YOU ARE BEING WATCHED:
SURVEILLANCE CAMERAS IN DOWNTOWN GRAND RAPIDS
INTRODUCTION

You Are Being Watched is a map of video surveillance cameras located in Grand Rapids, Michigan. The purpose is to track the increasing usage of surveillance systems in the United States and to discover how Grand Rapids fits into the trend of increased usage of CCTV (closed-circuit television) systems.

METHODOLOGY

During July of 2004 Media Mouse searched downtown Grand Rapids for surveillance cameras. We only tracked outdoor cameras, and of those, we only mapped cameras in areas where one has a reasonable expectation of being able to move without being recorded by a camera, such as driving and walking on public roads and sidewalks. In order to define the “downtown area,” we used a map available on the City of Grand Rapids website, although we made one alteration and ended our survey at Wealthy instead of Logan.

While we could only identify visible cameras, there is the possibility of “hidden” cameras being used in the downtown area, as they are used in many other cities. It is also worth noting that all busses operated by The Rapid (http://www.ridetherapid.org) have video and audio monitoring systems.

We divided cameras into the following categories:

Private – Cameras owned and operated by building owners as a part of their security systems.

Government – Cameras on state and federal government buildings.

City/Police – Cameras operated by the city and the Grand Rapids Police Department and found on their respective buildings.

Traffic – Cameras used to monitor traffic flow.

ATM – Cameras found on bank ATMs.

Webcam – Privately operated cameras with feeds publicly available on the internet.

TABLE OF FINDINGS

The following table lists the numbers of the various types of cameras that were found:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Private</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City/Police</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traffic</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ATM</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Webcam</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>162</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
MAP OF SURVEILLANCE CAMERAS IN GRAND RAPIDS
MORE INFORMATION ON VIDEO SURVEILLANCE

ACLU: What’s Wrong with Public Video Surveillance?
http://archive.aclu.org/issues/privacy/CCTV_Feature.html

A well-argued position paper against video surveillance, citing past abuses, the potential for greater abuses in the future, and the failure of the systems to deter crime.

ACLU: Resources on Public Video Surveillance
http://www.aclu.org/Privacy/Privacy.cfm?ID=12705&c=39

A variety of resources produced by the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) on the use of public video surveillance.

Electronic Privacy Information Center: Video Surveillance
http://www.epic.org/privacy/surveillance/

A group that focuses on cameras in the Washington, DC area, but also maintains an extensive list of links to news articles on video surveillance. An invaluable resource for people researching public video surveillance.

The Surveillance Camera Players
http://www.notbored.org/the-scp.html

The Surveillance Camera Players are a New York City group that maps surveillance cameras and organizes against the proliferation. Their site also contains links to chapters of the SCP outside New York and has a number of resources on the subject of video surveillance.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Media Mouse can be contacted online at www.mediamouse.org.