

Fresh. Focused. Filtered.

-Since 2006-

NewsFilter

Editor: Mike Strawhecker, VP & Director of TSG Metrics
Co-Editor: Andrew Nuss, Marketing Manager



Payments Experts. Powerful Data.
THE STRAWHECKER GROUP



Feb. 5th, 2016
Edition #492



Subscribers:

Please complete [this brief 2 minute survey](#) and help us improve NewsFilter! Thank you!

Categories

[Featured](#)

[Mobile Payments & Bitcoin](#)

[Regulation & Security](#)

[Economy](#)

[Payments Press](#)

Want to Advertise in NF?

[Click here to learn more.](#)

This Day in History: 1994

nmi

FACE the facts: payment facilitators need technology, and NMI has it

LEARN MORE

Trending This Week...

Super Sunday is finally here! To celebrate, TSG is hosting a fun little contest...

Since TSG is headquartered in Omaha, [email us](#) the number of times you think Peyton Manning will yell 'OMAHA' during the big game. The first person to send the correct number will receive a **FREE** copy of TSG's newest **Directory of U.S. Merchant Acquirers**. Entries must be in by 12pm CT on 2/7.



Highlights this week include:

- [House of Representatives Votes to End 'Operation Choke Point'](#)
- [Amazon Offers Free Square Credit Card Readers to Former Amazon Local Register Customers](#)
- [Eye on Branding: Vantiv Renames Mercury and Element](#)
- [Visa Opens its APIs to Grab 'Staggeringly Large' Opportunities](#)
- [Wages Rise as US Unemployment Rate Falls Below 5%](#)

Beckwith Convicted of Killing Medgar Evers

On this day in 1994, white supremacist Byron De La Beckwith is convicted in the murder of African-American civil rights leader Medgar Evers, over 30 years after the crime occurred. Evers was gunned down in the driveway of his Jackson, Mississippi, home on June 12, 1963, while his wife, Myrlie, and the couple's three small children were inside.

Medgar Wiley Evers was born July 2, 1925, near Decatur, Mississippi, and served in the U.S. Army during World War II. After fighting for his country, he returned home to experience discrimination in the racially divided South, with its separate public facilities and services for blacks and whites. Evers graduated from Alcorn College in 1952 and began organizing local chapters of the NAACP (National Association for the Advancement of Colored People). In 1954, after being rejected for admission to then-segregated University of Mississippi Law School, he became part of an NAACP campaign to desegregate the school. Later that year, Evers was named the NAACP's first field secretary in Mississippi. He moved with his family to Jackson and worked to dismantle segregation, leading peaceful rallies, economic boycotts and voter registration drives around the state. In 1962, he helped James Meredith become the first African American to attend the University of Mississippi, a watershed event in the civil rights movement. As a result of his work, Evers received numerous threats and several attempts were made on his life before he was murdered in 1963 at

New eReports This Week:

Directory of U.S. Merchant Acquirers

- TSG's directory provides profiles on 250 ISO/Acquirers that include the country's top tier acquirers, along with supplemental ISOs and technology-centered acquirer's. Company profiles provide factual insights that include (as available) processor relationships, merchant vertical specializations, dollar volume statistics, transaction counts, active merchant outlet counts, key management names and titles, corporate structures, sponsor banks, partnerships and more. [Download a sample.](#) [Click here to purchase.](#)

The State of Global Investments and Funding in FinTech and Payment Startups

- The FinTech and Payments sector is currently seeing a boom in investment along with strong M&A activity. To help understand this ever-evolving space, TSG has put together a 102-page study, which provides an in-depth look at the payments financing landscape as well as the investors and companies fueling the payments startup ecosystem. [Download a sample.](#) [Click here to purchase.](#)



Featured

[House of Representatives Votes to End 'Operation Choke Point'](#)

2/04/16 *Breitbart*

The House of Representatives passed the Financial Institution Customer Protection Act on Thursday by a vote of 250-169. The primary purpose of the bill is to end the Obama administration's controversial "Operation Choke Point," a secretive effort launched in 2013 to "choke off" legitimate businesses through the use of the federal government's regulatory power over banks and third party payment processors. All 240 Republicans who cast ballots voted in favor of the bill. They were joined by 10 Democrats.

