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Foreword

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This document was prepared by ISO/IEC JTC 1, *Information technology*, SC 37, *Biometrics*.

Introduction

In conventional biometric access control systems, an adversary who compromises an enrolment database may gain access to the generative biometric data of the individuals enrolled therein. This is undesirable because, if the biometric system is vulnerable to presentation attacks or replay attacks, the adversary could impersonate an individual and gain access to the system after gaining access to the enrolment database. Furthermore, if the biometric enrolment databases contain unprotected templates and the same biometric modality is adopted in multiple applications, the adversary could link the accounts of the individual across those applications (cross-matching).

A biometric template stored in an enrolment database is a reference set of biometric features derived from the biological and behavioural characteristics of an individual. If the system implementation allows it, a biometric enrolment that is known to have been compromised may be revoked and renewed a limited number of times. However, the number of unique biometrics that can be extracted from an individual is limited and thus biometric enrolments cannot be revoked and then re-issued an unlimited number of times like new credit card numbers or passwords. The compromise of biometric enrolment records stored in an enrolment database is a serious issue. Therefore, methods and procedures to mitigate the risk of compromise are needed.

Secure biometric verification

The biometrics research community has invested significant effort in enabling biometric verification without directly needing to store an individual's biometric features in the clear at the access control device. This has led to the development of new methods referred to as "biometric template protection", "biometric information protection", or simply "secure biometrics". In this document, the term "biometric template protection" is used.

The rationale behind this strategy is that, instead of storing the biometric features directly, the access control system derives some data from the biometric features and stores this derived data on the device. During the biometric verification phase, the system receives a probe biometric sample from the individual seeking access. Then, the system combines the probe biometric sample and the derived data and generates a biometric verification decision. The main property of the derived data is that it reveals little or no information about the underlying biometric characteristic that was captured during the enrolment phase.

Thus, if the access control device is compromised by an adversary, only the derived data falls into the hands of the adversary, but this does not enable the adversary to recover the biometric characteristics of the individuals enrolled in the database. Clearly, this strategy protects the privacy of the individuals enrolled in the database.

Further, if an adversary attempts to gain access, i.e. to log in, to the system by providing a fake probe biometric sample, then in a well-designed secure biometric system, combining the fake probe biometric sample with the derived stored data results in biometric verification failure. Thus, this strategy protects the secrecy of the individuals enrolled in the database.

Rationale for new metrics

There are several ways in which biometric template protection can be realized. Some of these methods are described in ISO/IEC 24745:2011. Regardless of the method employed to construct the derived data, the following questions must be asked when evaluating a biometric template protection system:

a) What is the probability that the system rejects genuine individuals and accepts imposters? This is a natural question to ask of *any* biometric verification system. The metrics, False Non-Match Rate (FNMR) and False Match Rate (FMR) measure this performance [ISO/IEC 19795-1] for the conventional biometric system in which enrolment biometric features are matched against probe biometric features. A biometric template protection system will also inherit these metrics, though the method of measuring them may vary depending upon the particular realization of the template protection algorithm.

b) What is the probability that an adversary enhanced with some knowledge about the database of enrolled individuals can be successfully verified as one of those enrolled?

c) How much information can an adversary obtain by compromising an access control device and stealing the derived (stored) enrolment information? In conventional biometric systems, the adversary may obtain significant information, in the form of the stored biometric template, or the stored feature vector. The goal of biometric template protection systems is to ensure that the stored derived data does not leak much information about the enrolled individuals.

d) What is the probability that an adversary, having successfully compromised one or more access control devices and having stolen the data stored on them, uses the information gained to be successfully verified at an access control device?

These questions form the basis for evaluating the accuracy, secrecy, and privacy of a biometric template protection system, which introduces a new set of metrics not previously associated with evaluating traditional biometric systems.

Necessity for standardization

There are several architectures under the umbrella of biometric template protection, e.g., fuzzy vault-based systems, secure sketch-based systems, cancellable biometric systems, secure multiparty computation-based systems, etc. It is necessary to define key metrics that not only answer the questions posed above, but also apply to a wide variety of biometric template protection architectures, thereby providing a common basis for comparison of systems based on different architectures. The goal of this document is to specify new metrics for evaluating template protection-based biometric verification and identification systems. Theoretical and empirical definitions are provided for each metric in Clause 8.

