

Communications: An example of the oncoming
tyranny of unchecked technology. ~~From Peter~~
Valentine sent to the president of MIT.
To the City Council and Citizens of Cambridge, MA 02139

5

From a letter of a friend →

Did you know that "soldiers" sitting in Washington with laptops are remotely controlling drones bombing people in across the planet? As if they were playing a computer game? Then going home to have dinner with their families in their suburban homes?

OFFICE OF THE CITY CLERK
CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS

2014 OCT 29 PM 12:09

I am actually planning right now to try to protest this in a very small way. The Massachusetts Department of Revenue recently sent me a letter. I had filed my tax return properly, and on time (I had an extension). The letter said that they would not send me my refund or process my return unless I went onto the internet and correctly answered a personal quiz about myself to verify my identity. I did some research and found out that they have employed an international marketer of data with a huge data warehouse from all different sources. They sent taxpayer information to this data warehouse to be subject to "analytics" and "lifestyle analysis" to use AI to flag certain returns as suspect. And now they are telling me that even though I fulfilled the law, I have to prove that my tax return is not fraudulent against their presumption of guilt, based on AI statistical analysis. What I plan to do is refuse to take this quiz, and question the fact that they sent my tax information to a vast international data warehouse. And that they used AI analytics to stigmatize me, and in fact penalize me for deviating from some statistical norm.

I'm just getting into the situation, and doing the research, but I would like to assert to them that they have no right to treat me this way, to have collected any information on me other than tax information (the basis for the quiz). It's an interesting situation, because if I don't respond and prove my identity by taking this quiz, they keep my refund, \$800, and also refuse to process my tax return! But the question then is: I will have broken the law by not filing my tax return. This vast data warehouse will get to keep 18% of all the refund money that the state keeps. In other words, 18% of my refund will go to LexisNexis. Can you believe it???

I realize that my refusal to take an online quiz seems like getting upset about a trivial matter, but I think it actually isn't trivial at all. Because I am not longer even being dealt with as an individual human being, by this algorithm, I am being dealt with in terms of statistical probabilities based on data collection that occurred without my consent. They are accusing me of a crime because their "big data" analytics (AI) has flagged me a statistically probable of fraudulence.

I state here and now it is against my religion to allow mechanical systems to have authority over my life. To do is an act of brutal slavery.

Peter Valentine
Oct. 29, 2014