

## **Thesis Portfolio**

**Collecting Publicly Accessible Virginia Court Data into a Searchable and User-Friendly Database**  
(Technical Report)

**The Impact of Telecommunications Technologies on Social Mobility during the COVID-19  
Pandemic**  
(STS Research Paper)

An Undergraduate Thesis

Presented to the Faculty of the School of Engineering and Applied Science  
University of Virginia • Charlottesville, Virginia

In Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree  
Bachelor of Science, School of Engineering

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Department of Computer Science

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## **Sociotechnical Synthesis**

The technical project that I plan to work on in the Spring is tentatively called the VA Court Data project. This project involves helping build a system that collects publically accessible Court Data into an easily searchable database, under the auspices of UVA's Law School's legal Data Lab. Ideally, this will assist people involved in the legal industry better access information in an organized and efficient way, which will save money and hopefully improve the accuracy of the data-gathering process.

However, this project is not without ethical concerns. Because this project plans to handle private or sensitive information (as it is within the legal industry), incorrect information or unhandled security could be disastrous. For example, though the source data is intended to be all publicly available data, there are concerns that this data is not entirely accurate and propagating false data through the system without proper safeguards could lead to ethical issues and harm people's lives unfairly. In addition, given that the legal system in this country is not infallible and can itself perpetuate inequality, this project could lead to further policing and another layer of marginalization of underprivileged populations like lead to employers discriminating against people in this database. These are all ethical concerns that will be addressed during ongoing work on this project.

My STS prospectus will explore a different topic. For my STS research paper, I plan to study how social mobility is impacted by the rise in telecommunication technologies during the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition, I will explore how demographic factors like age, gender, educational qualification, etc. impact mobility. I will do this by conducting a series of surveys and collecting a mix of qualitative and quantitative data.

The technical subject of the STS prospectus and the technical topic for the Dept. of Computer Science is not related.