



OneID looks to fill gap in UK digital infrastructure

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ONEID LOOKS TO FILL GAP IN UK DIGITAL INFRASTRUCTURE

UK startup **OneID** is looking to fill what it sees as a key gap in the UK's digital infrastructure and make the world a safer place through its Digital identity service. According to OneID, we should be using banks as a means to verify our digital identity, sparing consumers (and businesses) from the laborious task of submitting and reviewing passports and other identity documents. TechMarketView recently caught up with the team at OneID to understand more about how the business is looking to change identity verification, and how its plans for growth are progressing.

Strong backing and embedded social values

We first covered OneID in detail back in 2021, when the company was known as Digital Identity Net (See [Digital Identity Moves Up the Agenda](#)). The business has a lot of experience behind it including CEO Paula Sussex, who many of our readers will be familiar with as the previous CEO of the Student Loans Company. Paula became CEO in April 2023 (See [Paula Sussex emerges as CEO of OneID](#)), taking over the reins from Martin Wilson, who led the company through its build and early growth period. Other experienced members who are helping drive the business forwards include Chief Product Officer, Stuart Kempster, a former programme director at NatWest, and Chief Customer Officer, Keith Mabbitt, who has previously held sales director roles at DXC and HPE. The company is funded by a number of silent angel investors (see [New - familiar - additions to OneID Board](#)) and currently has 34 employees, though will likely add more in the future as the business further scales.

Paula and the team were keen to stress that a driving force behind the business is its social purpose, with a goal to make the world a safer place for everyone. OneID wants to enable people to prove who they are online easily and securely, and give people control over their data and privacy. As well as its social mission it is already well on its way to breaking even, with customers including DocuSign and JCB Finance using its digital identity solution. The business also has a strategic partnership deal with **NatWest**, working with the bank to offer the OneID service to its corporate customers (see [NatWest selects OneID as digital identity partner](#)).

Improving the customer experience of verifying your identity

You will surely be familiar with the process of identity verification, whether that is from taking out a loan, or signing a lease; you may have needed to upload a copy of your passport, driving license, maybe provide a recent utilities bill. Verification is also required when purchasing age restricted goods, often slowing down the payment process. Overall, such processes are often time consuming, difficult and can vary greatly by supplier, and just pray that you don't actually hit the back button or refresh the page!

The idea behind OneID is to take that pain away by using your bank to verify your details. With the majority of people already used to using mobile and online banking, and in general a relatively high level of trust in banks holding our sensitive data, then really it all makes perfect sense. OneID essentially acts as an information broker, connecting with all the major UK banks either through a contractual agreement or via Open Banking services, with the participating business simply integrating the OneID platform into its regular customer onboarding or purchasing process.

Why banks may be the best choice for identity verification

The idea of using banks as a means for identity verification is not new, the UK is just a bit of a laggard. In the Nordic region the bank-verified ID model has been successfully implemented, with adoption and usage rates exceeding 98%. For example, in Sweden a similar service to that offered by OneID from an organisation called BankID, was used 6.7bn times last year for identifications, as well as digital signing, and it is now launching a new digital ID.

Banks, after all, have years of experience protecting customers' money and assets, with regulation that clearly delineates what they can and cannot do with a person's data. Bank customers also go through an extensive KYC (Know-Your-Customer) process during onboarding. When you access your banking app or online banking you are digitally verified. So just as banks help people protect, manage and access their financial assets, the idea behind OneID is enabling this service to extend to identity assets, not only the information they already have about you, but also other verifiable credentials coming from reputable institutions, such as universities or government agencies.

The OneID platform

When it comes to the verification processes, it is all pretty straightforward. There is no app to install, no account to create or document to scan. If you have online banking from a UK high street bank you can use OneID now.

As an example, say you are using the popular DocuSign app to sign a lease; after clicking the usual link the user is prompted to select their bank (this can be on a mobile or web browser), they are then diverted to that bank's own digital login portal or mobile banking app. Once logged in via password or biometrics, the user simply confirms the acceptance to share data, and that's it. The process can also be combined with ecommerce transactions to confirm payment and age verification at the same time. OneID does not store any sensitive data on users, only data on transactions and on consent (which expires in 24 hrs).

Whilst there are other companies that offer such a service, there are none in the UK (excluding the government's own One Login service – see below). OneID has invested time in securing key certifications including; Account Information Service Provider (via FCA), Age Verification Product, Identity Service Provider (through DCMS), Orchestration Service Provider (via UKAS) and DBS checks. They are also listed as an official provider of Open Banking services. This all helps in building trust in the OneID brand and the process of bank verification.

Competition? Apple & GDS 'One Login'

Whilst competitors are few, there are potential disrupters and one of these could be **Apple**. In the U.S., the company is steadily rolling out IDs in Apple Wallet, with a number of states supporting the ability to load a digital version of users' government ID to their iPhones. Would you (and should you) trust Apple with your data over your bank? OneID is banking (no pun intended) on that answer being no.

Another one to watch is the UK Government Digital Service (GDS) 'One Login' programme. One Login is being developed as a single, reusable form of identity verification for central government services and is expected to save the government around £700m over the next five years, according to GDS. Its core system is up and running, making it possible to prove an identity through its web channel or the app, using passports or driving licences as evidence on both. But even with One Login fully scaled across government services (which we are some distance from), there will likely be room for more than one provider of digital identity verification services.

The One Login programme, if successful, could act as a tailwind for OneID. With One Login focused only on government services, there is a huge market opportunity for OneID to create a single digital platform for private organisations. As cultural acceptance of using verification services grows, people should grow more comfortable with using banks as a way to verify their identity. OneID will however have to balance a complex set of relationships, between banks, private organisations, regulatory bodies and of course end users themselves.

To build that trust with its user base it needs to gain better brand awareness, this might not necessarily mean direct marketing, but certainly strong partnerships and customer advocacy. In many ways you can draw parallels with **PayPal**, now trusted by many as a more secure way of transacting online payments instead of directly inputting card details. OneID is aiming for something similar in the identity verification arena, it needs to be sufficiently visible on major websites and applications (DocuSign is already a great example), that it becomes a regular everyday method which you use to prove your identity. Perhaps given the prevalence of comparison sites to find many services today a partnership in this area could bear fruit? Regardless, watch out for OneID, if acceptance grows as expected, in a few years we may all be as used to using them as we are PayPal today.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



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Simon joined TechMarketView in March 2022 as a Principal Analyst as part of the TechSectorViews research stream. Simon is lead analyst for Cybersecurity, Analytics and AI.

He has over 11 years of experience in research and analysis across the Global and UK IT markets, working with strategy and business development functions to shape how emerging technologies can drive real-world digital transformation for organisations.

Immediately prior to joining TechMarketView Simon held the position of Senior Market Intelligence Manager at Fujitsu Services Ltd. and was responsible for embedding market insight into Fujitsu's decision making and leading a range of market research programmes and teams across Fujitsu's global business encompassing Europe, North America and Japan.

Simon has a BA (Hons) in Marketing and Management from Newcastle University.

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