

FROM: Kelvin Glare AO APM, former Chief Commissioner, Victoria Police, Australia, and Fingerprint Expert.

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Sir William Herschel was a British government official in Bengal, India, in the 1850s and is given credit for being the first to devise a workable method of fingerprint identification.

Herschel sought to use the thumb prints of illiterate workers as a means of positive identification. In those days people often pretended to be someone else so they could collect wages or pensions that were not theirs.

Identity theft is not a recent phenomenon.

In time, the idea of fingerprinting, more properly called dactylography, developed into a scientific system. Sir Francis Galton founded the present system of fingerprint identification in the early 1900s. His system was later refined and perfected by Sir E.R. Henry, a Police Commissioner of Scotland Yard of London. Modifications the Henry system were most commonly used and the modern advent of computer based fingerprint searching systems has simplified the whole process.

Fingerprint identification is based on the simple truth that no two fingerprints are alike unless they are from the same finger. One ought not to be surprised that each individual fingerprint throughout the world is different. In the Bible the Book of Job, Chapter 37, Verse 7, states, "He sealeth up the hand of every man that all men may know his work." What else but a reference to the individuality of fingerprints?

Technology has now more than ever assumed an increasingly prominent place in preventing identity theft. Modern technology has the capacity to embed a fingerprint in a wide variety of applications that make it virtually impossible for a miscreant to assume the identity of another without the certainty of detection. One thing a potential fraudster cannot do is present the fingerprint of some other person. Whether related to financial transactions or to access to secure areas, the simple expedient of electronically scanning a person's fingerprint can ensure that the authorised person alone gains access to whatever is involved. This measure of security cannot be provided by any other simple, failsafe, practical means.

The highly successful PRM Group of Suite 2B, first floor, 80 Keilor Road, Essendon North, Victoria, 3041, Australia, which offers services worldwide, is a highly recommended leading provider of biometric security systems that are of the highest quality and which can be individually tailored to meet the needs of any client. Embedding a fingerprint in a security system is one facet of biometric identification - but one of the simplest and best.