Alienware AlienSense FAQ

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Recognizing my face

1. **Why doesn’t AlienSense recognize my face and log me into Vista every time?**
   The goal of AlienSense is to dramatically reduce the number of times that you must type your username and password in order to gain access to your computer as well as to websites. The more you use the system, the better it will become at recognizing your face. It will never recognize you 100% of the time. If ever you are not recognized and logged in within a few seconds, simply click your username “tile” and type your password. This will not only grant you access to the computer, but will also teach AlienSense a bit more about what you look like. The next time you present your face to the system, it’s more likely that it will see who you are quickly and grant you access to the computer or website.

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2. **I rarely see video, facial recognition never seems to start, and every time I reboot my computer I get a “password override” warning message. What’s going on?**
   These symptoms will be evident if you only have one Vista account set upon your PC and that account is not password protected. In this situation, Vista automatically logs such accounts in when the PC reboots...effectively bypassing facial recognition. To get the benefits of facial recognition you can take one of two steps.
   a) Recommended - password protect the Vista account. This has the added benefit of dramatically improving the security of your account. [Click here](#) for a discussion of password protection and it’s relation to facial recognition and general security.
   b) Alternatively: Once you’ve logged in and received the “password override” warning, lock the desktop by hand by either hitting Windows + “L” or Control+Alt+Delete. You may also lock your desktop using your screensaver. After the desktop is locked, log in again with your face visible. All AlienSense functions will now work as normal until the next reboot.

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3. **Where is the program that I need in order to put my face into the system?**
   There isn’t one! AlienSense learns your face as you use the computer normally. If ever it doesn’t see who you are (recognize you) quickly, simply log in with your username and password. This will teach the system a bit more about what you look like.

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4. **It recognized me as someone else!**
   The vast majority of the time that AlienSense is perceived to have recognized one user as another the underlying cause is actually something other than a true failure of the recognition algorithms – something other than a “false positive”. There are several common possibilities:
   a. Continuous Security locking timer – if you are in Continuous Security mode and move away from the desktop, it will take the amount of time that you specified to lock. If during that time another user sits down, they may be able to view your desktop for a period of time. This is not a false positive. Adjust thelocking timer to balance your workflow and security needs.
   b. User Switching mode – if you are in User Switching mode and move away from the computer and another user sits down, AlienSense will only switch to that user’s Vista account if they are recognized. If they are not recognized (either because they have not trained AlienSense to recognized them well or because they don’t have a Vista account on that machine) then they will continue to view your desktop. This is also not a false positive. If additional security is desired, select “Continuous Security” mode or enable “Auto Lock on Unauthorized User”.
   c. Weak, easily guessed or non-existent password – if a Vista account has either no password or one that is easily guessed, it is not secure. Should another person guess your password, they will be able
to log into your Vista account...with or without AlienSense. After this occurs, their face then may be used to log into your Vista account later. This is not a false positive as the other user was able to enroll their face into your biometric database. To remedy this, click here for instructions.

d. **Multiple users sharing one Vista account** – If multiple users choose to share a Vista account, then both of their faces will be enrolled into the same biometric database. Having both users be recognized and logged into the same Vista account is, in this case, correct. This is, however, very poor security practice, will cause recognition performance to suffer, and is strongly not recommended.

With all security measures there is a small but finite chance that a true false positive or other undesirable event could occur. Passwords can be guessed or discovered, badges can be given away, etc. In standardized tests, a true false positive with AlienSense occurs in less than 1 in a million attempts. There are certain conditions that can slightly affect these odds.

a. **Lighting** – the better (even, bright enough) the lighting, the more facial detail is visible, the lower the odds of a true false positive. Very low levels of detail will be rejected by AlienSense for a recognition attempt, but in general the more even the lighting on the face the better.
b. **Out of focus camera** – this also decreases available detail. An out of focus camera is unlikely while using the integrated web camera but is possible if the user installs a second camera for use with AlienSense.

AlienSense has implemented numerous technologies to prevent false positives. If one is truly confirmed however, (most often through the picture access log) then the steps to remediate it are similar to a stolen password. Clear the affected biometric database (the database of the user who the system incorrectly thought that it saw) and increase the recognition strength.

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5. **How far can I turn my face to the side (profile) and still have AlienSense “see” it?**

   Many factors, including camera angle and lighting, affect how far you can turn your face and still have AlienSense be confident that you are in front of your computer. If you are using “Continuous Security”, you may wish to choose a longer “Locking Time” to balance your movements with how quickly the computer locks. For some users, a very fast locking time is not always practical for efficient workflow.

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6. **I don’t see a blue Alien Head outline around my face — why?**

   Make sure that the camera is on, that you’re facing the camera and that the lighting in the room is sufficient. Seeing the blue outline is important because it means that AlienSense can see your face and therefore, can learn what it looks like.

