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CANADIAN POLICE RESEARCH CENTRE



CENTRE CANADIEN DE RECHERCHES POLICIERES

TM-07-94

Winnipeg Police Evaluation of In-car Video

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Winnipeg Police Department

TECHNICAL MEMORANDUM

Submitted by
Winnipeg Police Department

April, 1994

NOTE: Further information
about this report can be
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SUMMARY

In June 1993 the CPRC provided the Winnipeg Police Department an in-car video system for evaluation purposes. The unit was placed first in the general patrol division where the acceptance and use was limited. The unit then was moved to traffic where it was accepted immediately. The net result was that the number of arguments and confrontations were dramatically reduced.

It was then transferred to "Technical Accident Investigation" section where it was used to videotape a high speed chase route, a train-car collision and other fatals.

The one negative comment about this particular unit was the inability to take it outside the car. From the evaluators' experience, this would be a valuable addition (see CPRC's Cyclop project - TM-03-93, "The Cyclop Video System").

It was recommended, in the purchase of in-car video, that they first be purchased for traffic and one man units then, perhaps, general patrol.

The Winnipeg Police Department is evaluating two other video systems which, when completed, will be sent to the CPRC.

RÉSUMÉ

En juin 1993, le CCRP a remis au Service de police de Winnipeg, pour fins d'évaluation, un système vidéo pour voiture. L'appareil a d'abord été installé dans la division de patrouille générale, où il n'a été accepté et utilisé que par un nombre restreint de personnes. On l'a ensuite confié au service de la circulation où il a été accepté immédiatement. Son utilisation a eu pour résultat net de réduire considérablement le nombre de différends et de confrontations.

L'appareil a ensuite été remis à la section des enquêtes techniques d'accidents de la circulation où il a servi à enregistrer sur bande vidéo une poursuite à haute vitesse, une collision train-voiture et d'autres accidents mortels.

Les utilisateurs n'avaient qu'un seul commentaire négatif à l'égard de cet appareil particulier, soit le fait qu'on ne pouvait le sortir du véhicule. Selon l'expérience des évaluateurs, on augmenterait considérablement l'utilité du système en remédiant à ce problème (voir le projet Cyclop du CCRP - TM-03-93 - système vidéo cyclop).

Il a été recommandé que des systèmes vidéo pour voiture soient d'abord achetés pour les patrouilleurs de la circulation et les patrouilleurs oeuvrant seul, et peut-être plus tard pour la division de la patrouille générale.

Le Département de police de Winnipeg évalue deux autres systèmes vidéo. Une fois terminés, ses rapports d'évaluation seront présentés au CCRP.



CITY OF WINNIPEG

INTER - OFFICE MEMORANDUM

TO: A/Supt. J. Raftis

FROM: Cst. L. Rea

RE: In Car Video System

DATE: 94 03 03

REPORT ON V.I.C.S. CAMERA SYSTEM

In June 1993, the Winnipeg Police Department had an In Car Video System installed in a general patrol car. The system was provided by CrimTec through the Canadian Police Research Centre.

The unit had little success in the general patrol division. Once the initial feeling of "Big Brother is watching" was overcome, members generally received the unit well, but felt that the system would be better placed in traffic and single officer units.

In October 1993, the unit was placed in a traffic car. Members of the Traffic Division were eager to try the unit. The major benefit was that when motorists were approached and notified that the stop was being video taped, the number of arguments and confrontations was dramatically reduced. There was only one major problem encountered and that was a problem with the unit itself. After some checking it was found that the tape drive was faulty, and after replacement there were no further problems.

Later the unit was used by our Technical Accident Investigation Unit for Videotaping Fatal Collision scenes, in particular one which involved a high speed chase. Not only was the collision scene itself videotaped, but the route of the chase as well. This case is currently before the courts. In another case, a car-train collision the whole scene was videotaped and then officers taped the scene using the point of view of the driver. This was invaluable in determining the precise details of the collision.

There were some negative comments. The first being that the camera was not removable, which would make it a more valuable tool in investigations. The second major drawback was the fact that the unit could not be activated remotely by switching the microphone on. A couple of situations developed where the unit would not normally be recording, and the officer was away from the police unit. A confrontation developed, and the ability of turning the

unit on to record just by switching the microphone on would have been valuable.

The last complaint was the microphone itself. The toggle switch to turn it on and off should be redesigned. With the amount of equipment on officers duty belts, and then adding jackets and seat belts, the microphone would be turned on and off just by the officer moving around. Also a "low Battery" light would be an asset.

It should be pointed out that this summer in Winnipeg was the wettest on record, and the winter had several weeks with temperatures well below normal. With the exception of the faulty tape drive the CrimTec system worked well.

Once it became known that we were testing the CrimTec system, the Department was approached by two other firms, Kustom Signals and AlphaCam, to test their products. We are in the process of doing these tests now and will forward the results to you when available.

Overall, having an In Car Video System installed in police vehicles would be an asset to the department. Just the fact of having such a unit defuses confrontational situations. As has been proved by the T.A.I. unit, the camera is also a great aid to investigations. The CrimTec (VICS) system, although a very good unit, has certain drawbacks that would be an asset to have. The unit tested did not have the capability of being removed from the police vehicle, and the microphone should be redesigned to prevent accidental switching of the microphone.

I would suggest that the Department purchase an In Car Video System, but at this time I would recommend that a system that has the capability of being removed from the vehicle, and has the capability of being turned on just by the microphone be purchased.

When purchasing these units it is recommended that they be purchased firstly for traffic and one man units, then as finances allow, they can be purchased for general patrol units.



Cst. L. Rea 1206/17