

AI startup Onfido to provide coronavirus immunity passports

Recently, Onfido created a free resource for not-for-profits and charities in healthcare, home service and education working on relieving the COVID-19 outbreak: "a fully automated document and selfie service for no cost for the next six months". This should help these organisations to save time by remotely verify identities and build trust as it's never been more important.

London-based AI startup Onfido, which uses AI to read identity documents and uses facial recognition has received £80M (\$100M) from TGP Growth. Onfido's software uses machine learning to verify a person's photo ID and match it to their face using biometrics.

On top of using its AI and facial recognition software to detect and tackle identity fraud, Onfido is now exploring applications for its technology to ease the strict measures of lockdown. Issuing coronavirus immunity passports could be one way to identify people who have developed resistance to COVID-19, and could be used to start giving people a way out of quarantine.

Onfido's CEO and co-founder Husayn Kassai said the startup could help people prove to the police that they have recovered from coronavirus and thus

developed immunity. That could help governments avoid another wave of infections when they ease lockdown restrictions. At the moment, the startup is discussing the project with a number of EU countries as well as with the US government.

We feel privileged that the @Onfido vision of a world where users are empowered to prove their real identity in an easy and secure way - is starting to become the new global standard for digital access <https://t.co/5SE6FWG8sP>

— Husayn Kassai (@HusaynKassai) April 15, 2020

It is clear that, so far, the UK government has struggled with identity verification issues during the coronavirus crisis. But as nothing has been agreed yet, Kassai said that the priority remains to “roll out lockdown testing that’s scalable and effective, next is the ID piece”. If testing kits were to become available, this project could be implemented within weeks.

The 750,000 volunteers who signed up in response to the government’s call to support the NHS is an example of the problem that Onfido’s CEO wants to solve. Unfortunately, the huge response forced the government to pause the scheme, with around half a million applicants still waiting to start volunteering.

Read also

ID and facial recognition specialist Onfido raises £80M

