



81% of citizens in favour of biometric identification finds Steria survey

In summary

Survey conducted by Steria shows that over three quarters (81%) of European citizens are in favour of using biometrics to identify criminals. However, while the majority of citizens support the use of biometrics in identity cards or passports (69%) as well as to enter secure areas (69%), only 45% are in favour of the use of biometrics to replace PIN numbers for bank cards. The results of the survey show that citizens are still wary of embracing this technology in their everyday lives.

Paris, France, 11 July 2013 – While the majority of citizens (81%) support the use of biometrics for criminal identification, only 45% are in favour of the use of biometrics to replace PIN numbers for bank cards, finds research from Steria, a leading provider of IT-enabled business services. The survey, conducted amongst 3,650 respondents from across Europe, shows that citizens lack a thorough understanding of the benefits and applications of biometrics technology in their everyday lives.

Biometrics, which consists of authenticating or identifying people by their physical characteristics including fingerprints, face, iris and veins, is a growing technology across several European countries. When asked about the applications of biometrics, the French were most enthusiastic about adopting this technology to identify criminals, with 89% supporting the use of biometrics for this purpose compared to 80% in Britain and 77% in Germany.

Furthermore, almost three quarters (69%) of respondents across Europe agreed that they would support the use of biometrics in identity cards or passports, with 81% of French citizens in favour of this application, compared to 73% of Danish and 68% of British respondents. The same percentage of respondents across Europe (69%) were also in favour of using biometrics to enter secure areas, lead once again by the French at 77%, followed by the Danes at 75% and the Brits at 69%.

However, when it comes to everyday applications of biometrics technology, only 45% of citizens agreed they are in favour of the use of biometrics to replace PIN numbers for bank cards. Only 41% of Germans were keen to use biometrics for this purpose, compared to 43% of Norwegians and 44% of Swedish citizens. The French are interestingly above the European average with 53% in favour.

Citizens were also divided in their opinions around the benefits of biometrics ID/passports applications. Around half of respondents (54%) said security against identify theft is the most important reason for using biometric ID or passports, while 12% thinks reducing crime was more important. Only 4% feels that simplifying administrative procedures is the most important application for biometrics technology.

Steria has a proven track record in biometrics technology, having delivered [biometrics solutions](#) to customers in 27 countries, including the UK, Switzerland, Netherlands, Germany, Norway, Belgium and France. Earlier this year, Steria was selected by the Danish Police for an eight-year [biometrics fingerprint identification programme](#) and, alongside the European Commission, recently announced the deployment of a state-of-the-art second generation Schengen Information System (SIS 2) which will use biometrics data to help streamline border control processes and transform the way Schengen States share information.

“Biometric technology is increasingly used to support a diverse range of tasks. Within the security market, it is typically used to process asylum applications and to provide smooth flow of cross-border traffic, or to identify criminal identities and control access to military facilities. Other markets are also adopting it where it is used, to protect health records and even bank accounts. However, many citizens are still wary of adopting this technology in their everyday lives due to concerns around privacy”, says Ole Marius Steinkjer, Business developer at Steria’s Centre of Excellence, Biometrics.

“Despite these concerns, it is becoming increasingly common for organisations to use biometrics for effective identification and authentication – for example, airlines, gyms and self-service convenience stores aiming to increase their efficiency, or pharmacies using it to secure their medicine stocks. It is absolutely vital that organisations fully understand the consumer benefits and position them correctly to encourage mainstream adoption of biometrics applications,” added Steinkjer.

-ENDS-

About this research:

Steria surveyed 3,650 citizens from UK, France, Germany, Denmark, Norway and Sweden. The research was conducted by Toluna on behalf of Steria in June 2013.

About Steria: www.steria.com

Steria delivers IT enabled business services and is the Trusted Transformation Partner for private and public sector organisations across the globe. By combining in depth understanding of our clients' businesses with expertise in IT and business process outsourcing, we take on our clients' challenges and develop innovative solutions to address them efficiently and profitably. Through our highly collaborative consulting style, we work with our clients to transform their business, enabling them to focus on what they do best. Our 20,000 people, working across 16 countries, support the systems, services and processes that make today's world turn, touching the lives of millions around the globe each day. Founded in 1969, Steria has offices in Europe, India, North Africa and SE Asia and a 2012 revenue of €1.83 billion. Over 20%(*) of Steria's capital is owned by its employees. Headquartered in Paris, Steria is listed on the Euronext Paris market.

(*): including “SET Trust” and “XEBT Trust” (4.15% of capital)

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