You Don’t Say: Using A.I. to Monitor Federal Prison Calls

By “Coach Vance” Trefethen

***Resolved: Resolved: The United States Federal Government should significantly reform its policies regarding convicted prisoners under federal jurisdiction***

Case Summary: This plan has the federal prison system use Artificial Intelligence to transcribe and gain actionable information from recordings of phone calls coming from prisoners. Federal prison phone calls (except to an attorney) are monitored for security reasons, as you could well imagine. Threats against people on the outside, staff on the inside, or plots involving further criminal activity, or even self-incriminating admissions of guilt are heard on prison phone calls all the time. But federal prison phone monitoring is done sporadically and manually by human observers occasionally listening in. If they are recorded, nobody goes back and listens to hundreds of hours of phone calls unless a court case comes up or a crime happens and they need to hunt for evidence. But that’s after the fact, and many threats, crimes, or even suicides could be prevented by acting on information in prisoner calls immediately. AI could transcribe and flag conversations containing key words (“I’m gonna tell Jimmy to beat up Suzy if she testifies against me” … “I think I’ll kill myself” etc.) and prison officials could immediately take action to prevent problems from occurring. Several states are already doing it, with dramatic and beneficial results.

You Don’t Say: Using A.I. to Monitor Federal Prison Calls 3

OBSERVATION 1. DEFINITIONS 3

Significant 3

Reform 3

OBSERVATION 2. INHERENCY, the structure of the Status Quo. 3

Monitoring of inmate phone calls in federal prison is inadequate, and occurs only after a problem happens 3

OBSERVATION 3. We offer the following PLAN implemented by Congress and the President 3

OBSERVATION 4. SOLVENCY. AI dramatically improves information gathering from inmate phone calls. We see this in 2 sub-points. 4

A. AI can flag key words in prisoners’ phone conversations 4

B. AI prison phone monitoring yields lots of valuable information 4

OBSERVATION 5. ADVANTAGES 4

ADVANTAGE 1. Solving crime 4

AI analysis finds evidence that solves previously unsolved “cold cases” in States that have tried it 4

ADVANTAGE 2. Preventing crime 4

AI monitoring of inmate phone calls prevents crime by allowing officers to take action before it happens 4

ADVANTAGE 3. Reducing suicides. 5

Federal use of AI phone monitoring would prevent a lot of inmate suicides 5

ADVANTAGE 4. Reducing contraband 5

A. The Link: Artificial Intelligence uncovers plots about smuggling contraband into prison 5

B. The Impact: Injuries and deaths. 5

2A Evidence: Prison Phone Calls 6

INHERENCY 6

No facility has the manpower to actively monitor inmate phone calls adequately without new technology 6

Phone call data exists but no one is examining it – there’s not enough manpower 6

Phone calls from known dangerous terrorists in federal prisons are not monitored due to limited capabilities 6

HARMS / SIGNIFICANCE 6

Bombing plot discussed on a phone call in an Alaska prison, resulted in death and injury 6

Suicide is a growing problem in federal prisons 7

SOLVENCY / ADVOCACY / ADVANTAGES 7

AI monitoring in State prisons has already prevented dozens of suicides, and solves for threats of violence and contraband smuggling 7

AI saves lives both inside and outside of prison and isn’t racially biased 7

AI phone monitoring prevented 88 suicides in 2019 alone 8

AI phone analysis solved the Aniah Blanchard murder case in Alabama 8

AI phone analysis saves money, stops suicides, prevents violence and blocks contraband smuggling 8

Inmates know they’re being recorded, but they still give up lots of useful information 8

AI phone monitoring costs between $500-600 thousand/year for 1000 prisoners 9

153,248 federal prisoners 9

How much does the plan cost? Do the math: 153 x $600,000 = $91.8 million 9

Increased enforcement of existing tax laws would increase federal revenues by $1 trillion over the next decade 9

Prisons don’t need manpower to use AI: The system comes with an expert to handle the software as part of the contract 9

DISAD RESPONSES 10

AI doesn’t raise the price of prisoner phone calls (sometimes it decreases them) 10

Civil rights protected: Calls to attorneys are not monitored 10

Civil rights protected: Caller and recipient are fully aware that calls are recorded 10

No racism: The AI only looks at the words, not the caller’s identity, race or other features 10

You Don’t Say: Using A.I. to Monitor Federal Prison Calls

Everyone knows calls from prisoners in jails are supposed to be monitored and recorded. But if no one is listening in real time and no one is reviewing the recordings, then nothing really happens. But states that use artificial intelligence to transcribe and analyze prisoner phone calls have discovered, and prevented, a lot of terrible things. Please join us in affirming that: The United States Federal Government should significantly reform its policies regarding convicted prisoners under federal jurisdiction.

