

**Report to / Rapport au:**

**OTTAWA POLICE SERVICES BOARD  
LA COMMISSION DE SERVICES POLICIERS D'OTTAWA**

**27 April 2020 / 27 avril 2020**

**Submitted by / Soumis par:**

**Chief of Police, Ottawa Police Service / Chef de police, Service de police d'Ottawa**

**Contact Person / Personne ressource:**

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**SUBJECT: RESPONSE TO INQUIRY FACIAL RECOGNITION SOFTWARE**

**OBJET: RÉPONSE À UNE DEMANDE DE RENSEIGNEMENTS : LOGICIEL DE RECONNAISSANCE FACIALE**

**REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS**

**That the Ottawa Police Services Board receives this report for information.**

**RECOMMANDATIONS DU RAPPORT**

**Que la Commission de services policiers d'Ottawa prenne connaissance du présent rapport à titre d'information.**

**INQUIRY: Facial recognition software** - There have been various media reports about the use of controversial facial recognition software and the concerns that arise from its use. The Chief was asked for assurance that due diligence would be undertaken prior to any full implementation of this program to ensure public confidence and observance of privacy laws to its full extent.

**BACKGROUND**

In February, it was brought to our attention that police members from services across Ontario, including the Ottawa Police Service (OPS), had created accounts with Clearview AI, a facial recognition software company, on a trial (free) basis. The Chief ordered an immediate cease of use of the product and committed to the Board that the

OPS would poll all members to determine the exact number of the downloads and the subsequent usage. This response seeks to satisfy that commitment.

It should be noted that the OPS has previously conducted and concluded a pilot project using facial recognition software, of which the Board was made aware. That pilot project included a Privacy Impact Assessments (PIAs) as mandated by the Information Privacy Commissioner. We procured and used NeoFace for this pilot project. This pilot started in Jan 2019 and was concluded in March 2019. The scope of the pilot project was limited to the comparison of unknown offender images to an OPS database of known offender images of persons charged with criminal offences collected under the authority of the Identification of Criminals Act, similar to the established practice of fingerprint and DNA identifications. This pilot project was led by the Forensic Identification Unit

Clearview AI was not invited to bid and did not bid in this pilot project. While the pilot project demonstrated a range of potential public safety benefits, the OPS has no intention to use facial recognition in the immediate future.

### **Polling of Members**

In specific response to the Board inquiry on the use of facial recognition technology, the OPS undertook a polling of all our members to determine the exact numbers and usages of facial recognition technology, specifically NeoFace and Clearview AI.

From the polling, we can report that eleven OPS personnel accessed and applied facial recognition technology from January 2019 to date.

There were six personnel who accessed and opened NeoFace software. They were the forensic officers involved with the specific aforementioned pilot project with NeoFace – they used the NeoFace software within the parameters of the pilot project.

There were five personnel who accessed and opened Clearview AI software (see next section for details of this usage).

### **Clearview AI**

Of the five OPS criminal personnel who accessed and opened accounts with Clearview AI, four were from the Internet Child Exploitation Section. These members were either delegates to a 2019 child exploitation conference where Clearview AI was a presenter and had set up accounts for the delegates, or were referred to the technology through policing partners on the Provincial Strategy to Protect Children from Sexual Abuse and Exploitation on the Internet. The technology was evaluated, tested, and applied on several occasions, none of which resulted in criminal charges.

The one other application of Clearview AI was by an investigator from the Missing Persons Section who created an account and searched two dated photographs of a missing person from a historical investigation, which met with negative results.

## **CONCLUSION**

While the 2019 facial recognition pilot project demonstrated a range of potential public safety benefits, the OPS has no intention of using facial recognition technology in the immediate future. As raised by the Information and Privacy Commissioner of Ontario and the Ottawa Police Services Board, we fully recognize that any implementation of facial recognition technology would need to ensure stringent policies and procedures are firmly in place and our need to develop an IT Governance and Information Management Strategy based on recognized industry standards. Until such time all OPS members have been directed to discontinue the use of all facial recognition software.