

Set Up a Home Surveillance System with FaceTime



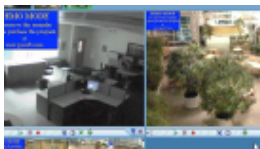
Whitson Gordon

Filed to: SCRIPTS 10/27/10 12:30pm





We've featured a few ways to create a home surveillance system, but if you'd like something really, really simple for keeping an eye on your living room, all you need is a Mac and this AppleScript.



Turn Your PC into a Home Surveillance System

We've highlighted gobs of tools for turning your computer into a security camera, but if...

It certainly won't alert you to intruders in your house, but if you want to make sure your cat hasn't gotten into a fight with the dog, you can easily access your webcam from your iOS device with FaceTime. Just

copy and paste the following AppleScript into AppleScript editor and save it as an Application. Now, whenever you leave the house, just run the application and it will monitor for new FaceTime calls.

When you want to check in on your living room, just call yourself on FaceTime from your iPhone or iPod touch, and your Mac will automatically answer the call. When you hang up the call, the script will close FaceTime and continue monitoring for incoming calls. When you get home, you can just quit the app to stop FaceTime from auto-answering everything that comes in.

```
-- Facetime Auto Answer
-- Copyright ©2010 CornDog Computers
-- twitter: @CornDoggyRob

repeat
    -- Check to see if Facetime is active
    tell application "System Events" to set theCount to
    if theCount = 0 then
        do shell script "sleep 1"
    else
        tell application "FaceTime" to activate
        do shell script "sleep 2"
        tell application "FaceTime" to activate
        tell application "System Events" to tell process
            if name of front window contains "wi
                do shell script "sleep 5"
            else
                tell application "System Events" to tell process
                    keystroke return
                    do shell script "sleep 5"
                -- Check to see if call is a
                tell application "System Events" to tell process
```



```
if name of front win
    do shell scr
else
    -- Quit Face
    tell applica
        do shell scr
    end if
end tell
end if
end tell
end if
end repeat
end
```

IMPORTANT: You'll want to make sure that you have your Mac set to use an email address that no one else knows you use for FaceTime, otherwise it will auto-answer anyone that calls it. Unless, that is, you are setting up a kitty-cam and giving the address to all of your friends for afternoon entertainment.

Update: It seems you need access to assistive devices enabled for this to work. If you get an error when running the script to that effect, head over to System Preferences > Universal Access and check the "Enable Access for Assistive Devices" checkbox at the bottom of the preference pane.

How to Setup a Home Surveillance System Using FaceTime [CornDog Computers]



GetOutOfBox > Whitson Gordon

10/27/10 12:37pm



Not trying to troll, but I hate AppleScripts syntax, its simple, but overtly so in my opinion. It feels like a crappy version of VB, and that's saying something.



Whitson Gordon > GetOutOfBox

10/27/10 12:52pm

@GetOutOfBox: But it's really nice for those of us that want to get more out of our OS, but we don't know Python or anything.



GetOutOfBox > Whitson Gordon

10/27/10 8:18pm

@Whitson Gordon: Don't get me wrong, this wasn't criticism directed at users of AppleScript, I just find it 'wording' annoying (i.e "tell application"). I just wish it was a little more elegant.



Whitson Gordon > GetOutOfBox

10/27/10 9:56pm

@GetOutOfBox: I'm not a coder, so I don't have anything to compare it to really :-)



Larry Furtsch > Whitson Gordon

10/27/10 1:07pm

Result:

error "System Events got an error: Access for assistive devices is disabled." number -1719 from window 1 of process "FaceTime"



Whitson Gordon > Larry Furtsch

10/27/10 1:35pm

@Larry Furtsch: Hmm, I'll add that this needs to be enabled for it to work.



theminimalist > Whitson Gordon

10/27/10 2:11pm

Why are you using the shell script instead of merely "delay 5"



Whitson Gordon > theminimalist

10/27/10 2:14pm

@theminimalist: Not sure, I didn't write the script myself.



31ModelA > Whitson Gordon

10/27/10 1:43pm

Update to my own question:

"access for assistive devices disabled"

Credit where credit is due:

[hints.macworld.com]

Quoted from above site:

To turn it on, type this in Terminal:

```
sudo touch /private/var/db/.AccessibilityAPIEnabled
```

To then disable it, type this:

```
sudo rm /private/var/db/.AccessibilityAPIEnabled
```

Thats it. If you wanted to AppleScript it, you could do something like this:

do shell script ↵

```
"touch /private/var/db/.AccessibilityAPIEnabled" password
```

```
"pwd" ↵
```

with administrator privileges

[robg adds: Somewhat obviously, replace pwd with your admin user's password. Also, change touch to rm for the opposite version of the AppleScript.]



Whitson Gordon > 31ModelA

10/27/10 2:15pm

@m.m.shaefer: Thanks for sharing this, but it's actually much easier. There's a checkbox in System Preferences :-) I updated the post.



31ModelA > Whitson Gordon

10/27/10 3:11pm

@Whitson Gordon: i was trying to find a way to enable access within the script and then disable access so that it's not always on. I tend to be kind of paranoid about access since i live in a dense area with lots of other users.

See my later post in the comments with this solution.



Whitson Gordon > 31ModelA

10/27/10 5:31pm

@m.m.shaefer: Ahh, that makes sense. Then mad props! For that, you get a star.
