Video Surveillance in Public Libraries: A Case of Unintended Consequences?

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Abstract

This paper presents the findings of an exploratory qualitative research study in which the authors sought to examine why two public libraries have implemented video security systems and why one of these libraries has reversed course and recently removed a previously installed surveillance system. We found that one library initially installed the system in various branches as an ad hoc response to specific incidents of crime without central administrative oversight, while the other installed their system as an integral part of the design and construction of their central library location and collaborates with local police and professional consultants on security issues. The former library system subsequently removed all of their cameras in 2011 as a consequence of having negative interactions with local police departments.

1. Introduction

In May 2012, the American Library Association (ALA) celebrated its third annual "Choose Privacy Week" under the moniker "Freedom from Surveillance." Through this program and others, the ALA's Office for Intellectual Freedom has actively promoted the recognition of privacy in the public library setting. This discussion has encompassed library records in all their forms, from reading and borrowing histories to the use of RFID chips in books to track library materials and aid patron checkout. However, many public libraries around the United States, and the world, have also implemented another form of surveillance – video security systems – that potentially pose a threat to the privacy of library patrons and staff in conflict with library commitments to privacy and intellectual freedom. This paper presents the findings of an exploratory research study which attempts to understand what factors and considerations have driven certain public libraries to implement video surveillance policies and install security cameras, and why one library system has reversed course and removed previously installed video surveillance systems from all of its branches. Ancillary to these questions, we also sought to understand the relationships and interactions that libraries have had with local law enforcement agencies as a result of their video surveillance policies. To begin to uncover answers to these questions, we requested official documents and emails from two large library systems in the Pacific Northwest region of the United States under state freedom of information laws and analyzed these materials along with other library documents, news stories, and press releases. We also visited the urban library's central branch location to observe the cameras and security personnel, and were invited to briefly observe operations in that library's central CCTV control room.

2. Prior research and the legal basis for video surveillance in libraries

2.1. Surveillance and crime reduction

Academic and professional literature on privacy issues and the effect of CCTV video surveillance systems on crime rates (primarily in urban areas) have proliferated in recent years (for discussion of some of these studies, see [1, 2, 3, 4, 5]). Much of this research has been conducted in the United Kingdom by academic researchers and the British Home Office [6, 7, 8], although some research has also been based on surveillance and crime statistics in the state of California [9, 10, 11] and Washington, D.C. [12]. These studies have generally reported that cameras have little or no statistical effect on incidents of crime [1, 7]. This finding is especially pronounced in the United States, where fewer interventions in addition to cameras alone, such as increased police presence or improved lighting, coexist with cameras at the surveillance sites subject to the research [1, 7].

Webster has claimed that the notion that CCTV systems actually prevent crime is a myth and that the evidence base does not support the continued expansion and use of CCTV on the basis of crime prevention alone [13]. Webster has also argued that

the purposes and uses of CCTV systems have been shifting over time, becoming "normalised and accepted" in society, allowing unabated diffusion of CCTV systems despite serious implications for citizens' civil liberties [13]. This theory is premised on the idea that "the policy focus of CCTV has shifted as the technology has diffused, from crime prevention, to community safety and now also to national security", a phenomenon described as "surveillance creep" [13, 14]. The "net result" of the accumulation of surveillance systems has only been increased levels and "intensities of surveillance" [13]. For some, the modern security systems with centralized control rooms, CCTV cameras, and privatized security – such as the system employed by one of the libraries in our study – "plagiarize brazenly" from Jeremy Bentham's famous "panopticon prison" so widely discussed in surveillance studies literature [15, 16].

Despite the lacking evidence base supporting video surveillance as an effective crime prevention tool, researchers have begun to find that CCTV systems may have actual effects on reducing antisocial and undesirable behavior [6, 13] and may even be used to discriminate against certain sections of the populace by barring them from public spaces through targeted monitoring and coordinated officer interventions [17]. This phenomenon of discrimination through surveillance technologies has been referred to as "surveillance as social sorting", and has been documented in a variety of settings [18]. In their observational study of four CCTV control rooms in Scandinavia, Sætnan, Lomell, and Wiecek reported various patterns of discriminatory enforcement by private security firms [17].