OBSERVATION 1. DEFINITIONS

Significant

Merriam Webster Online Dictionary copyright 2021. <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/significant> (accessed 26 June 2021)

2 a: having or likely to have [influence](https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/influence#h1) or effect

Reform

Merriam Webster Online Dictionary copyright 2021 <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/reform> (accessed 28 May 2021)

**:**to put or change into an improved form or condition

OBSERVATION 2. INHERENCY, the structure of the Status Quo.

Monitoring of inmate phone calls in federal prison is inadequate, and occurs only after a problem happens

ABC News 2019 (journalist Chris Francescani) 24 Oct 2019 US prisons and jails using AI to mass-monitor millions of inmate calls <https://abcnews.go.com/Technology/us-prisons-jails-ai-mass-monitor-millions-inmate/story?id=66370244> (accessed 1 Oct 2021) (brackets in original)

“One of the biggest operational issues that has plagued this industry of automated inmate telephone recording has been the lack of staffing to monitor every single call,” said John Shaffer, a corrections technology expert and one of the authors of the NIJ study who spent 31 years working in Pennsylvania state and county prisons. “And, frankly, most inmate calls are innocuous.” Retired warden Robert Hood, who from 2002 to 2005 ran Colorado’s ADX Florence “Supermax” federal facility, agreed. “In the three prisons where I was warden, it was pretty much reactive: a very small percentage [of inmate calls] was monitored and it was done after the fact, when there was a crime or an alleged crime, that you’d get on to your phone monitoring equipment and try and hunt down what occurred,” he said.

OBSERVATION 3. We offer the following PLAN implemented by Congress and the President

1. Implement Artificial Intelligence transcription and analysis of all inmate phone calls in the federal Bureau of Prisons system, except those protected by attorney-client privilege.

2. Funding from increased enforcement of existing tax laws.  
3. Enforcement through the federal Bureau of Prisons and the FBI.  
4. Plan begins 30 days after an affirmative ballot.   
5. All Affirmative speeches may clarify

OBSERVATION 4. SOLVENCY. AI dramatically improves information gathering from inmate phone calls. We see this in 2 sub-points.

A. AI can flag key words in prisoners’ phone conversations

David Sherfinski and Avi Asher-Schapiro 2021 (journalists for Reuters news service) “U.S. prisons mull AI to analyze inmate phone calls” <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-tech-prison/u-s-prisons-mull-ai-to-analyze-inmate-phone-calls-idUSKBN2FA0OO> (accessed 1 Oct 2021)

The technology can automatically transcribe inmates’ phone calls, analyzing their patterns of communication and flagging certain words or phrases, including slang, that officials pre-program into the system.

B. AI prison phone monitoring yields lots of valuable information

ABC News 2019 (journalist Chris Francescani) 24 Oct 2019 US prisons and jails using AI to mass-monitor millions of inmate calls <https://abcnews.go.com/Technology/us-prisons-jails-ai-mass-monitor-millions-inmate/story?id=66370244> (accessed 1 Oct 2021)

New technology driven by artificial intelligence (AI) is helping prison wardens and sheriffs around the country crack unsolved crimes and thwart everything from [violence](https://abcnews.go.com/US/inside-nightmarish-world-alabama-prisons-dojs-attempt-fix/story?id=62146416) and drug smuggling to attempted suicides -- in near real time, in some cases -- through digitally mass-monitoring millions of phone calls inside the nation’s sprawling prison and jail systems. Despite legally-mandated warnings preceding every prison phone call that the conversation is being recorded and monitored, inmates still regularly reveal astonishing amounts of incriminating information, according to technology company records provided to ABC News and interviews with law enforcement and [corrections officials](https://abcnews.go.com/US/39-states-show-decreases-prison-populations-report/story?id=65810199) using the systems in multiple states.

