New driver’s licenses
Identification and accountability for better road safety
The driver’s license is a document with multiple uses. On the road, it gives its holder the right to drive certain vehicles. Very often, it also serves as an identity document, particularly in countries which do not have a national identity card program. This is just one more reason why it has to be highly secure.

As it has in the past often been no more than a paper-mounted document with little or no security, states have more recently developed the international ISO/IEC 18013 standard, which came into force in 2009 and outlines the framework for migration towards a secure, credit card-format document.

The standard stipulates the use of visual security elements comparable to those used on identity cards and passports. It also lays down a standardized structure for the basic data set (ISO 1813-1).

The material adopted by Europe is polycarbonate, a durable medium, which is hard to counterfeit. Cards of this type can have a life-cycle of over 10 years.

> Mexico’s smart card driver’s license: a multi-purpose document

In Mexico, a country with more than 110 million inhabitants and some 50 million drivers, migration to smart card driver’s licenses has brought numerous benefits to regions and citizens alike, all the more so because these cards are recognized nationwide as a form of identification.

The card’s capacity to store various information concerning the driver, such as his or her accident history or past breaches of the highway code, represents an unquestionable advantage for the police and for the authorities responsible for issuing driver’s licenses. These new technologies, together with the new, closer links established between the authorities and insurance firms have been effective in increasing driver accountability.

This kind of smart card, the effectiveness of which in reducing traffic accidents (-39% between 2007 and 2009), insurance costs, identity theft and administrative fraud has been demonstrated on a daily basis since 2007 in the state of Nuevo León, was adopted by three other states in 2008 (Mexico State, Sonora and Vera Cruz) and looks set to be implemented in other regions in the future.

The issuance process is immediate but thorough. Each citizen’s photograph and fingerprints are taken and the card is electronically signed. The visible signs of security, both in the issuance process and on the document itself, as well as the electronic chip, give the holder a sense of confidence in the card.
The standard also defines the technologies capable of automatically reading data (ISO 18013-2), as well as authentication and data integrity functions (ISO 1818-3). As with all other secure documents (passport, identity card, etc.), it proposes the addition of a chip (microprocessor) to extend the range of possibilities offered by the card.

There are many benefits to using a smart card for driver’s licenses:

- The chip stores the data printed on the card. While it may be possible to counterfeit the data visible on the card, the data stored on the card is secure and its integrity is vouched for by the use of an issuer certificate to "sign" the data.
- The chip also provides automated identification for the driver, thanks to the use of biometrics. By comparing the citizen’s prints during a roadside check with the prints stored on the chip, the police officer is able to confirm the driver’s identity in a fast, reliable way.
- In addition, the police officer can automatically send the drivers license number to a central database in order to confirm the validity of the license (expired, stolen or suspended driving license).
- The chip guarantees the privacy of the citizen is respected. The data is stored in a secure fashion and access is restricted to authorized personnel only (police, etc.), as only they have the key granting them access to the data.

Several countries have already opted for the credit card format and smart card for their driving license programs by selecting Gemalto as their partner. India, Japan, Australia, El Salvador and Mexico are just some of Gemalto’s customers in this area. In India, Gemalto has been providing smart card-based driving licenses and registration certificates for eight years, in compliance with the SCOSTA standards defined by the Indian Transport Ministry. The information stored on the chip is read by mobile terminals supplied to police forces in the various provinces already having deployed the new document.

In Australia, Gemalto is to supply several million electronic driving licenses to local partner Placard for the state of Queensland by 2015. The chip will offer considerable improvements to the security and confidentiality of data which will from now on be stored electronically. Copying and counterfeiting of documents will become increasingly difficult, minimizing the risks of identity theft. The Ministry of Transport also plans to use this secure technology to prove the bearer’s age, as well as for boating licenses and other permits.

Gemalto offers a wide range of cards, from secure chipless cards to a high-security cards with contactless interfaces, that can be used for a range of driver management and registration solutions, the issuance and checking of documents, as well as managed services for the issuing of licenses on behalf of Governments, as in Finland and Sweden.

About Gemalto

Gemalto (Euronext NL 0000400653 GTO) is a world leader in digital security with pro-forma 2009 annual revenues of €1,654 billion, more than 77 offices in 40 countries worldwide and some 10,000 employees, including 1,400 Research & Development engineers.

Gemalto manages 18 production sites, 30 personalization centers and 11 R&D centers.

Gemalto produced and personalized over 1.4 billion smart cards in 2009. Gemalto provides end-to-end digital security solutions, from the development of software applications through to the design and production of digital security devices, such as smart cards, SIMs, bank cards, e-Passports and tokens, as well as the deployment of services on behalf of customers.

Gemalto and the public sector

Gemalto has considerable hands-on experience in the public sector, having participated in over 50 national projects worldwide, including many electronic identity card and passport programs. Gemalto is also a partner in the world’s main e-Health programs, and has worked extensively with drivers’ licenses, vehicle registration and tachograph cards. Gemalto was formed in June 2006 as a result of the merger between Axalto and Gemplus.

For more information, visit: www.gemalto.com
The world leader in digital security