Related: [Find Out If Your Lawmaker Voted to End Operation Choke Point](#)

[Amazon Offers Free Square Credit Card Readers to Former Amazon Local Register Customers](#)

2/04/16 *Recode*

First, Amazon wanted to compete with Square. Now it is playing nice. The e-commerce giant is offering free Square credit card readers, which retail for \$10, to business owners who had previously bought an Amazon Local Register, the company's version of a card-swiping device that plugs into phones and tablets.

[Eye on Branding: Vantiv Renames Mercury and Element](#)

2/04/16 Digital Transactions

Vantiv Inc. and PayPal Holdings Inc. are, separately, creating new looks for their brands. Vantiv, which bought integrated-payments specialist Mercury Payment Systems LLC in 2014 for \$1.65 billion, is renaming Mercury and Element Payment Services, an integrated-payments provider it purchased in 2013, as a single unit called Vantiv Integrated Payments.

This name change is a natural evolution for the companies, Matt Taylor, Vantiv group president of integrated payments and emerging channels, tells Digital Transactions News via email.

Related: [Mercury & Element are Now Vantiv Integrated Payments](#)

[PayPal Reveals Vision for the Future of Money](#)

2/04/16 BusinessWire

PayPal Holdings Inc. revealed its first major brand campaign as an independent company with a 45-second commercial that will air during the first quarter of Super Bowl® 50. This will mark the first time the global digital commerce leader has advertised during television's most-watched event. The new global campaign, called "New Money" will show how PayPal can make people's lives easier by helping them move and manage money securely and more efficiently.

[Let's Be Honest About The Problems With Blockchain And Finance](#)

2/03/16 TechCrunch

Strange times we live in. The world's biggest financial players and analysts are buzzing about an invention that became famous partly by promising to destroy them. In just a few months, blockchain went from the cause célèbre of crypto-anarchists and tech evangelists to the biggest idea in mainstream banking. We've seen a steady stream of blockchain news: five more banks joined the massive R3 consortium (its membership reads like a who's-who of global finance), Nasdaq announced its first share transaction on blockchain and the Australian stock exchange announced it would test blockchain for trade settlement.

Related: [Blockchain Won't Make Banks Any Nimbler](#)

[Visa Opens Its APIs to Grab 'Staggeringly Large' Opportunities](#)

2/04/16 American Banker

For the first time, Visa is inviting third-party software developers onto its network with the goal of advancing digital commerce. The launch of the Visa Developer platform transforms the card network's products and services with open application programming interfaces. Developers will now have access to payment technologies and services including account holder identification, person-to-person payment capabilities, secure in-store and online payment services such as Visa Checkout, currency conversion and consumer transaction alerts, the company revealed Thursday during a press conference in San Francisco.

Partners

Europe Money20/20 • 4-7 APRIL 2016
• COPENHAGEN

USE STRAWHECKER GROUP'S DISCOUNT CODE STRAW200 AND SAVE €200

Dwolla Bank To Bank Transfers Let Companies Get Paid Without Credit Card Fees

2/03/16 Forbes

Dwolla, a payment network that allows individuals and businesses to send, receive and request payments for free over the ACH network, has released a new white label API that provides the convenience of credit cards without their high costs by connecting directly to bank accounts. It charges for the API service. There's no shortage of people frustrated by expensive transaction fees who want a simple way to move money between accounts," said Ben Milne, founder and CEO of Dwolla.

Wearable Payments Startup Fit Pay Secures \$3.1 Million in Seed Funding

2/05/16 Finextra

Fit Pay, a wearable payments startup founder by former Visa and CyberSource executives, has raised \$3.1 million in a seed funding round led by Germany's Giesecke & Devrient. The San Francisco-based startup, founded by former Jumio and CyberSource exec Michael Orlando and one-time Visa chief technical architect Scott Stevelinck, has developed a service that allows wearable device manufacturers to seamlessly add contactless payment capabilities to their products.

