

All of society would have to be systems thinkers in order for persistent surveillance to be effective. To non-system thinkers, an implementation of this methodology would not be seen as revealing previous unknowns for the common good, it would be viewed as an invasion of privacy. These sorts of thinkers lack the ability to see beyond themselves and view the system at large. Implementing something (especially on this scale) on humans makes them more likely to feel attacked, and react negatively to whatever is being put in place. Systems thinking ideology should continue to be taught in an effort to expand this way of thinking, but at this point implementing this surveillance technology would cause more harm than good for society at large.

The major problem with this technology is there is no way to gain consent from every person in the general public. As a result, it would feel like a forceful invasion of privacy. Once this mindset is established, it would be almost impossible to change people's mind and convince them that it is for the best. Humans like to be in control of their lives, or at least *feel* like they are in control. All of the social media apps and Internet we interact with already have this extent of knowledge, but it is "invisible." Ironically, I think that non-systems thinkers are more comfortable with acknowledging the existence of "invisible" relationships as opposed to trying to reveal them. This stems from the popular stream of thought that people would rather not know because knowledge would require them to act – something that is not highly desired. In addition, we technically consent to this information being shared when we absent-mindedly sign the "code of conduct" on the social media and Internet platforms. Although very few of us read the fine print and understand what we are signing up for, we still feel better about it because we technically agreed and were given a "choice." There is no way to do this with the surveillance technology, so even if someone supported the idea it would feel imposed and take away the agency of individuals, causing more opposition.

There is already a large amount of distrust in today's society. A study by the Pew Research Center revealed that only 18% of Americans trust the government – the lowest it has been since 1958. They also revealed decreasing trust in CEOs and public businesses. This addresses the question of who would survey the data, be in charge of how it is used, and dictate the proper governance. Neither private companies nor the government is an appropriate option. If the government was in charge of it, the information could easily be too widespread and end up in the wrong hands. In addition, this forceful implementation of the technology would increase mistrust towards our government, which is not the direction in which we need to move as a country. Within the government, which branch would control it? The police department should be solving the crimes, not surveying all people at all times. But if there were a separate branch created to monitor this technology, how would they decide when to contact another department to take action? It would require an extremely detailed contract of when exactly the information should be shared, to limit the scope of this technology as a tool to solve heinous crimes. However, it is impossible to predict every situation, so the branch of government would often have to make split decisions on what information to share – an idea that is inherently disconcerting and would require massive amounts of trust. It is not possible to filter the constant surveillance, meaning that more harm than good would come from this.

This surveillance technology would not be any better in the hands of a private company. How would they maintain a close relationship with the government so that police could be informed of crimes, but be privately run? It would allow for personal bias to be a

threat. Private companies that currently have data to massive amounts of private information such as Facebook and Wells Fargo have recently faced large information breaches. What is to say that this wouldn't happen with the surveillance technology? These companies revealed the previously invisible relationships – a concept that was not well received by the public.

It is difficult to argue against a technology that could continue to solve crimes and better society in some aspects. However, I believe that it ultimately comes down to measuring costs and benefits of solving some crimes at the expense of the dehumanization of society. It would feel hunger-games-esque to be recorded all the time, even if you have nothing to hide. I believe that this constant surveillance would cross a line that we as society could never come back from. Often times, people turn to technology as a solution to our larger social problems that we do not want /know how to solve. This technology feels like it would be a Band-Aid for the larger systematic reduction in crime and increase in systems thinking that needs to occur. It would result in too many negative flows and relationships in other parts of the system. I do not have a suggestion as to how to go about this systematic change, but I think continuing to advance systems thinking is a good place to start.

Sources:

- <https://hbr.org/2017/01/survey-peoples-trust-has-declined-in-business-media-government-and-ngos>