



The War Against Anonymity

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The Mexican government wants to [stop people](#) from using cellphones anonymously.

Every mobile phone number in Mexico — some 127 million — must now be biometrically tied to the owner's identity. Cellphone owners must register their numbers by June 30 or lose signal.

The ID card to which numbers must be linked will in turn be linked, via QR code, to a national registry of biometrically verified records.

Who needs anonymity? Just criminals?

Criminals do use throwaway “burner” phones when committing crimes. They won't necessarily be stymied

now. Would they hesitate to steal other people's cell phones, treat them as burners, then throw them away?

Maybe victims would act fast enough to get lost and stolen phones deactivated before thieves could use them, maybe not. Criminals may have several ways to circumvent the new law.

We must remember, after all, that criminals are willing to commit crimes.

The safety of journalists, dissidents hiding from other governments, targets of abusers and stalkers, and anyone with good reason to keep his identity separate from his phone will be endangered by Mexico's new mandate.

Some may say that Mexico's ID database is inaccessible by all but authorized, benign, unbribable government personnel. One problem with this fairy tale is that not long ago, a cyberhacker used AI to [steal](#) 195 million taxpayer and other records from the Mexican government.

Not the first time hackers have grabbed “secure” data. And what has happened again and again and again and again, can happen again.

This is Common Sense. I'm Paul Jacob.