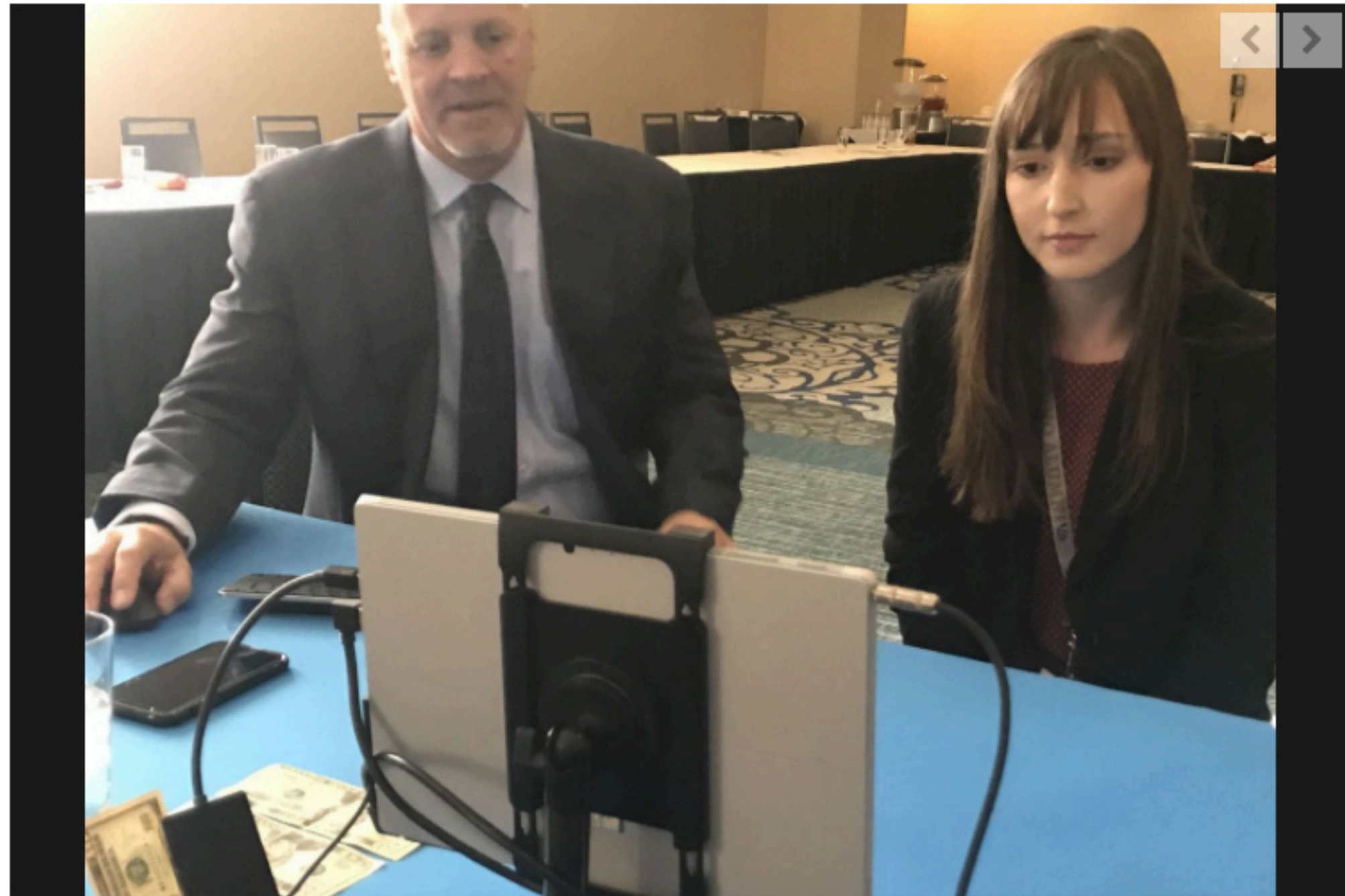


Boise Police buys lie detector tool that measures pupils

