

# Obama's Cybersecurity Adviser: Biometrics Will Replace Passwords for Safety's Sake

October 13, 2014 | [Guy Taylor](#)

The days of using a password to access a bank account or cellphone will soon be a thing of the past, President Obama's top cybersecurity adviser said Thursday.

The risk of getting hacked by criminals has grown so widespread that far more sophisticated identification technology — including biometric scanning devices — will become the norm, said Michael Daniel, the White House's cybersecurity coordinator.

"You've started to see some of that with the emergence of the fingerprint readers," said Mr. Daniel, adding that the technology will become increasingly mainstream as cellphone cameras, "hard" card readers and other authentication gadgets replace the annoying process for millions of Americans of punching in a password to confirm their identity.

"Frankly, I would really love to kill the password dead as a primary security method because it's terrible," Mr. Daniel said at an event hosted by the Center for National Policy, Northrop Grumman Corp. and the Christian Science Monitor. Since passwords can so easily be hacked, a variety of new technologies will provide more protection and some "will be biometric related," he said.

Mr. Daniel's comments come against a backdrop of recent friction between the U.S. Justice Department and private tech giants like Apple, which unveiled a host of new privacy features for its iPhones and iPads last month designed to frustrate government snoopers. Features like fingerprint scanners on phones are popular because consumers believe such advancements will protect them from government intrusions on their private data. FBI Director James Comey lashed out on the subject in late-September, accusing tech companies of "marketing something expressly to allow people to place themselves beyond the law."

So far the Obama administration has been reluctant to push legislation that would require private companies to take any specific cybersecurity measures. In February, however, the administration launched a "Cybersecurity Framework," described as the "result of a yearlong private-sector led effort to develop a voluntary how-to guide for organizations in the critical infrastructure community to enhance their cybersecurity."

Mr. Daniel one point told the audience that the administration feels strongly that "market forces" can be trusted to take the lead on guiding private companies toward taking sufficient cybersecurity measures without heavy government intervention. But he later said there are concerns inside the White House that almost all private companies — when left to their own devices — have a habit of ...

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