

Uber jacks up security in Nigeria, Ghana, Kenya

After the successful implementation of an intelligent new safety feature was introduced to Uber driver-partners in South Africa early this year, the company has announced that the same feature will be implemented in other markets in Africa. Uber has begun this African roll out of its Real-Time ID in Nigeria, Ghana and Kenya in a bid to further improve passenger security.



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The technology works by prompting driver-partners to periodically share a selfie in the app before going online and accepting rides. Uber then compares this photo to the one corresponding to the account on file.

Facial recognition technology

This feature works on facial recognition technology and begins by identifying the drivers face, then it builds a feature set by focusing on key features, and finally, compares the feature set to the validated photo Uber has on file.

If the two photo's don't match, the account is temporarily blocked while Uber investigates the situation.

This helps Uber to ensure in real time that the driver-partner using the app matches the account it has on file. Given that verification takes only a few seconds to complete, this feature proactively and efficiently builds more security into the app.

Alon Lits, general manager for Uber sub-Saharan Africa explains, “During our pilot of Real-Time ID Check over the past few months in South Africa, we learned that more than 99% of drivers were verified. This new feature makes sense as a simple action of taking a selfie is a language that people all over the world understand. This extra security feature does not inconvenience driver-partners, which is extremely important for us. “

Protects drivers' accounts

Real-time ID check assures riders that when they are picked up, the right person is behind the wheel. This prevents fraud and protects drivers' accounts from being compromised. An important part of safety is verifying that the driver-partner who is picking up riders is the same person who underwent Uber's screening process.

This software feature is a result of various cutting edge technical solutions being tried and tested in face, voice, and gesture recognition. Face verification stood out on top compared to all other solutions and is an example of proactive technology that solves potential challenges before they occur.

Real-Time ID Check is a phased roll out and not all driver-partners will see this right away. Riders can feel safe knowing that their driver has been verified and driver-partners can rest assured that a fraudster is not using their account.

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