

Driving Value through Innovation

Verified Credential Insights from Cisive PreCheck

by Haley Glover, Senior Director, UpSkill America

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Executive Summary

Cisive is one of the largest and most influential background screening and monitoring organizations in the US, with specialized platforms that enable employers from all industries to conduct seamless background checks, license monitoring, drug and health testing, and more for candidates entering key roles. Cisive powers PreCheck, which since 1993 has explicitly focused on the health care industry, where background screening and licensing are a matter of both compliance and patient care.

Health care employers are struggling to find the talent they need to serve patients and are looking for innovative solutions that can get clinical candidates to the bedside more efficiently without sacrificing quality. **Zach Daigle**, chief client experience officer at Cisive, is leading the work to adopt verified credentials as a means of streamlining background checks for items that remain the same over time – degrees, work experiences, and licenses – while enabling deeper, faster work in uncovering important factors in candidates' backgrounds that change.

Cisive plays four key roles in this movement. They are:

- A node operator – within the network of verified credentials, immutable records of credentials can be replicated across Cisive's node.
- A notary issuer – Cisive issues credentials for static attribute information for which the organization is a primary source.
- A credential agent operator – Cisive maintains partnerships with colleges and education providers in which the provider issues digital credentials through Cisive.
- A batch issuer – Cisive processes large volumes of credentials simultaneously, rather than individually.

Cisive's work to utilize and issue digital credentials is supported by the [Velocity Network](#), a blockchain-based utility layer governed by member organizations that enables secure, portable storage and sharing of digital credentials.

The following interview with Daigle – facilitated by UpSkill America Senior Director Haley Glover – dives into details about Cisive's approach, how they are moving the needle for their clients and disrupting established practices to solve a major problem for the health care industry.

Haley Glover: Thanks for connecting with us, Zach. Can you share some key information about what PreCheck is, what it does, and how you do the work you do?

Zach Daigle: PreCheck is the health care screening division of Cisive. We were founded back in 1993, and back then, we did handwritten reports for all types of businesses. We started to realize over time that there is this unique need in health care to have a higher standard. There is a level of trust needed for health care employers because lives are at stake at the end of these background checks. We're

checking someone who will ultimately go and impact a patient's life. So, PreCheck, backed by the global footprint of Cisive, is a service business conducting background checks, including criminal investigations, sex offender checks, license verifications, education verification, employment, credit checks, and more.

And now you're moving away from highly manual processes and written reports into tech-powered strategies. What does that look like for you?

The background screening industry has spent the last two decades evolving from a very manual business with white-glove customer service to a technology business, using advanced tools to scale and provide better time service for customers without sacrificing service, quality, or accuracy. We're using technology to access primary source data, and then we use our very smart and well trained investigators to create differentiated value where it is needed. When I found out about Velocity and distributed ledger technology, I saw it as a way to create an immutable record of someone's credentials, and that is the right solution and paradigm shift to create the trust needed and to have someone own their credentials in a self-sovereign way.

I use the example of boarding passes on people's phones. If you have a ticket on your phone, when you show it to a gate agent, they believe it because it has gone through this protocol. The utility layer of Velocity ensures that anyone who is an issuer of these records is either a primary source or a notary issuer who has been approved through a governance model.

Let's back up for just a bit and put this into some nontechnical terms. Can you walk me through how this works?

In a typical manual approach, background checks will recheck someone's education, which is a static attribute, over and over, faxing and emailing schools and sending paper orders to schools with money orders. Why are we doing that? We're reaching out to the school to get a verification because we got consent to do a background check for a candidate for an employer. I wouldn't rely on anyone else's verification because I don't know their methodology for doing that. The only way I can guarantee to my customer is if I verify the facts myself. So that's the business problem. We're checking things that don't change over and over again, and that takes time.

And time is the enemy, especially in health care, where getting practitioners bedside is the priority. Can you share what kind of impacts you're seeing in your early work implementing verified credentials in your process?

We're going to create so much value by providing our clients near instantaneous background checks. We are still doing all the dynamic work on criminal backgrounds, sex offenses, and licenses that change over time. We'll use our capabilities to get all of that information and report it in a compliant way, but now, we'll also combine that with pulling static attributes in the most effective and fastest way possible.

