Enterprises take aim at the unpopular, hard-to-kill authenticator
The Province of British Columbia was in a bind. It had a health ID card that was more than 20-years-old with practically no security features and little identity vetting on the backend.

The province is home to 4.5 million residents, yet had issued 9.2 million BC Care Cards. While some were justifiable duplicates, there were still too many cards floating around in the system. “Basically there were a lot of cards and suspected misuse of the health card,” says Kevena Bamford, executive director for the Provincial Identity Information Management Program in British Columbia. “The Ministry of Health was challenged to replace the Care Cards, strengthen the process of getting the card and incorporate more security features.”

While this was happening, the Ministry of Technology, Innovation and Citizens’ Services was looking to expand the functionality of their BCeID service, Bamford says. The BCeID is an online credential that citizens can use to access government services. Typically it was a low-level, self-asserted credential that takes the form of a username and password combination that was federated for use across provincial online services. The citizen could conduct in-person vetting to raise the level of assurance underlying the username and password login. Unfortunately, few citizens opted for this in-person vetting.

Like the BCeID, the Care Card was typically a low security, level one credential. So the Ministry of Technology, whose primary function is supporting other agencies with the delivery of their technology solutions, started to work with Ministry of Health. The goal was to improve the security of the BC Care Card while also increasing the usability and identity assurance behind their eID service. Enter the ICBC Driver Licensing Services. Every half-decade a license expires and the citizen must show up to renew the credential and provide foundational documentation. Thus, this is the one government agency that has both in-person contact with citizens and has access to the documents that prove citizen identity.

The ministry saw a chance to kill three birds with one stone. When citizens came to renew their driver license, the same foundational documents could be used to receive a health ID card and increase the assurance level of the eID, Bamford says. Then came another idea. What if one card was used for all three functions? Thus was born the BC Services Card: driver license, health ID and electronic ID all rolled into one contactless smart card that serves as an extremely strong, level three credential.

By the close of 2013, the province had issued 800,000 BC Services Cards, Bamford says. Residents can choose to combine their driver license and Services Card, or have a standalone Services Card. All Services Cards replace the prior Care Card with improved identity proofing and security features and also enroll citizens in the digital identity program. The contactless smart card has an EMV application stored on it that will eventually be used to authenticate an identity.

Uptake on combination cards has been a little slower than expected, Bamford says. There are businesses around British Columbia that require two forms of identification and two of the most common pieces are the driver license and health ID card. Spreading the word to businesses regarding acceptance of the new combination card has been slow.

British Columbia is working with SecureKey to enable the BC Services Card to be used for access to online provincial services. SecureKey also has a contract with the Canadian federal government to enable contactless bank EMV cards to be used for access to federal services, and there is potential to enable the BC Services Card for
access to federal resources as well, Bamford says.

The province is working to build authentication service functionality and business cases so the card can be used to digitally access online services, she explains. At the moment, however, the chip is yet to be used. Still, significant value has been gained based on the fact that all 800,000 eID holders have undergone the stronger in-person identity vetting.

The goal is for citizens to have NFC readers attached to their computers where they could tap the card, enter a passcode and then gain access to online government services. One day, citizens might do the same thing at a doctor’s office to authenticate their identity in order to receive health services.

Government officials are working on the authentica-

BC’S CITIZEN ENGAGEMENT:
A MODEL FOR FUTURE PROGRAMS

KALIYA “IDENTITY WOMAN” HAMLIN

Because of my decade long advocacy for the rights and dignity of our digital selves, I have become widely known as “Identity Woman.” The Government of British Columbia invited me to participate as an industry specialist/expert in its citizen consultation regarding the province’s Services Card. I want to share the story of BC’s unique approach, as I hope that more jurisdictions and the effort I am most involved with of late, the U.S. government’s National Strategy for Trusted Identities in Cyberspace, will choose to follow it.

The Canadian Province of British Columbia engaged the public about key issues and questions the BC Services Card raised. The well-designed process included a panel of randomly selected citizens. They met face-to-face, first to learn about the program, then to deliberate key issues and finally make implementation recommendations to government.

The Services Card was developed over the last 10 years under the Ministry of Technology, Innovation and Citizen Services. Inside the same ministry an office of Citizen Engagement was created four-years ago. The minister of these two offices was one and the same and to ensure the success of the project, he instructed the offices to work together to conduct a wide-ranging and meaningful constellation on the future of the card.

The first step was the creation of a white paper, Designing the Digital Service Consultation. It described core issues raised by deployment of the card and outlined processes project leaders could use to address these issues. They could have simply moved ahead with what was outlined but instead solicited feedback and used it to adapt the approach.

The User Panel was one of three streams outlined in the white paper that would
tion services and business requirements that will enable the smart card’s use, Bamford says. Citizens are being asked how they expect the services to work and what services they would like to see offered.

