

NYU Disavows Link To Recently Publicized Computer Jury Project

BY MATTHEW GOLDSTEIN

NEW YORK UNIVERSITY is doing its utmost to distance itself from an outfit calling itself "NYULAW Artificial Intelligence Research," which markets a computer program it says can render decisions better and faster than a panel of live jurors.

Despite a recent report on CNN connecting the program to New York University, as well as an article in the *San Francisco Chronicle*, Kathy Schulz, associate general counsel at NYU, said the school has no connection to the purported jury research experiment, dubbed the Solomon Project.

School officials also said they do not know the group's alleged director, Joseph Bonuso, who in October contacted various news organizations and law schools touting the group's creation and its plan to "re-try" O.J. Simpson by computer, following his acquittal on double-murder charges.

After determining that neither Mr. Bonuso nor his group had any ties to NYU, Ms. Schulz sent him a letter Nov. 13 warning that his organization's name too closely resembled the law school's and that if he did not change the name, the university would pursue legal action.

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NYULAW AI RESEARCH THE SOLOMON PROJECT

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Overview,

By way of introduction we are a group of computer scientists and attorneys specializing in the field of artificial intelligence. For the past seven years, we have focused our attention on the process of American civil and criminal jurisprudence. Like many other engineers, pension and ordinary citizens, we are dismayed by what we see. Our century-old model of constitutional law, brilliantly designed to protect individual rights and liberties, has degenerated on the promise of equal protection for all the people. Unlike many who share our view, however, we refuse to swing our hands and walk away. In short, we believe we have a solution to the crisis.

It is admittedly a radical solution, for nothing less will lead us out of the mire in which we find ourselves. We have concluded that a drastic reworking of the current legal system is imperative. The American people have lost confidence in the judicial system, and with reason. From gross disparities in sentencing to the skyrocketing costs and excessive lengths of trials, mistrials, hung juries, and trials de novo, one or another frivolous lawsuits, we have grievously tarnished the dream of a swift and impartial justice.

Name: SOLOMON.

The ultimate practical application of artificial intelligence, SOLOMON is a distributed program running on a set of super computers. Judge and jury both, it is uniquely capable of accessing the entire corpus of legal literature and fairly applying legal concepts and principles of equity and fairness to the facts information it is fed.

Our overview is novel. Our justice is novel. SOLOMON combines the wisdom of the ages with a thorough knowledge and understanding of the judicial process. It is essentially an innovative theory of all statutory, regulatory, and case law (constantly updated); ethical and equity principles; and factual precedent. Imagine human wisdom processed with the machine accuracy and you begin to understand SOLOMON. We are not turning our back on the founders, but transcending new life into their message, meaning that our constitutional guarantee stand strong for all people.

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The cover page from the Solomon Project's literature.

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A month later, Ms. Schulz said she received a faxed response from Mr. Bonuso, in which he apologized and promised to "refrain from any further reference to NYULAW" in the organization's name.

CNN Report

Ms. Schulz, who declined to release copies of her correspondence with Mr. Bonuso, said she had then thought the matter concluded, but the controversy surfaced again during a Cable News Network broadcast two

weeks ago.

On Dec. 29 and 30, CNN aired a news report about Mr. Bonuso and the Solomon Project, in which a reporter for the cable network described the experiment as associated with NYU Law School.

Ms. Schulz, who said she had not seen the report, but was reviewing a transcript, said the university was considering asking CNN to broadcast a correction and taking further action against Mr. Bonuso, who could not be reached for comment. Mr. Bonuso, whose address is listed as a post office box in Manhattan, is not registered as a lawyer in New York, but claims in his literature to have a doctoral degree. A telephone number listed on the literature is connected to an answering machine.

Joan Dim, an NYU spokeswoman, said school officials received a number of telephone calls as a result of

the CNN broadcast in the past week.

CNN spokesman David Talley said the network stands behind its story.

During the CNN broadcast, Mr. Bonuso said the Solomon Project had found Mr. Simpson "guilty beyond a reasonable doubt," and termed juries "a manipulated group of puppets."

"Fuzzy Logic"

In his October promotional letter to the news media and various law schools, Mr. Bonuso claimed researchers had designed a unique "fuzzy logic" program enabling the Solomon Project's computers to assess the veracity of witnesses "by using voice stress analysis" and "polygraph telemetry." He said the project also involves the pre-testing of all trial participants with "sodium pentothal," commonly known as truth serum.