Telefónica accelerates global rollout of Open Gateway with agreements with tech firms and companies from around the world

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Chema Alonso, Chief Digital Officer of Telefónica, made several announcements in the presentation ‘Open collaboration to innovate’, which took place in the Agora of the Telefónica stand at the Mobile World Congress (MWC), which is being held from today until 6 March in Barcelona. During his speech he presented several of the achievements made by Telefónica since the launch of the global initiative of the telecommunications sector led by the GSMA to transform networks into future-ready platforms was announced in 2023, also at MWC Open Gateway.

During his presentation, Alonso mentioned that Telefónica has already closed deals with more than 50 large companies around the world and are negotiating a growing number of new contracts with more companies interested in adopting Open Gateway APIs to improve the digital services they offer to their customers. To achieve this great moment of Open Gateway deployment, in addition to direct sales through its commercial network, Telefónica has the support of more than 20 commercial partners, a number that is constantly growing.

Telefónica and TikTok, the leading mobile short-video form platform, have reinforced their commitment to GSMA Open Gateway widening the scope of their collaboration to Europe. The collaboration started last year during MWC 2024, when both companies announced their alliance to design a simpler and more secure onboarding process, based on the ‘Number Verification’ API. This solution will allow TikTok users to register to the app using their mobile phone number, without the need for an SMS or a third-party verification system, thanks to the security provided by the API. The ‘Number Verification’ solution will be launched in Brazil during the first half of 2025, and it will be extended to strategic markets for both companies.

The two companies have also announced plans to collaborate on a new API named “Age Verification” within the CAMARA framework (an open source project developed by the GSMA and the Linux Foundation to standardise and expose APIs), that will integrate key functionalities from other widely adopted solutions like ‘Number Verification’ and ‘KYC’ (Know-Your-Customer). This new API would be designed to provide age signals to supplement TikTok’s existing age assurance and age confirmation measures in collaboration with its trusted partners, to help ensure age-appropriate experiences.

Another important commercial announcement Alonso made during his presentation was when he invited Carlos Herrera Yagüe, CTO of Cabify, on stage. Both communicated that Cabify will start using the Number Verification API in its registration processes. This will allow Cabify users to register directly, without having to receive an SMS or use another third-party verification system, which slows down the process. With this API, Cabify is able to offer its users greater speed and security, as this integration makes it possible to verify that a user is interacting through a device that has a SIM card associated with a specific phone number, without having to associate it with any element or enter any type of credential or one-time password.

Miguel López-Valverde Argüeso, Councillor for Digitalisation of the Community of Madrid (Spain), also attended the session to announce, together with Telefónica, a collaboration agreement to use Open Gateway APIs in the public administration, with the aim of optimising its internal processes to become more agile and responsive to the needs of the people of Madrid. According to the agreement, they will use Open Gateway to facilitate the digitisation of public services in key areas such as health, transport, justice and tourism. This will make it possible to offer more accessible and convenient services to citizens, improving their quality of life and promoting a more modern and connected administration.

An innovation centre for creating products for telcos

Ishwar Parulkar, Chief Technologist for Telecom and Edge Cloud at Amazon Web Services, also took part in the session. , which took place in the Agora of the Telefónica stand. Alonso and Parulkar announced the joint creation of an innovation centre for new SaaS consumer products for telcos that combine the strengths of the cloud with those of telecommunications networks.

The collaboration will be based on Telefónica's experience in the management of telecommunications data and algorithms to analyse this data and obtain anonymous and aggregated information from consumers to serve different verticals. AWS, for its part, will provide infrastructure and data storage, data governance and analytics services to enable the development of modern management platforms, generative AI applications and data analytics based on the cloud and adapted to telecommunications data.

Both companies aim to democratise access to technology by offering 'plug and play' platforms as SaaS products to companies around the world. The products emerging from the innovation centre will abstract companies from the complexity and cost of creating data services, thereby democratising access.

Telefónica is partnering with Google Cloud

to accelerate authentication solutions in Firebase supported by Open Gateway

Telefónica is partnering with Google Cloud to integrate Open Gateway into Google Firebase, a platform with over 3 million active developers that offers a suite of cloud tools and services including authentication services. Both companies will work on incorporating the phone number verification service enabled through Open Gateway APIs as announced by Christiaan Brand from Google alongside Chema Alonso during the session at Telefónica's stand at MWC.

Traditional authentication methods, such as one-time passwords (OTP) via SMS, create friction for users due to slow delivery, and pose security challenges like vulnerability to phishing or social engineering.

The Open Gateway Number Verification API enhances user security by transparently sharing the phone number, always with the user's consent, and authenticating it. This method doesn't require the user to enter their phone number, receiving an SMS-OTP or to share a code with the app, resulting in a more secure and simpler experience. The service will be available for native Google ecosystem apps and for any other application through Google Firebase.

Telefónica is not alone in this initiative. Other operators including AT&T, Deutsche Telekom, T-Mobile, and Telenor are also working on

enabling this service, and more are expected to join in the coming months. The goal is to have the service commercially available before the end of the year.

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