

## Big brother biometrics not scary for Kiwis

People are less apprehensive about biometrics than they were two years ago, says Unisys

By Hamish Barwick Auckland | Thursday, 4 December, 2008

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More than 70% of New Zealand respondents would use fingerprint scanning if it meant better personal security, according to the latest Unisys Security Index.

The index, which surveyed 500 people, suggests more New Zealanders would support the introduction of biometrics such as fingerprints, iris (59%) and facial scanning (45%). Traditional identifiers such as pins and passwords remain popular with 64% and 63% support. The highest level of support was for the use of photographs with 73%.

Unisys enterprise security manager Mike Webber says people are less apprehensive about biometrics than they were two years ago, the last time the survey was done. "People are starting to look for more security around their financial transactions and their personal information.

Over the last two years we've seen a much greater acceptance of fingerprints in a simple way. They're turning up in laptops and you can buy fingerprint door locks for your house."

He adds that local media reports about consumers using their fingerprint to pay for shopping in Europe have also helped allay fears. "People are also realising that PINs and passwords aren't as secure as they used to be."

Webber says the greatest change since 2006 has been the slight decline in the acceptance of personal identification numbers. "To see the acceptance of fingerprint scanning go over 70% is a telling number. And to see it pass PINs is quite compelling."

He says New Zealand is likely to see more biometric technology as cost decreases.

"The technology is not as expensive as people might think. For example, the fingerprint scanners on laptops only cost a few dollars. But if you want to scan people walking through a corridor that will cost significantly more."

Organisations such as banks and airports may help lead the charge, says Webber.

"Workplaces and organisations that have physical requirements might look to secure access controls that are based on biometrics."

But he adds that companies looking to install biometric devices will need to work alongside privacy issues. "It's important that all relevant parties are consulted."