



Why Transparent Data is Vital to the Commercial Transportation Industry

By the time you read this, chances are you've already forgotten about FaceApp, a smartphone app that went viral in early July 2019. This sparked an avalanche of use as people rushed to post their digitally-aged selfies under the #FaceAppChallenge. Less than a week after the craze exploded, the web was awash with posts on the privacy and security of user data. What's the big deal over something like FaceApp? It all comes down to data and privacy.

The Two Faces of Biometric Data

Utilizing biometric data such as fingerprints or facial recognition for security has become standard thanks to widespread smartphone and mobile app usage. Where else does biometrics appear in day-to-day life? Airports use biometrics including fingerprint ID, facial recognition and iris scans for security purposes. Fingerprint recognition is used as identity verification for building access, unlocking cars and mobile banking. Royal Caribbean has started to roll out facial recognition to streamline its boarding process. Biometric data is even making its way into schools, with The Association of School and College Leaders estimating that about 30 percent of England's secondary schools (students aged 12 through 16) are utilizing the unique data.

The ever-increasing presence of biometric data collection for security purposes has sparked a spirited debate. On one end, there are those touting it being more secure and convenient for the user with minimal concern for widespread fraud. On the other end, there are people concerned over security and ethics behind biometric data usage. They argue that the large-scale scanning of faces is an inherent invasion of privacy, effectively treating our faces as databanks that can be stored, tracked and eventually stolen.

There are major players that can be found on both sides, with a great example being when only eight days after San Francisco became the first major United States (U.S.) city to ban civil facial recognition use, Amazon shareholders resoundingly rejected two proposals limiting the sale of the company's face and image ID service.

Where is the U.S. at?

There are a growing number of states that have laws addressing the collection and use of biometric data. However, there isn't a single federal law to take on the issue. This could be changing soon and could directly affect businesses that have regulated fleets.

Making the Most of Biometrics in Travel and Transportation

There are a number of obvious applications for biometrics in the commercial transportation industry, including securing access to vehicles and facilities, driver identity substantiation and product delivery verification. Clean, transparent and safe data is key for developing truly effective monitoring solutions.