# AN ARMS RACE IN TRACKING

**Technology that eliminates long-standing gray zones is seldom welcome by the workers it affects. A few examples of systems and the resistance they elicit:**

## Employee tracking software on smartphones

In many jurisdictions, it is legal for an employer-issued phone to contain software that allows the employer to track a worker. Some employees deal with this by shutting down their phones when not at work when possible. Others have taken to the courts. A sales executive at a money-transfer firm, for example, sued after being fired for removing a tracking app from her company-issued phone. She argued she was being treated like parolees required to wear ankle bracelets. The 2015 suit eventually was settled out of court.

## Office screen and keyboard trackers

Software packages like Worksnaps and Kickidler now let employers count keystrokes and rate of typing, and see a what is appearing on employees' screens. Employers have an obvious incentive to monitor computer behavior, given the widespread use of computers for personal shopping or, worse, pornography watching. Yet there is little doubt that employees resist the implicit message of this software: that they can't be trusted. The result has been an arms race of sorts between makers of tracking software, who strive to capture fakery, and hackers, who make software to fool the monitors.

## Police officer body cameras

Research suggests that body cameras reduce complaints about officers' use of force. They also reduce cops' ability to use their judgment about when and how to enforce laws. Officers have been known to resist by "forgetting" to turn on body cams or reporting that a device malfunctioned.

## GPS and monitoring of truckers

Once "the knights of the road," to use their own description, long-haul truck drivers today cannot pick up hitchhikers or make unexpected detours. They're monitored by cameras, GPS trackers, and devices that trigger cameras whenever they brake forcefully, among many other devices. Drivers have been discovered putting tinfoil over their GPS receivers, or making sure logging devices meet with unfortunate "accidents," and working around device specs. Similarly, employees whose employers monitor their wellness habits with Fitbits have discovered that they can appear very active indeed—by attaching the devices to pets.

## Airport monitoring of security screeners

TSA employees, who feel they are intensely watched by supervisors and the public at all times, respond with strategies including taking extra time traveling from one part of the airport to another, extending their breaks, and keeping their expressions blank. "You learn to work under the umbrella," one employee told Anteby. Ironically, Anteby and Curtis K. Chan of Boston College wrote in a recent paper in *Organization Science*, employees' resistance to surveillance prompted management to install more surveillance equipment.