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Companies Try To Cover-Up Move To Watch Consumers Via TV's

Vice President Kunkel forgets he told journalist of move to "know who was in the living room," Microsoft and TiVo have already filed similar patents to create Minority Report style invasive hell

Paul Joseph Watson
Prison Planet
Tuesday, March 25, 2008



Comcast has denied that it is developing camera devices built in to cable boxes that monitor consumers as they enter the room, despite the fact that Vice-President Gerard Kunkel admitted to a journalist that such a move would represent a "holy grail," and rival companies like TiVo and Microsoft have already filed patents for similar technology.

A firestorm of controversy erupted last week after industry website newteevee.com carried an article by Chris Albrecht which revealed that Comcast was, "experimenting with different camera technologies built into devices so it can know who's in your living room".

How did Albrecht know? Because Comcast's senior VP of user experience Gerard Kunkel told him during the Digital Living Room conference held in San Francisco.

"Perhaps I've seen Enemy of the State too many times, or perhaps I'm just naive about the depths to which Comcast currently tracks my every move," wrote Albrecht.

(Article continues below)

"The idea being that if you turn on your cable box, it recognizes you and pulls up shows already in your profile or makes recommendations. If parents are watching TV with their children, for example, parental controls could appear to block certain content from appearing on the screen. Kunkel also said this type of monitoring is the "holy grail" because it could help serve up specifically tailored ads. Yikes."

Readers responded to the article in droves and most were shocked by the proposals.

"Orwell thought that cameras in the living room would imposed on us by a fascist government. Fascism these days is dominated by corporate power guised under a mantle of legitimacy. These systems of control have been primarily put in place by willful consumption of consumer goods," wrote one.

"This is not cool, this is not fun, this is not exciting. This is invasive. They've been talking about this technology since the inception of cable modems, and there's a certain amount of tracking in place already. Cameras? Too much," stated another.

Comcast responded to the article by claiming the device was, "in no way designed to – or capable of – monitoring your living room. These technologies are designed to allow simple navigation on a television set just as the Wii remote uses a camera to manage its much heralded



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gesture-based interactivity."

However, Albrecht shot back by pointing out that Kunkel told him the device was explicitly being designed so as to monitor who was entering the living room.

"After you granted me our initial video interview, you brought up the topic of *Comcast knowing who was in the living room* in a conversation between you, myself and another conference attendee," writes Albrecht.

"I actually left and came back to follow up on this point while you were talking with that same attendee. At this point, you were aware that I was a reporter and I took handwritten notes in front of you as we talked to make sure I had an accurate accounting of what you were saying," he added.

Minority Report will meet Orwell's telescreens if telecommunications giants like Comcast and Microsoft have their way.

Tracking and databasing of consumer's TV viewing habits is nothing new - for years cable box companies like TiVo have monitored behavior down to the level of what parts of shows viewers rewind or fast forward - [an example](#) being Janet Jackson's wardrobe malfunction during the 2003 Super Bowl half-time show.

Indeed, the monitoring of viewers for the purposes of Minority Report style commercial assaults and viewer customization has been in the works since at least early 2005.

[In November 2005, TiVo applied for a patent](#) allowing customization of TV remotes and viewing preferences via an RFID chip the consumer would attach to his or her body - which is just one step away from an embedded microchip in the body.

Microsoft has also applied for a patent that would utilize, "a camera sitting on top of a television set to detect the presence of viewers and identifying them using facial-recognition software -- or perhaps a fingerprint scanner in a remote control," according to a report from [Multichannel News](#).

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Similarly, corporations and eventually the government is planning to [use microphones in the computers of an estimated 150 million-plus Internet active Americans](#) to spy on their lifestyle choices and build psychological profiles which will be used for surveillance, invasive advertising and data mining.

In 2006, Google announced that they were developing a plan to use in-built microphones to listen in on user's background noise, be it television, music or radio - and then direct advertising at them based on their preferences.

"The idea is to use the existing PC microphone to listen to whatever is heard in the background, be it music, your finger going off or the TV turned down. The PC then identifies it, using fingerprinting, and then shows you relevant content, whether that's adverts or search results, or a chat room on the subject," reported the [Register](#).

Last year the [New York Times](#) reported on a venture by [Pudding Media](#), a new company founded by two former Israeli intelligence officers, to

offer its customers free Internet phone service in return for their consent to have their conversations monitored for keywords upon which targeted advertising is directed.

"A conversation about movies, for example, will elicit movie reviews and ads for new films that the caller will see during the conversation. Pudding Media is working on a way to e-mail the ads and other content to the person on the other end of the call, or to show it on that person's cellphone screen," according to the report.

If you think telesales calls and pop-ups ads are annoying, the new wave of invasive advertising will not only saturate the senses with 24/7 vapid consumerism, but it will signal the death knell for the assumption that privacy is a human right not to be infringed upon by corporations or the state.

Orwell's telescreens and Minority Report style assaults on our senses may not be born out of government coercion, but as a result of consumers willfully enslaving themselves into this matrix - all for the convenience of enhancing their consumption of *programming* via the one-eyed brainwashing monster in the corner of the room.

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