

# *Biometric Consortium 2005 Conference*

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**Austin Hicklin**  
*Senior Principal*  
*Mitretek Systems*

3150 Fairview Park Drive  
Falls Church VA 22043  
Phone: 703.610.1995. hicklin@mitretek.org

**Topic:** The Myth of Goats:  
How many people have fingerprints that are hard to match?

**Abstract:** The proportion of people who have fingerprints that are particularly hard to match (also known as “Goats”) is a topic of great interest in biometrics, especially for those involved in the design, development, or evaluation of fingerprint-based identification or verification systems. There have been a variety of statements made in the recent past that a small percentage of people (usually 2%) cannot be fingerprinted due to poor quality fingers. This study shows these statements are based on misconceptions: the fact that some small percentage of fingerprints may be hard to match does not mean that a corresponding percentage of people are hard to match.

**Biography:** Austin Hicklin is a Senior Principal with Mitretek Systems, in the Biometrics Group. Mr. Hicklin has nearly twenty years of experience in systems engineering and software design and development, projects dealing with biometrics, PKI, smartcards, Web development, user interface design, and financial and project management software. In ten years with Mitretek Systems (and the MITRE Corporation), Mr. Hicklin has focused particularly on biometrics, in projects for NIST, the FBI, the U.S. Department of Justice, and other government agencies.

Mr. Hicklin has had key roles in a variety of biometric evaluations and programs over the last decade. Mr. Hicklin recently had a defining role in the Slap Segmentation Evaluation 2004 (SlapSeg04), which is the first rigorous evaluation of slap segmentation algorithms yet conducted. Previously, Mr. Hicklin has been involved in a number of biometric projects, including the Fingerprint Vendor Technology Evaluation (FpVTE) 2003, an extensive evaluation of the accuracy of fingerprint matching; the IDENT/IAFIS Image Quality Study, which was critical in defining the effect of poor-quality fingerprints and the comparative performance impact of flat and rolled fingerprints; and the Universal Latent Workstation, which is the latent fingerprint processing software that is distributed by the FBI to Federal, State, and Local agencies and has been responsible for thousands of identifications.

Mr. Hicklin has a Master of Science degree in Computer Science from Virginia Tech, and a Bachelor of Arts degree from the University of Virginia.