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Introduction to Cybersecurity

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Someone Is Always Watching

Throughout my exploration for security cameras, I found one hundred and four security cameras, traffic cameras, and parking lot cameras during a single day of my travels. I found all of these cameras while shopping in Panama City Beach during spring break. The camera that I took a picture with (as seen below) was taken at a convenience store we stopped at to get drinks on our first day of travel.



The picture shows a monitor as well as a dome shaped camera. There were three more additional security cameras not pictured. The monitor showed all four cameras’ video feeds on its display. While I watched the screen I noticed a few things; the first thing was that the cameras did not move. The second was that there were a few blind spots that the cameras did not cover in the store. Another thing I noticed was that the monitor was also facing the front door, so as soon as you walked in, you knew you were being watched. The monitor however, could not be seen by the man behind the counter.

These cameras provided some aspects of security but not all of them. These cameras provided two things, deterrence and the ability to capture images of those who committed crimes in the store. The cameras provided deterrence because as soon as you walked into the store, you could see the cameras as well as a picture of yourself on the big monitor. This instantly discourages someone from committing a criminal act because they know they are being watched. It also provides the ability to catch those who commit crimes in the store because they are always recording, which allows the police to go back and identify those who made the criminal offense. There are a few downfalls to theses cameras however. The first being that they do not pan; meaning they do not get the entire view of the store. This means that there are certain spots that someone can do something and get away with it. The next is that the cameras do not offer any real protection. The cameras can deter crime as well as catch those who commit the crimes but they do not offer any type of barrier or defense to stop a crime from happening. Also I believe that no one is actually watching the cameras, partially because the monitor is in the middle of the store and partially because the convenience store would not hire another person just to watch security cameras, since you could see behind the counter and there was not a monitor there. Another down side to having these cameras in place is that it kind of invades a persons’ right to privacy. A person should be allowed to do whatever, legally of course, he or she wants to do without being monitored all the time. These cameras track every person who comes in and that itself is violating their right.

There are a few ways to get around these cameras if it needed to be done and it would not be that hard. The setup of the cameras was pretty basic. The first camera was in middle of the store facing the entrance and the rest were by the counter. One of the cameras was monitoring the man behind the camera, no doubt to make sure he was not pocketing money or selling things to minors. The next camera that was behind the counter was in the corner with a diagonal view across the store. The last camera was in the other corner behind the counter with a diagonal view that crossed the view of the third camera. This made a blind triangle at the back of the store as well as blind spots below both of the diagonal cameras. This setup would be easy to defeat in a few ways. One way someone could easily get past these cameras is the classic ski mask, it hides the identity of the perpetrator, only leaving his relative height and possible his skin color for identification. The other way these cameras could be defeated is through the blind spot, shaped like a triangle, in the back of the store. A person could simply take an item off the shelf, walk to this blind area, wait for the cashier to look away, stash it on their person, and walk out the front door. There would not be any concrete evidence because neither the cameras nor the clerk actually saw the person take something. This means that there would only be circumstantial evidence, which would be thrown out in court.

There are a few actions the owner(s) of this convenience store could take in order to upgrade their security cameras to make them more efficient. First of all, they should add at least two more cameras at the back of the store to eliminate the giant blind spot they have. The next thing they should do is add an addition monitoring station behind the counter so the clerk can more easily and more proficiently monitor the entire store. These few semi-easy upgrades would eliminate almost all of the problems the stores current security cameras have. These upgrades would not protect against the classic ski mask but they would eliminate all the blind spots, making it easier to capture those who steal.

Another thing to think about is who else is watching this video. The internet allows anyone the ability to hack into a surveillance feed. This is also another reason to why managers should make room for extra security cameras in their store or business. If a criminal finds a way to hack into a certain company’s footage then they have an inside advantage to that companies weak spots or blind spots. By making sure that there are little to no weak spots, it ensures the safety of customers and also the employees that are working for that company. That alone is the company’s biggest priority, to ensure the safety of their customers so that they will come back and do business with them in the future.