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Torontonians Concerned About Privacy with Police Facial Recognition

But half think it'll be positive for their ability to solve crimes

Toronto, June 11th, 2019 - In a random sampling of public opinion taken by the Forum Poll™ among 1157 Toronto voters, 4 in 10 (41%) say the oppose the use of facial recognition technology by police services. A third (36%) say they support the use of facial recognition technology, while a quarter (24%) say they are not sure.

4 in 10 are concerned the technology will not be used appropriately

4 in 10 (41%) say they do not trust that facial recognition technology will be used appropriately by police services, while a third (35%) say yes, it will be used appropriately. A quarter (24%) are not sure.

Respondents most likely to say they don't trust the technology will be used appropriately include those aged 34 and younger (59%), the least wealthy (47%), and living in the former City of Toronto (48%) or York (n=67 54%).

Half say facial recognition technology will impact their privacy

(BTM2: 51%) say they are concerned that the use of facial recognition technology will impact their privacy, with a quarter (24%) saying they are very concerned.

Just over 4 in 10 (TOP2: 44%) say they are not concerned that the use of facial recognition technology will impact their privacy, with quarter (25%) saying they are not concerned at all.

Respondents most likely to say they are concerned (BTM2: 51%) include those aged 34 and younger (64%), males (54%) and earning $20-40,000 (56%), $40-60,000 (55%), $60-80,000 (57%).

1 in 20 (6%) say they aren't sure whether it will impact their privacy.

Toronto split on whether facial recognition is good value for money

4 in 10 (TOP2: 38%) say they think facial recognition technology will provide good value for money, but only 1 in 10 (13%) say that they think it will provide a very good value.

4 in 10 (BTM2: 38%) say that facial recognition technology won't provide a good value for money, with a quarter (26%) saying it won't provide a good value at all.

A quarter (24%) say they aren't sure if facial recognition technology will provide good value for money or not.

"There are obviously some great concerns with the idea of a police service using facial recognition technology," said Dr. Lorne Bozinoff, President of Forum Research. "Torontonians are concerned about their privacy, about how the data will be used, and generally just lean toward opposition. Almost half say that facial recognition will have a positive effect on crime solving, though, so even if residents have concerns, they do recognize the use of this technology could provide a benefit, despite those concerns."

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Half think it will help solve crimes

Half (TOP2: 47%) say they think it will have a positive effect on the police's ability to solve crimes, with about one-fifth (19%) saying it will have a very positive effect.

A quarter (BTM2: 25%) say it will have a negative effect, with 1 in 10 (13%) saying it will have a very negative effect.

Almost a third (28%) say the effect will be neither positive nor negative.

"There are obviously some great concerns with the idea of a police service using facial recognition technology," said Dr. Lorne Bozinoff, President of Forum Research. "Torontonians are concerned about their privacy, about how the data will be used, and generally just lean toward opposition. Almost half say that facial recognition will have a positive effect on crime solving, though, so even if residents have concerns, they do recognize the use of this technology could provide a benefit, despite those concerns."

Lorne Bozinoff, Ph.D. is the president and founder of Forum Research. He can be reached at lbozinoff@forumresearch.com or at (416) 960-9603.

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Methodology

The Forum Poll™ was conducted by Forum Research with the results based on an interactive voice response telephone survey of 1157 randomly selected Toronto voters. The poll was conducted June 8-9, 2019.

Results based on the total sample are considered accurate +/- 3%, measured as the average deviation across all response categories, 19 times out of 20. Subsample results will be less accurate. Margins of error for subsample (such as age, gender) results are available at www.forumresearch.com/samplestim.asp

Where appropriate, the data has been statistically weighted by age, region, and other variables to ensure that the sample reflects the actual population according to the latest Census data.

This research is not necessarily predictive of future outcomes, but rather, captures opinion at one point in time. Forum Research conducted this poll as a public service and to demonstrate our survey research capabilities. Forum houses its poll results in the Data Library of the Department of Political Science at the University of Toronto.

