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ISC West 2011 – Consortium unveils new concept in ID card authentication

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A consortium of four companies – [Codebench Inc.](#) ^[2], [Quintron Systems Inc.](#) ^[3], [Mercury Security](#) ^[4] and [Farpointe Data](#) ^[5] – has devised a new approach to authenticating an identification card being presented at a door by locating the credential and identity verification process logic at the *control panel*, rather than at the unsecured side of the reader.

The concept is intended to allow the holder of a valid ID card to enter a secured door, while preventing the holder of a *cloned version* of that same card from gaining admittance, according to Geri Castaldo, CEO of Codebench.

This innovative approach is accomplished by having the control panel transmit a random number to the card being presented to the card reader at the door. The card would be expected to encrypt that random number using its *private* key and send the encrypted number back to the control panel. The panel, in turn, would decrypt the number it had just received from the card using its *public* key. If the two numbers are identical, the control panel will determine that the ID card is valid, so it can then check the current status of that individual's authorization to enter the premises. If the two numbers are different, the controller will determine that the ID card is not valid – and is perhaps a clone -- and will deny the holder admission.



Geri Castaldo, of Codebench (right) and Richard Finnegan of Quintron

The consortium envisions the use of Codebench's *PIVCheck* software suite, an end-to-end card validation, authorization and registration solution; Quintron's *AccessNsite* PACS management system; Mercury's control panel; and Farpointe Data's card reader, Castaldo told *Government Security News* on at the ISC West show in Las Vegas on April 7.

Castaldo said the concept of authenticating an identity at the control panel, which might be located in a closet a long way from the door, is unique. "The novelty is that we're not doing it at the door," she explained. "The fact is that up in the closet is more secure."

The consortium's new approach to verifying the validity of an ID card, which it calls "Authenticard," will be released this summer, said Castaldo and Quintron's vice president and general manager, Richard Finnegan.

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