Face recognition technology in public places

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Currently, technologyis rising, along with suspected terrorist attacks. Mobile phones and computers have minimized its size to an incredibly small size it was almost unimaginable in the years before. Subsequently, bombs could be as small, but the threat is still as massive. In this light, scientists and engineers have concocted devices to help alleviate this threat to society.

Unfortunately, to this date, face recognition technology in public places remains ineffective, as it even violates people's right to privacy.

There are many reasons behind the pursuit of this technology. There are questions and ethical concerns behind the arguments. However, one can be certain that this technology is still at its tender stage and should not be used until it is at the state of perfection. In this light, this essay aims to give light to certain issues regarding this matter.

First, this kind of technology is still not foolproof. It does not accurately identify terrorists. Second, it has a strong potential for misuse and abuse. It has been used without the consent or knowledge of the people, violating their right to privacy.

Last, the expected improvement in security is not justified by its costs. These are the basic inquiries one should be able to deliberate on regarding the matter.

Face recognition teechnology is yet to prove its worth to the society. It was found out during tests that it has failed at 38% of the cases. Boston reported that the techonology aimed to point a terrorist from the crowd by comparing the images with those in their system. What came out was a depressingfailure.

The technology was still too objective that it failed to recognize slight changes on the faces of these people. This was only through a test run in a rather select sample. What more could have happened if this was a real life scenario?

In this light, one can say that when it failed at that percentage, the system chose innocent people. These people could be passers-by, simply coincidental that they were there when the system detected them. It cannot be helped that even total strangers have similar characteristics, and the system was unable to be accurate on this aspect.

This technology is still inaccurate. A person's face could change completely even when there were minor changes to his entire look. The accuracy of the technology also relies on how similar the image is in comparison to the image in the system, a slight different in lighting and angle can alter the face of the person.

In this case, a terrorist may not be detected, and in its place is an innocent person. In this light, ABC News also mentioned that if this is the condition of the technology, then two stangers will look more alike than two different pictures of the same person.

Face recognition technology cannot be experimented on a real life situation. It would be more than a risk. It would have been a mistake.

Barnaby Feder of the New York Times also mentioned that this technology was quite a promising piece againstterrorism. However, their tests also failed. The technology experienced difficulty. On the other hand, there are establishments who already use the technology in question, like casinos.

It was mentioned in the article that face recognition technology could be a requirement in more establishments in the future. Unfortunately, with the presense of skeptisms and flawed eperiments, producers of this technology are yet to mark their points in history.

They are inproving over the years, but they have not come up with the technology that will find perfectly match the face of a person to the database, and therefore a suspicious person or a criminal. Alice Lipowicz of Washington Technology wrote that the technology failed in another experiment at the Super Bowl in 2001.

When the technology was used, it came out with too many false positives that they immediately called the experiment a total failure.

Another argument against this technology is brought about by the fact that this has great potential for misuse and abuse. Given that the people are being viewed by a camera and objectively scrutinized by the system and database, one person is studied and judged by it. Furthermore, it is not only the faces that these cameras capture.

It also captures the actions that these people are doing. That is not the purpose of the technology, but because the system is trying to ID everyone who could match a certain culprit, this technology is overlooking the essense of the person's actions.

He is judged by his face and actions when he shouldn't be judged at all. He shouldn't even be watched by another person who might have biases and prejudices. This, by itself, is an ethical question: should these people be watched? Who are watching them?

Lipowicz also mentioned that the technology is crawling close to becoming unethical. The article mentioned that when drivers are given their license, their pictures are taken into a face recognition database and used for future investigative purposes.

Before these people are even able to know about investigations their names and faces are already part of the system for scrutiny and matching. This becomes a question in people's minds because it can be related to intrusive surveillance and tracking, as mentioned in the same article. This means that even if the people are not involved, because of the technology, they are made involved in the system.

Unfortunately, this is still an expanding research as the technology is updated and organizations, especially the government, make use of it. Despite the concern on people's privacy, perhaps they opted to choose the larger purpose of its creation: the safety of the people against terror. Those who are trying to protect the people should consider this: who are they protecting?

From whom are they protecting these people? Why are they protecting these people? If their tools would be objective in detecting the faces of these suspicious people, then their objectives as human beings should be objective as well. Are they judging the person based on what they see on screen?

Are they judging them based on the name on which that face matches? If the face and name was ill matched, should they still be judged? Perhaps when those behind the cameras, with the database at hand, are able to answer this, then they should be able to bring brighter light to the situation.

Furthermore, this technology captures people's faces and identities without the consent or knowledge of the person. It is always important, as it is ethical, for a person to be told that he or she is going to be watched. Although doing this gives potential to a change in their behavior while being watched, the people should always be told when the cameras are on them.

The reason behind giving the consent is that the people should agree that they are being watched for the benefit of everyone's safety. They should be informed of their objectives, like finding the terrorist among the crowd. In relation to their right to privacy, they should be able to act upon their wish without being judged by it.

In a crowd, they could be on a phone call or talking with a friend, and those actions may bare negative implications depending on how those behind the cameras are looking at them.

This is also to prevent the possibility of having those observations used for something else. As mentioned earlier, this technology has the potential for misuse and abuse. Just because these people are able to retrieve information via these cameras does not mean that they should freely use these.

If the information is to be compared to another set retrieved from another location, then the person is objectified—overlooking the fact that he is human and unique from everybody else. Stereotyping, biases and prejudices could rise and add greater problems to the technology, despite its already faulty results in finding terrorists.

Last, in today's rampant pace, technology never comes cheaply. By the description of the technology alone, one is given the hint of how much it

could cost. There are no exact digits for the curious mind, but there is an implied amount.

The technology is able to measure, study, compare and match random faces to those already in the database. The scrutinizing process by which this technology aimed to protect the people could be very extensive that one could only think about the many brilliant minds that worked together to create the prototype. Although the technology is not yet full proof, it is still expensive.

In this light, if the technology is not yet at its best, why should anyone make use of it? Although attached with the package is the promise that they could be safer, the disadvantages still seemes to outweight its benefits. As mentioned in this article, face recognition technology is still a growing study.

To prematurely use it, while simultaneously paying a high amount for it, would not allow the technology to fulfill its promise—like of any product: the output worthy of the amount.