

# 20 MASS High Tech

YEAR ANNIVERSARY

THE JOURNAL OF NEW ENGLAND TECHNOLOGY

## Webcam-wired campus

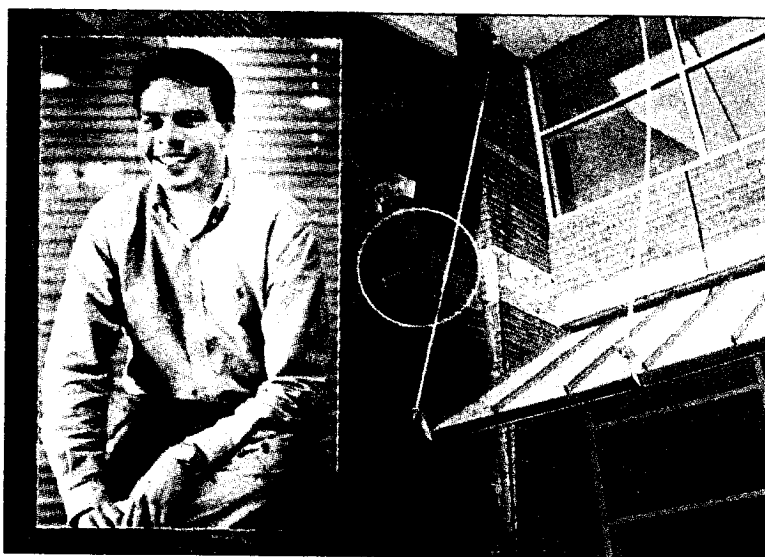
Axis Communications' cameras to be used in some high schools

BY PATRICIA RESENDE  
STAFF WRITER

Stuffing someone in a locker may be the last thing on a student's mind this fall now that some schools are installing Web cameras that are monitored by law enforcement organizations.

Several companies including Chelmsford-based Axis Communications are installing Web cameras in hallways, schoolyards and cafeterias at middle and high schools throughout the country.

Axis' Web cameras give police and fire officials the ability to log in, watch and record students' every move while in the camera's view.



Fredrik Nilsson (inset photo), Axis' director of business development, says he has seen an increase in the use of Web cameras at schools, such as the one highlighted in yellow in the photo above.

They are being installed in several schools, including Canton High School in Canton, Miss.

Fredrik Nilsson, director of busi-

ness development for Axis, said placing the cameras in schools, day care and elder care facilities

See View on PAGE 12

FROM PAGE 1

## View: Schools purchase Web camera systems that transmit images to emergency personnel

has increased in the last few years.

"We are definitely seeing a trend," Nilsson said. "Some are using surveillance for the first time and some are replacing surveillance with remote technologies."

"Schools have always been looking for ways to provide better security," he said.

But with shooting incidents such as the one at Columbine High School and teachers feeling insecure about safety at their jobs, the need has increased, he added.

Various system integrators install Axis cameras, so Nilsson could not say whether any schools in New England are using the technology.

Pelmac Industries Inc. of Auburn, N.H., however, has installed cameras made by Pelco, a camera company in Clovis, Calif., in three New Hampshire schools.

Manchester Central High School students will be greeted by the cameras when they go back to school this fall, and Pelmac also installed cameras in schools in Londonderry and Nashua.

Camera systems such as those made by Pelco send live feeds via a fiber-optic cable to local police and fire departments.

Axis' cameras have a built-in Web server, and a PC is not required to transmit images over the wide area network, local area network or Internet.

"We have network cameras that interface to the Ethernet," Nilsson said. "Then in the back end you

have a PC server with software to store the images."

School officials say the cameras will help police and fire personnel to record negative behavior at schools and will give them access to view the school in case of an emergency. But privacy advocates say it sends the wrong message.

"I think it's problematic to begin with," said John Roberts, executive director of the American Civil Liberties Union of Massachusetts. "When people are constantly watched, morale suffers and it's not the kind of environment you want at the work place or at schools."

Executives at Axis said there hasn't been much controversy about the cameras among students, parents and schools.

The only complaint, he says, is from teachers who do not want the cameras installed in the classroom.

"Both parents and children want to make sure the (administration) provides the best environment for schools," he said.

Roberts said violence in high schools is down and that there isn't a need for the cameras.

"People respond to worst-case scenarios," he said. "What's happening is you have a bunch of high technology companies selling their technology and play-

ing off post-9-11 and post-Columbine."

But Mike Pellerin, president of Pelmac Industries, said school officials say they want them for student safety.

"Some schools in lesser grades are doing it because of the abductions," Pellerin said. "High schools do it if a) there are any drug transactions; b) fights break out, and c) students get out of control."

Besides the privacy issues, Roberts said the use of such cameras would have a negative effect on the student/teacher relationship.

"This does not create a climate of trust between teacher and student. It creates a problem of distrust." And what about access?

Axis' Nilsson said his company allows login access to authorized personnel only. And most of the time that access is given only to law enforcement officials and school officials.

"We have the same security as the banks do and (that they) are using for your accounts."

Web-based cameras have also sprung up in day care and elder care facilities.

Executives at Axis say there is much more of a debate between nurses and the children of elderly over these cameras than there are with the use of the cameras in schools.

"Kids have the opportunity to watch to see if everything is going well (at a nursing home), and nurses were complaining," Nilsson said.