OBSERVATION 5. ADVANTAGES

ADVANTAGE 1. Solving crime

AI analysis finds evidence that solves previously unsolved “cold cases” in States that have tried it

David Sherfinski and Avi Asher-Schapiro 2021 (journalists for Reuters news service) “U.S. prisons mull AI to analyze inmate phone calls” <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-tech-prison/u-s-prisons-mull-ai-to-analyze-inmate-phone-calls-idUSKBN2FA0OO> (accessed 1 Oct 2021)

Bill Partridge, chief of police in Oxford, Alabama, said local forces have managed to solve cold case homicides after prisoners were flagged on the phone talking about “actually committing the murder.” Partridge’s department is one of a handful of agencies in the state that have utilized software from LEO Technologies, a California-based company, that uses Amazon Web Services (AWS) natural language processing and transcription tools to process and flag inmate calls for near real-time analysis.

ADVANTAGE 2. Preventing crime

AI monitoring of inmate phone calls prevents crime by allowing officers to take action before it happens

Stephanie Kanowitz 2021 (journalist) 20 Aug 2021 “AI on the line: Monitoring prisoners’ phone calls for criminal intent” <https://gcn.com/articles/2021/08/20/ai-prison-phone-conversations.aspx> (accessed 1 Oct 2021)

Some correctional agencies are turning to artificial intelligence to monitor inmates’ phone calls for signs of violence. Phone calls to and from inmates are regularly recorded and monitored, but some companies are using AI speech-recognition technology, semantic analytics and machine learning to flag phone calls in near real time that contain conversations indicating violence or criminal behavior. LEO Technologies, a firm that offers AI services to U.S. prisons and jails, uses cloud-based natural language processing to build a customized lexicon based on keywords, code words and local slang. Its software identifies discussions among inmates and their outside conversation partners focusing on weapons, contraband, threats to inmates, gangs, homicides, assaults or suicide. LEO investigators notify law enforcement when the system picks up suspicious language or phrases that signal criminal intent, enabling officers to take action before a problem erupts.

ADVANTAGE 3. Reducing suicides.

Federal use of AI phone monitoring would prevent a lot of inmate suicides

Stephanie Kanowitz 2021 (journalist) 20 Aug 2021 “AI on the line: Monitoring prisoners’ phone calls for criminal intent” <https://gcn.com/articles/2021/08/20/ai-prison-phone-conversations.aspx> (accessed 1 Oct 2021)

Bill Partridge, chief of police in Oxford, Ala., told [Reuters](https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-tech-prison-idUSKBN2FA0OO) that local law enforcement officers were able to solve cold homicide cases after prisoners were flagged on the phone talking about committing the murders. The Verus technology also helped prevent suicides, he said. “I think if the federal government starts using it, they’re going to prevent a lot of inmate deaths,” he said.

ADVANTAGE 4. Reducing contraband

A. The Link: Artificial Intelligence uncovers plots about smuggling contraband into prison

ABC News 2019 (journalist Chris Francescani) 24 Oct 2019 US prisons and jails using AI to mass-monitor millions of inmate calls <https://abcnews.go.com/Technology/us-prisons-jails-ai-mass-monitor-millions-inmate/story?id=66370244> (accessed 1 Oct 2021)

In Alabama, corrections officials said they caught an inmate teaching his wife [how to smuggle Suboxone](https://www.prisonlegalnews.org/news/2018/apr/2/prisons-and-jails-impose-more-restrictions-mail-visits-curtail-contraband/), which aids in opiate withdrawal, into the jail -- by dissolving the drug in water and then using a makeup brush to paint the drug onto the back of postcards that would be mailed to the jail. Another recently-uncovered alleged plot involved smuggling narcotics into a facility by secreting them inside the soles of orthopedic shoes being delivered to an inmate who had been authorized to wear them by a county doctor, according to LEO internal reports.