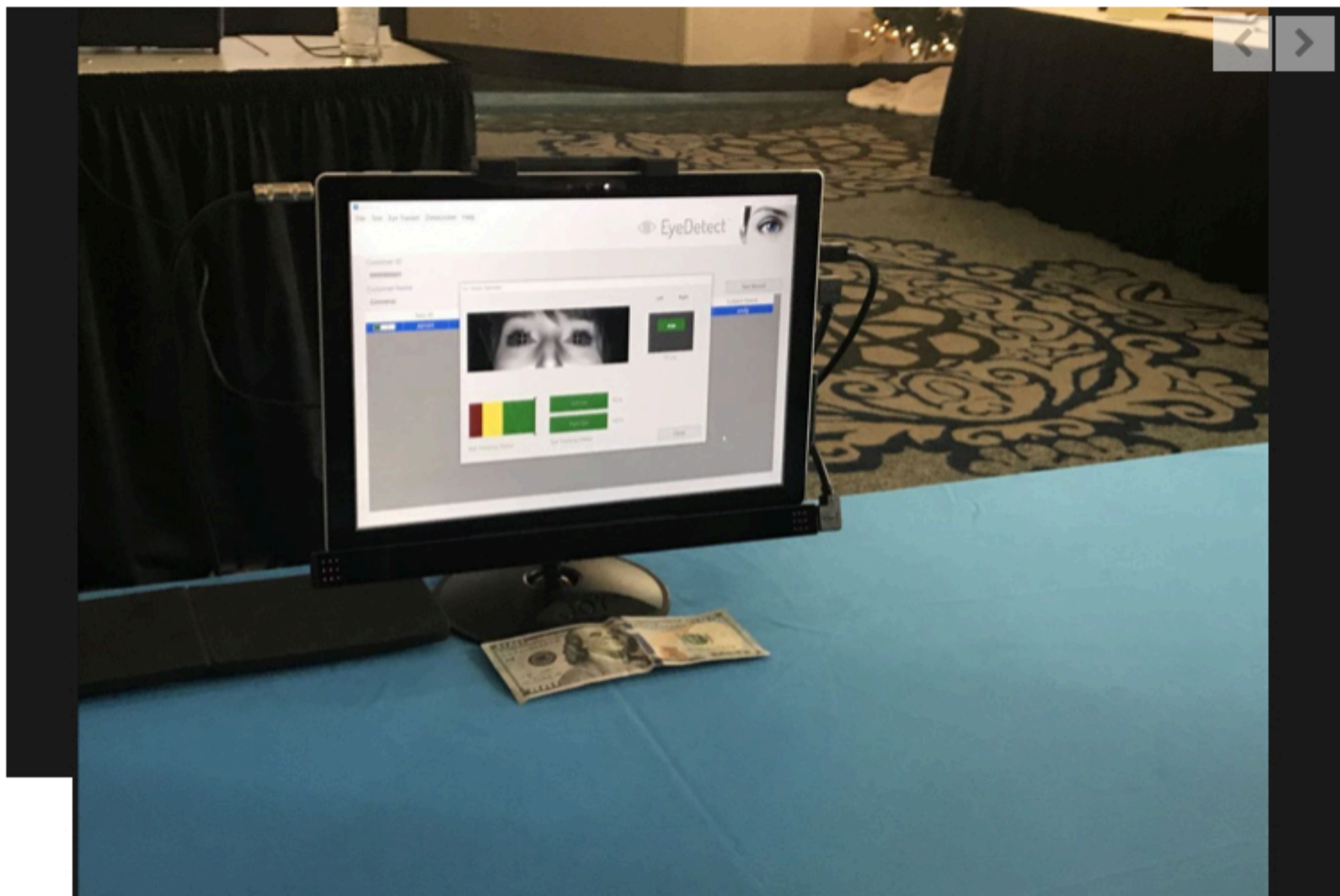
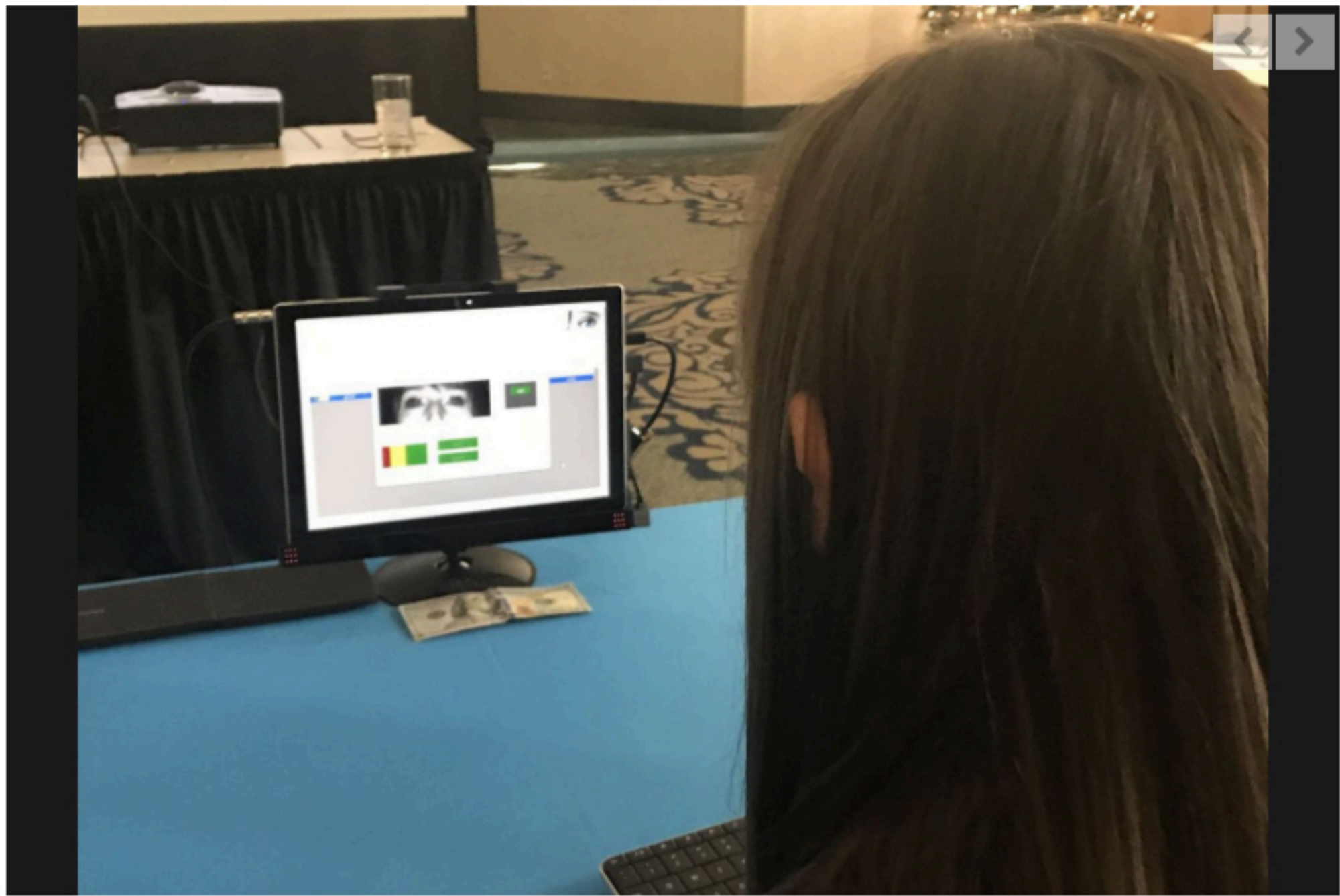
By EMILY LOWE elowe@idahopress.com Dec 5, 2017 (0)



