

As with any emerging technology there will always be sceptics, but it is time we gave biometric tools a chance. You might even like them, says **Julian Ashbourn**

Biometrics is a subject guaranteed to stir up some interesting opinion and debate. Many see the identification of individuals via physiological or behavioural traits as a new-fangled emerging concept, albeit one which has been emerging for thousands of years.

In the context of our modern

information society, with all its attendant bells and whistles, marketable electronic biometric devices have now been around for 15 years or so. Within this time, costs have fallen, matching algorithms have improved, and suppliers have come and gone – and we are still sitting around talking about emerging technologies.

The intelligent use of biometrics for network access control represents a significant step forwards from the use of passwords and associated methodologies. It is time for a fresh look at this technology, its strengths and weaknesses, and how it might be used within the broader IT context.



DigitalPersona Pro for Active Directory

Version	3.0
Supplier	DigitalPersona
Price	\$149.99 for workstation (includes sensor; IDentity Engine and software); \$49.99 per seat for server software and seat license
Contact	www.digitalpersona.com



SC MAGAZINE RECOMMENDED DigitalPersona Pro (formerly U are U Pro) for Active Directory is now at version 3.0 (the vendor tells us version 3.1 is now available) and is as slick as ever in its presentation, installation and general ease of use.

The fingerprint reader continues to be a favorite due to its combination of small size, attractive design and overall quality.

As the name suggests, the product is designed to dovetail neatly with your Windows logon policies via the Windows Active Directory and the use of group policy objects. It can thus be easily employed and deployed within a typical corporate network.

It might also be used on a standalone workstation, where it

is able to integrate seamlessly with your Windows logon routine, replacing the standard dialog with an attractive DigitalPersona version that allows you to either logon with one touch of the sensor, or press *ctrl-alt-delete* in the usual manner and fallback on a password if, for some reason, you cannot use the reader.

The sensor is able to detect when a finger is present, and placing your finger on it when you have already logged on, activates a pop-up menu with various options including encrypting or decrypting files, reviewing settings and activating the finger registration wizard.

All such options worked faultlessly, as did the use of the fingerprint to log on in the first place. Another very useful facility is one

touch sign-on to applications and web sites which require authentication – useful to individuals who regularly visit secure websites.

A one-touch sign-on administration utility helps to set things up accordingly. Overall, it is hard to find anything negative to say about this product. It is very simple to install and use, and everything works as you would expect it to.

It has been continuously refined into a reliable and genuinely useful tool for those wishing to implement biometric verification for access control purposes.

SC MAGAZINE RATING

Features	★★★★☆
Ease of use	★★★★★
Performance	★★★★★
Documentation	★★★★☆
Support	★★★★★
Value for money	★★★★☆
OVERALL RATING	★★★★☆

FOR Sensor quality, ease of use.

AGAINST Nothing.

VERDICT Another sound product from DigitalPersona.

Another sound product from DigitalPersona.

Julian Ashbourn



digitalPersona.

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