

Biometrics used to stop Wi-Fi hacking

A little box of fingerprint tricks.

Peter Judge, Techworld

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California start-up Shimon Systems has produced a biometrics package designed to make authentication easy on Wi-Fi networks.

Despite endless iterations of Wi-Fi security specifications, users still have doubts, a lot of Wi-Fi networks are misconfigured, and 802.1x authentication is rarely applied at smaller businesses. Bio-NetGuard is intended to help those sites lock their Wi-Fi down without calling in specialists.

It's a small standalone device including a Radius server and EAP (encapsulated authentication protocol), which works with standard fingerprint readers, either external or built into a laptop. It's available in the US, starts at \$500 for ten users, and supports up to 250 users.

"Verifying the identity of the equipment - not the user - has been considered unsafe for any security conscious enterprise environment," said Baldev Krishan, president and CEO of Shimon, in a release.

The device should work with any WPA access point, as the WPA standard includes the option to refer authentication to a Radius server. Shimon publishes an extensive list of APs and NICs that it has tested the product with, and says it supports a number of fingerprint scanners - the clients have to be running Windows, though.

The product should be available worldwide from biometrix provider Silex Technology - "We believe that this product solves a key problem with enterprise WiFi LANs," said Gary Bradt, Vice President of Silex Technology America - but at the time of writing, it's not yet in the catalogue of Silex Europe.

"The Bio-NetGuard acts as a bit of a black box," comments Glenn Fleishman, of [Wi-Fi Net News](#), adding that it should find a strong niche: "Medical, government, and legal industries are full of smaller shops with high regulatory burdens, such as the HIPAA rules governing medical patient privacy," he says. "For businesses that need this form of security coupled with the kind of simplicity that a fingerprint scanner offers, Shimon might have the right price and right product."