Our customers are looking at this entire onboarding process from candidate engagement to checking I-9 forms. We help them look at every single piece of that process. When they kick off the background check to us, we're looking at how they get that data into our system. Using this technology, we can help candidates prepopulate all the data they'd typically have to enter manually just by scanning a code or clicking a link to share from their wallet. So, this is a great experience for the candidates, and it makes it a lot easier for them to go through the process.

For the client, the employer, we're looking to cut time out of every step of the process. For a registered nurse, a background check would get triggered at the time of offer acceptance. The candidate then

consents to us running the check. We have all their data coming in from an integration with the employer's applicant tracking system, and we allow the candidate to share from their credential wallet. Checking the static attributes is the longest part of our process. Once this moves into broader adoption, we'll eliminate all the time spent checking those attributes that are verified already, and we anticipate delivering fully completed and compliant checks not in the three or so days it takes now, but in less than a day. Our clients could have a nurse at the bedside within two days of offer acceptance, instead of four days or two weeks or however long that might take.

That is really exciting, and it sounds like this would make a huge difference to health care employers who spend or lose money every day a role goes unfilled, and for an industry that is challenged to get talent to the bedside as quickly as possible.

As this keeps scaling, our work now is to verify those static attributes will stay in people's wallets. As people change jobs down the road, we'll experience continued time savings in those background checks. More and more, we'll be able to model out and show our clients the impact of these time savings. We know that health care employers lose, on average, \$680 a day for every nursing role that remains open.

One of our largest clients asked us to launch a pilot. We've issued thousands of credentials to their employees. So, we're now getting to a point where people are getting rehired, or there's internal mobility, and they're sharing their verified credentials.

Huge impacts! But making those impacts relies a lot on adoption, which is something that a lot of folks working on verified credentials struggle with. What have you learned about driving adoption, and helping people with verified credentials remember how to retrieve and use them?

It's a good question. We designed our solution on the Velocity utility layer, but we're wallet-agnostic. Any credential wallet out there that is Velocity-enabled will work with our solutions, so our credentials can live in any wallet. That is one big factor for scale – we're not picking one winner. I'd much rather be able to work with any wallet that follows this protocol and scale with my customers, regardless of where their users are coming from. If our tools aren't interoperable, you negate the whole point of this work. That is the approach that creates the highest value for our clients.

To answer your other question about getting someone to get and use a credential the first time – that is pretty challenging. As I mentioned, one of our large clients is doing a pilot and they have statistics about conversion rates on how many people are issued and ultimately get their credentials through our system. What we've learned is that the more utility the person has at the time you're offering the credential, the higher the adoption will be. Making an end user have an immediate need to find their credentials will create a much higher compliance rate of going through and getting the wallet.

So, for example, if an employer said to a candidate, we're offering you a job, but you need to get this wallet and put your credentials into it as a condition to get the job, you're going to have a very high compliance rate right from the jump, and without reminding them.

We've also tested offering credentials back to new hires through our clients at the end of the background check. Right after the check is completed, we take the candidate to a landing page and say, "Here, click this. Get one of these wallets and retrieve your credentials." We also see very high interest among candidates in owning their credentials. When we surveyed individuals, that interest was very high – 87% of people said yes, they want to own their own credentials. Where people fall out of the process is when you send them somewhere else and make them click through long processes.

Ultimately, the challenge will be around how much the employer leans into this process, letting candidates know how this will be useful for internal mobility inside the organization and as they go on their career journeys, even outside the organization. The stronger the employer creates the context, the higher the utility value and the higher the person's likelihood of going through the process.

This is the early adoption phase, so as the flywheel starts to move, we'll start to have more supply of verified credentials. And if that continues to concentrate, we'll start to see the demand side from employers pick up. And when they start to develop solutions, and even issue employment credentials to their employees, people will start to say they were able to apply for a job online without typing anything in, or they'll get a job offer in five days instead of 60 days.

One day, I think employers will start to incentivize people who have verifiable career credentials because they know that will lower the cost of talent acquisition, de-risk their hiring decision, or make the process more seamless. Once employers realize how much value this will create for them, adoption will start to happen rapidly.

But it requires all of us to think about and drive adoption to get better at this. One of the challenges we've had with adoption is that we've attacked this from a technological standpoint, and we try to explain blockchain to people. That is just not the right approach. We have to talk about this from a business paradigm.

That is the dream.

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