foodstuffs NORTH ISLAND

FACTS ABOUT OUR USE OF FACIAL RECOGNITION

We use facial recognition (FR) in some of our stores as part of our commitment to keeping our teams and customers safe by identifying and dealing with previous offenders before they can cause more harm.

You can find a list of our stores that use FR here: https://www.foodstuffs.co.nz/news-room/facial-recognition.

We understand people may have questions or concerns about our use of this technology. This fact sheet addresses common topics and explains how FR is used, and the safeguards we have put in place.

Concern	Fact
1. "FR identifies everyone"	FR works by matching, in real time, the faces of people who enter a store against that store's record of offenders and accomplices within the FR system. Offenders are individuals who have previously engaged in harmful behaviour or been trespassed from that store where the trespass notice was issued because the individual engaged in harmful behaviour. Accomplices are individuals that have actively assisted an offender.
2. "Images are saved indefinitely."	All images of people entering a store are deleted within 60 seconds unless the FR system detects a match with an accuracy level of at least 93% against an image in that store's record of offenders and accomplices within the FR system. Only images of offenders and their accomplices are kept in the FR system.
3. "People will be enrolled for petty crimes."	Only offenders, and their accomplices, are enrolled into that store's record of offenders and accomplices within the FR system. The inclusion of offenders and accomplices in the FR system is done by specially trained and authorised personnel, according to strict criteria. To be enrolled into the FR system as an offender, someone usually has to have assaulted someone, been threatening, violent or aggressive, stolen or attempted to steal products of a high-value, or otherwise committed a crime. To be enrolled into the FR system as an accomplice, the individual must have actively assisted an offender (for example, helped an offender flee a store).

4. "People will be punished indefinitely."	The personal and biometric information (including images) of offenders are kept in the store's FR system for up to a maximum of two years. The personal and biometric information (including images) of accomplices are kept in the store's FR system for 3 months. After these time periods, all personal and biometric information (including images) is automatically deleted from the store's FR system.
5. "Hackers can steal identities."	The store's FR system extracts facial features from an image and converts those features into an alphanumeric computer code called a biometric template. The biometric template is anonymous and cannot be reverse-engineered back into an image. All FR system data is securely stored in New Zealand.
6. "Images will be shared with other places and you'll use them for other purposes."	No information stored in the FR system is shared between stores, and no information from the FR system is disclosed to third parties unless this is required by law.
7. "Images are saved in a big databank."	Each store's record of offenders and accomplices is stored separately. No information stored in the FR system is shared between stores, and no information from the FR systems is shared with third parties unless this is required by law, to operate the FR system, or to ensure the store complies with its legal obligations.
8. "You're keeping images of kids and young people."	Our authorised personnel are specially trained to not enroll minors (being people under the age of 18) or vulnerable people into a store's record of offenders and accomplices within the FR system.
9. "Innocent people might be wrongly identified."	The store's FR system must detect a 93% facial match. If a store's FR system detects a match with an accuracy level of 93% between the face of a person entering the store with that of someone in the store's record of offenders and accomplices within the FR system, an alert will be sent to the store's specially trained store team members. Two of these store team members will then need to agree that it's a match before a match detected by the FR system is acted on.
10. "FR is racially biased."	The FR system has been trained on images of people that are broadly similar to the New Zealand population – this reduces the risk of bias in the technology as much as reasonably possible. To further reduce the risk of bias, where the FR system detects a match, two of our specially trained store team members will still need to agree that it's a match before a match detected by the FR system is acted on. All authorised personnel involved in the operation of the FR System also receive training on concerns relating to privacy, inaccuracy, and unconscious and conscious bias.

11. “Police can access the system.”	Stores don’t share any information from their FR system with the police unless they are compelled to do so by law.
12. “Store staff can see who’s on it.”	The FR system is subject to strict access controls, with only authorised and specially trained personnel having access to each store’s record of offenders and accomplices within the FR system. These authorised personnel are required to keep information confidential.

If you have any questions

For more information about our use of FR visit: https://www.foodstuffs.co.nz/news-room/facial-recognition.