



Melbourne Debating Academy Round 2

That we should have video surveillance in all public places

Background:

Video surveillance or CCTV consists of camera (and potentially audio) recording. It is generally done to protect private property, such as the premises of a business or a private residence. The purpose is to collect video and/ or audio which can be used to support the conviction of alleged criminal activity, typically offences relating to stealing, burglary, robbery or property damage.

Some CCTV cameras can also be used to deter would-be criminals. Because of how damning CCTV evidence can be, many criminals are reluctant to commit offences on camera. So, some private businesses can use CCTV cameras as a deterrent, even if the cameras don't actually work!

Crime is an ongoing problem in society, particularly in densely populated city centres. One of the proposed solutions to help lower crime rates has been to increase the number of surveillance cameras in the city, so that the police can monitor what is going on. However, there are concerns that widespread use of cameras in public places is an invasion of privacy, as footage would also be taken of innocent citizens.

Given the advancement of technology, deploying large-scale technological security solutions has become increasingly easy for governments at a lower cost. However, many argue that this comes at the expense of our 'right to privacy'. The right to privacy is not technically established by any piece of legislation, other than the privacies we get in our data and information. It might be worth considering whether video surveillance in all public places conflicts with the idea of a 'right to privacy', and how that forms a part of the debate.

What you need to consider as debaters is the harms and benefits of implementing video surveillance into all public places. There are huge non-financial and financial costs, as well as huge non-financial and financial gains. Consider how you can frame these points as arguments to make a coherent case.

Key questions for consideration:

- What is the purpose of having video surveillance in all public places?
- Does video surveillance actually satisfy the supposed purpose?
- What are the benefits of implementing video surveillance in all public places?
- What constitutes a "public place"?
- What is more important: privacy or safety?
- Do we have a 'right to privacy'?
- What happens to the footage?
- Do surveillance cameras work in helping identify crimes/criminals?
- Does video surveillance constitute an unreasonable overstep by Government?
- What is the cost? Who is going to bear the cost? Is that cost worth it?

Resources:

<http://www.aclu.org/privacy/spying/14863res20020225.html>

<https://www.ifsecglobal.com/role-cctv-cameras-public-privacy-protection/>

<http://edition.cnn.com/2013/04/26/tech/innovation/security-cameras-boston-bombings/>

<https://titanalarm.com/security-cameras-in-public-places-a-good-or-bad-thing/>