

Is the increased
presence of public
surveillance
technology justified



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October 8, 13 | Is The Increased Presence of Public Surveillance Technology Justified

We hear it again and again. Video surveillance cameras can pick up and see what humans can't. Over the last couple of years, surveillance technology has flourished, however it brings up a very controversial topic of whether it is cost worthy or not; some argue that video surveillance isn't effective and that it is just wrong to spy on people while others contend that it provides an extra eye and is effective at providing security. Installing cameras, however, can be controversial.

There have been protests and legal actions surrounding camera installation, and there are a number of issues to consider before signing off on surveillance. People in impoverished and crime prone environments say that these security systems help stop violence. However people in rich and crime free environments feel these systems infringe on our basic right of privacy. "Cameras may reduce the likelihood of crime," says Ellis Godard, a professor of sociology. "It's a construct where people do feel safer when cameras are up.

People behave themselves. They're alerting people to what they do." When the authorities are watching citizens, or aware they might be watched at any time; they are more self-conscious and less freewheeling. As syndicated columnist Jacob Sullum has pointed out, "knowing that you are being watched by armed government agents tends to put a damper on things.

You don't want to offend them or otherwise call attention to yourself."

Surveillance cameras, in particular are indispensable part of security.

However the public may act differently when they know they are being

watched and in time, the influence of the cameras watching the public could inherently change their behavior. Basically stating that if this happens then these cameras set out for our safety will shape personalities.

Each technology raises its own questions, but in general surveillance raises three kinds of risks;...