

A  
GUIDE

TO

SELECTING A



PHOTO ID

SYSTEM

**FARGO**<sup>®</sup>

The World's Most Secure  
Card Identity Systems

# Digital Systems vs. Cut-and-Paste

*It's no contest.*

People have been creating and using ID cards for over 100 years. Prior to the early



*Cut and paste cards wear quickly, look flimsy, and are easy to alter.*



*Cards from a digital system are made of durable plastic, look colorful and sharp long after issue, and are difficult to counterfeit.*

1990s, the most common way of producing an ID card was known as the cut-and-paste or film-based method. This involved taking a person's photo, cutting it out, then laminating it to a card-sized piece of paper containing the person's data. The results of this labor-intensive method were cards that weren't very durable and were easy to alter.

**Today, digital printing has become the technology of choice for organizations issuing identification cards** — and with

good reason. Digital photo ID systems are now affordable, easy to use, and offer a host of benefits that cut-and-paste systems can't, including...

- Ultra-fast production times
- Low per-card cost
- Single-step printing and encoding
- Unlimited card designs and color options
- Magnetic stripe, bar code, proximity, or smart card options
- Powerful database options
- Highly durable cards
- Difficult to counterfeit
- Faster, easier badge replacement
- Far less labor

When it's time for you to invest in a photo ID system, invest in the future — go digital!

# Selecting the right digital photo ID system

## The basics of a digital photo ID system.

A digital photo ID system typically consists of a computer, software with card design capabilities and database, a digital camera, and a card printer/encoder. How you intend to

use your cards is vital in determining what software is best suited

for your applications — and what printer/encoder is needed

to get the job done. For best results, involve a systems

integrator early in your selection process. They can answer

questions and recommend the appropriate individual

system components. More importantly, they can

implement the right system to match your organization's

needs for both today and tomorrow.



## Determine your applications.

The most basic reason for a photo ID system is to identify people. Typically, organizations like to identify people for safety or security reasons. Photo ID cards let you quickly identify who is authorized to be in or around your facility and who is not.

**Instant Security.** Unauthorized visitors can be a nuisance or even a threat to your employees, members, or customers. Plus, they can be costly if they use your equipment or services without permission, or without paying the necessary fee. If you have people, property, equipment, or services you would like to protect, a photo ID system is a smart, effective solution.

**Easy Automation.** Today, digital photo ID systems can do much more than just secure your organization. By using bar codes, magnetic stripes, or small computer "smart" chips on your cards, digital systems can conveniently automate a

variety of facility or operational functions. To take advantage of electronic card benefits, you'll need a printer with built-in encoding capabilities.

**Operational Efficiency.** For example, ID cards can be encoded to restrict access to rooms, buildings or parking lots. They can be used for controlling access to

equipment such as computers, copy machines, or fax machines. If your facility has (or is) a cafeteria or store, you can use ID cards to provide credit and debit



programs for employees or customers. Today's ID cards can even be used for phone cards, for tracking time and attendance, or for regulating admission to sporting events, theme parks, resorts, clubs, and much more.

# System today can improve your bottom line tomorrow.

Organizations everywhere use digital photo ID systems for a multitude of applications.



Corporations and Healthcare

Schools and Universities

Government Agencies

Special Events, Meetings and Clubs

What could you use your system for?

- Employee IDs
- Access Control
- Loyalty Cards
- Government IDs
- Business Cards
- Time & Attendance
- Season Passes
- Phone Cards
- Cashless Vending
- Customized Gift Cards
- Visitor IDs
- Club Membership
- Healthcare Cards
- Discount Cards
- Photo IDs
- Cafeteria Payments
- Trade Show Promotions
- Debit Cards
- Phone Cards
- Event Passes
- Proximity Cards
- Schedules
- Hunting & Fishing Licenses
- Law Enforcement Badges
- Parking Lot Access
- Computer/Network Access
- Inventory Cards
- ...and more

## Consider your needs.

Even if you plan to use badges only for visual identification, consider possible future applications. You may not need or have the budget for an integrated system with encoding right now, but you might next year. Make sure the system you buy today will be able to handle your needs tomorrow. A systems integrator can help you with all of these considerations up front, and help you get the maximum value out of your investment.

## Customize your cards.

Talking to your integrator and determining what applications you need your photo ID system to handle is crucial to selecting the right system for your organization. But equally important is knowing the numerous ways you can make your ID cards more unique, secure and functional.

