Joint EC-UNDP Thematic Workshop on Sustainability in Electoral Administration: Adequate Resourcing for Credible Elections

National identity cards – Niall McCann, 7 March.
National ID cards

• Presentation structure
  – Some background on NIDs
  – Policy issues and data protection
  – Sustainable use of NIDs for voter registration
Some background on NIDs

1. NIDs – two elements:
   1. The card;
   2. The database;
   - *The card is the part of the ‘iceberg’ that is visible;*
   - *Huge policy vacuum.*
National ID cards

– NB: a NID database may be a population register but is NOT a civil registry:

– **Different data:**
  - NID (*name, DOB, address, ID number, sex, place of birth, etc., but also sometimes religion/ethnicity, or even criminal record, voting history, etc*).
  - CR (*record of birth, death, marriage, divorce, other name changes*).

– **Different purpose:**
  - CRs (*record of ‘key life events,’ evidence of individual’s clam to an identity*).
  - NIDs (*multipurpose*).
National ID cards

- 25 of 28 EU states (from Jul 2013) issue NIDs
- No NIDs in UK, IRL and DK (or USA).
- Africa? Morocco (includes lots of CR data), Kenya, Zambia, South Africa, etc...
- Cost? Free to $80 (Austria).
- Trend moving to microchips;
  - more data can be held;
  - **data can be added**
  - *(Is card owner aware?)*.
NIDs - Policy issues and data protection - 1

– Control of data:

• Who manages the NID system? Interior Ministry? Specialist state agency?
• Who has access to the data?
• Who can amend it/delete the data? Central data server administrators only? Or remote, off-site officials?
• Is there one database, that state agencies access according to their ‘user profiles’? Or multiple databases, linked by a number unique to each individual?
• How much data is kept on the card (microchip) itself? Who can read it? Who can amend it/delete it?
Privacy issues:

- Is there a data protection law?

- A legal redress for citizens to challenge either the accuracy of the data or how it is used, e.g. via a Data Protection Commissioner or Ombudsperson?

- Is there a freedom of information law? Does the citizen have the right to know what data is kept on them by the state?
NIDs - Policy issues and data protection - 3

– ‘Real’ vs. digital identity:

- Which identity has primacy in law?
- The ‘physical’ identity of the person, as per official paper documents issued by the state
- Or the ‘digital’ identity of the person, as per the data carried in the database(s) or the card?

– Some practical issues

- Does the data die with the person?
- Get deleted if no longer relevant? (e.g. tax history)
- Onus on cardholder/family or state to ensure accuracy?
- Etc…
Controversies over the use of NIDs

– Cost! (e.g. Afghanistan - $220m – $800m);
– Invasion of citizen privacy?;
– Potential for identity theft for criminal purposes;
– Security of system, vulnerability of hacking;
– Sovereignty concerns over ownership and security of data;
– Intellectual property rights of vendors;
– Racial or ethnic ‘profiling’;
– Database merging:
  • ‘single point of failure’ for identity management;
  • Abuse of data by state agencies, e.g. cross-referencing ethnicity by criminal record, by tax status, etc.
The future....10 years?

– Replacement of paper documents with digital ‘documents’ added to NIDs (e.g. e-birthcerts)
– NIDs for children and ‘baby biometrics.’
– Private sector battle to datamine NID data;
– Continued data-merging, driven by e-commerce and security sectors?;
– Machines replacing humans in verifying NID data (e.g. airport fast-entry schemes);
– More biometrics ➔ less need for cards, e.g. iris-scanning
– Ultimately, no need for NID?
Sustainable use of NIDs for VR

– In electoral terms, NIDs can be used...
  • To identify oneself in a VR exercise;
  • To establish eligibility in a VR exercise;
  • To identify oneself on polling day;
  • To register as a candidate, poll worker or party agent/domestic observer;
  • *To create the voter register.*
Sustainable use of NIDs for VR

– Concerns and challenges;
  • Reliance of data accuracy of other institutions;
  • Politically tainted NID affects EMB independence?;
  • Public distrust of NIDs causing VR backlash?;
  • Expectance of EMB to be at the forefront of data protection issues;
  • Allocation of voters issue;
  • Accuracy of NID database not responsibility of EMB;
  • VR-led NID creation risks overloading EMB;
  • Risk to integrity of NID process – VR interested in those of voting age. Identify fake whether paper or digital
  • Neither process should be held up or hostage to the other;
Sustainable use of NIDs for VR

– Tips for proper VR/NID linkages;
  • Determine limitation of EMB responsibilities early;
  • Unless established address/postal code systems, allocation to polling centres responsibility of EMB;
  • Create cross-Ministerial task force, involving key ministries:
    – Health;
    – Justice;
    – Education;
    – Social welfare;
    – Defence/interior.
  • Realistic operational plans/budgets on long-term basis;
  • Determine citizen rights and responsibilities.
New ID cards are supposed to be 'unforgeable' - but it took our expert 12 minutes to clone one, and programme it with false data

By STEVE BOGGAN
Last updated at 9:42 AM on 06th August 2009

Adam Laurie is no ordinary hacker. In the world of computing, he is considered a genius - a man whose talents are used by government departments and blue-chip companies to guard against terrorists and cyber-criminals.

But even by his standards, what he is about to demonstrate is mind-boggling - and deeply disturbing.