



Secure Travel and Identity Through Biometrics

US-VISIT
Keeping America's Doors Open and Our Nation Secure



**Homeland
Security**

An effective U.S. immigration and border management system has the ability to verify that travelers are who they say they are and do not pose a threat to the United States. The U.S. Department of Homeland Security's (DHS) US-VISIT program leads the U.S. government's efforts to establish the identity management capability that supports that system.

The system calls for a layered approach where cross-border travel and U.S. immigration activities are simple and convenient for eligible, low-risk travelers, and virtually impossible to circumvent for those who seek to do harm or break the law.

US-VISIT's innovative biometrics-based technological solutions—digital fingerprints and photographs—provide decision-makers with accurate information when and where they need it. Whether it is visa adjudications at U.S. consulates overseas, inspections at U.S. ports of entry, immigration enforcement or determining the immigration status of a visitor, biometrics form the foundation of this reliable and proven identity management system.

Biometrics-based technological solutions from US-VISIT enable the U.S. government to:

1. *Enhance the security of our citizens and visitors*
2. *Facilitate legitimate travel and trade*
3. *Ensure the integrity of our immigration system*
4. *Protect the privacy of our visitors*

As we enhance the security of our system, other countries are adopting the US-VISIT model to improve their border management systems. We are working together with these countries to share best practices and move toward a single approach that provides for secure global travel. And, as the technological means of collecting and using biometrics evolve, US-VISIT can build upon established capabilities.

The Challenge of Immigration and Border Management

95,000 miles
of shoreline and navigable waters

7,000 miles
of land border with Canada and Mexico

440+ million
total border crossings

211
visa processing embassies
and consulates abroad

7+ million
visa applications: 5 million issued,
2 million denied per year

700,000+
new lawful permanent
residents per year

460,000+
new naturalized citizens per year

\$550+ billion
generated by international trade
and tourism per year

Note: statistics compiled from FY 2002 through FY 2004 data

Biometrics and US-VISIT

US-VISIT collects biometrics from travelers when they apply for visas at U.S. consulates through the U.S. Department of State's (State) BioVisa program; apply for admission at U.S. air, sea and land border ports of entry; and exit the country at limited locations.

Biometrics collected by US-VISIT and linked to specific biographic and biometric information allow for the establishment, then verification, of an individual's identity with each encounter within the immigration and border management system. The capability to match a person's biometrics against U.S. and international watch lists or against prior encounters makes it virtually impossible for a person to assume another's identity.

Establishing and Verifying Identity Throughout the Travel Process

Pre-travel

Consular officers collect biometric and biographic data to **establish** identity information as part of the visa application process. This information is checked against watch lists, improving State's ability to make visa determinations. The BioVisa program, integrated with US-VISIT, has resulted in the identification of thousands of individuals with histories of criminal or immigration violations that would otherwise be unknown.

Entry

US-VISIT procedures allow U.S. Customs and Border Protection officers to **verify** whether the person applying for entry to the United States is the same person to whom the visa was issued. For individuals traveling under the Visa Waiver Program (VWP), it is the first opportunity to enroll in US-VISIT and **establish** identity.



Benefits of Biometrics

Virtually impossible to use fraudulent documents or claim another's identity for immigration purposes.

Essential elements of a worldwide standard for establishing and verifying a person's identity.

Powerful information tool for making visa and admissibility decisions.

Status Management

US-VISIT monitors and records the status of individuals who apply for immigration benefits in the United States, such as adjustments to lawful permanent resident status, extensions of stay or changes from one nonimmigrant visa category to another. US-VISIT matches the entry and exit records of individuals to identify those who may

have overstayed the terms of their admission and provides this information to U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement. This enhanced information-sharing process provides an increased capability to identify and apprehend overstays—a critical tool with which to manage the immigration and border system.

Exit

Air and Sea Environment—DHS, in collaboration with international air carriers, is working to modify, test and deploy US-VISIT biometric exit procedures to be a part of travelers' existing airport or seaport experience.