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7. **If I dim or turn off the lights, I can’t log in automatically anymore — what can I do to fix this?**

   There are three options. The first and easiest is to turn the lights on. AlienSense uses a camera which, like all cameras, must have light in order to function. If you must use your computer in the dark you can always log in manually. In this case the computer will lock according to the settings that you set in your screen saver. Automatic account switching will also not function. Finally, it may be possible to manually adjust the webcam’s exposure to allow AlienSense to operate.

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8. **AlienSense is telling me that there is “The lighting is preventing reliable face recognition” – what does this mean and how can I fix it?**

   Try to increase the light on your face in the area where you are working. AlienSense requires a minimum amount of detail to be present in the video in order to be confident of your identity. This feature provides strong security for your computer. Please see question 5.

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9. **If there are multiple people standing in front of my computer, who gets logged in?**

   Generally, the person who is the closest to the computer. AlienSense locks on to the face that is the largest within the video image. The largest face is generally the one who is closest to the camera and, therefore, most likely to be the person actually using the computer. You will be able to tell who AlienSense is “looking at” by who has the blue Alien Head shaped outline around their face.

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10. **What about twins?**

    In preliminary tests, AlienSense has shown the ability to tell the difference between identical twins. To be safe, however, we recommend disabling AlienSense if identical twins need to access the same PC.

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11. **The video looks bad...how can I fix it?**

    Poorly exposed images or images with other problems can generally be improved in one of two ways. You can adjust the lighting in the room where you’re working, or you can make adjustments to the camera properties. To do the latter, while on the login screen, mouse over the Alien Head graphic in the upper left. Click the “Properties” checkbox and adjust the camera settings until the displayed video image improves.

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12. **What happens if I put a phone to my ear, take off my glasses, grow a beard or otherwise change my appearance?**

    AlienSense uses a learning technique that allows it to continuously adapt to any appearance changes that you might experience. If for ANY reason you are not recognized quickly, simply click your name “tile” and type your password manually. This will update AlienSense with the new way that you look, making it more likely that you will be recognized quickly the next time around.

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13. **I put a stuffed animal in front of the camera – AlienSense drew a blue outline around it’s face! Why can’t it tell the difference between a human and an object?**

    AlienSense is designed to detect face-like patterns. Some things like stuffed animals, photographs, pets, etc. also have those kinds of patterns on them. AlienSense may “see” those patterns on non-human objects and draw a blue outline around them. What it will **NOT** do, however, is grant access to your Vista account based on holding a non-human object up to the camera.

    As a warning - you can technically hold an object or animal with a face up to the camera and then log in manually with your username and password. That “face” would then be associated with, or “enrolled” into your Vista account. It could then be used to access your account in the future. Just like you shouldn’t write down your username and password on a sticky note and put it on the monitor, however, intentionally causing the software to learn something other than your own face is to be avoided if you truly want to maintain security!

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14. Can I train AlienSense to recognize my cat?
   See the previous question.

15. How can I improve the recognition performance in general?
   a. Make sure there is a blue outline drawn around your face. If a blue outline is not visible, face recognition is not possible. Make sure your eyes, nose and mouth are in clear view of the camera and if prompted, turn on additional lights.
   b. When logging in, act naturally. Simply place your hands on the keyboard and simply look at the screen. Making faces at or talking to the camera will slow down the recognition process.
   c. Even lighting provides the best recognition. Strong shadows on the face will require more frequent manual logins.
   d. Whenever face recognition takes more than a few seconds, click on your user name and enter your password if required to login to the computer. This teaches the software to better recognize your face and can improve the speed of face recognition under the same lighting conditions.
   e. Use a consistent position in front of the computer. While different positions during recognition can be learned, a consistent position when logging in will improve recognition speed.
   f. Hair obscuring your face will slow recognition.

Security concepts
1. Do I REALLY need to password protect my Windows account?
   If you really want to enforce any kind of security then yes, you do. You may, of course, use AlienSense for fun and convenience without a password on your Vista account, but a Vista account without a password truly has no security at all….with or without AlienSense or any other security tool.

