

Luzzi meeting

NOTE: THIS IS NOT VERBATIM. Some things are paraphrased. We made it as accurate as we could.

9am October 6, 2022. ISEC 140

Attendees:

SVP for research David Luzzi

Building Manager Elham Ghabbor

(Remote) Anita — some sort of IRB specialist

~55 ISEC Faculty and Students

Meeting begins:

Luzzi: explains his role by explaining research and cybersecurity to us all. He was a graduate student, lived our lives. Was a faculty advisor. Is now a “facilitator of our research program”

Referred to his “ad hoc” visits around the place. “If there was an error here it is in communication”. Why did I send my notifications about these issues to faculty and not students? Because it is the “right way” to communicate to research groups.

This is the first town hall to discuss the sensors “being distributed” amongst the building.

(The above part took 8ish minutes)

Student: why wasn't consent required for this

Luzzi: Anita is online dropping her kids off at school, she will join soon to discuss IRB. show of hands who has experience with IRB?

~1/2 of room raises hands

Luzzi: Faculty should not participate in hand raising

Student: Why should faculty not participate?

Luzzi: Faculty should participate, not in hand raising though

Luzzi explains what IRB does. Says “calling this something about monitoring people is wrong. This is desk occupancy”

Student: who are we monitoring if not people

Luzzi: any heat source

Student: what other heat source would it be

Luzzi: could be a service animal or something but I guess yeah its a human. We don't know if it is a person who normally uses that desk or someone else. No individual data goes back to the server only suitelevel data. We already collect card data and that is individualized data. We live

in an age of data. How does the university handle covid. I was very involved and it was a success. Data is very important to being able to run an equitable system. ISEC is the best building to do this in because it covers all of the university. *Lists all the labs on all the floors and says what research happens here*

Student: you are describing what happens in this building which we know. Its not the point of this meeting. You are collecting data. This is a privacy issue

Luzzi: we are not collecting individual data

Student: it doesn't matter, you are monitoring us and collecting the data for science

Luzzi: "we are not doing science here." We could be doing this with humans watching and keeping track

Student: who from the faculty did you consult with to design the experiment.

Luzzi: I am faculty. I am research faculty. I told the faculty and they had opportunity to respond

Student: we are upset because you did this without our consent. What is your plan for the data exactly

Luzzi: this is a big question. I hope that everyone understands that the data gathering is independent of any human. I hear everyone feeling emotion that this is monitoring you. It is largely monitoring heat away from desks right now. How will the data be used? We want to know how data will be utilized in different kinds of research. We want to see how students move around the lab.

Student: on the 6th floor we have an IOT lab where we have to give consent to go in there.

Luzzi: We submitted to IRB and they said nothing about the design of the experiment requires

Faculty: I asked IRB and there was no process so you did not go to IRB this is false

Luzzi: Ok you're right, I went to HRPP who determined that IRB was unnecessary.

Faculty: Is the only reason it does not fall under IRB because the data will not be published?

Luzzi: I will turn it over to Anita now to explain the IRB process

note at this point 5-7 hands are raised

Everyone (overlapping): we are not done asking questions

Student: the cost per floor of installing these was about \$10,000 which is \$50k for the building. This feels like a waste of money. Why not have students self report. This is more than a grad student's stipend.

Luzzi: You are thinking in units of grad student stipends which is great. All the good research work gets done at the unit of grad student stipends. This is a standard set around the world by the US government. However, hiring a person to monitor you would be a lot more than 50k

Student: no one asked for this project and we do not want it so don't do it

Luzzi: the university is doing well on research. Show of hands who thinks Northeastern is doing good research?

Student: this is supposed to be a listening session to address concerns. Please answer the question

Luzzi: I am trying to listen- I am listening. How will we bring in more faculty and students in the world of finite assets. Our world is space constrained. The building costs 400 million dollars. How many units of grad student stipend is that? It is critically important. We need to understand how we use our research assets.

Student: if you want to understand how research is done, dont piss off everyone in this building

Luzzi: we will have more of these sessions

Student: I would rather be doing research than being at this meeting

Luzzi: or sleeping I guess. Any other questions?

Student: The sensors are only useful if they are being triggered by people, otherwise the data is meaningless, so you are using human subjects

Luzzi: there is a lot of concern on the sixth floor. Your lived experience is more desk-centric when you are in the building. It is my opinion that people on the 6th floor would feel that these sensors are a bigger part of their day. You are the cybersecurity lab

Student: And privacy. Cybersecurity and privacy. The privacy part is relevant right now

Luzzi: yes, I know, also privacy. I know, I'm the one who signed off, approving your institute.

Faculty: you're saying you're going to collect data. What are you going to do with that data? What exactly?

Luzzi: we want to understand how desk assets are utilized. A couple of scenarios: a growing interest among undergrads want to get involved in research. There's no way we can provide individual desks for every grad student and undergrad. We need to have a desk available for grad students. If we are spending money on new buildings then we are not spending it on other things. If desk utilization is 60% then it has to be able to grow.

