

[Smile, you're on state-run candid camera](#) [1]

Written by [Tom Bowman](#) [2] | Tuesday 19 February 2008



Eamonn Butler, the ASI's director, has an [article](#) [3] on The Free Society's excellent new [website](#) [4], in which he looks at the worrying amount of surveillance we are all subject to these days:

From time to time there are small victories ? a judge recently grumbled about street cameras with microphones that enable police and local authority staff to eavesdrop on what it being said on the pavement underneath. But the trend is all to more and more surveillance. Yes, CCTV cameras have no doubt deterred crime in some places and they have certainly solved crime in others. But do they make me feel safe? Not on your nellie.

Well, quite. As Eamonn continues:

[I]t?s not as if all this surveillance is being used to protect us against hardened terrorists anyway.

No, it's fly-tippers and speeding motorists that Big Brother is really on the lookout for.

Throw in all our personal, medical, financial, and (soon) biometric details that the state has access to, add in the fact that the police has the DNA and fingerprints of hundreds of thousands of people who have never even been charged with a criminal offence, and then consider that the movements of our mobile phones are tracked and stored in case the police subsequently want to check our movements. It's clearly a scary future we are heading towards. Needless to say:

[W]e will probably find the state authorities sharing this information with lots of other people. Not deliberately, of course. I?m thinking of the hackers and mafia bosses who will find them to be a very convenient way of cloning someone?s identity. Why should the state have a monopoly on the abuse of personal information?

The whole article is well worth a read. While you're there, have a look around The Free Society's [website](#) [4]. They're adding more interesting stuff every day.

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- [1] <http://www.adamsmith.org/blog/justice-and-civil-liberties/smile-youre-on-state-run-candid-camera>
- [2] <http://www.adamsmith.org/taxonomy/term/5775>
- [3] <http://www.thefreesociety.org/Issues/Surveillance/smile-youre-on-state-run-candid-camera>
- [4] <http://www.thefreesociety.org/>
- [5] http://disqus.com/?ref_noscript
- [6] <http://disqus.com>