2. Can someone break into my account using a photograph of me?
   Generally no, they cannot. AlienSense pays enough attention to how you look when you’re actually using your computer (including lighting, camera angle, angle of your face, camera type, etc.) that a photograph is extremely unlikely to match all of these characteristics closely enough to allow unwanted access to your account. There are two nuances here; however, that warrant further discussion.
   a. It MAY be possible gain access to your account with a photograph, printed or displayed at high quality, that is taken through the web camera that you use to access your computer. Since this could in theory match closely what you actually look like to the software while using your computer, it is recommended that you not allow this type of photograph to be taken. This may on rare occasions also be possible if a photograph is taken with another camera from the perspective of the web camera in conditions that are very similar to those in which you use your computer.
      i. If it is not possible to limit photographs of you from being taken through your web camera, we recommend enabling the photographic access log feature and reviewing the images stored there periodically.
   b. If you hold a photograph of yourself up to the camera and then log in manually, that photograph will be “learned” as your own face and could then be used in the future to gain access to your account. Just as you would not write your password on a sticky note and post it on the monitor, however, it is strongly recommended that you avoid doing this if you truly want to maintain account security.
3. **Can multiple people share one Vista account?**
   While this is certainly possible, it is not recommended. There are two primary concerns here.
   a. Part of the security provided by AlienSense are strong access logs....knowledge of who used your computer and when. With multiple people sharing one Vista account, this access logs are not as useful. You can still check who logged in by using the Photo Access Log feature, but this is far less convenient.
   b. More importantly, recognition performance (how many times the software successfully recognizes your face and logs you into Vista) will be degraded. There is a certain amount of storage allocated for each Vista account to store multiple versions of how you look. Video from the camera is compared against this entire “biometric database” every time you try to access your computer. If you share your account with someone else, then both of your faces will be occupying the same storage space. Each of you will effectively have fewer versions of your face for comparison against the video coming from the camera. This will make it less likely that either one of you will be recognized and logged into Vista quickly.

4. **It seems like I can hold up objects that have “faces” in them like photographs, stuffed animals, even my pet and then type my password into Vista and it accepts that! Isn’t this a huge security hole?**
   No. Although AlienSense will draw a blue outline around objects other than human faces that also have face-like patterns (like photographs or stuffed animals), it will not let them be used to access your account. A word of warning, however....if you hold an object up to the computer and then type your password, this object may be learned as being your own face and could then be used to access your account in the future. Just as you would not write down your password on a sticky note and attach it to the monitor, however, this procedure should be avoided if you want to truly maintain account security.

5. **How do I make my computer secure?**
   There are many facets to having a truly secure computer system. Employing a biometric login device such as AlienSense is certainly one part, but is by no means the only one. It’s also necessary to follow other standard security processes such as using a strong password on your Vista account, making sure that each user has their own unique Vista account, employing a firewall to protect against outside intrusion, using antivirus software, and routinely backing up the data on your computer. As long as you have a strong password on your own, unique Vista account, AlienSense can improve security by preventing unauthorized use of any stored website login information in Internet Explorer and can even protect your entire desktop from casual use by other people if you select “Continuous Security” mode (automatic desktop locking).

6. **In the “Advanced” section of the AlienSense Console, I see a section called “Recognition Strength”. What does this do?**
   Recognition strength is a measure of how “picky” AlienSense is with what is considered a facial match. Increasing this slider will more strongly protect against an incorrect recognition (recognizing someone else as you or you as someone else) but may also slightly decrease the frequency with which AlienSense makes a correct match as well (correctly recognizing you as you). It is recommended that the default value be kept unless you see issues with incorrect recognitions or if the number of users on your computer is very high. Although turning down the recognition strength from it’s default may slightly increase how often your are let into your computer quickly, this is also not recommended in order to maintain strong security.
7. I've heard that an “audit trail”, or having good access logs is an important part of maintaining security. Does AlienSense have these tools?
   Yes! Comprehensive access logs can be found by opening the AlienSense Console (double click the “Alien Eye” icon in the system tray), and clicking the “Access Logs” button. In the log you can see who has access your computer and when. In the main Advanced Features window, you will also see a checkbox to turn on and off a feature called “Record Picture”. If this feature is on then an actual photograph of the user will be recorded each time they access the computer. This provides additional security as it allows you to visually verify who entered a given Vista password.

8. What are the false acceptance and false rejection rates of AlienSense?
   False acceptance (“false positive”, or recognizing one person as the WRONG person) and false rejection (“false negatives”, or failing to recognize an authorized user) rates are traditional ways to measure biometric accuracy. AlienSense is unique that the false negative rate actually improves with use. The more the user logs into the system, the better it gets at recognizing them! With use, AlienSense should recognize the user more than 90% - often more than 95% - of the time. True false positives are exceedingly unlikely. In standardized tests, they have occurred in less than $1 \times 10^{-6}$ (1 in a million) logins. Please note that if a user’s face (or an object with a face) is actively enrolled or learned into the wrong account (with a stolen or compromised password, for example) and then later recognized that this is NOT a true false positive.

Security Levels
1. I’m in “User Switching” mode. I got up and someone else sat down. Vista didn’t switch to their account – why?
   AlienSense’s user switching mode is designed to make switching between various Vista accounts more convenient. It switches between accounts automatically as soon as the new user’s face is recognized. If their face is not recognized quickly for some reason, however (if there was an facial appearance or lighting change, for example) then the accounts may not switch. You can always secure the desktop by hand by hitting "Windows+L" and then having the new user log in manually. This will teach AlienSense more about what the new user looks like, making the automatic account switching more likely to happen quickly in the future.

