

What you need to know about the spread of facial recognition technology

Every week, Maddyness curates articles from other outlets on a topic that is driving the headlines. This week, we're talking about the introduction of facial recognition software in UK schools, and the security concerns linked to this technology.

Nine schools in England have started taking lunch payments from students using facial recognition technology.

The system, which was introduced in schools in North Ayrshire, is intended to speed up the payment process, while reducing the Covid risks associated with card and fingerprint payments.

David Swanston, the managing director of CRB Cunninghams – provider of the technology – told the Financial Times: “In a secondary school you have about a 25-minute period to serve potentially 1000 pupils. So we need fast throughput at the point of sale,”

The average transaction time is now five seconds per pupil.

But though around 97% of children or their parents consented to the use of the technology, others have expressed worries of its intrusive nature, which normalises biometric identity checks for children paying for lunch.

Read more via [Sky News](#).

Information Commissioner's Office to step in

The Information Commissioner's Office is now set to intervene over concerns about using the technology in for school lunches.

The ICO, which was set up to uphold information rights in the UK, stressed that a "less intrusive" approach should be adopted where possible.

A spokesperson said all organisations who use this technology must comply with data protection law, which in this case provides "additional protections" for children.

Read more via [The Guardian](#).

Eurostar also set to trial biometric identities

Introduction of facial recognition tools in schools comes as the Eurostar is also set to trial the technology. Customers can now register their passport and facial identity ahead of travel, and will have their face scanned before boarding the high speed train to avoid checks of passports and boarding cards.

Touch-free solutions are becoming increasingly popular across the travel industry as it rebounds in the wake of the pandemic. Facial recognition tools are already used at E-gates in many airports, but often cause delays if the technology system fails.

The Eurostar will start trialling the technology at the end of November, with a pre-selected travellers who have already given consent.

Read more via [The Independent](#).

European Parliament calls to ban facial recognition tools

The expansion of the technology for processing payments and travel documents comes only weeks after the European Parliament called for a ban on facial recognition tools in public spaces and in predictive policing – which

means police have the power to identify individuals they believe are likely to commit a crime and deploy police accordingly.

As well as accountability and transparency issues, the system is often criticised for perpetuating racial bias.

The calls for a clamp down in facial recognition technology give an indicator of how the Parliament will vote over the AI act, which would restrict facial recognition technology in public spaces unless it is being used to tackle “serious” crimes including terrorism.

Read more via [*Politico*](#).

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