integration is key," stressed Ayers, "for technology developers to meet those trends, and credited the TSA with taking a free market approach to aviation industry threat assessments. The TSA made an important step in allowing airports and airlines the opportunity to choose among service providers. A one-size-fits-all approach rarely results in the best solution," he concluded.

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