2. I’m in “Continuous Security” mode and have the computer set to lock in X seconds. When I log in without the blue outline around my face, this automatic locking doesn’t seem to work for some reason – why?
   Continuous Security mode is designed to provide the maximum possible security for your computer by automatically locking your desktop X seconds (exactly how long is up to you) after your face leaves view of the camera. If you log in without the blue outline around your face, however, that means that AlienSense couldn’t see your face to begin with. Counting down from when your face leaves view of the camera is illogical in this case since it was never IN view in the first place. When this occurs, the desktop will be locked according to the settings that you have chosen in your screen saver. If your screen saver is not set to lock the computer, then it will not lock. Be sure to set your screen saver as a backup and/or make sure that your face is always in clear view when logging in.
3. **How can I lock my computer by hand?**
   You may always lock your desktop manually by holding down the “Windows” key and simultaneously pressing “L”. Be aware that in this case, facial recognition is intentionally suspended for 10 seconds or so to give you time to get out of view of the camera.
   
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4. **Why does my computer lock when someone turns out the lights?**
   If you have AlienSense set for “Continuous Security”, it will automatically lock your desktop X seconds (exactly how long this takes is selectable) after your face leaves view of the camera. If someone turns off the lights while you are using your computer, your face may no longer be in view and AlienSense may, therefore, secure your desktop.
   
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5. **I’m in “Continuous Security” mode and my screensaver doesn’t seem to work. Why?**
   Your screensaver will work when you face is no longer in view of the camera. As long as AlienSense can see your face, it will prevent the screen saver from starting.
   
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6. **I can’t figure out how my screen saver interacts with “Continuous Security” mode. What am I missing?**
   Without AlienSense, your desktop may be secured by setting a screen saver to activate after a certain amount of time of having no activity on the keyboard or mouse. If you choose to set AlienSense to “Continuous Security” mode, then you’ve decided to switch how your desktop is locked from the keyboard/mouse to waiting for a certain period of time after your face has left view of the camera. In this scenario, the screensaver is not necessary and will not activate as long as your face is visible. The exception is if, for some reason, you log in manually to Vista while your face is not in view of the camera. In this case, it’s not possible to wait until your face has left view of the camera because it was never IN view to begin with. In this scenario, the desktop will revert to locking according to the settings of your screen saver.
   
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7. **In Auto User Switching mode and I’ve check the “Auto Lock on Unauthorized User” option. A new user sits down and it doesn’t lock instantly. Why?**
   This is correct behavior. When AlienSense loses continuous track of your face, then regains access to a face, it has about 60 seconds to re-recognize that face. If it’s still you, then nothing happens. If it’s another authorized user on the system then it will switch to their account as soon as the recognition is made. If after 60 seconds AlienSense doesn’t recognize the face at all, then it’s assumed to be an unauthorized user and the desktop will lock. Bear in mind that it’s impossible to positively recognize a user as unauthorized because – by definition – an unauthorized user has no Vista account or biometric templates to match against!

   The 60 second value was chosen to be a good balance between workflow and security. Shorter times may technically increase security, but shorter times will also increase the likelihood of the system locking on the authorized user if they experience a long recognition after looking away from the computer and then looking back. Users desiring stronger security than this option provides for should simply switch to Continuous Security mode.
   
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8. **What is the best security mode for me to use?**

The answer to this question depends on your physical location, the data that you’re protecting, the number and type of Vista accounts on your PC, and how you use your computer. You should feel free to switch modes as required to adapt to changing security and workflow needs. Here are some suggestions:

   a. **Disabled**: Use this mode when there is no need for any additional security or when you need the maximum possible CPU cycles for a game.

   b. **Face Login**: Select this mode when the biggest need is for added login convenience - for example, when you are always in possession of your laptop and are the only person that typically has access (PC in locked home office or going from class to class, for example). Provides no additional security beyond that already provided by a username and password. Also provides maximum CPU availability after login (possibly beneficial for gaming).

   c. **Auto User Switching**: Select this mode when the desire is for added convenience both at login AND in switching between Vista accounts (using your face). For example, if you share your computer with others in your house and each person has a Vista account mostly for personalization (bookmarks) rather than security. "Auto Lock on Unauthorized User” adds some additional security, though if security beyond what this feature provides is desired you should select #4 – Continuous Security.

   d. **Continuous Security**: Select this mode when the need for security is the strongest. For example, your computer is in a very public space (coffee house, library, meeting room, etc.) and/or you share your computer with others and have private files that you don’t wish them to access (enforcing parental controls at home, dorm room with roommate, etc.)

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### Administration

1. **I just updated the Command Center. Now I see video on the login screen and something about facial recognition. What is this and how did it happen?**

   Newer versions of the Command Center include software called AlienSense. It performs facial recognition. This provides added login convenience and the potential for added security for your desktop. It is enabled by default when a new enough version of the Command Center is installed. It can be turned off through the command center, though in it’s default mode of “Face Login”, it has no impact on the performance of your computer.  

