



The Future of Justice: Evaluating Emerging AI Technologies for Effectiveness, Fairness, and Safety

The Wilson Center

Launched in 2019, the Wilson Center is Duke University's hub of research and public engagement around the criminal legal system. Housed within the Law School, the Wilson Center works with community stakeholders, policymakers, leading academics, and Duke students to conduct interdisciplinary research and translate that research into effective and practical policy change. In addition to wide ranging work across the criminal legal system, the Center is an established leader in [promoting safeguards](#) around the [use of AI in the criminal legal system](#) and for providing [impartial evaluations](#) of artificial intelligence (AI) and other technologies for communities, governments, and other stakeholders.



"Rigorous, independent evaluation is critical to assess the impacts of AI tools in real-world settings. Criminal justice agencies should advocate for, execute, and/or learn from empirical studies that evaluate AI capabilities and real-world performance."

— Council on Criminal Justice (October 2024)

Evaluating AI and Emerging Technologies in the Criminal Legal System

The Wilson Center conducts independent, nonpartisan evaluations of AI and other technologies used across the criminal legal system. We help government agencies assess whether these tools are achieving their intended goals—and what their broader impacts may be.

Our work supports evidence-informed decision-making through rigorous, data-driven analysis. We partner with jurisdictions to answer practical and policy-relevant questions, such as:

- Do these technologies work as intended?
- Do they meet the needs of the agency?
- Do they improve public safety or system efficiency?
- How are these tools experienced by impacted communities?
- Are there concerns related to equity, privacy, or accountability?

The Center's capabilities include both quantitative and qualitative methods, tailored to the needs of each agency. Recent projects include in-depth evaluations of [ShotSpotter, a gunfire detection system](#), for the cities of Durham, NC and Fayetteville, NC. These evaluations examined ShotSpotter's effects on police deployment, investigation outcomes, and the costs to the cities' police resources, as well as community sentiment about the system. The Wilson Center is also well-positioned to evaluate a wide variety of technologies, such as predictive policing systems, automated court notification systems, and evidence analysis systems.

With a track record of producing accessible, actionable findings, the Wilson Center supports informed decision-making in an era of rapid technological change.

