BIOMETRIC AUTHENTICATION TECHNOLOGY: FROM THE MOVIES TO YOUR DESKTOP

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Passwords and personal identification numbers (PIN) are information that we need to remember since the day we started interacting with digital systems. Some of these passwords also known as passphrase are long to remember that we need to come up with a pattern to create such passwords. We sometimes rely on tools such as a sticky, PDA or text file to store these lists of passwords.

Would it be easy to identify yourself as if you are been seen by another individual acknowledging their acquaintance with you? That's exactly what a biometric authentication technology does.

Biometrics are automated methods of identifying a person or verifying the identity of a person based on a physiological or behavioral characteristic. Examples of physiological characteristics include hand or finger images, facial characteristics, and iris recognition. Behavioral characteristics are traits that are learned or acquired. Dynamic signature verification, speaker verification, and keystroke dynamics are examples of behavioral characteristics.

The National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) partners with virtually every agency in the Government that uses large biometric systems to assist with their mission. This includes:

1. DHS
2. DOJ/FBI
3. DOD
4. DOS
5. Intelligence Community

Why are biometrics important? Biometrics are used to:

1. Secure facilities.
2. Protect access to computer networks.
3. Counter fraud.
4. Screen people at our borders.
5. And fight crime.

Biometrics are used to manage identities for:

1. First responders at the scene of a natural disaster.
2. Border patrol.
3. Soldiers in theater.
4. And police officers on the street.

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