

Just what is surveillance technology?

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Just what is surveillance technology?

By Julianna Munro

The technology of surveillance equipment is continuing to advance at a very rapid pace. As a result

surveillance equipment has become almost ubiquitous in retail stores, public schools, gas stations, and airport terminals all across the United States. There is a wide range of surveillance technology that is available on the market. Surveillance equipment ranges from wiretapping phone and internet based equipment to high tech facial feature recognition computer software known as biometrics.

Surveillance equipment makes the world infinitely more manageable for people who need to protect their belongings and protect people and make its far more difficult for people who actually want to commit crime. As more of the high-tech surveillance equipment becomes more and more easily available to the general public and small business owners, more and more people will reap the benefits.

The basic concept that underpins a piece of surveillance-equipment is one of 'you will be seen'. The gist of it is that criminals may well think twice about committing a crime if they think they might be seen, identified and then found later on and be charged with a crime. Although it is unlikely that everything can be caught on surveillance camera at one time, on the occasions when surveillance does pick up activity, it does provide enormous help to security and police in identifying the offenders.

These days the more advanced surveillance equipment operates in the same way in an effort prevent crime from occurring, so it has not veered from its original intent. Indeed many small businesses decide to install dummy cameras that don't actually record anything, indeed don't even turn on, but act more as a preventative measure for potential offenders.

One of the main reasons for the establishment of surveillance equipment is to prevent the theft of merchandise from stores and warehouses. Usually offenders come from outside the company and so the theft can be caught on tape and referred to the police. But on occasion the offender will actually come from within the company and then employee policy needs to be implemented. Upon discovering the internal offender that employee will usually find themselves without a job.

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Apart from the examples outlined earlier, shopping malls, parking garages, office buildings, and warehouses and financial institutions all now commonly use video based surveillance equipment in order to protect their wares and to also to limit the costly losses incurred by dishonest employees. Major department stores who have high internal theft rates use these video surveillance systems to actively prosecute thieving employees.

Julianna Munro is the owner of First

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which is a premier source of information about

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Video Surveillance

By Ralph Winn

The dependability and prevalence of video surveillance cameras has increased dramatically in the past decade. Numerous home and business owners have integrated video surveillance cameras into their security systems to ensure safety, crack down on regulations, and catch criminals in the act. Video surveillance is considered covert when the cameras are hidden or aren't identifiable. Video surveillance is largely legal in the United States, as long as it doesn't directly infringe on a person's fourth amendment right to privacy.

Uses of Covert Video Surveillance

"A picture is worth a thousand words". This saying rings true in court. According to a recent study, when a jury is presented with video surveillance footage, it is twice as likely to convict as when not shown video surveillance evidence. The strategic placement of covert video surveillance cameras aid in the detection and prosecution of vandalism, theft, child abuse, elder neglect, stalking, and harassment.

Some of the more common places to use covert video surveillance are homes, casinos, police stations, nursing homes, construction sites, prisons, hospitals and retail stores.

Monitoring the activities of nannies and household help with covert video surveillance cameras is a growing trend. Due to recent advances in technology, cameras are now small enough to be hidden in many home items such as teddy bears, house plants, clocks, and wall paintings.

Video Surveillance Laws

Most video surveillance is legal in the United States. The majority of video surveillance laws concern the invasion of privacy with the use of covert video surveillance. The use of covert video surveillance is particularly controversial in areas in which a high level of personal privacy is expected, such as locker

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rooms, dressing rooms, bedrooms, and bathroom stalls. There are some general guidelines to follow to ensure the legality of your video surveillance system.

Covert video surveillance is illegal when audio surveillance is also taking place, and if the it is done without the consent of those being monitored and the person being monitored by the video surveillance has a reasonable expectation of privacy.

Covert video surveillance may be illegal when the video surveillance encourages an illegal activity and the subject under video surveillance has a right to counsel, as when being questioned by law authorities and the person in charge of the premises have not given permission for video surveillance.

If you opt to incorporate a covert video surveillance system into your home or business, consult with a lawyer or your local law enforcement agency to ensure your compliance with local, state, and federal video surveillance laws.

Many independent studies in the United States and United Kingdom have suggested that video surveillance acts as a powerful deterrent, stopping crimes before they happen. Studies also show

strong evidence that video surveillance systems can be an extremely effective tool in detection and prosecution.

Ralph Winn has over 32 years of experience in the security industry. Throughout his career, he has developed cost effective security programs for numerous small, medium, large commercial and government properties and for many nationally known corporations.

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