

Disturbing DHS Program Designed to Assign Risk Scores to American Social Media Users

June 8, 2023 - In 2018 the Department of Homeland Security started program they code named Night Fury. The program, which DHS contracted with the University of Alabama to build, used AI to assign risk scores to social media users. Its purpose was to find people with criminal intent or who were potential terrorists. That may sound fine and dandy until you stop to think about it. Within the past couple of years, the Justice Department and other government agencies have called parents expressing their opinions at school board meetings terrorists. Night Fury is a very slippery slope that the government has no business engaging in.

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})();
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Night Fury was supposed to do quite a few things. The contract for it had the university designing systems that would have informed DHS if account were owned and operated by individuals or bots. It was also supposed to be able to track the location of account users even when GPS data wasn't available. This would have been accomplished by AI analysis of key words used in social media posts.

While there may have been significant value in such a program for watching foreign individuals, such as denying them entry into the United States, there is no indication that Night Fury wouldn't have been used here at home too. And while according to DHS the program was actually cancelled in 2019, there is no reason to believe that it wasn't simply renamed or that any relevant data to come out of the program wasn't transferred to other similar programs that the government may be operating.

The revelation that Night Fury existed at all was made by the Brennan Center for Justice through a public records request.

by Jim Malmberg

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