

Recognition is not identification and it matters

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From a computer science perspective, it is easy to assume that effective automated human identification is a given. Biometric systems for recognising faces and dermatoglyphic fingerprints, for example, have been established for many years. Rapid automated systems for DNA profiling, too, seem to be just around the corner. DNA profiling has offered a gold standard to forensic science, which has thrown the inadequacies of other methods of human identification into the spotlight. It has also demonstrated the difference between investigative and probative forms of identification evidence. This presentation will contend that any assumption that facial and fingerprint recognition systems are effectively identification systems is naïve and dangerous. It will contend that the technological gap that needs to be closed to make them so is non-trivial. It will argue that a change of paradigm is needed to address these problems in order to advance new technologies and implement security systems in an optimal manner.