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Article



# Why Security Matters for the Greater Good

Published: OCTOBER 18, 2016 | by **Bob Grossman** | [Edit](#)

**When evaluating a video surveillance installation, careful attention to camera placement, image quality and timeliness of repairs could ultimately have very real and positive benefits to our communities.**

One thing I find interesting about reading a blog is that they live virtually forever. If you search for a topic, click on a link and start reading, it is important to check the date it was written.

This is important with technology issues as they get stale, quickly. Social issues often remain pertinent for far longer, and sometimes older information about trends in either area show how closely — or badly — the author missed the mark. So, time will tell how well I did here, but I'm afraid this blog topic will remain relevant for a long time. Hopefully I am wrong.

We are confronted almost daily with incidents involving criminal actions, including terrorism, in public areas. In the aftermath, the first place law enforcement usually goes is the myriad video surveillance cameras that surround all of us. A great example is the footage that led to the identification and apprehension in September of suspects in the New York and New Jersey bombings. The list of incidents where private **video surveillance** has been used for public good continues to grow. Some may argue the social implications of a **security camera** on every corner, but no one argues the benefits to law enforcement.

In our consulting practice ([tech-answers.com](http://tech-answers.com)) we regularly do assessments of CCTV systems, making recommendations to improve and enhance reliability, performance and functionality. Our clients uniformly share two objectives: They want all of their cameras to work, and they want the image quality to be sufficient for the application. Their business needs are the driving force behind this, but I was recently called to task for not considering the greater good as well.

If you have cameras covering publicly accessible areas, another huge benefit to keeping them in good working order is their availability to help in solving crimes. At our office we have cameras that show the street in front of our building.

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We have had police come to our door twice over the years, asking to see footage during a certain time window to see if a certain vehicle drove by. In one instance we were able to help, but the second time we weren't — the camera was down and we weren't in a hurry to fix it as it was really a demo camera, not a security camera. Shame on us.

We should also consider the greater good when determining the image quality we need. Again, using our office as an example, we have an old analog camera in place covering our front entry area that is as good as it needs to be. If someone hits the doorbell, we can see if there's a UPS or FedEx truck next to them and react, accordingly. But a simple upgrade to an IP camera in that area would allow us to identify faces before they get in the building. Maybe that's not so important to us, but there are a lot of street corners in New York, Boston and other cities where higher quality could have saved lives. If you are responsible for cameras on those corners, give it some thought.

When it comes to looking out for our communities, we all want good neighbors that share a common goal. In much the same way that you might want your neighbor yelling at your kid for running into the street without looking both ways, we have an opportunity to be good neighbors in business. A neighbor is more effective at that if they are on their front porch and wearing their glasses — otherwise they may not notice your kid or yell the wrong name.

If your camera is always looking out into the street, consider the electronic equivalent of being there (in good working order) and wearing glasses (good image quality).

I'm not suggesting that you change your approach to CCTV coverage, or even that you spend more money. I'm just pointing out that paying attention to the greater good when evaluating camera placement, quality and timeliness of repairs could have very real and positive benefits to all of us.

If you're already doing this, thank you. If not, please consider it. I know I will.

*Also published as:*

First published in the **October 2016 issue of Security Sales & Integration** magazine.



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