

Trust -At the end of the day it all boils down to a matter of trust. Do you trust Tony Blair? Do you trust David Blunkett? **Do you trust this and every other Government with the intimate knowledge of our lives that compulsory National Identity Cards will bring?** Do you trust them not to abuse this power - now or in the future?

The Future - Where will we be twenty years from now? I don't know. I do know this:

The world will change.

Perhaps we will be at peace and have a benevolent government that supports the rights and freedoms of all citizens including minorities.

Or perhaps the current trend will continue. Perhaps people will become increasingly disillusioned with the two main parties and allow minor parties like the BNP to get in. Perhaps parties like the BNP will win not just local but Westminster seats. Perhaps they will eventually hold the balance of power in a hung Parliament.

Perhaps they'll get to dictate policy. Do you want to be carrying an Identity Card if that happens? Would you still be happy to have your personal information held in a central Government database?

What about your gay / black / Muslim friends?

I don't know what will happen. I do know that **I'm not prepared to gamble.**

This leaflet has been produced by News From Nowhere Radical & Community Bookshop, Liverpool www.newsfromnowhere.org.uk – FREE TO COPY & DISTRIBUTE!

ALL TEXT IS BY TREVOR MENDHAM & HAS BEEN ABRIDGED, BY NFN WITH HIS PERMISSION, FROM HIS WEBSITE:

<http://www.trevor-mendham.com/civil-liberties/identity-cards/index.html>

where you can read *much* more of 'The Case Against UK ID Cards'

FIND OUT MORE:

http://www.theregister.co.uk/2004/05/05/complete_idcard_guide/

'Everything you never wanted to know about the UK ID card'

HIGHLY RECOMMENDED – outlines the enormous cost, complexity & pitfalls of what the government is proposing.

Campaigning Against ID Cards:

www.no2id.net

www.stand.org.uk

www.privacyinternational.org

www.liberty-human-rights.org.uk

Weblogs with news & articles on ID cards & civil liberties:

<http://whiterose.samizdata.net/>

<http://chestnut-tree-cafe.blogspot.com/>

<http://www.spy.org.uk/spyblog/>

<http://uk-id-cards.blog-city.com/>

STOP ID CARDS!



Did you know the Home Office is holding a public consultation on identity cards right now?

How to have your say:

- **Email:** identitycards@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk
(Put "consultation response" in the Subject line)
- **Fax:** 020 7035 5386
- **Write to:** Robin Woodland, Legislation Consultant, Identity Cards Programme, Home Office, 3rd Floor, Allington Towers, 19 Allington Street, London SW1E 5EB

DEADLINE FOR CONTRIBUTIONS IS 20th JULY 2004

It will cost at least £3 billion of public money & will seriously erode our privacy & civil liberties – will it be worth it?

To Fight Crime and Terror? - There is no evidence to support the claim that ID Cards will significantly cut down on crime and terror. **Many other countries have ID Cards and still suffer from crime and terrorism.** Spain has compulsory Identity Cards. That did nothing to prevent the Madrid massacre. Remember that all the September 11th terrorists entered the US on valid documents - ID Cards would have made no difference to their actions.

The best that an ID Card can possibly do is to prove *who* someone is. It can never prove their *intent*.

To Prevent Benefit Fraud? - Most benefit fraud is *not* identity fraud. Instead it comes from people claiming benefit whilst actually working or otherwise lying about their circumstances. Identity Cards will do nothing to prevent this.

To crack down on illegal immigrants? - ID cards will not deter illegal immigrants, they will still come. Nor will ID Cards allow illegal immigrants to be deported more easily. By definition people in the country illegally will not apply for the cards and will avoid places where these cards need to be shown. Most illegal immigrants currently work at the fringes of legality, where pay is in cash, no questions asked. **Such employers are unlikely to**

start demanding to see Identity Cards. If they do then many illegal immigrants will have no choice but to turn to crime to survive. Thus **compulsory National Identity Cards could actually raise the crime rate.**

Dangers of ID Cards:

Centralisation - All the current ID is optional, **you can decide for yourself whether the benefits it brings is worth the loss of privacy.** You carry the cards you need as and when you need them. **The proposed new cards would be compulsory.** Whatever the initial laws, functionality creep would soon make carrying them effectively mandatory. Currently the government, the credit card company, your doctor, etc all hold different pieces of information about you. In general **they know what they need to know** in order to provide a service.

The introduction of a universal card - or even simply the National Identity Database - threatens this "need to know" principle. It opens up the prospect of all this information - your "data shadow" - being easily accessible to police and government officials.

