

## ICOP Surveillance Technology

by Kevin Gordon

In-car video, AKA surveillance technology, is an accepted and standard police tactic. The video gear is usually praised by those who have an in-car unit and wished for by those who don't. Recent reports provide that about 40% of American squad cars use some type of in-car video.

By the numbers, the most common form is analog video, but digital video is clearly the growing trend. Digital is the way to go for many reasons, not the least of which is the higher quality images available from digital, as well as the storing, viewing and searching capabilities of digital video. According to the [IACP's](#) report titled, "The Impact of Video Evidence on Modern Policing," the speed and versatility of digital recording are too beneficial for law enforcement officials to ignore.

The report also addresses the old concern that the video will be used against them. The data showed that officers were exonerated 93% of the time in cases where the video evidence was available. The report, available online from the IACP research center, is well worth reading for any department considering adding in-car video, whether their first units or additional.

The report provides background information such as history and survey agency information, as well as the benefits and impact of department videos including: officer safety; agency liability and internal control; training and education; community perception; judicial process; officer performance and professionalism; agency policies, procedures and protocols; agency leadership and homeland security.

For those serious about obtaining in-car videos, the report provides best practices, such as how to assess the needs of the department, the acquisition process and managing the video evidence.

[ICOP Digital](#) is a provider of surveillance and communications solutions to both the public and private sectors. ICOP Digital's first commercial product is the ICOP Model 20/20. A highlight of this product is the ease involved in the installation of the product. The unit mounts in the dash in the standard AM/FM radio slot. An AM/FM tuner is built right into the unit. There are no holes needed, nothing in the trunk, nothing overhead and nothing under the seat.

The ease of installation has been well-received by departments. Chief Todd Hunter of the Jasper, TX Police commented about his department's use of ICOP Model 20/20, "ICOP system installs in the dash, eliminating any installation issues and safety concerns."

Chief Steven Wayman of the Lansing, KS Police said "We were particularly pleased to find that we were able to quickly install the units on premises without any technical hassle whatsoever. The fact that there are no cables running through the car into the trunk, like our former VHS unit, is especially impressive."

This sentiment was echoed by Chief Kris Wolski of the Richmond, IN Police, "One feature that makes the ICOP Model 20/20 so attractive to us is the fact that we can purchase a unit today, receive the unit within a day or two, and quickly install it in one of our patrol cars. Considering installation takes only about 45 minutes, the vehicles do not incur any material down time."

ICOP Model 20/20 is a full-VGA recording, which provides a much higher picture quality. The digital videos are easily converted to AVI and MPEG II formats and then transferred to CD, DVD or VHS tape. The user-friendly environment allows the easy ability to input case numbers directly onto archived videos and in-vehicle classification codes aid in easy search and retrieval.

This search capability is greatly beneficial according to Officer Ryan Martin of the Cumberland, ME Police. "One feature that we are really looking forward to capitalizing on is being able to quickly search the video archive for a specific event, upload it, and provide that evidence in a manner that could potentially

exonerate our officers from wrongful accusations or use-of-force issues.”

Administrators can view events on their desktop computers once downloaded to the server. There are three frame rate options, 10, 25 and 30 frames per second. Recording time varies by this fps as well as hard drive size. As an example, using a 40 GB, hard drive you are able to record 26 hours in the 10 fps mode and 12 hours in 30 fps mode.

An impressive built-in GPS function has a continuous latitude and longitude display that records location as well as standard information such as date, time, and officer ID. An “Officer HELP” feature, activated by a button, allows the officer to send out a silent alert to the dispatch center that provides vehicle ID and GPS coordinates. Justhan Webster, chief of the Strafford, MO Police said, “We are using the system to review field procedures so we can help reduce potential life-threatening situations to our patrol officers.”

A wireless 900 MHz transceiver, with automatic activation and 1,000 feet maximum operating range, uses Frequency Hopping Spread Spectrum (FHSS) Narrow band FM for security, privacy and less interference. The unit’s removable hard drive enclosed in a shock-resistant case and has a password-protected electronic lock. The Model 20/20 uses proprietary software to prevent unauthorized access and the unit’s software is easily upgraded with future updates through USB Port.

The Model 20/20 operates as many as three cameras, one viewing in front of the vehicle, one behind the vehicle and one viewing the back seat. A Sony color camera with a 40X digital zoom views the front of the vehicle, and back, if that option is chosen. A low-light, wide-angle camera watches the back seat. The cameras can record by manual activation or automatically with lights, siren, radar, speedometer, wireless microphone or brake connection interface, depending on the vehicle.

Assistant Chief Don Melton of the Webb City, MO Police said, “Upon gathering officer feedback on the unit, we learned that there is literally nothing our officers do not like about the system—and that is saying something.” Webb City was one of the first agencies to beta test the ICOP Model 20/20.

*Kevin Gordon spent 25 years in law enforcement and retired as a chief of police. He is a national and regional officer of the International Police Association. He can be reached at [Kevin@KGordon.com](mailto:Kevin@KGordon.com).*

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