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Expert: As NYC Bans Tobacco Sales to Minors, An Innovator's App Could Bolster Law

Released: 22-Nov-2013 8:35 AM EST

Source Newsroom: Intellicheck Mobilisa

Newswise — On November 19, Mayor Michael Bloomberg of New York City signed landmark legislation banning the sale of tobacco products to anyone under age 21. This makes New York the first large city or state in the U.S. to prohibit sales to young adults. Bloomberg remarked that raising the legal purchase age would help prevent young people from experimenting with tobacco at the age when they are most likely to become addicted.

New York's merchants might fear an onslaught of fake IDs in the wake of this ruling—but one man has developed an app that could meet this challenge head-on: Nelson Ludlow, Ph.D., President and CEO of Intellicheck Mobilisa, a global leader in identity solutions and wireless security systems based in Port Townsend, Washington.

Dr. Ludlow's background lends itself well toward solving the thorny problem of fake IDs. He has more than 30 years of experience in software development for the military and corporate sectors; while in the Air Force, he served as mathematician, pilot, intelligence officer and more. He also holds a Ph.D. in artificial intelligence from the University of Edinburgh in Scotland.

Ludlow helped create barZapp™, an app that originally launched for iPhones in the Apple App Store on July 1 (version 2.0 is now available), as well as for Android phones in the Google App Store on October 29.

What is barZapp, and how could it help to minimize illegal tobacco sales in the Big Apple? As its name suggests, the app offers a way to prevent alcohol sales to the under-21 crowd in bars—but its use is hardly limited to bar owners. barZapp users can aim their smartphone at the barcode on a driver's license to instantly read and verify the encoded information and display the results—including the bearer's name, date of birth, ID expiration and ID number. barZapp incorporates Intellicheck Mobilisa's patented ID Check software that instantly verifies the authenticity of state

and provincial driver licenses and ID cards, as well as military and government ID cards.

barZapp can be utilized by servers at any establishment to reduce the chances of receiving fines and penalties when age-restricted products—including tobacco—are unknowingly sold to underage purchasers. Introductory versions are available in both the Apple App Store and the Google App Store for \$1.99.

In an Associated Press story on NYC's new tobacco ban, one 19-year-old man was quoted as saying Bloomberg had just exponentially increased the fake ID industry in New York. With Ludlow's barZapp app now available to every NYC store owner with a smartphone, the law may be easier to uphold than any would-be smoker under age 21 might think.

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