

Christopher Cruz

From Analyst to Technologist to AI Leader

Mindy: [00:00:00] Welcome to Analyst Talk with Jason Elder. It's like coffee with an analyst, or it could be whiskey with an analyst reading a spreadsheet, linking crime events, identifying a series, and getting the latest scoop on association news and training. So please don't beat that analyst and join us as we define the law enforcement analysis profession.

One episode at a time.

Jason: How we doing? Alice, Jason Elder here with another LE, a podcast Deep dive. A first today welcoming back to the show, Christopher Cruz to help us talk more about artificial intelligence and impact on analysis. Chris, how we doing?

Chris: Doing well, Jason. So happy to be back. Thank you for having me.

Jason: I appreciate you.

I just informally have started to get different takes on AI and how it relates to law enforcement analysis, I remember seeing your presentation in Vegas a couple years back at the IACA conference and still quote [00:01:00] your, lesson about trying to. Calculate what the black box calculates and how it might take you 60 years to do one calculation.

So I thought, who better to continue this conversation than to have you back on the podcast to, give us your take on AI and analysis.

Chris: Oh, for sure. Yeah, it sounds amazing. Yeah, that that I, a CA presentation was it was fun. It was one of my funnest, I think, conference presentations I've ever done.

Got a ton of really great feedback. I think I truly felt like a rockstar after that one delivering it so well in Vegas and, getting such great questions after the fact. So I definitely. It clearly like struck a lot of interest chords with a lot of analysts, I think, which was really exciting to see.

Jason: Yeah, yeah. So I want to get your impact on AI now. Maybe talk about future considerations and talk about how AI impact the knowledge, skills and

abilities. Get your take [00:02:00] like everybody else is, is AI taking over. Analyst jobs.

Chris: Yeah. It's a, it's a fascinating topic and a, and a fascinating question and I think analysts as a whole, kind of across all levels of government are.

In the middle of it, they're in the thick of it. Probably much more than a lot of other public safety professionals. I think the, analyst as a technologist has, has started to become the norm, I think, and they're starting to look to us to be like you're, you're the techie expert.

You're the, you're the one who's good with computers. What's the AI thing? What are we gonna do with it? How are we gonna use it? So it's really putting analysts potentially front and center. But I think the big question is are, we all prepared and ready for what's already here? And, and what's gonna come?

Jason: Yeah. No, I think before we start I think, I think it's an interesting concept about analyst as. What did you refer to as a technologist?

Chris: Analyst. As a technologist, yeah.

Jason: Yeah. I think that's a fascinating concept because I've been [00:03:00] in roles where I was the analyst and I was basically the middleman between it and executives.

And knew enough about both sides to really help with the matter, going directly from it to executive is something that doesn't happen very smoothly in a lot of cases. So analysts are needed to, be that middle man.

Chris: Yeah, I think you're totally right. There is there's often a friction between, well, to be honest, it and, and everyone else often.

But it can be its own little box of, of interesting characters to work with. But I always feel like thinking back to early in my careers and analysts to working with a lot of particularly sworn counterparts agents or investigators or officers or troopers who.

We're less comfortable on a computer, less comfortable with technology, less comfortable navigating the internet. And so there was always this expectation that, well, the [00:04:00] analyst is, is your go-to person for that type of stuff. You're, there to help them not just do analytical work, but somehow that also includes supporting the technology efforts as well.

And I think now we're getting AI thrown on us. I think you'll find many analysts are deeply involved in like, rolling out new CAD or new RMS systems. Like we really are taking. For better or for worse, a lot of responsibility is this technologist role in, in agencies and departments.

Jason: Yeah, and, and I think there's certainly executives or even officers that certainly can handle going straight to it in our, in our scenario here. I, I think one of the, the aspects of it for analysts though. Is, as you mentioned already dealing with the computer, already dealing with data. Having that, time and experience it helps with the matter.

Whereas even if, [00:05:00] even if executives or officers had the knowledge, skills and abilities, like they have a lot other responsibilities outside of the desk to, take care of and might not have that time. Necessary to really corroborate some of the leads you get from ai.

Chris: Oh, a hundred percent true.

I think a lot of it is exactly your point. A lot of other positions having to, to do other things that, that take them away from the desk or from the, the laptop or the computer, where I think more often not that's where the analyst lives and so. There's just this sort of proxy effect that occurs where we're just always there and always ready.

