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Defy-ID Newsletter

June 04

Welcome to the first in an irregular news bulletin on the Surveillance State and ID Cards. As Blunkett presses on with hurried legislation to introduce ID cards, this issue focuses solely on Identity Cards.

- Draft Legislation -

After David Blunkett's sham 'public consultation' about ID cards, that the public was largely unaware of, he has used the excuse of anti-terrorist security measures as a way of pushing his plans on to a fast-track. With a public seemingly willing to see further erosion of civil liberties in exchange for heightened protection from a perceived terrorist threat, Blunkett sees this as his opportunity to rush in legislation which in more peaceful times, the British public might object to. The draft bill has been published and might be pushed through parliament before the next election.

You can download the draft bill from our website at
<http://www.defy-id.org.uk/downloads/IdCardsDraftBill.pdf>

Now that ID cards look likely to happen to this country, the media have started to take note, and below are links to some of the most interesting recent stories.

Everything you never wanted to know about the UK ID card
http://www.theregister.co.uk/2004/05/05/complete_idcard_guide/

Blunkett threatens to fine refuseniks £2,500
<http://www.guardian.co.uk/guardianpolitics/story/0,3605,1204082,00.html>

ID cards are beginning to look like Blunkett's Iraq
<http://www.guardian.co.uk/comment/story/0,3604,1204198,00.html>

ID card pilot hit by technical glitches
<http://politics.guardian.co.uk/homeaffairs/story/0,11026,1209381,00.html>

Glitches in ID card kit frustrate Blunkett's pod people
http://www.theregister.co.uk/2004/05/05/id_pilot_glitches/

Long lashes thwart ID scan trial
http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk_politics/3693375.stm

ID card scheme 'will be costly fiasco'
<http://education.guardian.co.uk/higher/news/story/0,9830,1203688,00.html>

- Corporate Identities -

ATOS ORIGIN PREPARES TO IMPLEMENT BIOMETRIC ID CARDS IN UK

The UK Government's plans for the introduction of ID cards are on the way to being implemented. The Government had their so called "consultation" and the draft legislation has been published. In the meantime, various corporations are trying to convince the Government that they deserve the extremely lucrative contracts to supply the ID cards and associated technology. The corporation best positioned to become the Government's "primary partner" in the implementation of biometric ID cards is ATOS ORIGIN. Atos Origin is currently carrying out the three-month (it was to

be six-months but they had loads of tech problems!) trial of iris, fingerprint and facial biometrics on behalf of the UK Passport Service.

WHO ARE ATOS ORIGIN?

Atos Origin is an international information technology (IT) services company. Its business is turning client vision into results through the application of consulting, systems integration and managed operations. The company's annual revenues are more than EUR 5 billion and it employs 50,000 people in 50 countries.

Atos Origin is the Worldwide Information Technology Partner for the Olympic Games and its clients include ABN AMRO, Akzo Nobel, Alstom, BNP Paribas, BP, Ericsson, EDF, Euronext, Fiat, France Telecom, ICI, ING, KPN, Lucent, Philips, Renault, Royal Bank of Scotland, Saudi Aramco, Schlumberger, Shell, Telecom Italia, UBS, Unilever, Vivendi Universal and Vodafone.

Atos Origin is quoted on the Paris Euronext Premier Marché and trades as Atos Origin, AtosEuronext, Atos Worldline, Atos KPMG Consulting and Atos Odyssee.

The UK arm of Atos Origin employs over 7000 people in the UK, with 600 business and IT consultants, 2500 professionals in systems integration and applications management and 4000 in managed operations and business process outsourcing. UK annual revenues are more than €1 billion.

Atos Origin's interest in UK ID cards began on January 30th with its acquisition of Schlumberger Sema, the information technology (IT) business segment of Schlumberger Limited. Schlumberger Sema had been lobbying hard for the introduction of biometric id cards and was selected by the Home Office to run a biometric passport trial.

Schlumberger Sema no longer exists since being taken over by Atos Origin and Atos Origin is currently carrying out the three-month trial of iris, fingerprint and facial biometrics on behalf of the UK Passport Service.

"Atos Origin will continue not only to play a major part in exploring and developing ID scheme solutions but also contribute to the discussion of issues of public interest or concern about the technological aspects of an ID scheme."

