Arlo is taking away security camera features you paid for

When I set out to buy my first home security cameras, the Arlo Q was my obvious pick – every reviewer pointed out that it offered seven days of free cloud storage instead of forcing you into a subscription. Heck, Arlo even advertised it on the packaging.

But on January 1st, 2024, the company's killing that feature for many Arlo cams – and reserving the right to eliminate all cloud functionality, including email alerts, push notifications, and other "bundled services or features," for any camera that hasn't been manufactured for four years.

Arlo's delivering that news in the form of a new retroactive "End-Of-Life Policy" which you can read in full below, but the short version is this:

According to redditors who received an email from Arlo (via *9to5Google*) with the new policy, you can still "live stream video, receive motion notifications, and store video clips locally with a compatible Arlo base station." But grammatically, it's not clear if that means the base station is required for live streaming *any video at all*, or just for local storage.

I understand and sympathize with the idea that a company may not want to support its products forever, and EOL polices are not unusual, nor is cutting off support for, say, a phone after 3-4 years. But these are not smartphones you replace that often – they're products we install in our homes and expect to keep there indefinitely. And again, 7-day free cloud storage is a feature that was advertised right on the box.

I wonder if lawsuits are coming. Canary was sued in 2018 over bait-and-switch tactics when it started charging for services that used to be free, but the suit was voluntarily dismissed amid questions about whether Canary could force its customers into binding arbitration. Arlo has a binding arbitration policy, too.

When Amazon killed its Cloud Cam, which also offered free 24-hour storage, owners at least got a free replacement device and a year of subscription service. Maybe the company will do something like that if there’s a sufficient backlash.

https://www.theverge.com/2023/1/2/23536194/arlo-eol-security-cameras-pro-baby-q-gen-3-lights-doorbell