Rabobank Desensitizes Client Data for GDPR and DevOps with IBM
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UTRECHT, Netherlands, April 5, 2018 /PRNewswire/ -- Rabobank, the Dutch multi-national bank and financial services company, is working with IBM (NYSE: IBM) to use cryptographic pseudonyms on its client's personal data to innovate and comply with new financial regulations in the EU.

Starting on 25 May, the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) seeks to create a harmonized data protection law framework across the EU and it aims to give citizens and residents back control of their personal data, whilst imposing strict rules on those hosting, moving and processing this data, anywhere in the world.

Rabobank is addressing GDPR compliance across a number of activities. In one project with IBM Services and IBM Research, the bank has cryptographically transformed terabytes of its most sensitive client data, including names, birthdates and account numbers, into a desensitized representation – meaning, it looks and behaves like the real data, but it's not.

Pseudonymization enhances privacy by replacing most identifying fields within a data record by one or more artificial identifiers, or pseudonyms, i.e. replacing a real name with a fictitious one. In addition, for GDPR the data is also processed in such a way that it can no longer be attributed to a specific data subject without the use of additional information. For example, without pseudonymization knowing the date of birth, and the home address can reveal the person's identity.

"IBM analytics software combined with our cryptographic desensitization engine achieves pseudonymization by converting the data into individual hash-based token keys which are completely impermeable today and in the future, even from a fault-tolerant quantum computer many years from now," said Michael Osborne, cryptographer, IBM Research. "This research is now a commercial technology available to address multiple compliance legislations, cross industry, around the world."

Besides helping towards GDPR compliance having the data desensitized also makes it easier for Rabobank's Radical Automation DevOps team to use the data for performance testing for the development of new innovative technologies and services, such as mobile apps and payment solutions.

"It's critical for our DevOps team to use data which is as close as possible to production during the testing phase, so when we go live, we are confident that our services will perform," said Peter Claassen, Delivery Manager Radical Automation, Rabobank. "Being able to test and iterate using pseudonymized data is going to unleash new innovations from our DevOps team bringing even more security, innovation and convenience to our clients."

Rabobank and IBM Services have been running the project for the past year. Multiple key applications and platforms have been pseudonymized, including the current bank account and savings systems on mainframe, Linux, Tandem and Windows platforms.

Ultimately, the project will pseudonymize all payments applications and expand into other functional areas within the bank.

About Rabobank Group
Rabobank is an international financial services provider operating on the basis of cooperative principles. It offers retail banking, wholesale banking, private banking, leasing and real estate services. As a cooperative bank, Rabobank puts customers' interests first in its services. Rabobank is committed to being a leading customer-focused cooperative bank in the Netherlands and a leading food and agri bank worldwide. Rabobank employs approximately internal and external 43, 810 people. Rabobank Group is active in 40 countries.

For more information about the Rabobank Group go to www.rabobank.com.

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Rabobank
Margo van Wijgerden
+31 30 21 60967
margo.van.wijgerden@rabobank.nl

IBM Research
Christopher Sciacca
+41 44 724 8443
cia@zurich.ibm.com

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