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2. **Someone stole my password and logged in as me. How do I fix this?**

   First, change your password. This is critical. After that, open the AlienSense Console (double click the “Alien Eye” icon in the system tray), click the “Advanced” button, select your own entry in the “User Database” box at the top and click “Delete Biometric”. This removes all the stored versions of what you look like. This is an important step because if someone has your password, it may be possible for them to put their face into your own biometric database. Removing the entire database and changing your password will ensure that all new facial “learning” going forward will be only of your own face. This is why having a Vista account that is protected by a strong password is so important.

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3. **How can I tell who has used my computer?**

   AlienSense provides a very strong access logs – in other words, an accurate record of who logged into your computer and when. To find it, open the AlienSense Console (double click the “Alien Eye” icon in the system tray), click the “Advanced” button, then click the “Access Logs” button. Along with a text-based list of who
accessed your computer, if you may also enable the Record Picture feature. There is a checkbox on the main “Advanced” window that, if checked, will record an actual photo of the user will be taken each time they access the computer. This further increases security by allowing a visual confirmation that the person entering a password (should a recognition not occur for some reason) is in fact the appropriate person.

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4. **Why would I need to delete my biometric enrollment? What does this even mean?**

   AlienSense stores an enrollment, or biometric database for each user. This is simply a collection of the different ways that you look while using your computer. Each time you access your machine using facial recognition, the video from the camera is compared against this database. If a match is made to one of the versions of how you look, you are allowed access. It is possible, however, for this database to become corrupted if someone steals your password. With possession of your password, it may be possible for them to log in manually and put their face into your database. In this case you should change your password (critical!) and delete your biometric enrollment information in order to remove the other person’s face from your own database. To do this, open the AlienSense Console (double click the “Alien Eye” icon in the system tray), click the “Advanced” button, select your own entry in the “User Database” box at the top and click “Delete Biometric”. If you are a Vista administrator, you may also delete the biometric enrollment information for other users on the machine if they have experienced a similar scenario.

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5. **How do I add to the list of “Programs that Automatically Disable AlienSense”?**

   This list are programs that you specify that, when launched, will temporarily turn off all the features of AlienSense. When the program is closed, AlienSense automatically resumes normal operation. To find this list, open the AlienSense Console (double click the “Alien Eye” icon in the system tray), click the “Advanced” button and then click the “Advanced” button. This feature is disabled by default so you must turn it on first. To add a program to the list, click the “Add” button and type the name of the executable file (the file that’s used to launch, or execute, a given program...it will end in “.exe”) for a program that you wish to have automatically disable. For example, if you wish to have Windows Media Player disable AlienSense while Media Player is in use, type “wmplayer.exe”.

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6. **I enabled “Programs that Automatically Disable AlienSense” and put a program in the list. Most of the time it works fine. Sometimes, though, when I close the program AlienSense does not turn back on as expected. Why?**

   This is the result of a behavior of Windows that is beyond the control of AlienSense. Occasionally when a program appears to have closed, it is actually still running despite no longer being visible on the desktop. In this case, AlienSense detects that it is really still running and does not re-enable itself. To correct the situation, launch the Task Manager, find the program that was supposed to be close and end the process manually. AlienSense will re-enable automatically.

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7. **I installed a new camera and want to use it with AlienSense instead. How do I tell AlienSense to make the switch?**

   Open the AlienSense Console (double click the “Alien Eye” icon in the system tray), click the “Advanced” button. Choose the name of the camera that you would like to use from the “Web Cameras” section. You will have to disable/enable AlienSense before the new setting will function. Note that the camera must first be installed properly in Vista in order for it to be available in this list. In order for it to function within AlienSense it must also not currently be in use by any other video enabled programs.

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8. **Can I use AlienSense to log into a domain account? Will AlienSense work on a machine that is joined to a domain?**

   No. The current version of AlienSense does not support domain use. At this time, a machine that is placed on a domain will display the error message “License Key Invalid” for AlienSense.

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9. **Can I use AlienSense with another login tool – for example another biometric device like a fingerprint reader?**

   Although a “credential provider”, or logon screen, from another vendor may work, they are not supported at this time.

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10. **I checked “Require Password” in the Advanced section, then went to delete a biometric database entry but it didn’t prompt me for a password – why?**

    The “Require Passwords” checkbox and the “Delete Biometrics” section, despite their physical proximity to one another, are completely separate functions.

    Any Administrative user can delete any biometric database entry. Any normal user can delete their OWN entry – both without being prompted for a password.

    Checking the “Require Password” checkbox requires that all users password protect their Vista account in order to be allowed to associate their face with that account and, hence, use the features in AlienSense. Without the box checked, users can have a blank Vista password (as allowed by Windows by default). Click here for more information on password protection for Vista accounts.

