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PRIVACY

Global data protection authorities tackle Google on Glass privacy

Data protection commissioners from a number of countries have banded together to write to Google expressing privacy concerns about Google Glass.

The letter states, "We are writing to you as data protection authorities to raise questions from a privacy perspective about the development of Google Glass, a type of wearable computing in the form of glasses, which is currently in beta testing and not yet available to the general public."

The letter urges Google to 'engage in a real dialogue with data protection authorities about Glass' and asks a number of questions, including how does Google Glass comply with data protection laws? What are the privacy safeguards Google and application developers are putting in place? What information does Google collect via Glass and what information is shared with third parties, including application developers? How does Google intend to use this information?

The authorities comment, "While we understand that Google has decided not to include facial recognition in Glass, how does Google intend to address the specific issues around facial recognition in the future?"

Signatories to the letter are Jennifer Stoddart, Privacy Commissioner of Canada, Jacob Kohnstamm, Chairman of the Article 29 Working Party, on behalf of the members of the Article 29 Working Party, Timothy Pilgrim, Privacy Commissioner of Australia, Marie Shroff Privacy Commissioner, New Zealand, Alfonso Orñate Laborde, Secretary for Data Protection, Federal Institute for Access to Information and Data Protection, Mexico, Rivki Dvash Head of the Israeli Law, Information and Technology Authority Hanspeter Thür Swiss Federal Data Protection and Information Commissioner, Jill Clayton Information and Privacy Commissioner of Alberta, Jean Chartier President, Commission d'accès à l'information du Québec, and Elizabeth Denham, Information and Privacy Commissioner of British Columbia.

The full text of the letter is at http://www.oaic.gov.au/news-and-events/statements/privacy-statements/google-glass-letter-from-privacy-and-data-commissioners.

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PAYMENTS

WorldPay finds shoppers would like to pay with fingerprint, palm and iris

Paying for goods and services through fingerprint, palm and iris scanners is the most popular future technology choice ahead of other mobile payments options for security-conscious shoppers, according to research from payments processing giant WorldPay.

Almost one in two people surveyed (49%) stated they would like to use biometric payment methods, such as fingerprint, palm or iris scanners, far outweighing the popularity of other emerging mobile technology options. 30% would like to use PIN-based smartphone payments, 25% online wallets, and 23% are

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keen to use SMS payments. Paying through social media was the least popular choice, with only 12% saying they would like to use it.

The research will culminate in a report into the payment marketplace, 'Optimising your Omni-Payments: consumers, payments and the future', examining the public's attitudes and usage of emerging payment technologies, with a focus on smartphones, to be published on WorldPay's website.

Ron Kalifa, deputy chairman at WorldPay, says: "Retailers can help drive mass adoption of new payment technologies by challenging existing shopping behaviours and most importantly, making a compelling case for new payment methods that consumers will understand and buy into. It's interesting to see the public considering options such as biometric payments, a science that they may have seen in sci-fi films or on TV, which suggests familiarity and visibility of new payment technologies is crucial in moving usage from tech savvy enthusiasts to the wider public."

He adds, "Our research showed that three in four of us shop on auto pilot using cash, card and by paying online, so the industry needs to take greater steps to challenge these behaviours. Additionally, more needs to be done to ensure that ongoing implementation support is provided to retailers, and that staff are educated on new technologies."

* A UK voice biometrics start-up has launched an iPhone app it says could replace PINs as a way to validate financial transactions, reports *Finextra*. Voicekey, developed from research at Nottingham Trent University, extracts unique features from an individual's voice in order to create bespoke biometric classifiers that can be stored in a central database or locally on a user's smartphone.

EDUCATION

HRS MVerify aims for university

Human Recognition Systems has launched a student identity and attendance verification platform aimed the university sector.

As visa restrictions on international students are tightened, UK universities must ensure accurate reporting in order to comply with the Home Office rules for Tier 4 student immigration and maintain their Highly Trusted Sponsor (HTS) status.

The MVerify platform allows the automated verification of student identity documents and capture of student attendance during teaching sessions using fingerprint or smartcard technology integrated on to a handheld device. This

HRS' handheld MVerify ids students.

data is then fed back into the MVerify web application to allow monitoring and reporting of student attendance data in real time.

MVerify operates off an online platform that enables quick deployment without the need for infrastructure setup. The platform can also be integrated into existing Student Information Systems (SIS) to provide an end-to-end student reporting solution, with the first integration being Tribal's SITS:Vision system.

The ability to access student information from any location in real time will also benefit universities with students and staff located across multiple sites.

PRIVACY

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Google had already acknowledged privacy fears and confirmed that it won't allow developers to create facial recognition applications for the glasses before the data protection commissioner's letter was published.

Google's Project Glass blog states: "When we started the Explorer Program nearly a year ago our goal was simple: we wanted to make people active participants in shaping the future of this technology ahead of a broader consumer launch. We've been listening closely to you, and many have expressed both interest and concern around the possibilities of facial recognition in Glass. As Google has said for several years, we won't add facial recognition features to our products without having strong privacy protections in place. With that in mind, we won't be approving any facial recognition Glassware at this time."

As reported in *Biometric Technology Today* June 2013, developers had already started to work with the facial recognition facility. MedRef has introduced the ability to look up medical records via facial recognition using Google Glasses. The Google Glasses can be interacted with to look up patient records by saying the patient's name or taking a picture of their face. Caregivers can then append photo and voice notes.

Meanwhile Google has looked beyond plain vanilla facial recognition in a patent application published in June 2013, adding facial gestures to