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23 June 2023

### IVIR LECTURE SERIES

"Biometrics and the Registration  
and Authentication of Voters"  
by Prof. Colin Bennett

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### Speaker

Colin Bennett is Professor of Political Science at the University of Victoria, British Columbia. For over thirty years, his research has focused on impact of surveillance technologies, and on the comparative analysis of privacy protection governance at domestic and international levels. In addition to numerous scholarly and newspaper articles, he has published seven books on these subjects, including *The Governance of Privacy* (MIT Press, 2006). He has also worked on policy reports for national and international organizations, including the Privacy Commissioner of Canada, the UK Information Commissioner, the European Commission and the Council of Europe.

### Details of the lecture

Date: 23 June 2023  
Time: 16.00-17.30 CET  
(Amsterdam)  
Place:  
- IViR Room, REC A5.24  
- online via Zoom

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All democratic countries require reliable methods to authenticate the identity of eligible voters. They need ways to ensure that only those eligible to vote are included in official electoral registers and that those who vote on election day are eligible to vote, and indeed, are ‘who they say they are.’ For more established democratic countries, these systems of voter registration and authentication are rooted in distinct institutional and administrative practices that have strong roots in their political cultures. In recent years, as a result of various forces, we have witnessed pressures in a number of countries to support or reinforce existing methods of voter authentication with new forms of identification, often based on biometric data. These trends are particularly notable in countries in the global south, where biometric methods are aggressively promoted by the burgeoning biometrics industry. In this talk, Colin Bennett reviews these trends and outlines the various risks of biometric identification in the electoral context. Those risks relate to privacy, as well as to wider issues of voter discrimination and suppression.