So we just end up getting that mantle kind of thrown upon us.

Jason: Yeah, and I think one, I, I talked about it on another podcast where I was talking about the different layers, the different tiers. Of ai because that bottom tier I just is maybe something just [00:06:00] naturally happens in a Google search now or B browser.

You're asking a question, you're getting an answer. Maybe you're asking chat GBT or AI chat to, fix some code. There's, it's a specific question that you're asking. It's like that bottom tier that anybody that's dipping their toe in, that's, that's where they start. And then it's, it seems like it jumps from there to then large language models and then craft databases, and there's just this huge leap to this next tier thing where it's like, oh, this is.

This is a lot, lot more responsibility, a lot more set up a lot more things to consider other than just asking the computer a question, for lack of better term.

Chris: Oh yeah. I think I think everyone's first foray is that entry level experience with ai where we're really just using it as like the new Google search [00:07:00] essentially.

It's just, I, I have a question. I want an answer. Let me input and, and get a result, or maybe I have a, a, a slightly more complex question. I'll, I'll get a longer answer. I think that's where everyone starts, and I think getting people to, to move beyond that is hard. 'cause after that it does spiral very quickly into this, this massive array of different technologies and different techniques and even even different types of AI models that you start interfa interfacing with or experiencing.

So. It's like, it is kind of like a pool where it's really easy to take the first step. But then after that it just drops off drastically into like a whole new world of technology for people to figure out.

Jason: Yeah. Yeah. And I might, I always like to give the tidbit too, for the listeners that. I think Jan Mondale who does our open secrets deep dives, said that, hey, once you use chat, GPT or, and any of them, you can always ask for their source.

The next question can be, what is your source? And you can always review [00:08:00] the sources as well. So it's, you can try to corroborate what you're getting from the ai.

Chris: Yeah, always, always recommend people don't blindly trust whatever it spits out. There is no shortage of stories of people who have, who have gone awry with it a little bit.

I think there's a massive uptick of allegedly lawyers using it for cases and depositions and. An increasing issue of like made up or fictional case law getting thrown in there that mm-hmm. Lawyers and counsel are not catching, but judges are. And I hear the judges are not happy.

Jason: Yeah, I'm sure.

I'm sure. So I think it's one of the difficult aspects of talking about current state analysis. And AI is that there are so many different scenarios for an analyst. There's 17,000 police departments in the United States, and so you have everything from your [00:09:00] small town, one person analyst, all the way up to your NYPD having hundreds of analysts.

I know that's difficult, but, talk a little bit about. What you think the, current state is with analysis and ai.

Chris: Yeah, I think we're at kind of an, an interesting inflection point maybe. So I did, a little research. I made sure I came prepared, right. So I've found a couple interesting surveys from.

Companies that many of us probably know and debatably love perhaps. And I won't, I won't name these companies 'cause I don't want to appeal like a, a advertising or anything like that. But these are two mm-hmm two big companies that most people in public safety would recognize. The first one talked about kind of the, the state of.

Of hiring and, and personnel and, and police departments. And I think they surveyed over 500 police departments and they found only 14% of those were fully staffed. And half of them were below eight [00:10:00] at or below 80% capacity, I think. And so I, I know we were all kind of suffering staffing issues after 2020, kind of

Jason: mm-hmm.

Chris: Blew up the, the role of policing as a whole. And it seems like we're still. Haven't righted the ship since then. But there was another interesting takeaway that 75% of those departments that were surveyed or off, or professionals that were surveyed found they thought that AI would help make the job easier and boost investigative efficiency.

So three out of four people were like, yeah, AI is gonna make everything better and easier. Compared that to another survey. Were upwards of 80% of respondents out of 2000. Professionals in public safety upwards of 80% were saying, Hey, AI is gonna make investigations easier. It's gonna make them more effective.

But we also know that there's this big concern on, well, is it gonna replace us? Is it gonna, is it gonna replace the role of the analyst? Or how heavily is it gonna augment the role of the [00:11:00] analyst? And so I think that is sort of where we're kind of left wondering. And I think the. It's really up to the analyst.

I think to your point, there are really small rural departments that are just gonna look for how do we maximize efficiency and mm-hmm. In their minds that might just be plop some AI down and then just run with it. I think more mature

departments are hopefully gonna gonna look more of it as how do we augment rather than replace?

