



BIOMETRIC VISA PROGRAM



BioVisa & US-VISIT as Partner Programs

- Under BioVisa, DOS started collecting two index fingerprints of visa applicants in September 2003.
- By October 7, 2004, all posts issuing visas were capturing fingerprints of applicants.
- BioVisa has been responsible for thousands of refusals of ineligible applicants who would have likely succeeded in obtaining visas in the past.
- Decision to Transition from two to ten prints was made in 2005.
- Advantages of Ten Prints:
 - Improves accuracy
 - Additional matching opportunities
 - Allows for a check against FBI IAFIS criminal master file.

DoS Facial Recognition System Screens Photos of Visa Applicants

- Photos of all applicants exempt from fingerprinting are screened against a photo watchlist of known or suspected terrorists (KSTs) in the DOS Facial Recognition (FR) System.
- Exemptions from Fingerprinting:
 - Diplomats/certain other government officials.
 - Children under 14 and adults over age 79.

Ten Prints Screened Against KST Latents in IDENT

- In 2007 DOS transitioned all visa-issuing posts from two to ten fingerprints.
- Ten Prints sent to IDENT are checked against all available KST and other criminal latent fingerprints.
- Latent fingerprints collected from improvised explosive devices (IEDs) in Iraq and Afghanistan are transferred to IDENT to be checked against visa applicant fingerprints.

BioVisa Ten Prints Advance IDENT-IAFIS Interoperability

- In January 2008 ten fingerprints of visa applicants began to be searched against IAFIS criminal master file.
- The visa applicant ten prints continue to be sent first to IDENT, which relays them to IAFIS.
- IAFIS results are returned to DOS via the DOS interface with IDENT.