University of Essex

Drones and unmanned aircraft - privacy requirements

If you are using a drone or unmanned aircraft for filming on campus you must make sure that:

- people are aware of what you are doing,
- you protect people's privacy,
- if people are likely to be recognisable in your footage then you give them the opportunity to have their image removed.

Making people aware

- Put out a communication to let everyone know what the drone is doing, when it will be doing it, and reassuring people that there will not be any recognisable footage/images being taken
- The drone operator should be clearly identifiable to people (through a clothing, and ID badge, or a notice they can stand near)
- The drone operator should be able to tell people how to find out if their image has been captured and to stop their image being used

Protect privacy

- Where possible, film at weekends and times when not many people are likely to be on campus
- Filming should be done from a height that will mean that any people captured on film are not likely to be recognisable in any footage
- Do not take footage through windows or in places where people might expect to be private (e.g. the V-C's house and grounds or the Hotel house and grounds. Permission should be sought for filming in these areas)
- Avoid filming number plates (or blur them out in footage/stills)

Removing images

Let people know how to object to their image being used. The process must be straightforward. Please don't:

- Ask people to complete a long form or write a letter.
- Ask for a fee for removal
- Ask for reasons for removal

If you do need to use recognisable images of individuals from the footage then you must get their permission.

If the footage contains identifiable images then it is classed as personal data. Make sure it is stored securely, shared only with permission, and destroyed when it is no longer needed. Bear in mind that the police and other authorities, including campus security, could potentially ask to see your footage if they have reason to be believe you have captured evidence of an incident or offence.

If in doubt please contact the Information Assurance Manager for advice.
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