B. The Impact: Injuries and deaths.

Gary York 2016. (award-winning Florida state correctional officer and senior prison inspector) 4 Mar 2016 “The dangers of prison contraband smuggling” <https://www.corrections1.com/corrections-jobs-careers/articles/the-dangers-of-prison-contraband-smuggling-RrCoxajZN7umIaeQ/> (accessed 2 Oct 2021)

 Inmates high on drugs have physically injured or have killed officers with weapons that are homemade or smuggled into the prison.  Inmate escapes have caused private citizens and law enforcement injury and even death. Prison fights and riots have been caused by smuggled drugs entering our prisons because of prison drug lord competition or non-payment of drugs from one inmate to another. Staff members breaking up with an inmate during a prison romance have been attacked and injured. Many of the injuries and deaths in prison can be traced back to contraband smuggling or prison romance.

2A Evidence: Prison Phone Calls

INHERENCY

No facility has the manpower to actively monitor inmate phone calls adequately without new technology

Leo Technologies 2020 (maker of “Verus” - AI software that transcribes and analyzes prison phone calls) HERE’S WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT LEO TECHNOLOGIES AND VERUS <https://media.business-humanrights.org/media/documents/files/documents/060920_LeoTech_FactSheet.pdf> (article is undated but references events in 2019 in the past) (accessed 2 Oct 2021)

LEO Technologies was founded by former law enforcement officers (LEOs) who saw the gaps left by using old-school tactics and the need to bring policing into modern times. They saw how inmate phone services in jails and prisons routinely recorded phone calls but never gave LEOs an easy way to search for important information within specific calls. Millions of minutes of recorded phones calls could not be accessed except through hours of listening—hours that no agency or facility can spare.

Phone call data exists but no one is examining it – there’s not enough manpower

Sean Ross 2019 (journalist) YELLOWHAMMER NEWS 26 Nov 2019 “Technology that led to recoveries of Aniah Blanchard, Kamille ‘Cupcake’ McKinney could help solve Alabama’s prison crisis” <https://yellowhammernews.com/technology-that-led-to-recoveries-of-aniah-blanchard-kamille-cupcake-mckinney-could-help-solve-alabamas-prison-crisis/> (accessed 2 Oct 2021)

Respective prison phone providers across the country already offer transcription services, however, these are done manually — and normally after a specific, reactive request. No law enforcement agency has the manpower resources to transcribe or monitor every prison phone call. Simply put, this means information is out there across the country that could be used to save lives and reduce crime — yet that goldmine of data is sitting idly by, collecting digital dust as business as usual in the American corrections system nets the same old problems.

Phone calls from known dangerous terrorists in federal prisons are not monitored due to limited capabilities

Jason Hopkins 2020. (journalist) DAILY CALLER 25 March 2020 “Federal Prisons Are Failing To Monitor Communication Between Terrorist Inmates, Audit Finds” https://dailycaller.com/2020/03/25/federal-prisons-monitoring-terrorists-communications/

In cases where federal prisons were aware of terrorists in their custody, authorities were not able to conduct a complete review of their communication because of the sheer volume of correspondence. Even the few, especially dangerous inmates who required careful supervision did not receive 100% communication monitoring due to limitations of the prison’s capabilities.

HARMS / SIGNIFICANCE

Bombing plot discussed on a phone call in an Alaska prison, resulted in death and injury

Scott Schober 2015 (cybersecurity and wireless technology expert) Why Are So Many Prison Calls Being Recorded And Stored? 24 Nov 2015 <https://scottschober.com/why-are-so-many-prison-calls-be-recorded-and-stored/> (accessed 2 Oct 2021)

There is little doubt prisons need to monitor inmate calls, as prisoners have used the phone system to communicate with accomplices on the outside. In one notable case, two Alaska prisoners orchestrated a [revenge bombing plot](http://juneauempire.com/stories/072297/gustafson.html) against a witness who testified against them. In 1991 inmates Raymond Cheely Jr. and Joseph Ryan instructed three co-conspirators on the outside over the phone on how to construct and deliver a mail bomb. The witness was out of town when the bomb was delivered, but the explosion killed one family member and maimed another.