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**Using other video applications with AlienSense**

1. **Why can I only have 1 video application running at a time?**

   Under Vista, only one application at a time can use a given web camera. In Auto User Switching and Continuous Security modes, AlienSense provides strong security for your data and in the future, web passwords by continually tracking your presence in front of the computer at all times – which means that it uses the web camera at all times to the exclusion of other programs. To allow you to still use other video applications, AlienSense creates a “virtual”, or duplicate camera in software within Vista. Other applications can use this Virtual camera to access video from the web camera after AlienSense is done with it. Since there is only one virtual camera, you may only run one other video application at a time.

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2. **I see a new camera in the Windows Device manager...this laptop only has one camera...what's the second one?**

   This is a VIRTUAL video camera provided by AlienSense. Since AlienSense protects your data by continually tracking your presence in front of the computer, it uses the web camera at all times (while in User Switching and Continuous Security modes). Normally this would cause you to be unable to use any other video applications on the system while AlienSense is running in those modes. To get around this Vista limitation, AlienSense creates a virtual or duplicate video camera in software which other applications can then attach to. This allows those other applications to use video from the web camera after AlienSense is done with it.

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3. **I have a program that doesn’t work with the Virtual Camera. How can I use it on a system running AlienSense?**
   
   If for some reason a video application can’t use the virtual camera, you can set AlienSense to Face Login or temporarily disable AlienSense. Either will release the “real” camera driver for use. When you’re finished, be sure to close the other video application and re-start AlienSense in order to continue to provide strong security for your data.
   
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4. **What is the interaction between the security modes and AlienSense? When is the virtual camera available and when is it not?**
   
   The virtual camera is available for use by other video applications when AlienSense is in User Switching or Continuous Security modes. This is because AlienSense makes continuous use of the integrated camera driver in these modes. The virtual camera is not available in Face Login or Disabled modes as AlienSense releases (makes available) the integrated camera driver after initial login.

   The interaction between these camera drivers is very much as if you had two cameras installed on your computer - with the exception that one of them only exists when AlienSense is in User Switching or Continuous Security modes. In both cases, only one application at a time can attach to any given camera driver.

   If you change security modes with another video application running, you may have to close the application to make video available to AlienSense or close and restart the application to cause it to attach to the other camera driver. See questions below for more details.
   
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5. **I’m running another video application while AlienSense is in User Switching or Continuous Security modes. Then I change AlienSense to Face Login or Disabled and the video application looses video! Why?**

   In this scenario, AlienSense is using the integrated web camera and your other application is using the virtual camera. When you changed the AlienSense mode to Disabled or Face Login, the virtual camera is disabled. You will either need to manually tell your application to now use the integrated web camera, or close and restart the application to cause it to automatically choose the “first available” camera driver (which in this case is now the integrated camera).

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6. **I’m running another video application while AlienSense is in Face Login or Disabled modes. Then I change AlienSense to User Switching or Continuous Security and AlienSense can’t seem to get video on the login screen! Why?**

   In this scenario, your video application is using the integrated camera driver and AlienSense is not using a camera driver at all (after initial login). When you switch security modes, AlienSense tries to attach to the integrated camera but cannot because it’s in use. You will need to close the video application first, then lock the PC to allow AlienSense to access the integrated camera. AlienSense will then publish the virtual camera for use by your other application. The virtual camera will likely be chosen automatically by your video application when it’s restarted.

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7. **I’m running another video application with AlienSense in Face Login mode. If I lock the computer by hand or let my screen saver lock it, there is no video in the AlienSense login window. Why?**

   Similar to the scenarios above, in this case your application is using the integrated web camera and AlienSense is not using any camera at all. If the user locks the computer, however, AlienSense will try to
attach to the integrated camera in order to authenticate the user by their face. It will be unable to do so,
however, as the integrated camera is already in use. The user must log in with their password in this case.
Normal operation will occur any time the computer is locked after the video application is terminated.

8. **AlienSense is in Face Login or Disabled mode. I see the virtual camera (FA Cap) in the Windows
Device Manager anyway and it’s disabled. Can I enable it directly?**

    No. The virtual camera can only be enabled/disabled by AlienSense. Manipulating it directly within the Device
Manager is not supported.

**Messages and error conditions:**

1. **The Alien Eye system tray icon keeps changing colors...what do the various colors mean?**
   a. Green – AlienSense is active and working normally
   b. Blinking Green and Yellow:
      i. If you are in the security mode “Continuous Security”, then this means that your face is out of
         view of the camera and the system is counting down to lock the desktop.
      ii. It could, however, also mean that you logged into Vista while your face was not in view of the
         camera. In this case, your computer will lock according to the settings of your screensaver.
   c. Blinking green and red: You are in collaboration mode. This mode temporarily turns off the automatic
      locking action, automatic logging into websites and the virtual camera present while in “Continuous
      Security” mode. This mode is only available while your security mode is set to “Continuous Security”.

