

# **Cameras scanned fans for criminals**

**Super Bowl fans had their privacy invaded by the technology, critics say. Law officials cite security.**

**By ROBERT TRIGAUX**

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TAMPA -- Were you one of the 100,000 fans and workers to pass through the stadium turnstiles at Sunday's Super Bowl? Did you smile for the camera? Each and every face that entered Raymond James Stadium for the big game was captured by a video camera connected to a law enforcement control room inside the stadium. In milliseconds, each facial image was digitized and checked electronically against the computer files of known criminals, terrorists and con artists of the Tampa Police Department, the FBI and other state and local law enforcement agencies.

Sunday's Super Bowl was the first major sporting event to adopt the face-matching surveillance system. But the designers of the system expect other security-sensitive sporting events, ranging from the upcoming 2002 Winter Olympics in Salt Lake City to the hooligan-plagued soccer leagues in parts of Europe, to express great interest. The point? To gain immediate identification of people who have past ties to illegal activities. Images of individuals captured by the database system are not stored permanently, but could be used on game day if there is criminal activity at the stadium or law enforcement officials see someone wanted for a serious crime. The problem? Most Super Bowl fans had no clue their faces were being checked for matches with criminals. "I find it disturbing," said privacy expert Christine L. Borgman, professor and presidential chair in information studies at the University of California in Los Angeles. "It smacks of Big Brother societies that keep watch over people."

Security officials counter that the database system is no more and possibly less intrusive than videotape cameras already in use at convenience stores, shopping malls or schools. In cooperation with the Tampa Sports Authority, the Super Bowl surveillance system was also used this past week at the NFL Experience adjacent to the stadium. The system, which relies on "biometric" technology to recognize faces, continues to be used by the Tampa Police Department in Ybor City, where 22 cameras monitor the entertainment district. Police have used cameras to watch for fights and crime in Ybor for several years, but recently those cameras were linked directly to the police department's own database of mug shots.

"Places where large crowds are present, such as sporting events, are tempting targets for all types mischief, criminal behavior and larger threats," said Tom Colatosti, president of Viisage Technology in Littleton, Mass., whose software runs the face-identification system known as "FaceTrac." "The security undertaking for a game like the Super Bowl is extraordinary," he said. "Law enforcement is concerned about potential problems ranging from scalping tickets and pickpockets to aerial anthrax attacks." At Sunday's Super Bowl, any individuals matched with photo files in the database could be questioned or detained by officers of the joint task force who were circulating throughout the stadium complex. Several technology executives said Tuesday that their surveillance system did match a few fan faces with database mugs during the Super Bowl event.

However, Tampa Police Department spokesman Joe Durkin said the system did not match any known con artist or terrorist, and there were no resulting arrests. The Police Department's network of cameras operating in Ybor's entertainment district was upgraded and tied to the new face-recognition system "within the last couple of weeks," Durkin said. Is the new surveillance system the latest twist on Big Brother? Face-matching surveillance already is well established at more than 70 casinos. But the system's biggest opportunities lie in more benign functions: Identifying customers at ATMs or participants in welfare programs, and screening people who want to enter secure workplace areas. At Raymond James Stadium, surveillance system cameras were focused only on people entering at turnstiles. No cameras were used inside to pan the fans inside. But cameras did sweep the crowds at the NFL Experience, indicating the growing reach of database systems to try and match faces even in large groups.

At UCLA, professor Borgman questioned the technical ability of a system to identify individual faces so quickly. "If these surveillance systems spread, there may be a considerable margin of error in determining the identity of people who get snagged," she said. "And that is a big price to pay for your civil rights."

- Contact Robert Trigaux at [trigaux@sptimes.com](mailto:trigaux@sptimes.com) or (727) 893-8405.