

**ACLU of Wisconsin  
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March 11, 2004

Attorney General Peggy Lautenschlager  
Wisconsin Department of Justice  
17 West Main Street  
Madison, WI 53702

Via Facsimile to (608) 264-6374

Dear Attorney General Lautenschlager:

According to news reports, the Wisconsin Department of Justice "has signed on to join the Multistate Anti-Terrorism Information Exchange, or MATRIX." I understand that your department is reviewing participation in this controversial data-mining project. As you know of the original participating states several have dropped out

While I'm sure the intentions of your department in signing up were good, I urge you to consider the increasingly apparent problems of the system and unintended consequences of participation as you make a final decision.

The American Civil Liberties Union has begun to find out more about this data mining program through a series of public records requests to the participating state agencies. And, what we've found out is disturbing. The program makes available to law enforcement unprecedented access to enormous amounts of commercially available information without adequate guarantees of its accuracy or security. Private individuals have access to the information and a private company, Seisint, Inc., has complete control over the MATRIX system.

At least 15 Seisint employees have access to the MATRIX database. Hank Asher, Seisint's founder, had access to this system before court records revealed that he was an unindicted co-conspirator in a group responsible for bringing more than \$150-million worth of cocaine into Florida in a single year. Further, it was Asher's former company that administered the contract that stripped thousands of African Americans from the Florida voter rolls before the 2000 election, erroneously contending that they were felons. It was a full year after the program began before Seisint Inc. performed background checks on employees involved with MATRIX.

The MATRIX system has very little to do with terrorism. Like the Total Information Awareness system that was shut down by Congress, the MATRIX raises serious concerns that the privacy of millions of innocent Americans is in further jeopardy.

On behalf of the thousands of ACLU members in Wisconsin, I urge you to terminate Wisconsin's participation in the MATRIX immediately.

Thank you.

Sincerely yours,

Christopher Ahmuty

Executive Director

cc: Brian Rieselmann