

Capstone Project Design Brainstorming Example: DeFlocking

In August 2026, I saw and photographed the following phenomenon on Koenig Lane, in Central Austin (see Figures 1-2). This is a place near my home that I drive by at least 3 or 4 times a week, right around the corner from the state headquarters of the Department of Public Safety (DPS).



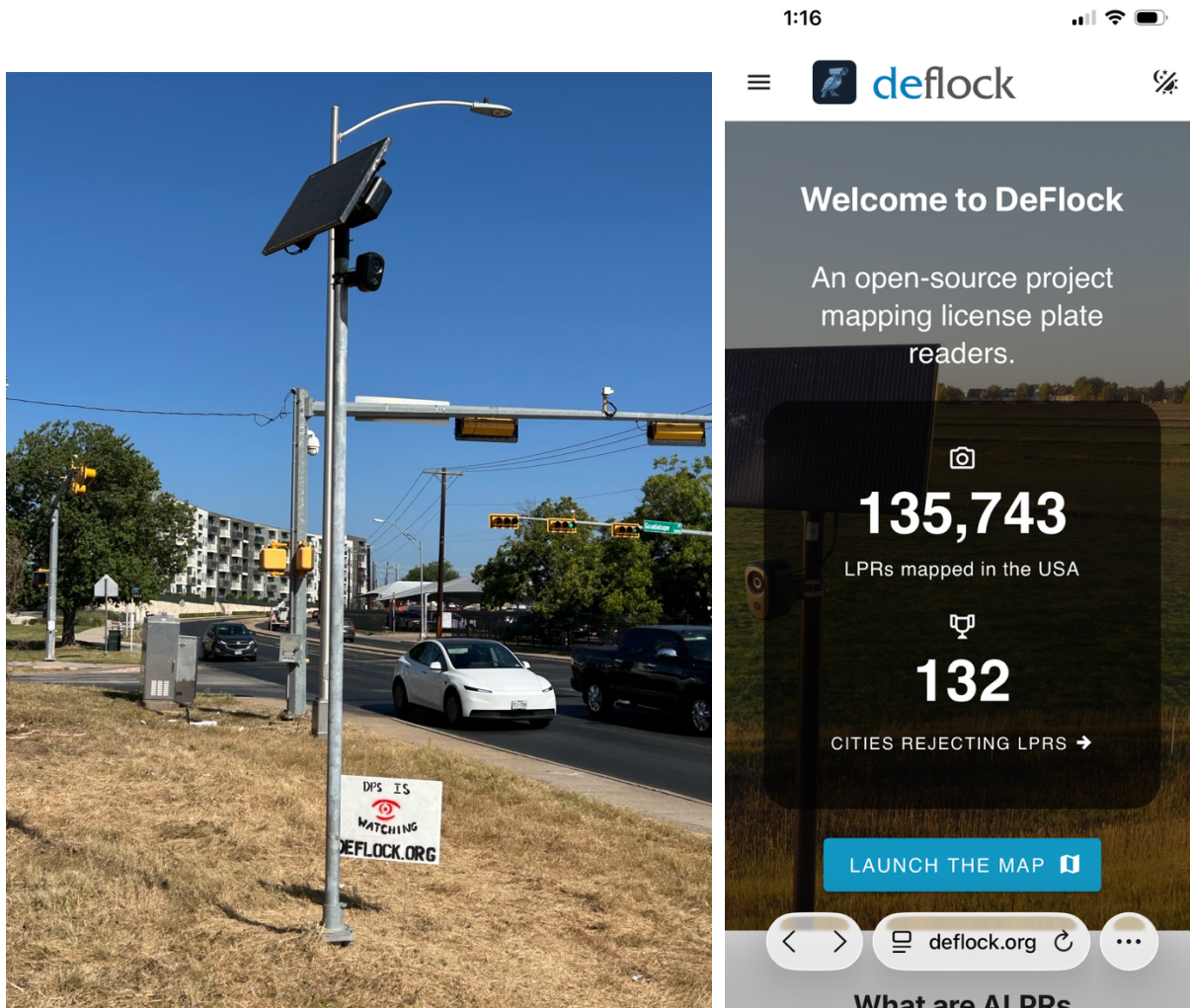
Figure 1. “DPS ~~IS~~ WAS WATCHING” Closeup, Koenig Lane, Austin, Texas, August 21, 2026.



