

Keeping an eye on it



Surveillance equipment around buildings has become more accessible with technological advancements. Jerry Tyrrell explains the benefits.

Not a lot of new products immediately offer an advantage to our clients. And to tell the truth, I'm always really careful telling contractors to support new technology because I've seen so many instances where we have been used as guinea pigs to test products before they were really ready for market.

For instance, many waterproofing membranes never really worked that well but we kept using them and then had to fix up expensive leaks. Particle board fascias were simply a stupid choice which caused more trouble than there were worth. Timber benchtops were a maintenance nightmare. And injected foam into cavities shrunk and was a fire risk.

Some products are good from the beginning and quickly improve such as double glazed windows which provide better thermal performance, block noise and save energy.

Locating cameras

All buildings

- Main entrances – front and rear
- Side entrances if employee safety is necessary
- Driveway entrances

Apartments

- Lift interiors
- Entrance to all hallways
- Carpark
- Pool/gym/tennis court

Commercial buildings

- Loading docks
- Outside all toilets
- As required at points of sale/high risk/high security



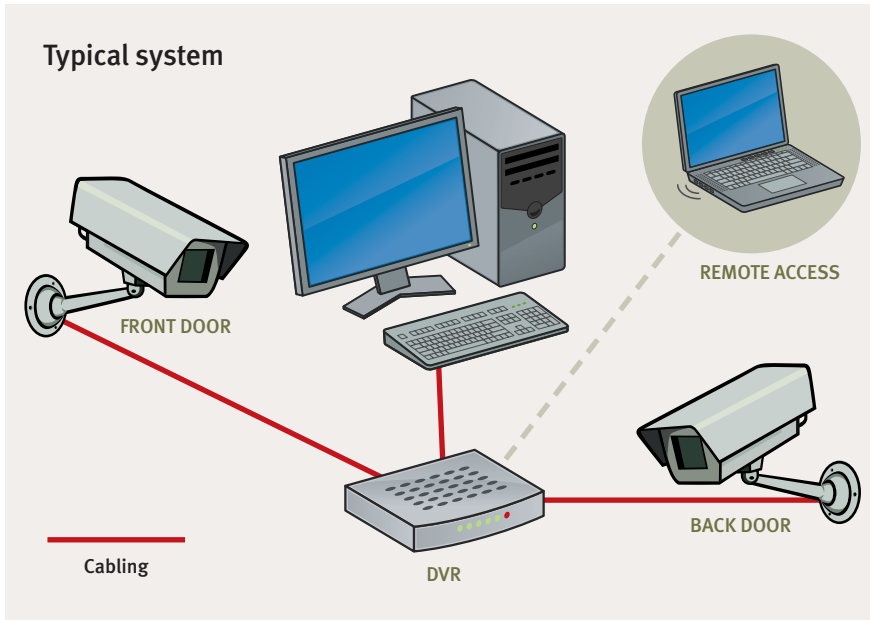
Equally, surveillance adds security to every building it is installed on and discourages anti-social or criminal behaviour.

I may be wrong, but I think every home needs more than high fences and expensive alarms. Surveillance is the best way to catch out the bad guys because you can capture footage of them 24/7. And it will probably help catch a crook knocking off your neighbour's property too.

What is surveillance technology?

Surveillance is a type of closed circuit television (CCTV). These systems use a combination of high resolution video cameras to transmit signals (images) to wherever you want to see them. Data can be stored for a specific time or archived for future analysis. Access can be multi-user/networked as needed. Remote access allows owners/managers to monitor spaces and people anywhere through the net on PDAs and mobile phones. ▶





Camera rules

I'm no expert on this technology so I've gone to few people who are. This is what the people in the know say:

1. Allow three (maximum four) cameras for a typical home. Higher number camera systems (8/12/16/32) can be employed for bigger buildings.
2. Locate cameras to capture people's faces, vehicle number plates and any likely movement or entry.
3. Choose motion activated cameras.
4. Choose good quality technology which is durable and easily cleaned.
5. Use vandal proof housing or domes over any camera which can be reached from the ground.
6. Select correct camera for:
 - low light conditions;
 - 360° rotation; and
 - zoom function.
7. Digital video recorders should allow for:
 - web based real time viewing from multiple users; and
 - management of camera settings.
8. Consider connecting to backup power supply in high security buildings.
9. Agree backup management costs with your supplier.
10. Request 24-36 months warranty on good quality cameras.

Common camera types

	Dome	Full body	Pan tilt	Infrared
Outdoor use	✗	✓	✓	✓
Vandal proof	✓	Housing & bracket required	✓	✓
Cleaning	3 monthly	3 monthly	3 monthly	3 monthly
Camera maintenance	Annually	Annually	Annually	Annually
Zero light				✓

The basic ingredients of a surveillance system are:

- Cabling;
- Cameras;
- Digital video recorder with back up; and
- Display screen.

So what are the reasons why I reckon surveillance is so good for our clients?

Firstly, surveillance is a great deterrent against trespassing or illegal behaviour. It is a permanent record that will capture quality images of people, vehicles and incidents. Secondly, it is awake all the

time unlike security firms driving around periodically. Finally, over the life of the building, it is an inexpensive way to monitor the property.

Obviously, you need to get the cables in as part of routine pre-wire. That's why I'm talking about surveillance – so you don't forget to tempt the client before it becomes difficult to lay cables in voids and cavities and fit cameras off scaffolding.

I've been watching surveillance technology for some time. It's such a great product. It has improved to a point where

it is excellent value because the cameras are robust and trouble free, data storage is much cheaper and there are tradesmen who know how to get the installation right. Why not add value to your product by making sure your electrician can fit these or you get together with a specialist for bigger or complex jobs. Your client will appreciate the advice and it might just save a life one day.

Where to find help

The 3rd Eye
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www.the3rdeye.com.au

Please email me any thoughts or experiences at jwtyrrell@tyrrells.com ■

Jerry Tyrrell is co-founder of Tyrrells Property Inspections. He has more than 30 years' experience as a labourer, tradesman, contractor, architect, mediator, building consultant and author.

Next Issue: Emergency management

