

Is bio-metric technology safe?

Passwords, pin numbers a thing of the past

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ORLANDO, Fla. -

Consumers are overwhelmed with remembering all of those different passwords and pin numbers to get through daily tasks like online banking, reading email and even unlocking a cell phone, but the days of passwords and pins may be numbered.

Companies now want to read your body parts to grant you access to services, which raises the question: When you let a company scan your finger or your iris, does that personal information stay safe?

Bio-metric technology is nothing new. The first time many local families allowed a company to scan fingers was probably during a trip to Disney, Universal or SeaWorld.

Local theme parks began introducing Central Florida to that bio-metric technology back in 1996. But while the technology has been around for a while, the amount of times the average person will use it each day is on the rise.

Now the technology has advanced to where people don't just encounter it at a theme park, they are actually carrying it around in their own pocket. That's especially true now with the iPhone 5s and iPhone 5c being released just over a week ago. The latest iPhone comes with a finger scan button, and people are buying it in droves.

[Web Extra: Technical information on iPhone safety](#)

"It's hugely popular and it probably will be for a couple more weeks," said Rosie Montalvo with AT&T.

And with all the controversy about the government forcing cell phone companies to fork over some of its customers' phone records, Local 6's Erik Von Ancken asked if the finger scan feature was scaring any customers away.

Montalvo said she did not know of that being an issue.

"Obviously customers come in, they know about the device and they've done their homework already," she said.

Local 6 asked the National Security Agency if it would be able to pull data the iPhone 5s obtained when scanning a fingerprint, but NSA spokeswoman Marci Green Miller declined to answer that question.

However, Don Benson, the IT Program Director of Orlando's Keiser University, did not think data from your finger could be compromised over the internet.

"It only stores it on that phone," Benson said. "So if you were to lose that phone and bought a new one, you'd still have to reprint yourself."

It's not just iPhones that are embracing the growing bio-metric technology. You could soon be asked to swipe your finger, or even scan your eyes, at the gym or the bank. Even your child may soon have to scan a body part in the school lunch line.

While it's convenient, Benson has concerns.

"If someone does happen to get your thumbprint, they have it forever, you can't change that. If someone steals your password and you find out, you can change your password," Benson said. "I only have one right thumb, so if they get that, I only have so many choices of fingers to use."

The bottom line with bio-metrics is to make sure that any time you allow someone to scan a part of your body, that you trust whoever is doing it -- and that it's secure.

While experts believe the new iPhone 5s is safe, as the technology becomes more popular, they warn that you should keep a close eye on exactly how it's being used, and make sure to keep your fingerprint out of the hands of crooks.

[Click here to read more about why Apple says its technology is safe.](#)



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