**Friday Podcasts**

Name: Sanjay Jagadeesh

**Episode Title:** “The End of Privacy as We Know It?” **Podcast:** *The Daily* **Date:** Feb. 10, 2020

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| **Headings** (after)  Facial Recognition technology  Dangers of Facial Recognition  Clearview AI  Use of technology:   * Benefits * Manipulation * Positive or Negative   Hoan Ton-That   * Background * Start of Clearview AI   Selling Technology  Controversy | **Notes** (during)  Private company offering a radical new tool to solve crimes using facial recognition.   * Database of images far bigger than anything ever constructed by the U.S government.   Law enforcement has had access to facial recognition tools for years.  This company has taken public photos from all over the open web and has a massive database of billions of photos.   * Facebook * Venmo * Twitter * Educational Sites * Employment Sites   The company says that you can enter a picture of a suspect and identify them in seconds.  ~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~  Big tech corporations (such as Google in 2011) have said that they can make a powerful facial recognition tool but that they aren’t because it could be used in bad ways.  If this facial recognition technology was made public, it would be the end of being anonymous in public (privacy). Anyone can know who you are any time they can take a photo of your face.  ~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~   * Company: Clearview AI * Website: clearview.ai (pretty bare). * Uses a fake address. * LinkedIn has one employee listed for Clearview AI: a sales manager names John Good (who could also be fake)   A venture capital firm and Peter Thiel (a big name in Silicon Valley) have invested in Clearview AI ($7 million).  Hoan Ton-That: Genius coder behind Clearview AI. Vietnamese Royalty but from Australia. Uses the fake name “John Good” on LinkedIn.  ~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~  Law enforcement is already using the technology.   * Spreading like wildfire (they love it).   Over 600 law enforcement agencies have tried the app, including the Department of Homeland Security and the F.B.I.   * Local and federal users   Retired police Chief from Indiana:   * One of the first departments to start using the app. * Were able to solve previously unsolved cases quickly. * App was able to identify people that couldn’t be found on the government database. * Much more effective.   Using government databases, police needed a direct full-face photo (a mugshot, driver’s license photos, etc.). With Clearview AI, a person could be concealing their face and still be identified (even if they were just in the background of the image).  When the reporter asks the officers to run her face through the app, the officers would say that nothing showed up and then would stop talking to her.   * One officer explains that they got a call from the Clearview company asking why they were uploading a New York Times reporter’s photo. * Clearview had flagged the reporter’s face so that they got an alert when someone tried to run it through the app.   Clearview can monitor who law enforcement is looking for and be able to manipulate the results.  Technology is worth it for government agencies (easier to find criminals), though it is a privacy nightmare.   * Worth it if done for the right reasons.   Don’t know much about the company.  ~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~  Hoan Ton-That:   * 31 years of age. * Liked computers. * moved to San Francisco in 2007 after dropping out of college. * Built Facebook apps. * Met Richard Schwartz (who worked for Mayor Rudy Giuliani in the 1990s)   Ton-That and Schwartz started a facial recognition company together (Ton-That was reading about facial recognition and machine learning).  ~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~  Got billions of photos from the internet (their technology was 99% accurate). Sold to government agencies.  Hoan Ton-That brushed over the fact that Clearview may be flagging/blocking certain people (called it a “bug”).  Clearview is selling to law enforcement and a few private companies for security reasons. Says that they won’t sell it to bad actors or bad governments.   * No regulations. * Clearview can sell to whoever it wants. * Investors predict that one day, all consumers can use the product.   Ton-That says that the tech. won’t become public.   * Government tech. usually becomes available to the public, however.   ~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~  Lack of regulation on facial recognition, though some places are now starting to ban it.  Social media companies are now demanding that photos should not be scraped from their websites. | **Academic vocabulary…**  Breakthrough  Radical  Authoritarian  Repercussions  Anonymous  Astounding  Manipulate  Colleagues  Eccentric  Conservative  Revolutionize  Barred |
| **Technical terminology…**  Facial Recognition  Database  Clearview AI  Direct full-face photo  Machine learning  AI  Algorithms  Public scraping  Image recognition  Hoan Ton-That  Richard Schwartz  Peter Thiel |

With & Against the Grain

Regarding the current use of this facial recognition app…

* **Read with the grain** by arguing why Clearview AI should continue to make the app available to law enforcement agencies. [100 words minimum]

Clearview AI should continue to make the app available to law enforcement agencies as it can make society safer. As talked about in the podcast, the ability to enter a face, even one obscured or in the background, into the app and be able to identify the person has the potential to make finding criminals much easier. This can be seen in the podcast when the retired chief of a police department in Indiana said that they were ale to solve many previously unsolved cases using Clearview AI’s facial recognition technology. This kind of revolutionary technology that can make communities and society much safer from criminals should continue to be available to law enforcement agencies.

* **Read against the grain** by questioning the current use and distribution of this app. [100 words minimum]

Clearview AI should not make the app available to the numerous privacy and safety concerns it poses. It is obvious that Clearview AI can monitor and manipulate the results of searches using its app, which leads to an issue of manipulation and whether the app is objective. Also, as discussed in the podcast, technology that the government uses sometimes becomes available to the public. If this technology becomes available to general society, it will pose many privacy and safety concerns. The podcast talks about this when it says that “it would be the end of privacy as we know it.” The complete lack of privacy can lead to safety issues such as harassment or stalking.

Unanswered Questions / Research Questions

* Identify unanswered questions and/or generate research questions based on this podcast. 5-10 questions total.

1. Why is the government allowing Clearview AI to be able to sell this technology to whoever it wants?
2. What are some ways that facial recognition technology could be used for bad?
3. Why does Clearview AI list a fake address on their website/are so secretive?
4. Why do Clearview AI let themselves monitor and manipulate searches using their technology (what do they get from it?)
5. What could the repercussions of using the facial recognition technology for bad be?