

Consumer attitudes about biometrics in ID documents

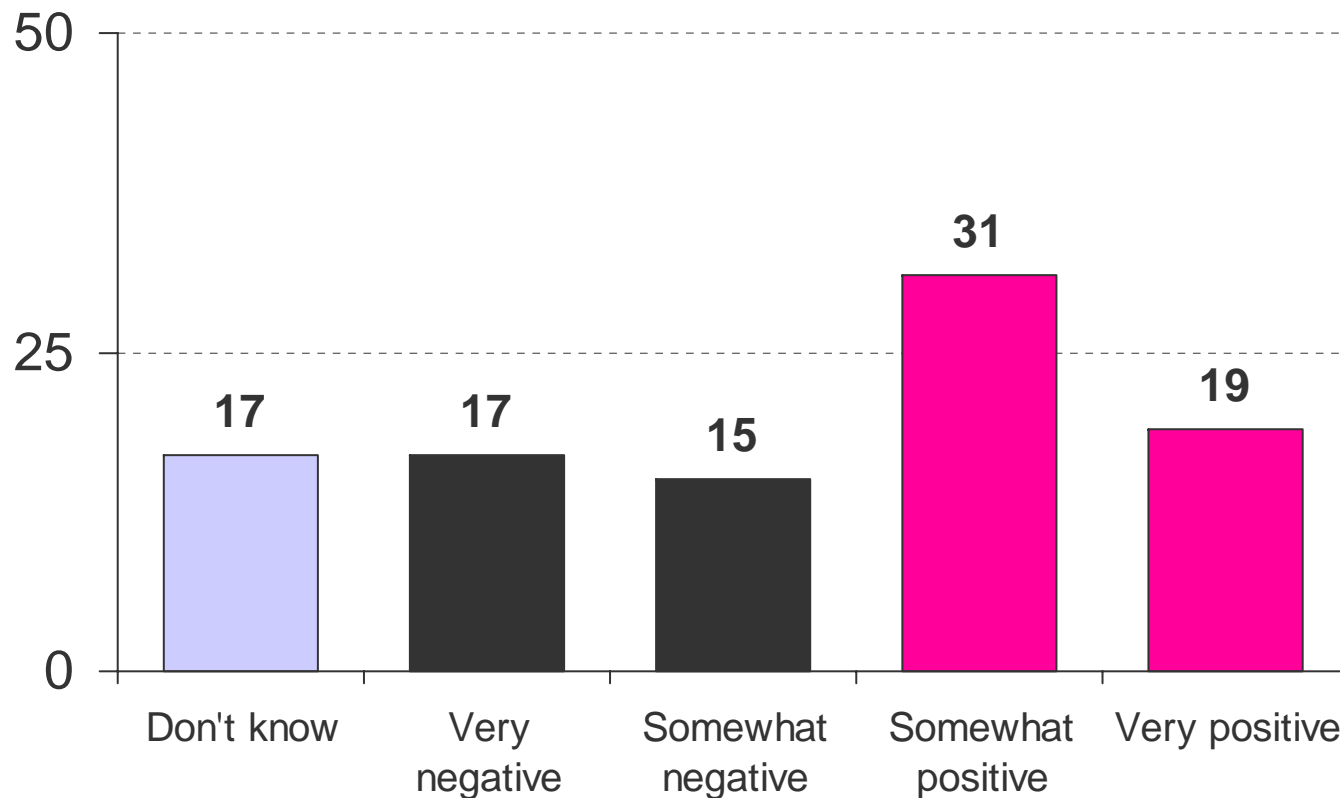
a TNS / TRUSTe study

August 2005



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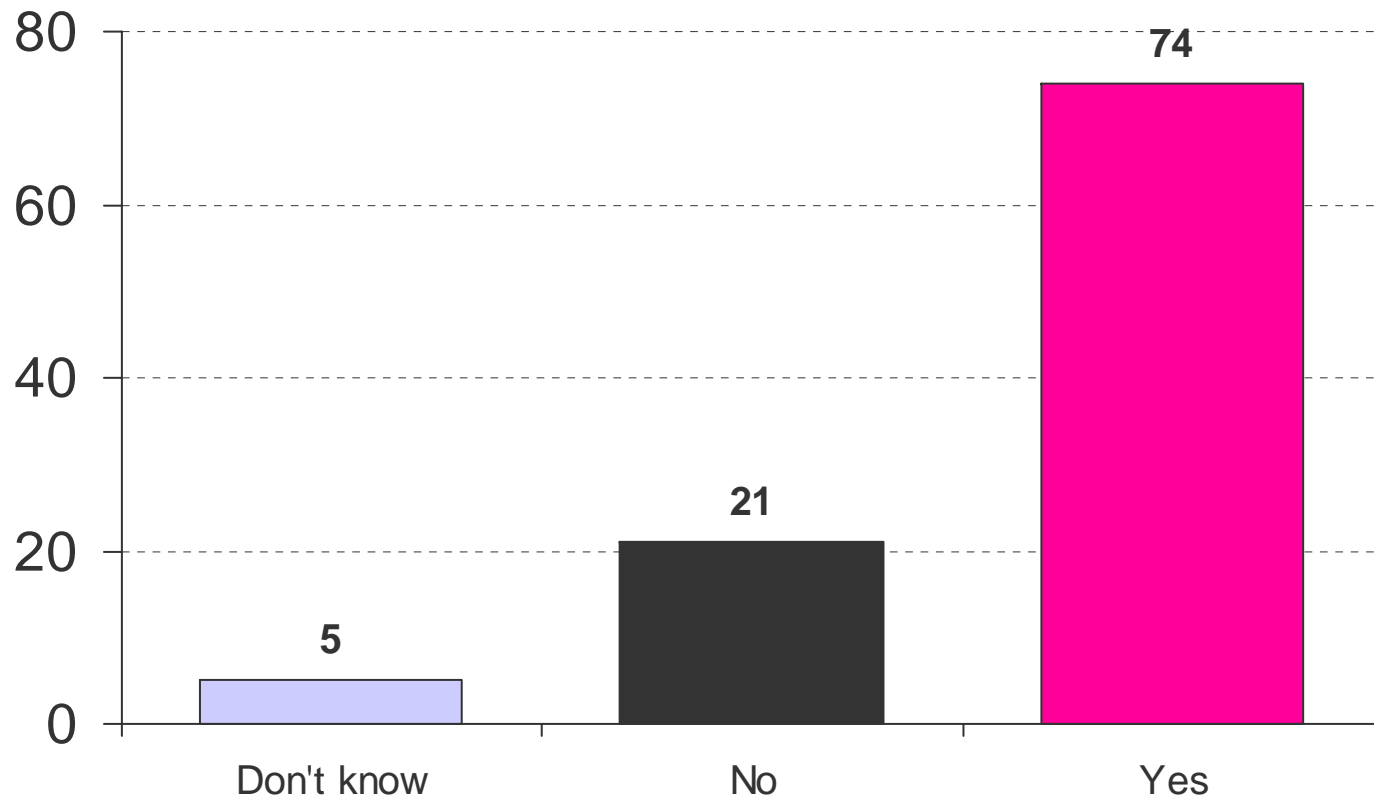
Half of Americans view a national form of ID positively



Q. At present, Americans have a number of different ID cards, such as a driver's license, that allow them to access services from government agencies or retail stores that they do business with. A proposal being considered is to issue every American citizen a national identity card. Do you think the introduction of a national form of identification is a positive or negative thing?