With offices across Canada and around the world, 100% Canadian-owned Forum Research is one of the country's leading survey research firms. This Forum Poll™ and other polls may be found at Forum's poll archive at forumpoll.com.

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Top2/Btm2 (or 3 or 4 where applicable) refers to the combined results of the most answered positive and negative responses (EXAMPLE):

%	Total	18-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+	Male	Female
Sample	631	112	91	133	119	176	303	315
NET: TOP3	66	57	60	68	78	86	67	64
NET: BTM3	34	43	39	32	21	14	32	36
Very satisfied	9	9	6	6	13	20	11	8
Satisfied	28	17	29	35	32	45	25	31
Somewhat satisfied	28	31	26	28	32	20	31	25
Somewhat dissatisfied	12	11	16	14	11	8	13	12
Dissatisfied	11	15	15	9	5	3	9	13
Very dissatisfied	11	18	9	8	5	3	9	12
Don't know	0	0	1	0	1	0	1	0

Top 3 here collects very satisfied, satisfied, and somewhat satisfied into one category, and Btm 3 collects very dissatisfied, dissatisfied, and somewhat dissatisfied.

Due to rounding some numbers may not add up to 100

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Overall approval of facial recognition

Overall, do you support or oppose the use of facial recognition technology by police services?

Age/gender

%	Total	18-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+	Male	Female
Sample	1157	154	167	206	242	388	589	544
Oppose	41	52	39	42	29	30	45	36
Support	36	25	38	37	48	39	39	34
Don't know	24	23	23	21	23	31	16	30

Income

%	Total	<$20K	$20-$40K	$40-$60K	$60-$80K	$80-$100K	$100-$250K
Sample	1157	68	121	142	127	125	289
Oppose	41	40	33	45	40	34	44
Support	36	28	38	33	29	41	40
Don't know	24	32	29	23	31	24	16

Community

%	Total	Former City of Toronto	East York	North York	Etobicoke	York	Scarborough
Sample	1157	379	97	222	198	67	194
Oppose	41	46	38	37	39	45	39
Support	36	30	36	35	36	32	44
Don't know	24	24	26	28	25	23	17

Education

%	Total	Secondary school or less	Some college or university	Completed college or university	Post graduate degree
Sample	1157	124	242	459	332
Oppose	41	33	43	39	44
Support	36	44	38	35	32
Don't know	24	23	19	26	24

Method of commute to work/school

%	Total	Private vehicle	Public transit	Bicycle	Walking	Some other way	Don't travel to work or school
Sample	1157	463	277	55	69	19	274
Oppose	41	41	45	51	40	11	28
Support	36	36	34	20	41	44	41
Don't know	24	23	20	29	19	45	31

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Appropriateness of use

Do you trust that police services will use facial recognition technology appropriately?

Age/gender

%	Total	18-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+	Male	Female
Sample	1157	154	167	206	242	388	589	544
Yes	35	28	39	34	42	40	37	34
No	41	59	35	39	26	27	42	39
Not sure	24	12	26	27	32	34	20	27

Income

%	Total	<$20K	$20-$40K	$40-$60K	$60-$80K	$80-$100K	$100-$250K
Sample	1157	68	121	142	127	125	289
Yes	35	40	37	31	32	41	40
No	41	47	39	43	39	34	42
Not sure	24	13	24	27	29	24	18

Community

%	Total	Former City of Toronto	East York	North York	Etobicoke	York	Scarborough
Sample	1157	379	97	222	198	67	194
Yes	35	27	34	42	36	25	39
No	41	48	39	35	40	54	37
Not sure	24	25	28	22	23	20	24

Education

%	Total	Secondary school or less	Some college or university	Completed college or university	Post graduate degree
Sample	1157	124	242	459	332
Yes	35	34	36	35	35
No	41	42	41	41	41
Not sure	24	24	23	24	23

Method of commute to work/school

%	Total	Private vehicle	Public transit	Bicycle	Walking	Some other way	Don't travel to work or school
Sample	1157	463	277	55	69	19	274
Yes	35	35	36	16	45	50	39
No	41	41	46	59	38	23	24
Not sure	24	25	18	25	17	27	37

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Privacy

How concerned are you that facial recognition technology used by police services will impact your privacy?

