

NEWS RELEASE

HSBC TRAILBLAZES BIOMETRICS TECHNOLOGY TO PROTECT SENSITIVE DATA

Thursday 22nd October 2008

HSBC has become the first bank to choose facial recognition technology to improve security at its data centres.

The bank will be installing ten facial biometric access control units in two new data centres in the UK over the next 6 to 9 months in a bid to protect sensitive information that might otherwise be vulnerable to loss or misuse.

The move comes at a time when identity theft is now the fastest growing crime in the UK – affecting more than 100,000 people at a cost of £1.7m according to Home Office figures.

Recent high profile cases of sensitive data being lost by financial and also public sector organisations has highlighted the risk to individuals and to the reputation of the organisations concerned.

Recognising this problem, HSBC has been co-operating with UK facial biometric experts OmniPerception to develop a more secure access control system for their new data centres. The bank has worked closely with the company in testing and developing the right solution, based on Omni's CheckPoint™ facial recognition product.

First deployed in police applications, in Liverpool, London and elsewhere, OmniPerception's biometric solutions are now being applied to access control, data protection and the improvement of identity management generally.

After extensive field trials at HSBC's Canary Wharf offices, the CheckPoint system will be installed at access points as a way of verifying the identity of staff and external contractors who need access to areas containing sensitive information.

Speaking at a conference of biometric experts in Westminster on October 22nd (or "Wednesday of last week"...etc), John Williams, Head of Physical Risk at HSBC said: "We decided to use biometrics to protect our high vulnerability inner sanctums such as communication suites and data halls."

In explaining his choice of a facial biometric solution, he said: “To gain acceptance from the user, a biometric needs to be as non-intrusive as possible. One natural thing human beings always rely on is to be recognised by someone they know. It’s far more natural than say, getting your eye scanned or gently moving your finger across a reader to get yourself identified”.

He announced the bank’s intention to install ten CheckPoint facial biometric access control units in various IT facilities in the UK; and anticipated their wider deployment to other sites in the future.

David McIntosh, the CEO of OmniPerception who were a participant and a co-sponsor of the conference, said: “Helping to prevent sensitive data falling into the wrong hands is clearly an important role for modern facial biometric technology. HSBC has been a pioneer in this area and my team greatly appreciates their support. By being the first to adopt facial recognition technology for this purpose, HSBC is blazing a trail that will benefit both the banking sector and society as a whole.”

NOTES TO EDITORS

About CheckPoint™

- A biometrics ‘first’ because it is light immune – for the first time (after 30 years of failed attempts by other technology suppliers) making it perform accurately no matter what the lighting conditions
- Provides accurate identity checks of faces in under two seconds
- User friendly, convenient and non-intrusive
- Can be floor, desk or wall mounted

About OmniPerception

OmniPerception, a private British company based in Guildford, Surrey, is a global supplier of computer vision capabilities, specialising in facial biometrics and advanced image processing. The company’s software is in widespread use in the UK and internationally, providing automated solutions for the recognition of objects and people in a wide range of customer applications – including secure biometric access control and facial imaging for police custody management and criminal investigations.

For more information or an interview with David McIntosh contact Carol Jenkins on 07786 132375.