

## Electronic Security in Everyday Life

As with all other areas of human innovation, security is constantly changing and evolving. As society and technology advance day by day, the concept of security must also advance and shift both to include new developments within the field and to fit the new needs of society at large. In the current age of technological development, electronic security systems have become increasingly prevalent in almost every area of society. Whether it be in homes, businesses, or schools, alarm systems and video surveillance cameras have become quite commonplace and as we progress as a society, more advanced electronic security systems are becoming more common in our everyday lives as well.

Though technological advancements have been crucial to the continued growth and evolution of our society, these advancements also bring about new issues. In the past, the need for high levels of security in everyday spaces was nowhere near what it is now, homes, schools, and businesses functioned successfully with manual locks on doors and simple alarm systems. Though these are still used today there have also been extensive developments in the field of security that are becoming the new standard systems. Threats of theft and breaking and entering spaces were certainly still present in the past, but as of late these threats have increased and must be combatted in equally advanced ways.

With the rise of the smart phone and social media platforms galore, it has become easier than ever to obtain large amounts of information on just about everything... including people and their whereabouts! The lack of privacy on these new electronic platforms makes it very easy for many people to find themselves in exceedingly vulnerable situations. For example, the social media app Snapchat recently added a feature in which users of the platform can view the exact locations of their contacts at all times. Users do have the option to opt out of this feature, but the default is to track and post the locations of all users. I can only assume that the intention of a feature like this would be far from malicious however, in the wrong hands this sort of personal information can be used for direct and dangerous targeting.

To combat the heightened level of threats to our security, advanced electronic security systems have taken a more prevalent role. I have personally noticed the

electronic security systems throughout my university campus (the University of Manitoba Fort Garry Campus). In addition to traditional, non electronic security measures such as campus security personnel, the university utilizes electronic security systems to ensure that students are safe to live, work, and study on campus at all times of day. I personally study within the faculty of Fine Arts and within the faculty building (the ArtLab), the presence of electronic security can be greatly felt. The ArtLab boasts many spacious studio spaces in which students are encouraged to work on projects and pieces, many areas to store supplies and artworks, a computer lab with advanced hardware and software for design and photography, a dark room, a wood shop, a gallery space, and a print making lab. These areas contain sensitive and expensive materials, and the valued work of students. It is important for the university to protect the space, tools, supplies, artwork, and hardworking students who occupy the space.

To protect this space, the university has a number of electronic security systems installed within the building. One of these security systems is an access control system (locked doors with fob/swipe card access). Each student of the University of Manitoba has a student identification card which also functions as a swipe card to access specific areas of the university campus. Each identification/access card allows its owner to access a different, specific set of buildings and rooms corresponding with the courses and faculties they are involved with. For example, the art building itself is locked after regular business hours, as are the specialty labs inside. With my student ID/swipe access card, I can unlock the doors to the building and to the rooms within (such as the computer lab) that I need to access for the classes that I am taking. Because of this, I can confidently work in the building late into the night feeling secure in knowing that access to the building is limited and not just anyone can enter.

In addition to the areas restricted by access control systems, the university also utilizes a system of doors that can be locked remotely. This system of locks mostly applies to the entrances/exits of buildings on campus and ensures a very fast and efficient response in the event of any threats of danger to staff and students. The university campus is also covered in a system of surveillance cameras, both in and outdoors.

Along with the use of security apps and other digital security tools, all of these electronic security systems have become a necessary element of everyday life especially on university campuses across the country and worldwide. In 2005, the U.S. Department of Education's Campus Safety and Security trends showed 66221 criminal offenses on college campuses, in 2010 there were 44176, and in 2016 there were only 37389.<sup>1</sup> The decline in these offenses is likely due, at least in part, to our increased ability to prevent and combat security threats using advanced electronic security systems.<sup>2</sup>

Though threats of danger often seem to be increasing, especially in areas of high population concentration such as university campuses, our level of technological advancement in the area of security is increasing too. The prominence of electronic security systems in everyday life has provided us as a society with a sense of safety and continues to keep us safe each and every day. As technology continues to evolve and create more opportunities for vulnerability, security will evolve not only to meet our ever changing needs but also to stay a few vital steps ahead of future threats.

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1. Figures obtained from <https://ope.ed.gov/campussafety/Trend/public/#/answer/1/101/trend/-1/-1/-1/-1>
  2. <https://edtechmagazine.com/higher/article/2016/09/5-ways-technology-can-boost-campus-security>

## Sources

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