

Press release

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Biometric industry supports the effort by Global Trust Center to secure individual privacy in the digital world

The biometric industry has participated in the development of a framework that supports the recently adopted GTC Global Policy on Enabling Trust in the Digital World and recommends the use of biometrics as a privacy enhancing tool and to protect the security of people in the digital world. By giving people the right to manage access to their own biometrics, it is estimated that commercial use of biometrics will increase dramatically in the coming years.

Under the biometric framework, biometrics will be required to gain access to an individual's own Personal Trust Center, which will contain an individual's private information that is needed to perform a digital transaction under the GTC Global Policy. The framework also recommends that storage of any biometric information that could be used for unauthorized purposes together with other forms of identification of the individual be avoided. The best way to protect your personal biometric information is to store the information locally on a smart card, or any other form of token that can store and perform a biometric process on the token, without passing out the biometric information.

The most privacy enhancing use of biometrics can be described as "untraceable biometric" technologies. These technologies irreversibly transform the biometric data provided by the individual to the system and will not store any biometric data for later reference. One such technology is named Biometric Encryption and is a process that securely binds a PIN or a cryptographic key to a biometric, so that neither the key nor the biometric can be retrieved from the stored information.

"The GTC Global Policy and its Biometric Framework demonstrate GTC's serious commitment to long-term privacy, security and online trust by encouraging the use of Biometric Encryption (BE), the most privacy-enhancing form of authentication technologies. As a new breed of untraceable biometrics, BE minimize the collection and use of personal (biometric) data, empower individual users, and offer superior safeguards. Online trust will depend on Privacy Enhancing Technologies (PETs), such as BE, now and well into the future", says Dr. Ann Cavoukian, Information and Privacy Commissioner of Ontario, Canada

The framework has been developed in close collaboration with biometric industry organizations around the globe as well as with key biometric manufactures and prominent privacy and technology experts. GTC will continue to work with the biometric industry as well as privacy organizations and advocates to maintain and further refine this biometric framework. It will also educate manufacturers and vendors about the value of the biometric framework in offering solutions and technologies based on GTC Global Policy.

"Biometrics can play a key role when strong authentication in a digital environment is needed. However, a fragmented approach will lead to unharmonized scenario's, resulting in compromises and gaps in the design of common trust models. A global policy will lead to stronger application frameworks and ultimately to clear business models" commented Max Snijder, CEO of the European Biometrics Forum. "The work of the GTC is highly desired and certainly doesn't come

too early, now that biometrics are being implemented in large scale government applications and the use of biometrics in commercial environments is increasingly showing its unique added values.”

The commercial use of biometrics has been in the shadow of large scale government identification projects, where privacy is not the main issue. It is anticipated that this framework will be a strong addition to the adoption of the GTC Global Policy as well as supporting the growth for the use of biometrics in the commercial marketplace.

Further information and visual documentation is available for download at www.globaltrustcenter.org

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