



Stop LAPD Spying Coalition

What is Predictive Policing?

Predictive Policing, is a police strategy, that applies secret computer algorithms to past crime data to “predict” where crime will be committed and who will commit crime. In reality, hidden in computer language, predictive policing further legitimizes speculative and hunch based policing that feeds into the larger system of institutional racism and state violence.

LAPD uses two different programs: PredPol and LASER (Los Angeles Strategic Extraction and Restoration)

Predpol: claims to predict **where** crime will happen

- Predpol is a company that profits from selling its software to police.
- Predpol’s computer algorithms¹ claims to use communities’ calls for police to “predict” where crime will be committed.
- Police concentrate their presence in areas predicted by the software- these areas are called “hotspots”.

Operation LASER: claims to predict **who** will commit a crime

- LASER uses past crime data and criminal records to create “Chronic Offender Bulletins,”² similar to most-wanted posters, which identify specific people as likely “future” criminals.
- Police pay special attention to those people with a Chronic Offender Bulletin and the neighborhoods in which they live.
- LASER also uses other spying tools, such as license plate scanners, closed-circuit television, and cell phone trackers, to track and trace people³.

Why should I be concerned?

Predictive policing creates a feedback loop of injustice

- Black, Brown, and working poor neighborhoods have been more heavily policed for decades. Black and Brown people are stopped, detained, frisked, and arrested more often than their white counterparts.^{4 5}
- Predictive policing continues the never-ending cycle of policing the same people. Predpol sends police into a community and police will inevitably target Black and Brown people⁶.

Predictive policing masks racist policing practices behind computer algorithms

- Predictive policing claims to be fair and neutral and driven only by community members who are calling police. However no matter how or why police are sent into a community they always target and harass Black or Brown people and the same violent policing tactics are used.

¹ An algorithm is a step-by-step procedure for solving a problem or accomplishing some end, especially by a computer.

² Chronic Offender Bulletins include physical descriptors, physical oddities, gang affiliation, prior crimes committed, parole or probation status, vehicles, areas they frequent, and contact with law enforcement. <https://cvpcs.asu.edu/sites/default/files/content/events/Los%20Angeles%20Western%20SPI%20Workshop.pdf>

³ <http://www.cbsnews.com/news/lapd-uses-big-data-to-target-criminals/>

⁴ <https://www.aclusocal.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/99227648-Racial-Profiling-the-LAPD.pdf>

⁵ <https://www.aclu.org/report/report-war-marijuana-black-and-white?redirect=criminal-law-reform/war-marijuana-black-and-white>

⁶ <https://oaklandnorth.net/2016/11/07/critics-say-a-predictive-policing-system-could-further-racial-bias-in-oakland/>

Police use the hotspots and suspect lists the computer creates to justify the continued harassment and abuse of communities

- Police will put you and your neighborhood under increased scrutiny just because someone in your neighborhood is listed on a Chronic Offender Bulletin.
- Police will consider you more suspicious just because you are in a “hotspot ⁷.”
- Labeling a neighborhood a crime hot spot means more police. Under the law, the computer “predictions” will make it easier for police to argue that they had “reasonable suspicion” to justify a stop and frisk, or “probable cause” to justify an arrest.⁸

Continued militarization of policing: War abroad and war at home

- Predpol’s technology was first used by the military in Iraq and was funded partly by grants from the Army Research Office.⁹
- Predpol’s developers have made direct comparisons between “enemy combatants” and people in the United States they defined as “gang members.”¹⁰
- LASER uses CIA-developed software¹¹.

Profit-driven public safety

- The companies that sell “predictive” police technologies profit off concerns about public safety while poor communities and communities of color suffer the consequences.
- There is no good evidence that predictive policing programs reduce crime or improve public safety¹².

What can I do about it?

- **Host a focus group** in your community and start the conversation about policing and its impact on the community!
- **Go to the Los Angeles Board of Police Commission** and demand that they stop using predictive policing programs. Oakland community residents did it - so can we!
- **Join our Campaign.** We meet every 4th Tuesday of the month at 6pm at Los Angeles Community Action Network located at 838 E. 6th St. (x street Gladys St.)
- **Contact us!** Stoplapdspying@gmail.com or call (424) 209-7450

⁷ <http://law.emory.edu/elj/content/volume-62/issue-2/articles/predicting-policing-and-reasonable-suspicion.html>

⁸ Illinois v. Wardlow, 528 U.S. 119 (2000)

⁹ <https://www.thenation.com/article/what-amazon-taught-cops/>

¹⁰ <http://www.truth-out.org/news/item/22357-predictive-policing-from-fallujah-to-the-san-fernando-valley-military-grade-software-used-to-wage-wars-abroad-is-making-its-impact-on-americas-streets>

¹¹ <https://www.rt.com/usa/205727-lapd-criminals-data-collection/>

¹² <https://www.teamupturn.com/reports/2016/stuck-in-a-pattern>