Concerns about discriminatory use of video surveillance systems are pronounced in the library setting, especially given the purported importance of serving poor and underserved communities, including homeless populations. However, researchers have noted that libraries in the United States have not universally adopted or embraced the ALA's policy on Library Services to the Poor (ALA Policy 61) [19, 20]. Utilizing surveillance systems and library security staff to respond discriminately to complaints or the presence of apparently homeless or poor patrons could raise serious ethical and legal issues. The possibility that the modern library could be compared to Bentham's panopticon is a striking reminder that decisions about digital surveillance systems in public libraries should be based on sound evidentiary and policy grounds.

2.2. Surveillance in the workplace

In addition to research on the effect of cameras on crime rates, literature about the psychological effects of employer mandated surveillance on employees has also received some deserved attention [21, 22, 23]. Coultrup and Fountain [21] conducted an exploratory survey of faculty and staff of a small liberal arts university in South Carolina, investigating employee attitudes towards email and internet monitoring. In their preliminary findings, they reported that "employees have strong feelings of disliking monitoring, as they perceive privacy violations and unfairness of the practice." The study also found that "Disclosure of policies does little to alleviate the lack of support for monitoring" and that men were more likely to claim privacy violations [21]. Other studies, discussed by Moore [23] find evidence that employer monitoring systems "produce fear, resentment, and elevate stress levels" of employees resulting in lower employee satisfaction a more competitive workplace environment.

Additionally, the ALA has provided the following guidance regarding surveillance of library employees:

> "…library employers who use electronic or video surveillance or engage in monitoring of computer, e-mail, or telephone use must carefully evaluate these practices in light of both legal requirements and the profession's ethical commitment to upholding rights of privacy and confidentiality" [24].

These rights vary by state, but most public employees enjoy certain protections related to their privacy at work and the protection of their own personal information [24]. Additionally, employees should be made aware of what surveillance they might be subject to while in the workplace and should be given the opportunity to consent in many cases [24]. Surveillance technologies in the workplace may also lead to discriminatory "social sorting" [25].

2.3. Privacy, ethics, and the law

The pervasiveness of video surveillance is made apparent by library use of CCTV for security purposes, given that libraries have traditionally been regarded as sanctuaries for intellectual freedom, free speech, and privacy – civil liberties obviously affected by video surveillance. Claims that the rise of governmental use of CCTV has changed the relationship between the citizen and the state [26] may ring true in the library setting as well. How, and whether, the use of CCTV in libraries has significantly changed the traditional relationship between libraries and their patrons is a question that we hope to answer through further research, although this current study may provide some early insights.

The legal basis for governmental video surveillance in public spaces (such as libraries) is based on the premise that individuals do not maintain any objective expectation of privacy in their conduct in these public spaces and that these systems represent a valid use of state power to protect public safety [5]. Some opponents to this dominant view claim that citizens, at least in the United States, should maintain a right to anonymity in public spaces that would prohibit government from engaging in pervasive video surveillance and tracking without proper justification [27, 28]. Reports analyzing governmental use of video surveillance systems in public spaces against the requirements of the First and Fourth Amendments to the Constitution of the United States, and various state laws, have concluded that such use is generally permissible [5, 29, 30]. Carson [29] applied this rational to video surveillance in public libraries. Additionally, public employers are often subject to other state privacy laws, but even when these exist, they generally allow employee monitoring after disclosure [31]. In addition to concerns about privacy invasions, some courts have also begun to evaluate the need, under tort law negligence principles, for landowners to install video surveillance cameras on their property to deter criminal activity [32].

Despite the fairly clear legal basis for video surveillance in libraries in the United States, legal scholars have noted the potential chilling effects that such systems may have on speech in public spaces [5, 30, 27], which potentially raises important issues in the library setting, where patron privacy and confidentiality are particularly sacrosanct. These concerns have been suppressed, at least as far as the Fourth Amendment is concerned, by analogizing video surveillance cameras to static patrol officers engaged in valuable public safety efforts [5]. Some commentators have argued that, because CCTV raises the problem of the "unobservable observer", where the watched do not – or cannot – know who is watching or for what purpose, national or local policy ought to require more overt surveillance practices, public disclosure, and independent oversight of control rooms [33].

2.4. Video surveillance in libraries

In the library setting, the ALA's position in regard to video surveillance is particularly enlightening:

> "Today's sophisticated high-resolution surveillance equipment is capable of recording patron reading and viewing habits in ways that are as revealing as the written circulation records libraries routinely protect…. Any records kept may be subject to FOI requests… If the library decides surveillance is necessary, it is essential for the library to develop and enforce strong policies protecting patron privacy and confidentiality." [24].

