

Face to Face with Nest's smartest home security camera

November 7 2017, by Michael Liedtke



This July 25, 2017, frame grab from video shows the Nest Cam IQ camera. Nest's newest home security camera is supposed to be so smart that it can recognize anyone entering its sight line after it has been introduced to someone. That skill comes from facial recognition technology made by sister company Google. As The Associated Press discovered, the Nest Cam IQ has an uncanny knack for recognizing people, even when they're disguised. (AP Photo/Ryan Nakashima)

Nest's new home security camera is supposed to be so smart that it can

identify people it's been introduced to.

That skill comes from facial-recognition technology made by Nest's sibling company, Google. The Nest Cam IQ camera is so slick that it carries a premium price—\$300—plus a \$10 monthly subscription to run the facial-recognition program and other features, such as 10-day video storage. That compares with Nest's \$200 standard camera. Google's facial-recognition technology also is being added to a camera-equipped doorbell from Nest; a price hasn't been disclosed yet.

Apple is also embracing facial recognition, though with a different type of technology and goal—to unlock the just-released iPhone X .

The Nest Cam IQ offers a glimpse at how deeply intelligent computers will be able to peer into our lives, especially as more home appliances become connected to the internet.

We set a camera in The Associated Press' San Francisco bureau and identified everyone who regularly works in the office. We tested whether the camera would remember them and send notifications when it spotted them. On the flip side, the camera also sends alerts when it sees someone it doesn't recognize, raising the possibility of an intruder on the premises.

That made us want to find out just how smart—and potentially creepy—this camera really is. As part of the test, a couple of us donned disguises.

It wasn't easy to pull the wool over this camera's prying eyes. It still recognized me wearing psychedelic garb, wolf-like head gear, an Egyptian pharaoh's headdress and a fake mustache. Understandably, the camera couldn't recognize me under a Frankenstein mask. For some reason, it was just as baffled when an editor it usually had no trouble

recognizing donned his cycling helmet and sunglasses in the office. The camera occasionally got baffled when it saw someone from a side angle, even it had previously identified that person.

It also added images of paper print-outs of people's faces to their profiles and questioned the identity of an Albert Einstein image on my T-shirt. That's not something that would the iPhone X would have recognized, as it adds depth to its recognition algorithm to understand what's a real face and what's not.

Overall, it's an impressive camera, although it's probably not worth the higher price and monthly subscription unless you have a burning desire to own the latest technology and really need to know everything everyone is doing in your home all the time.

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Citation: Face to Face with Nest's smartest home security camera (2017, November 7) retrieved 26 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2017-11-smartest-home-camera.html>

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