

BIOMETRIC NETWORK PROTECTION SYSTEM RECEIVES APPROVAL FOR DOD

Date: March 15, 2004

The government's National Information Assurance Partnership recently certified the first of five Biometric Protection Profiles for the Defense Department designed to provide security on its information networks, according to the DOD-led Biometrics Management Office.

The certification, called the "U.S. Government Biometric Verification Mode Protection Profile for Medium Robustness Environments," was approved in late February and provides a baseline for "acceptable information assurance." If a product fails to meet the requirements, a policy barring its purchase would protect DOD networks at risk, according to a BMO statement.

The certification spells out minimum requirements that define the need to protect the biometric device, the templates and to provide data integrity and confidentiality, said BMO officials. The requirements also provide for encryption once data are stored beyond the control of the biometric device.

The criteria affect biometric products that operate in an environment of protection called "medium robustness," which ensures that the product being secured is tamper-proof and that security measures always kick in when someone tries to access the product. This mid-range level falls between a basic level of protection and a high one and is evaluated based on the resource being protected, the assets available to threaten its security and the likelihood of it being attacked, BMO sources said.

The biometric protection profile was developed by a working group of experts in biometric technology and information assurance after research, discussion and collaboration with members of industry. The profiles are reevaluated every 18 months, according to the BMO.

Biometric devices buttress existing security by identifying individuals, which include ocular scans, fingerprinting and voice recognition systems. One of the criteria for a medium robustness device is to have an extremely low false acceptance rate.

The BMO is planning a March 18 symposium at the National Defense University. --*Jen DiMascio*

ARMY-16-11-17