Base: Total American Internet Users. N = 1,003

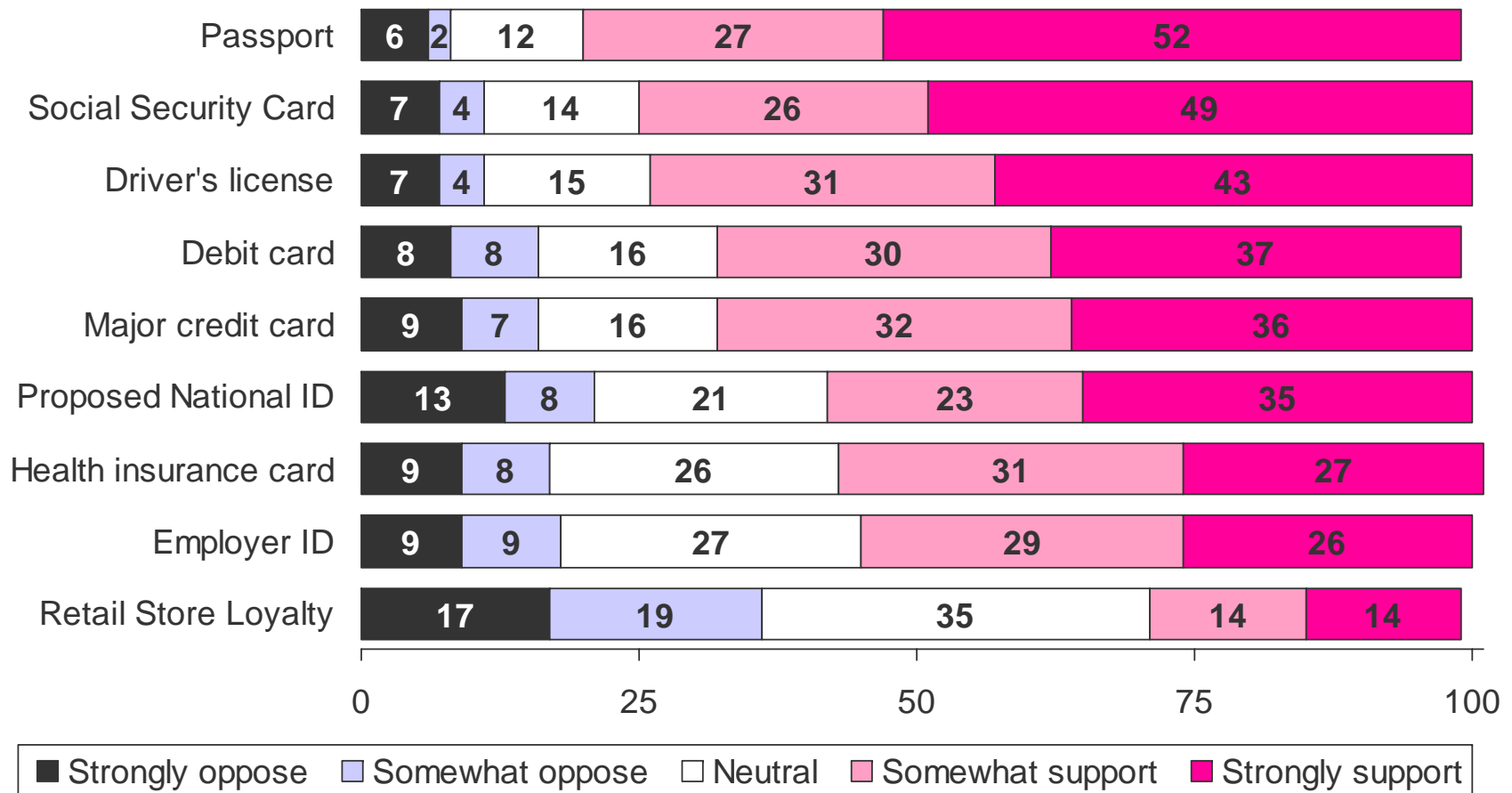
Most have heard about biometrics



Q. Biometrics is the use of a person's permanent physical characteristics, such as eye or fingerprint patterns, to verify their identity. Before this survey, had you ever read or heard about biometrics?

Base: Total American Internet Users. N = 1,003

Support for inclusion of biometrics varies by type of ID



Q. For each type of document listed below, please indicate the degree to which you would support or oppose adding biometric information, such as your fingerprint or facial scan.

Base: Total American Internet Users. N = 1,003

Support for inclusion of biometrics varies by type of ID – results for U.S. and Canada