COIN Tossed Into Class Action Lawsuit by SF Lawfirm

2/04/16 Crowdfund Insider

COIN, the one card to rule them all, has been slapped with a class action lawsuit filed by Kronenberger Rosenfeld, a San Francisco-based law firm that specializes in internet, tech and media law. The suit was filed against COIN alleging they "knowingly marketed a defective product". According to information released by Kronenberger, COIN "violated several unfair competition and false advertising laws during a vastly successful crowdfunding campaign". The suit asserts that COIN received millions of dollars from consumers through a crowdfunding campaign for a product "the company knew could never work as advertised".

Blockstream Raises \$55 Million to Build Out Bitcoin's Blockchain

2/03/16 CoinDesk

Blockstream has raised \$55m in Series A funding to continue its work expanding the bitcoin code base for commercial use. With the news, Blockstream's total funding rises to \$76m over two investment rounds. To date, the company's signature technology has been its sidechains offering, currently in testing, which enables the creation of blockchains that can validate data from, and transfer assets to, other blockchains. Blockstream's round was led by venture capital firms AXA Strategic Ventures, the venture capital arm of French multinational insurance firm AXA Group; Digital Garage, the Tokyo-based online payments firm co-founded by Joi Ito; and Horizons Ventures.

Homeless Man Now Accepts Visa, MasterCard, and American Express

2/01/16 Mashable

For some people, begging is a business. Abe Hagenston has been homeless in Detroit for the past seven years. It's been a struggle for him to find a job, so he recently decided to treat his panhandling like real employment. While he once only accepted cash, he's now taking VISA, Mastercard, and American Express, thanks to an app he uses on his smartphone. On his website, Hagenston stressed that he will work - but he also wants people to understand the plight of homeless individuals like him.



Regulation & Security

Landry's Reveals Details of POS Breach

2/03/16 Bank Info Security

Houston-based Landry's Inc. has opened up on the broad scope of point-of-service malware attacks at its restaurants and other properties dating back to 2014 and 2015. The breaches exposed payment cards used at 46 of its brands, which include the restaurant chain Morton's and Golden Nugget Hotels and Casinos. More than 350 locations in 34 states, the District of Columbia and Canada were affected, according to a Jan. 29 statement. Landry's has about 500 locations under its corporate umbrella.

Safeway Self-Checkout Skimmer Close Up

2/03/16 Krebs on Security

In Dec. 2015, KrebsOnSecurity warned that security experts had discovered skimming devices attached to credit and debit card terminals at self-checkout lanes at Safeway stores in Colorado and possibly other states. Safeway hasn't disclosed what those skimmers looked like, but images from a recent skimming attack allegedly launched against self-checkout shoppers at a Safeway in Maryland offers a closer look at once such device.

Pot Banking 2016: More State Ballots But Continued Unease

2/01/16 BankThink

Despite its astounding growth in recent years, the marijuana industry remains hampered by its own banking crisis. Marijuana businesses' difficulty in accessing financial services has created problems for businesses and government alike. Billions of dollars from marijuana sales legal in multiple states remain largely outside the sanctioned financial system, impeding the ability of public officials both to tax marijuana businesses and to prevent marijuana-related funds from financing criminal activity. And most marijuana businesses continue to hit a wall in getting financial services, which is limiting their growth.

Luxury Retailer Neiman Marcus Says Hackers Breached User Accounts

2/02/16 Softpedia

Neiman Marcus has sent out letters to some of its customers, informing them of an incident where an unauthorized party managed to guess their passwords, logged into their account, and even attempted to initiate fraudulent transactions.

Related: [Are Retailers Improving Cybersecurity?](#)

Economy

Wages Rise as U.S. Unemployment Rate Falls Below 5%

2/05/16 *The New York Times*

The American economy's jobs machine cooled in January, but still performed well enough to push unemployment to an eight-year low and deliver some much-needed wage gains for ordinary workers. The Labor Department said Friday that payrolls rose by 151,000 in January, a falloff from the year-end sprint that helped make 2015 the second-best year for job creation since the late 1990s. The slowdown makes it more likely that the Federal Reserve will not raise rates again when it meets next month.

