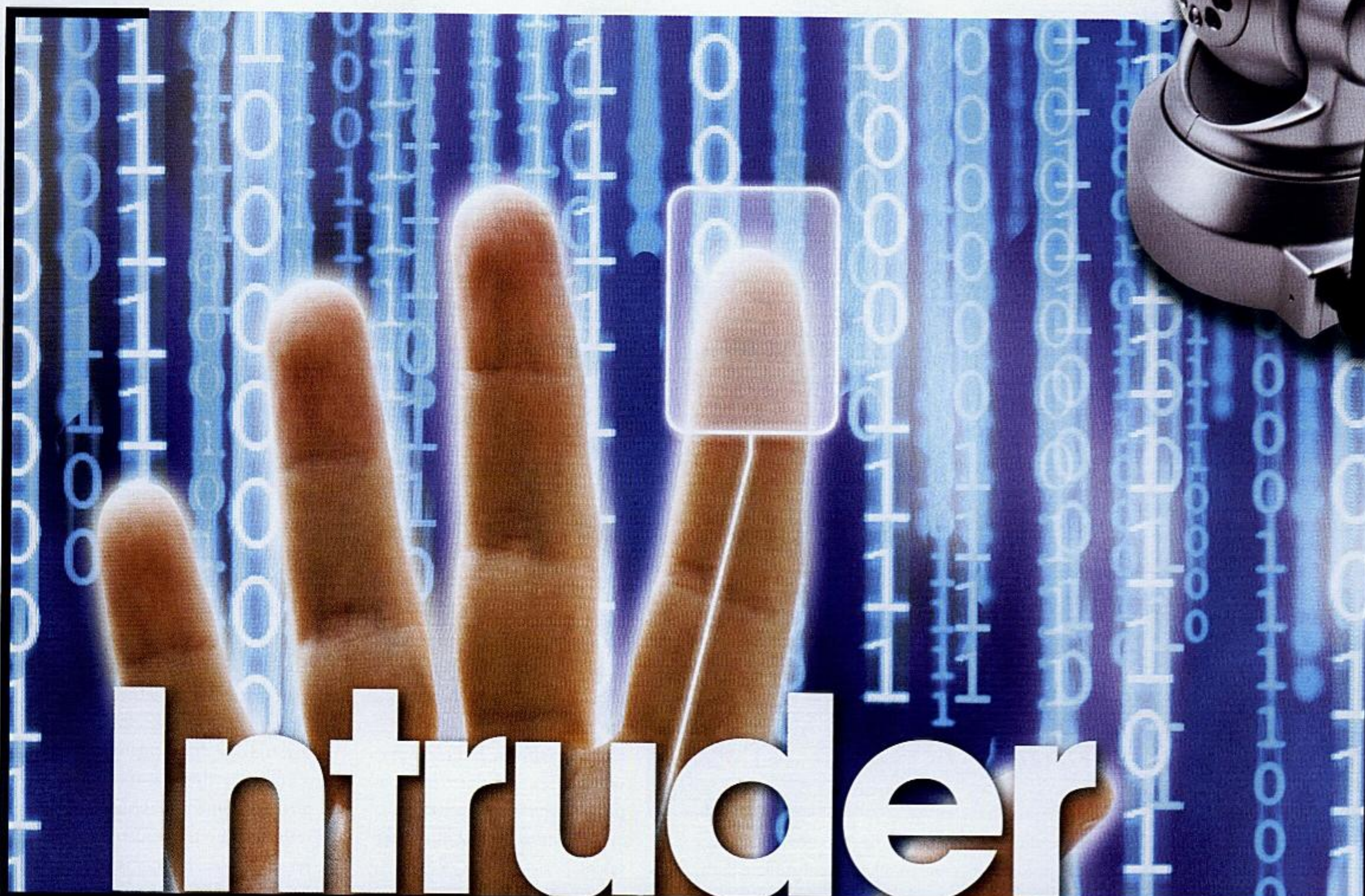


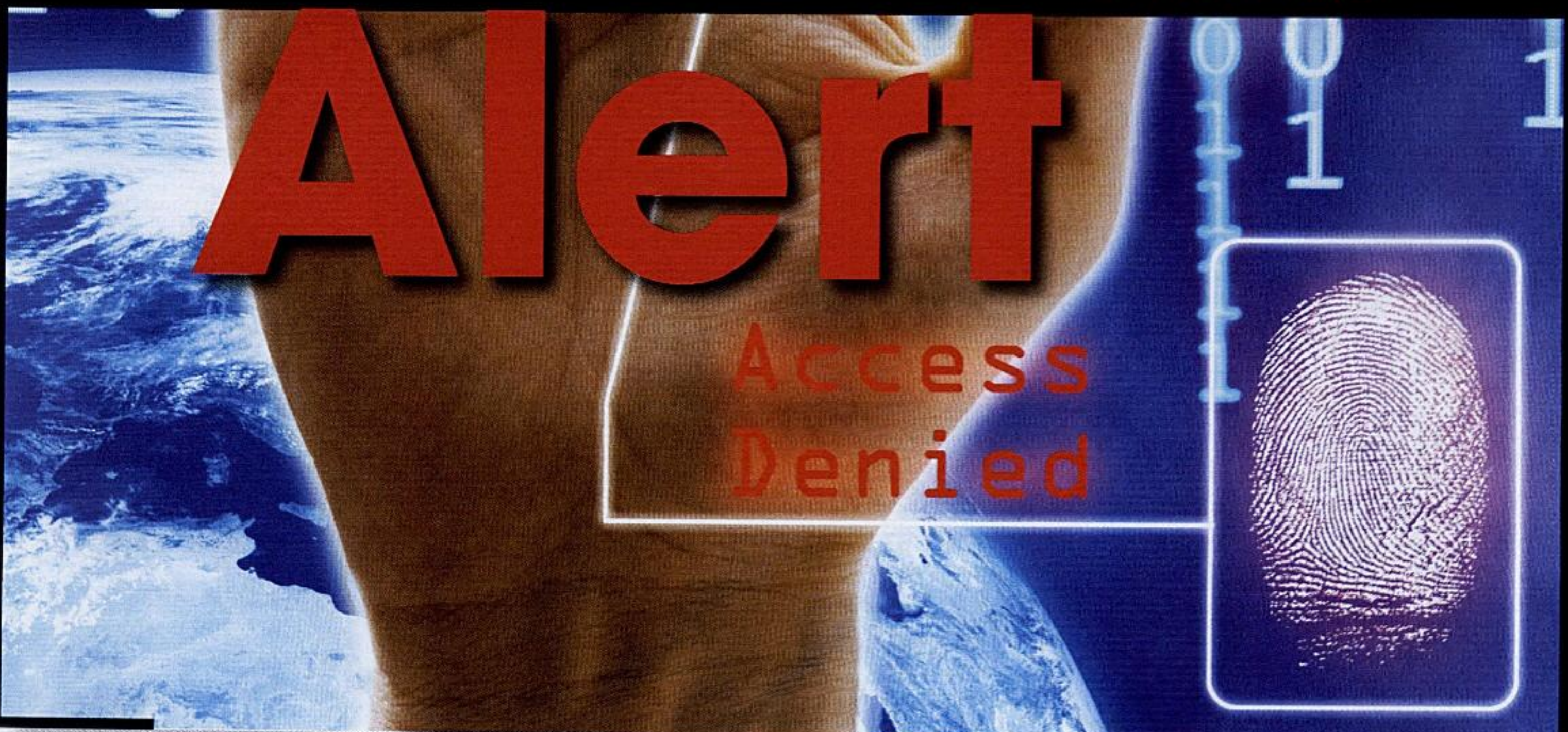


» ZONE IN
HOME NETWORKING PART 3



Intruder


HOME NETWORKS AREN'T JUST FOR SHARING MUSIC AND FILES: THEY CAN BE THE CORE OF HIGHLY EFFECTIVE SECURITY SYSTEMS. BY PAUL FURBER



Alert

Access
Denied





wireless digital security camera used for surveillance

Home networks are not limited to entertainment and convenience. They can also help protect you and your property. We are surrounded by plenty of networks every day - such as the telephone network, the PA system at the office and the power grid - without thinking much about them.

