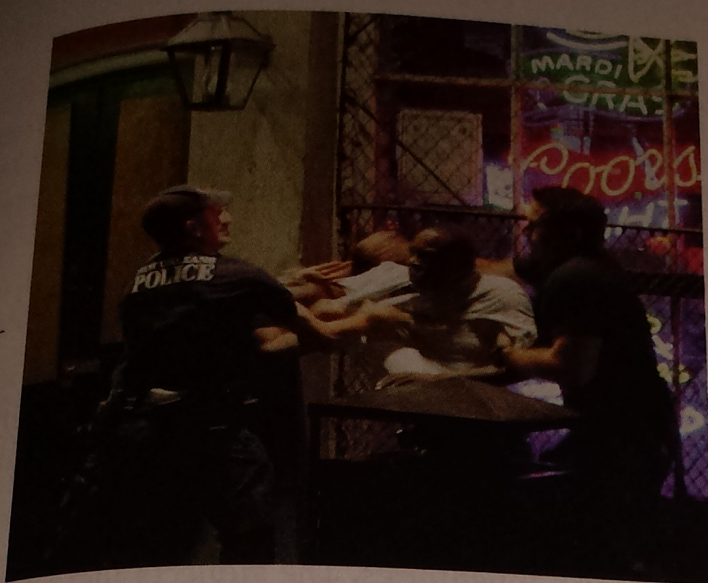


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4. Because digital and electronic technologies have made still and video cameras cheap, small, and durable, they're being increasingly used in many situations to provide factual evidence. Security cameras survey



Police in New Orleans were videotaped arresting and beating a man they accused of being disorderly and drunk, a charge that the former teacher strongly disputed. The police were subsequently charged with battery.

more and more public spaces, from convenience stores to subway stations, to deter assaults or catch criminals in the act. Video recorders on police cars routinely tape encounters between officers and the public, putting both groups under scrutiny. Drivers can now get tickets in some states from cameras that catch them speeding or entering intersections after traffic lights have turned red. And the National Football League and some college leagues rely on instant replay to check calls by the officials that are disputed or questionable.

In all these circumstances, the cameras record what individuals on their own may not see or not remember well, presumably providing a better—though far from perfect—account of an event. (Overturning a call in a Big 10 football game, for example, requires “indisputable video evidence”; otherwise, the call by the referee stands.)

Does all this surveillance enhance our society or undermine it in some ways? Study just one type of surveillance, including any others you think of not mentioned here (baby monitors? cameras on cell phones?). Read up on the subject in the library or on the Web, and then make a factual argument based on what you uncover. For example, you might show whether and how people benefit from the technology, how it's being abused, or both.