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US Law Enforcement Warns of 'Anti-Tech Extremism' as AI Hatred Grows

As Americans stew over the looming risk of job-stealing AI and data centers in their back yards, the feds are raising the alarm about a new category of threat, documents obtained by WIRED show.



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IN THE WAKE of attacks on CEOs, a nationwide protest movement targeting data centers, and increasing concerns about AI job replacement, federal intelligence agencies and domestic law enforcement are circulating reports with a new domestic target in mind: anti-technology extremists.

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More than 1,000 pages of unpublished reports from the Department of Homeland Security, FBI, and fusion centers obtained by WIRED show a national shift taking place to surveil this new and worryingly broad category of people and activities deemed an emerging threat.

This new effort follows President Donald Trump's National Security Presidential Memo 7, which instructs the Department of Justice to target anyone holding “anti-American,” “anti-Christian,” and “anti-capitalism” beliefs. Earlier this month, Trump's counterterrorism czar, Sebastian Gorka, released a public counterterrorism strategy claiming that left-wing extremists are one of the three top counterterrorism priorities facing the United States.

Taken together, these Trump administration directives have commandeered the domestic surveillance apparatus to surveil and criminalize speech and assembly that challenges the ideology of the White House. A new focus on anti-technology extremism adds an unreported category to already public designations under a presidency that has heavily invested political and material capital in AI and data center proliferation.

AMONG THE DOCUMENTS in the tranche obtained by WIRED is a New York Intelligence and Counterterrorism Bureau report that warns of widespread upheaval in response to AI adoption. Of particular note is a novel term for what the bureau purports to be an emerging extremism threat.

"The chaotic atmosphere that may result from emergent AI technology in the next five years may fuel large-scale protests that devolve into civil unrest and anti-tech violent extremist activity, especially in large urban areas such as New York City," the report reads. The term "anti-tech violent extremism" does not appear in any publicly available DHS or FBI domestic extremism reports or guides and represents a novel grouping of a

In the same Intelligence Bureau assessment, analysts also describe a novel threat emerging in the wake of the arrest and trial of Ziz Laota, an extreme rationalist who allegedly led a small cultlike group, three members of which have been charged with murder, tied to an obsessive ideology focused on the existential risk posed by AI.

While the Zizian ideology is extremist in nature, a less extreme version of the same fears surrounding the cataclysmic potential of AI are a common concern among AI alignment experts, machine learning engineers, and even frontier AI companies. Nonetheless, the Intelligence Bureau warns that "paranoid views regarding AI" may proliferate in the aftermath of the Zizians' trial, thanks to their "attempt to reason the belief that a godlike incarnation of AI is imminent," and belief that "humans must best use their time in the present to devote themselves to ensuring its compliance with human morality, or face existential consequences for failing to do so."

The NYPD intel assessment follows the department's collaboration with the FBI last year to monitor the Signal chat of an activist group coordinating volunteers to monitor public hearings at immigration courts in New York. According to documents obtained by The Guardian, the FBI surveilled activists as part of a broader investigation into "anarchist violent extremist actors," one of the threat categories named in the new counter terrorism strategy.

Created in the wake of 9/11, 80 fusion centers now pockmark the country and serve as go-betweens for federal intelligence agencies and state and local law enforcement. In addition to concerns about portions of the American populace disturbed by the rapid proliferation of AI, these centers are also gathering and circulating "intelligence" about alleged threats to data centers.

A Western Pennsylvania fusion center, for example, claimed that "adversarial actors, including state-sponsored entities, criminal groups, and extremists, such as homegrown violent extremists or environmental extremists, may target US data centers" and that "these actors could also exploit the strategic importance of data centers to the US economy, using them for activities like cryptocurrency mining or leveraging third-party entities, such as front companies, to gain access to US data and infrastructure."

A report from the Northern Virginia Regional Intelligence Center warned that AGAAVES—anti-government, anti-authority violent extremists—influenced by government-related grievances and conspiracy theories, have engaged in pre-operational planning targeting data centers and other critical infrastructure facilities to disrupt government operations. But in the breakdown of Suspicious Activity Reporting indicators, the intelligence report lists activities that could easily be carried out by peaceful protesters,

"These intelligence reports are part of a long tradition of agencies identifying protest or even simply having strong opinions as precursors to violence," Spencer Reynolds, senior counsel at the NAACP Legal Defense Fund, tells WIRED. "Suspicious activity reports are incredibly unreliable, often about vague or innocent behavior, issued under permissive standards. These reports, often received in large volumes, allow officers to inject their own biases and see what they want to see in the facts."

Among the vaguely defined activities flagged by the Northern Virginia intelligence center as suspicious are "expressed/implied threat," "observation/surveillance," "photography," "testing/probing of security," and "attempted intrusion."

"The FBI investigates individuals who commit or intend to commit violence and criminal activity that constitutes a federal crime or poses a threat to national security," the FBI wrote in a statement to WIRED. "We have no additional comment."

The Department of Homeland Security did not respond to Wired's request for comment.

