



Published in Vol. 3 no. 148, Tuesday, 21 August 2007

Army sends hardened fingerprint readers to Iraq

The U.S. Army hopes that a high-tech fingerprint scanner designed and manufactured in Albuquerque, New Mexico, will revolutionize security in Iraq and Afghanistan. Lumidigm's light-based devices scan a finger's subdermal structures, such as capillaries, to get accurate prints in dry, sandy conditions. Such conditions have plagued the 3,000 to 4,000 conventional fingerprint scanners already in use overseas, said Kathy DeBolt, program manager for the U.S. Army Intelligence Center's Biometrics Automated Toolset program. "We're convinced this will be a whole new way to take fingerprints to a whole new level," she told the Albuquerque Journal. The company is expected to receive \$2 million in federal defense funds for the scanners, pending final approval of the 2008 Defense Appropriations Act.

DeBolt said the U.S. Army Intelligence Center first looked at Lumidigm a year ago, when its first products were on the market. Those devices were too large, though, she said. The company recently released a line of scaled-down, lower-cost fingerprint scanners designed for high-volume production. They are being used around the world for building and grounds access control, tracking of immigrant entry and exits, and other purposes. Besides working in poor environmental conditions or bright light, Lumidigm's scanner also captures a fingerprint from fingers that have been scarred or otherwise damaged, DeBolt said. "We want to eventually develop a whole hand print device," she said.

The military's biometrics program, which has been developed over the last decade, uses iris and fingerprint scans and massive computer databases to track workers, prisoners, enemy combatants, and others at military bases and in theaters of war such as Kosovo and Iraq.

published Tuesday, August 21, 2007

[e-mail to a colleague](#) | [sign up](#)