Age/gender

%	Total	18-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+	Male	Female
Sample	1157	154	167	206	242	388	589	544
NET: TOP2	44	32	43	46	55	56	42	46
NET: BTM2	51	64	48	50	41	37	54	47
Not concerned at all	25	15	21	32	31	36	26	24
Not very concerned	19	18	22	14	23	20	16	22
Somewhat concerned	27	32	28	23	24	23	26	27
Very concerned	24	32	19	27	17	14	27	20
Not sure	6	4	9	4	4	8	4	6

Income

%	Total	<$20K	$20-$40K	$40-$60K	$60-$80K	$80-$100K	$100-$250K
Sample	1157	68	121	142	127	125	289
NET: TOP2	44	48	39	40	35	50	49
NET: BTM2	51	46	56	55	57	44	47
Not concerned at all	25	25	29	18	19	28	29
Not very concerned	19	22	10	22	16	22	20
Somewhat concerned	27	21	38	28	32	26	24
Very concerned	24	24	19	27	25	18	23
Not sure	6	7	5	5	8	6	4

Community

%	Total	Former City of Toronto	East York	North York	Etobicoke	York	Scarborough
Sample	1157	379	97	222	198	67	194
NET: TOP2	44	42	52	41	44	47	46
NET: BTM2	51	52	43	52	49	51	50
Not concerned at all	25	23	40	24	29	26	23
Not very concerned	19	19	13	17	15	21	22
Somewhat concerned	27	31	19	26	27	21	26
Very concerned	24	21	25	26	22	30	24
Not sure	6	5	4	7	7	3	5

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Education

%	Total	Secondary school or less	Some college or university	Completed college or university	Post graduate degree
Sample	1157	124	242	459	332
NET: TOP2	44	46	41	44	44
NET: BTM2	51	49	52	51	51
Not concerned at all	25	32	26	23	25
Not very concerned	19	14	15	21	20
Somewhat concerned	27	27	25	26	30
Very concerned	24	22	27	25	21
Not sure	6	5	7	6	5

Method of commute to work/school

%	Total	Private vehicle	Public transit	Bicycle	Walking	Some other way	Don't travel to work or school
Sample	1157	463	277	55	69	19	274
NET: TOP2	44	42	43	35	49	57	50
NET: BTM2	51	52	54	61	45	36	39
Not concerned at all	25	25	21	22	28	29	34
Not very concerned	19	18	22	14	21	29	16
Somewhat concerned	27	27	26	44	26	11	26
Very concerned	24	25	28	16	19	25	14
Not sure	6	6	4	4	7	7	10

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Value for money

In your opinion, will facial recognition technology provide good value for money?

Age/gender

%	Total	18-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+	Male	Female
Sample	1157	154	167	206	242	388	589	544
NET: TOP2	38	36	42	31	45	37	39	38
NET: BTM2	38	46	34	43	30	28	41	34
Very good value	13	11	11	13	19	13	17	10
Somewhat good value	25	25	31	18	26	24	22	28
Not a very good value	13	16	8	16	10	10	13	12
Not a good value at all	26	30	26	27	21	18	28	22
Not sure	24	18	24	26	24	35	20	28

Income

%	Total	<$20K	$20-$40K	$40-$60K	$60-$80K	$80-$100K	$100-$250K
Sample	1157	68	121	142	127	125	289
NET: TOP2	38	42	28	36	35	42	40
NET: BTM2	38	31	44	46	39	36	42
Very good value	13	13	11	16	9	9	15
Somewhat good value	25	30	17	20	26	33	25
Not a very good value	13	11	20	15	17	9	11
Not a good value at all	26	20	24	31	21	27	31
Not sure	24	26	28	18	26	22	18