Meanwhile, the same intelligence center also circulated a report in March showing monitoring of constitutionally protected events and demonstrations related to critical views on technology. These events included multiple "[Tesla Takedown](#)" protests against [Elon Musk's ransacking of the US government](#) and a "Break Up With Tech Rager" sponsored by Eject Elbit, an activist group organizing to halt investment in the Israeli weapon's manufacturer Elbit.

In addition to intelligence analysts working inside fusion centers and federal law enforcement agencies, open source intelligence companies that contract with federal law enforcement agencies appear to be scouring the web for what they claim to be anti-technology sentiment as well. In January 2025, SITE Intelligence circulated bulletins to fusion centers alleging that conversations in a "neo-Luddite" Discord server had turned violent, with one user of the group called for violence against tech CEOs and power plants.

"SITE is a for-profit private intelligence firm that monitors social media for its law enforcement customers. It promises to do an incredibly difficult if not impossible job, consistently mining social media written by anonymous posters, full of in-jokes, slang, different languages, vagueness, and so on, to deliver credible information that can predict threats," Reynolds says. "Instead, this type of activity tends to focus on people's views about things like policing, abortion, economic inequality, vaccines, or any other hot-button topic of the day."

"By narrowing our OSINT focus exclusively to communities with a proven link to real-

online threats advocating for sabotage against data centers, which is a true cause for concern,” Rita Katz, founder of SITE, tells WIRED in an email.

The documents obtained by WIRED also show that fusion centers are currently keeping tabs on in-person assemblies. The Northern Virginia center generated a report about demonstrations at local civic events, including the Arlington County budget meeting and the Fairfax County School Board meeting. Across the country, town halls and budget committee meetings have been among the chief forums for local residents to express their dissent with data centers being built in their neighborhoods.

According to [Data Center Watch](#), a project by AI security firm 10a Labs that tracks opposition to data centers, hundreds of organizations across 42 states have organized to block data center construction in their towns and counties. These efforts are often contentious. In California, Illinois, Indiana, New Jersey, Oklahoma, and Wisconsin, state and local police have removed or arrested speakers at town halls who criticize data centers, in one case before they were even allowed to speak.

UNDER US LAW, domestic terrorism is not a stand-alone crime that is brought to bear during trial. Instead, domestic terrorism laws allow for targeting and surveillance of extremists, with charges sometimes bearing terrorism enhancements and sometimes excluding them altogether. This has led to protesters and activists being surveilled under domestic extremism provisions while being charged with crimes like criminal trespass and vandalism.

The zeroing in on anti-tech activity by federal agencies is evident in an invitation to a lecture by extremism researcher Mauro Lubrano circulating in fusion centers across the country. Lubrano has emerged as one of the foremost experts on anti-technology extremism. He is the author of *Stop the Machines: The Rise of Anti-Technology*, which describes three main strains of a newly minted threat matrix: insurrectionary anarchists, eco-extremists, and ecofascists.

Lubrano's book identifies followers of “Unabomber” Ted Kaczynski, German anarchists, Mexican eco-extremists, and far-right fascists in the [Terrorgram Collective](#) as distinct but aligned components of an emerging tech extremism movement. In Lubrano’s analysis, these groups are united by the fact that they have all plotted or carried out acts of violence in furtherance of their ideological goals.

Lubrano said he was not surprised that his lecture turned up in a fusion center but cautioned that any anti-tech extremism framework must be exercised carefully. “I hope the warning I, along with other colleagues, raised is being acknowledged. While anti-

trajectory,” Lubrao tells WIRED.

But Spencer Reynolds says that, despite the real if limited threat posed by these groups, a category like “anti-tech extremism” could be drawn so broad as to ensnare peaceful data center protesters, AI skeptics, and anyone with a bone to pick with technology that permeates modern life.

“As people continue to organize for a better future, we’re likely to see more surveillance and criminalization of this opposition, just as we have of Black Lives Matter, Occupy Wall Street, and environmental movements in recent decades,” Reynolds says.

A January 2025 DHS Office of Intelligence and Analysis report furthers this perspective by attempting to connect Luigi Mangione—the alleged assassin of UnitedHealth CEO Brian Thompson—with Kaczynski. “Law enforcement reports that the individual may have drawn inspiration from Ted Kaczynski (the Unabomber) and his anti-technology beliefs,” the report reads, without offering further evidence. It concludes with a warning alleging that executives “are at a heightened risk for targeted acts of violence or threats of violence” when they are “perceived as taking advantage of individuals of lesser means.”

But perhaps the clearest-cut example of how nonviolent critiques of technology can be swept up and flagged as a threat is found in an open-source report circulated by SITE Intelligence in April 2025. The report flags a video from the progressive nonprofit More Perfect Union on the destructive effects of a data center to nearby residents in Georgia. Nothing in the video advocated for violence against property or people. But thanks to fusion center targeting, the advocacy group is now circulating among US intelligence and law enforcement across the country as a potential threat vector.

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