This instruction gives libraries considering or maintaining video surveillance important guidance about the factors that should be considered when making these policy decisions. Additionally, since certain library documents – and potentially some video surveillance footage – remain subject to public requests under various state freedom of information laws, and to requests from local police and federal law enforcement agencies, library administrators should follow ALA guidelines to establish and enforce strong policies to protect patron privacy and confidentiality.

Other reports also suggest that video surveillance systems should only be employed to "provide a safe and secure facility for library employees, library resources and equipment, and library patrons" [34]. Best practices also entail risk assessment prior to implementing a security system, and to prioritizing the implementation of physical (non-electronic) security measures as the first step in implementing a security system [34]. However, one report [34] also states that "[video surveillance] systems are quickly becoming one of the most important and economical security and safety tools available to libraries," but does not even mention privacy considerations. Another report by Westenkirchner [35] describes the pros and cons of different types of video security systems, and the experience of Auburn University Libraries implementing a campus-wide surveillance system in 2006 but, as with the former report, does not examine the legal or ethical concerns that the use of such a system might raise in the library setting.

In what is probably the most directly relevant study to our current research project, the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals (CILIP) conducted a short six-question survey of library administrators in Great Britain in 2008 to investigate "a number of reports concerning increased police or other security agency activity with regard to libraries and their users" [36]. This survey represents the only investigation of which we are aware that has investigated the nature of the relationship between law enforcement and libraries, and it is admittedly lacking in depth and substance. According to the CILIP survey [36], 75% of respondent library administrators reported that police and security agencies were requesting information, and 71% reported that the police followed proper procedures for legitimate purposes. Only 12% of libraries reporting incidents reported that they felt police had engaged in "fishing expeditions," though one did report a request for the borrowing histories of

Muslim patrons. Additionally, only 62% of respondent libraries reported having a policy for dealing with police requests.

2.5. Conclusions about the literature

Video surveillance appears to have little effect on crime and there is evidence that surveillance technologies are expanding and increasing in intensity. Additionally, employer initiated surveillance raises serious issues about employee privacy in the workplace. Choices made in regards to video surveillance in libraries will result in very practical implications for library administrators when they are confronted with police requests for patron information (or even requests by local citizens under state freedom of information laws). Video surveillance may also potentially lead to discriminatory "social sorting". These findings, especially the emphasis on prioritizing privacy rights, have particular importance in the library setting due to the nature of library positions in regard to intellectual freedom and privacy. Interestingly, despite the voluminous literature about the effects of surveillance more generally, there is scant literature about the effects of, and reasons for, the implementation of video surveillance systems in public libraries, or the relationships between libraries with surveillance systems and law enforcement agencies. This study is an attempt to begin to fill this void, and represents part of a much larger on-going research project. In this paper we sought to analyze our findings against the existing theory and literature on surveillance creep and surveillance diffusion [13, 14], and we hope eventually gather data that will enable us to analyze library surveillance practices in light of theory and evidence that video surveillance may lead to discriminatory "social sorting" [17, 18].

3. Methods

For this study, we investigated the surveillance activities of two separate library systems. The first is a large non-urban library system located in the Pacific Northwest. This system is comprised of 46 separate library locations spread throughout a 2000-square-mile area, and has approximately 1200 employees. The second system is an urban library system located in the Pacific Northwest. This system is comprised of a large central library location and 26 smaller branches located within an 80-square-mile area.

We contacted the individual institutions and requested documents related to current and past video surveillance policies and practices. These requests were made under the authority of state public records laws. We received documents from each institution, and the institutions provided documents and feedback on multiple occasions - including library administered surveys of staff and camera related issues, official video surveillance policies, a security consultant report, and some related emails.

Table 1. Demographics (2011 annual reports)

Library	Locations	Area	Staff	Circulation
Urban	27	80 Sq. Miles	613	11,500,000 (approx.)
Non-Urban	46	2000 Sq. Miles	1,200	21,800,000 (approx.)