The results are mixed, particularly around the area of usage history, Bamford says. “Many people in the early focus groups said they would expect to access usage history, similar to a bank account’s transaction history,” she explains. “Others refuse this concept outright, claiming it’s a compromise of privacy and personal security.”

Over the course of 2014, the province plans to work with programs and begin to roll out some digital services that can leverage the authentication service, Bamford says. “Citizens of British Columbia are very interested in using the card,” she adds. “There are many years ahead of us in building the system as well as dialogue around using the credential.”

This User Panel method was chosen because the Province’s approach to digital services and identity management are both reasonably complex subjects and require time to understand. By convening the panel of citizens over two weekends they provided time for participants to get up to speed.

Secondly for recommendations to have legitimacy, the broader public needed to have high confidence that the right mix of British Columbians had an opportunity to contribute to the discussion. The way the panel was selected meant that it was a defensibly representative group of citizens to both consider the issues put to them and to legitimize their recommendations.

So how was this panel selected such that it would be representative of the population, age, income, ethnicity, gender, and geography of the province?

The Office of Citizen Engagement sent out a letter to 16,500 randomly selected citizens – one in 110 – across the province inviting them to signal interest in participating. From this group, 800 individuals responded sharing basic demographic information, age, gender and location. From this group, 36 were selected – an equal number of men and women across age groups and from around the province. They also specifically selected a person with a disability and a person of aboriginal decent.

A critical success factor, highlighted in the white paper, was the need for the government to be clear about, “what it needs to learn so that it can ensure public input can most effectively inform its decisions.”

**USING THE BC SERVICES CARD TO ACCESS ONLINE SERVICES**

**Step 1 Request**
- **@ home, on the web** Start by clicking ‘Login’ at a government service website, then tap your card on the card reader plugged into the USB port of your computer.
- **@ A point-of-service (e.g. ServiceBC desk or Health Clinic)** Tap your card on the card reader at the counter.

**Step 2**
The card validation system checks:
- Is the request coming from the Government Identity Assurance System?
- Is the card reader and desktop software valid?
- Is the card valid?

If all check out, then a one-time ticket is provided to the Government Identity Assurance System containing the card number.

**Step 3**
The ticket gives permission to look up the person associated with the card. Next:
- **@ home** prompts you for password and then validates it.
- **@ point of service** displays photo for the counter agent.
- If the password or photo is valid, then it prints one-time ticket to the appropriate government system, with a person’s number and identity information.

**Step 4**
The specific government ministry system reads the ticket and checks:
- Is the request coming from an authorized service?
- Is the request coming from an authorized counter agent?

If the request is approved, information is released to the requesting service.

**Step 5 Result**
- **@ home, on the web** Get access to this website to view personal information and/or use its services.
- **@ A point-of-service** The counter agent can access the information needed to provide its services.
The Government set two specific tasks for the Panel:

1. Review the Province’s approach to digital services, recommending actions the Province can take to build citizens’ confidence in the Services Card and in the digital services that take advantage of the opportunities it creates.

2. Recommend principles and priorities for the design and implementation of digital services and the next phase of the provincial identity management program to support the Province’s vision to save citizens’ time in their interaction with government and make it easier to access better quality services.

This was then broken down into five more specific questions:

- Where should the Province focus its efforts in using the Services Card to create new kinds of digital services, and why?
- How can the Province best balance privacy, security, cost effectiveness and convenience in the design of the Services Card to include key features such as pass code reset and managing transaction history?
- What actions can the Province take to build citizens’ confidence in the Services Card and in the digital services that take advantage of opportunities it creates?
- How should the Province explore using data created from digital services to improve policy and services?
- What would it mean for BC’s identity management service to be used by organizations that aren’t part of government?

An independent chair and facilitator of the panel lead the process and developed the learning curriculum for participants. It involved learning from the government how the Services Card worked and their perspectives on digital futures. It also included the views of the BC Civil Liberties Association and the BC Privacy Commissioner. As part of their deliberations participants explored different possibilities through group discussion and sorting exercises.

The Citizen Panel report was completed and submitted to the government. The Office of Citizen Engagement is now weaving the outcomes of all three streams of engagement into the final report that is to be released this spring.

I asked David Hume the executive director, of Citizen Engagement for the Province of British Columbia what resources he would recommend for those considering citizen engagement within their jurisdiction.

He suggested that the website, Participedia.net, is a great place to explore a variety of case studies. More step-by-step guidance for such processes can be found at the National Coalition for Dialogue and Deliberation (ncdd.org) and the Canadian Coalition for Dialogue and Deliberation (c2d2.org). Additionally, the Environmental Protection Agency has good, broad guidance (epa.gov/oia/public-participation-guide/index.html).