Community

%	Total	Former City of Toronto	East York	North York	Etobicoke	York	Scarborough
Sample	1157	379	97	222	198	67	194
NET: TOP2	38	27	34	35	37	52	51
NET: BTM2	38	45	48	36	41	26	33
Very good value	13	9	15	12	15	17	17
Somewhat good value	25	18	19	23	22	35	34
Not a very good value	13	16	23	12	13	6	9
Not a good value at all	26	29	26	24	29	20	23
Not sure	24	29	18	29	21	22	16

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Education

%	Total	Secondary school or less	Some college or university	Completed college or university	Post graduate degree
Sample	**1157**	**124**	**242**	**459**	**332**
NET: TOP2	38	43	43	39	31
NET: BTM2	38	37	38	36	42
Very good value	13	11	17	12	12
Somewhat good value	25	32	26	27	19
Not a very good value	13	17	15	13	9
Not a good value at all	26	20	24	23	33
Not sure	24	19	19	25	27

Method of commute to work/school

%	Total	Private vehicle	Public transit	Bicycle	Walking	Some other way	Don't travel to work or school
Sample	**1157**	**463**	**277**	**55**	**69**	**19**	**274**
NET: TOP2	38	38	41	21	40	46	35
NET: BTM2	38	40	39	54	43	34	22
Very good value	13	14	12	3	19	35	10
Somewhat good value	25	24	28	18	21	11	24
Not a very good value	13	14	11	24	15	19	6
Not a good value at all	26	26	29	30	28	15	16
Not sure	24	22	20	25	17	20	43

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Positive or negative for crime solving

Generally, will facial recognition technology have a positive, or negative effect on the police's ability to solve crimes?

Age/gender

%	Total	18-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+	Male	Female
Sample	1157	154	167	206	242	388	589	544
NET: TOP2	47	40	51	47	58	48	51	45
NET: BTM2	25	31	24	23	19	21	24	25
Very positive	19	16	19	19	28	18	21	17
Somewhat positive	29	24	32	28	30	31	30	28
Neither positive nor negative	28	29	25	30	23	31	25	30
Somewhat negative	12	13	12	12	10	11	11	12
Very negative	13	19	12	11	10	10	12	13

Income

%	Total	<$20K	$20-$40K	$40-$60K	$60-$80K	$80-$100K	$100-$250K
Sample	1157	68	121	142	127	125	289
NET: TOP2	47	40	38	38	49	50	51
NET: BTM2	25	43	26	40	24	22	22
Very positive	19	24	19	13	15	18	21
Somewhat positive	29	16	19	25	34	33	30
Neither positive nor negative	28	17	36	22	28	27	27
Somewhat negative	12	8	14	25	11	10	11
Very negative	13	35	12	15	13	13	11

Community

%	Total	Former City of Toronto	East York	North York	Etobicoke	York	Scarborough
Sample	1157	379	97	222	198	67	194
NET: TOP2	47	41	37	54	46	55	48
NET: BTM2	25	28	35	23	22	18	26
Very positive	19	14	17	23	20	21	19
Somewhat positive	29	27	20	31	26	34	29
Neither positive nor negative	28	31	28	23	32	27	27
Somewhat negative	12	11	21	7	16	11	13
Very negative	13	16	14	15	7	7	12

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Education

%	Total	Secondary school or less	Some college or university	Completed college or university	Post graduate degree
Sample	1157	124	242	459	332
NET: TOP2	47	41	45	49	49
NET: BTM2	25	22	27	26	24
Very positive	19	20	19	19	19
Somewhat positive	29	20	26	30	30
Neither positive nor negative	28	37	28	25	27
Somewhat negative	12	7	18	13	8
Very negative	13	15	9	13	16

Method of commute to work/school

%	Total	Private vehicle	Public transit	Bicycle	Walking	Some other way	Don't travel to work or school
Sample	1157	463	277	55	69	19	274
NET: TOP2	47	50	42	37	50	61	52
NET: BTM2	25	26	27	39	24	19	11
Very positive	19	20	18	12	21	32	18
Somewhat positive	29	30	24	25	29	29	35
Neither positive nor negative	28	24	30	24	26	20	36
Somewhat negative	12	10	15	22	15	10	5
Very negative	13	16	13	17	9	9	6

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