We also conducted internet searches and searches of the public-facing websites of each of these libraries, uncovered detailed minutes from board meetings, director's reports and year-end reports, public policies, and searched for local news stories from reputable local news agencies. After collecting this information we began a comparative case study of the two library systems, analyzing the documents we had gathered to garner as much detailed information as possible. The aim of which was to not only get an idea of the library system's policies, but also to begin to understand the reasons behind the implementation of those policies. This data will also be used to inform future research, as we are currently engaged in a larger research project that will include additional public records requests, semi-structured interviews, and a quantitative nation-wide survey.

4. Findings

4.1. Reasons for surveillance systems

Our first research question was driven by a desire to understand the decision making process behind libraries implementing video surveillance systems, and the specific factors that drove certain library administrators to make this decision. Both libraries we studied have installed cameras in their branches. One library continues to utilize its system, and is actively upgrading it, while the other has recently chosen to remove all of their cameras.

4.1.1. Non-Urban Library System. The non-urban library system no longer manages or operates any video surveillance cameras at any of its locations, although exterior cameras at two branches are still active and run by their respective city governments directly. However, 10 of their 46 branches previously had cameras installed up until the point the administration simultaneously removed all cameras under their control in mid-2011.

Table 2. Reasons for system installation

Library	Rationale	Locations
Urban	Part of an overall security strategy when the building was constructed.	Only in central library; tested in 4 branches.
Non-Urban	Cameras were installed by various branch managers in response to staff concerns about criminal activity both inside and outside library buildings.	Installed in 10 libraries; currently all have been removed.

Cameras were originally installed in response to staff requests following incidents of crime, vandalism and graffiti at some of the library branch locations. In a survey of library managers conducted in 2007 and 2008, managers reported that cameras had been installed because of problems with prostitution, fighting, theft, and drug activity both inside the library buildings and in the parking lots. Of all the reasons indicated by the managers, theft was the most commonly cited reason (3 of 9 branches reporting), while loitering, graffiti, and undesirable youth activity were each cited by 2 of the 9 branches who completed the survey. Only one branch struggled to provide a definite answer for why the cameras had been installed; only providing graffiti as a possible reason.

4.1.2. Urban Library System. The urban library system currently only has security cameras installed at their central library location. They have previously tested pilot programs at four of their other branches, but none have permanently installed video cameras at this time. The pilot program was not fully implemented due to funding and staffing limitations. The urban system regards cameras as a safety and security tool for deterring crime, ensuring patron and employee safety, and protecting library property. Their central library was constructed with video camera placement in mind. The older building had a black and white analog camera system, but did not have a useable recording system in place. As of summer 2012, the new building has 40 cameras installed as well as a central video monitoring facility onsite, and stores recorded security footage for up to 30 days. At the time the non-urban library system removed its cameras, in May 2011, an urban library spokesperson told the news media that the urban library had 26 cameras installed. The library is currently undertaking an upgrade and reassessment of the cameras and their locations, and this increase in the reported number of cameras may be due to this system upgrade.

As a result, the video cameras at their central building were not installed as a response to a specific incident or string of incidents but as an extension of the library's policies on safety and security, especially given the unique design and location of the new building. The central library also has a permanent staff of security officers. In 2008, the urban library had an independent consulting group conduct a library security assessment, which included recommendations for expanding the video security system and installing cameras in branch locations. The library administration sought input from a number of internal committees and branch managers, and issued a report in 2009 detailing the recommendations of the consulting firm and the action (or inaction) the library had decided to take in response to these recommendations. The assessment responded to two primary types of security challenges facing the library and some of its branches: "school-age youth behavior issues" (disruptive activity and fighting) and "adult behavior issues" (alcohol and drug use and aggressive behavior). The recommendations included expanding camera deployment, adding security officers and more engagement with community stakeholders, such as local law enforcement, elected officials, and community service agencies.

The urban library system, in contrast to the non-urban system, tends to have a cooperative relationship with local law enforcement. A library spokesperson stated to news media in 2011 that the library shares footage with local law enforcement as long as the footage is unrelated to the use of the library and the borrowing choices of library patrons. The local Police Department was even involved in the security consultation for the central library at its construction. The Library report in 2009 after the security consultation states that

> "…the [local] Police Department has been responsive to Library requests for support in addressing security issues. Each branch library has an identified contact at a nearby precinct. Branch managers and precinct officers have discussed security issues at branches. Precinct personnel have attended meetings with branch managers, discussing police response to Library 911 calls and providing 911 call training. The Library and the [local] Police Department will discuss the most effective ways to enhance this cooperative framework."