But I think it's really gonna be dependent on the, the attitude of the agency, their leadership, but also the, the contributions of the analysts to, to. Chart their own path a little bit on those issues.

Jason: Well, I, I think and I, I've this is one of the things that Dawn Reeby and I talked about on when we were talking about this topic.

I, think potentially a lot of the, tasks that analysts get assigned that, may not necessarily be analysis, might be alleviated using AI like graphic design or building a PowerPoint or [00:12:00] building a sign for the company party the, those type of things where you're, you're like, oh, that's clerical task that analysts sometimes get assigned and, and I told her, I was like, Hey, there's analysts out there that really enjoy doing that. And that might be something where it's like, Hey, yeah, I don't want you spending an hour getting this PowerPoint correct. Get it ready in five minutes.

But I feel that those. Those kind of tasks, data cleaning and then fixing code. And, and those are really some of the things that may take a lot of time away from analysts and free them up to do other things. So. My take is, AI is going to take analyst jobs in a way.

And I think analysts, if they don't start understanding a little bit more about ai. They're gonna be seen as dinosaurs , what is [00:13:00] your take on that? Agree or disagree?

Chris: I definitely agree. I think you're, I, I agree on two parts. I agree. If, if you're not.

Learning to use it in some capacity. You're gonna be left behind, like analysts who can't make some use of it. At some point are, I think people are gonna look at you funny. Like, what do you mean you don't know how to use Jet Gt the same way? When you meet someone who's still using like an aol.com email, you're like, what do you mean still using aol.com?

Why would you do that? It's gonna be same. I like

Jason: my Hotmail. My Hotmail email.

Chris: Yahoo's great. No. So I think, I think that'll be, I think there'll be some. Stigma and , some just change has to come with it. I think the other part I who agree with is like there's so much tasking that is just epically time consuming.

And I think good analysts and smart analysts will learn how to game the system a little bit to like optimize things where AI is useful and, and spend more time on the actual like. Hard analytics that, that they all probably want [00:14:00] to do. When I did my presentation in Vegas, I think I hit on some really great examples where number one, that whole presentation, it was partially created with ai and that was kind of a disclaimer at the start, is.

I didn't make this whole thing. I, I made it in concert with two different AI bots that helped flush out content and generated slides and created pictures. I also created a, a framework on how to assess like usability or risk in AI for police departments. That framework was created from ai and I, I did a lot of polish and cleaning on it, but I used AI to generate that framework.

And then I went one step further. And I made a website and I put the, the slides and summaries and the tool that I created all on the website, which itself was also created with ai. And what a lot of people didn't realize is 90% of i, of what I just described, I did from when I landed in Vegas to when I did the presentation.

So I didn't do that like months ahead of time. I put myself through this [00:15:00] crazy test of how much can I knock out with AI in a very short amount of time. And I really like put my money where my mouth was and showed like I could build a bunch of stuff in 48 hours essentially and have, have it presentation ready which I thought was really fascinating experience.

Jason: And you used the word bought there, is that? Something that you customized yourself or is that just you're just referring to that as, as one of the AI tools like chat, GBT ?

Chris: In that instance it's a little bit of both. So if you look at chat GBT as an example mm-hmm.

There, there's just a core function that you can use, but then they have kind of like a, I forget the name they use, but it's almost like a store where you can find all these customized GPTs they call them.

Okay. And essentially what you can do is feed it a bunch of extra data. You can set very specific instructions and guidelines and you can sort of tailor one to do

or act or respond in a certain way. And I actually had one that was tailored to [00:16:00] like the, the role of a crime analyst. And I fed it dozens of like job descriptions of what a crime analyst does.

I fed it like books about crime analysis and like PDFs and reports. And I told it like, you are a seasoned crime analyst, answer every question like, you've been doing this for 30 years and you're an expert in the field, and things like that. So I sort of tricked it into thinking it was an expert. And then everything it did, it did through this lens of.

Thinking it was a crime, an crime analyst.

Jason: Hmm. And what were some interesting things that came outta that?

Chris: I was surprised at how good I was at certain things. One of the things that I demoed but was like kind of floored me when it happened. And I, I realized that when I was like setting up the presentation, so I had this example where I wanted to show like, oh, you could take like crime stats and you could put it in one of these tools and you can ask it questions and it will generate answers and it will, it will calculate trends and hotspots for you.