But your home network, now that it's up and running, is worth thinking about: it can be a crucial piece of security infrastructure. It can help authenticate entry, letting you in and keeping the bad guys out; it can serve as a transport for surveillance videos; and it can be part of an advanced alarm system. Home security is changing rapidly as home networks become popular and there are quite a few gadgets to choose from.

WIRELESS SURVEILLANCE

One of the most useful is the video camera. Computers really are much smaller and more powerful than they used to be. One market where this is quite obvious is network-enabled cameras. Security cameras used to be analogue only, with all of the cables, quality and monitoring issues that came with them. Today's security cameras have built-in PCs, Web servers, wireless Internet connections and the kitchen

sink included.

A good example of such a model is the Axis 207, which we got to play with here at the office. It's a tiny little unit, but with high quality video and still output, a wireless network option and the ability to control it from your browser.

As a home security option, it couldn't be easier: mount it somewhere, make sure it detects

“The best wireless security solutions have three things in common: they're standards-based, they work with your existing equipment and they're secure.”

your wireless network and set the motion capture to “on” from your PC. If your bent runs to software development, you can even write your own applications to work with the 207 and it's ideally suited to being mounted just about anywhere to which you can get a power cable. Best of all, you can configure it to upload videos via e-mail, the Web or FTP if something is detected. Want to know what's going on in your driveway? The 207 will get in touch if it detects some movement that shouldn't be there.

I installed its bigger brother - the 214 - for a commercial client at a remote location a couple of years ago and the video quality was superb. There's nothing wrong with this one's output either. Axis also makes a camera controller

that can manage up to 24 cameras at once, archiving the video if necessary. But that's for the higher end-user. For the home or SME user, one or more 207 units (or similar) could go a long way towards securing your home.

ACCESS GRANTED

Access control is another area where having a wireless network is extremely useful. Kevin Breckle of Control Logics distributes the Microlatch set of products in South Africa and says wireless networks are more and more common at home.

“I've seen a big pick-up in the number of wireless solutions I install for clients in this country,” he says. Microlatch has, among its product range, a biometric security system, which uses fingerprints and a wireless connection to provide remote authentication. This overcomes the age-old problem of losing your wireless remote: someone else can press the button and get access. But with Microlatch's BIOFOB range, a fingerprint reader is built in to the system so unauthorised people can't use it, even if they do manage to get their hands on a unit.

Breckle also distributes Wi-Lite products, a wireless-based environmental control system.

“The Wi-Lite range encompasses wireless control products designed to automate both home and business environments,” he says. “And because they're designed and manufactured in South Africa, the product range is affordable.”

Wireless control of your house is extremely flexible. You can control your lighting from any point in the home by connecting a receiver. And once a lighting circuit is connected



to a Wi-lite receiver it may be controlled by multiple means: remote keypads, touch screens, motion sensors, day-night sensor - or even your voice.

NO LOCK-IN

The best wireless security solutions have three things in common: they're standards-based, they work with your existing equipment and they're secure. Standards-based kit goes without saying - don't get locked into something proprietary, especially if it's featureful. Similarly, prefer solutions that can be added to your lights and circuits rather than requiring them to be ripped out. And if you're using standard Wifi to connect a device such as a camera, make sure anything you buy supports the WPA2 security standard.

Wireless technology is fun - and it can also make you more secure. If you're looking to put in a new security system for your house or business, you could do a lot worse. 