Thus, the urban library system appears to have a collaborative relationship with the police and maintains a softer stance on releasing footage to police when a request is unrelated to patron activity or library use than does the non-urban library system.

4.2. Removal of a video security system

The second question was driven by a desire to understand what factors drove one library system's administration to change their policy on video surveillance and remove a previously installed video surveillance system. As stated above, the non-urban library system had initially installed cameras in 10 of their branches prior to removing them in beginning in May of 2011.

The non-urban library system administrators stated in a memo to library staff in 2011 that there were two main reasons for decision to remove the cameras. The first involved negative interactions occurring between the libraries and local law enforcement over the library's interpretation of state law regarding the privacy of library records. The overhead produced by local law enforcement engaging the library administration was a factor behind the decision, as was the interaction between police and staff at the libraries.

> "The cameras have also created an adversarial relationship between [the library], local law enforcement agencies and crime victims. In our attempts to cooperate with police while maintaining patron privacy, staff have experienced intense pressure to release footage on demand, without requiring a warrant or court order… Our efforts to protect patron confidentiality [are] viewed as uncooperative and hindering criminal investigation."

This adversarial relationship was closely related to the library's position about the applicability of the exemption of library records under state freedom of information law to video surveillance footage. Under state law, library records are privileged information and police require a court order to obtain them. The non-urban library system felt that this included video surveillance tapes as they could be used to identify patrons, their borrowing habits and other personal information. In this regard, the memo stated:

> "…maintaining cameras as a safety and security measure is not only ineffective, it may not be in keeping with the intent of the public records exemption for libraries. Library administration has resisted the disclosure of videotape footage that depicts library patrons (whether in or outside the building) in accordance with our interpretation of the public records exemption for libraries... Protecting the confidentiality of library records, in this case videotape footage that may include images of patrons using the library in one form or another, is seen as an important measure to ensure free and open access to the community."

Several city governments, and police departments in particular, put a lot of pressure on the non-urban library system to change their policy with regards to the cameras. This contention escalated from a couple of local municipalities to the involvement of the association of local municipal attorneys within the library's jurisdiction. Ultimately, because of the resistance from local police over the library's policy of requiring court orders before turning over security footage, the administration made the decision to get rid of the cameras in early 2011. The library director publicly stated that the library was getting "out of the camera business" because of the conflict with law enforcement and the library's commitment to intellectual freedom. Further tension between the library and local law enforcement occurred when one city police department removed all the computers from a library branch as part of a child pornography investigation. As a result there was a court action, in which a judge ultimately sided with the library.

These interactions with law enforcement led to the second stated reason for the removal of the cameras, an investigation into their usefulness to deter crime. After conducting research into the effectiveness of surveillance cameras, the administration ultimately concluded that the evidence, from outside research and the library's own experience, did not support cameras as an effective preventive measure against crime or property loss.

Additionally, the library administration also felt that footage they had provided to police, upon the execution of a court order, had never been of any real help in securing a conviction. According to the staff memo, very few crimes had been solved as a consequence of having security cameras in place, and even when the cameras do capture potential helpful information, the "images are not clear enough to provide helpful information." This feeling was also evident in statements made by library managers in a separate survey conducted by the library administration in April of 2011 as part of their decision making process. The survey attempted to elicit the feelings of library staff in regards to the presence of cameras in the libraries and the overwhelming response to this survey was that staff wanted the cameras retained.

Interestingly, when the non-urban library system decided to remove the cameras from their branches, the negative relations peaked – especially between the library and certain police departments. Police officers accused the library of endangering their patrons and the greater public. One police chief attended a library board meeting and disputed the library's claims that

the footage had not been helpful to law enforcement. Quoting from the minutes of the meeting, he stated that "cameras are a major attribute in criminal investigations" and that they had been instrumental in building cases against multiple suspects, even if they did not always provide key evidence in and of themselves. The cameras, according to the police chief, had made the library "a valued neighbor."

5. Discussion

5.1. Reasons for surveillance systems

The two library systems presented here show two vastly differing cases for the installation of video surveillance cameras. Both systems have varied philosophies on what constitutes part of the public record and how they deal with patron privacy.

