Inverse Surveillance AI

HACKATHON 2021
“We cannot solve our problems with the same thinking we used when we created them.”

- ALBERT EINSTEIN
Who can join?

Everyone is welcome to join. This includes students, researchers, professionals, etc. → It is this diversity in perspectives that we value.

This is an idealistic project with a concept that could potentially change the relationship between citizens and bigger organizations. We welcome those with an interest in the project, and who wish to add to the research by participating in this hackathon.
What to expect

Hackathon Format
- The hackathon consists of two parts:
  - One month of preparation time.
  - Hackathon Weekend (finalizing your products)
- This will be an Online Hackathon (via discord)
- Language: English
- You can join by yourself or with a team
- Everyone with an interest in the project is welcome to join (students, researchers, professionals, etc.)

Hackathon Challenge & Rewards
- Deliverables
  - A proof of concept that will make Inverse Surveillance available for citizens by using AI.
  - Your proof of concept (via Github)
  - A (video) pitch and short blog explaining your proof of concept and choices
- We reward both strong execution as well as strong ideas
- Besides price money we offer visibility in the Asimov network
Inverse Surveillance AI

Surveillance as a method is typically used by governments and bigger organisation in order to control and influence behaviour through the panopticon effect: when you know you can be watched, you tend to behave better to prevent negative consequences.

In this research project we turned the whole idea of surveillance upside down, What if we can empower citizens, by using AI to surveil and regulate corporations and governments? In this case citizens would take on the role of observers, aided by AI technology, and knowing they are watched, they create an panopticon effect that will promote behaviour from organizations that is beneficial for citizens, and democratize this technology.
Hackathon Challenge

1. **Identify** which behaviour from organizations can be surveilled by citizens (inspired by the podcasts and blogpost about inverse surveillance)

2. **Develop** a proof of concept that uses AI technology analyzing data, which allows for surveillance of this behaviour by citizens.
Guiding Questions

The following questions will help you get things started:

**Concept Questions**
- Which (types of) organizations are interesting for this PoC?
- What type of (indirect) data can be used from these organizations?
- What type of predictions based on this data would be interesting?
We reward both a strong concept as well as a well executed PoC.

The month-long preparation time before the hackathon will result in some teams being better prepared than others. Execution wise they probably will score higher with their PoC. But teams that only join for the weekend also have a fair chance when it comes to the concept.
The Hackathon
This information will be shared on the 1st of October. From this moment on you can sign up for the Hackathon and get started on your proof of concept.
Preparation Phase [15 October – 19 November]

Now that you have all the information you need, you can actually start today!

You are allowed to come to the hackathon prepared, this includes written code. During the hackathon itself we will focus on polishing the concept and make sure it is in line with the research project.

Once you have signed up you will get access to the discord we have set up for this research. Here you can get to know other participants, talk about the research, share insights, and memes. We will use the discord to share information with participants.
Pre-Hackathon [12 – 19 November]

During this week before the Hackathon our team will use the discord channels to remind you of the agenda, guiding questions, etcetera.

On Friday the 12th of November there will be a Q&A Session on discord in preparation of the hackathon.

Q&A Session, Friday 12 November, 18:00-19:00 CET (UTC+1h)
Hackathon Day 1  [Friday, 19 November]

18:30-19:00 CET (UTC+1h) Digital Walk In (Discord)

19:00 CET CET (UTC+1h) – KickOff
- Introduction
- Hackathon Agenda, Challenge, and Practicalities
- Getting to know each other
- Share your individual or team profile (anonymity through nicknames is allowed)
→ We will list all participants on the Asimov website.
Hackathon Day 2 [Saturday, 20 November]

09:00-09:30 CET (UTC+1h)
- Day 2 Kickoff

09:00 – 12:00 CET (UTC+1h)
- Time to work & collaborate

12:00 – 15:00 CET (UTC+1h)
- Lunch break & Question Sessions

15:00 – 18:00 CET (UTC+1h)
- Time to work & collaborate

11:00-11:30 CET (UTC+1h)
- Speaker (tba) via Discord

14:00-14:30 CET (UTC+1h)
- Speaker (tba) via Discord

16:00-16:30 CET (UTC+1h)
- Social Meetup via Discord
Hackathon Day 3 [Sunday, 21 November]

09:00-09:30 CET (UTC+1h)
- Day 3 Kickoff

09:00 – 12:00 CET (UTC+1h)
- Time to work & collaborate

12:00 – 15:00 CET (UTC+1h)
- Lunch break & Preparing pitch and code

15:00 CET (UTC+1h)
- Submit code, and (video) pitch

15:30-17:00 CET (UTC+1h)
- (Video) Pitches / Presentations

17:00 – 17:30 CET (UTC+1h)
- Jury decides on winners / Social Discord Meetup

18:00 – 18:30 CET (UTC+1h)
- Winners are announced

18:30 ~ CET (UTC+1h)
- Social Discord Meetup
Wrap-Up [After 21 November]

Your projects will be shared on the project pages.