Competency - The database required to support compulsory National Identity Cards will be massive, probably the biggest IT project ever undertaken in this country. Whatever assurances we are given the ID system *will* be full of bugs and incorrect data. Add to that basic human error and we have the potential for a huge mess.

Governments have a dreadful record when it comes to implementing large-scale projects of any kind, let alone IT. Do you remember the mess over passports and the changes to Family Credit? When your electricity contract is wrongly switched to another supplier it's annoying. What happens when your personal records are mixed up with someone else's and you find yourself declined medical treatment?

Bootstrapping the System - For an ID system to have any value at all it must be 100% reliable - 99% is not good enough. **This begs the question: when I apply for my ID Card, how will I prove my identity?** If I *already* have a reliable form of ID then why do I need an ID Card? If I *don't* have any reliable ID then how can my ID Card be reliable? **There is a serious danger that the new Identity Cards will simply legitimise existing fake ID.**

Single Point of Failure - Most people today habitually carry several forms of ID - credit card, driving licence, railcard, etc. Each has a specific purpose. If you lose one of them, it's a pain but you can deal with it.

Now imagine that you also lost *every* other form of ID - from your passport down to your library ticket. Within a few years, [functionality creep](#) will mean that the compulsory National ID Card will be used for almost everything. Lose it and **you won't be able to operate in society until you get it replaced.** You might not even be able to buy a drink in a pub without it.

Now imagine a darker scenario. Today, if someone steals/fakes your credit card they can spend money as you. If they steal/fake your work ID they can enter your office as you. If they fake your National Identity Card they will be able to do all that - and more. **ID Cards are a skeleton key to your identity.** Instead of faking many pieces of identity, the criminal/terrorist only needs to fake one thing.

Only the technically naive can believe that it will be "impossible" to fake ID Cards. Difficult, yes, but organised criminals and terrorists have huge resources and great incentive.

Privacy

No one shall be subjected to arbitrary interference with his privacy, family, home or correspondence...

Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Article 12

Where I go and what I do is not illegal, but it is no business of the Government or the police. The proposed cards will be the front end to a massive database containing an unprecedented amount of information on every British citizen. Over time functionality creep will ensure that information grows. Data previously segregated and available only on a need to know basis will all be held in one place .

Ensuring the security of this data (confidentiality, integrity and availability) will be a massive task. Even if the system is technically secure (unlikely) the weakest element in any security system is the human one. There will be **thousands** of people with legitimate access to the data in the system. Most will be honest and competent. A few will not. It only needs a few.

Remember that it is not just the data on the ID database per se that counts. Once we all have a unique identifier then **it becomes an easy matter to cross-reference the ID database with other databases.**.. Cross-referencing all these different public and private systems then becomes a very real possibility.

"The innocent have nothing to fear"? This mantra is often trotted out by those who support compulsory National Identity Cards for innocent British citizens. They claim "If you oppose ID Cards you must have something to hide." That argument is as wrong as it is simplistic.

Opinion polls show that one person in five opposes ID Cards on principle. If they've all got something to hide, that means that one person in five is a criminal, illegal immigrant or terrorist. Next time you're on a train or in your office take a look around and ask yourself if you really believe that.

If you still believe "The innocent have nothing to fear" then consider this: there is a large amount of marital, child and other abuse that takes place in the home. This could be wiped out by installing compulsory cameras in every room of every home and recording their output centrally. Why would you object to that? Yes, that's a deliberately extreme scenario, no-one's suggesting it would ever happen. However it makes the point that even the most innocent person fears loss of privacy.

Intent vs Capability - In many ways this is the core of the argument against compulsory National Identity Cards for innocent British citizens. Governments of all colours tend to enact rules and legislation as widely as possible in order to give themselves flexibility. **As a result they enable the capability for abuse.**

When campaigners complain about the possible abuses we are told that we are being silly and that the powers would never be used that way. We are told to trust the government's *intent*.

Even if we do trust this government and this Home Secretary, can we trust future ones? Measures like ID Cards provide the *capability* for massive abuse, regardless of current *intent*. Whatever assurances we are given, **sooner or later the powers will be abused**. (For example, abuse of the Terrorism Act to prevent lawful anti-war protests at RAF Fairford).

! UNDER THE DRAFT BILL, NOT ONLY WILL WE HAVE TO PAY FOR THE ID CARDS, WE CAN BE FINED £1,000 FOR FAILING TO NOTIFY THE GOVERNMENT WHEN WE CHANGE ADDRESS! (Name & address requirements for the National Identity Register, applying to ALL of us, would be even more stringent than the Violent & Sexual Offenders Register!)