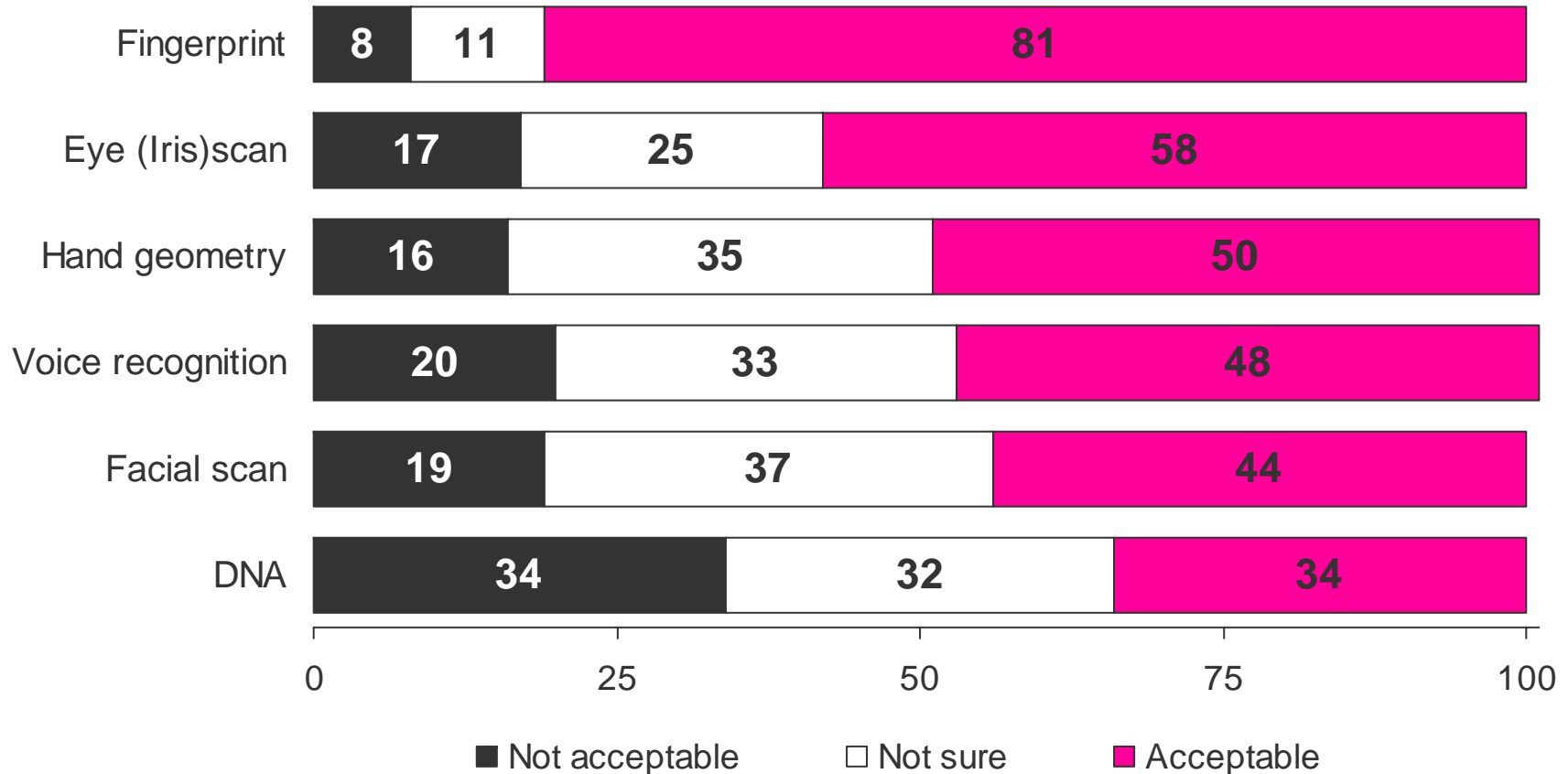
On both sides of the border, support for including biometric data in government-issued ID documents is high, though slightly higher in Canada. Americans, however, are more supportive of including biometric information in cards issued by the private sector.



	U.S. Support	Difference	Canada Support
1. Passport	79%	-6	85%
2. Social Security Card	75%	+2	(Social Insurance Card – 73%)
3. Driver's license	74%	-1	75%
4. Major credit card	68%	+7	61%
5. Debit card	67%	+8	59%
6. Proposed National ID	58%	-11	69%
7. Health insurance card	58%	N/A	(Provincial health card* – 71%)
8. Employer ID	55%	+19	36%
9. Retail store loyalty card	28%	+10	18%

