

Biometric benefits

BY John Moore

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Scott Air Force Base, Ill., has installed hand geometry readers at two turnstiles to improve base access via its Shiloh-Scott MetroLink rail station entrance.

Base officials "sought a system that could provide fast throughput, high reliability and ease of use — all at a reasonable cost," said John Woodward, director of the Defense Department's Biometrics Management Office. More than 13,000 personnel regularly enter the base. Accordingly, the facility places "a high premium on physical access control," Woodward said.

Officials deployed Recognition Systems' HandKey II systems. Each system employs two-factor authentication: the hand geometry biometric plus a personal identification number that individuals must enter on a keypad.

Last year, West Virginia University researchers studied the biometric installation at Scott. They found that the system could save the Air Force as much as \$412,000 over five years, according to a draft report from the Biometrics Management Office. The ability to redeploy security guards contributes to that savings.

"We find biometrics being used in ways that help reduce costs," said Bill Spence, director of marketing at Recognition Systems.

Beyond cost reduction, the office's report noted unquantifiable benefits such as "improvements in speed of entry, ease of access and use, and simplicity of access for the users."

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