So you don't necessarily have to do some of that stuff [00:17:00] manually. You can just invest your time in like operationalizing those findings. So I downloaded some open source openly available crime data from like data.gov, which just has a bunch of free data from different sources. I think it was like New Jersey crime data or Ohio maybe.

And I didn't notice, but the spreadsheet, the CSV that the data was in was like messed up. The formatting was all jacked up. The columns were off. Kilter from each other. So an analyst would've opened that and been like, oh man, I gotta like fix this stupid spreadsheet. Lemme clean up this data. I didn't check it that closely, I just uploaded it.

And it actually said, Hey, FYI, the spreadsheet's broken. I went ahead and fixed it for you. Here's a nice new clean version of the spreadsheet. Now let me go ahead and answer this question you have about like, calculating crime trends. So I thought that was a really great example of like something that is.

Like, arguably still high value, but certainly like time consuming and not really high value as an analyst. Just high value as in like someone has to [00:18:00] do it. And I think that's where AI has an opportunity is to optimize the things we have to do, but aren't true. Like analytical work.

Jason: , I feel for the analyst.

Because even, though they could do all that, themselves, if I'm running something like that, trying to turn it into a supervisor, I'm double checking, running something parallel to it, every time. To make sure that it's producing accurate results just in case it, it reads something it shouldn't and produces results that I don't want, because obviously I don't wanna turn something in that isn't what is expected.

Chris: Yeah, a hundred percent. And that's something I've, I've told a lot of analysts is, . Normally we would say like, in the cybersecurity world, like trust but verify. But I would almost say don't trust, just and just verify that you never know what it's spitting out. There is a whole field of ai called hallucinations, which, where it

mm-hmm

Chris: [00:19:00] it generates wrong things or ridiculous things.

For a hot minute. Chat. GPT was notorious for something they call glazing. And this is like an AI term as well where it tells you whatever it thinks you want to hear. Even if that's not the right answer, it tries to guess what it thinks you think the right answer is. And it hyper fixates on being as nice and kind and supportive of whatever absurd or ridiculous thing you're saying.

And I've definitely, in my testing. Noticed it happening to me or I'm like, wait a minute. This is like, this is wrong. This is totally wrong, and I yell at it. I type meanly, I should say, and I say, why are you giving me the wrong answer? And I once had one of these tools literally respond to me and say, well, I really wanted to show you the answer I thought you wanted, so that's why I said all those things.

I'm like, oh my God. It's like, it's lying and it's even admitting to me it's lying and then it's saying, sorry that I lied. And I'm like, this is a wild experience to be having with an, inanimate object essentially.

Jason: [00:20:00] Yeah, it, it's funny 'cause I catch myself when I'm asking something I use. , Please.

I was like, will you please do this?

Chris: Yeah.

Jason: And I'm like, why am I using please, like I'm talking to a human, but I, I catch myself doing that.

Chris: Well, there's, there were, there were a couple studies that came out and at least for a couple of the more popular ones. There was some early studies that suggested if you say please and thank you, it performs better.

Cool. There was also a study that came out that said, when you use please and thank you, it works harder. Like it uses more processing power. But allegedly one of the companies was like, every time you do that. It consumes more energy and that costs us more money. So please stop saying please and thanking.

Jason: Please stop saying please. Oh man.

Eliann: This is Dr. Eliann Carr from the Ellensburg Police Department here to talk about the [00:21:00] first of its kind, the Crime Analyst Census survey. This is an opportunity for crime analysts from around the world to be able to share information on the demographics that make up the field, be able to look at the relationship between commission, non-commission, and how we navigate that relationships in our career field, and also to look at training opportunities and development that will help us foster the opportunities for growth and development both personally and professionally.

If you're interested in taking the survey, you're welcome to go to the link in the show notes below, sure that your voice is heard and included in the data.

Jason: So I, I mean obviously there's huge trust issues right now. And I don't know if you even know, , let me back up. Do you know of police departments that ha are. That are farther along than most. And have, have you, do you have any insight into what they're doing?

Chris: I know of a couple. I don't know how [00:22:00] public, what they're doing is, I won't, I don't wanna name them. Mm-hmm. But I know of a couple departments that have stood up, like local large language models. So they have an an LLM, they have their own little mini version of chat, GPT, and it's, it's running on their own server, using their own hardware somewhere.

