



## The Child Project

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Updated: 09/25/2007

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## Questions

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### **What is The Child Project™?**

The Children's Identification and Location Database (CHILD) Project is a secure nationwide network and registry, maintained by the Nation's Missing Children Organization (NMCO) and National Center for Missing Adults (NCMA) – [www.theyaremissed.org](http://www.theyaremissed.org), that enables law enforcement and social service agencies throughout the country to locate and positively identify missing children and adults with iris biometric recognition technology. Through this network, The Child Project™ will compare the unique features contained in the iris against a database of individuals who enroll throughout the country to determine the identity of an individual. Complementing fingerprinting identification and related

programs now in place, The Child Project™ will capture a digital photograph of the individual's iris, along with basic demographic information. Unlike existing fingerprint identification programs, The Child Project™ will create a national registry to give social service agencies, law enforcement, and other authorized users of the system, access to data that can positively identify children in seconds.

***Tell me more about the Nation's Missing Children Organization and Center for Missing Adults (NMCO) and their relationship with other organizations.***

The Nation's Missing Children Organization and National Center for Missing Adults is a nonprofit agency providing nationwide assistance to law enforcement and families of missing persons. The agency, headquartered in Phoenix, Arizona, was founded in 1994 by Kym Pasqualini who, at the age of eight, survived an attempted abduction by a knife wielding stranger. The group provides a variety of services including advocacy, search assistance, national distribution of information related to missing persons and various programs addressing child safety such as the Child ID program. NMCO acts as a clearinghouse of information and does not provide investigative services or employ private investigators.

Over the last ten years the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children (NCMEC) has provided training, and technical assistance to establish the first national clearinghouse for missing adults. In 1995 NMCO expanded its charter to include services to missing persons over the age of eighteen and quickly identified that missing adults and their families were a segment of the victim population that has been under-served. In July 2002, the United States Department of Justice Bureau of Justice Assistance provided funding to help NMCO establish the National Center for Missing Adults, the first national clearinghouse for missing adults providing services and advocacy to families of missing persons. The agency is dedicated to the prevention of abduction and the safe recovery of missing adults with primary focus on adults determined by law enforcement to be endangered due to foul play, diminished mental capacity, physical disability, or suspicious circumstances.

The National Center for Missing Adults is working to address the issues affecting the adult segment of the adult victim population and serves as a national repository of information accessible to the law enforcement, medical examiners, social service and advocacy groups, and the general public. The National Center for Missing Adults in a partnership with Fox Valley Technical College and the Bureau of Justice Assistance is working to provide training to law enforcement agencies throughout the country and promote and provide advocacy services for the victim families.

***Why is access to a national database needed?***

The National Center for Missing and Exploited Children estimates that on average; more than 2,000 children are reported missing every day across the nation. Iris recognition technology will enhance the identification methods already in place by providing a quick and easy method of correctly and positively identifying an individual. As children grow, their physical appearance changes but their iris never changes. Today, there is no national registry of biometric identification information that could help locate and positively identify missing children and adults. The Child Project™ fills that critical gap.

### ***What is included with the system?***

As pictured below, The Child Project™ system includes all of the hardware and software needed to begin enrolling individuals in the database. This includes, The Child Project™ Software, Iris Recognition Enrollment Camera, Digital Photo Camera, laptop computer, licenses, training and support. It is a very portable system that can be used at community events. The only requirement for remote use is electricity. The system is also extremely easy to use. The Main Menu contains easy "point and click" features for all of the software functions.



### ***How does The Child Project system connect to the national database?***

The Child Project™ system connects and transfers information via the Web. All that is needed to connect and share data is web connection -- either a dial up or other connection, such as a county local area network. The only difference will be the speed of the network.

***How quickly does the system enroll and positively ID individuals?***

A standalone system with over 150,000 records will usually take less than 5 seconds to positively identify and individual. Over the web, depending on your network connection and speed, a positive ID will take about 12 to 15 seconds. Taking a picture (enrolling) of a child's iris usually takes about 15 seconds – about a third of the time it typically takes to do a fingerprint card.

***How does The Child Project™ system handle removal of children or adults who are enrolled?***

The system is set to automatically remove the biometric and demographic information on a child on their 18th birthday. However, that date can be manually changed or entered on the enrollment screen by the user. For example, a parent or guardian may want to have their child's information stay in the system until they turn 21 or automatically removed on their 17th birthday. For adults who are voluntarily enrolled in the system, i.e., Alzheimer's patients, etc., the automatic removal date can be set at the time of enrollment.

***How much does the system cost?***

The single, standalone system costs \$25,000. The four (4) system regional server configuration costs \$150,000. In all cases, the funds are a donation to the Nation's Missing Children Organization and Center for Missing Adults, a qualified 501 (c) non-profit organization.

