Ben-Gurion University startup technology SayVU deployed at Rio Olympics

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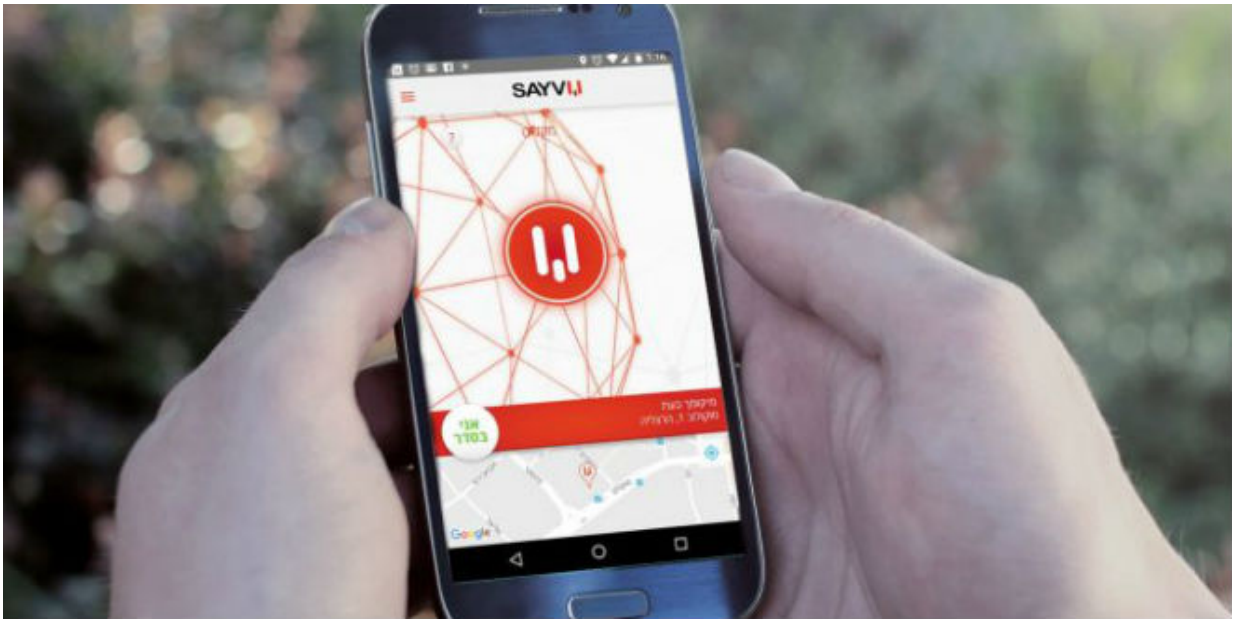

SayVU strives to minimize the response time of emergency services and other authorities, and make sure the user gets assistance as quickly as possible. The company was also just awarded a $1 million grant from the U.S.-Israeli BIRD Foundation for a project funded by Israel's Public Security Ministry and the U.S. Department of Homeland Security. Credit: SayVU

A new app, SayVU, conceived as a graduate student project at Ben-Gurion University of the Negev, is being deployed at the 2016 Rio Olympics. International Security & Defense Systems (ISDS), the security integrator for the Olympics, selected SayVU as one of the

Israeli technologies being used to protect attendees.

SayVU, now available on the Android platform, enables a user to send a distress signal to an emergency hotline even if a phone is locked and without having to access the application. The message can be sent in a number of ways; shaking the device, tapping the camera button, or simply speaking into the phone.

"SayVU strives to minimize the response time of emergency services and other authorities, and make sure the user gets assistance as quickly as possible," according to SayVU Chief Executive Officer Amotz Koskas. We have established a hotline center at the 2016 Rio Olympics, which help emergency and law enforcement agencies respond to alerts and ensure the safety of Olympics attendees."

SayVU also includes the option for automatically turning on the phone's microphone. It sends the recorded voice, GPS and other locating information to an emergency hotline. The app uses patent pending machine learning techniques to determine the user's patterns and checks when it senses abnormalities. If there is no reply, the app automatically sends out a distress message.

In addition to SayVU's life-saving security benefits, the technology provides real-time event and emergency reporting to emergency medical services (EMS) and law enforcement agencies as well as threat management, regional threat mapping and trend prediction.

The technology was conceived and developed in the wake of the kidnapping and murder of three Israeli youths in 2014. One of them managed to call and report the kidnapping but the police did not immediately respond because they thought it was a prank call. Koskas, at the time an MBA student at BGU's Guilford Glazer Faculty of Business and Management, wondered if there was a technological means to

prevent similar instances in the future.

A year later, Koskas won the joint Google and BGU competition "Students Thinking Innovation in the Public Sector" in collaboration with "Digital Israel" and the staff of the "Accessible Government" initiative to promote innovation in the public sector through information and communication technologies. The new technology attempted to meet two main needs: to give citizens the tools to send out a distress message and location quickly in an emergency, and to enable the authorities to get a clear, real-time situation report.

Recently, the company ran a pilot with kindergartens in Ofakim, Israel. It was deemed a success when a pedophile was caught by a teacher who used the app. As a result, the Ofakim municipality decided to use the app for all educational institutions, social workers and the municipal hotline, with other municipalities following suit.

SayVU has embarked on a $2 million round of funding. The company is developing strategic partnerships in the U.S., China, Europe and Africa.

The company was also just awarded a $1 million grant from the U.S.-Israeli BIRD Foundation for a project funded by Israel's Public Security Ministry and the U.S. Department of Homeland Security. The goal is to provide orientation within buildings and non-failure communications under extreme conditions to first responders such as police, firefighters, and emergency medicine personnel.

More information: sayvu.com/

Provided by American Associates, Ben-Gurion University of the Negev