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Pssst. We've got a lot of full-body scans you might want to check out, by Northwest Florida Daily News

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This is creepy. When the government started using fullbody scanners over the past few years to screen passengers at airports and people visiting federal buildings, it promised that the electronic images would not be stored. That's because the scanners basically see through clothing, revealing a nude image. (Magnetic scanners, in use for decades, do not reveal such details.) The government said the body-scan images would be purged immediately from scanner memory banks.

Instead, reports CNet News, "it turns out that some police agencies are storing the controversial images after all. The U.S. Marshals Service acknowledged last week that it had surreptitiously saved tens of thousands of images recorded with a millimeter wave system at the security checkpoint of a single Florida courthouse.

"This follows an earlier disclosure by the (Transportation Security Administration) that it requires all airport body scanners it purchases to be able to store and transmit images for 'testing, training, and evaluation purposes.'"

Children are scanned as well as adults. This could well be the government making child pornography, said Jim Harper, director of information policy studies at the Cato Institute. "The question (of kiddie porn) is brought up from time to time by people whose kids go through" the scanners, he said.

The question becomes more acute now that the government might be storing the images.

And, as a recent Washington Post series revealed, no one really knows what information is collected by government security agencies or what is done with it.

Mr. Harper told Freedom Communications that the full-body scans, as opposed to the older magnetic scans, provide only a tiny degree of added security. Moreover, attempted terrorist attacks in recent years have been averted by people on the planes, not by government actions.

"People object in the abstract" to the scans, Mr. Harper observed. "But they get to the airport and act like sheep. They do what they're told."

Perhaps if enough people object, these digital Peeping Toms will be discontinued.

— Northwest Florida Daily News

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