

# Setting Up Home Security

**S**etting up remote video surveillance of your house—once a balky chore for rocket scientists and other Ph.D.s—is now a snap. You place video cameras—\$50 to \$500 from D-Link ([dlink.com](http://dlink.com)), Logitech ([logitech.com](http://logitech.com)), Panasonic ([panasonic.com](http://panasonic.com)), Probotics ([probotics.com](http://probotics.com)), Xanboo ([xanboo.com](http://xanboo.com)), or X10 ([www.x10.com](http://www.x10.com))—anywhere you want. They link back to your PC, wired or wirelessly.

From the PC, you can click to activate any camera or jump between them. Motion or heat sensors can trigger the camera and pop up the picture (and record it) if something comes into view. If you're working from an upstairs home office, you immediately know if it's the FedEx guy or a Jehovah's Witness arriving on your front doorstep.

When you're out of the house, the images can follow you anywhere you have Internet access. Some cameras can broadcast continuously; for that you obviously need an always-on broadband Internet connection. Others broadcast only when a sensor—motion, heat, water, doorbell, pressure mat—sets them off and activates the system.

Most common is for the video to be sent to your surveillance provider's Web site—a minute or two of video or a series of stills beginning when the sensor was triggered—while you're paged with a message to check

out your private part of the site. Xanboo, which offers an array of inexpensive wireless sensors and cameras, does this especially well for \$9.95 per month.

## [TIPS]

**TELL YOUR CELL** Shades of James Bond: When 3G cellular phone service arrives later this year, you should be able to get somewhat grainy surveillance video sent to your cell phone, too. It's possible now in Japan.

**ENCRYPT YOUR VIDEO** Be careful with wireless cameras. The same signal they can send to you may be available to anyone else in range (100 feet or so). Make sure you go with a manufacturer that offers encryption for the video signal, and learn how to set it up.

**STAY INSIDE** Most surveillance cameras won't survive being outdoors, though they should be okay under a covered porch.

**CHOOSE THE RIGHT CAMERA** As a rule, the pricier the camera, the better the quality and the more extensive the features, including tilt, pan, and zoom. The best cameras deliver TV-quality images to your computer screen.

**GET HELP FROM ROBOCOP** One camera, Spy-Cye from Probotics, prowls your house on wheels, but it's a bear to set up, and it doesn't like rug-to-wood-floor transitions. Warning: It might also freak out your dog.

## [GEAR]



### KEEP AN EYE ON IT

Popular pan-and-tilt home security cameras from X10 come with software interfaces that let you control the movement of the camera from any computer in the house. When the doorbell rings, you'll know who's there.



### SHINE A LIGHT ON IT

Did you just hear some mysterious rustling in the backyard? Make your own surveillance video. X10's wireless motion-detecting FloodCam (\$130) will activate and begin sending images to your PC or VCR.

## [SCENES] With always-on broadband Net access, your network can become your virtual eyes and ears, alerting you to all kinds of trouble and helping you take action before it gets worse.



### THE LEAK

Uh-oh. You've sprung a leak at your country home. A wireless water sensor sends a message to an always-on Net-connected computer in the house.



### THE ALERT

You're alerted via e-mail, instant message, or cell phone. Do you have cameras installed? Take a look before you decide what action to take.



### THE FIX

Call the plumber as fast as you can and watch as he arrives at the house. Unlock the door from where you sit to let him in to begin the repair work.