

<http://www.pocket-lint.com/news/18707/mobile-fingerprint-scanners-for-police>

## Police to carry fingerprint scanners

### Identity checks in the street

by Katie Scott published on 27 October 2008

Ten of thousands of handheld devices capable of taking fingerprint readings could soon be distributed to British policemen.

The Mobile Identification At Scene (Midas) project, which has so far costed at £30m-£40m, could soon see the average bobby able to take a fingerprint reading on the street to be able to identify someone straight away.

The move, however, is already causing concern, coming so soon after the announcements of increasingly invasive plans by the government to keep data on British citizens.

The police force has tried to allay some fears stating that the fingerprints taken by the scanners will not be stored or added to any government databases.

But the civil rights group, Liberty, emphasised that this must be the case or the police, ironically, will be breaking the law.

Gareth Crossman, Liberty's policy director, told The Guardian: "Saving time with new technology could help police performance but officers must make absolutely certain that they take fingerprints only when they suspect an individual of an offence and can't establish his identity."

The technology is being made accessible using BlackBerry-sized devices, which could, in the future, also be able to receive pictures of suspects.

The National Policing Improvement Agency (NPIA) revealed that they could be in use in the next 18 months.

It hopes that the devices could save time - as policemen will no longer have to take suspects to a station to have their fingerprints taken.

