Austreme
A Safer Online Payment Environment

The horizons of online consumerism are now wider than ever before. With a surge in the number of merchants and consumers, the volume of online business has grown exponentially over the years. This unprecedented market expansion has also opened up newer avenues of security and compliance breaches and nefarious activities. It also poses significant challenges for banks, payment service providers (PSP), and transaction aggregators who face the possibility of falling into a pit dug by nebulous merchants. Hong Kong-based Austreme yearns to fill these pits with its services to identify transactions laundering and falsified merchants.

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Many merchant websites are used as payment conduit for non-compliant and fraudulent activities which can be a worrisome scenario for card brands such as Visa and MasterCard, banks, PSPs, and consumers equally. With the goal to counter with the risks and compliance issues faced by every stakeholder, the firm invented the world first Transaction Laundering Detection technology in 2010. Terence Chau, Founder and CEO of Austreme, elaborates "Our function is to look after merchant websites or mobile apps to ensure that the merchant is not selling anything illegal or anything that is prohibited." The company is a registered MasterCard Merchant Monitoring Service Provider (MMSP) and it offers two other key services which help in the underwriting process — merchant onboarding and ongoing monitoring; especially for small and medium merchants given their vulnerability toward cyber breaches and the compliance requirements. The first service, VerifyStore, collects the technical data to determine the authenticity of a merchant along with its background and business history, this process is also known as technical KYC. Austreme does the technical assessment by checking other websites that have passed through the merchant website under the lens, highlighting any potential risks that might linger. The second service, SiteInspect, is the sustained web-crawling system that crawls through websites and identifies the brands, products and category the merchant's website comes under as opposed to what is mentioned. This service also detects any malware or phishing to prevent it from spreading to the users' PCs and stealing confidential data. Through these two services, Austreme provides security check, category check, and brand discovery. By leveraging machine learning (ML) and artificial intelligence (AI), the company has successfully tapped abnormal transaction patterns to identify hidden payment aggregation, money laundering or illegal use of a merchant account by exploring web crawl rules and transactions.

The services monitor websites based on an industry compliance standard, laws and client's policies which allow Austreme to prepare reports identifying websites with non-conforming items or services. The company not only tackles the breaches but also records the tackling process to mitigate any similar risk in the future. In the event of any breach, it is the banks involved in pulling through the payments that are liable to provide complete information about the merchant or the owner. Austreme works as a service provider which assists banks in justifying the litigations. With its services, Austreme helps banks, PSPs, and transaction aggregators acquire legitimate business by discovering fraudulent merchants and take suspension and termination

Terence Chau,
Founder & CEO

actions as appropriate. "Owing to our qualification, reputation, and experience, the banks registered with us enjoy up to 75 percent waiver of penalties," adds Chau. With its ICT award-winning, the first and the only Transaction Laundering Detection that complies with Payment Card Industry Data Security Standard (PCI DSS), Austreme aims to expand its capability to tackle fraudulent activities by further leveraging ML and AI. In a mobile world that is continuously on-the-go, Austreme is increasing its data set by gathering data transaction history, language usage, mobile apps and the kind of devices in play. This will further their capability to track fraudulent activities, improving the system to check and manage customers, helping online consumerism leap toward a safer experience. CA