* Government-issued document

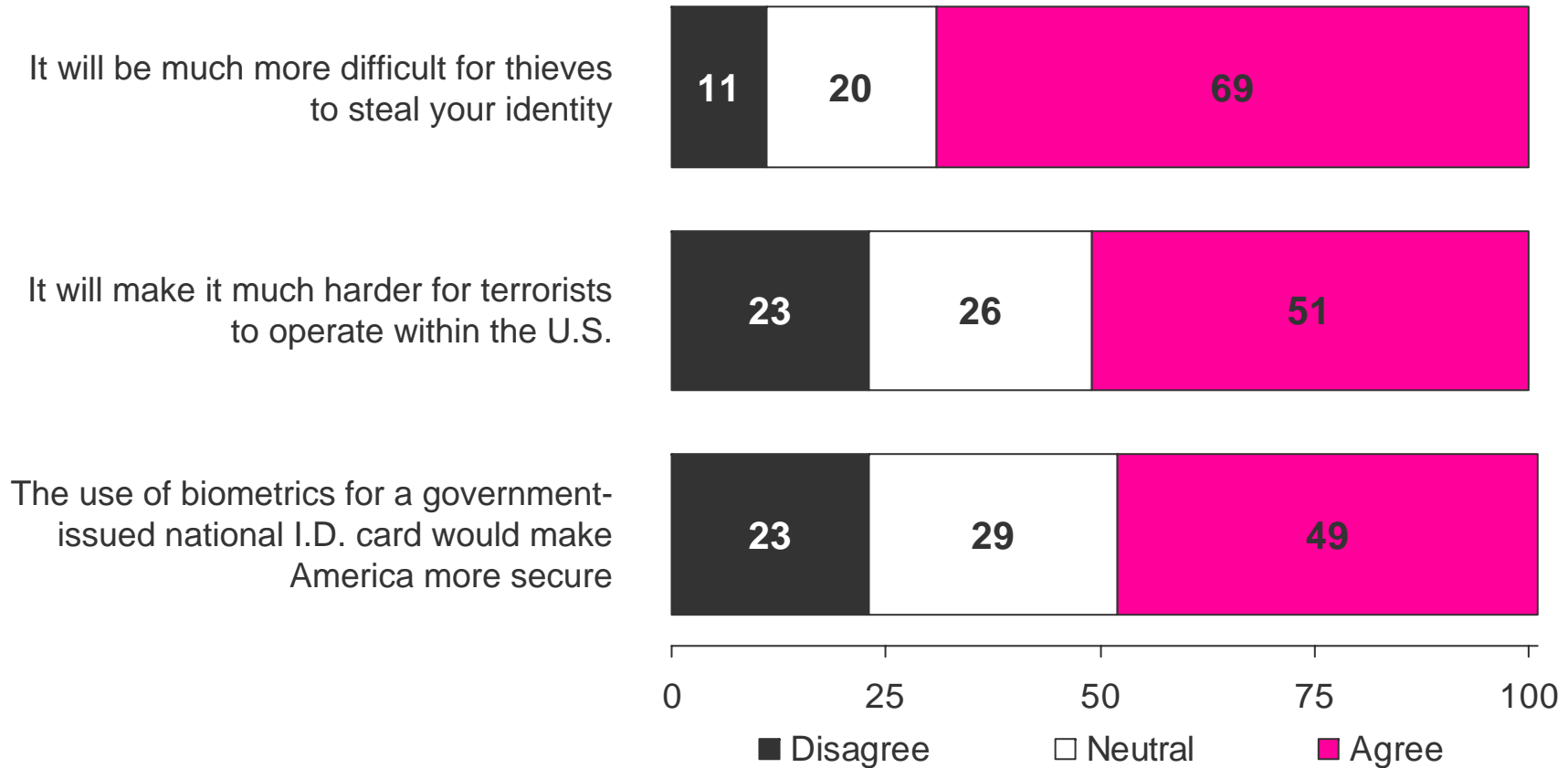
Acceptability of different types of biometrics



Q. Please indicate how acceptable each of the following types of biometric information would be to you as a way to prove your identity. All of these procedures would be painless.

