

Controversy over full-body scanners

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Having security inside an airport is a necessary and important safety precaution, but there is controversy as to how to achieve an effective airport screening system, and yet provide privacy to travelers. A recent national debate has arisen on the topic of installing new Full Body Scanners into airport security systems nationwide. The scanners are thought to be an invasion of privacy, have a very high cost, and are an ineffective security method.

One of the key issues for the usage of full body scans is that it can be a major invasion of privacy to people being screened during the airport security process. For instance in the article “ Debate Over Full Body Scans vs. Invasion of Privacy Flares After Incident,” the author John Schwartz explains that “ images produced by the machine can be startlingly detailed”(1). So despite claims of “ blurry and opaque images” they can in fact have the potential to become detailed images.

This could potentially make the security process a humiliating experience and discourage some people from air travel. In another article by U. S. A today “ Our View On Transportation Security: Airport Body Scanners Balance Safety and Privacy,” they found out that “ TSA sought to buy scanners that can store and send images in test mode”(1). If the scanners that can store photos are utilized by airport security systems, then it is possible that the images could be copied or shared.

People should not have to worry that their semi nude images are going to be shared, however slight the risk. Is it not true that travellers should feel comfortable during the check in process and not need to be concerned about a humiliating or undignified experience? Another important argument <https://assignbuster.com/controversy-over-full-body-scanners/>

against the instillation of full body scanners is that they can be overly expensive relative to traditional screening methods. Jessica Ravidz supports this argument in her article “ Airport Security Bares All, or does it?

,” saying “ each machine can cost up to a total of \$170, 000 per scanner”(1).

It is a costly and unnecessary project because there is already a effective security system in place. It would be cheaper to stay with the current methods of security, such as metal detectors and pat downs than to incorporate a much more costly alternative. A story in The Wall Street Journal “ TSA Pressed on Full-Body Scans Despite Concerns,” Cam Simpson and Daniel Michaels say in the paper that “ The U. S.

Transporation Security Administration plans to buy 450 body scanners, and that the Department of Homeland Security announced that they are purchasing 300 more this year”(1). This is a large fund of money that could be used for better training, different technologies, and more efficient systems moving people through the airport security process. Another way the money could be used is to fund investigations and intelligence work and detect threats before they even arrive at the airport. The financial costs vs benefits to airport security does not appear to support adding Full Body Scanners to our current methods.

A different debate on the usage of body scanners is that they are an ineffective security system and cannot detect certain objects. An example is in the story “ Debate Over Full Body Scanner vs. Invasion of Privacy Flares Anew After Incident,” by John Schwartz states that “ the machines cannot, for example, detect objects stowed in bodily orifices or concealed within folds of an obese person’s flesh”(2). This proves that the

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scannertechnology is limited and can be deceived under certain circumstances. Therefore the scanners are only useful against a limited number of threats.

In the same article Bruce Schneider, a technological security expert is interviewed and says “ If there are a hundred tactics and I protect against two of them, I’m not making you safer, if we use full body scanning, they are going to use something else”(2). He brings up a point that even though the scanners can detect certain concealed objects they still only protect against a few specific threats. And now that people know about the scans and how they work they now also know how to get around them. Those are the reasons on why it is an inefficient security method and should not be put into use as primary airport security.

In conclusion this proves that the usage of Full Body Scanners in airports would not be a conventional method to replacing current security processes. The reasons being on why they would not be viable solution are that they are an invasion of privacy to travelers, a costly national project, and would be an ineffective method for increasing security. The solution to the problem dealing with body scanners is to not install them in airports at all, but to stay with traditional methods and finding other means to improve on the current system.