

Patented system better secures digitally stored data

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(Phys.org) —Arizona State University computer scientist Gail-Joon Ahn has been granted a U.S. patent for a novel identity management system that helps protect personal identity information stored on digital devices.

The patent is the result of a 10-year project Ahn began in 2003 as an associate professor at the University of North Carolina, Charlotte (UNC Charlotte), where he was the founding director of the Center for Digital Identity and [Cyber Defense](#) Research.

Ahn is an associate professor and a Fulton Entrepreneurial Professor in the School of Computing, Informatics, and Decision Systems Engineering, one of ASU's Ira A. Fulton Schools of Engineering.

He's also founder and [chief technology officer](#) of GFS Technology, an ASU-incubated company set up to commercialize his mobile security technologies.

GFS Technology focuses on identity management solutions and also works on a platform for mobile users whose mobile devices are used for work, eCommerce, financial transactions and Internet use. The technology protects against insecure connections, hackers, phishers and identity thieves by targeting four layers of vulnerability: networks, applications, services and data.

Ahn's platform stems from a more ambitious project to produce a "mobile wallet" that can safely store a person's "digital presence" and

other personal information on a mobile device.

"This invention is just one piece," Ahn says. "There are a lot of other applications for this technology."

GFS Technology's solutions can be used for anything from ensuring confidential business transactions to securely purchasing groceries at the supermarket.

"This invention can create a new paradigm in terms of purchasing transactions in the mobile computing community," he explains.

Ahn led a research project on the identity management solution for Bank of America for five years when he was at UNC Charlotte, but due to economic restrictions at the time, [Bank of America](#) could not afford the technology. When Ahn came to ASU in 2008, he brought his security research project with him.

The Open Invention Network (OIN), a North Carolina-based company, purchased and licensed Ahn's work at ASU in 2009 - including an invention that protects customers' identity. The company's clients include large corporations such as IBM and Cisco. Through the licensing, Ahn has so far brought \$200,000 in royalty payments to ASU.

When Open Invention Network licensed Ahn's work, the company filed seven patent applications in his name. "ASU realized it was very valuable," Ahn says, and Arizona Technology Enterprises (AzTE) – the university's intellectual property management and technology transfer organization – then helped to develop GFS Technology.

GFS [Technology](#) chief executive officer and founder Ken Petzoid and director James Power now work out of the business park SkySong – The ASU Scottsdale Innovation Center.

The patent on the identity management system is the first Ahn has received. He has six pending patents for the digital security platform, along with two other security patents pending on systems that focus on picture-password authentication and Internet security.

Provided by Arizona State University

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