Expanding biometric security

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'01 Spartan Engineer Salil Prabhakar is helping make iris recognition technology available worldwide

A Spartan Engineer is helping accelerate the dream of making iris recognition technology available around the world.

Salil Prabhakar ('01) is president and CEO of Delta ID, the world’s leading supplier of iris recognition technology. The company is based in California’s Silicon Valley.

At MSU, he was a student of University Distinguished Professor Anil Jain in the Pattern Recognition and Image Processing (PRIP) Lab of the Department of Computer Science and Engineering. He earned a PhD in computer science and engineering in 2001.

“Coursework at MSU and thesis work with Dr. Jain helped me lay strong foundations in the area of biometrics,” said Prabhakar. “That eventually helped me in various endeavors, including contributions I made to world’s largest biometric system -- Aadhaar in India -- and founding Delta ID that brought iris recognition technology for the first time to consumer mobile devices."

Prabhakar recently told Jain that the acquisition of his company, Delta ID, by Fingerprint Cards for $106 million will expand biometric technologies based on the human eye on a global scale. Biometrics relates to human characteristics that offer unique authentication options for identification and access of electronic devices.

“We are very excited to become part of the Fingerprint team,” Prabhakar said, noting the acquisition is about to improve security technology through the combination of iris recognition and fingerprints on a worldwide scale.
Delta ID develops biometric identity and authentication solutions based on iris recognition technology. The company’s ActiveIRIS(TM) system is the world’s only iris recognition system for mobile phones, PCs, tablets and vehicles.

Prabhakar explained that the ActiveIRIS(TM) system is certified for use with Aadhaar, the world’s largest biometric identity system, which the Indian government implemented for about 1.2 billion users in India. Fingerprint Cards has a strong customer base in China, he added.

The acquisition transaction is subject to regulatory approvals and expected to be complete by Spring 2017. Read more on the acquisition by Fingerprint.