

Press Release

Contact: Tovah LaDier
Tel: (202) 587-4855

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IBIA Releases Recommendations on Face Detection and Recognition in Consumer Applications

Washington, DC, December 22, 2011 — [Face Detection and Recognition in Consumer Applications](#) outlines the position of the International Biometrics and Identification Association (IBIA) on the responsible use of this key biometric technology in light of technological advances and new uses and proposes best practice recommendations to safeguard privacy while continuing the use of the technology to serve important and legitimate commercial, national security, and law enforcement functions.

While the new consumer and commercial applications of face detection and face recognition technologies — such as social media and digital signage— can be positive and beneficial to consumers, they must be deployed with utmost sensitivity to the privacy of the consumer and general public, according to IBIA and Dr. Joseph Atick in the recommendations outlined in [Face Detection and Face Recognition in Consumer Applications](#). Dr. Atick is one of the original inventors of face recognition technology and is Vice Chairman of the International Biometrics and Identification Association (IBIA).

The underlying principle of IBIA's best practice recommendations is that a photo is not a biometric but a faceprint (the unique digital code derived from a photograph that can be matched against a database of known faceprints to establish identity – face recognition) is a biometric and should be considered Personally Identifiable Information (PII) and, as such, should have the security and privacy protections of other PII. Thus, applications that generate and store faceprints (tracking or face recognition) should be subject to a higher standard of protection than applications that simply perform face detection.

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In addition, IBIA supports the implementation of technical measures to protect against developing large scale identity databases by harvesting identity-tagged face photographs from the web that could be subsequently used to perform face recognition of unknown individuals appearing in front of cameras in public places, thus piercing the veil of anonymity. These measures could include limiting access to identity-tagged images on the web to search engine companies that commit to appropriate privacy policies, and blocking those that do not. Please see a recent IBIA white paper on this issue: [Face Recognition in the Era of the Cloud and Social Media: Is it Time to Hit the Panic Button?](#)

Along with technologies that measure patterns of fingerprints, the iris of the eye, and veins in the hand, face recognition today is a cornerstone in the group of modern *biometrics* that serve to establish individual identity based on the uniqueness of measurable characteristics of the human body. The use of face recognition and other biometrics to uniquely identify individuals is now common and growing to combat identity fraud in the issuance of drivers' licenses, passports and travel documents; expedite border crossings; or to dispense social services.

About IBIA

The International Biometrics & Identification Association (IBIA) is a trade association founded in 1998 in Washington, DC that promotes the effective and appropriate use of technology to determine identity and enhance security, privacy, productivity, and convenience for individuals, organizations, and governments. More information about IBIA can be found at www.ibia.org.