

**BREVET DE TECHNICIEN SUPÉRIEUR**  
**SERVICES INFORMATIQUES**  
**AUX ORGANISATIONS**  
**SESSION 2021**  
**SUJET**  
**ÉPREUVE E1- CULTURE ET COMMUNICATION**  
**Sous épreuve U12**  
**EXPRESSION ET COMMUNICATION**  
**EN LANGUE ANGLAISE**

Durée : 2 heures coefficient : 2

Matériel autorisé : DICTIONNAIRE UNILINGUE  
CALCULATRICE NON AUTORISÉE POUR CETTE ÉPREUVE  
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## **‘They track every move’: how US parole apps created digital prisoners**

### *Is smartphone tracking a less intrusive reward for good behaviour or just a way to enrich the incarceration industry?*

In 2018, William Frederick Keck III pleaded guilty in a court in Manassas, Virginia, to possession with intent to distribute cannabis. He served three months in prison, then began a three-year probation. He was required to wear a GPS ankle monitor before his trial and then to report for random drug tests after his release. Eventually, the state reduced his level of monitoring to scheduled meetings with his parole officer. Finally, after continued good behaviour, Keck’s parole officer moved him to Virginia’s lowest level of monitoring: an app on his smartphone.

Once a month, Keck would open up the Shadowtrack app and speak his answers to a series of questions so that a voice-recognition algorithm could confirm it was really him. He would then type out answers to several more questions – such as whether he had taken drugs – and the app would send his responses and location to his parole officer. Unless there was a problem, Keck would not have to interact with a human and the process could be completed during a TV ad break.

But for Keck, being put on to the app didn’t feel like a less intrusive reward for good behaviour. When downloading Shadowtrack, users must consent to having their location monitored in the background on their phone so parole officers can send “silent” location requests at any time. “It was cool to not have to report to a probation officer, it was cool to not have to take drug tests any more,” Keck says. “But that peace of mind, of not having somebody track your every move ... it was like being locked up again.”

Virginia has used Shadowtrack since autumn 2015 and about 11,000 Virginians are monitored by the app, says Dale Jacobson, who runs the Virginia Department of Corrections’ voice-verification biometrics unit.

“It’s saving countless hours on the officer’s part,” Jacobson says. He believes, from anecdotal evidence, that slightly fewer low-risk probationers are getting arrested since Virginia began using Shadowtrack instead of calling landlines at probationers’ curfew locations. As the pandemic wore on, the department started using the app’s video-conference function to conduct safe meetings with probationers deemed at higher risk of reoffending. “I can’t imagine it going away,” Jacobson says.

Shadowtrack is one of an array of apps that, boosted by the Covid-19 Pandemic, are increasingly being used in state criminal justice systems and federal immigration courts to track people while they await trial or are on probation or parole. They are easier to install than GPS ankle bracelets, come with a tantalising variety of analytics features, and are much cheaper. In some jurisdictions, the person being monitored must pay a daily fee instead of the justice agency purchasing the service.

Ease of use is one of the aspects that most worries civil liberties groups and prison reformers about probation tracking apps. The companies marketing the apps – including BI Incorporated, Outreach Smartphone Monitoring, TrackTech, Telmate and others – say the tools will lead to lower incarceration rates and replace stigmatising and often physically painful ankle bracelets.

The next generation of monitoring technology promises to go even further. Researchers at Purdue University in Indiana, funded by a federal grant, are combining tracking apps with devices that monitor the user’s cortisol levels and heart rate as markers for stress. That biometric data, along with location histories and other information collected through apps, will be fed into algorithms to determine whether a person is engaging in risky behaviour that could lead to reoffending, potentially sending an automatic alert to a parole officer.

*Todd feathers*

*The Guardian*

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