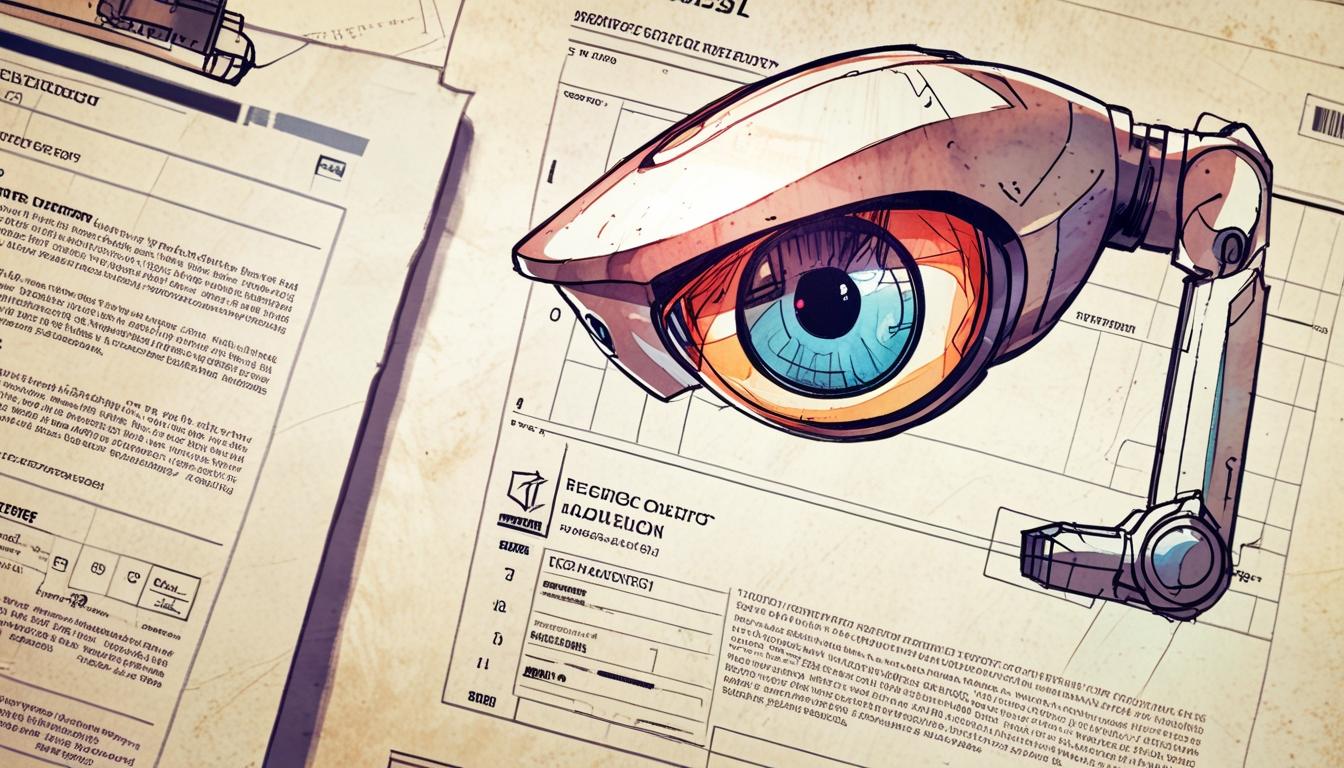
# Elon Musk-led DOGE uses AI surveillance to monitor federal employees’ loyalty amid controversy



The United States Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE), led by Elon Musk, has reportedly implemented artificial intelligence (AI) systems to surveil federal agency communications for sentiments deemed anti-Donald Trump and anti-Elon Musk. This initiative forms part of a broader push by DOGE to overhaul government operations through technology aimed at cutting waste and improving efficiency, though it has sparked concerns about employee rights, transparency, and government accountability.

DOGE, established with the goal of streamlining federal agencies, has introduced AI tools that automate the assessment—and in some cases, the dismissal—of federal employees based on their alignment with the administration's priorities. Since taking over critical functions of the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) in January, the department has reportedly terminated hundreds of federal workers without formal explanation, restricted access to essential systems, and sidelined long-serving officials. This approach represents a significant shift from traditional personnel management and due process protocols.

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and other agencies reportedly caution staff to be mindful of their speech and activities online, signaling the pervasive nature of the surveillance. These AI-driven practices have been overshadowed by other political debates but raise serious questions about how surveillance might undermine transparency and the culture of public service.

Within federal agencies, DOGE has encouraged communication and document editing through tools more typical of private sector tech startups, such as Signal messenger and Google Docs, bypassing standard government-approved platforms. The AI chatbot Grok, launched by Musk in 2023, has been integrated across departments, although its exact role remains unclear.