For the non-urban library system the installation of the cameras was primarily a reaction to incidents of crime that had previously occurred at some locations. These were generally minor crimes such as theft or graffiti, but over time, and consistent with the idea of "surveillance creep" [13, 14], the cameras became used and relied on by staff for additional purposes, such as ensuring personal safety prior to leaving the buildings after closing as well as to identify participants engaged in objectionable behavior. This was especially important when taking into account that most of the libraries that had cameras installed were in higher-crime and deprived areas. The installation of the cameras was never part of a scheme by the administration but originated at the individual library level with requests from branches to the system's facilities services division. Over time, however, the administration became involved with overseeing the cameras due to the impact of law enforcement requests.

In contrast, the urban library system made the decision to install cameras at their central branch during the design phase of the new building. Cameras were always a part of the administration's plan for security at the library and were not an afterthought reaction to specific incidents. The urban library system sees cameras as a tool for security personnel dealing with incidents that occur in and around the library, as well as securing convictions.

Overall, despite the differing specific reasons behind the installation of the cameras, both systems chose to install them to improve security, albeit with different philosophies in mind. Ultimately both systems never used cameras as their primary security strategy, instead opting for human measures. For the non-urban library system, this was in the form of more teen librarians and safety and security coordinators, for the urban library system it was a private security staff.

5.2. Removal of a video security system

As mentioned previously, the non-urban library system's installation of cameras was driven primarily by staff requests at individual libraries, and was apparently not an organizational initiative. As such, it is very apparent from the documents we received that the individual libraries were much more invested in the camera systems than the central administration, a point that is reinforced by the results of a library survey of cluster manager opinions regarding the administration's proposal to remove the cameras.

The decision to remove the cameras was made in early 2011, prior to the Board of Trustees meeting in May of that year. The administration's concern about the library's use of the camera systems was an on-going issue, but the impetus for the decision to remove cameras came in March of 2011 when a conflict arose with a local police department after the library demanded that police obtain a court order before the library would turn over camera footage of an assault in the library parking lot. This particular situation became further aggravated when police finally obtained a court order for the footage a week later and publicly stated that they had apprehended the suspect, a known transient, within 15 minutes of an officer viewing the footage.

Although the library did not have a written policy governing the use of camera systems, they did have a written policy for responding to requests for security camera footage. This policy stated that all requests for footage must be accompanied by a court order or subpoena, and all footage requests were routed to one individual at the administration office. Warrants were to be complied with immediately, but if a library staff member was presented with a subpoena, library policy was to consult legal counsel prior to releasing footage. The library maintained this policy because their interpretation of the library records exemption to the state public records act held that video footage was part of the patron record. However, as stated above, this policy became a point of contention with multiple law enforcement departments.

Shortly after the March 2011 incident, the administration set up a team to conduct a "critical review of security cameras to gauge the impact and effectiveness of the cameras and whether they are appropriate to our mission of protecting patron privacy and confidentiality." The administration also discussed the issue with their legal counsel and the relevant library cluster managers, who were each responsible for managing clusters of at least two library branches. Interestingly, when the library surveyed its cluster managers in April 2011, all ten managers stated that they wanted to have the cameras retained, but only half

stated they wanted the cameras actually set to record footage to tape. Their responses indicated a uniform feeling that the cameras were useful to library staff, both for staff safety and crime prevention.

> "Before the cameras were installed, there was heavy traffic in sex and drugs in the restrooms. Having the cameras is most important for the [library] staff… The cameras provides [sic] staff with the opportunity to check outside the building before leaving."

One response also noted the presence of expensive equipment as a reason to retain cameras. Despite the overwhelming positive response to cameras by the cluster managers, some also expressed understanding of the administration's worries:

> "I think the need for some [branches] to maintain good relationships with their police departments is more important than our need to have cameras. The cameras are useful, but not essential to us."

The responses also indicated that the administration's concerns about poor relationships with law enforcement were very real. Cluster managers stated that "police often end up miffed when we report a crime but then can't just turn over any video footage and the quality of the images isn't all that great," and "Having the recorded videos is more trouble than it is worth." Additionally, managers reported that patrons had complained about the presence of cameras in the library, and staff at one location "[had] never gotten decent footage and… can never figure out how to [do] the recording anyhow."

The administrative team also concluded that prior research showed that surveillance cameras have little impact on crime. After the administration announced the decision in a memo to library staff, the system quickly removed all cameras under its control at its ten branches. A few branches continue to have cameras installed on their buildings, but these are not owned, operated, or maintained by the library.

