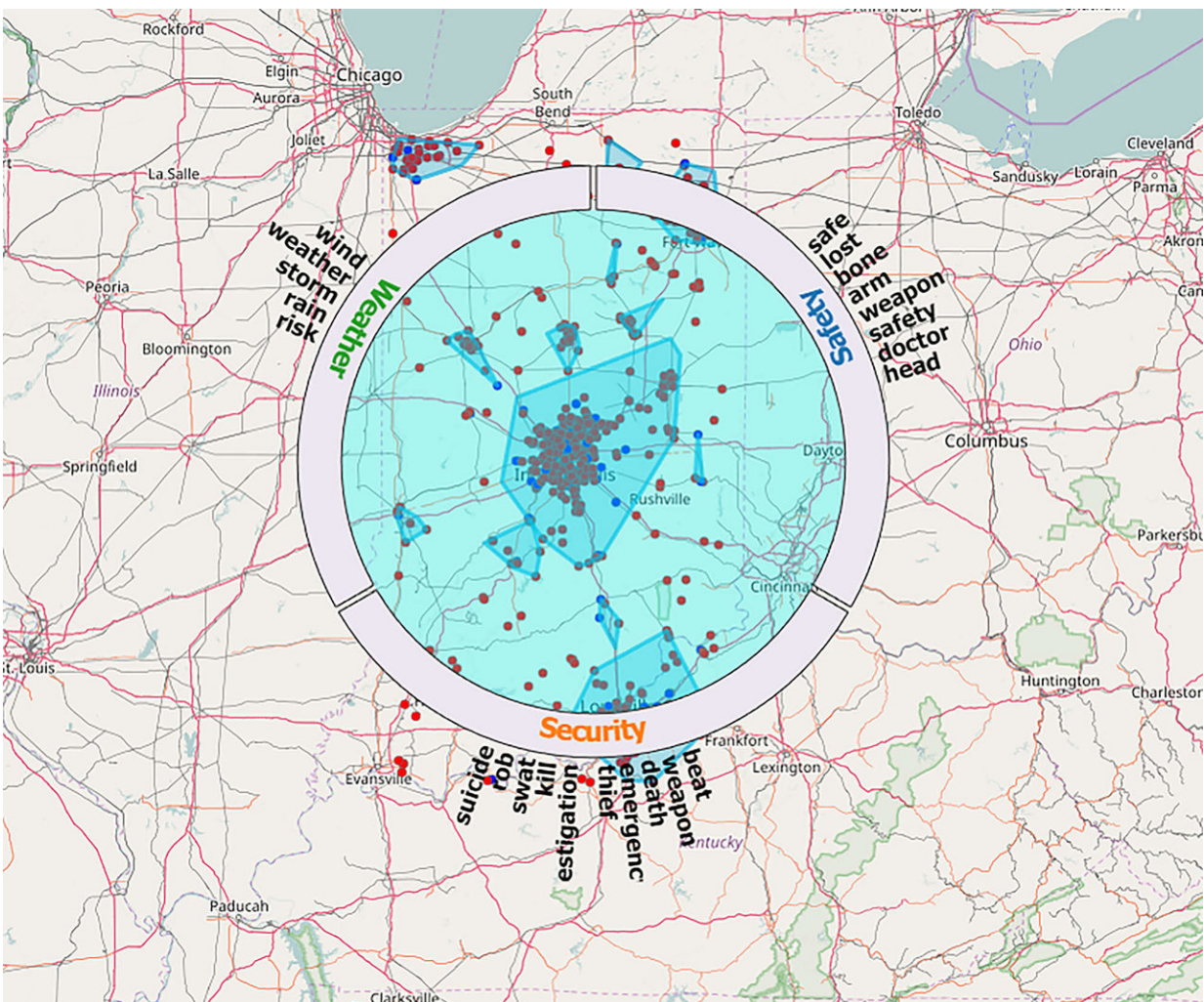# Emergencies at the big game? New technology may help police find those situations quicker

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Purdue University researchers have developed a social media analytics tool to help police monitor emergency and public safety information on game day.

Medical emergencies for fans during athletic events can quickly turn into life-or-death situations. That's why as another Boilermaker football season gets underway, Purdue University researchers are using technology to help police monitor emergency and public safety information on game day.

"This is a giant leap for social media analytics tools," said David Ebert, director of Purdue's Visual Analytics for Command, Control and Interoperability Environments center by the Department of Homeland Security and the Silicon Valley Professor of Electrical and Computer Engineering. "Police departments and first responders can use the social media posts to reach people in need of assistance, including medical emergencies, disaster emergencies or criminal activity. During the start of football season, it can be used to find fans having heat-related medical issues."

The platform also has applications for monitoring traffic, finding victims when hurricanes make landfall, analyzing school threats and helping with security at major speeches or visits by people of note.

"We use the technology during special events to build word clouds based on the type of event," said John Cox, Purdue's police chief. "We use it during dignitary protection details where there could be a threat of violence or there is a history surrounding the subject of the dignitary's visit."

Ebert and his research team created an online platform, called the Social Media Analytics and Reporting Toolkit, to help first responders better monitor areas of natural or human-made disasters.

On game day, Purdue police can monitor the browser-based platform to see filtered social media content related to key words and geographic regions.

The platform technology allows first responders to select key words and themes, such as various types of medical incidents or crimes, which are then visually displayed and highlighted on a map as they are talked about on social media within a specific geographic area.

"Users have told us our technology is easy to use and allows them to clearly see and monitor what is going on within a specific area," Ebert said. "Practically everyone is on social media these days, so there is a rich amount of data available."

Purdue's technology also allows users to set up customizable email alerts for relevant key words within a specified time frame.

Provided by Purdue University

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