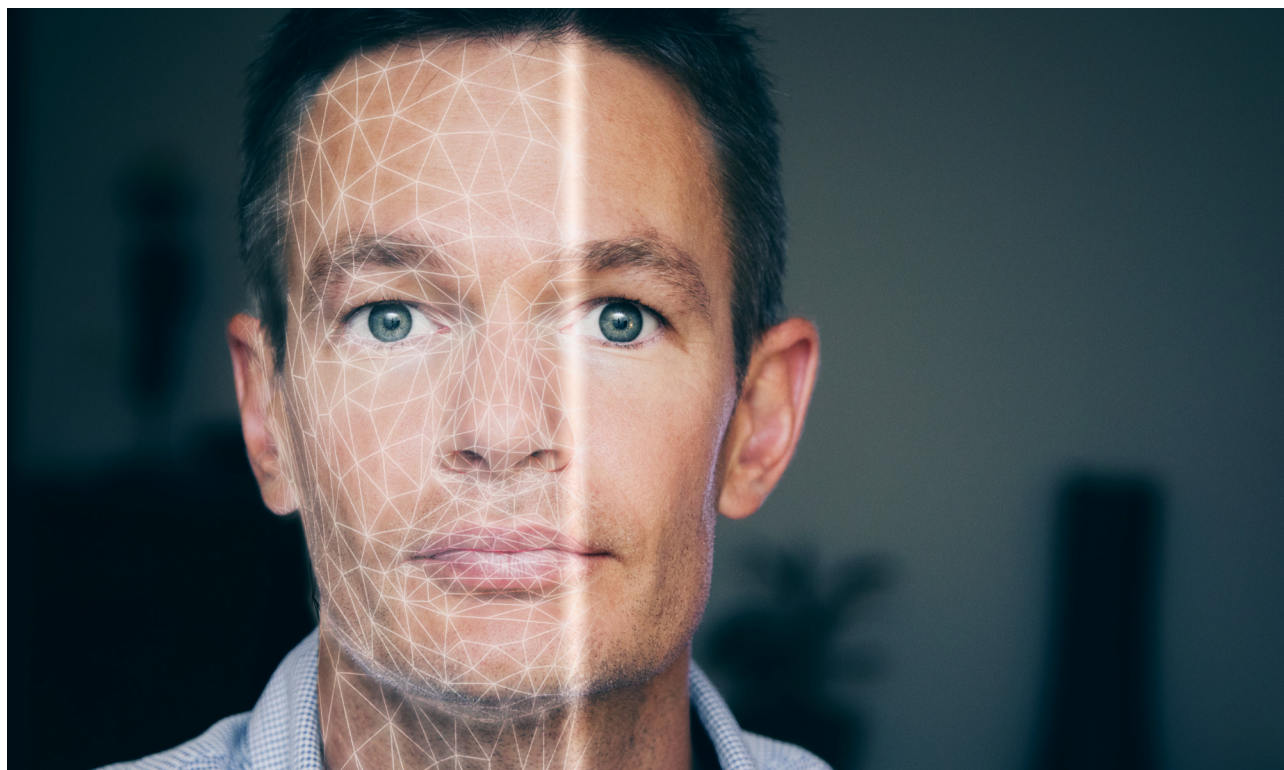


The AI tool transforming business

From the simple act of unlocking your phone, to clearing passport control at the airport, facial recognition has changed the game when it comes to identification verification.



TECHNOLOGY COMPANIES TORUTEK and COMS have teamed up with Microsoft to use facial recognition and cloud-based artificial intelligence tools for public good.

In what they believe is a world first, the companies have developed an accurate real-time system for identifying people who have taken the step of registering on the national photo database of problem gamblers.

This voluntary system lets gamblers help themselves by requesting to be excluded from gambling venues. The system has widespread support. But how can busy venue staff be expected to pick a face out of the crowd?

That's where facial recognition comes in. On entering a gambling venue, a video camera captures an image of the visitor's face and uploads it to a cloud-based system that compares the image to the national database.

If a match is determined, a process that takes mere seconds, staff at the

venue are alerted with a message to the problem-gambling management software on a terminal behind the bar.

A venue manager then approaches the gambler to ask for proof of identification. "Facial recognition has been used for security purposes widely in airports and in the retail sector. But outside government, this is the first system that operates across multiple organisations and venues", says Torutek chief executive, Chris Yu.

"Someone might ask to be excluded from 20 venues. A treatment provider would normally have to get in touch with each of those individually. With Guardian it takes just a few minutes," says Yu.

"The venues all get an alert about a new exclusion request and accept it. It's that simple."

Underpinning Guardian is Microsoft's Azure cloud computing service and artificial intelligence tools, which allow images captured at venues around the country to be compared with the database instantly.

"The Microsoft AI services are easy to use, built into our existing Azure stack and we don't have to worry about machine learning implementation," says Yu.

The scalable nature of Azure means it can easily handle increased demand as venues join the scheme, which has been successfully trialed in locations from Auckland to Christchurch. Ethical use of accurate facial recognition systems is a growing area of focus for Microsoft.

Torutek plans to extend Guardian to more venues here and across the Tasman as momentum grows behind an effort designed to empower problem gamblers to help themselves.



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