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## Biometrics and Privacy

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### The Problem:

Privacy advocates in the United Kingdom are questioning the use of biometric identification in schools for children under the age of 16.

### The Issues as the Privacy Advocates See Them:

- Children as young as four years old are being having their fingerprints taken without parental permission.
- There is the possibility of communicating germs between students who are touching the fingerprint readers.
- The security of the data is in question as evidenced by the number of data breaches involving personally identifiable information.
- Lack of regulatory guidance for many aspects of the use of biometric data.
- Privacy implications of using biometrics as a tracking tool.
- Concerns about the fact that the cost-benefit ratio may not justify the deployment of biometrics and therefore use money that could be better spent on education of the students.
- Concerns about biometric data being useable to link the possessor of certain biometric characteristics to race and/or ethnicity, which then requires adherence to certain laws regarding collection of that type of information.
- The association of certain biometric equipment manufacturers to morally objectionable activities.
- The rationale given by certain administrators for deploying biometrics.
- The use of the act of collecting of biometric information as a tool to shape children's behavior.



### As Administrators See Them:

- Biometrics are the same as an ID card so there should be no need for parental permission.
- There is no greater risk of communicating disease via a fingerprint reader vs. a doorknob.
- Biometrics data formats are proprietary and cannot be used by other systems and therefore pose no greater risk to data confidentiality than any other information secured by Information Technology departments at schools.
- Regulation is dictated by each local school or school district.
- There is no right to privacy in schools.
- As early adopters of biometrics, savings will accrue over the long term.
- The science says there is no correlation between ethnicity and the characteristics of fingerprints.
- Biometric equipment manufacturers are part of large consortiums and in general also do defense work, but so do airplane manufacturers and the privacy people still fly.
- This is a new day and age and people need to be identified properly and it is necessary to know what books people are reading.
- Children should get used to giving their fingerprint because many applications moving forward will require fingerprint identification (banking, international travel, background checks...)

### What is the Actual Situation?

### The Concerns Seem Similar to the Concerns Regarding RFID, and The Surveillance Society in General

It was determined that the best way to start to address these issues would be to find out what people know and what their attitudes are regarding:

- Data aggregation and data aggregators
- Deployment of biometrics
- Deployment of RFID
- Security, privacy and terrorism

It was decided that a survey would be useful for determining these facts.

### Who to Survey?

- Parents in the UK of children whose biometrics are used now
- Parents in the UK of children whose biometrics are not used
- Parents of school-aged children in the U.S. (where it is not an issue yet)
- Individuals in the general population

### What will be determined?

- Attempts to correlate attitudes to parental status, age of children, age, education, profession (IT v non-IT and other dichotomous professions), income, and other demographics.

Please take, complete and return a survey today!

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