

Malaysian Government Agency Streamlines User Authentication with Help from the BlackBerry Solution



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The Federal Agricultural Marketing Authority (FAMA) is an agency under the Ministry of Agriculture & Agro Based Industry in Malaysia. FAMA's primary objective is to develop a strong marketing infrastructure for the local and international supply chain systems it supports. In Malaysia, this is accomplished through an extensive network of local markets that offers local produce and processed food products at affordable consumer prices.

In 2010, FAMA deployed a comprehensive mobile solution to their field officers who oversee the 278 Pasar Tani's (Farmers' Markets) throughout the country. FAMA integrated an efficient BlackBerry® smartphone solution with the customizable user authentication application, Smart-Track™. The application also included firmware and leveraged a unique messaging architecture developed by CompuRex, a mobile solutions provider and proud BlackBerry® Alliance member. The implementation replaced an ailing mobile platform system that was unable to sustain increasing demands from the field.

"The agency's existing older mobile system was quickly becoming out dated," said Tan, Lim-Keat (LK), Chief Technology Officer, CompuRex. "While the responsibilities and needs of field officers had significantly grown, and a more efficient mobile communication solution was required to service the regions in Malaysia without 3G coverage."

CompuRex approached FAMA to understand which mobile solution would best suit its needs. This mobile solution would need to provide a reliable wireless connection in the field and data protection, both key considerations for a government agency. The solution had to be secure and able to properly authenticate a field officer's credentials upon accessing the system. Once connected, the solution needed to let field officers confirm the identity of a vendor from a list of over 20,000 on the national Pasar Tani register.

In addition, field officers required remote access to FAMA's corporate websites and databases to source out and track the pricing of commodities through the Pasar Tani website. The website links 278 farmer markets managed by FAMA and provides the daily Index Charts for the country's local agricultural exchanges to ensure competitive and fair pricing.

The mobile solution also had to have dependable hardware that withstood the rigors of the fieldwork and software that streamlined the existing process of recording, accessing and tracking FAMA's marketing information and processes.

"Our team recommended a trial of our solution consisting of our Smart-Track application, pre-loaded onto BlackBerry smartphones, which we prefer for many reasons." said LK Tan. "In my opinion, BlackBerry devices provide long battery life, durability, and their data compression technology is advantageous to FAMA from a cost and efficiency perspective."

The initial trial involved 10 BlackBerry smartphones. The solution consisted of an external smartcard reader that connected via Bluetooth® with the BlackBerry device and leveraged the employee's MyKad personal identification card ("MyKad") – the card is issued by the Malaysian government to every Malaysian citizen. MyKad provides both photo identification and fingerprint biometric data on an embedded chip – to authenticate and grant access to FAMA's internal databases. The field officer would enter the password on their BlackBerry device and simply swipe their MyKad through the smartcard reader, providing a secure two-factor authentication. The Smart-Track software would then authenticate the user's information and allow them access to the necessary information from various databases and websites, helping to alleviate them of security concerns.

The software solution provided FAMA with a simple and easy-to-use verification process that leveraged the employee's state-issued identification card. It also helped field officers stay abreast of the latest agency information and gave them mobile access to internal databases and websites.

The seamless integration of the Smart-Track application on BlackBerry devices helped in the user authentication process by connecting the smartcard reader with the mobile networks. The efficient data transmission on the BlackBerry smartphone, combined with its battery life and durability provided FAMA a cost-effective and dependable solution. The trial was such a success that the solution is now deployed in all 278 markets throughout the country.

www.blackberry.com/go/success

The BlackBerry logo features the word "BlackBerry" in a bold, sans-serif font, preceded by a stylized icon of a BlackBerry keyboard.

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