

## Users don't want Passport or Liberty

By Iain Thomson in Paris [10-10-2002]

ID management schemes better suited to business use

Identity management systems, such as Microsoft's Passport and the proposed Liberty Alliance standard, are not wanted by most consumers, according to panellists at RSA Security's European conference in Paris.

In a round table debate between the two camps, none of the Liberty Alliance representatives could provide any evidence that consumers were interested in signing up to online identity schemes.

Although 200 million people use Passport, this is heavily made up of Hotmail customers who are now signed up automatically.

Richard Golding, EMEA chief executive at beTRUSTed, the e-security arm of PricewaterhouseCoopers, said: "We're not seeing any consumer demand at all.

"It's the major corporations that want this. We're seeing negative feelings from consumers and many are quite fearful of it.

"On the other hand I remember consumers being very fearful of credit cards when they were introduced, and look at them now."

Businesses, on the other hand, are very keen on the technology, particularly for managing staff and at business-to-business and business-to-enterprise online trading centres.

The automotive industry was cited as an example, where five companies provide the brakes for all major manufacturers. Secure identity management has cut the infrastructure costs of purchasing and delivery systems.

The panel was split on how to make identity management more palatable to the wider market. Some, like Tom Patterson from Deloitte & Touche, believed that if savings could be made consumers would buy in.

Others, like Stephen Martin, a director at Zyen Aspect Research, felt that it was a case of educating consumers and making it free to use.

Meanwhile, it seems that Microsoft is not ruling out joining the Liberty Alliance programme.

Caspar Bowden, former head of the Foundation for Information Policy Research, and now privacy and security manager at Microsoft, said: "Liberty Alliance was launched as very much an anti-Microsoft coalition.

"[Microsoft was] approached to join the group at very short notice and was given two weeks to make up its mind.

"That just wasn't enough time to sort out all the issues, but there could be genuine benefits in working together."

Liberty Alliance released version 1.0 of its proposed specification in July. Details can be found [here](#).