

Introduction: This omnibus survey focuses on biometric technology. It offers valuable insight into public awareness, usage, perceptions and comfort levels of using biometric technologies such as fingerprint and facial recognition technology.

Methodology: Savanta interviewed 2,316 UK adults aged 18+ online in March 2024. Data were weighted to be representative of the UK by age, gender, region, and social grade. Savanta is a member of the British Polling Council and abides by its rules.

Results:

Q1. Have you ever heard of the following forms of technology?

Base: All respondents (n=2,316)

- Nearly all UK adults have heard of CCTV (98%), fingerprint recognition (98%), facial recognition (97%), and voice recognition (97%). Around two thirds (65%) have heard of facial age estimation technology.
- Adults aged 18-34 were significantly more likely than those aged 35-54 and 55+ to have heard of facial age estimation technology (81% vs. 67% and 50%).

Q2. Biometric information is often used to confirm your identity by matching it with information that's already known about you. Which of the following biometric technologies have you used?

Base: All respondents (n=2,316)

- **Facial recognition technology** is most commonly used by UK adults for unlocking a personal device (46%) or verifying identity for payment processing (33%).
- Just under a third (31%) of adults say they haven't used facial recognition in any of the listed scenarios. This figure is significantly higher among adults aged 55+ (52%) compared to those aged 18-34 (12%) and 35-54 (25%).
- **Fingerprint technology** is also most commonly used by UK adults for unlocking a personal device (58%) or verifying their identity to process a payment (38%).
- Over one in five (22%) of adults say they haven't used fingerprints in any of the listed scenarios. This figure is significantly higher among adults aged 55+ (38%) compared to those aged 18-34 (7%) and 35-54 (17%).

Q3. Where you have used this technology, what impact has it had?

Base: All respondents (n=2,316)

- Over half (54%) of adults find using biometric information quicker or more convenient than alternatives. Just under two in five (39%) say it is more secure than a passcode.
- Adults aged 55+ are more likely to say that this technology offers no benefit or difference (26%), or are unsure about its impact (17%), compared to those aged 18-34 (8% and 6% respectively) and 35-54 (14% and 7%).

Q4. To what extent would you be comfortable with your biometric information (e.g. facial recognition or fingerprint) being used to confirm your identity in the following situations?

Base: All respondents (n=2,316)

- More than half of adults report they would be comfortable with biometric information being used in each of the listed situations. Most are comfortable with its use for airport passport control (71%), personal device usage (68%), and everyday online banking (68%).
- Although the lowest level of comfort, just over half say they would be comfortable with the use of biometrics to access a service provided by a business and to enter an entertainment venue (both at 51%).

Q5. What would be the three most important factors in making you more comfortable with your biometric data (e.g. facial recognition, fingerprint) being used, if any?

Base: All respondents (n=2,316)

- Two in five (40%) adults would feel more comfortable with their biometric data being used if it was kept secure. Just over a third state that they would feel more comfortable if their biometric data wasn't shared with anyone one (36%) or used for anything else (34%).
- Women are significantly more likely than men to say they do not feel comfortable with their biometric data being used in any circumstances (10% vs. 7%), as are adults aged 55+ (13%) compared to other age groups (18-34 5% and 35-54 8%).

Q6. Another use of biometric information can be to identify one individual from many. An example of this kind of identification is facial recognition technology. Have you read, seen or heard anything about facial recognition technology recently (in the last 12 months)?

Base: All respondents (n=2,316)

- Just under two in five (38%) adults report having read, seen or heard anything about facial recognition technology in the last 12 months, while just under half (45%) say they have not.
- Men are significantly more likely than women to say they have read, seen or heard something (47% vs. 30%), as are adults aged 18-34 (55%) compared to other age groups (35-54 37% and 55+ 26%).

Q7. Was what you read, saw or heard about facial recognition technology positive or negative?

Base: Those who have read, seen or heard anything about facial recognition technology recently (in the last 12 months) (n=944)

- Over half (52%) of adults who report having read, seen or heard anything about facial recognition technology in the last 12 months, perceived the information as positive. However, 31% describe it as mixed, and just over one in ten (11%) as negative.
- Higher social grades are significantly more likely than lower grades to describe the information about facial recognition technology as positive (AB 62% vs. C1 48%, C2 39%, DE 46%).
- Men are significantly more likely than women to describe the information about facial recognition technology as positive (56% vs. 47%).

Q8. Do you feel that using facial recognition technology for identification purposes in each of the following cases is acceptable or not?

Base: All respondents (n=2,316)

- More than half of adults find it acceptable to use facial recognition technology for identification purposes in various scenarios. Acceptance is highest for police use in identifying suspects (80%), locating/monitoring people suspected of terrorist offences (79%), in catching wanted individuals for serious offences (79%), and in finding lost or vulnerable people (79%).
- Over one in five adults think it is not acceptable to use facial recognition technology by transport for customer safety (22%) and by entertainment venues for those banned from the premises (21%).

Q9. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about facial recognition technology?

Base: All respondents (n=2,316)

- Most UK adults agree that facial recognition technology should be used permanently in high-crime areas (62%), that it is a necessary security measure to prevent low level crime (60%) and that only the guilty have something to fear from using facial recognition (59%).
- Opinions are divided on whether respondents would avoid an event where facial recognition was being used, with 31% agreeing and 39% disagreeing.

Q10. Please rate the extent to which you are comfortable with the fact that, for the sake of identification, facial recognition technology requires the checking of everyone against a watchlist, not just the people of interest.

Base: All respondents (n=2,316)

- Levels of comfort with facial recognition technology checking everyone against a watchlist across all tested situations are similar, and range from 41% to 51%. Adults are most comfortable with this technology being used at matches/concerts (51%), train stations (50%), and public events (49%).
- However, discomfort with each of the situations is also expressed (23%-33%), and about 1 in 10 feel very uncomfortable with each of these uses of facial recognition technology.

Q11. Biometric analysis is a technology that uses different methods, like artificial intelligence, to make educated guesses or predictions about a person. How comfortable are you with the use of biometric analysis for the following?

Base: All respondents (n=2,316)

- UK adults are moderately comfortable with biometric analysis being used in the range of situations tested. They are most comfortable with biometric analysis determining their health or helping diagnose a possible disease (58%), detecting if they are tired when driving (46%) and estimating their age (44%).
- However, discomfort is expressed with its use in a number of situations, such as estimating sex, gender, or ethnicity (e.g. for the purpose of targeting advertising (43%), making employment predictions based on behaviour at interview (42%), guessing the likelihood of certain behaviours based on their observed behaviours (40%), and guessing their emotional state (40%).