

Information Policy/Technology in the News

Gene E Starr

University of South Florida

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Kiersty Cox

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Privacy is always a concern when it comes to information policy and technology developments. An article by Scharon Harding, which was retrieved from ACM TechNews, but published originally by Ars Technica, brings attention to a recent partnership that has alarmed privacy advocates. Local law enforcement agencies will soon be allowed to request footage from Amazon's Ring smart cameras through platforms such as Flock Safety (Harding, 2025). The system is voluntary for both local law enforcement and customers, but the issue lies in the fact that the platform, Flock Safety, is reported to be widely used by federal agencies despite not being in a partnership (Harding, 2025). Another issue is that the platform will gain access to footage with facial recognition from Ring cameras (Harding, 2025). An assessment of this event regarding stakeholders, possible policy implications, and my own understanding of the event will be done.

Assessment

A possible policy implication that I perceive from the problem is to ensure that organizations that manage surveillance platforms are restricting the usage of the footage to only the relevant investigation. In the article, a quote by Guariglia states that "Even without formal partnerships with federal authorities, data from these surveillance companies flow to agencies like ICE through local law enforcement" (Harding, 2025). This means that collected footage is being used outside of its original intended use without the knowledge or consent of the customer. Another policy implication is ensuring individuals can be informed of or have a say regarding the use of facial recognition on them. Harding (2025) quotes Schroeder viewing "... the new feature for

Ring cameras as “invasive for anyone who walks within range of” a Ring doorbell, since they likely haven’t consented to facial recognition being used on them.” At the moment there seems to be no way for an individual to know that such technology is being used on them. This information policy topic would have various stakeholders related and they would be customers, the public, law enforcement, Ring, Amazon, and Flock.

My own understanding of the event is that it discusses the balance between privacy and safety through the use of information technology. Such an initiative, that is a voluntary opt-in, does seem beneficial to the community for safety and law enforcement regarding collecting evidence during investigations. However, there also appears to be conflict with frameworks such as the Fair Information Practice Principles (FIPP). Local law enforcement, which are the original intended users of the data, giving footage to federal agencies violates these principles. People being unaware of the use of facial recognition on them would also violate the FIPP.

Conclusion

The implications of this event for information professionals and society are to ensure that organizations focused on surveillance are collecting data responsibly, using it responsibly, and taking steps to protect the information privacy of the individual. The concerns that Harding highlighted are a result of failures to adhere to existing frameworks such as the FIPP. The information privacy concerns should not be overshadowed by the benefits the initiative brings.

Reference

Harding, S. (2025, October 17). *Ring cameras are about to get increasingly chummy with law enforcement.* Ars Technica.

<https://arstechnica.com/gadgets/2025/10/ring-cameras-are-about-to-get-increasingly-chummy-with-law-enforcement>