

Giving the Finger

Start your engines with a scan of your fingerprint! Electronics reporter, SCOTT FULLER, delves into a great Aussie invention!

Finscan is a revolutionary Australian-designed and owned fingerprint scanning system that removes the need for keys on any boat — old and new. Developed by security system designer, Carlo Khamu of Sydney, Finscan Bio eStart is being launched at this month's Sanctuary Cove International Boat Show (SCIBS) and may well be the show-stopping product of the year.

So what is Finscan and its family of products? Well, it is a system that bypasses (or removes altogether) the ignition key and/or start button on diesel and petrol engines, and also generators. Your fingerprint is pre-stored in the memory of the device and you cannot start the engine until the system identifies you. The system also replaces the need for door keys and on/off switches for larger electronics and engineering installations. In short, only authorised persons can turn on or get access to the boat.

IT TOOK ONLY MINUTES

Intrigued, I invited Carlo down to my market research vessel, a 1982 Mariner 43. "OK Carlo," I said, "turn my pride and joy into a 21st century piece of electronics wizardry." And within five minutes he had done so, completely bypassing my well-worn ignition keys and starter buttons.

To start the engines, I placed my previously recorded left index finger on the Bio eStart scanner. The system identified me and I was able to start

the engine. And it worked! My Detroit's sprang to life. I was simply amazed, plus it looks good too.

Simple wiring also allows you to start and stop the engine from the flybridge. What if you fall overboard or can't get to the ignition? Don't worry. As many people as you like can be programmed into the system and an overriding keyless remote control allows the system to be bypassed by the marina staff when necessary. A separate scanner can be mounted at the door, too, removing the need for door keys. Another scanner can control the functions of the AC/DC electrics.



Top: The Finscan Bio eStart sanner. Above: The comes with an overriding keyless remote control. Above left: It only took five minutes to bypass the ignition keys and starter buttons. Left: Finscan ready to go.

Already the Finscan Bio eStart system interfaces with several engine-makers' products, and its plug-and-play wiring should not interfere with warranty. Discussions are under way to make the product standard on more expensive craft produced here. Best of all, it can be retrofitted to older boats. Workboats can now be secured without hiding keys, thereby reducing unauthorised use and possible tragedy at sea.

The system costs about \$2500 for a twin-engine installation. Single and triple engine systems are on the way. For more info, visit www.finscan.com.au or see Carlo at his stand at SCIBS. Carlo is going to win lots of awards with this product, here and overseas. Bravo!