Facial Recognition for Airline Entry

Inspired by: https://twitter.com/mackenzief/status/1118509708673998848?s=20&t=NJxWEJ-3ud3_g-vK313UQg

The Issue:

Airlines are increasingly moving towards using facial recognition biometric information to confirm passenger identity in lieu of boarding passes, passports, RealID, and other forms of human-authenticated biological data. The images are scanned in the airport and sent to CBP who compares them to a composite image of the passenger based on images collected from other forms of identification and government photos.

Positives:

- 1. Streamlines the airport experience for passengers.
 - a. No need to keep track of passports, licenses, or boarding passes
 - b. Faster than manually checking documentation
- 2. Aids in national security
 - a. CBP has a Congressional mandate to collect biometric data
 - b. More thoroughly tracks visa overstays
 - c. Photos of international visitors can be checked against FBI and terrorist watch lists
- 3. Citizen photos are held for only 14 days
 - a. Helps with analyzing system functionality
 - CBP already has biometric photos of all US citizens who travel via passport
- 4. Data is encrypted and held for 24 hours, and airport cannot send it anywhere
- 5. Voluntary system: US citizens have the right to opt out

Negatives:

- 1. Facial recognition is "the most dangerous biometric"
 - a. Unreliable and biased, particularly for POC
 - b. Widely and easily subject to scans w/o knowledge or permission
 - c. Subject to "mission creep" if normalized
 - d. Helps CBP do their "job," but the job is flawed and abusive
- 2. Risk of having traveler data hacked and exposed
 - Best security practices are left to privatized security companies subcontracted by each airport; DHS has
 disclosed that some passenger photos were recently taken in a data breach
 - b. The government can create a digital identity for you and track you without your consent or knowledge, with NO current regulation
- 3. Unnecessary and expensive
 - a. Initial reports show it doesn't reduce traffic at security checkpoints
 - b. Often ends up relying on confirmation checks by humans anyway
- 4. The current system is opt-out (rather than opt-in) and photos are still part of CBP gallery they created prior to the flight

Sources:

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