

"Privacy Glasses" exposed

CCTV - in particular the one equipped with facial recognition - and the resulting dehumanization and discrimination enabled by it, is obviously a big problem and a part of the technological slavery system I wrote about long ago. Recently, a friend notified me about a product that promises to at least partially solve this issue, the Privacy Glasses ([archive](#)) ([MozArchive](#)). They even give us a beautiful example of why there is even a problem:

According to a German media, someone who participated in an anti-war and peace-calling parade is astonishingly being listed in the extremist database after his face is recognized by the police camera. Can you imagine that? The existing cases have given more alarms to us. In London, where the facial recognition technology was adopted for providing assistance to the public security, 35 people were mistakenly arrested in just a day. The idea that our information might be wrongly used by the state administrative departments really worries and frightens us, for we have no idea what we and our family may pay for it. Property, reputation, our job, freedom, health or even our lives, everything is possible.



So will this product end up being our savior? The aforementioned friend sent the producers an E-mail trying to learn more details about it. Here it is:

Hello,

I am interested in purchasing several pairs of privacy glasses. First, however, I have several questions I would be grateful if your team could answer for me. These are:

- Are you able to provide any documentation of your products working?
- Is it possible to view the certification mentioned on your website? For example, the FDA certification?
- How long have you been making these glasses for?
- Are there any specific models of face recognition cameras that your glasses DO NOT work with?
- Does your store accept payment in cryptocurrencies?

I look forward to reading your answers and proceeding with a purchase.

Regards,

A Potential Customer

I won't post the response images directly, as they have bad formatting and doxing info, but I'll cite the producer's replies to the inquiries. To the first question, the reply was:

We believe that all the information that can be disclosed is already on the website, if you have any other questions, you can contact us by email.

To the second:

We are currently only accepting bulk orders, and bulk orders will be issued with the appropriate FDA certification by the factory

And here is where the producer (probably unwittingly) revealed information which damns this product. Namely that **a regular person cannot hope to buy it**, as presumably they don't have the money for a “*bulk order*”. And so, when this company complained about protestors being exposed because of facial recognition, the implicit notion that their product would help prevent it turns out to be a fraud, as they won't even be able to get it. There is also a particularly malicious possible reason for limiting access to these devices to large institutions, namely so that they could be used by state-funded groups at pro-system protests (this, at the moment, is entirely speculative, though). In this case, the power gap between the so-called "elites" and the plebs would widen even further. Anyway, the reply to the third question was:

This depends on the working mode of face recognition, algorithm, etc. Even for the same model of face recognition camera, there will be different results due to the different parameters of its settings. For example, if the recognition rate is set too low, you will be recognized as a third person.

And the last:

Our country does not accept cryptocurrencies at the moment, and our finances cannot work legally according to the law. Therefore, we do not accept cryptocurrencies at this time.

And the cat's out of the bag. Even if you had enough money for a “*bulk order*” (the price is also not directly mentioned, but you can send a “*price inquiry*”), the doxing requirement of the banking system would basically put a target on your back. "Why is this guy buying so much of this anti surveillance technology? Let's surveill him more specifically now!". And, the banks might just end up blocking the purchase altogether.

Due to the fear of being used for illegal purposes, we prefer our customers to be able to disclose their identities.

But weren't you concerned about people being found out at anti-war protests and being added to an “*extremist database*”? Protecting identity should be the point of such products, but it is clear this company doesn't care about it. They admit it on another page (archive) (MozArchive), too:

Sunphy Optics does not ship to P.O. Boxes, APO/FPO/DPO military address, or shipping forwarding locations.

The only point of having these restrictions is to force you to dox yourself. Anyway, here is what my friend ended up replying to them:

Hi,

In other words, your products are only available for governments and other elite groups? You really believe the surveillance state is fine, so long as it only targets ordinary people and not those with institutional power? That's a very selfish and wicked position to take. Abusing technology for greed is one thing, but abusing it in support of an objectively evil and totalitarian system is even worse.

Morally, you are on the same level as pharmaceutical companies that develop cures for cancer but refuse to release their products to the general public, reserving effective treatments only for the exceedingly wealthy.

You ought to feel ashamed. And rest assured, a time will come when you and people like you who give support to and collaborate to uphold this monstrous dystopia will meet justice.

Heh. By the way, even if you could anonymously buy these glasses for yourself, their effectiveness would still be doubtful. There are other ways to fish one out from inside a crowd - for example, by how one walks (local) - *“Focusing on ‘Experiment A’, the results in Tab. 1 indicate that from low resolution frames (i.e. 80×60) the trained CNN model is able to extract gait signatures that used in combination with standard SVM classifiers, it is attained an average of 98% rank-1 correct recognition [...]”*. It is obvious that in the end, we have to tackle the problem head on. AKA physically remove / disable the surveillance devices. But of course, that's "breaking the law", which for this company is a sacred cow, even though it's what enables the spying and punishments to happen in the first place. Laws banning masks at protests already exist (archive) (MozArchive), why think that these shiny glasses won't simply be added to them, even assuming they worked well? **In a world based on unjust laws, someone, somewhere must at some point break them for things to get better.** And it is clear that this company never will.

I won't even talk about the malfunctioning website where half of the stuff is off the screen (unless you enable JavaScript). Or the funny typos like *“Appcalition”* (I guess this is supposed to be "Application"?). And not even listing the prices outright. It is clear these people are at the very least not professional, but more likely also cowards and / or malicious. Actually, might as well replace the "more likely" with "surely", as they will even grab (archive) (MozArchive) *“search habits, shopping records and shopping preferences”* - as if the usual doxing info of name, address and phone wasn't enough.

To be quite honest, I did not really "review" this product, as I obviously am not capable of getting my hands on it due to the bullshit requirements this company has set up. But these are enough to doom it - just like they did to the many E-mail providers who have also decided to implement them. It does not matter what kind of ancient pirate treasure is hidden in a box, if the lock cannot be picked. So while it might have been nice to be able to actually test its effectiveness against facial recognition technology, the producers have made that option impossible for me. However, searching on youtube and two regular search engines, I was **unable to find an independent test of these glasses**, so it is likely that they are just a complete scam. At the very least, you are shooting in the dark while buying them, if you can even manage to do that.

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