



## FACT SHEET

### **New Records Provide Details on ICE’s Mass Use of LexisNexis Accurint to Surveil Immigrants**

Newly obtained Freedom of Information records from Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) provide a previously unreported window into ICE’s expansive use of LexisNexis’ Accurint data service.<sup>1</sup> Using the Accurint Virtual Crime Center, ICE has “access to public records and state and local record management systems (RMS) and computer-aided dispatch (CAD) data from over 1,500 agencies nationwide, all in one search.” The records also reveal that ICE shifted away from using Thomson Reuters’ CLEAR Product to using Accurint in March 2021. ICE Enforcement and Removal Operations division (ERO) had capacity to bring over 4,200 users onto Accurint, and encouraged it to be widely utilized by ERO personnel.<sup>2</sup>

ICE’s mass use of Accurint’s people search tools, including by ERO, the branch of ICE responsible for civil immigration enforcement, suggest that ICE uses LexisNexis to conduct large scale surveillance for civil immigration arrests. From March to September 30, 2021, ICE ran over 1.2 million searches on individuals through Accurint. This data calls into question LexisNexis’ prior statements that ICE uses its technology, “strictly... for identifying individuals with serious criminal backgrounds.”<sup>3</sup> Under current agency priorities, ICE officers retain significant discretion over investigations and enforcement, and there is no verifiable information about ICE or LexisNexis restricting use of the technology only to limited criminal investigations.<sup>4</sup>

LexisNexis appears to be trying to keep the full extent of its dealings with ICE secret, and in its contract, prohibits government customers from naming LexisNexis or referencing use of LexisNexis in press releases.<sup>5</sup> These newly released documents suggest that LexisNexis is attempting to hide its own complicity in the deportation machine.

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<sup>1</sup> An internal memo within ERO describes the Accurint Virtual Crime Center (AVCC) database also states: “Users will also have mapping and link analysis capabilities to help locate non-obvious relationships between people, assets, and incidents.” (Bates #14) The database includes access to LexisNexis Jail Booking Data, which contains over 140 million booking records, and over 38 million offender images from 2,000 law enforcement databases. (Bates #45)

<sup>2</sup> “Please note this additional valuable resource should be widely utilized by ERO personnel as an integral part of our mission to protect the homeland through the identification, location, arrest, and removal of noncitizens who undermine the safety of our communities and the integrity of our immigration laws.” (Bates #46)

<sup>3</sup> <https://risk.lexisnexis.com/government/our-services-for-homeland-security>. LexisNexis’ press release also states, “In March 2021, LexisNexis Risk Solutions began a five-year contract worth \$3.2m a year to provide an investigation tool for the Department of Homeland Security’s U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement. The tool promotes public safety and is not used to prevent legal immigration nor is it used to remove individuals from the United States unless they pose a serious threat to public safety including child trafficking, drug smuggling and other serious criminal activity.”

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.ice.gov/doclib/news/guidelines-civilimmigrationlaw.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> “Customer will not name LN or refer to its use of the LN Services in any press releases, advertisements, promotional or marketing materials, or make any other third-party disclosures regarding LN or Customer’s use of the LN Services.” (Bates #661).

## I. Expansive Use of LexisNexis Accurint by ICE Enforcement and Removal Operations (ERO)

Shockingly, ICE ERO field offices—offices responsible for conducting raids and detentions—conducted thousands of queries on immigrants per month using the LexisNexis platform. Of locations where the Accurint searches were conducted, San Diego, Chicago, Los Angeles, and Atlanta saw the greatest usage.

| Field Office     | Searches | Reports | Total  |
|------------------|----------|---------|--------|
| ERO-San Diego    | 16,527   | 2,173   | 18,700 |
| ERO-Chicago      | 13,004   | 1,858   | 14,862 |
| ERO- Los Angeles | 9,662    | 2,343   | 12,005 |
| ERO-Atlanta      | 8,639    | 1,422   | 10,061 |

The FOIA records also affirm the central role of the ICE National Criminal Analysis and Targeting Center (NCATC) in using Accurint. Through September 2021, NCATC alone conducted almost a quarter of ERO’s Accurint searches, despite NCATC making up less than 2% of all Accurint user accounts. This amounted to over 45,000 searches. As [reported](#) by the *Intercept*:

ICE periodically sends datasets of deported individuals to the NCATC to run through the agency’s Data Analysis System to see if they’ve reentered the United States. The system pulls data from other federal agencies, as well as commercial data brokers, to match the names of deported individuals to recent car registrations, utility bills, and mailing addresses, among other records. This data is either openly shared with ICE, as is the case with government agencies like the post office, or collected by data brokers and then sold to ICE, as is the case with many electricity providers or other companies that are prohibited by local laws from sharing data with ICE directly.

