

## Victory Down Under!

In 1987 the Australians managed to stop their government from introducing a national identity card system. Massive opposition to the plans in Australia reached the point of open civil disobedience. Australian understood that the introduction of such a scheme would reduce freedoms and increase the powers of authorities. Indeed "freedom" would come to mean the freedoms granted by the card.

As news of the specifics of the ID card legislation spread, the campaign strengthened. If you had a job but no ID card it would be a \$20000 offence for your employer to pay you. It would be an \$20000 offence to hire a cardless person. Without an ID card you could not get access to a pre-existing bank account. Cardless people could not buy or rent their own home or land (\$5000 penalty). Non-accidental destruction of an ID card = \$5000 or 2 years in prison. Failure to report loss of ID card within 21 days = \$500. Failure to produce your ID card on demand to the Tax Office = \$20000.

In the face of mass public protests and civil disobedience, the government eventually scrapped the ID card proposal.

## Resistance in the UK

This is the first government legislation since the Poll Tax which will affect everyone, will require everyone to register, and which will initially have the most impact on marginal groups (those who need benefits, have to use the NHS, work on the sly, are criminalised for any reason, asylum seekers, activists etc etc)

Defy-ID is an (emerging!) adhoc network of groups and individuals prepared to actively resist the introduction of a national identity card scheme in the United Kingdom as part of resistance to a Big Brother state.

Tactics of resistance might include

- Non-cooperation
- Sabotage
- Creating support networks for cardless people

Contact: [admin@defy-id.org.uk](mailto:admin@defy-id.org.uk)

To join the Defy-ID emailing list, send a blank email to [list-subscribe@defy-id.org.uk](mailto:list-subscribe@defy-id.org.uk)

More information and links on [www.defy-id.org.uk](http://www.defy-id.org.uk)

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# DEFY-ID

Defy ID is an adhoc network of groups and individuals prepared for active resistance to increasing surveillance and the introduction of identity or 'entitlement' cards in the UK

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

## Surveillance State

The UK is leading the way in the development of both state and corporate surveillance technologies.

The UK has more CCTV cameras than any country in the world. Over 300 new ones go up every week. The most advanced CCTV Control Centre in the UK, a public/private partnership (in Manchester) can provide coverage of the city centre with over 400 cameras and an 18 metre (!!) monitor wall which can display from 6 to up to 180 high resolution images. Images are recorded and stored for at least 92 days.

Manchester police also have their own surveillance plane. It can stay airborne for over 5 hours, is 40% quieter than the helicopter and is the first police aircraft in the UK that can send and receive live video images in flight. Its equipment includes thermal cameras and 'moving map' technology.

Communications data is stored for years. Your emails can be read and the history of your websurfing analysed, *without a court order*, by six government agencies *and* the police. Thanks to pressure from the UK, personal communications data of the whole population of the European Union are now to be stored. Your landline phone can be tapped. Your mobile is a portable bug and tracking device. Your mobile phone company records and stores your geographical location every few minutes.

Vehicles can be tracked across the country through number plate recognition software - which also allows congestion charging.

The police now have power to access your NHS records, without having to establish that a criminal act may have taken place.





Important changes are taking place. We are moving from an age of targeted surveillance to an age of universal surveillance. Society is becoming a technological Panopticon. Much like Bentham's 19th century 'ideal' prison where you can be watched at all times without your knowledge.

***Another step in this progression will be the introduction of national identity cards.***

## National Identity Cards

The government wants to introduce a national identity card. Packaging identity cards as "entitlement" cards isn't going to fool anyone.

They are planning to create a high-quality population register of everyone 'lawfully' resident in Britain. National population registers have only been previously thought necessary in wartime situations. This new database will hold "core data" of every UK resident, who will be assigned a unique personal number that can be used across the public sector. The "entitlement" card will contain a photo and some kind of biometric information (fingerprint or iris scan) which will allow the verification of your identity.

Everyone above the age of 16 will be registered and issued with their own "entitlement" card which allows them access to social security, health, education and other services. You won't be *required* to use a card unless, that is, you wish to work, use the banking or health system, vote, buy a house, or receive benefits. The card is planned to be combined with the existing photocard driving licenses and the forthcoming passport card. So you will also need your "entitlement" card to drive or travel abroad.

They say you won't *have* to always carry the card. But once it's in place, you can bet this will change.

*"The issuing of a card does not force anyone to use it, although in terms of drivers or passport users, or if services – whether public or private – required some proof of identity before expenditure was laid out, without proof of identity and therefore entitlement to do it I doubt whether non-use of it would last very long."* David Blunkett



### BIOMETRICS?

A biometric is a measure of identity based on a body part or a behaviour of an individual. The most well known biometrics are fingerprints, iris scans and signatures. The government says some biometrics are extremely secure and reliable forms of ID, and is very keen on the idea of iris or retina scans to establish one's identity or, at least, one's uniqueness.

## The ID card is not just another piece of plastic.

It is an integral part of a vast national information system. It is likely to contain four key components. The first is the card itself, which can be used for low-level identification purposes such as entering a secure building or renting videos. The second is a biometric identifier such as a fingerprint or an iris scan, which will be linked to a national database. The third is an electronic storage chip, which will contain multiple levels of information about the card-holder. The fourth, and most significant dimension, is an information matching system based on the card's unique number and a central population database, linked to a wide range of government and private sector organisations.

You might be of the opinion that if you've nothing to hide, it'll be quite useful. But imagine a card that can carry details of your benefits (that often tie you in to being in one place looking for work), your job, your driving, drinking and other 'criminal' offences – plus all your personal information. Everyone has something that they see as private.

## Is this really happening?

The government has already completed a "consultation" with the public – which ended in January 2003.

### Did anyone ask you what you thought?

The government's record on other consultations has been abysmal. Policies are developed centrally, and the process of consultation is merely a litmus test of public opinion to aid the spin doctors. Blunkett will brook no dissent to ID cards – when challenged by his Parliamentary colleagues he exclaimed, "this is degenerating into a contest with intellectual pygmies".

In any case, identity cards and the collection of biometric information on the UK population are already being introduced on the sly.

Recent reports include the fingerprinting of all school kids in one region, biometric library cards for students, an entitlement card for benefits in one area of the North East – and unbelievably even on the back of Ready Brek cereal, a special offer for kids to get their own ID card with photo.