<http://www.atosorigin.co.uk/industries/publicsector/idcards/index.htm>

VISIONS OF THE FUTURE

Atos Origin are full of shit, the 'Entitlement' Card Unit at Atos Origin believe that "secure electronic identity will empower society in the same way as electronic money empowered the economy".

In a lengthy submission to the Home Office Atos Origin (formerly Scumberger Sema) argued that the "well understood sensitivity of the issue indicates the need to progress gradually rather than by "big bang". Because of the history and tradition of the British people, we believe that arriving at a universal entitlement multi-application smart card may be an iterative process stretching over a number of years". Atos Origin basically argued that the Government should introduce an ID Card-lite and then "migrate" to a full biometric card and detailed population database when the card is already in use. Atos Origin told the Government that "trying to move from where we are now to a sophisticated smart card solution without one of these interim steps would underestimate the business process and social attitude changes that would need to take place."

- Resistance -

Defy-ID began a couple of years ago, as several people started to get increasingly worried by the Orwellian tendencies of this government. UK society is one of the worst for intrusions into our privacy, with CCTV and so on, but biometric ID cards is taking things several steps too far. The email network was begun, and workshops happened at several events, gathering ideas and support. For a while, the prospect of ID cards hung

in the balance, as many key cabinet members were opposed, and for Defy-ID it was a waiting game to some extent. Also, the war on Iraq became a more pressing issue as energy was diverted into fighting that. Now, however, with biometric ID cards just around the corner, it's time to step up a gear. There have been a number of isolated anti-surveillance / ID card actions around the country already, but we clearly need to take this further. Below are some ideas for taking action now, plus an invitation to a planning conference for actions against ID cards in September.

- Ideas for Action -

- * Target Atos Origin. Use your imagination - anything from letters, to visits, to fax bombardments. You can find a list of Atos Origin's offices at <http://www.atosorigin.co.uk/about/ukcontacttext.htm>
- * Print off Defy-ID leaflets (updated version will be available on the web by the end of May)
- * Talk to people about ID cards, how it will affect them, how much they'll have to pay for it, how it will confine them to doing exactly what the state expects them to be doing (e.g. looking for work every day), how it could detail everything from sexual inclination to previous speeding offences, employment etc etc.
- * Bring the issue to a group you are involved in, print off some leaflets, or even form your own group
- * Write articles in local newsletters, groups newsletters
- * Start to think about how we could form solidarity groups for ID card refusers
- * Who are our allies? You could ask your local doctor if they would accept people for treatment who didn't have ID cards. This would be a way of introducing the topic. What does your local job centre think about it?
- * At this stage, writing to your MP may be of use, as there are many within the Labour Party who already think this government has gone too far. Blair is under enormous amounts of pressure due to his policy on Iraq and the Middle East, as well as domestic policies on education. He won't want another major battle on the home front.

- Defy-ID Gathering -

Saturday September 11th (proposed)
Bridge 5 Mill
Manchester

The idea behind this gathering is to bring together in real life, what is currently just an electronic network, in order to move forward in our opposition to ID cards. We'd hope that representatives from groups such as Liberty and Privacy International will be able to be there, as well as activists involved in grassroots groups and interested people from across the country. The aim is to share information, ideas for action and campaigning, and then to begin planning actual future events. Also the plan is to look at how to take a network of opposition to ID cards forward. The gathering is free, and open to anyone who is interested, but donations are asked to cover costs of the venue. Please email us to book/say if you are coming so that we can have an idea of numbers. We will send out a more detailed programme on request, closer to the time. The proposed date for the gathering is Saturday September 11th. If this is an horrific clash with some big demo or such like please let us know soon.

Cheers,
Defy-ID

admin@defy-id.org.uk
<http://www.defy-id.org.uk>

- Public Meetings This Week -

There are two public meetings about ID cards this week, in London and Glasgow.

On Wednesday 19th May there will be a public meeting in London on the Government's proposed National Identity Card. This will take place between

13:30 and 17:00 at The Old Theatre, London School of Economics.
<http://www.privacyinternational.org/conference/missingid/>

On Thursday 20th May there will be a public meeting in Glasgow. This meeting has been organised by Defy-ID Glasgow who are a new group that came together because Glasgow is one of the trial sites for the biometric ID card scheme. The group have started educating themselves about the issue, produced a leaflet and have called a public meeting on Thursday 20th May, 7pm, at the printworks social centre, 58 Albion St, in the merchant city (0141 552 4551) to try and get more people involved in the campaign and to inform people of what they have found out.

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