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Disclaimer

This report, "Identity In Security: The Problem With Billy", provided by The Walsingham Institute Inc., contains an analysis of the perspectives, issues, challenges and consequences related to the use of identity in security measures. This report is intended to serve as an educational tool to assist in achieving a better understanding of identity as a basis for developing security measures. As such, this report is to be used for general reference purposes only and is not to be construed as legal advice. The purchasers of this report are responsible for ensuring that the use of identity in security measures is in accordance with the laws and regulations to which they are subject.

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Overview & Highlights

Overview:

In this Walsingham Report we consider the concept of identity and its use as a basis for select security measures. Through the creation of a character, Billy Schumacher, the concept of identity is deconstructed and analysed. With an understanding generated from this analysis the role of identity is considered when applied to Border, Perimeter and Corporate security measures. As always with Walsingham Reports, this document is interactive and best read at a computer connected to the Internet.

Who should read this?

“Identity In Security: The Problem With Billy” is a primer on the concept and applications of identity in security and is meant to question current approaches to increasing security. This Walsingham Report is intended for anyone considering the use of identity as a basis for security measures.

Highlights:

Identity is a fluid concept that builds and changes over time. Moreover, identity is extremely difficult to authenticate definitively. Thus, the most effective security measures that use identity as their base are those measures, which are limited to a finite number of users. Indeed, the fewer the individuals being identified the more capable the system. Thus, applications of identity in corporate management systems and perimeter security are far more effective than those used in border security.

Biometric identifiers are perhaps the only reliable method currently available by which we can quantifiably measure a person’s uniqueness with a high level of accuracy.

Security approaches relying on identity are not viable preventative measures, particularly in widespread applications. Understanding human behaviour as a means to uncover or predict intent should be the focus of any security measure involving people.

A security measure, whether proposed or existing, that uses identity as a base needs to be revisited from a holistic perspective; considering not just the individual measure but also the wider concept of security.

Identity In Security: The Problem With Billy

Having an identity is a person's ticket to partake in all a social system has to offer - collect a pension, drive a car, receive health care, travel, bank, vote. It is also a possible ticket to some assurance of security. But what is it about identity that affords it such an integral role in our lives? Does having an identity really make us more secure?

Humans have been struggling to define identity since first perceiving themselves as separate beings. apart from nature. The need to understand what makes someone unique or different, and to accordingly establish enduring categories has been compelling and open-ended.

What is Identity?

Identity, in its simplest definition, is a set of traits, by which an entity can be distinguished from others. Depending on the field or interest - identity can take on a variety of forms. Some definitions are more rigid - logicians feel identity can only be in relation to an object and itself - while other definitions focus more on function - as is the case with the field of computer science and object-oriented programming. Companies are concerned with corporate identities, whereas Internet users are concerned with the way they would like to be represented in a digital realm through the creation of online identities. Although these concepts of identity are important to many, perhaps no other type of identity affects the lives of more people than that of personal identity.



Personal identity is a concept that builds up over time. Characteristics that can serve to distinguish one individual from others are noted and collected to create such an individual's identity. There are roughly five predominant trait categories that are used when establishing and tagging an identity: Personal, Mental, Physical, Social and Bureaucratic. In the collecting of data on which an identity is built in most cases begins before the individual is even born.