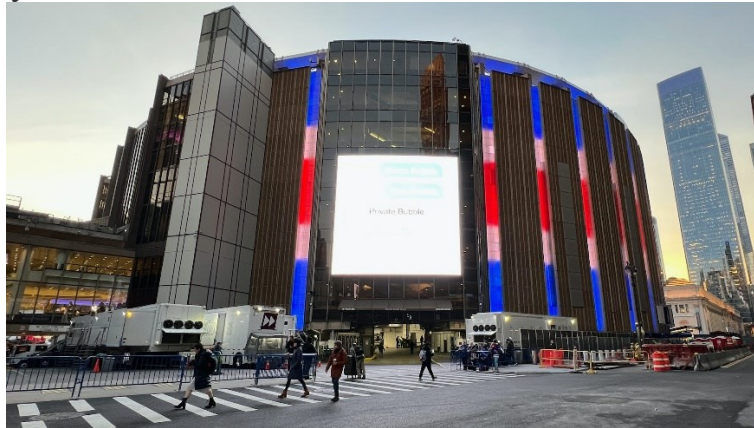


Madison Square Garden Uses Facial Recognition Technology To Stop Certain People From Entering

By **Ben Zeisloft**

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Bruce Bennett via Getty Images

Madison Square Garden Entertainment is using facial recognition technology to prevent attorneys from law firms representing clients suing the company from entering iconic venues in New York City.

The policy may violate state and federal laws prohibiting discrimination and retaliation toward individuals engaged in protected activities, such as “taking on legitimate cases, including sexual harassment or employment discrimination claims,” according to a letter from Kyle Rapiñan, an official with the New York State Office of the Attorney General. An investigation from the New York Times found that the company is stopping lawyers from entering the facility with the help of software that can identify their faces using profile photos on their companies’ websites.

Thousands of lawyers across several dozen firms may have been affected by the company’s move, according to the letter, which indicated that season ticket holders could be barred from attending events. Sports teams such as the New York Knicks and the New York Rangers play at Madison Square Garden, which is also a coveted concert venue.

In one example highlighted by the New York Times, personal injury lawyer Kelly Conlon was pulled aside while chaperoning her nine-year-old daughter to Radio City Music Hall for a Rockettes show. Security guards pulled Conlon aside and

informed her that she had been placed on an “attorney exclusion list” created by the venue’s management.

Madison Square Garden Entertainment CEO James Dolan, whose family owns the company, affirmed during an interview with Fox 5 New York that he stands by the policy. “If somebody sues you, that’s confrontational, that’s adversarial,” he asserted. “There’s all kinds of politicians who are jumping into this, none for the right reasons.”

Although the use of facial recognition is presently legal in New York City, other state and local governments have prohibited the technology. Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton filed suit last year against Google and Meta for breaches of state laws which prohibit technology companies from using data such as iris scans, fingerprints, voiceprints, or records of hand and face geometry for commercial purposes without permission.

Other technology firms have likewise faced criticism from lawmakers over the collection of user data. Amazon smart doorbell company Ring informed Sen. Ed Markey (D-MA) that the company has provided law enforcement with videos from user devices in emergency scenarios after making a “good-faith determination that there was an imminent danger of death or serious physical injury” involved in the situation. The lawmaker said that the policy justifies passage of the Facial Recognition and Biometric Technology Moratorium Act, which would prohibit state and federal entities from accessing Americans’ sensitive data.

“As my ongoing investigation into Amazon illustrates, it has become increasingly difficult for the public to move, assemble, and converse in public without being tracked and recorded,” Markey said in a press release. “We cannot accept this as inevitable in our country.”

ByteDance, the Chinese parent company of social media platform TikTok, recently garnered controversy for planning to track the location of specific American citizens, according to a report from Forbes. The company’s internal audit and risk department was originally purposed to investigate misconduct from employees, yet the team allegedly planned to collect data about the location of at least one American who had never been employed by ByteDance.