2. **I locked the computer by hand by hitting the Windows key + “L”. I get the message “Face Detected,
Recognition temporarily suspended...”. What does this mean?**
   
   AlienSense assumes that because you locked the desktop by hand that you want it to be locked. If it
   immediately tried to recognize you and log you back in again, you could end up in a repeating loop that
   would never let you keep the computer locked. Lock, quick recognition, unlock, lock, quick recognition,
   unlock.....etc. AlienSense will try to recognize your face again after waiting for 10 seconds or if you move out
   of view of the camera and then back into view.

3. **When I try to run the AlienSense Console, I get a warning in a window called “User Account Control”
(UAC). The window says “A program needs your permission to continue.” Why is this there?**
   
   This message is a security measure put in place by Vista itself. When you run programs that can affect how
   the computer behaves, Vista wants to be sure that this is truly your intent. Simply click “Continue” to proceed
   to the AlienSense Console.

4. **I find UAC (“User Account Control”) annoying so I turned it off. Even with AlienSense controlling
the power mode, I can no longer put the laptop to sleep using the keyboard command. Why?**
   
   This is a defect in Windows. With UAC disabled, the keyboard command to “sleep” is unavailable. AlienSense
does not and can not correct this behavior.
5. **I logged in and received a warning message called “Password Override Warning”. What is this?**

If you ever log in without the blue outline around your face, you can still be granted access to your computer. There are certain facial recognition functions that will not work, however. This message tells you that automatic user switching will not function, for example. In order to re-activate these functions, lock the computer manually by hitting the Windows key + “L”. Log in again with your face in clear view of the camera.

If you have not created a Vista login password a Vista login password, you will see a modified version of this message requesting you create a Vista login account password.

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6. **I rarely see video, facial recognition never seems to start, and every time I reboot my computer I get a “password override” warning message. What’s going on?**

These symptoms will be evident if you only have one Vista account set upon your PC and that account is not password protected. In this situation, Vista automatically logs such accounts in when the PC reboots...effectively bypassing facial recognition. To get the benefits of facial recognition you can take one of two steps.

- **c) Recommended - password protect the Vista account.** This has the added benefit of dramatically improving the security of your account. [Click here](#) for a discussion of password protection and it’s relation to facial recognition and general security.

- **d) Alternatively:** Once you’ve logged in and received the “password override” warning, lock the desktop by hand by either hitting Windows + “L” or Control+Alt+Delete. You may also lock your desktop using your screensaver. After the desktop is locked, log in again with your face visible. All AlienSense functions will now work as normal until the next reboot.

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**Miscellaneous**

1. **What happens if the camera is broken or disabled?**

   You may always log into your computer by selecting your username and typing your password by hand, even if the camera is broken or otherwise disabled. Any time you log in without the software being able to see your face for any reason, you will see a message stating “Biometric Validation disabled.”. If your screen saver is not set to lock your computer you may see another warning to this effect as well. In effect, this all means that the traditional features enabled by facial recognition will not be available. For example, the computer will now lock according to the settings that you set in your screen saver instead of by the method you chose in the “Security” section of the AlienSense Console. Automatic account switching will not function as well.

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2. **I want to play a game...can I turn off AlienSense to maximize system resources and keep it from locking?**

   Absolutely! In Face Login mode, AlienSense “turns itself off” automatically freeing up resources. For Auto User Switching and Continues Security Modes, AlienSense provides a feature whereby you can specify specific programs that will automatically disable AlienSense when they are launched. AlienSense will also automatically resume normal functionality when programs on that list are closed. This feature is disabled by default so you must enable it first. Open the AlienSense Console (double click the “Alien Eye” icon in the system tray) and click the “Advanced” button. Select the “Programs that automatically disable AlienSense” check box. Click the “Add” button then type the name of the executable file (the file that’s used to launch, or execute, a given program...it will end in “.exe”) for a program that you wish to have automatically disable AlienSense into the field at the bottom of the screen, then click “Ok”. For example, if
3. **How can I use AlienSense to enforce parental controls?**

   First, make sure that both you and your child have your own, unique Vista accounts. You can do this through the Vista User and Accounts control panel which can be accessed through the AlienSense Console (double click the “Alien Eye” icon in the system tray). Click the “Security” button then the “Vista Account Management” link at the bottom of the window. Be sure that your child does NOT know your own password. Enable whatever Parental Controls through Vista that you wish to on your child’s account. In AlienSense, it is recommended that you select “Continuous Security” mode under the “Security” section of the management window. This will ensure that your machine will be automatically locked after you leave view of the camera. This way your child can not simply walk up to the computer and use your account should you forget to secure it manually when you leave your desk. The access logs within AlienSense will also help you accurately monitor when your child is using the computer.