Land Environment—US-VISIT conducted a 15-month test of radio frequency identification (RFID) technology at five locations. The test showed that RFID provides a viable exit solution at U.S. land border ports of entry. DHS continues to work with industry, local communities and other interested parties to develop the best solution to meet the multiple challenges of the land border environment.

Securing Travel Documents: e-Passports

The e-Passport is one of many technological solutions DHS and State use to improve the travel process and enhance fraud detection.

An e-Passport contains an embedded, contactless, integrated circuit chip that stores the holder's biographic information and a digitized photograph. Biometrics in the contactless chip provide another means to verify a traveler's identity, helping prevent identity theft and the illicit use of fraudulent documents. Using e-Passport readers, U.S. Customs and Border Protection officers access data stored on the chip to quickly and easily compare it to the person presenting the document.

E-Passports effectively eliminate many forms of passport fraud, including "photo substitution," where an imposter tampers with a genuine travel document by replacing or altering the photograph. E-Passports also protect against unauthorized access or use—such as "skimming" or "tracking"—thus

protecting travelers' privacy.

Passports issued by VWP countries on or after October 26, 2006, must be e-Passports to be valid for entry to the United States without a visa. A traveler who has a valid passport does not need a new passport until the existing one expires if it was issued:

- Before October 26, 2005, and includes a machine-readable zone, or
- Between October 26, 2005, and October 25, 2006, and includes a digital photograph.

Working with international partners to develop e-Passport capability is laying the foundation for more secure international travel. This cooperation serves as a model for better border management—not only among VWP countries and the United States, but also for other countries working to improve their border security.

Information Sharing for Actionable Results

US-VISIT built its pre-entry and entry capabilities on two digital fingerprints. However, to ensure more comprehensive screening, DHS and the State Department will transition to 10-fingerprint collection for US-VISIT and BioVisa. This transition is consistent with biometric data collection in the United Kingdom and European Union.

US-VISIT Biometrics Milestones

January:

US-VISIT establishes biometrics-based entry capabilities at 115 U.S. airports and 14 seaports; begins testing exit procedures.

January – October:

BioVisa program rolls out.

September:

Visa Waiver Program travelers included in US-VISIT.

December:

Biometrics-based entry capabilities at the 50 busiest U.S. land border ports of entry.

June – September:

International live test of e-Passports.

August:

Radio frequency identification (RFID) technology testing begins.

October:

Biometrically compare and authenticate U.S. travel documents.

December:

Biometric entry capabilities at remaining 104 land border ports.

January – April:

International live test of e-Passports with basic access control (BAC).

October:

Capability to compare and authenticate e-Passports.

November:

Completed 15-month land border test of RFID technology.

2007

Begin test of 10-fingerprint collection capability at 10 U.S. airports.

Announce air and sea biometric exit solution.

GLOSSARY

Authentication: System matches a person's claimed identity using his/her biometrics to establish and verify a document's authenticity.

Biometrics: Measurable physiological and/or behavioral characteristics used to verify the identity of an individual.

Enrollment/Processing: DHS or State Department collects digital photographs or prints.

US-VISIT: United States Visitor and Immigrant Status Indicator Technology. US-VISIT provides biometrics-based identity management services to entities throughout the U.S. government. Most international travelers applying to enter the United States experience US-VISIT procedures—the collection of digital fingerprints and a photograph. State Department consular officers and U.S. Customs and Border Protection officers use US-VISIT biometric identity management services to establish and verify travelers' identities.

Web Site:

For more information, visit the US-VISIT program Web site at www.dhs.gov/us-visit.

Privacy Policy:

US-VISIT upholds the privacy of individuals while helping protect our national borders and immigration system. Personal information collected by US-VISIT will be used only for the purposes for which it was collected, unless specifically authorized or mandated by law. Questions or concerns relating to personal information and the US-VISIT program may be directed to the US-VISIT Privacy Officer, US-VISIT program, Department of Homeland Security, Washington, D.C. 20528, or usvisitprivacy@dhs.gov.



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