Suicide is a growing problem in federal prisons

USA TODAY 2019. (journalist Kevin Johnson) 22 Aug 2019 “Federal prison suicides were quietly rising before Jeffrey Epstein's death in a New York detention center” <https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/politics/2019/08/22/federal-prison-suicides-rising-before-jeffrey-epsteins-death/2070689001/> (accessed 2 Oct 2021)

When accused sex trafficker Jeffrey Epstein hanged himself while awaiting trial this month, it was the first recorded suicide at Manhattan’s federal detention center in 13 years. But across the vast Bureau of Prisons, suicides have been gradually ticking up even as the overall inmate population has declined. Twenty-seven federal inmates committed suicide in the fiscal year that ended in September 2018, the largest number in at least the past five years, according to prison system records. At least 21 inmates, including Epstein, have killed themselves in federal facilities since Oct. 1.

SOLVENCY / ADVOCACY / ADVANTAGES

AI monitoring in State prisons has already prevented dozens of suicides, and solves for threats of violence and contraband smuggling

ABC News 2019 (journalist Chris Francescani) 24 Oct 2019 US prisons and jails using AI to mass-monitor millions of inmate calls <https://abcnews.go.com/Technology/us-prisons-jails-ai-mass-monitor-millions-inmate/story?id=66370244> (accessed 1 Oct 2021)

But the underlying suite of AI-driven technologies being marketed to U.S. prisons and jails, which rapidly mine existing inmate recorded call databases, is beginning to change the way prisons monitor their inmate populations. The "smart prisons" industry is still evolving. The nation's two largest phone service providers to prisons and jails -- GTL and Securus, its main rival, are building out their own call analytics technologies. Securus is developing biometric voice identification technology and GTL is marketing iPad-like tablets for inmates. LEO -- which contracts with GTL -- is currently operating in five U.S. states, company officials said. LEO Technologies embeds its own investigators into the corrections and law enforcement agencies it contracts with, and those investigators seed the databases with keywords, phrases and prison slang specific to the region of the country. They then notify law enforcement partners when the system picks up suspicious language or phrasings, a rapid-response process that company officials claim has prevented dozens of attempted suicides over the past two years in several states -- after officials were able to get an inmate psychological counseling in the minutes and hours after the inmate was recorded making references to self-harm. The same process is followed when recorded conversations point to imminent threats of violence within the facility, or to plots to smuggle in contraband.

AI saves lives both inside and outside of prison and isn’t racially biased

David Sherfinski and Avi Asher-Schapiro 2021 (journalists for Reuters news service) “U.S. prisons mull AI to analyze inmate phone calls” <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-tech-prison/u-s-prisons-mull-ai-to-analyze-inmate-phone-calls-idUSKBN2FA0OO> (accessed 1 Oct 2021)

Scott Kernan, CEO of LEO Technologies and a former Secretary of the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation, said the technology is “saving lives both inside and outside of the correctional environments we monitor”. “Because we listen to all communications, we do not target a race, gender or protected group,” Kernan said.

AI phone monitoring prevented 88 suicides in 2019 alone

Leo Technologies 2020 (maker of “Verus” - AI software that transcribes and analyzes prison phone calls) HERE’S WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT LEO TECHNOLOGIES AND VERUS <https://media.business-humanrights.org/media/documents/files/documents/060920_LeoTech_FactSheet.pdf> (article is undated but references events in 2019 in the past) (accessed 2 Oct 2021)

Because of immediate keyword alerts, Verus helps support inmate health (including mental health) and safety in other ways. In 2019 alone, Verus was involved in 88 suicide prevention incidents in multiple facilities. Verus has also helped identify inmates going through opioid withdrawal or threatened by sexual assault. The immediate information from Verus has allowed staff to proactively connect at-risk inmates with critical services.

AI phone analysis solved the Aniah Blanchard murder case in Alabama

Leo Technologies 2020 (maker of “Verus” - AI software that transcribes and analyzes prison phone calls) HERE’S WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT LEO TECHNOLOGIES AND VERUS <https://media.business-humanrights.org/media/documents/files/documents/060920_LeoTech_FactSheet.pdf> (article is undated but references events in 2019 in the past) (accessed 2 Oct 2021)

The disappearance of this college student gained national attention following the appeals of her stepfather, UFC fighter Walt Harris. Following a tip about a truck, investigators added the keyword “truck” into the Verus alert list. The following day, the system flagged a phone call that revealed an inmate arrested on unrelated warrants talking about the young woman’s disappearance. Evidence from this call helped police pick up the suspect and locate Blanchard’s remains.

