

Media Release

Every face tells a story



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE : SEPTEMBER 14 2007

For the first time in New Zealand biometric facial recognition software has been launched into the public arena. NeoFace, developed by NEC Laboratories, is the software behind the current Weet-Bix / All Blacks Face2Face competition.

More widely accepted as a security tool, NeoFace is revolutionising the way facial recognition software is used. The NeoFace software was customised by a team of systems integration specialists at NEC in New Zealand. It enables people to match their face to the face of an All Black, and was designed by the team to be a fun and novel application of a powerful biometric tool.

NeoFace identifies and compares segments of a face or image of a face. These unique capabilities enable a high degree of accuracy even if parts of the face are covered e.g. by glasses, a motorbike helmet or mask. Tested mainly on security applications to date, NEC software developers are currently working on ideas for NeoFace applications in agriculture, health, communication for the disabled community, and consumer marketing. Alongside recognising facial segments and movements, NEC software can also recognise and identify behavioural patterns amongst individuals and groups.

“The possibilities for biometric software development are infinite,” says NEC business development manager, Paul Nuttridge. “Now your face will literally open the door to your future – and your past. It will enable you to unlock the door to your home and office, welcome your guests, start your car, access your bank account, and interact with technology despite any physical limitations you may have. It will also enable security forces to recognise and diffuse non-acceptable behaviours, including theft, kidnap and potential violence, and businesses to identify the shopping behaviours of their customers.”

The company believes that public discussion and acceptance of these types of biometric technology are breaking down the ‘Big Brother’ barriers, creating a stepping stone in the right direction for software engineers to develop useful applications for New Zealand.

“The tangible personal benefits of any technology need to be understood by the public before any software is accepted,” says Mr Nuttridge. “Regardless of how clever software engineers may be, it’s the public who ultimately make the decision about the success of a product. The challenge for all software designers is to observe how people interact with and react to technology and then to design innovative solutions which improve our business or personal lives - rather than just creating a technically impressive product for its own sake.”

For further information or comment on the implications of biometrics please contact:

Paul Nuttridge Business Development Manager | NEC New Zealand | **Phone:** 04 381 1111 | **Cellphone:** 027 249 9959

Email: paul.nuttridge@nec.co.nz | **www.nec.co.nz**