***Are there any on-going or annual costs associated with The CHILD Project, such as support or maintenance?***

There are no required annual costs for support or maintenance required. Of course, the individual system components come with limited warranties (ranging from 90 days to 1 year) from the manufacturers, i.e., the PC, camera, etc. There is no obligation to purchase or pay for any extended maintenance or support. The Child Project™ is a web-based system. As a result, a department will need to have an internet connection available to transfer and share data with the Nation's Missing Children Organization and Center for Missing Adults (NMCO).

***What is Iris Recognition Technology?***

Iris recognition biometric technology positively determines the identity of an individual by capturing a high resolution digital photograph of the individual's iris. The technology is based on the most mathematically unique biometric -- even between twins or an individual's right and left eyes -- the iris of the eye.

The technology is non-intrusive - the individual does not need to touch anything to use the system. Unlike other biometric technologies, there is no need to touch anything - thereby eliminating any possibility of transmitting disease, such as SARS, and there are no lasers, strong lights or any kind of harmful beams. By simply looking into the digital video camera, a photo of the iris is taken, captured and stored. The iris recognition equipment is portable and simple to use, making it ideal for use at remote locations such as fairs and special events.

### ***How does iris recognition technology compare to electronic fingerprint technology?***

The system has both advantages and disadvantages to electronic fingerprint systems, such as Live Scan. Here are some of the advantages: the iris biometric is about 12 times more unique --- from a science and statistical perspective -- than fingerprint biometrics. There is no need to touch anything (as with fingerprint) to capture the biometric data. A participant simply looks at a digital camera from about 10" to 15" inches and it takes a digital photo of their iris. As a result, there is almost no possibility of transmitting germs, bacteria, etc. as can happen on the surface of the fingerprint reader.

The file generated to store the iris is significantly smaller -- and therefore easier to store and retrieve -- than a fingerprint image. The iris code file is only 512 bytes. By comparison, most live scan digital images for a ten print system are around 1.5MB. So, from a storage and retrieval perspective, iris is much more cost-effective while being around 12 times more accurate. One of the other major advantages is that iris recognition biometric technology is always a "one-to-many" search -- unlike most live scan systems that are a "one-to-one" search with a "one-to-many" candidates search option. Every time a person is presented to the iris camera, the system researches every enrolled person. The search time is also important. For example, the average search time for a "one-to-many" search using our iris recognition system is about 2 to 5 seconds. On the other hand, most states report that the AFIS search at the state level, on a "one-to-one" search, is approximately 3 hours. Of course, a specific jurisdiction may be faster or slower, but the iris is always about 2 to 5 seconds.

Those are some of the advantages. Now, some of the disadvantages of iris biometrics vs. fingerprint. Iris biometrics have virtually no forensic value -- a person does not leave a print of their iris at a crime scene the way they might leave a fingerprint or sample suitable for DNA analysis. Currently, there is no national law enforcement database against which to run a match for iris. As a result, it has virtually no value for crime scene investigations.

### ***Is the technology dangerous?***

No. A video image is taken of an iris in a manner that is completely non-invasive and inherently safe – just like getting your picture taken with a digital camera. And, unlike other biometric technologies, there is no need to touch anything – thereby avoiding the possible spread of illness, i.e., SARS, colds, flu, etc.

***What if someone doesn't want a picture taken of their iris?***

Iris recognition technology is strictly voluntary – just as it is now with any identification card kits that may be used with children. Participants agree to enroll, thereby eliminating privacy concerns. The user voluntarily decides to participate in iris recognition for authentication by looking at a digital video camera from about 5 – 10 inches away from the camera. The technology cannot work without the explicit cooperation of the end-user.

***How accurate is iris recognition?***

Iris recognition is proven to have the highest biometric accuracy, with no false matches in over two million cross-comparisons, according to Biometric Product Testing Final Report

(19 March 2001, Center for Mathematics and Scientific Computing, National Physics Laboratory, U.K.). The human iris is absolutely unique, even between twins or an individual's right and left eyes. The iris itself is stable throughout a person's life (approximately from the age of one). The physical characteristics of the iris do not change with age. Because of its accuracy, reliability and ease of use, iris recognition biometric technology is gaining popularity across the globe in areas such as public safety, aviation, education and health care.

***Who will use the iris recognition database and when will it be running?***

Many Sheriffs are already using iris recognition as an integral part of their arrest, booking, intake, and release process. Roll out of the The Child Project™ application began in January of 2005. During the initial phase of the program, The Child Project™ contacted Sheriffs to gauge their interest in participating in the program. Over the first seven months of operation, The Child Project™ has received written commitments of participation from more than 1,200 Sheriffs in 46 states and the endorsement of the National Sheriffs' Association (NSA).

***Who will be in charge of the database?***

The Nation's Missing Children Organization & Center for Missing

Adults (NMCO), a nationally certified 501 (c) nonprofit agency headquartered in Phoenix, Arizona will be in charge of the national database for all enrolled children and adults. For more information about NMCO and its programs, please visit the website at [www.nmco.org](http://www.nmco.org) .

***Who do I contact for more information?***

For more information about The Child Project™, please call Patricia Lawton at 508-224-1600 ext 309 or Kym Pasqualini at NMCO at 602-944-1768.