

Altair to Deliver Europe's First Prepaid Programs with *MasterCard rePower*

LONDON, 9 July 2008 – Altair Financial Services International Plc (Altair), a leading global prepaid card and transaction processing solutions provider, announced that it will work with MasterCard to deliver the first prepaid card programs in Europe using *MasterCard® rePower™*, the MasterCard point-of-sale reload service. The first prepaid programs to benefit from *MasterCard rePower* loading facility in the UK will be issued by Newcastle Building Society in Spring 2009.

The recent MasterCard announcement of an alliance with Payzone plc is the starting point of what will become a network of participating European merchants that can provide convenient cash to prepaid card loading. *MasterCard rePower* creates a compelling business case for all parties, facilitating more reload points, while providing convenient and cost-effective *MasterCard rePower* facilitated transactions.

“We are delighted to participate in the *MasterCard rePower* launch,” said Lee Britton, Altair CEO. “MasterCard rePower will bring a valuable service to millions of unbanked and financially underserved individuals throughout Europe. *MasterCard rePower* will enable issuers and acquirers to reach emerging markets, broaden acceptance opportunities, convert cash purchases to card transactions and to take advantage of the rapidly growing market for prepaid products.”

Altair systems are flexible enough to respond to the requirements set out by MasterCard, and was selected as having already successfully delivered multiple card programs to MasterCard, such as the limited edition MasterCard Prepaid *PayPass™* contactless cards at The BRIT Awards 2008 and Swarovski Fashion Rocks for the Prince's Trust 2007.

The Altair processing platform provides a turn-key innovative payment solution for a number of clients in various sectors. These include consumer focused retail and travel prepaid cards, corporate targeted focused prepaid cards for payroll or insurance claim payouts, and even prepaid government cards used to distribute payments to beneficiaries.

The *MasterCard rePower* service benefits all partners involved in a prepaid payment transaction including issuing and acquiring financial institutions, cash acceptance networks and cardholders. The service will enable cardholders to add money to eligible cards in real-time at any participating merchant with a MasterCard POS terminal, at the same time providing cardholders with a standardised experience at every *rePower* merchant. Through a single agreement that provides multiple reload locations covering Europe, the prepaid card issuer earns revenue based on shifting transactions from cash to card. Issuers benefit further from a net settlement guarantee and next day fund flow (MDS settlement times).

Kriya Patel, Head of Card Solutions at Newcastle Building Society says, “*MasterCard rePower* represents a significant new venture for us. The partnership with MasterCard, Altair and Payzone plc brings together experience and utilises the latest technology available. As a Society we strive to keep up to date with developments in the industry and are proud to be at the forefront of card issuing and acquiring in the UK.”

The cardholder experience is designed to be simple, quick and convenient. Prepaid cardholders present their MasterCard or Maestro-branded reloadable prepaid card to a participating merchant along with the money they wish to add. The merchant uses standard transaction codes and transmits the load amount. The transaction is processed in real-time over the MasterCard network, giving the cardholder immediate access to his or her money.

Commenting on the announcement, Paul Bartholomew-Keen, Business Leader, Prepaid Europe at MasterCard, said, “*MasterCard rePower* is a great leap forward for our prepaid cardholders and we’re delighted to be delivering this with industry-leading partners. Although people can reload their prepaid cards at the point-of-sale today, the separate arrangements with the ‘top-up’ networks often means that cardholders receive a multitude of service experiences, and a wide range of timescales for when their money is available. With *MasterCard rePower*, cardholders will benefit from a streamlined service experience and be able to spend the money on their prepaid card as soon as it’s been loaded.”

About Altair Financial Services International Plc:

Altair Financial Services International Plc (Altair) is a global transaction processing company, issuing and acquiring processor, internet payment gateway, mobile payments and stored value processor. Altair was incorporated in 2005 as a global provider of bespoke white labelled Prepaid Card programs with enhanced functionality. Altair acquired established transaction processing company, Symmetrex, Inc. in November 2006. Altair is headquartered in London with banking and processing relationships in UK, USA, Middle East and Africa, Asia Pacific and throughout the Latin America and Caribbean regions and issues on behalf of MasterCard® and Visa.

Altair solutions are designed to be flexible enough to provide companies with almost any type of prepaid card functionality, including open and closed loop programs, and created for corporate, retail/consumer and government use. Through its relationship with MasterCard®, all Altair cards issued in Europe are based on Chip & PIN technology and are EMV standards compliant. Altair is a certified issuer and transaction processor of contactless (MasterCard® *PayPass*™) prepaid cards in the United Kingdom. For more information, visit www.altair-financial.com or call +44(0) 20 7659 1140.