



OFFICE OF THE
STATE AUDITOR

News Release

For Immediate Release

March 30, 2021

**Office of the State Auditor Announces the Release of a
Review of Banjo, Inc. and its Public Safety Application**

Office asked to evaluate concerns regarding privacy and potential algorithmic bias

Salt Lake City, UTAH –

The Office of the State Auditor (Office) today announces the release of its review of the State's contract with Banjo, Inc. (Banjo). Attorney General Reyes requested the Office review the contract for Banjo's public safety application Live Time. The circumstances surrounding Live Time posed several complex technical and social issues, including concerns regarding privacy and potential algorithmic bias. We recognize the compelling law enforcement interests underlying the associated procurement, particularly the possibility of leveraging technology to accelerate the safe rescue of abducted children.

Key takeaways of the review include:

- The actual capabilities of Live Time appeared inconsistent with Banjo's claims in its proposal. Other competing vendors might have been able to meet the lower expectations.
- It appears that Live Time lacked the advertised AI technology. Live Time appeared suited to aid a skilled analyst via the power of an enhanced dashboard.
- Because of the reduced capability of the Live Time system, it appears much less likely sensitive personally-identifiable information (PII) was accessed, transferred, and used improperly than was previously feared. Live Time appeared to lack the algorithmic sophistication that would have posed the risk of inappropriate discrimination.
- The architecture of Live Time's access to certain public safety systems should not have been permitted based on existing industry best practices.

In June 2020, State Auditor Dougall announced the formation of a Commission on Protecting Privacy and Preventing Discrimination (Commission) to assist in the Office's review.

In February 2021, the Commission released two documents intended to help State and local government entities that are considering the procurement of advanced software technology. The two documents are:

- Software Application Procurement Principles for Utah Government Entities (Principles)

- Questions from the Commission on Protecting Privacy and Preventing Discrimination (Questions)

The application of these recently released principles to the original RFP likely would have avoided the pitfalls encountered.

State Auditor John Dougall said, "I recognize the challenges of finding innovative ways to better perform critical government functions. I also understand the complexities of translating one's vision into operational tools. I commend government entities who continually strive to strengthen operations while saving money, despite the hurdles encountered pursuing those objectives."

The news release, the Review, the Principles and the Questions are found at auditor.utah.gov.

The Review is found specifically at:

<https://reporting.auditor.utah.gov/servlet/servlet.FileDownload?file=0151K0000042i9IQAA>

"Software Application Procurement Principles for Utah Government Entities" is found at <https://auditor.utah.gov/wp-content/uploads/sites/6/2021/02/Office-of-the-State-Auditor-Software-Application-Procurement-Principles-Privacy-and-Anti-Discrimination-Feb-2-2021-Final.pdf>

"Questions from the Commission on Protecting Privacy and Preventing Discrimination" is found at <https://auditor.utah.gov/wp-content/uploads/sites/6/2021/02/Office-of-the-State-Auditor-Questions-to-help-Procuring-Agencies--Entities-with-Software-Procurement-Feb-1-2021-Final.pdf>

About the Office of the State Auditor

The Office of the State Auditor provides Utah taxpayers and government officials with an independent assessment of financial operation, statutory compliance, and performance management for state and local government.

Specific activities of the Office include performing financial audits, conducting federal funds compliance audits, providing local government oversight, conducting agency and program performance audits, performing fraud and compliance audits, and operating the State Auditor Hotline for citizens to report suspected financial issues or improprieties. These capabilities strengthen Utah State Government and help taxpayers have confidence in the integrity of Utah's government agencies.

The Office also provides interactive graphical tools to help taxpayers and policymakers gain greater insight into governmental financial activities.

The State Auditor is a Constitutional Officer of the State of Utah, elected directly by the state's citizens every 4 years. The role of the Utah State Auditor is authorized in Article VII, Section 15 of the Utah Constitution. For more information, see auditor.utah.gov.

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