4. **I right click the AlienSense icon in the system tray and see “Collaboration Mode for 10 minutes”. What is this for?**

   Collaboration mode is a way to temporarily suspend AlienSense functions. Collaboration mode is only available when your security mode is set to “Continuous Security” (automatic locking of the desktop after X period of time has passed after your face is no longer in view of the camera). Specifically, Collaboration Mode turns off the automatic desktop locking, automatic web logins and the virtual camera. This mode might be used if, for example, you wish to deliver a power point presentation where you may be looking at the projection screen instead of the camera. You can use Collaboration mode to temporarily keep the computer from locking when you look away. Similarly if you want to share an online video with a group of friends, you can suspend the automatic locking for a brief period of time to allow this conveniently. When the 10 minute timer expires, the desktop will lock even if the computer is in use. You will, however, be alerted to the pending lock and given the opportunity to extend Collaboration Mode for another 10 minutes.

5. **On the login screen, I see a new “AlienSense” user account “tile”. What is that used for?**

   This tile is for visual reference only and has no function.

6. **How do I access the help files?**

   There are several ways to access help files within AlienSense. If you may right click the Alien Eye icon in the system tray and “help”. Alternately, there is a variety of screens with the AlienSense Console itself where there are “Help” buttons. Clicking any of them will open a help window with text appropriate to the particular screen that you are currently working with. You may also click the Windows menu button in the lower left corner of your desktop, select “AlienSense Facial Recognition”, then click on “AlienSense Help”.

7. **When first starting the computer, the AlienSense window along with the video takes several seconds to appear. Why?**

   When booting your computer there are many components of Vista that must be loaded in the correct order. AlienSense itself loads relatively early in that process. AlienSense has no control, however, on when the video camera is activated. It may, therefore, take several additional seconds after the login window appears before the video becomes functional. You may log into Vista manually before the camera is activated.
however, most AlienSense features such as automatic account switching, automatic desktop locking and automatic website login will be disabled if you do this.

8. **I was logged into Vista with my face before video ever appeared on screen! How is this possible?**
   During the boot process, the camera drivers and the parts of Vista required for displaying video on the screen are actually started *separately*. It is, therefore, possible for the camera to be functional and for AlienSense to be analyzing video for several seconds before that video is actually shown on the login screen. If during those few seconds your face is recognized, you may be logged into Vista before the video ever actually appears. Not to worry, however - all AlienSense functions will still be available to you in such a case.

9. **How is the AlienSense recognition programming tested for accuracy?**
   The AlienSense recognition algorithms are routinely tested against a database of faces specifically set up for this purpose by a US government. Although real world results may differ slightly from these tests, the accuracy measurements are none the less significantly better than most commercially available fingerprint readers, for example.

10. **Will AlienSense shorten how long my laptop will run while on batteries?**
    No. Unlike many technologies on your laptop such as Wi-Fi, Bluetooth, or the LCD screen, the power draw from the web camera is miniscule. Battery life is, therefore, not impacted in any statistically significant way.

11. **Does AlienSense slow down my computer?**
    No. Your typical overall computer speed will be unaffected by the use of AlienSense. If you are a competitive gamer and demand every CPU cycle for gaming purposes, you should set AlienSense to Face Login or Disable before playing just as you would shut down other applications. You can do this by right clicking the AlienSense icon (if available) and selecting “Disable AlienSense”, setting the Security Level in the AlienSense Console to “Disabled or Face Login”, or by adding your game to the “Programs that automatically disable AlienSense” list so that AlienSense will be disabled automatically when you begin to play and re-enabled automatically after you finish.

12. **I've heard that facial recognition is “not ready for prime-time” and does not work. Why will is secure my computer?**
    Traditionally, there have been significant problems with facial recognition. As with all technology, however, it’s not just the technology itself that’s important – equally if not more critical is how it’s being used. There are many factors – both technical and in terms of how people interact with the technology – that make facial recognition and AlienSense in particular a practical and highly secure method for accessing computers where it has failed in the past to be a suitable technology for, for example, locating people (who often don’t want to be found!) in airports, sports stadiums, on the street or in other relatively uncontrolled, public spaces.

13. **When my computer unlocks, it makes a sound. Why does it do this and how can I stop it?**
    This “unlocking” sound is a default part of Vista itself. While running AlienSense in “Continuous Security” mode, you may hear the sound more often than normal because the desktop is locking and
unlocking more than it might without AlienSense installed (after all, locking and unlocking the desktop is a main purpose of AlienSense).

To turn off the sounds, click the “Windows” menu in the lower left corner of your desktop. Select “Control Panels”. In the window that appears, click the “Hardware & Sound” link. In the next window, click the “Change System Sounds” link. In the next window, scroll down the list of system events until you find “Windows Logoff”. Select it. Choose “(None)” from the “Sounds:” drop-down menu. Repeat for the “Windows Logon” event as well. Click “Ok”.  

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