

# Is China's 'social credit' surveillance system coming to America?



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China's "social credit" system, a high-tech operation that tracks and assigns points in relation to the daily activities and behavior choices of its citizens, is

being developed in Silicon Valley.

The Communist government's digital efforts, which have been in place since 2014, to control the actions of the people has been extensively utilized to manipulate them into compliance with their preferred way of conduct.

Reports indicate that it is increasingly common for Chinese people who refuse to go along with what the regime deems as good behavior to be denied the ability to travel by air or business class train tickets, among other things. Thus, if people want to live a normal life they are incentivized to keep their social credit score positive.

Although not sponsored by any government entity, similar efforts are underway in the United States. Meanwhile, talk is emerging of cyborgs and non-human beings taking over the world.

In a Monday Fast Company essay, Mike Elgan explained that private companies such as Uber and Airbnb are employing tactics that mimic the Chinese state.

"Airbnb can disable your account for life for any reason it chooses, and it reserves the right to not tell you the reason. The company's canned message includes the assertion that 'This decision is irreversible and will affect any duplicated or future accounts,'" he said.

"It's now easy to get banned by Uber, too. Whenever you get out of the car after an Uber ride, the app invites you to rate the driver. What many passengers don't know is that the driver now also gets an invitation to rate you. Under a new policy announced in May: If your average rating is 'significantly below average,' Uber will ban you from the service."

Such ratings systems could, if widely adopted, inhibit many people from traveling and moving about with their daily lives.

Insurance companies are also utilizing these technologies, Elgan said, noting that the New York State Department of Financial Services announced earlier this year that life insurers can base premiums on what they see on their clients' social media accounts.

"That Instagram pic showing you teasing a grizzly bear at Yellowstone with a martini in one hand, a bucket of cheese fries in the other, and a cigarette in your

mouth, could cost you. On the other hand, a Facebook post showing you doing yoga might save you money," he observed.

"The most disturbing attribute of a social credit system is not that it's invasive, but that it's extralegal. Crimes are punished outside the legal system, which means no presumption of innocence, no legal representation, no judge, no jury, and often no appeal. In other words, it's an alternative legal system where the accused have fewer rights."

Christopher Benek, a Presbyterian pastor and the CEO of CoCreators, believes the developments underscore the need for Christians to call for ethical technology.

"As Christ calls us to mutual accountability, we too should expect and advocate for digital accountability globally," Benek commented in an email to The Christian Post Tuesday.

"That being said, Christians need to recognize that, in the growing digital age, our privacy will continue to be diminished. This means that we need to focus on forming virtuous people who will prayerfully discern, in community, how technological advancements are implemented."

Christians must advocate for the technologically disenfranchised in order that unvirtuous oppression and technological enslavement is avoided, he added, noting that this will be especially important as more and more technology is adapted toward biological advancements and use.

In November of 2017, Benek traveled to Japan and was the first ever pastor to speak at the International Conference for Social Robotics. He opined previously that technology will uncover the sin in the human heart.

"The hacking of the Ashley Madison site has exposed millions of persons who succumbed to the temptations of adulterous lust. Social media posts have a way of generally revealing our personal flaws but it has also repeatedly aided authorities in making arrests for enacted crimes. Computer data regularly leads authorities to cases of fraud and illegal/inappropriate activities," he said in 2015.

An era is coming, he predicted, when humans will not even be able to maintain the privacy of their hearts and minds.

“What we are seeing in our current age is that following Christ’s spiritual teachings, a formational process of bettering the heart/mind, is one way to make sure that what technology reveals about us is increasingly less and less scandalous.”

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