

Canadians should be concerned about camera surveillance: report

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A new report by the Surveillance Camera Awareness Network (SCAN) at Queen's University shows that Canadians believe surveillance cameras promote safety, but their perceptions don't match the actual evidence. The first of its kind in Canada, *A Report on Camera Surveillance in Canada* will be used as background to help structure new federal surveillance legislation.

"There is little or no evidence that surveillance deters crime," says David Lyon, coordinator of the report and director of the school's new Surveillance Studies Centre. "Media such as TV police shows and crime stoppers promote the perception that cameras are more important than they really are."

The report looks at the rapid growth of surveillance in Canadian society based on studies about:

- The lack of Canadian legislation addressing public camera surveillance
- Camera surveillance as big business
- An exploration of camera operators
- Research on public opinions about camera surveillance

- Camera surveillance as one of the legacies of hosting the Olympic Games
- Camera surveillance in Ottawa taxicabs
- Camera surveillance in shopping malls

"The public should be concerned," adds Professor Lyon. "Surveillance technology is constantly changing. Closed-circuit television does not accurately describe it anymore; now surveillance footage is increasingly digitized and free to flow online. What stops are in place to prevent it from falling into the wrong hands? We need to question the social ethics of surveillance footage as well as establish legal limits on how the footage can be used."

Provided by Queen's University

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