



Speak on the dotted line

QUT software is improving the security of our telephone transactions.

TO help in the fight against identity fraud, QUT researchers have developed a speaker verification system that can assist in determining if a person is who they say they are, when talking on the telephone.

Unlike PINS and passwords, which can be stolen and fraudulently used, speaker verification provides a layer of security which is far more difficult to bypass when doing business over the phone.

The technology has been developed over the past two years by biometric researchers Professor Sridha Sridharan, Dr Robert Vogt and Dr Michael Mason, from the Faculty of Built Environment and Engineering.

Dr Michael Mason said the software recognised voice patterns during short durations of speech over the phone, and could quickly and accurately confirm the identity of the speaker.

"Current methods of verifying a person's identity involve knowing a few personal details and rely on a series of questions such as your date of birth, mother's maiden name and personal identification numbers," he said.

"By being able to authenticate a person's identity based on their speech our system ensures people aren't able to impersonate you just because they have access to some personal information."

Dr Mason said QUT's software aims to achieve competitive performance and thereby improve the security and efficiency of security-sensitive telephone transactions.

He said the technology was the outcome of research supported by the Australian Research Council.

"We are also developing other biometric systems based on face recognition and a combination of a person's face and voice, which QUT hopes to commercialise in the future."

In a deal brokered by bluebox, QUT's commercialisation company, the software has been acquired by Australian IT security company, Torqx Pty Ltd, which plans to implement the system across the government, banking and finance, entertainment, telecommunication and health sectors.

Torqx chief executive officer Gary Samuel said the software would be used to help tackle the burgeoning biometrics and authentication industry.

"Our primary aim is to develop a best practice standard for voice verification software using the QUT-developed system, for application in interactive voice response telephone systems worldwide," Mr Samuel said.

- Sandra Hutchinson