

Ring's AI-powered Search Party won't stop at finding lost dogs, leaked email shows

A leaked internal email obtained by *404 Media* shows that Ring has bigger plans for its AI-powered neighborhood search capability than just looking for lost dogs. The outlet reports the email, sent last October by founder Jamie Siminoff to all Ring employees, says that with Search Party, "You can now see a future where we are able to zero out crime in neighborhoods."

The ad, which details how AI can be used to search through footage from Ring's network of cameras, sparked concerns that it could be used as a broader surveillance tool.

In response to earlier questions from *The Verge*, Ring maintained that Search Party is a purpose-built tool that is not currently capable of searching for people. Additionally, the company said that sharing any footage from Ring cameras is at the camera owner's discretion, except in response to legal requests.

The email, which Ring confirmed to *The Verge* was written by Siminoff, was sent following the launch of Search Party. Siminoff wrote:

"This is by far the most innovative that we have launched in the history of Ring. And it is not only the quantity, but quality. I believe that the foundation we created with Search Party, first for finding dogs, will end up becoming one of the most important pieces of tech and innovation to truly unlock the impact of our mission. You can now see a future

where we are able to zero out crime in neighborhoods. So many things to do to get there but for the first time ever we have the chance to fully complete what we started.”

Ring already has AI-powered search tools that a camera’s owner can use to search their own footage for virtually anything, including people, pets, and vehicles. A Search Party, on the other hand, can be initiated by anyone with access to the Ring Neighbors app.

Ring issued a statement about the contents of the leaked email. “We’re focused on giving camera owners meaningful context about critical events in their neighborhoods – like a lost pet or nearby fire – so they can decide whether and how to help their community,” spokesperson Emma Daniels said. “Community Requests notify neighbors when local public safety agencies ask the community for assistance. Across these features, sharing has always been the camera owner’s choice. Ring provides relevant context about when sharing may be helpful – but the decision remains firmly in the customer’s hands, not ours.”

The company is building a powerful technology that it says is designed for its users. But the potential privacy implications of these tools remain very broad. Dogs and wildfires notably do not cause crime. Which begs the question, exactly what is it that will eventually help Ring “zero out crime”?

<https://www.theverge.com/tech/880906/ring-siminoff-email-leak-search-party-expansion>