Student: you're aggregating sensors into individual floors

Luzzi: only coincidentally because that is how the building was designed. What we want to know is desk utilization in different types of research

Student: we are robotics and we are there all the time but many other students on our floor are only there a small amount of the time. This skews the data and could end in people losing their desk

Luzzi: this data will be foundational data. Faculty members working on finding space for engineering. Everyone is thinking about students at desks. We also think about faculty. Young faculty don't have many students to begin with. That faculty member grows quickly and that is done in "units of grad student". Its not a magical sequence of equations

Student: it would have been helpful if the students were involved. Admin did this unilaterally

Student (or maybe Faculty I couldn't see): number 1 should be involving the stakeholders in the space

Luzzi: the administration is us (points at himself and building manager and Anita on the zoom call)

Student: can you answer the prior questions: how is this different than 6th floor IOT lab? Which faculty was involved? Can I have your blessing to put another heat source under my desk to trigger the monitor?

Luzzi: yeah sure, you could all figure out how to subvert it you're all very smart. What is the IOT lab?

Faculty: it is exactly the same. Just the fact that the sensor is collecting data leaks information. This data from these sensors has no encryption so it has no privacy.

Luzzi: the biggest risk to this experiment is active subversion of this experiment by students. Hacking these devices is illegal. Let's be police-

Faculty: we are allowed to observe wireless traffic

Luzzi: Yes I have spoken to <student> about this

Luzzi misgenders a student

Luzzi: let's be cops

Student: Anyone can connect to these sensors. If we think about this, other people can detect the traffic so someone could know if I'm in the office late at night and about to leave. They could be outside waiting. It's a safety issue

Faculty: That is true, traffic from the monitors can be received by anyone.

Luzzi: you need an ID for an individual monitoring

Student: our labs have windows so anyone can determine when we come and go and detect the traffic to find our unique IDs

Luzzi: *raises his voice, interrupts the student* let's not extrapolate. Lets throw it to anita

Anita (some sort of IRB specialist?) speaking over zoom on a laptop. No one can hear her

Student: We can't hear her

Luzzi ignores this

Faculty raises hand

Luzzi: Dave what is your question?

Faculty: I'm Cristo. All this info about IRB is news to me. I've done a lot of work with IRB and this is not how it went at all.

Other Faculty: is the difference that we are using it for internal research but not publishing?

Anita cant hear anything

Building Manager repeats question, Anita still cannot hear

Luzzi: please go up to the laptop to ask yourself

Faculty goes to laptop where Anita is on zoom and starts repeating the question

Luzzi: *interrupts faculty* please introduce yourself

Faculty: *introduces self* Is the difference between this and regular IRB about the data only being used internally

Luzzi: *interrupts Anita immediately* *says to faculty member* this is not a trial this is not a court of law. You are trying to make it sound like that is the only difference.

Lots of overlapping arguing

Student: If I were to use this data inappropriately who would be to blame?

Luzzi: please let your colleagues with their hands raised ask their questions.

Student: the first day I arrived my desk had a box with an ID and I'm assigned to the desk so it is identifiable.

Student: any person anywhere near isec could get this data. Even if you have good intentions someone else could get this data

Luzzi: I could design a device that could just increment a variable without connecting between devices

Student: but the desk has a unique id

Luzzi: there has to be some trust here. I gave permission to the federal government to learn information about me. *waves phone in the air* I give my phone permission to collect my data and not have it hacked.

Everyone starts talking at the same time with basic idea being "but we didn't give consent/permission"

Luzzi smirks

Student: is there anything that could come out of this conversation that could prevent sensors from being added to our desk

Luzzi: do you have a sensor under your desk

Student: no but I assume you will put one back

Luzzi: your desk space is always going to be an asset

Student: so, no

Luzzi: can we have an intellectual conversation?

Other student: that was condescending

Luzzi: What?

Other student: that was condescending

Luzzi: yes it was condescending I'm sorry. I just don't want to be interrupted. I want to have a conversation about consent

Building manager: it's 10am

Luzzi: I have to go now but we will schedule another meeting. I promise.

Student: I have a question. my research has a wireless experiment and I was supposed to collect data on 28 september and it had interference because of the monitors which ruined my data. I analyzed the device and it is transmitted on the same range as my device. An industry partner visited and I had nothing to show

Luzzi: Are you in <Faculty>'s lab?

Student: No, I'm in <other faculty>'s lab.

Luzzi: We know about what happened there. We live in a world of interference. Any number of things could affect your research. The university has a facility where you can run the demo for your industry partner where there is guaranteed to be no interference.

Student: that facility is in Burlington I'm not going to Burlington

Luzzi: we go to Burlington all the time. We know that happened, but stuff like this happens. This is maybe a first experience for you but it is not for me. I have a long career.

Student: I didn't know the sensors had been installed so I didn't even know I should go to Burlington

Luzzi: I have to go but my point is the university is complex and does every grad student need to know everything going on in the university? No. That would be too much information.

general protests to this

Luzzi gets up and starts to walk out

Luzzi: I really have to go. I have lots of obligations. We will do this again unless you don't want to show up. At the end of the day remember my words: this has nothing to do with individuals. I love you all because you do good research. This is about making the university more successful. I feel really energized right now.

Luzzi exits the room