You can make changes to your project (Github & Concept) after the hackathon. Although this will not change the winners, it will add to the quality of the (research) project. If you keep us in the loop we will also update your page on the Asimov website.

We will share all proof of concepts and our research material as a launchpad for future research.

You can let others know if you are open for being contacted by others for research later – in case someone is interested in your project and would like to collaborate. We can also add link(s) to your linkedin, website, etc.
So how do you win?

Cliché as it is, everyone who adds new insight and a strong proof of concept to the research project is already a winner. But there are a few things we do focus on.

- The most important one: Does it include AI?
- Does it truly grasp the concept of Inverse Surveillance?
- Does it achieve the panopticon effect?
- Is it a solution-based out-of-the-box idea? In line with Utopian thinking?
- Does it democratize tech? / Empower citizens?
Rewards | What you can win

The winning teams or individuals will be put in the limelight with a short introduction and description of the hackathon accomplishment in a blog shared in our LinkedIn network, and will be mentioned in the closing short video by Asimov.

You can win first place in one of the following three categories:
1. Overall Hackathon Winner (reward: 400 euro)
2. Most feasible (reward: 200 euro)
3. Most out-of-the-box idea (reward: 200 euro)
4. Most empowering (reward: 200 euro)

Every participant (and team) will be listed on the Asimov website (you are allowed to use a nickname) with their final concept and link to Github.

We will get the winners featured through the SIDN fund, and other media partners.
Getting Started
How to Join/Sign Up

You can sign up by sending an e-mail to Juliette van der Laarse, listing your (nick)name, if you are participating with a team, and if you are in the same timezone during the Hackathon (CET).

juliette@asimovinstitute.org
Context: Project Inverse Surveillance

THE CONTEXT OF THIS HACKATHON
Scope

This is a big idea, with a small research team, and a small time-frame (6-8 months). The goal is not to fully research Inverse Surveillance in depth, but rather using this explorative research to create a launchpad for future research into this topic.

By proposing this more elaborated concept of Inverse Surveillance we aim to proof that this is a concept worth exploring and that AI can make inverse surveillance in-reach for citizens.

We are aiming for this explorative first research to become a launchpad for future research into this topic.
The Research Project

Research Question

“How can we use AI as a Panopticon to promote beneficial actions for citizens by organizations?”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase 1 – Literature Research</th>
<th>Defining the concept Inverse Surveillance AI. Laying the foundation for the expert interviews</th>
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<tr>
<td>Phase 2 – Expert Interviews</td>
<td>Interviewing experts from diverse backgrounds regarding this concept, it’s practical execution, and ideology</td>
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<tr>
<td>Phase 3 – Thinktank discussions</td>
<td>Using the expert interviews and literature research to further elaborate on the concept, define dynamics, and execution.</td>
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<td>Phase 4 – Hackathon (PoCs)</td>
<td>Developing Proof of Concepts for Inverse Surveillance AI</td>
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<td>Phase 5 – Dissemination</td>
<td>Sharing all gathered informations and ideas and sharing them open source to function as a launchpad for future research</td>
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What we wish to see in your proof of concepts
Inverse surveillance is surveillance performed by citizens, on governments and bigger organizations, with the aim to control and influence their behaviour, thus promote transparency and equality, and by doing so democratize power.

You can read more on this topic in the following blog:

[Conceptualizing Inverse Surveillance](#)
The Panopticon Effect

An important aspect of surveillance is the panopticon effect: through the fear of possible surveillance, you will self-regulate your behaviour. In our research, AI can create this panopticon effect, since their actions and data will be scanned by AI and possibly marked.

You can read more on this topic in the following blog:

Panopticon for the Masses
A lot of research has focused on the bad sides of surveillance, and it holds a rather negative connotation. Veillance however is something that can also be used for good. For this reason, we focus on a utopian approach. We use utopian thinking methods like thinking outside the box, focusing on solutions, and what is needed for a positive outcome.

You can read more on this topic in the following blog:

On Utopian Thinking
Auditors, not police officers

Inverse surveillance is by definition not anti-government in a dystopian sense, but pro-government from a utopian stance. Inverse surveillance provides citizens with leverage for holding a government accountable - as an auditor would - which ought to be considered a positive effect in a functioning democratic society.

You can read more on this topic in the following blog:

Two Examples of Inverse Surveillance