



Ride-sharing giant Uber is back in the headlines after one of the self-driving cars it was piloting in Arizona was involved in a fatal accident with a pedestrian recently. While the current debate is over how safe we all are with "driver-less" cars, another controversy persists—the fact that these cars-of-the-future are still being operated by live people who, like all Uber's drivers, are not subject to fingerprint background checks.

It is difficult to imagine how the public is expected to trust Uber with respect to the safety of self-driving cars, when such trust has not even been earned regarding the qualification of its drivers. Although often taken for granted, getting into a stranger's car, whether it be on the way to work or home from a party, requires a great deal of trust. Users of ride-sharing apps deserve the assurance that whomever is behind the wheel has no history of recklessness or predatory behavior, and unfortunately companies are not doing all they can to make good on this promise.

Fingerprint-based criminal background checks have become standard practice in many sectors of the service industry, including taxi driving. However, as IBIA highlighted in a 2016 white paper [Uber and Lyft: Fingerprint-Based Criminal Background Checks Essential to Assure Public Safety](#), the ride-sharing services have vigorously resisted the implementation of the well-established form of identity verification for their drivers. In defense of its inaction, Uber has made several claims against the accuracy and reliability of fingerprint technology, which we know the data simply does not support. Given the inherently vulnerable nature of name-based background check methods used by companies like Uber and the increasing sophistication and ease of fingerprinting, there is no excuse for not adopting widely accepted biometric screening practices in the interest of protecting the public.

Cities and municipalities across the country, and world, are recognizing the importance of greater consumer protection, and as a result are requiring that ride-share drivers be subject to the same rigorous vetting as others in the service industry. As Uber and Lyft pour money into fighting these new ordinances on fingerprint background checks, and even pull their services out of cities over the issue, they are going to have to decide whether it is worth risking consumer trust and safety.