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Facial recognition technology, especially the type of surveillance that the government and companies utilize, has both positive and negative implications. As for as the positives go, having facial recognition technology in surveillance has the potential to greatly increase security. Having facial recognition in cameras can increase the likelihood of finding a wanted criminal and decreasing the time before their capture, which could prevent a dangerous situation from occurring. Law enforcement officers could instantly search through a database of millions of photos to identify a criminal somewhere (such as in a crowd). As for companies, facial recognition has the potential to increase the quality of their customer service. Using facial recognition technology, companies could see if their customers are satisfied (or not) and make changes accordingly. This can already be seen in some McDonalds in Japan. Companies are also starting to replace security badges with facial recognition for increased security. Retailers are using facial recognition to monitor their customers and to try to find potential shoplifters. This can reduce thefts and save companies money. Also, as the world becomes digital, advertisements will start to play a bigger and bigger role. With facial recognition, companies can start making advertisements more personalized and thus possibly more interesting for viewers. This can lead to increased advertisement effectiveness and thus increased sales for companies. Companies are already using this strategy on billboards which can change their advertisements based on the reactions of the people watching them. Overall, facial recognition (at least the type of surveillance that it allows governments and companies to do) has the potential to be beneficial for society as it can make communities safer by making it easier to identify criminals and can make companies money by increasing advertisement effectiveness (while potentially making them more interesting for viewers) and decreasing shoplifting rates. Facial recognition can also help consumers by increasing the quality of customer service.

Facial recognition also has numerous drawbacks as well. For example, the government (or the police) using facial recognition may wrongly identify someone as a criminal. This could lead them to using unnecessary excessive force against the person as they might find themselves in danger when they really are not. On the other hand, facial recognition might not recognize a criminal for who they are, making it much harder for the police to find them and increasing the time that the criminal is at large (which increases the risk of a dangerous situation occurring). There is also the issue that facial recognition could include racial/gender biases (certain groups of people may be mis-identified more often than others). This could either be done intentionally or not. On a larger scale, the fact that the government and companies are using facial recognition as a form of surveillance raises many ethical concerns, especially those related to privacy. America has a big emphasis on the rights of the people (which can include privacy) and thus many people may not like the fact that the government and companies are essentially “watching and identifying” them without them knowing it. Lack of consent may also play a role as people may feel that they did not consent to being under surveillance. This is not helped by the fact that there is a lack of transparency between the government/companies and the people and a relative lack of federal regulations on the technology. Beyond these privacy concerns, there also many other potential dangers of facial recognition. For example, the technology has its vulnerabilities, meaning that it is technically possible for someone to pretend to be you (identity fraud). If the data stored gets leaked or stolen (data theft/a data breach), it poses a huge danger for the government as well as the people (dangers of identity theft, harassment, and/or stalking). Thus, facial recognition has many potential drawbacks regarding its use.

Facial recognition is a new, exciting technology that has the potential to revolutionize the world. That being said, there are just as many drawbacks regarding the use of facial recognition as there are benefits. Thus, these issues must be addressed before facial recognition can experience widespread use.

(680 Words)