Figure 2. "DPS IS WAS WATCHING," Koenig Lane, Austin, Texas, August 21, 2026.

Soon after I saw this, I saw and photographed another intact Flock camera with a slightly different sign about 200 yards up the street, closer to DPS, still intact (Figure 3).

Later that day, intrigued by what I had witnessed, I visited the deflock.org website listed on the sign (See Figure 4). The website says that the DeFlock website (and app) is an “open-source project mapping license plate readers,” and that DeFlock is an organization of citizen activists who document and map existing AI-enabled Automatic License Plate Reader (ALPR) camera sites and lead efforts to get ALPRs banned in specific cities.



Left: Figure 3. “DPS IS WATCHING,” Koenig Lane, Austin, Texas, August 21, 2026. Right: Figure 4. DeFlock.org website, URL Accessed August 21, 2026.

That same day, I had an uncanny feeling when I saw a news story about this phenomenon in my Apple News Feed that focused on vandalism to Flock cameras (See Figure 5). The article described lots of other examples of people vandalizing or advocating vandalizing Flock cameras, characterizing it as a “grassroots uprising” and a “growing movement,” one that was “nonpartisan,” uniting “people on the left” with “MAGA Republicans” and “centrists.”

The article continued: “People have stolen the cameras, sawed them down, crashed into them with their cars, covered them with paint and stickers, and shot at them. Social media is filled

with tongue-in-cheek how-to videos, instructing viewers on things like how to discretely saw through a metal pole.”

The article said that activists working against Flock were concerned not only about surveillance, but abuse by police, citing several examples of police officers accessing data from the cameras to stalk partners and exes, about ICE using the data to profile drivers, and a case in Texas of police monitoring someone leaving the state for an abortion.



Figure 5. “Someone vandalized a Flock camera near Washington Avenue and Westcott in Houston.” Photo by Raquel Natalicchio. Source: Meg Anderson, “Amid intense backlash, people are vandalizing Flock cameras,” NPR August 21, 2026. URL: <https://www.npr.org/2026/08/21/nx-s1-5939851/flock-cameras-police-block-surveillance-vandalize>.

A couple of days later, further intrigued by the phenomenon, I did a web search and discovered another news article from the *Wall Street Journal* about anti-Flock efforts, including the organization DeFlock evoked on the signs where I first encountered the phenomenon.

The WSJ article said that anti-Flock activists associated with DeFlock are calling themselves “wardrivers,” and profiled a few of them, including a “cybersecurity researcher” named Benn Jordan who parked his van (complete with a magnetic “MEDIA” sign) outside a recent conference in Atlanta where Flock was selling its equipment to policing organizations. Jordan

surreptitiously used high-tech counter-surveillance equipment to listen into the event and report back to other anti-Flock activists on his YouTube channel (see Figure 6).



Figure 6. “Benn Jordan and a van, loaded with electronics, outside the Flock Forward 2026 conference.” Photo by Audra Melton. Source: Kris Maher, “Flock Cameras Are Spreading Across America. The Backlash is Spreading Just as Fast.” *Wall Street Journal*, August 25, 2026. URL: <https://apple.news/AggJliq1JQCCZCigMwrmHTg>.

The same article also showed photos of a recent anti-Flock protest outside the same Flock conference in Atlanta, which is also the location of Flock’s corporate headquarters. The article pointed out that these protests were connected to protests about ICE and AI data centers, showing that they were becoming a political issue that cut across existing factions.

All of the photographs they published with the article focused on the protests led by Community Movement Builders, which WSJ described as “an activist group focused on Black communities.” (see Figures 7 and 8). The person wielding the megaphone in Figure 8, Kamau Franklin, is wearing a shirt that says “Socialism is the Future.”



Figures 7 and 8. "A protest against Flock Safety was held outside the Atlanta hotel where the annual Flock Forward 2026 conference took place." Photo by Audra Melton. Source: Kris Maher, "Flock Cameras Are Spreading Across America. The Backlash is Spreading Just as Fast." *Wall Street Journal*, August 25, 2026. URL: <https://apple.news/AggJliq1QCCZCigMwrmHTg>.