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## 'You are literally hurting people': Professor lines out concerns around crypto mining



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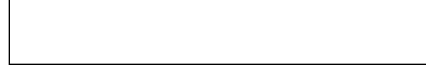
Last week, [LEX 18 talked with neighbors of a Wolfe County crypto mine](#) that are disturbed by the non-stop noise of the operation.

Dr. Daniel Lau, an electrical and computer engineering professor at the University of Kentucky, has been watching as crypto mines pop up around the country, and he thinks Kentucky should take note of the concerns.

"The number one rule for bitcoin mining is don't put it near people," Lau said.

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"You are literally hurting people," Lau said of the impacts of the industry. "You're hurting them because you're making their lives miserable because of the sound, or you're hurting them because you're taking away whatever value they have in their home. Or you're making them pay more for electricity."

The non-stop humming noise that draws complaints from people who live near the mines comes from fans used to cool the high-powered computers inside the facilities.

Lau said that most efforts to lessen the noise at other mines haven't worked in the past.

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Beyond that, the crypto mines use a massive amount of power, which is why they are often built near substations.

"Over a gigawatt of Kentucky's electricity goes toward bitcoin mining," Lau said. "And to give you an idea of how much electricity that is, that's the average amount of electricity produced by a nuclear reactor."

That figure is about two years old, Lau says, and he thinks now it's closer to one and a half gigawatts.

"When you take one and a half gigawatts of electricity out of Kentucky's power grid, there's essentially no way that you can do that without affecting the rates that consumers pay," Lau said.

And for all the power used, Lau said the facilities don't employ many people.

Lau compared Georgetown's Toyota plant to a large Bitcoin mine in Navarro County, Texas. He said that if the Toyota plant was expanded to use as much electricity as the Texas bitcoin mine, it would employ over 149 thousand people, while

A small mine like the one in Wolfe County may only employ four or five people.

"A bitcoin mine, people don't realize, is largely, they're fully autonomous, and they're run remotely," Lau said.

So while a Bitcoin mine might create a handful of security jobs, they're not creating high-paying programming jobs, Lau said.

Based on power usage, Lau estimates there could be anywhere from 50 to 200 bitcoin mines in the state.

But so far, LEX 18 has not been able to get a conclusive number or find out what agency, if any, tracks crypto mines in the state.

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