Earlier this year, the OPM emailed thousands of federal employees requesting weekly reports of their accomplishments. Elon Musk, in public statements on the social media platform X, warned that failure to respond would be interpreted as an act of resignation. The move generated confusion and anxiety across government branches. Without clear legal guidance, some agencies, including the Department of Justice and several intelligence organisations, advised their staff not to comply. Other departments, like the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and the Department of Transportation, instructed employees to cooperate, even as HHS warned about potential exposure to hostile foreign actors. The EPA supplied template responses to assist their workers. Eventually, the OPM clarified the reports were voluntary, though substantial data had already been collected.

Reports suggest that DOGE intended to use these responses within a large language model to evaluate employee value to the administration’s mission; Musk later described the exercise as a simple check “to see if the employee had a pulse.” This marks a notable use of AI not to enhance productivity but to monitor perceived loyalty. Former Trump administration officials reportedly disclosed that employees have been informed about DOGE's surveillance efforts targeting signs of disloyalty to both the Trump administration and Musk himself.

Experts warn that employing AI systems to identify political dissent lacks nuance and reduces complex human judgement to superficial compliance metrics. Such practices risk promoting conformity over capability, diminishing the ethical and professional standards traditionally upheld in public service roles.

Musk’s approach has been characterised by using emerging technology to enforce discipline and align federal staff with his vision of efficiency. The digital surveillance environment has reportedly contributed to employee self-censorship, eroding trust within agencies and undermining psychological safety. The consequent disengagement could lower accountability and discourage whistle-blowing, which typically serves to uphold institutional integrity and transparency.

Legal concerns have also surfaced. In March, a federal judge blocked DOGE from accessing Treasury Department systems due to a “chaotic and haphazard” approach that could jeopardise sensitive financial information.

Elon Musk recently announced that his involvement in DOGE would “drop significantly” starting in May, amid political pressure from Republicans urging distance between Trump and Musk as well as investor concerns linked to Tesla. Despite Musk’s expected reduced role, approximately 100 DOGE employees and their AI frameworks remain embedded in federal departments, raising questions about the future of these surveillance systems.

Historically, surveillance tools introduced by governments endure beyond the tenure of their creators, often becoming entrenched institutional mechanisms. With minimal formal oversight beyond presidential discretion, the current AI-driven surveillance operations may continue, potentially impacting the political neutrality of the U.S. civil service.

The Conversation is reporting these developments as part of a wider analysis on the evolving role of AI in public administration and its implications for governance, employee rights, and institutional transparency.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.reuters.com/world/us/trump-says-doge-work-led-fraud-referrals-justice-department-2025-04-30/> - This article reports that President Donald Trump confirmed referrals for fraud have been made to the Justice Department based on investigations conducted by the Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE), led by Elon Musk, aligning with the claim that DOGE has implemented AI systems to surveil federal agency communications for sentiments deemed anti-Donald Trump and anti-Elon Musk.
2. <https://www.reuters.com/world/us/us-appeals-court-will-not-allow-doge-access-social-security-data-2025-04-30/> - This article discusses a federal appeals court's decision to block DOGE from accessing sensitive Social Security data, highlighting concerns about employee rights and government accountability, which relates to the article's mention of concerns about employee rights and transparency.
3. <https://www.reuters.com/world/us/100-days-doge-lots-chaos-not-so-much-efficiency-2025-04-24/> - This article examines the operational challenges and inefficiencies faced by federal agencies under DOGE's leadership, supporting the claim that DOGE's approach represents a significant shift from traditional personnel management and due process protocols.
4. <https://www.reuters.com/world/us/us-farm-agency-require-doge-approval-some-loans-2025-04-30/> - This article reports that the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Farm Service Agency will now require approval from DOGE for certain farm loans, indicating DOGE's influence over federal operations, which aligns with the article's mention of DOGE's efforts to overhaul government operations through technology.
5. <https://www.reuters.com/world/us/100-days-doge-lots-chaos-not-so-much-efficiency-2025-04-24/> - This article highlights the widespread disruption and operational inefficiencies in federal agencies under DOGE's leadership, supporting the claim that DOGE's approach has sparked concerns about employee rights, transparency, and government accountability.
6. <https://www.reuters.com/world/us/100-days-doge-lots-chaos-not-so-much-efficiency-2025-04-24/> - This article discusses the significant staff reductions and operational challenges faced by federal agencies under DOGE's leadership, corroborating the claim that DOGE has introduced AI tools that automate the assessment—and in some cases, the dismissal—of federal employees based on their alignment with the administration's priorities.
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