



The Church of Scotland

Church and Society Council

Surveillance and Social Justice – May 2017

'Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground unperceived by your Father' (Matt 10:29 NRSV)

'O Lord, you have searched me and known me...Such knowledge is too wonderful for me' (Ps 139: 1, 6 NRSV)

Section 1. Introduction

1.1 David, who suffers from chronic anxiety, had his welfare benefits cut for three weeks because he was late for an appointment at the Job Centre. David is subject to surveillance. Sarah tests the hardware that collects communications data from every mobile phone and internet browsing data from every user in the UK. Sarah is a surveillance agent. Tom develops computer code that enables commercial companies to categorise and filter-out less profitable customers. Tom is a surveillance analyst.

1.2 Jack suffers from dementia. His daughter carries a pager that alerts her when he steps on the mat inside his front door during the night. Jack is subject to surveillance. Anne manages a team at the security checks at Glasgow airport. Anne is a surveillance agent. Charles designs algorithms that cross-reference NHS and international databases to identify trends in disease risk. Charles is a surveillance analyst.¹

[See the full report](#)

¹ These vignettes capture the reality of contemporary surveillance.