

RPC 2018-014

Regarding Washington County Sheriffs' use of
Amazon.com's "Rekognition" Facial Recognition Program

(A) WHEREAS, the Washington County, Oregon Sheriffs' Department is the sole uninterrupted United States program participant^{1,2}, who, with little public disclosure began using in 2017 a pilot facial recognition program developed by Amazon.com, known as Rekognition, along with consulting services, to provide real-time facial recognition³;

(B) WHEREAS, a non-disclosure agreement between Amazon.com and the Washington County Sheriff's Department has made details surrounding these agreements difficult to obtain⁴, leaving many open-ended questions on the details of the program's capabilities and usage that may affect county residents adversely and may set a bad precedent for the United States at large;

(C) WHEREAS, organizations including the Electronic Freedom Foundation (EFF) and the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), have noted many potential problems, most notably false positives, affecting various facial recognition technologies (including Rekognition), particularly a recent test showing false positive identification largely of members of the Congressional Black Caucus⁵, which reflect the systemic problems in the recognition of people of color, younger people and women;

(D) WHEREAS, difficulties in facial recognition of various population groups may be exacerbated by documented situations of biased law enforcement agency practices⁶; and

(E) WHEREAS, Amazon.com's own shareholders⁷ and employees⁸ have joined many groups in writing letters of opposition to these technology agreements, reflecting very broadly-based concerns regarding the development of a wide spread "big brother" presence that blurs the boundaries of private commercial and government control of surveillance and other personal information data;

THEREFORE, We the Washington County Democratic Central Committee (WCDCC) of Oregon, Resolve as follows:

1. We the WCDCC, make a formal public records request for details of this agreement regarding local usage of Rekognition software and request that this information be made public at a publicly announced meeting where the Washington County sheriff's department and Amazon.com speak on this issue and active participation, and public input be encouraged from community residents and other parties such as elected officials, the ACLU and EFF;
2. We question the wisdom and public benefit of merging government surveillance data and privately owned and controlled surveillance data, since the usage and availability of such merged data might be made available to other private entities and would make security of such private data difficult or impossible to control;

3. We request our County Commission and chair⁹ as well as other elected local, state and congressional representatives, conduct appropriate reviews of public and remaining non-public details of the Amazon/Washington County Sheriffs agreement, and provide public disclosure, oversight or legislative corrective action is needed, and establish a community oversight body; and
4. We encourage and will help existing local and national groups interested in building a local community group effort to develop local ordinances to protect public and personal privacy in all areas of technology innovation (cell-site simulators, drone usage, etc. as well), working with and learning from other similar high tech community efforts (Santa Clara County, CA¹⁰, Seattle, WA along with Los Angeles, CA¹¹).

Resolution submitted by an R&PC Member – July 31, 2018

Approved by R&PC – September 4, 2018

Adopted by the WCDCC – October 24th, 2018

Notes:

- 1 - June 26, 2018 - **Orlando Police End Test of Amazon's Real-Time Facial 'Rekognition' System** – Bill Chappell, National Public Radio
<https://www.npr.org/2018/06/26/623545591/orlando-police-end-test-of-amazons-real-time-facial-rekognition-system>
- 2 - July 12, 2018 - **Orlando Police are testing Amazon's Facial Recognition software again** – Benjamin Freed, State Scoop
<https://statescoop.com/orlando-police-are-testing-amazons-facial-recognition-software-again>
- 3 - May 22, 2018 - **Amazon is Selling Facial Recognition to Law Enforcement** - Elizabeth Dwoskin, The Washington Post
<https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/the-switch/wp/2018/05/22/amazon-is-selling-facial-recognition-to-law-enforcement-for-a-fistful-of-dollars/>
- 4 - May 22, 2018 - **Amazon Teams Up With Law Enforcement to Deploy Dangerous New Face Recognition Technology** – Matt Cagle, ACLU of Northern California, Nicole Ozer, ACLU of California
<https://aclu-or.org/en/news/amazon-teams-law-enforcement-deploy-dangerous-new-face-recognition-technology-heres-how-its>
https://www.aclunc.org/docs/20180522_ARD.pdf - page=4
- 5 - July 26, 2018 - **Amazon's Face Recognition Falsely Matches 28 Members of Congress with Mugshots** – Jacob Snow, Technology & Civil Liberties Attorney, ACLU of Northern California
<https://www.aclu.org/blog/privacy-technology/surveillance-technologies/amazons-face-recognition-falsely-matched-28>
- 6 - **Street Level Surveillance – Facial Recognition** – Electronic Freedom Foundation
<https://www.eff.org/pages/face-recognition>
- 7 - June 18, 2018 - **Amazon Shareholders Call for Halt of Facial Recognition Sales to Police** – Matt McFarland, CNN
<https://money.cnn.com/2018/06/18/technology/amazon-facial-recognition/>
- 8 - June 21, 2018 - **Amazon Workers Demand Jeff Bezos Cancel Face Recognition Contracts With Law Enforcement** - Kate Conger, Gizmodo
<https://gizmodo.com/amazon-workers-demand-jeff-bezos-cancel-face-recognition-1827037509>
- 9 - July 27, 2018 - **Justice League of Washington County Facebook post**
<https://www.facebook.com/crimjusticeleague/posts/359667554567671>
- 10 - June 15, 2016 – **A California County Breaks New Ground for Surveillance Transparency** – Shahid Buttar, Electronic Freedom Foundation
<https://www.eff.org/deeplinks/2016/06/california-county-breaks-new-ground-surveillance-transparency>
- 11 - August 7, 2017 – **West Coast Jurisdictions Advance Community Oversight of Police Surveillance** – Shahid Buttar, Electronic Freedom Foundation
<https://www.eff.org/deeplinks/2017/08/west-coast-jurisdictions-advance-community-oversight-police-surveillance>