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Camera that sees right through your clothes

Strip search!

by Katie Scott published on 10 March 2008

A British company has designed a camera that can see through clothes from 80ft away.

The device is designed to help detect weapons, drugs and explosives, and so could soon be used at railway stations, shopping centres and airports around the UK.

The T5000 system has been developed by ThruVision, an Oxfordshire-based company.

It was originally designed for use in spacecraft and astronomy but researchers soon realised that cameras capable of seeing through clouds of cosmic dust could also see through clothing.

According to The Times, ThruVision already offers a smaller system designed for office foyers that can scan through clothing at a range of 30-40ft, and it's already in operation at London's Canary Wharf complex.

The system uses "passive imaging technology", which, for all us normal people, means that it identifies substances using the natural electromagnetic rays, also known as Terahertz or T-rays, which they emit.

Each material has a distinctive signature, so the system can distinguish between, for example, cocaine and sugar - which means you're not going to get stopped on your way back from Starbucks.

But, although it can see through your clothes, the camera does not show "anatomical details" - so security guards aren't going to be snickering at shoppers in their birthday suits.

