



THE NET

(<https://reclaimthenet.org>).

**Defend free speech and individual liberty online.**

**Push back against big tech and media gatekeepers.**

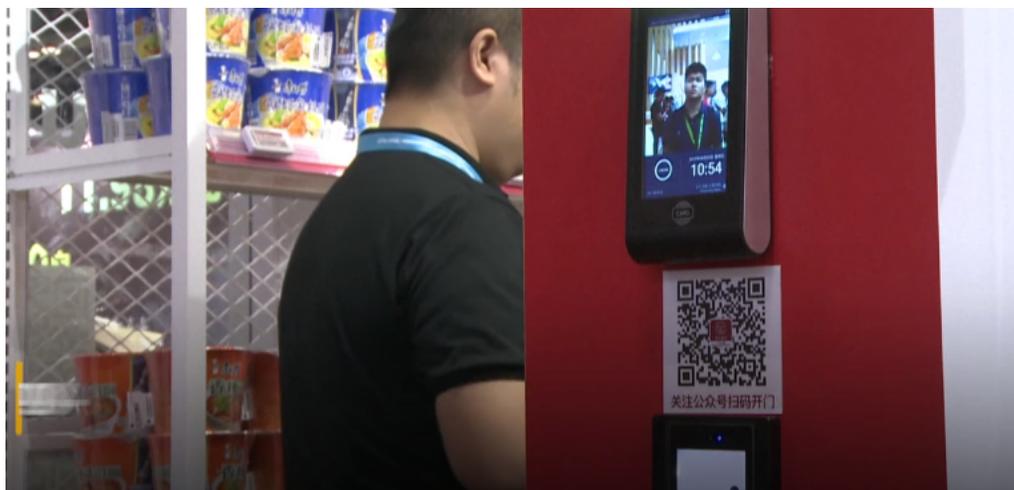


Issue: January 25, 2021

## There's about to be a big push to encourage people to pay with their face

By Didi Rankovic(<https://reclaimthenet.org/author/dee-rankovic/>) Posted 1:33 pm

Despite all privacy concerns.



**If you're tired of the destruction of digital civil liberties [subscribe to Reclaim The Net. \(https://reclaimthenet.org/subscribe\)](https://reclaimthenet.org/subscribe)**

Facial recognition technology is often considered as one of the most powerful tools of mass surveillance.

But now, reports show that payment industry is getting in on the game, not only in China – a leader in both developing and using this technology – but also elsewhere around the world, in countries like Denmark, Nigeria – and the US.

The practice of paying for goods and services via facial recognition devices, without the need to use a card, a phone or in any other way prove one's identity, is already well-established in China.

In the US, a startup pioneering the use of facial recognition is PopID. The BBC (<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-55748964>) says that their services are used by about 70 restaurants and cafes on the West Coast, and that they are talking to major card processing companies, who are apparently eager to find a way around relying on apps like Apple Pay and Google Pay.

In his comments, company's CEO John Miller downplayed the glaring privacy concerns, saying "Our view is that using your face to pay is no different [than using your phone].

"It's just another way to identify yourself. The [digital] picture [taken at point of sale] is destroyed immediately, and the data isn't shared with anyone."

In fact, he argues that it's less intrusive than paying by your mobile phone, because a phone can track your location at all times via GPS. He adds that the photos stored by PopID are mathematical maps of unique facial vectors, not actual photographs.

The sheer power of the tech behind these systems is evident in the fact that PopID will soon be able to identify even a person wearing a mask. An 18-year-old user of this system is happy with it, and has no privacy concerns.

"It's faster, more convenient, and safer... and you don't have to worry about leaving your phone or cards at home," said a random Los Angeles resident Sara Stewart, who was questioned.

But over in China, some people are far more aware of the dark underbelly of this technology, and less likely to trade privacy for convenience.

In Guangzhou, a student identified as "Ling" told the BBC that she refuses to use vending machines that mandate the use of facial recognition.

"Tech is like a tide. There's no way you can swim against it. But I also want to make a stand of some kind, for as long as I'm able to do so," said Ling.

Chinese experts say that the coronavirus epidemic has helped adoption of facial recognition payments, as 760 million people in that country are expected to be using it by 2022.



RECLAIM  
**THE NET**

**Defend free speech and individual liberty online.**

**Push back against big tech and media gatekeepers.**

Your email address