And there the use cases I have seen are feeding historical data into it and asking questions. There was a really interesting use case. I remember reading about. About someone using like AI and large language models for like cold case and unsolved crimes where mm-hmm.

They have got like 30 years of case files and, and reports and witness testimony. And normally staff would sit there and, and pour through that and read everything. There is an agency that this is actually a, a service you can buy. I think a company actually sells this capability now where you can pump all of that into a large language model and ask your, your 30 year case questions who was where at this date [00:23:00] or what color shirt was this victim wearing?

Without having to go back and read and memorize all that stuff. There's definitely some case studies that I've seen that talk about a lot of like pilots. I've seen a lot of agencies piloting different use cases around using AI to generate police reports. So. I know some are like, you input some basic data during a traffic stop, but then you push a button and most of the paperwork auto generates itself.

I've seen ones that are partially generated. Those are the early use cases that I'm seeing most common. Those both come to me though, kind of back where we were with like. Question of, of validity or accuracy. Like, I don't know that I would trust the AI to output a police report succinctly correctly, 100% of the time.

I would have a lot of. Questions. And I know a lot of other people have that concern because even here in Virginia, they our general assembly tried to pass a law basically saying any police report that it results in arrest at any point. If it used AI in any part of it, you have [00:24:00] to put a big banner on the report.

You have to notify. The Commonwealth's attorney, you have to notify the defense attorney. So it's clearly something that lawmakers and other policy makers are thinking about and trying to jump ahead of.

Jason: Yeah, , and it's, the same notion of what I just talked about, the trust that I would have to double check everything.

So from the. Patrol officer, they're like, oh, well I could have wrote this myself by the time I'm reviewing and maybe having to fix something that it generated for me. It'll be interesting to observe when, there starts to be trust.

In, the system.

Chris: Yeah. It's an interesting, it's an interesting boundary I don't know what it takes, I don't know where, like, when does the wave crest on trust essentially. , When is enough trust earned? If you, if you think other use cases of ai, like

obviously AI's, not you, we knew we've been using it for decades in a variety of methods.

We just never thought of it the way we think of it [00:25:00] now. The same. Core elements of AI that power chat, GPT or, or Gemini or Claude. It's the same thing that populates your Google search. Like when you go to Google and you start typing and it auto finishes your search and it gives you a bunch of options and what it thinks.

That's the, that's the birth of the large language model essentially. That's what it's based off of. That auto complete guessing, but instead of guessing. The next three or four words, it guesses the next three or 4,000 words and seems to be really good at guessing what those words should be, ideally.

But even thinking back to like when I was an analyst when I first started, automatic license plate readers, LPR systems. That's a form of AI technically. Doing like facial recognition on booking photos or things like that, that's AI technically.

So we've been in the space for a hot minute for sure. But it's just like the whole game has flipped around on us, the whole use case of the technology and the view of it. And so we trusted it back then. [00:26:00] Now it's sort of like the trust has, we've seen how easily, I guess the trust can be broken, and now we're all sort of left scratching our heads of like, what does it take to get back to trustworthy technology in this space?

Jason: Hmm. Yeah. Hmm. I want to go back to. You mentioned departments creating their own LLM and then feeding it with their own data. And for the listeners that's unless it's an open source data, you, you don't want to put any, department sensitive data inside a chat GBT. That's, a first and foremost.

But, and as I mentioned that, that seems to be like a, just a huge leap for me as a, as I'm thinking about this, of all the, what the analysts do now. They're even, it, they're they're, they're asked, okay, now let's, let's create this large language model. , To me, it seems so daunting, but I also think.

That's where we're headed.

Chris: Yeah, I think, I [00:27:00] think there's so much concern on the data security and the sensitivity and SCI compliance. All these things come up when we look at these tools and Yes, yes. Kids at home don't, don't put data into tools

you don't own. 'Cause it's, it's not your tool and therefore it's no longer your data.

Mm-hmm. I heard a really interesting, I was at a conference yesterday actually, about cybersecurity and the, the chief Information security officer for Virginia was talking Mike Watson, and he was asked about dealing with sensitive government data that gets put into these things, and he said, yeah, that's such a, a concern.

