



News Release

US-VISIT Program Selects National Biometric Security Project as Site of e-Passport Interoperability Testing

Eighteen Countries Test Passport Readers for e-Passport Interoperability

Washington D.C. (11 August 2004) -- The National Biometric Security Project (NBSP) announced that the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) conducted an e-passport interoperability testing session at NBSP's new Test Research & Data Center (TRDC) in Morgantown, WV. Tests were conducted from July 27-30 under the auspices of DHS US-VISIT program to test the interoperability of e-passports and passport readers.

According to Brad Wing, Biometric Coordinator, US-Visit, who directs the program's efforts to deploy a new type of reader that can read the next generation passports, "This session provided an opportunity for organizations involved in the production of e-Passports and in the development of equipment to access the information from e-Passports to come together in a non-competitive environment in order to work towards establishing interoperability of their products."

Approximately 130 persons from 18 nations, representing over 50 organizations were present. Chip and passport integrators provided 128 prototype samples for use in testing chip and passport readers. By the end of the session, the technical staff of the participating organizations was able to establish basic interoperability for a broad set of prototype e-Passports and readers.

The session was divided into two segments: functional testing to ascertain if the data on the chip was readable and complied with standards recently set by the International Civil Aviation Organization; and a series of optional tests in which vendors were able to conduct on-the-spot evaluations of reader performance at their own pace. "The testing conducted at the NBSP lab helps ensure that we are on the right path to secure international borders without imposing new barriers to travel," added Wing.

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According to John E. Siedlarz, Chairman and CEO of NBSP, "The main objective of the new TRDC and its Testing & Evaluation (T&E) program is to give government and private sector decision makers accurate and reliable data that can be used to support

operational requirements and procurement processes.” The TRDC is an independent facility that is equipped with the tools to evaluate biometric solutions from any source, and follows objective metrics to provide meaningful, measurable data on performance. “We are very pleased that DHS selected our new Test Research & Data Center to conduct this extremely important round of interoperability tests,” said Siedlarz. He notes that the Center to be fully operational by the end of CY 2004.

About the DHS US-VISIT Program

The first phase of US-VISIT launched on January 5, 2004, when DHS deployed the new biometric entry capabilities at 115 airports and 14 seaports and began testing a biometric departure confirmation system at two locations. Since then, millions of foreign visitors have been processed without impacting wait times and it is working. US-VISIT has helped to prevent hundreds of criminals and immigration violators from entering the country. Before the biometric component of US-VISIT, these people might have gotten through our system and into our country.

As part of US-VISIT, visitors have their two index fingers scanned by an inkless device and a digital photograph is taken. By September 30, 2004, visitors traveling under the Visa Waiver Program will be required to enroll in US-VISIT at air and sea ports of entry,

About NBSP

NBSP is a not-for-profit research, test, and analysis organization focused entirely on the application of biometrics to improve the security of the U.S. civil infrastructure. NBSP services are available to government agencies at the federal, state, and local level and private sector agencies responsible for maintaining key components of the national infrastructure. The organization can also support non-U.S. nations and organizations involved in the international anti-terrorist coalition when sanctioned by the U.S. government. More information about the organization can be found at www.nationalbiometric.org.

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