Base: Total American Internet Users. N = 1,003

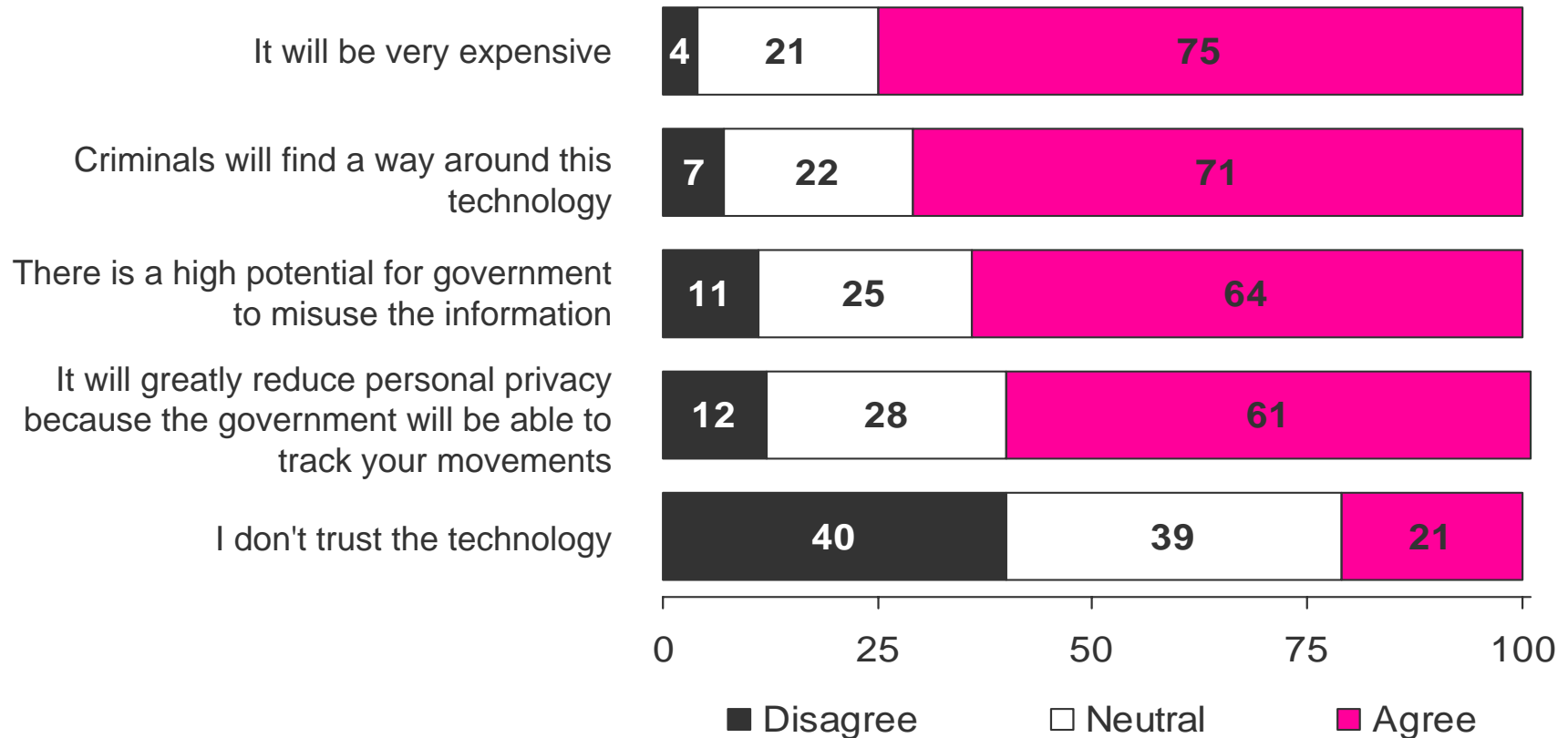
Positive attitudes about using biometrics



Q. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about the use of biometrics to establish the identity of Americans?

Base: Total American Internet Users. N = 1,003

Negative attitudes about using biometrics



Q. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about the use of biometrics to establish the identity of Americans?

Base: Total American Internet Users. N = 1,003

Summary

REAL ID Act

While only half of Americans express support for a brand new national identity card issued to every U.S. citizen, the public largely backs the use of biometric data in existing government-issued ID documents.

In June, Congress approved the REAL ID Act as part of a military spending bill. REAL ID will establish what amounts to a national identity card. By 2008, state drivers' licenses will have to meet federal ID standards determined by the Department of Homeland Security.

Americans will get the new ID cards through their state motor vehicle agency and it will take the place of their current drivers' licenses. Obtaining the new cards will involve a rigorous identification process. Information stored on the new cards will include name, date of birth, sex, ID number, address and a digital photograph. The cards must also include a "common machine-readable technology" and "physical security features designed to prevent tampering, counterfeiting, or duplication of the document for fraudulent purposes."

Homeland Security is permitted to add additional requirements to the cards, such as a fingerprint, retinal scan or other biometric information – which the public would likely approve. Three-quarters of Americans support the use of biometric data in drivers' licenses and eight in ten cite fingerprint as an acceptable type of biometric information to include. Nearly six in ten say that an iris scan is acceptable.