And, and we, we try to combat it every day. But he, he highlighted something I hadn't thought of, and it's just one more thing to keep me awake at night, I guess now is he's equally concerned around the sensitive data that these things can produce. And he gave a couple examples in that. Some of these are really good at understanding all kinds of calculations and algorithms and, and numeric [00:28:00] equations.

And for example people that are a little bit older have social security numbers that follow like a logical pattern depending on. Who you are and, and when you were born and where you were born.

Jason: Mm-hmm.

Chris: , Several numbers in your social security number can be guessed or pretty cleanly determined.

And you can essentially with the right amount of information. Get someone's social security number down to almost all the digits except for one, using some of these large language models. 'cause it's just really good at, at navigating all the reasoning and logic. The other example I gave was you might have a bunch of data about sensitive locations or something or critical infrastructure maybe.

And you put it in there. And obviously that's concerning, but then it spits out you know visuals or, or maps or lists that prioritize things or highlights weaknesses in things or highlight risks you didn't know you have. And so there's not just concern about what you're putting in, but sometimes what you're generating is more sensitive than the [00:29:00] data you gave it.

And now that is theoretically owned by someone else. 'cause now they, they may or may not have access to it. But then how do you scrub it? How do you protect it? How do you make sure that it, the, the model doesn't memorize that and share that with other people somehow, what it doesn't learn from what you're teaching it.

So there's so many like bizarre risks. But. That's why we see this move in law enforcement of, if you're going to use this type of technology a lot of people are doing what we call on-prem or or on-premise deployments where it's gotta be local, it's gotta be your hardware, your stuff so that you fully own and control the process.

'cause that's one of the few ways to mitigate some of the risks that pop up.

Jason: Hmm. Yeah. I, I think too, you run the risk of maybe using a data source that to a human doing it would, be against the rules then you're running into a situation where it's evidence is being thrown out because it's the fruit of the poisonous tray and everything from that point [00:30:00] on gets thrown out.

So you definitely don't want to be in that. Situation. And then that's, that's where, going back to what you mentioned before about attorneys and judges not being happy with, using AI and trying to use AI in court.

Chris: Yeah, for sure. It's, it's, it's, there's no, like, there's no path forward.

I think. Like there's no, no one has figured out like the, the golden ticket on this or like, what's, what's the ideal state essentially. So we see a lot of departments just experimenting with what they think works. But I think. There's still a lot of consequences we've yet to see.

I think a lot of problems still have to

Jason: mm-hmm.

Chris: Make their way. A lot of cracks in the veneer are still gonna show up before we figure out how to really use this technology correctly in our space.

Jason: Yeah. Now, for those, department that have used their own, LLM , do you think they're.

Completely custom building this [00:31:00] or are they working with vendors to help them build the

Chris: LLM? Most of the ones I've seen are, are vendor built. So a vendor mm-hmm. Comes in and says, we'll kind of walk you through the process. We'll, we'll do most of the setup, but we'll do it on your infrastructure. I've seen.

Some vendors that offer like, Hey, we'll set it up in the cloud, but it will be an isolated cloud environment. It'll be on gov cloud, which is like Amazon's government designated cloud infrastructure that is automatically CGIs compliant. Some people are like, Hey, we'll put it in the same cloud setup that like the NSA and the CAA use.

If that makes you feel better, like if it's good enough for them, maybe it's good enough for you. So everyone selling this stuff is, is hitting the same roadblock I think with departments and agencies of like, we have a lot of concerns on the, the access and fidelity of the data. And so companies are, are jumping through any and all hoops to try to make it.

Appealing, I think, to keep it rolling out to [00:32:00] people. But truly I think the safest bet if, if you're worried about access controls and if you're worried about fidelity of the data and who might see it and who might touch it, you doing it locally is really your only option. Mm-hmm. I have heard of a couple departments, this is why I don't wanna name them 'cause I would never recommend anyone do this, but they've basically just stood up ad hoc systems so .

, They get a, small server or random computer. There's a, a website called hugging face, and it's where lots of open source AI models are, are developed and shared. And you can go download a model and install it in five minutes or less, some of these and have your own like, full fledged AI or large, large language model.

System up and running. And all you gotta do is train it, pump some data into it, and then you're like off to the races. So I've, I've heard of some people who have experimented with that. I don't know how official or unofficial that is.

Jason: Mm-hmm.

