



## CASE STUDY

# Couchsurfing chooses Onfido to verify the identity of users and build trust throughout its community

## THE CUSTOMER

Couchsurfing is a global community of 14 million people in more than 200,000 cities who share their life, their world, their journey. Couchsurfing connects travelers with a global network of people willing to share in profound and meaningful ways, making travel a truly social experience.

Using Couchsurfing, you can stay with locals in over 100 countries. Travel like a local, stay in someone's home and experience the world in a way money can't buy.

## THE CHALLENGE

Couchsurfing was searching for a solution that would improve trust between its users. With members from over 100 countries, Couchsurfing had no way of truly verifying who their members were. "An address, credit card, or phone number doesn't verify a user's identity directly. Rather it demonstrates access to these components. While each of these is useful in its own way, we wanted something even strong-

**Verified over 30,000 users in less than 3 months**

**Global turnaround time less than 20 minutes per check**

**Able to verify users in over 200,000 cities around the world**



## CHECKS

Document Check | Facial Similarity Check Sex  
Offender Report | Watchlist Report

## THE COUNTRY

San Francisco, California, United States

## ORGANISATION TYPE

P2P hospitality service & network

## CUSTOMERS

14 million in over 200,000 cities

er.” said Don Fultz, Head of Trust and Safety at Couchsurfing. Couchsurfing wanted to ensure that their Verified members are who they claim to be, by implementing a robust identity verification process, while keeping it easy for members to join their platform from around the world. If users could voluntarily verify themselves, this would in turn increase trust and safety in the Couchsurfing community.

## THE SOLUTION

Couchsurfing identified multiple potential vendors that could support its goal of establishing trust amongst its users. For Couchsurfing, it was important that they partner with a vendor who could support them throughout the implementation process, and continue to provide ongoing support as their solution evolves. For this reason, Couchsurfing chose to partner with Onfido.

Onfido’s unique workflow, which involves combining a user’s Document Check with a Facial

“ Onfido allows us to not only verify a member’s identity, but also to incorporate a range of checks into our site. Seamless access to Global Watchlists, the National Sex Offender Public Registry, and criminal records provides us with flexibility that not all identity companies are able to provide. ”

**Don Fultz,**  
Head of Trust and Safety,  
Couchsurfing

Similarity Check, means that Couchsurfing can verify that a user actually exists. Onfido’s iOS & Android SDK enables Couchsurfing users to take a photo of their document, where it is verified at the point of capture to ensure that it is not affected by blurring or glare. The user then takes a selfie, which is compared to the face on their document to ensure that the two match, all within the app workflow. At the same time, the details provided by the applicant are checked against Sex Offender and Watchlist databases.

The implementation process, from beginning to end, took less than one month. Onfido engineers worked close with the team at Couchsurfing to integrate Onfido’s iOS & Android SDK into their app, discussing bug fixes over a dedicated Slack channel and through regular conference calls. After one month, the implementation was complete, and Couchsurfing went live with Onfido’s SDK embedded into their app.

## THE RESULTS

In the first three months following implementation, Onfido’s IDV solution enabled more than 30,000 members to become verified. With the quick turnaround time for each check (less than 20 minutes), Couchsurfing is now able to quickly onboard and verify new users in over 200,000 cities, while also reducing user dropout.

Onfido’s Account Managers have quick to react to any challenges, with a level of responsiveness and turnaround on all requests that has established a new level of trust between the two companies. Both companies will continue to work closely, with Couchsurfing providing feedback and input that will help influence Onfido’s future product roadmap.