Neal Harris, vice president of Converus, shows Idaho Press-Tribune reporter, Emily Lowe, how the EyeDetect program works.

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BOISE — An anonymous Idaho officer wrote a number on a piece of paper, which only he knew. He sat before a computer screen and answered a series of true or false questions in an attempt to deceive a computer program about the number written on his piece of paper. The technology was trained on the pupils of the officer, watching for any change in dilation. Although he answered the questions about his number by clicking the opposite answer, the technology could tell the officer was lying by measuring the dilation of his pupils.

This new technology, called EyeDetect, measures pupil dilation to determine if someone is lying. The technology was presented by Neal Harris, vice president of Converus, EyeDetect's parent company, to a group of officers from around the state at the Grove Hotel in Boise on Tuesday. Among those in attendance were members from the Idaho Department of Corrections, Idaho Department of Juvenile Corrections and attorneys from across the Treasure Valley.

The Boise Police Department purchased EyeDetect last year but has not yet used the technology to question suspects.

Harris explained there is scientific evidence to support that when someone is lying, their pupils dilate. EyeDetect uses a person's pupil dilation to reveal if they are lying about committing a certain type of crime.

EyeDetect is a computer program. An examinee is asked to perform a test. Questions are tailored to the specific crime or related subject. Harris said EyeDetect has commonly been used nationwide for law enforcement to screen potential employees.

It can also be used on suspects, and Harris said Converus is working to get a technology out that would help with identity theft for banks using the same technology.

"What we're really trying to do is best protect society," Harris said.

Before beginning the test, the examinee's eyes must be configured to the monitor attached to the computer screen, which detects pupil dilation. Once it's configured, the test begins. The examinee has about 25 minutes to answer 318 true or false questions by clicking green — true, or red — false. Each question must be answered within three to four seconds, and if it isn't, the program skips to the next question, Harris said.

The results of the test are gathered within five minutes of completion, Harris said. This determines if the examinee passed or failed the test. A failed test indicates the person lied. EyeDetect has about an 86 percent accuracy rate, he said.

Though Harris could not provide numbers on the accuracy of EyeDetect compared to the accuracy to a standard polygraph test, he said it really depends on the polygraph examiner.

James Page, a polygraph examiner with Ascertain Polygraph Services, LLC in Boise and Twin Falls, said an examiner can potential be biased before performing a test, especially if the examiner has read a police report or victim witness statement. In addition, some people who are asked to take a polygraph test have learned how to lie while answering questions.

Harris said courts have yet to establish if EyeDetect is admissible as evidence in court. He said some judges in Texas have taken into account results from an EyeDetect test, though.

Page said he prefers the use of EyeDetect because he has found it is "cheaper, faster, and more accurate."

Harris explained that EyeDetect takes away both examiner bias and potential for an examinee to lie. Though the test is not 100 percent accurate, he said, it makes it difficult to lie because of the short answer period and the measurement of pupil dilation.

Though the technology has not quite caught on yet in the Treasure Valley, the Boise Police Department purchased EyeDetect in 2016. However, it was not used last year because no one had been trained to administer the test, Boise Police spokeswoman Haley Williams said.

The test will be used with the next recruitment of potential employees this year, alongside the standard polygraph test as a way to test how the new technology works, she said.

Harris said the cost of EyeDetect is \$4,000, along with licensing fees.

Williams said after seeing how EyeDetect works during the upcoming hiring cycle, the department will then decide how it would like to move forward with program.

Emily Lowe is the public safety reporter. Follow @EmLoweJourn on Twitter

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