

Summary of Comments from Facial Recognition Survey

In early 2020, the IFC Facial Recognition Working Group distributed a survey to determine the library community's level of knowledge and concern about facial recognition software. This survey was distributed on social media, as well as through ALA Connect and several mailing lists; it was open from February 14 through March 14.

This summary is focused entirely on the response to the final question: **“What other comments would you like to share about libraries and facial recognition software?”**

Of the 628 respondents to the survey, only 404 left additional comments. Members of the working group worked through all responses, counting comments with similar content. (Note, since commenters often made multiple points, a single comment may have been counted several times, once under each of the themes it contained.)

The responses can be found in the table below, with “no comment” removed. If you have questions or concerns, please contact [Jim DelRosso](#).

summary of comment	# of similar responses (cumulative)	Percentage of total	Percentage of actual responses
General negative opinion	285	45.38%	70.54%
Threat to privacy (patron, user, worker)	61	9.71%	15.10%
No need for it in libraries	22	3.50%	5.45%
Racial bias	16	2.55%	3.96%
How would this be useful? How would this committee work?	15	2.39%	3.71%
ALA should take an official stance against FRT	13	2.07%	3.22%
Timely Topic / Thank you	13	2.07%	3.22%
Weighing pros and cons	12	1.91%	2.97%
General positive opinion	12	1.91%	2.97%
How can we prevent abuse?	11	1.75%	2.72%
Technology ineffective	10	1.59%	2.48%
Information unprotected/security concerns	10	1.59%	2.48%
Less welcoming environment	8	1.27%	1.98%
Gender bias	7	1.11%	1.73%
Negative outcomes	6	0.96%	1.49%

Uses the word ban	5	0.80%	1.24%
Curious about alternatives to FRT	5	0.80%	1.24%
Patron safety	4	0.64%	0.99%
General neutral comment	4	0.64%	0.99%
Connection to other systems unclear	3	0.48%	0.74%
What information is being provided?	3	0.48%	0.74%
ALA should lobby for legislation banning FRT	2	0.32%	0.50%
Canadian Concerns	2	0.32%	0.50%
Are Facial Recognition Solutions being marketed to libraries?	2	0.32%	0.50%
Already in use	2	0.32%	0.50%
Facial recognition used in other areas, like FB	2	0.32%	0.50%
Cost	2	0.32%	0.50%
Will not be in use at my library	2	0.32%	0.50%
Libraries should teach people how to fool it	2	0.32%	0.50%
Unrelated comment to ALA in general	1	0.16%	0.25%
What if facial features change	1	0.16%	0.25%
Would family members be able to pickup materials	1	0.16%	0.25%
Can FRT be used without revealing identities?	1	0.16%	0.25%
Nothing invasive about FRT but needs to think more	1	0.16%	0.25%
Know of libraries being pressured into this	1	0.16%	0.25%
Survey is bad	1	0.16%	0.25%
Government overreach	1	0.16%	0.25%
Off topic	1	0.16%	0.25%
Not in use	1	0.16%	0.25%
Help prevent fraud on the part of patrons	1	0.16%	0.25%
Comment on survey	1	0.16%	0.25%
Don't panic	1	0.16%	0.25%
It's inevitable	1	0.16%	0.25%