DOGE used flawed AI tool to “munch” Veterans Affairs contracts



According to a post on his blog, this was done with the approval of Musk before he left DOGE. “When he asked the room about improving DOGE’s public perception, I asked if I could open-source the code I’d been writing,” Lavingia said. “He said yes—it aligned with DOGE’s goal of maximum transparency.”

That openness may have eventually led to Lavingia’s dismissal. Lavingia confirmed he was terminated from DOGE after giving an interview to Fast Company magazine about his work with the department. A VA spokesperson declined to comment on Lavingia’s dismissal.

VA officials have declined to say whether they will continue to use the “munchable” tool moving forward. But the administration may deploy AI to help the agency replace employees. Documents previously obtained by ProPublica show DOGE officials proposed in March consolidating the benefits

claims department by relying more on AI.

And the government’s contractors are paying attention. After Lavingia posted his code, he said he heard from people trying to understand how to keep the money flowing.

“I got a couple DMs from VA contractors who had questions when they saw this code,” he said. “They were trying to make sure that their contracts don’t get cut. Or learn why they got cut.

“At the end of the day, humans are the ones terminating the contracts, but it is helpful for them to see how DOGE or Trump or the agency heads are thinking about what contracts they are going to munch. Transparency is a good thing.”

If you have any information about the misuse or abuse of AI within government agencies, Brandon Roberts is an investigative journalist on the news applications team and has a wealth of experience using and dissecting artificial intelligence. He can be reached on Signal @brandonrobertz.01 or by email brandon.roberts@propublica.org.

If you have information about the VA that we should know about, contact reporter Vernal Coleman on Signal, vcoleman91.99, or via email, vernal.coleman@propublica.org, and Eric Umansky on Signal, Ericumansky.04, or via email, eric.umansky@propublica.org.

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