



## **A2iA and Softpro Combine Technologies in Their First Globally Marketed Check Fraud Prevention Solution**

FraudOne, SignPlus Applications Leverage Handwriting Recognition and Signature Verification Tools

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**A2iA and Softpro announced today the first collaboration to combat check fraud worldwide. The companies have pioneered a unique solution which will be marketed globally under Softpro's FraudOne® and SignPlus® brands. The solution combines proven handwriting recognition, signature verification, and fraud detection technologies to create a holistic check fraud prevention solution for the world's financial institutions. FraudOne and SignPlus are available in six languages and on five continents: The Americas, Africa, Europe, Asia and Australia.**

In a strategic meeting in July, Frank Fuchs, CEO of Softpro, and Jean-Louis Fages, Chairman of the Board and CEO of A2iA, signed an agreement that further intensifies the companies' already successful partnership by allowing Softpro to market and sell A2iA products. The recently released version 3.9 of Softpro's FraudOne and SignPlus products will be refreshed to incorporate A2iA CheckReader. The combined offering enhances the range of check processing applications and provides unparalleled fraud prevention capabilities. The alliance also represents a team approach to addressing local market needs in countries that rely heavily on checks such as the United States, Brazil, France, and the UK. As an example, Softpro will be using functionality from A2iA's CheckReader that has been created specifically for this alliance such as the ability to interpret handwritten dates on Brazilian checks. One of Brazil's largest banks has already contracted the new solution.

### **Overview of Strategic Collaboration**

The combined solution will derive revenue primarily from North & South America as well as Europe. The solution will also enable the companies to capitalize on

- A strong and proven position in handwriting recognition and signature verification technologies.
- A unique fraud detection and prevention solution for addressing the increasing global threat of check fraud.
- World class R&D capabilities from France, Germany, and the United States.
- Excellent relationships with major Value Added Resellers (VARs), systems integrators and solution providers in the banking and financial services industries and Business Process Outsourcing (BPO).
- A large and diversified customer base in worldwide major banks with installations in twenty countries.

For financial institutions worldwide, check processing and clearing is a significant cost factor in the payment process. However, reduction in processing costs leads to higher check fraud risk exposure. Check fraud is consistently rising year-over-year and is expected to continue to rise as fraud perpetration using other payment instruments such as credit cards becomes increasingly difficult. According to the American Banker's Association, check fraud accounted for more than \$5.5 billion in losses in the United States alone in 2003. This was up from the 2001 losses of \$4.3 billion. Similarly in the UK, check fraud attempts increased by 20% between 2003 and 2004 to a total of £665 million in potential fraud losses. This indicates that the use of checks as a vehicle for fraudulent transactions is a global phenomena.



Up until now, the challenge to fighting this fraud has been to reduce check processing costs while increasing, rather than decreasing, protection against fraud losses. The new FraudOne/SignPlus solution will result in substantial savings for banks' back-office check processing centers by automating tedious and error-prone manual verification while significantly improving the detection of fraudulent items. This solution will enable banks to take necessary precautions to secure the paperbased payment process and prevent losses from check fraud in a truly cost-effective manner.

Softpro has a proven track record with its systems for the validation of handwritten signatures and fraud prevention in payment processes. The company provides the FraudOne suite of products, which were initially conceived in cooperation with a consortium of the largest U.S. banks. The solution is considered by many of the US Tier 1 banks to be a "best practice industry initiative" to combat check fraud and has been successfully deployed at many of the world's largest financial institutions since its inception.

A2iA CheckReader automatically reads cursive handwriting, handprint and machine print from key check fields – including courtesy and legal amounts, address block, payee name, and date – and converts the information into computer-usable, actionable data. With the inclusion of A2iA CheckReader in FraudOne, banks will not only be able to automatically verify the signatures on check images using Softpro's award-winning technology, but also be able to analyze the data contained within key check fields. The image analysis is complemented by Softpro's unique rules-based risk identification module, Combined Risk Score (CRS), which allows the incorporation of the bank's internal fraud rules to provide unprecedented accuracy levels in suspect check identification.

"We are confident that banks using FraudOne will achieve time and labor savings in their back-office check processing centers, while also ensuring that the risk of clearing a fraudulent check is alleviated," said Frank Fuchs. "A2iA's proven recognition engines complement Softpro's automatic signature verification tools perfectly, driving powerful applications that will fight check fraud on a global level."

"We are excited about the new product offerings our strengthened partnership with Softpro has made possible," said Jean-Louis Fages. "A2iA CheckReader integrated into Softpro applications enhances banks' ability to provide crucial information about check transactions, more quickly and more accurately. This will minimize risks while improving operational efficiency. The combination of our technologies delivers powerful built-in safeguards that give users the timely information they need to make sound decisions and reduce risks – wherever check processing is performed."

#### **About A2iA**

A2iA (Artificial Intelligence & Image Analysis), founded in 1991, headquartered in New York and Paris, is known as the worldwide leading developer of Intelligent Word Recognition (IWR), Classification & Data Extraction (IDR) technologies for extracting information from natural freeform and cursive handwriting on paper documents. The company's technology has been helping paper-intensive industries reduce data entry costs and improve business process automation for over 15 years. A2iA's recognition engines harmonize their OCR, ICR, IWR and IDR technologies with their image analysis, artificial intelligence and neural network systems to enhance solutions from the world's leading systems integrators and other independent software vendors. For more information: [www.a2ia.com](http://www.a2ia.com).

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**About SOFTPRO**

The SOFTPRO group is based in Boeblingen, Germany and has local subsidiaries for North America (Wilmington, Delaware), the United Kingdom and Asia-Pacific (Singapore). The group currently employs an international staff of over 60.

SOFTPRO is the leading vendor of systems for the verification of handwritten signatures and for fraud prevention in paper

based payment transactions, worldwide. The company's portfolio contains solutions for authentic processes and documents and works in two divisions:

- Biometric Division: Securing PC and network access as well as electronic documents and transactions through handwritten signatures. For this purpose static and dynamic (biometric) characteristics of signatures are extracted and evaluated.
- Fraud Prevention Solutions: Systems for Fraud Detection and Prevention and Signature Verification for banks in paper based payment transactions.

More than 200 companies are using SOFTPRO's software including American Express, ABN Amro, Bank of America, Barclays, Citigroup, DaimlerChrysler, Discover Financial, HypoVereinsbank, Ingolstadt Hospital, JPMorgan Chase, Lloyds TSB, Saudi Chamber of Commerce, SEB, Standard Bank of South Africa and Wachovia.

Since 2002, the offer to secure electronic documents with handwritten signatures extended the customer portfolio of SOFTPRO to other industries such as banking and insurance, health/pharma, retail, government, automotive and logistics.

SOFTPRO's shareholders are GE Capital (since 1998), AdCapital (since 2001) and management. SOFTPRO's partners include: A2iA, BancTec, Beta Systems (Kleindienst), Carreker, Fujitsu Siemens Computers / Fujitsu, House of Development, HP, IBM, Interlink, Lenovo, Microsoft, Mitek, Motion Computing, NCR, Toshiba, UNISYS and Wacom as well as APP Informatik Davos.

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