**Card Designs.** Creating a custom design sets your organization's card apart from the

rest. Security personnel and employees can easily identify a card lacking an authorized graphic or layout. Demand a card printer and software that won't limit your design capabilities.

**Magnetic Stripes.** Magnetic stripes can be encoded with information about access privileges, membership status and employment history. You can even load

cash for vending machine use. Magnetic stripe data is updatable over time.

**Bar Codes and Signatures.** Bar codes and bar code readers can automate many processes. Bar code technology adds convenience and speed to point-of-sale and inventory management transactions. For even greater security, select a system that adds a digital signature to your card.

## 10 questions to consider before talking to your integrator.



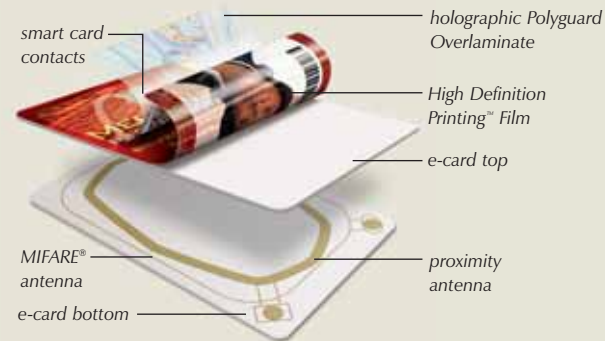
1. How are your photo ID cards going to be used?
2. Will your card be part of an access control/security program?
3. Will you need to assign users different levels of security clearance?
4. Do you need to secure multiple sites?
5. How many cards will you issue per year?
6. How long do the cards need to last?
7. Will cards be printed on one or two sides?
8. How much personalized information will the cards contain?
9. Will you need to badge employees at several locations?
10. What level of card security will you need?

# The anatomy of a digital photo ID card.

## Customized Card Features



## E-Card Features



Many companies are adding e-card capabilities to their ID systems for greater functionality and security.

**Custom Transparent Images.** With Fargo printers, you can print a custom transparent image (logo, symbol or text) directly onto cards using the clear overlay panel of your print ribbon. Once printed, this image appears only when viewed at an angle or under ultraviolet lighting.

**Oversized Cards.** Some printers can print on cards that are larger than standard credit card size. Oversized cards can hold an oversized photograph and large graphics, making verification even easier.

**Overlaminates.** Overlaminates bond to the surface of a card, protecting data from being altered. They also significantly extend the life of the card.

**Holographic Overlaminates.** An overlaminate containing a “generic” or stock holographic image protects a card from wear, and discourages card tampering or forgery. Creating your organization’s own custom holographic design ensures that your card is truly unique. Custom holograms are extremely difficult and cost-prohibitive for counterfeiters to recreate.

## Maximize your functionality.

**E-cards.** To make your photo ID system even more feature-rich, consider adding the capabilities of e-cards. An industry term that includes both proximity and smart cards, e-cards offer the greatest functionality available because they can store vast amounts of updatable data.

**Proximity Cards.** Proximity cards are at the entry level of the secure e-card continuum. They are widely used in access control applications, giving the user a great deal of keyless convenience. A proximity card’s internal antenna provides greater security than a magnetic stripe, whose data is vulnerable to strong magnetic fields or decoding.

**Smart Cards.** Smart cards are at the high end of the e-card continuum. They can store and transfer a significant amount of information. Plus, they are extremely tamper-resistant. Because they can store biometric data-like fingerprints, iris scans and signature dynamics, you can authenticate identity or verify information. This allows you to control access and track usage of physical assets and data.

## Choose the right partner.

The key to getting a secure, cost-effective photo ID system is to work with a knowledgeable partner, like an authorized Fargo integrator. These certified professionals will help you configure a Fargo photo ID system that fits your needs today and in the future.

Fargo provides the world’s most secure card identity systems. Our line of innovative card printer/encoders features the most advanced card personalization technology available. Fargo card printer/encoders integrate with virtually any photo ID software and database. Their smooth, reliable operation means, whether you issue one card per day or hundreds, you’ll get feature-rich cards that will improve the functionality and security of your organization.

**For a no-obligation consultation about selecting the right photo ID system for your organization, contact us today:**

Phone: **1-800-459-5636**  
 Web site: **www.fargo.com**  
 E-mail: **sales@fargo.com**

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