

UTAH IN THE MATRIX

What is the MATRIX Program?

MATRIX is a U.S. Department of Justice funded, on-year pilot program run by a private corporation – Seisint Inc. of Boca Raton, Florida – on behalf of a group of cooperating state governments. The program has received \$4 million from the DOJ, and has been promised an additional \$8 million from the Department of Homeland Security.

Created after Congress shut down the Total Information Awareness program, MATRIX is designed to do much of what TIA was intended to do – tie together government and commercial databases to allow federal and state law enforcement agencies to conduct detailed searches on individuals' dossiers. Compiling as much information as possible about as many individuals as possible in a large scale data base – called data mining – Matrix provides enhanced capability to assist in identifying and analyzing terrorist and other criminal activity, and sharing that information among local, state, and federal agencies.

Utah is one of 7 states that has voluntarily agreed to participate (the others are MI, NY, FL, GA, CT, OH, and PA). Eight states (LA, AL, SC, CA, TX, OR, KY, and GA) have withdrawn from the program, citing concerns about cost, privacy, and inaccurate data. The program is free to MATRIX coalition states until October 2004, at which time continued participation will require state expenditures.

Why should we be concerned?

- The data mining profiling individuals presents very serious privacy concerns.
- There is a substantial risk of inaccuracies, data anomalies, and "false positives".
- Correcting errors in the data may not be possible.
- Judgments about reasonable suspicion of criminal activity are human judgments that cannot be made accurately by computers.
- MATRIX lacks safeguards against these problems.

Questions for the Legislative Management/Executive Appropriations Committee to consider:

- Who approved Utah's participation in the MATRIX Program? When was this approval issued?
- Is there a contract with the private organization that runs MATRIX?
- Did this contract go through usual and customary review and bidding procedures with the state?

- When was this participation in MATRIX approved?
- Who was consulted?
- How come we weren't briefed on this?
- What agencies of the state are participating? What local government agencies are participating?
- Are there intergovernmental agreements associated with multi-agency participation?
- What benefits from participation in this program does the State expect? What was the rationale to becoming a guinea pig in this program?
- Why is that other states have dropped out of participating in this?
- How much money is the State spending now to participate in MATRIX? How much staff time is devoted?
- What is the estimated cost for continued participation in MATRIX in FY 2005? What about the local governments – are they incurring costs now, and will they in the future? If so, how much?