Chris: I think it skews more unofficial. But I, I know lots of people are [00:33:00] toying with the ideas for sure.

Jason: That makes sense. And that's really, I think, par for the course for a lot of. Police departments. . You think back to like records management systems, yes. They could build their own homegrown records management system, but most departments don't. They have a vendor do that and they make sure they lean on the vendor to come up with the specs and come up with all the requirements and stay within the law.

And that's more on the, the vendor side and not necessarily the department side, so that, that. Tracks with what I've seen in, in other situations. So I guess let's stay there a little bit then with the analyst. Maybe their department is, in the beginning stages of hiring one of these vendors to create an LLM.

What would be your recommendation to that analyst? As they're trying, just trying to be useful, trying to see where they can, can be [00:34:00] helpful.

Chris: Yeah, it's a great question. I think one of the, the best value adds that an analyst brings to that, and I think this applies to any, any new technology getting rolled out in a department is like really helping articulate and map out the use cases.

Ideally like everyone in a, in a department can do that, but you'd be surprised how many people. Just can't think outside the box or they're so, they're so focused on like, their one singular process or, or their one form that they fill out or, or what they've always done. I think analysts by nature are really good at thinking through complex systems and thinking outside the box and thinking bigger than themselves sometimes.

So I think number one. Really helping working with your, your department and the vendor to really think through, here's all the different use cases, here's the different ways people use this data and access these systems. And these are the variety of processes we have. 'Cause the better you understand all of that, the more useful you can make an artificial intelligence [00:35:00] based system or software.

I think the second one is definitely. Asking questions. As silly as that sounds, I think my experience in public safety has been a sometimes particularly leadership is more easily swayed by the sales pitch. And when it's really good and it's really shiny and it, and it seems like it does everything, they're ready to go with it.

I think analysts are really good at challenging those assumptions sometimes to say, well. Is it gonna work in this scenario? Or, Hey, is it gonna work for us when we deploy it at different offices or different precincts? Or, Hey, did anyone think through this type of data? Which wasn't in scope in, in the original plan.

So I think that's the other thing that analysts have the potential to bring to the table is asking the right types of questions to make sure you're getting the value that the vendor is, is allegedly promising you.

Jason: Hmm. Yeah. And, and in that, I think in that regard, it becomes, I mean, just becomes part of the CAD or the [00:36:00] pro process.

If, if you went through that with CAD or RMS is probably going to, there's probably gonna be a lot of similarities. And I, I'm a big. Advocate of not only do you talk about implementation you talk about how it's going to fit into the day-to-day operation for, for the police department, something like a records management system.

It's, it's usually taken care of. 'cause that's your, the reason you're using it is to manage all your records. So you have data entry folks. But I, mention a couple of times that when I was at Cincinnati supported getting a analyst software we got the software, but I didn't think it ever really was fully implemented into the day-to-day.

Operations or the day-to-day activity of, the analysts. So I always felt that I was a failure on, on that aspect of it. So that's down the road too. And man, Chris, just like [00:37:00] any software though with police departments, I mean, you really have to have folks, good advisors, decision makers, being able to see.

25 steps down the road as you're trying to evaluate this and how it's going to play out, and that's, that can be really difficult. Especially with such a new technology.

Chris: Yeah, a hundred percent. , In the IT world there's a whole group of people that, that's their job essentially is planning and shepherding projects and initiatives.

That are specific to a division or a department or a function they're typically called it business analysts essentially, right? Their job is to assess the current and future state of the technology to do the job that other people need to do, like really being that tech advocate.

And that's unfortunately why I think we see the analyst as the technologist kind of bringing it full circle on that one is that. I think of everyone who's typically involved in the process. Hopefully you've got good [00:38:00] IT people in your department and sometimes we do but sometimes we don't. And so the analyst the crime analyst, the intel analyst, ends up being sometimes that it BA person because they're the only ones that are like mentally trained to think 25 steps ahead on.

Like, is this like, is this a real solution or is this just a tool we're putting on the floor? 'cause we think that's where it goes. I think. Again, that's just a hat we end up wearing even when we don't want to sometimes.

Jason: Yeah. Alright. Anything else in terms of the near future of AI and analysis, do you wanna mention, do.

