

Utah Attorney General wants beta-test of body scanner that detects concealed weapons

ACLU, Libertas Institute have privacy concerns

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SALT LAKE CITY (ABC4 News) - Utah Attorney General Sean Reyes is looking to beta-test 3D body-scanning technology developed by the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) that aims to detect possible weapons at concerts, shopping malls and houses of worship.

The technology, called HEXWAVE, may also be tested at the Sundance Film Festival, Reyes told reporters.

Reyes and the company that owns the product, Liberty Defense, signed a memorandum of understanding, though Reyes said the state of Utah is not "on the hook" to commit to buying the technology. Liberty Defense told ABC4 News Wednesday the technology is safe and does not invade individuals' privacy.



"HEXWAVE is capable of providing accurate, high throughput screening that is suited for a wide range of facilities. This could include stadiums, malls, schools, hospitals, places of worship and beyond. Beyond that, our system is also safe to use and does not infringe on an individual's privacy. By this I mean that the radio frequency signals that it uses are 200 times less powerful than the Wi-Fi you use in your home, and the images themselves that the AI assess do not have any personally identifiable information and are only used by the machine to predict threats and ultimately further train the computer to expand its learning to understand what is or is not a threat," said Bill Riker, CEO of Liberty Defense.

But groups like Libertas Institute and ACLU of Utah have weighed in with questions as to whether law-abiding citizens would be unfairly targeted by the technology.

"As long as we stay within the confines of the constitution, we will use every chance and every bit of technology that we can to try to keep up with if not get ahead of the criminals," Reyes told reporters.

"For a lot of people that pendulum has swung too far in a very surveillance oriented setup where our privacies are being lost," said Connor Boyack, president of Libertas Institute.

"We are concerned about the lack of detail and public input behind the Utah attorney general's decision to sign an agreement that promotes testing of an experimental, see-through 3d body scanner by Utah law enforcement in our state," ACLU of Utah Legal Director John Mejia said in a press release, denouncing what it called the "airportization" of American life.

The groups also raised concerns that concealed carry permit holders might be targeted. "Are they gonna be harrassed? Are they gonna be asked to leave? Are they gonna get a pat-down?," asked Boyack. "I think those are the questions that will need to be worked out if this technology is implemented anywhere for the public."

The Attorney General's Office emphasized that this plan is still in the beginning stages, and the state of Utah may ultimately choose not to implement the technology if it is not successful. For more information about HEXWAVE, click [here](#).