Related: [Three Big Questions on the Job Market, and How January's Numbers Answer Them](#)

The Fed Wants to Test How Banks Would Handle Negative Rates

2/02/16 *Bloomberg*

As interest rates turn negative around the world, the Federal Reserve is asking banks to consider the possibility of the same happening in the U.S.

In its annual stress test for 2016, the Fed said it will assess the resilience of big banks to a number of possible situations, including one where the rate on the three-month U.S. Treasury bill stays below zero for a prolonged period. "The severely adverse scenario is characterized by a severe global recession, accompanied by a period of heightened corporate financial stress and negative yields for short-term U.S. Treasury securities," the central bank said in announcing the stress tests last week.

Small Business Owners Investing Significant Personal Time and Savings to Grow Their Business

2/03/16 *American Express*

Seventy-nine percent of small business owners continue to make growing their business a top priority, but many are making personal sacrifices in the process. According to data from the most recent American Express OPEN Small Business Growth Pulse, 89% of small businesses indicate they invest a significant amount of their personal time in an effort to grow their business. Also in line with these findings, six in ten (60%) small business owners say they spend a larger percentage of time working ON their business to drive growth rather than IN their business managing details.

Payments Press

B of A Digital Team Has a Fat Budget and a Whole Bunch of Plans

2/01/16 *American Banker*

Money talks, and Bank of America's plans to triple spending on its mobile app in 2016 say a lot about its priorities. The bank wouldn't disclose the exact dollar amount, so it cannot be ranked against its peers' spending, but the beefed-up budget is a sign of the times. Customer expectations are changing rapidly, and banks are now being judged harshly by how their offerings stack up. Even the front-runners have to invest heavily to defend their positions.

Vantiv Reports Fourth Quarter and Full-Year 2015 Results

2/03/16 *Vantiv*

Vantiv, Inc. announced financial results for the fourth quarter and full-year ended December 31, 2015. For the fourth quarter, revenue increased 16% to \$852 million as compared to \$734 million in the prior year period.

Net revenue increased 13% to \$453 million as compared to \$402 million in the prior year period, reflecting strong growth in both of our segments. On a GAAP basis, net income attributable to Vantiv, Inc. was \$51 million or \$0.31 per diluted share as compared to \$69 million or \$0.35 per diluted share in the prior year period.

Heartland Reports 2015 Fourth Quarter and Full Year Results

2/02/16 Heartland

Robert O. Carr, Chairman and CEO, said, "Results for the fourth quarter provide an emphatic conclusion to what has been the best year in the history of Heartland. We employed the same winning formula that has seen us report record results quarter after quarter this year: an increase in the size and productivity of our sales organization, record new business, the introduction of innovative new products and technology, and a focused effort on productivity and efficiency. This quarter we achieved the fastest rate of new margin installed since 2013, as we increased our relationship manager count to 1,240 at December 31, 2015, a 26% increase from a year ago, leading to the acceleration in new business growth."

Blackhawk Network Acquires NimbleCommerce

2/03/16 PR Newswire

Blackhawk Network, a leading prepaid and payments network, announced today that it has acquired NimbleCommerce, a digital commerce platform and network for promotions. NimbleCommerce also allows merchants and brands to manage their own prepaid offer and gift card programs, or resell through a network of retailer and publisher branded sites.

Payment Processor to Stop Working With Daily Fantasy Sports Clients

2/01/16 The New York Times

A payment processing company that handles a significant number of transactions for the two dominant daily fantasy sports companies notified the operators this week that it would no longer handle their payments and in fact was leaving the industry altogether. It is perhaps the biggest blow yet to an industry that has been pummeled by legal challenges in recent months.

