

Chapter 3

Uberveillance: Where Wear and Educative Arrangement

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ABSTRACT

The intensification and diversification of surveillance in recent decades is now being considered within a contemporary theoretical and academic framework. The ambiguity of the term ‘surveillance’ and the surreptitiousness of its application must now be re-considered amidst the emergent concept of Uberveillance. This chapter presents three cases of organisations that are currently poised or already engaging in projects using location-enabled point-of-view wearable technologies. Reference is made to additional cases, project examples, and testimonials including the Australian Federal Police, Northern Territory Fire Police and Emergency Services, and other projects funded in 2010 and 2011 by the former Australian Flexible Learning Framework (AFLF), now the National VET E-learning Strategy (NVELS). This chapter also examines the use of location-enabled POV (point-of-view) or Body Wearable Video (BWV) camera technologies in a crime, law, and national security context, referencing cross-sectoral and inter-disciplinary opinions as to the perceived benefits and the socio-technical implications of these pervasive technologies.

INTRODUCTION

[The Emperor] said: “It is all useless, if the last landing place can only be the infernal city, and it is there that, in ever-narrowing circles, the current is drawing us.”

And Polo said: “The inferno of the living is not something that will be; if there is one, it is what is already here, the inferno where we live every day, that we form by being together. There are ways to escape suffering it. The first is easy for many: accept the inferno and become such a part of it

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that you can no longer see it. The second is risky and demands constant vigilance and apprehension; seek and learn to recognize who and what, in the midst of the inferno, are not inferno, then make them endure, give them space.” (Calvino, 1972, *Invisible Cities*)

BACKGROUND

Memory

Picture a domestic setting in the 1970s.

Sydney, Australia throbbed under the self-determination of the tune in, dropout culture and the soapbox debates strayed left and right as far as public tolerance would allow. Telephones were wired to the wall, spin dialled and publicly coin dependent. Dogs roamed free, unidentifiable until someone visited the local pound. The faux-wood panelled television set peddled sitcom have-it-now culture. Police officers wore two-way radios and carried Smith & Wessons.

Fast forward to 2012.

Parents know more of their family’s lives through an online website designed originally to unite college sweethearts. Everyone owns a mobile phone or two and sometimes even three. Dogs are chipped, de-sexed, voice-boxed and confined to yards as are children confined to their living rooms. Long division is a practice lost to the electronic calculator.

DIY drone hobbyists gather on local town ovals.

Police officers and security agency personnel wear high definition location enabled video recorders for evidence gathering, as do teachers in educational organisations.

Have we progressed as a society over the last 30 years or have we lost the ability to think outside of the networked grid? Amidst our hyper-connectivity does anyone give himself or herself long enough to review what has been, what is happening and where we want to be?

SURVEILLANCE

We could, upon reflection, conclude that we now live in a society besieged by a technological omnipresence born of dystopia and intense paranoia.

We might also draw conclusions that communities in all parts of the world are constantly teetering between peaceful citizenship and utter chaotic anarchy, as if in a state of schizophrenia so acute that the very architectures they inhabit have become cells of their own Orwellian incarceration.

In many countries camera surveillance has become commonplace and ordinary citizens and consumers are increasingly aware that they are under surveillance in everyday life. Camera surveillance is typically perceived as the archetype of contemporary surveillance technologies and processes. While there is sometimes fierce debate about their introduction, many others take the cameras for granted or even applaud their deployment. Yet what the presence of surveillance cameras actually achieves is still very much in question. International evidence shows that they have very little effect in deterring crime and ‘in making people feel safer’ but they do serve to place certain groups under greater official scrutiny and to extend the reach of today’s ‘surveillance society’. (Doyle et al., 2011)

We could also, as optimists, consider that we have as a society developed a better sense of who we are as humans as a result of surveillance technologies, by being able to observe others at work, play and in public places volunteered to the interweb.

Some would say this developed “awareness” of self, our moral conscience before evil and malcontent, as impossible to attain given the depravities of inconsistency that humans exhibit when subject to a constancy of “unseen” supervision.

One of the goals of moral education is to cultivate a conscience – the little voice inside telling us that

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