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American Dragnet Data-Driven Deportation in the 21st Century | Georgetown Law

By Georgetown Center on Privacy & Technology

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When you think about government surveillance in the United States, you likely think of the National Security Agency or the FBI. You might even think of a powerful police agency, such as the New York Police Department. But unless you or someone you love has been targeted for deportation, you probably don't immediately think of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE).

This report argues that you should. Our two-year investigation, including hundreds of Freedom of Information Act requests and a comprehensive review of ICE's contracting and procurement records, reveals that ICE now operates as a domestic surveillance agency. Since its founding in 2003, ICE has not only been building its own capacity to use surveillance to carry out deportations but has also played a key role in the federal government's larger push to amass as much information as possible about all of our lives. By reaching into the digital records of state and local governments and buying databases with billions of data points from private companies, ICE has created a surveillance infrastructure that enables it to pull detailed dossiers on nearly anyone, seemingly at any time. In its efforts to arrest and deport, ICE has – without any judicial, legislative or public oversight – reached into datasets containing personal information about the vast majority of people living in the U.S., whose records can end up in the hands of immigration enforcement simply because they apply for driver's licenses; drive on the roads; or sign up with their local utilities to get access to heat, water and electricity.

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Source: American Dragnet | Data-Driven Deportation in the 21st Century