

Collectors Universe Uses HID Trusted Tag Services



The Fight Against Counterfeiters of Rare Coins, Banknotes and other Collectibles

Formed in 1986, Collectors Universe, Inc., is an American company that provides third-party grading and authentication for coins, trading cards, sports memorabilia, and autographs. Professional Coin Grading Service (PCGS), a division of Collectors Universe, has certified more than 44.8 million United States and world coins, banknotes, medals and tokens with a cumulative value of over \$42 billion. PCGS is the only third-party coin and banknote grading company to offer a guarantee backed by a publicly traded company.

CHALLENGE:

Ensuring the authenticity, certification, and grading of collectible goods is of critical importance to the collectibles industry.

Numismatics, or the collecting of rare coins, has a market exceeding an estimated \$3 billion, and counterfeiters are eager to take a slice of this lucrative market.

“We want collectors to be confident that when they have PCGS-authenticated, -graded, and -encapsulated coins and banknotes in their hands, they are holding an authentic and valuable collector’s item,” said Brett Charville, President of Professional Coin Grading Service, referring to the encapsulation process that protects valuable coins in sonically sealed, tamper-evident holders.

Product authentication technology has become a necessity in a day and age when counterfeit coins and banknotes are more sophisticated than ever. Collectors Universe was seeking a solution that would protect against both counterfeit collectibles and holders, since the strength of the PCGS brand has made its collectibles holders a target for counterfeiters to duplicate and/or use for carrying a fake collectible.

The company sought an embedded technology solution that would allow collectors to authenticate items and holders before purchasing them. At the same time, the technology could not damage the collectibles or compromise their value in any way. Collectors Universe needed a solution that would enable their PCGS-certified coins and banknotes to be authenticated immediately, while being scalable enough to roll out to other items in their inventory over time.

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— **John Nelson**
Chief Information Officer

SOLUTION:

**Easy Authentication and Fast Installation
Using a Contactless Reader**

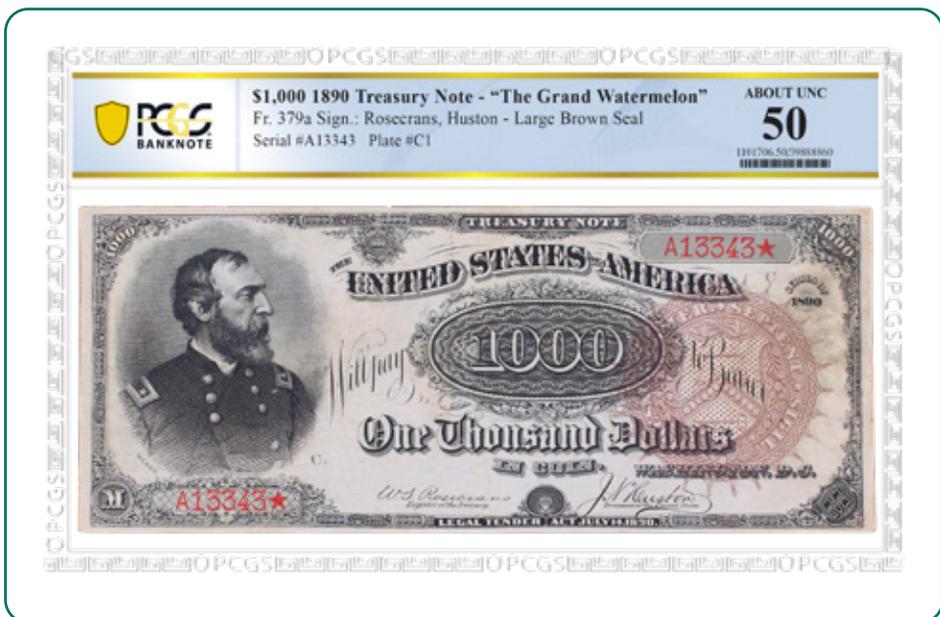
Collectors Universe partnered with HID Global to add NFC technology to coins and banknote holders in order to provide their customers with the assurance that their collectibles and PCGS holders are 100% authentic - and that they are the grade or in the condition stated on the label. The company deployed HID Trusted Tag® Services to make it possible for collectors and dealers to verify PCGS-slabbbed coins and holders in real time. The cloud-based HID Trusted Tag Services use HID Trusted NFC tags to authenticate collectible coins and holders when a customer or dealer taps their Android or iOS smartphone to a tagged coin holder.

How it works:

- The HID Trusted NFC tags are embedded into coin and holders using discreet wet inlays that are unseen behind PCGS's labeling.
- The collector taps their phone to the holder to authenticate the collectible through HID Cloud Authentication service; each tap generates a unique cryptographic one-time URL that automatically launches Collectors Universe's proprietary PCGS Cert Verification app or opens a web browser to display information about the coin's or banknote's authenticity. The page also displays valuable information including population reports, estimated value and high-resolution images.
- Since each tap generates a unique URL, the information cannot be cloned or manipulated by a counterfeiter.

“The technology provides peace of mind to customers who seek reassurance that their investment is going toward a verifiable collectable.”

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Chief Information Officer



BENEFITS:

The PCGS brand has a long history of bringing peace of mind to collectors through an industry-respected grading standard that is backed by a strong guarantee.

PCGS provides maximum value, security and liquidity to coins, banknotes, tokens and medals. With the help of HID Trusted Tag Services, collectors and dealers can now immediately verify the authenticity of both their collectible and its holder.

The best-in-class cryptography of HID’s Trusted NFC tags and ease of verification with virtually any smartphone also enable a seamless customer experience that can increase confidence in PCGS and other future Collectors Universe products. Charville commented, “This technology is the single biggest leap forward for third-party grading since its inception. While it may affect our pocketbook down the line, I would hope that every other third-party grading service in the industry considers integrating similar technology into their product lines as well. It’s simply that important for the hobby as a whole.”

“With HID Trusted Tag Services, Collectors Universe is the first in the numismatic industry and among the first in any of the collectibles fields to utilize this type of anti-counterfeiting technology at scale,” said Collectors Universe Chief Information Officer John Nelson. “The technology provides peace of mind to customers who seek reassurance that their investment is going toward a verifiable collectable.”

“Our name is trusted in the collectibles market, but we want to offer more than just our name to customers,” said Nelson. “Now just by tapping their smartphones, collectors and dealers have immediate confirmation that they are holding something authentic and valuable.”



RESULTS:

Collectors Universe initially rolled out the HID solution to approximately 100,000 coins to test compatibility and customer response.

Based on the overwhelmingly positive feedback, Collectors Universe has purchased an additional two million HID Trusted NFC Tags to embed HID Trusted NFC technology into its vast inventory of encapsulated coins, medals, tokens and banknotes.

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