

State-of-the-art technology could change lie-detection industry

By Paul Bryant editor@athensreview.com 1 hr ago



Scientists at Utah-based technology company Converus spent more than 10 years perfecting a nonintrusive lie-detection method called EyeDetect. It was released worldwide in April 2014.

Converus

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Using new technology to measure deception, a nearby private investigator expects the program to change the way some civil and criminal cases are handled.

“What makes it different is that it takes the subjectivity completely out of the equation,” Brian West said. “Some of my military buddies kind of talk about this stuff all of the time. I thought it was really cool new technology.”

West is a private investigator at Summit Investigations & Imaging in Jacksonville and a columnist for the Athens Daily Review.

Utah company Converus created EyeDetect — “the world’s first nonintrusive lie detection technology that accurately detects deception in 30 minutes by analyzing eye and other behaviors,” according to its website. The concept was conceived in 2002. Eleven years later, the ocular-motion deception test was branded. And in 2015, it was released to the U.S. market.

“Up to now, nine peer-reviewed studies show it works,” West said. “That was a big selling point for me. And when I started looking at it, I found that it was used in 40 countries and maybe 500 customers. The customers are a lot of government agencies.”

The Employee Polygraph Protection Act prohibits “most” private employers from using lie-detector tests for pre-employment screening or during employment, according to the U.S. Department of Labor.

“The big difference is who can actually be ordered, if you will, to take the (EyeDetect) test,” West said. “So if you are a public employee, whether it’s local, regional or national, then it is legal for those people who are seeking jobs public in nature for them to be tested, such as in the U.S. government. That holds true for the polygraph test as well. The EPPA prohibits that for private use. For example, if you are going to get a job at a private school, you cannot be coerced or forced to go through a test.”

Summit Investigations & Imaging has just begun offering EyeDetect.

“I took the test four times, and four times it nailed me,” West said. “It’s amazing. On those tests, it shows where my pupil dilation is when I lied. You are looking at a machine scanning 60 times your pupil per second at one-one-hundreds of a millimeter. The countermeasures are almost nonexistent.”

According to data provided by Converus, studies show that humans have an accuracy rate of about 54 percent for detecting a lie.

“When somebody lies, the brain requires more work,” West said. “It takes a heavier work load to lie. The pupils dilate, and that’s all this test is working on. If someone tries a countermeasure, like blinking a lot, it goes against them because it is an obvious attempt to fool the machine. It’s in conjunction with other things and has a roughly 80 percent accuracy rate. That helps police sort through their work much faster.”

A military veteran, West works cases throughout the state, including in Henderson County. He specializes in several fields, including child-custody issues, surveillance, investigating infidelity claims, missing person cases, insurance fraud claims and background and other checks.

So far, EyeDetect results have “only actually been allowed as evidence in one court case — a federal court, I think,” West said. “The judge said this is sound technology and that it was admissible. And the accused passed the EyeDetect with a credible score, which means they are telling the truth. That is a milestone. No one is asking questions, and you have no inflection or tone in the voice.”

Unlike polygraph tests, EyeDetect uses no cables or sensors. The test is automated, requiring no examiner and the results are determined by a computer algorithm.

“I do know that a judge in Ohio had considered the results in a case, and they used that with other evidence and ended up dropping charges,” West said. “It was for weapons possession at an airport. And we have one in Texas involving a suspect in a drug distribution case.”

The Converus website shows that EyeDetect test-takers sit in front of an EyeDetect station, a computer with an eye-tracking camera beneath the monitor. The person answers a series of true/false questions for 15 to 30 minutes, and responses and other eye behavior are measured and stored on an encrypted device. At the end of the test, responses are loaded to a secure server and analyzed by proprietary algorithms.

For more about EyeDetect, visit converus.com.

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