Response from the library staff to the proposal to remove cameras was mixed. Some were pleased that they wouldn't have to interact with law enforcement over the footage issues anymore, but others were not happy about the proposal. However, the administration did take concerns about safety and crime seriously too.

> "There are other strategies than cameras that are more effective in increasing our safety: building and environmental design, lighting, layout, and landscaping, as well as business practices, like the buddy system and personal alarms. We also offer safety classes, including Prepare and the new Safe Environment Training taught by a security officer."

Interestingly, the experience of both library systems appear to conform to the theory advanced by Webster [13] that as surveillance systems accumulate, surveillance creep occurs and increased and intensified surveillance results. The urban library is currently expanding its surveillance system and upgrading to higher resolution cameras, and the non-urban system experienced a prolonged expansion, albeit not centrally coordinated, as additional libraries requested cameras. The data from the non-urban system strongly suggests that the use of the cameras shifted from preventing crime to also ensuring staff safety and allowing library staff to identify potential problems. The urban library system also sees its system as a multifaceted tool that does more than just prevent crime. However, the case of the non-urban library system removing its cameras is an interesting, and unique, departure from the general trend towards greater and intensified surveillance. Bucking the trend, in this case, caused a surprising amount of public outrage, evidence perhaps that society is accepting – and even expecting – video surveillance to occur in public spaces.

6. Limitations and future research

The primary limitation of this study has been its scope, as we limited our investigation to accessing and analyzing publicly available documents. We plan to expand the reach and methods of this study to also include interviews and surveys with additional library systems and other community stakeholders – such as police departments, library staff, and patrons – to better understand how the presence of surveillance cameras may be changing the traditional relationship between libraries and their patrons. We intend to pursue this research considering issues related to privacy, speech, and the importance of preserving the library access of all individuals, including poor and underserved populations that may be particularly impacted by library surveillance. Because of the prior literature addressing the effects of workplace surveillance policies on employee stress and job satisfaction, we also plan to conduct interviews with librarians and other library staff to gain a better understanding of staff perceptions of CCTV in the workplace. We are also looking to conduct a nation-wide survey of library surveillance policies to get some quantitative data about video surveillance policies and practices across

the U.S., to better understand the national library video surveillance environment. These methods will enable us to make more trustworthy claims, gain a broader and more comprehensive understanding of the issues involved, and triangulate our data collection and analysis efforts.

Despite the exploratory nature of this study, we attempted to ensure that our findings were valid and trustworthy by sourcing data from multiple sources (public records requests and analysis of other publicly available documents, such as news reports) and by utilizing multiple investigators with different backgrounds to interpret and analyze the collected data. If we have been successful, this initial study can inform future research in this important area which, surprisingly, lacks much empirical investigation. Our future work will attempt to continue filling this void by gaining a fuller understanding of why (or why not) libraries are implementing video surveillance systems and how these choices have impacted their relationships with local law enforcement, library employees, and library patrons.

8. Conclusion

The two cases we studied demonstrate some stark differences in the approach to balancing library security and patron privacy. They also provide important illumination to the approach taken by these two systems to balance patron and employee privacy against public safety and various property interests. Although both library systems implemented video security systems at least partly in response to actual or expected criminal activity in or around library buildings, both systems utilized the cameras for various other purposes as well, including ensuring patron and employee safety, and protecting library property. This finding is consistent with the notion of "surveillance creep" discussed above by Webster, where he notes a shift from "crime prevention to community safety and… security" [13]. The administration of the non-urban library system went so far as to state to library staff that cameras do not prevent crime, and that other, more effective, means were available for that end. The documents we reviewed did not demonstrate any actual discriminatory enforcement by either library system, but this will remain an important question in our future work.

Surprisingly, our research uncovered evidence that library managers in the non-urban system were highly content with the presence of cameras, in contrast to the obvious discontent of that system's administration prior to removal. However, more in-depth research with a wider variety of library staff would provide a better picture of whether library staff more generally are as concerned about workplace surveillance as some studies have demonstrated in other work settings. Additionally, the urban library does not currently have signs installed to alert patrons to the presence of cameras, although a prior version of their video security policy called for such postings. These findings also lend support to the idea of surveillance creep and raise greater questions about the possibilities of social sorting and the impact of video surveillance on the privacy and civil liberties of library employees and patrons. These are questions we hope to answer in our on-going investigation.

10. References

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