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Passage Four   Students who want to enter the University of Montreals Athletic Complex need morethan just a conventional ID card——their identities must be proved genuine by an electronichand scanner. In some California housing estates, a key alone is insufficient to get someone inthe door; his or her voiceprint must also be verified . And soon customers at someJapanese banks wiU have to present their faces for scanning before they can enter the buildingand withdraw their moneys.   All of these are applications of biometrics, a fast-growing technology that involves the useof physical or biological characteristic to identify individuals. In use for more than a decade atsome high security government institutions in the United States and Canada, biometrics israpidly popping up in the everyday world.   Biometric security systems operate by storing a digitized record of some unique humanfeature. When a user wishes to enter or use the facility, the system scans the personscorresponding characteristics and attempts to match them against those on record. Systemsusing fingerprints, hands, voices, eyes, and faces are already on the market. Others using typingpatterns and even body smells are in various stages of development.   Fingerprints scanners are currently the most widely used type of biometric application,thanks to their growing use over the last 20 years by law-enforcement agencies. SixteenAmerican states now use biometric fingerprint verification systems to check that peopleclaiming welfare payments are genuine. Politicians in Toronto have voted to do the same, witha testing project beginning next year.

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