BlueSnap Measures Checkout Abandonment To Help Retailers Avoid Lost eCommerce Sales

2/02/16 EON

eCommerce now accounts for as much as 10 percent of all retail sales, but merchants are putting as much as 42 percent of their online sales at risk by making it too hard for consumers to complete the checkout process. In an effort to help retailers capitalize on the burgeoning eCommerce opportunity, BlueSnap, a leading provider of global, mobile checkout solutions, is launching The Checkout Conversion Calculator to help retailers identify the points of friction that create a loss of sales.

MiFinity Payments Launches New E-Wallet Solution for the Gaming Industry

2/01/16 BusinessWire

MiFinity Payments, a global payments provider that serves the travel, hospitality and gaming industries, as well as large multinational companies that need to serve many different payment needs in one place, announced today that it has launched a digital wallet solution for

the gaming industry. With the MiFinity E-Wallet solution, companies can electronically send money from anywhere in the world - to any location in the world, with the push of a button - or swipe of a screen.

YapStone Bolsters Executive Team

2/01/16 The GreenSheet

YapStone™, a full stack payments solution, today announced the expansion of its executive management team with the hiring of key leadership positions, including Debra Tenenbaum as Chief People Officer, Amir Sunderji as Chief Risk Officer, Saran Mandair as VP of Production Operations & Site Reliability and James Collom as VP of Engineering.

USA Technologies Receives 2015 IoT Evolution Smart Machines Innovation Award

2/02/16 BusinessWire

USA Technologies, a premier payment technology service provider of integrated cashless and mobile transactions in the self-service retail market, announced that its ePort Connect Service has received a 2015 Smart Machines Innovation Award from IoT Evolution magazine, the leading publication covering IoT technologies. The IoT Evolution Smart Machines Innovation Award honors products, services, platforms, and applications that are part of the intelligent device market.

FireEye Announces Acquisition of InvoTas International Corporation

2/01/16 Market Wired

FireEye, Inc., the leader in stopping today's advanced cyber attacks, announced the acquisition of privately held InvoTas International Corporation, a provider of security automation and orchestration technology. The transaction closed on February 1, 2016. The acquisition enables FireEye to deliver one of the world's premier security orchestration capabilities as part of the FireEye global threat management platform. FireEye will leverage the technologies of InvoTas® Security Orchestrator to unify cyber attack detection results, threat intelligence and incident response elements of an organization's security program into a single console, giving enterprises the ability to respond more quickly to attacks through automation.

RevoPay Introduces A Simpler Way to Pay: One-Click Payments

2/04/16 PR Web

RevoPay, a leading developer of electronic payments solutions for emerging markets, recently released a new feature inspired by online shopping giants: One-Click Payments. The feature allows payors using the RevoPay platform to pay rent, HOA dues, school tuition and other important bills simply by clicking on a single link in an email.

NACHA Adds New Directors to its Board

2/02/16 NACHA

The Electronic Payments Association® today announced the addition of four new and two re-elected directors to its Board. The Board consists of 19 voting directors representing a diverse set of depository financial institutions of all sizes and types that use and support the ACH Network. "We are in exciting times as financial institutions, technology solution providers and business end users continue to find new, secure and innovative ways to benefit from ACH payments," said Janet O. Estep, NACHA president and CEO.

A Way to Lock Lost Debit Cards, From a Big Bank

2/03/16 *The New York Times*

Almost everyone with a bank account has encountered this situation: You return home after shopping, or dining out, and discover that your debit card is missing. Frantic phone calls to stores and restaurants ensue, as you mentally retrace your steps to determine where you may have left the little plastic card. More banks are now offering a simple tool to protect bank accounts quickly, while the customer figures out where the card might be and retrieves it - or decides it's lost and requests a new one.



Payments Experts. Powerful Data.
THE STRAWHECKER GROUP



Copyright © 2016 The Strawhecker Group. All Rights Reserved. Unless noted, TSG does not take responsibility for content or opinions. Articles are sourced as appropriate throughout.

'**SafeUnsubscribe**' below will remove you from all TSG communications, this includes email blasts as well as NewsFilter. Please be aware of this before you choose to unsubscribe. Thank you, we appreciate your continued readership.