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Security cameras are arguably the most important part of your CCTV systems and are highly effective in helping you to deter people from breaking into your properties, as well as for allowing you to track those who do if it still happens. However in order to take advantage of CCTV cameras you first need to set them up, and in order to do this you need to navigate the various terms associated with CCTV cameras and their myriad types and features. There are many different types of security cameras, and there are many different features and specs associated with them. In order to choose the best CCTV systems for your home or business you need to understand what these mean. Here then are some terms with a little explanation.

Analogue/Digital: Security cameras are either analogue or digital and this has a large bearing on what they can do and how they will work. Analogue security cameras have been around for a long time while digital cameras are relatively new. Thus the latter are slightly more expensive, but are also more modern and have several advantages.

Analogue basically means 'using a video tape' which means the footage is shown on a television and recorded on an old fashioned VCR. Conversely digital means that the footage is stored as data on a card, harddrive or disk, or streamed wirelessly. This means that with digital you can record more footage, it means you can record from multiple sources at once (which you can't with the one-channel only analogue machines) and it means that you can manipulate and assess the footage in various ways – using video analysis and motion detection etc.

IP Cameras: IP security cameras are ones that rely on wireless transmission of data rather than wires. This means right away that you can move them around the room without needing to dig into your insulation each time, and it means you can put them in a greater variety of positions. Finally it means that the data can be streamed wirelessly so you can watch it remotely when you are away from home/the office.

VoIP: IP stands for 'internet protocol', while 'VoIP' stands for 'voice internet protocol'. Thus you can use VoIP in order to transmit speech so that you can ask how things are through your cameras for instance, or so that you can listen to your security cameras as well as watch them.

MPG4: MPG4 refers to the type of video file that your CCTV systems deal in. Others might be WMV or MPG3, and this tells you how large the files will be as well as how good the resolution will be.

Resolution: The resolution refers to the quality of the footage. Basically higher resolution means more pixels on the screen which means a more defined image and generally resolution translates as 'spatial' resolution. However you might also hear the term 'temporal resolution' which refers to the frame rate – i.e. how many images you see in the space of a second. More resolution in both respects means you are more likely to track down a perpetrator.

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