

FAICETECH

THE ETHICAL AI COMPANY

WHY YOU NEED A SPECIALIST FACIAL RECOGNITION PROVIDER

A practical guide to understanding why facial recognition demands specialist expertise — and the risks of choosing a generalist provider.

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INTRODUCTION

Facial recognition technology has moved from science fiction to everyday security. Retailers use it to identify known offenders, corporate offices use it for access control, and law enforcement agencies rely on it to find missing people. But here's the thing most people don't realise: **facial recognition is not an off-the-shelf product.**

You can't just buy it like a CCTV camera, plug it in, and expect results. It requires deep expertise in artificial intelligence, camera technology, data protection law, and ongoing system management. Choosing the wrong provider doesn't just waste money — it creates real risks for your business.

This guide explains why specialist providers exist, what sets them apart from generalist security or IT companies, and what questions you should be asking before signing any contract.

1. IT'S NOT PLUG-AND-PLAY

Unlike a standard CCTV system where you mount cameras and start recording, facial recognition involves multiple layers of complexity:

- **Camera positioning and angle** — the technology needs faces captured at the right angle, distance, and resolution. Get this wrong and accuracy drops dramatically.
- **Lighting conditions** — different environments (retail floors, building entrances, outdoor areas) all present unique challenges that affect how well the system performs.
- **Algorithm selection and tuning** — not all facial recognition algorithms are equal. The right one depends on your use case, environment, and what you're trying to achieve.
- **Database management** — the watchlists and enrolment databases need careful management to maintain accuracy and comply with data protection rules.
- **Integration** — connecting facial recognition with your existing security systems, access control, and alert workflows requires technical expertise.

A generalist provider — one that sells CCTV, intruder alarms, fire systems, and access control alongside facial recognition — simply doesn't have the depth of knowledge to handle all of this properly. They may install the hardware, but getting the system to actually work well? That's where specialists come in.

2. GENERALIST PROVIDERS CUT CORNERS

Many companies now offer facial recognition as an add-on to their existing product range. The problem is that most of these providers are simply reselling someone else's technology. They don't build it, they don't fully understand it, and they can't fix it when things go wrong.

Common issues with generalist providers include:

- **Limited troubleshooting ability** — when accuracy drops or false alerts spike, they don't have the expertise to diagnose and fix the root cause.
- **No algorithm expertise** — they can't advise on which recognition engine suits your environment, because they only offer one (often whichever was cheapest to license).
- **Cookie-cutter installations** — every site gets the same setup regardless of its unique challenges, leading to inconsistent results.
- **Reactive, not proactive** — they wait for you to report problems rather than monitoring performance and optimising the system continuously.

"At FaiceTech, our team works exclusively with facial recognition technology. Every member of our technical team understands the nuances of camera placement, algorithm behaviour, and the real-world conditions that affect performance. That focus makes a measurable difference in the results our clients see."

3. ACCURACY DEPENDS ON EXPERTISE

Facial recognition accuracy isn't just about the software — it's about how the entire system is designed, installed, and maintained. A specialist provider understands that accuracy is the product of dozens of variables working together.

Consider this: the same facial recognition algorithm can deliver 98% accuracy in one environment and 60% in another. The difference isn't the software — it's the expertise behind the deployment. Camera height, angle of approach, image resolution, lighting, and even the speed at which people walk past the camera all affect results.

A specialist provider conducts thorough site surveys, tests camera positions, analyses lighting conditions, and tunes the system before going live. They don't just install and walk away — they make sure it actually works.

4. COMPLIANCE IS NOT OPTIONAL

Facial recognition processes biometric data, which is classified as **special category data** under UK GDPR. This means it carries the highest level of data protection requirements. Getting compliance wrong can result in significant fines, reputational damage, and legal challenges.

A specialist provider will help you navigate:

- **UK GDPR requirements** — lawful basis for processing, data minimisation, retention policies, and data subject rights.
- **The Surveillance Camera Code of Practice** — the 12 guiding principles that govern how surveillance systems (including facial recognition) should be operated in the UK.
- **Data Protection Impact Assessments (DPIAs)** — mandatory before deploying facial recognition. A specialist can guide you through this process or provide templates tailored to FR.
- **Signage and transparency** — making sure the public knows facial recognition is in use and understands their rights.
- **Evolving regulations** — biometric data rules are changing. The EU AI Act, potential UK-specific legislation, and ICO guidance updates all affect how FR should be deployed.

A generalist provider may not even be aware these requirements exist — let alone be equipped to help you meet them. At FaiceTech, compliance is built into every deployment from day one.

5. ONGOING SUPPORT MATTERS

Facial recognition isn't a "fit and forget" technology. It needs ongoing attention to maintain performance:

- **Database hygiene** — watchlists need regular review. Outdated or incorrect entries reduce accuracy and waste resources.
- **System monitoring** — performance should be tracked continuously. If accuracy drops, it needs investigating quickly.
- **Software updates** — algorithms improve over time. A specialist provider ensures your system benefits from the latest developments.
- **Environment changes** — if your site layout changes, lighting is altered, or new cameras are added, the system needs recalibrating.

Specialist providers offer dedicated support teams who understand the technology inside out. When you call with an issue, you speak to someone who knows facial recognition — not a general helpdesk reading from a script.

6. THE REAL COST OF GETTING IT WRONG

Choosing the cheapest quote often turns out to be the most expensive decision. Here's what can go wrong with a poorly deployed facial recognition system:

- **High false alert rates** — staff waste time responding to incorrect matches, leading to alert fatigue and the system being ignored or switched off.
- **Missed detections** — the system fails to identify known individuals, defeating the entire purpose of the investment.
- **Compliance failures** — inadequate data handling, missing DPIAs, or lack of proper signage could expose your business to ICO enforcement action.
- **Reputational damage** — a badly managed system that generates complaints or negative press can undermine public trust in your organisation.
- **Wasted investment** — if the system doesn't work properly, you've spent significant money on technology that delivers no value.

The bottom line: a specialist provider may cost more upfront, but they deliver a system that actually works, stays compliant, and provides genuine return on investment. The cheapest installation is rarely the best value.

CHECKLIST: QUESTIONS TO ASK YOUR PROVIDER

Before choosing a facial recognition provider, make sure you can answer "yes" to these questions:

1. Do they specialise in facial recognition, or is it one of many products they sell?
2. Can they demonstrate proven deployments in environments similar to yours?
3. Do they conduct thorough site surveys before quoting?
4. Can they explain which recognition algorithm they use and why it suits your needs?
5. Do they provide Data Protection Impact Assessment support?
6. Is their data storage segregated and dedicated to your organisation?

7. Do they offer ongoing performance monitoring and system optimisation?
8. Can they provide references from existing clients?
9. Do they have in-house technical expertise (not just reselling third-party technology)?
10. Are they transparent about accuracy rates and system limitations?

ABOUT FAICETECH

FaiceTech is a specialist facial recognition provider based in Manchester, UK. We work exclusively with facial recognition technology, providing live alerting, retrospective search, and access control solutions to retailers, corporate organisations, and public sector clients.

Every deployment is designed around the client's specific environment, with dedicated data infrastructure, full compliance support, and ongoing performance management. We don't sell facial recognition as a bolt-on — it's all we do.

Ready to talk?

Book a demo to see FaiceTech in action, or visit our documentation library for more guides and resources.

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