Chris: , We've seen a lot of change already. I think we're gonna see more and more, I think governments and, and public safety as a whole have been one of the groups more hesitant to adopt this stuff. I think we're finally seeing that hesitancy peak, and I think well, I'll, I'll, I'll throw the gauntlet.

I think like 2026 will be a year where we see. A lot of rapid development and adoption in law enforcement agencies. I think it's been around just [00:39:00] enough. I think there's starting to be some use cases out there that we're gonna see a lot of agencies leaning into it. And I think unfortunately though, one of the things that's gonna drive that is, a lot of the staffing gaps that agencies are still dealing with. I think the, the ultimate question is gonna be, I use AI to fill gaps that are left by the vacancies. I can't fill, whether that's sworn or civilian. What kind of optimization can AI get the agency or the department so we can keep doing the job or, or do the job better?

I think that's what 2026 is gonna show us. And my hope is that analysts see this. This technology taking off and decide to jump on for the ride and then see where it takes them. 'Cause I think in a lot of instances it won't be optional.

Jason: I was I, I was trying to see about.

I had a coworker mention this the other day and I was quickly trying to Google it. I thought he said that 30% of calls now are handled by ai. I can't, I can't, I [00:40:00] can't find it right away, so I'm not sure. I'm not for sure , on that number, but. Certainly you're, you can see where if you're told to do more with less and it, and this it's always interesting.

If you ever, anybody that's ever been part of police departments and budget discussions, you know that the, employees, the humans. Or the biggest part of the budget, it's like 97% of the budget is, the salaries that go to the humans or the benefits that go to the humans. Right. Maybe 97 is a little high, but I mean it's still, the vast majority is of the budget deals with salary and compensation.

So if you're being told to do more with less and you, you get something where there's grants or other opportunities to get a technology, that also feeds into this

idea of like, oh, well, we're below capacity. You won't let us [00:41:00] hire, but you'll give us money for technology. This is going to also feed this fire.

Chris: Yeah, for sure. And I think I don't know the numbers, but I know in Virginia there are a few localities that have piloted or are currently piloting ai to improve their 9 1 1 processes. I know Arlington. County in Virginia has done some work in that space. I know Fairfax County was I think recently in the news as either doing it or rolling it out.

And I think Virginia Beach as well has done some ai like AI stuff. I think it was like non-emergency calls they were doing. Were going to AI first to kind of alleviate the burden on 9 1 1 dispatchers.

Jason: All right, Chris. Very good. This has been great. Great to catch up with you. I was, I was shocked to learn when I went back and thought, I knew I had you on the show, but I didn't realize it was 2022.

I was like, oh, it was almost four years ago that I had you on. So it's shocked me [00:42:00] that time had gone by, so much between us talking. So I definitely want to have you on again, talk more ai. With you. So for the listeners, be, sure to look for another episode with Chris and I talking ai Chris, for the listener, if they need or want to contact you.

What's the best way to contact you?

Chris: Yeah, so you can find me on LinkedIn. I'm pretty easy to find there. Christopher Cruz in Richmond, Virginia. You can also find me I work for the Virginia State Police so you can look me up there and find my contact info.

Jason: Yeah. And do you have any upcoming presentations or.

Or public events?

Chris: I don't think I have any upcoming ones. I literally just did one yesterday. Yeah. I did a, a presentation on social engineering attacks. Very cyber, that one. But yeah, I don't have anything upcoming at the moment. For once.

Jason: No, it's, and that's interesting, when I asked you that question, it sounded like you were [00:43:00] like a standup comedian.

Where can people come see you if they didn't wanna come see you kind of thing. So, man, that would be interesting to have that many events where you're like, rattling off. Yeah, you can come see me at these five different cities.

Alright, Chris, I'll give you the last word again. Thank you for your time.

It was great catching up with you. This is a great perspective., What's your last word for our listeners today?

Chris: Yeah, I think AI is not here to replace analysts. I think it's about amplifying impact. But it takes the analysts wanting that to happen. For it to happen.

So if you're out there and you're listening. Want it to happen and it'll happen for you.

Jason: Very good. Thank You again, Chris, and you be safe.

Chris: Thanks Jason. Really appreciate it.

Mindy: Thank you for making it to the end of another episode of Analyst Talk with Jason Elder. You can show your support by sharing this in other episodes found on our website at [www dot podcasts](http://www.dotpodcasts.com).

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[00:44:00] next time analysts. Keep talking.