AI phone analysis saves money, stops suicides, prevents violence and blocks contraband smuggling

Jayson Hawkins 2020 (journalist) 1 Apr 2020 PRISON LEGAL NEWS “Artificial Intelligence for Surveillance Spreading to Prisons Around the Globe” <https://www.prisonlegalnews.org/news/2020/apr/1/artificial-intelligence-surveillance-spreading-prisons-around-globe/> (accessed 2 Oct 2021)

When analysis of a phone call detects suspicious language, the company contacts law enforcement. One company, LEO Technologies, claims that in just two years of operation it has uncovered countless contraband smuggling schemes, prevented serious incidents of violence from occurring, and stopped dozens of suicides. “Taking your life in a penal institution--that’s a huge news story, because we’re there to maintain their health and well-being,” stated Bill Partridge, the Oxford, Alabama police chief. “It [the AI technology] saves taxpayers copious amounts of money and it also helps the family because they don’t have to deal with that situation” he added.

Inmates know they’re being recorded, but they still give up lots of useful information

Sean Ross 2019 (journalist) YELLOWHAMMER NEWS 26 Nov 2019 “Technology that led to recoveries of Aniah Blanchard, Kamille ‘Cupcake’ McKinney could help solve Alabama’s prison crisis” <https://yellowhammernews.com/technology-that-led-to-recoveries-of-aniah-blanchard-kamille-cupcake-mckinney-could-help-solve-alabamas-prison-crisis/> (accessed 2 Oct 2021)

Using inmate phone calls, which are hosted by other companies on behalf of the prisons, Verus produces near real-time intelligence based on keywords and phrases selected by law enforcement. It automatically downloads, analyzes and transcribes all recorded inmate calls, proactively flagging them for review. While legally mandated warnings play at the beginning of every inmate phone call stating that each call is being recorded and monitored, inmates — and individuals on the other end of the line — still disclose an incredible amount of information, from incriminating evidence important in criminal investigations to warnings that an inmate is in danger — whether through self-harm or threats from other inmates.

AI phone monitoring costs between $500-600 thousand/year for 1000 prisoners

ABC News 2019 (journalist Chris Francescani) 24 Oct 2019 US prisons and jails using AI to mass-monitor millions of inmate calls <https://abcnews.go.com/Technology/us-prisons-jails-ai-mass-monitor-millions-inmate/story?id=66370244> (accessed 1 Oct 2021)

The system's cost can vary, LEO Technologies officials said, but generally cost between $500,000 and $600,000 a year for a corrections facility housing about 1,000 inmates.

153,248 federal prisoners

Zoukis Consulting Group 2020.(consulting service for federal convicts and families) Federal Bureau of Prisons | Federal Prison (article is undated but references events in 2020) (accessed 2 Oct 2021)

The Federal Bureau of Prisons incarcerates 153,248 federal prisoners across 37 states. These inmates are held in 127 stand-alone federal prisons, 68 satellite prison camps, and 12 private prisons.

How much does the plan cost? Do the math: 153 x $600,000 = $91.8 million

$600,000 per 1000 prisoners times 153,000 prisoners

Increased enforcement of existing tax laws would increase federal revenues by $1 trillion over the next decade

Galen Hendricks & Seth Hanlon 2021 (*Hendricks is a research associate at the Center for American Progress. Hanlon is a senior fellow at the Center* ) 19 Apr 2021 “Better Tax Enforcement Can Advance Fairness and Raise More Than $1 Trillion of Revenue” <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/economy/reports/2021/04/19/498311/better-tax-enforcement-can-advance-fairness-raise-1-trillion-revenue/> (accessed 17 June 2021)

The good news is that Congress and the Biden administration have an opportunity this year to begin rebuilding the IRS’ enforcement capabilities, direct new resources toward thoroughly auditing high-income taxpayers and corporations, and modernize the agency’s computer systems in a way that will improve both compliance and taxpayer service. By taking these steps, the United States can increase revenues by more than $1 trillion over a decade, according to multiple estimates.  In other words, investments in tax enforcement would pay for themselves and could pay for other critical investments at the same time.