Summary

Cost, privacy and security main concerns

But Americans do have some concerns with biometric technology that would need to be addressed. First, the cost of including biometric information to establish the identity of Americans is perceived to be very expensive. Three-quarters of Americans say so and this is a point currently being made by several state governors.

Second, while nearly seven in ten Americans think that the use of biometrics would make it harder for identity thieves to ply their craft, an equal number believe that criminals will nonetheless find a way around the technology.

Third, Americans are somewhat skeptical about whether the use of biometrics in ID documents would thwart terrorists and make America more secure. Only half believe this to be the case and a sizeable number are undecided.

Finally, Americans cite privacy concerns regarding the use of biometrics. Two-thirds believe there is a high potential for government to misuse the information it collects and six in ten think that their personal privacy would be reduced because the government could track their movements.



Summary

Private sector uses of biometrics

In June 2005, CardSystems Solutions, a credit card payments processor, reported that over 40 million credit card accounts were exposed to fraud owing to a security breach. Several other cyber break-ins and data security breaches have been widely reported in the media recently. Indeed, according to the Federal Trade Commission, “identity theft is the fastest growing crime in the nation.”

Would the use of biometric technology in major credit cards and debit cards make consumers’ financial transactions more secure and prevent identity theft? Many Americans would seem to think so.

While fewer Americans support the use of biometric information in cards issued by private sector firms than in government-issued ID documents, more than two-thirds think it would be a good idea to add biometric data to credit cards and debit cards.

This fairly high support, however, does not extend to other types of cards. Just 28 percent of Americans favor adding their biometric data to retail store loyalty cards, for example.



Summary

Canadian attitudes similar to those of Americans

The most striking observation from this study is that Americans and Canadians share similar views when it comes to the use of biometric identifiers in ID documents.

Compared to U.S. citizens, though, Canadians tend to express slightly more support for including biometric information in government-issued documents and less support for private sector uses of biometric data.

Indeed, when asked for their views on whether there should be a national identity card, nearly seven in ten Canadians are supportive of a national form of identification, compared to half of Americans.

Canadians also tend to be slightly more upbeat than their southern neighbors are about the potential benefits of biometrics with respect to national security. Nearly six in ten Canadians (57%) think that the use of biometrics in a government-issued national ID card would make their country more secure. In the U.S., only half the population (49%) believes that their country would be more secure if every citizen were issued a national ID card with biometric identifiers. In addition, more Canadians (58%) than Americans (51%) believe that the use of biometric technology in ID documents would make it harder for terrorists to operate in their respective countries.



Summary

Canadians also tend to be slightly more trusting of biometric technology than Americans are. Fully 46 per cent of Canadians say they have confidence in it, compared to 40 per cent of their southern neighbors. Canadians' modestly higher levels of confidence are also expressed another way. While a solid majority of citizens in both countries believe that criminals will find a way around biometric technology, fewer Canadians (64%) than Americans (71%) believe this to be the case.

Biometrics in Canadian and U.S. passports

In both countries, citizens ranked the passport ahead of all other ID documents as the most appropriate one for the addition of biometric identifiers (85% support in Canada versus 79% in the U.S.).

As part of a national security policy, the Government of Canada has announced that Canada will deploy facial recognition biometric technology in the Canadian passport, in accordance with international standards. Currently, frequent travelers to Canada who are Canadian or U.S. citizens can apply to participate in a CANPASS air program, which facilitates efficient and secure entry in Canada for pre-approved, low-risk travelers. Participants can clear customs quickly and securely by simply looking into a camera that recognizes the iris of the eye as proof of identity.

In the U.S, the Department of State is testing a new electronic passport that will include a computer chip containing the same data visually displayed on the photo page of the passport, as well as a digital photograph that will enable biometric comparison through the use of facial recognition technology.



Survey methodology

U.S.

- Conducted online using TNS NFO's Internet access panel
- 1,003 interviews completed between March 17 and 25, 2005
- Survey sample is nationally representative of the adult (18+) online population
- Results considered accurate to within 3.1 percentage points, 19 times out of 20

Canada

- Conducted online using TNS Canadian Facts' Internet access panel
 - 1,157 interviews completed between May 26 and 30, 2005
 - Survey sample is nationally representative of the adult (18+) online population
 - Results considerate accurate to within 2.9 percentage points, 19 times out of 20
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