

FACTS ABOUT OUR FACIAL RECOGNITION TRIAL

What's happening

Everyone in New Zealand has the right to a safe workplace and a safe place to shop.

However, we're finding the same people keep offending and targeting our stores – even if they've previously been trespassed from the store.

That's why we're going to run a trial to see if using facial recognition, or FR for short, can help us better ID them if they try to return, so we can safely and quickly remove these people from the store, making our stores safer for everyone.

Our trial will run for up to six months across up to 25 New World & PAK'nSAVE stores around the North Island. We will only extend the trial if there are legitimate reasons for doing so and only following consultation with the Office of the Privacy Commissioner.

The trial's been designed and reviewed by a specialist, independent organisation who'll also evaluate the results. We want to learn if FR can help keep our people and customers safe without compromising their privacy.

We understand people might have concerns about our FR trial. Below are 12 common themes - and the facts about these.

Concern	Fact
1. "Facial recognition will identify everyone"	FR works by matching, in real time, the faces of people who enter a store against that store's record of offenders who have previously been trespassed from that store. Accomplices that have actively assisted an offender are also enrolled in the FR system.
2. "Images will be saved indefinitely."	All images are deleted automatically and immediately unless the image matches with an image in that store's FR system's record of offenders and accomplices. Only images of offenders and their accomplices will be kept in the FR system.
3. "People will be enrolled for petty crimes."	Only people who have been trespassed from a store, and their accomplices, will be enrolled into that store's record of offenders and accomplices within the FR system. To be trespassed, someone usually has to have been threatening, violent or aggressive, offended multiple times, or tried to steal a significant amount of product or committed a crime.

Concern	Fact
4. "People will be punished indefinitely."	Images of trespassed individuals will be kept in the store's FR system for up to two years with the images of accomplices being stored for a shorter period.
5. "Hackers will be able to steal identities."	The store's FR system extracts facial features from a photo and converts them into an alphanumeric computer code called a biometric template. This code is anonymous so cannot be reverse-engineered back into a photo. Both the images and this code will be securely stored.
6. "Images will be shared with other places and you'll use them for other purposes."	No information stored in the FR system will be shared between stores, and no information from the FR systems will be shared with third parties unless this is required by law or to run and evaluate the trial.
7. "Images will be saved in a big databank."	Images are not stored in a centralised databank. No information stored in the FR system will be shared between stores, and no information from the FR systems will be shared with third parties unless this is required by law or to run and evaluate the trial.
8. "You're going to be keeping images of kids and young people."	No images of minors (being people under the age of 18) or vulnerable people will be enrolled into a store's record of offenders and accomplices within the FR system.
9. "Innocent people might be wrongly identified."	The store's FR system must detect a 90% facial match. If a store's FR system matches the face of a person entering the store with that of someone in the store's record of offenders and accomplices within the FR system, two of our specially trained team members will then need to agree that it's a match before a match by the FR system is acted on.
10. "FR is racially biased."	Where the FR system detects a match, two of our specially trained team members will still need to agree that it's a match before a match by the FR system is acted on.
11. "Police will be able to access the system."	Stores will not share any information from their FR systems with the police unless they are compelled to do so by law.

Concern	Fact
12. “Store staff will be able to see who’s on it.”	The FR system will be subject to strict access controls, with only authorised and specially trained store staff, who are required to keep information confidential, having access.

If you have any questions

For more information about our facial recognition trial visit: <https://www.foodstuffs.co.nz/news-room/Retail-Crime>