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CCTV stands for closed circuit television system. CCTV cameras are used to direct the signals from several different cameras to on-location televisions. These systems are commonly used for security systems for personal use, department stores and other organizations. Other types of television such as broadcast television are different in that its signal is transmitted and is able to be played and viewed from a much larger range and for many more televisions. CCTV is sometimes confused with video-telephony communication, but video-telephony communication differs from CCTV in that it can also be transmitted on a much larger connection and to many more televisions. A great example for explaining what video-telephony is would be the rising technology, which allows mobile phone users talk to each other via video chat.

A CCTV camera and sets of these cameras are commonly used as security cameras and they are available to everyone. A broad variety of CCTV cameras are available online starting from as low as Â£36 with a resolution of 510 x 492. Some high quality CCTV cameras in the Â£200 and up range even offer wireless transmitting that can be viewed on an iPod or iPad. As one would also expect there are packages available that offer discounts when purchasing more than one CCTV camera, as well as sets that can be purchased which includes several of these cameras all sending video to a central receiver unit. The central receiving unit, available with lower quality cameras, can then be plugged up to a computer or a television and viewed on a specific channel. Most of the cameras that offer remote viewing on iPods and iPads also offer remote viewing to a Windows or Mac computers.

CCTV cameras are not all used for security purposes however, industrial plants are known to commonly use CCTV cameras and equipment for the monitoring of areas and parts of the plant where the environment is not safe for personnel. CCTV cameras have gone from using a digital video recording device to the now used IP-based CCTV system. The IP-based CCTV cameras feature the ability to connect to a network and send information to devices and wirelessly transmit data, CCTV also no longer uses taping material such as DVRs and VCRs for recording media, because flash memory is much more practical for this purpose and easier to conceal. It is precisely these types of video monitoring systems that are used on the launch setting for the NASA rockets, the wireless transmission abilities allow the engineers and scientists to monitor all of the rocket's many parts at all times. Higher quality versions of this technology are also used on the NASA space station to monitor the astronauts and their procedures, and the outside of the station.

CCTV cameras that are in the $1,000 range that are available to the public offer night vision settings as well as thermal vision for just a little more. Nicer cameras aren't always going to be that expensive, however, as hidden and sleeker versions for the same camera can be found online taking the appearance of fire alarms, motion detectors, exit signs, clocks, lamps, pens and just about anything and everything imaginable. Surprisingly these models can get as inexpensive as around Â£100, complete with wireless transmitter. The UK is known for having the most CCTV cameras that monitor the public, with a figure estimated at 1.85 million cameras. This means that there are fourteen cameras for every person living in the UK and it is estimated that a single person during their day-to-day routine would be recorded at least 70 times by CCTV cameras.

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