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COVER STORY

B of A Upgrades Nearly All of Its ATMs

■ BY SEAN SPOSITO

Bank of America is upgrading the majority of its automated teller machines to help them fight viruses and more effectively do their own maintenance.

B of A approached Diebold Inc. a year ago to license and develop software to help its ATMs self-heal. The system, which Bank of America is deploying across more than 17,000 ATMs, is designed to save the bank the time and expense of servicing machines in person for problems that Diebold's technology can resolve automatically. As such, it meshes with the bank's plan to cut branches.

"Perhaps the machine locks up or freezes, maybe there is a loss in communication," said Paul Mercina, Diebold's director of software and services product management. "This allows you to go in to reset the device, or reboot the entire system, without waiting for someone to drive out."

The system, which Diebold calls OpteView Resolve, diagnoses the machines and allows the bank to repair machines remotely, preventing them from experiencing excessive downtime and also saving the cost and time of having a maintenance worker service the machines.

The initial launch of the software was in March, said Tara Burke, a Bank of America spokeswoman. She said there was a series of deployments throughout last year. The only B of A machines that are not managed by OpteView Resolve are the 1,000 at Valero gas stations in the Southeast U.S.; those machines are under a cobranding agreement.

Burke said she could not discuss other specifics of the system, such as its cost, projected cost savings or whether this replaces another system for managing its ATM fleet. Diebold, of North Canton, Ohio, also would not discuss those details.

The concept behind OpteView Resolve came from abroad. Diebold employees in Brazil developed the underlying technology for OpteView Resolve and the software has been used in Latin America for the past several years, Diebold executives said.

"Brazilians are far more sophisticated in their use of ATMs, and they have one of the strongest ratios of ATMs to users," said Brian Riley, a research director in the bank cards practice at TowerGroup. "This is the first time I can recall something major getting imported from Brazil into the U.S."

The Diebold software works with different types of ATMs. Executives said that no matter the maker, OpteView Resolve can manage the device.

Similar products are available through NCR Corp. and Wincor Nixdorf AG. Wells Fargo & Co. has its own proprietary software



Self-serve: Diebold's OpteView Resolve system will be deployed across more than 17,000 B of A cash machines. NCR and others offer similar products.

that routinely runs software upgrades across its ATM network.

These tools, which vary in their capabilities across vendors, bring together data once scattered across multiple departments. The strategy is helping banks cut costs at a time when most, like B of A, are looking at consolidating branches by concentrating on ATMs.

The technology also allows banks to deploy people to provide preventive maintenance.

"If Big Brother needs to watch something, it's certainly his ATMs," Riley said. "This is a tool for bankers to stay on top of one of the most important facets of their business."

The chief aim of the software is to become "more proactive and predictive," said Bob Tramontano, vice president of marketing, NCR's financial services business.

"We don't wait for the machine to fail," he said. "We can get out there ahead of time to do the preventive maintenance."

In June, NCR said BECU, formerly Boeing Employees' Credit Union, was the first to deploy NCR's APTRA Vision, a tool that works much in the same way as Diebold's OpteView Resolve. The Duluth, Ga., ATM maker's software retrieves both operational data and inventory information. It can also track the number

of times an ATM has “self-corrected” a cash jam or check jam — so that more extensive maintenance can be scheduled for that machine.

“If you had a 1,000 machines in your network, typically banks treated all those machines equally, no matter if one did 10,000 transactions,” Tramontano said. “We can bring in that rich data — where the machine is located, what is going on with the data — with this” software.

As for the future of OpteView Resolve, Diebold executives said they will begin offering it to other clients soon. And

they said they can see the technology working across multiple industries.

“If it’s got an IP address, it can be managed,” said John M. Deignan, Diebold’s vice president and chief marketing officer.

Other technology companies that offer self-service device monitoring include Fiserv Inc., which offers dashboard and forecasting technology for ATMs and other devices. Like Diebold, its software is device-agnostic; it can work across multiple ATM platforms. ■

B of A Upgrades Most of Its ATMs to Self-Repair

The Diebold logo features the word "DIEBOLD" in a bold, blue, sans-serif font. A stylized blue swoosh underline is positioned beneath the letters "D", "I", and "E".

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