In addition to ICE ERO, ICE Homeland Security Investigations (HSI) conducted 500,000 searches and used Accurint to generate over 132,000 reports.

## II. Vast Search Capabilities of Accurint

Records reveal how ICE uses Accurint and its expansive search capability. ICE most frequently uses the “Advance Person Search” tool, which combines data from hundreds of sources to create a comprehensive collection of information about people in the United States.<sup>6</sup> ICE officers can use partial information, such as names of relatives or an individual’s previous state of residence, to accurately pinpoint where the person may be located.<sup>7</sup>

ICE also frequently uses the “Real Time Phone” search tool, which runs through a database of real-time phone sources including tens of millions of wireless numbers.<sup>8</sup> From the results of these queries, ICE can request a Phone Detail Report to gather further information on the

<sup>6</sup> “Advanced Person Search “Locating People Using Advanced Person Search” [http://www accurint.com/help/bps/v3/1e/advanced\\_person\\_help.html](http://www accurint.com/help/bps/v3/1e/advanced_person_help.html).

<sup>7</sup> *Id.*

<sup>8</sup> “This real-time information comes from a variety of sources including consumer bureaus, nationwide telephone companies, and phone networks like North American Numbering Plan, which includes the United States, all US territories (except Guam), and Canada. The Real-Time Phones Search allows you to locate the subject using a variety of search criteria such as the 10-digit phone number or subject name and address combinations. “Real-Time Phones Search” [http://www accurint.com/help/bps/pdf/real\\_time\\_phone\\_help.pdf](http://www accurint.com/help/bps/pdf/real_time_phone_help.pdf).

number, including phone type, line status, carrier information, and ported indicators, from the real-time sources.<sup>9</sup>

| <b>Type of Search</b>                       | <b>Percentage of Total Searches</b> |
|---|-------------------------------------|
| Advanced Person Search                      | 60% (727k/1.2m)                     |
| Real Time Phone Search                      | 17% (202k/1.2m)                     |
| Advanced Motor Vehicle Search <sup>10</sup> | 5% (64k/1.2m)                       |
| Quick Search for Phone Data                 | 3% (41k/1.2m)                       |
| Business Search                             | 2% (35k/1.2m)                       |
| Global Search                               | 2% (35k/1.2m)                       |

The range of tools available through Accurint demonstrate that LexisNexis offers a desired one-stop surveillance shop to ICE through a single service.<sup>11</sup> While LexisNexis has not provided a public list of its sources of data, other government contracts provide details on a wide range of source documents that feed into LexisNexis tools.<sup>12</sup> Some sources include property records, utility records, professional licenses, and real-time incarceration data.<sup>13</sup>

Other databases that ICE can access via its law enforcement tools include Black Book vehicle records, the National Change of Address Database (NCOA Database) and phone number databases.<sup>14</sup> ICE’s access to data from the NCOA database raises troubling legal questions—the NCOA Database is regulated by the Privacy Act of 1974 and may be used only to provide a mailing list correction service for preparation of mailings.<sup>15</sup> It is unclear whether ICE complies with these legal limits, or whether LexisNexis takes reasonable steps to ensure that NCOA data is not mixed into other law enforcement databases.

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<sup>9</sup> *Id.*

<sup>10</sup> “The Real-Time Motor Vehicle Registration Search provides current information on a vehicle. Since Vehicle registrations are renewed each year, address information is often more up-to-date than other sources (such as driver license records).” “Real-Time Motor Vehicle Registration Search” [http://www accurint.com/help/ln/real-timeMVR\\_help.html](http://www accurint.com/help/ln/real-timeMVR_help.html).

<sup>11</sup> (Bates #334)

<sup>12</sup> <https://www.michigan.gov/-/media/Project/Websites/dtmb/Procurement/Contracts/MiDEAL-Media/007/200000000664.pdf?rev=ad8b00e40c384387880d5a1ab0bce5ca>

<sup>13</sup> *See id.*

<sup>14</sup> (Bates #676-677, cross-referenced with other publicly-available contracts)

<sup>15</sup> *Id.*