Prisons don’t need manpower to use AI: The system comes with an expert to handle the software as part of the contract

Sean Ross 2019 (journalist) YELLOWHAMMER NEWS 26 Nov 2019 “Technology that led to recoveries of Aniah Blanchard, Kamille ‘Cupcake’ McKinney could help solve Alabama’s prison crisis” <https://yellowhammernews.com/technology-that-led-to-recoveries-of-aniah-blanchard-kamille-cupcake-mckinney-could-help-solve-alabamas-prison-crisis/> (accessed 2 Oct 2021)

Verus, on the other hand, is automated and proactive. And corrections facilities or the relevant associated law enforcement agency do not even have to expend manpower to constantly monitor the results produced. LEO Technologies provides each entity that uses Verus with an expert, retired law enforcement officer, from some of the best agencies in America. This individual becomes embedded in that law enforcement entity, monitoring the Verus results, helping facilitate the most effective keyword and phrase usage and forwarding relevant information to the proper investigator.

DISAD RESPONSES

AI doesn’t raise the price of prisoner phone calls (sometimes it decreases them)

Leo Technologies 2020 (maker of “Verus” - AI software that transcribes and analyzes prison phone calls) HERE’S WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT LEO TECHNOLOGIES AND VERUS <https://media.business-humanrights.org/media/documents/files/documents/060920_LeoTech_FactSheet.pdf> (article is undated but references events in 2019 in the past) (accessed 2 Oct 2021)

The service provides near real-time transcriptions, with keyword-based searches and alerts, enabled by artificial intelligence (AI). LEO Technologies has never raised the inmate phone rate of our clients and, in some cases, we have decreased the commission rate earned from inmate phone calls.

Civil rights protected: Calls to attorneys are not monitored

Leo Technologies 2020 (maker of “Verus” - AI software that transcribes and analyzes prison phone calls) HERE’S WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT LEO TECHNOLOGIES AND VERUS <https://media.business-humanrights.org/media/documents/files/documents/060920_LeoTech_FactSheet.pdf> (article is undated but references events in 2019 in the past) (accessed 2 Oct 2021)

It is also important to understand that, by law, inmate phone services cannot allow inmates to use their phones to call attorneys. In fact, phone calls to attorneys do not take place in the traditional phone room in a correctional facility. When inmates set up their phone service accounts, they are required to give their attorneys’ phone numbers. This means that Verus cannot access or monitor privileged communications.

Civil rights protected: Caller and recipient are fully aware that calls are recorded

Leo Technologies 2020 (maker of “Verus” - AI software that transcribes and analyzes prison phone calls) HERE’S WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT LEO TECHNOLOGIES AND VERUS <https://media.business-humanrights.org/media/documents/files/documents/060920_LeoTech_FactSheet.pdf> (article is undated but references events in 2019 in the past) (accessed 2 Oct 2021)

Our system abides by protocol from the ground up, which originates from departmental policy and goes all the way to rights guaranteed by the U.S. Constitution. It’s important to understand that when inmates make or receive phone calls, the facility phone service announces to both the caller and recipient that calls are recorded and monitored. Both caller and recipient must consent to the call being monitored before they are connected.

No racism: The AI only looks at the words, not the caller’s identity, race or other features

Leo Technologies 2020 (maker of “Verus” - AI software that transcribes and analyzes prison phone calls) HERE’S WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT LEO TECHNOLOGIES AND VERUS <https://media.business-humanrights.org/media/documents/files/documents/060920_LeoTech_FactSheet.pdf> (article is undated but references events in 2019 in the past) (accessed 2 Oct 2021)

From the beginning, Verus was developed to be a non-biased, objective tool. The natural language processing technology behind AI focuses only on the actual words transcribed from a phone call—not the caller’s identity. Verus has no way to search by federally protected classes which include race, age, gender, ethnicity, religion, or sexuality. Investigators may only search for calls by objective data, such as inmate name, date of call, or keyword.