

VIDEO CONFERENCE MEETING NOTES – 11:00am PT Friday June 4, 2021

Topic: Tim Reiersen CTL / Loris

Meeting Host and Organized By: Shawn Rodriguez; VP, General Counsel at Crisis Text Line, Inc.
[EMAIL REDACTED]

Also Participating: Erica Ruff, Legal Associate at Crisis Text Line, Inc.
[EMAIL REDACTED]

Invited Participant: Tim Reiersen, volunteer for Crisis Text Line, Inc.
[EMAIL REDACTED]

Meeting Time: Scheduled Completion 11:30am PT, Actual Completion 12:10pm PT approx.

Notes (Paraphrase of Conversation) By: Tim Reiersen

Versions: 1. Shared with Shawn and Erica for Review: via email June 5, 2021.

Shawn opened the meeting offering to answer any questions that Tim had about Loris.ai, Inc., the for-profit company created by non-profit Crisis Text Line, Inc.

Tim responded that he had many, many questions and preferred to use the time to talk about how to engage with the organization and communicate on the topic. Tim told at some length about his fundamental objections to the sale of data, talked about his experience as a volunteer for the past year--the direct human connection between volunteer and those in crisis using the service, and that the power in the conversations was in those moments of direct touch. That, to him, is the whole and essence of Crisis Text Line. Those conversations, in their form as data, then are another matter. Any sale or consideration in exchange for that data, goes into a “danger zone” where many questions are raised.

Shawn talked about the partnerships that CTL has with state governments, non-profits, and some for-profit companies (such as Facebook, Google), in which limited information is given or cooperation is achieved to address problems (higher incidences of bullying or suicide; return search results directing to resources). He mentioned keyword or dashboard agreements. Erica shared links to CTL’s reports relating crisis conversations to events and circumstances within the USA (links at end of this memo).

Shawn talked about the formation of Loris.ai, Inc. and the safeguards put in place, the fact that agreements were created at tremendous expense and with care to put protections around the data. Shawn shared some of the features of the Loris product, comparing it to Grammarly, which gives suggestions for grammar usage; Loris provides a dashboard resource to customer service representatives. It can do such things as rank the customer level of frustration and suggest techniques and phrases which can reduce customer frustration. Customer service representatives would then not need to complete 30 hours of crisis counselor training, for example, they could use the tools that resulted from experience with people in crisis. In this

way, the data is helping others, consistent with the formal purpose of the Crisis Text line non-profit, as set forth in its Articles of Incorporation and By-Laws.

Income from partnerships is included within federal 990 forms (non-profits) as earned income.

Shawn talked about Non-Disclosure Agreements and Data Use Agreements which are made with researchers who are granted access to data. All personally identifiable information is removed.

Shawn talked about Loris.ai selecting a new CEO (Etie Hertz) in 2019 and new investors coming on board. The CTL board decided to sell some of its shares, while still retaining shares. The CTL board does not want to miss the opportunity to benefit from potential growth in value of Loris shares.

Shawn also mentioned that they had received feedback from others who were opposed to the use of data to make products for sale, or in conjunction with Loris.ai. The CTL board has been considering that feedback.

Tim was appreciative of the background and explanation.

Tim stated that if he could have one outcome or result from this meeting, it would be to open a channel at CTL for an open discussion of the data issue. This could be on the platform and separate from the Network (CTL's secure discussion area for volunteers and staff to post and comment). Tim said he felt the Network was best suited for supporting volunteers. He thought that raising the data issue and Loris.ai there (which he has done) felt somewhat jarring in that context. For that reason, a separate and dedicated channel for discussion is requested. There could also be workshops and forums, panel discussions on zoom.

Tim said that he's working on a position paper and researching facts at this time. He intends to share it with the CTL board, the data ethics board, and on the Network. Also that he will have questions as he continues his research and appreciates that Shawn has offered to try to answer any questions. Tim said that he is only one person out of over 6000 active volunteers, and it would be impossible for Shawn to respond individually to everyone, and this point also is a point of appreciation for Shawn's generous offer of support. Tim wants open sharing and responding rather than individual question and response.

Tim would like the reform of CTL to specifically include the issue of data, and that this does not appear to currently be included. Tim said that he was informed by another person with more knowledge and background, that algorithms, and artificial intelligence can be discriminatory and racist, so it is very much a relevant concern. Tim stated that diversity, equity and inclusion need to be applied to this area within CTL. Tim would like all of the algorithms to be shared and explained openly. Tim shared that he has made efforts to learn more about Loris.ai, beginning from when he first looked into it shortly after Nancy Lublin (former CTL CEO and founder) was fired. He stated that he had made inquiries within CTL at several different times and through several different channels asking questions. Each time, he received a consistent messaging

which led him to believe that the organization has adopted standard talking points. This gave him the impression that CTL was not being completely open. Shawn consistently offered to answer any questions to the extent that he could.

Shawn mentioned relatively new legislation called algorithm accountability and considered it as a favorable development.

Shawn suggested that any further questions, and Tim's paper once finished, be shared with him and he can distribute it to board members and the executive team. Also that the ethics board would not be likely to have any direct input to this process as they each work in their own respective, separate areas.

Shawn stated that the board was not likely to favor an open discussion of the data issue and Loris.ai at this time. He mentioned the potential for unintended consequences with opening the discussion to the volunteer community.

The meeting came to end as it had gone past the scheduled time and other time commitments existed.

For further reading / reference:

From Erica:

Everybody Hurts: The State of Mental Health In America

<https://www.crisistextline.org/mental-health/everybody-hurts-the-state-of-mental-health-in-america/>

Everybody Hurts 2020

<https://www.crisistextline.org/community/everybody-hurts-2020/>

From Tim:

<https://nancylublin.com>

<https://loris.ai>