



# The Eye Of Sauron And The Pandemic Of Surveillance

Technocrats running the Great Panic of 2020 are taking every advantage to drive toward Technocracy and scientific dictatorship. Surveillance is a key component because monitoring provides the input for social engineering programs. □ TN Editor

Pandemic maps are all the rage, these days, but the latest one from the Electronic Frontier Foundation (EFF) is a little different; instead of viral hotspots, it displays a plague of official snoopiness, arranged by location and sortable by technology. While it documents intrusions that predate the current crisis, the [Atlas of Surveillance](#) is all too relevant to the age of coronavirus. Concerns about curtailing contagion help to normalize detailed scrutiny of people's lives and drive us toward a pervasive surveillance state.

"The Atlas of Surveillance database, containing several thousand data points on over 3,000 city and local police departments and sheriffs' offices nationwide, allows citizens, journalists, and academics to review details about the technologies police are deploying, and provides a

resource to check what devices and systems have been purchased locally," EFF [announced](#) on July 13.

Users can click on the map to see what surveillance technologies are used in specified localities. If you want to see what's going on in your area, the map is searchable by the name of a city, county, or state. The map can also be filtered according to technologies such as body-worn cameras, drones, and automated license plate readers.

The nearest entry to me is in Prescott Valley, Arizona, where the police department is [among the hundreds](#) that have partnered with Ring, the Amazon-owned doorbell-camera company.

The Ring [partnerships](#) don't give police live feeds, but they can request video recordings regarding a specific time and area. While participation by Ring customers is voluntary, the partnerships are "a clever workaround for the development of a wholly new surveillance network, without the kind of scrutiny that would happen if it was coming from the police or government," warns Andrew Guthrie Ferguson, a professor at the University of the District of Columbia's David A. Clarke School of Law and author of [\*The Rise of Big Data Policing\*](#).

Researchers [find few crimes solved](#) by the voluntary surveillance partnerships, but the home-security marketing of the Ring arrangement nudges the culture toward an easier acceptance of a panopticon that operates outside of the full range of civil liberties protections.

Also easing America's slide toward a full surveillance state is fear of the COVID-19 pandemic. Public health officials who, just months ago, fretted about [overcoming privacy concerns](#) with regard to contact-tracing schemes have turned to governments' usual solution: threatening harsh penalties for noncompliance.

"Travelers from certain states landing at New York airports starting Tuesday could face a \$2,000 fine for failing to fill out a form that state officials will use to track travelers and ensure they're following quarantine restrictions," AP [reported](#) this week.

Mandatory tracking forms for travelers to New York follow on [Rockland](#)

[County's earlier efforts](#) to compel cooperation with contact tracers.

“Commissioner of Health Dr. Patricia Schnabel Ruppert urged residents to comply with the Department of Health’s contact tracing efforts and threatened those who do not comply with subpoenas and \$2,000 per day fines,” the county [announced](#) on July 1.

We can hope that health-related snooping into people’s movements and activities will come to an end when the pandemic passes, but these things have a way of getting embedded in the culture as people become accustomed to them. In the name of controlling infection, many private companies are now [closely monitoring employees](#), including their proximity to one another in the workplace.

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