

# Digital In-Car Video Units

## Independent Review Panel Staff Report

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*IRP Staff was tasked to research and report on the various types of digital video units available for law enforcement use. The purpose was to create a basic study from a source independent of the Miami-Dade Police Department (MDPD) to inform the public of the costs related to purchasing this technology and its overall feasibility for implementation, not for the purpose of choosing a specific company to award a contract.*

*Staff contacted several industry leaders and obtained basic information on the digital video units they offered and the overall costs and benefits. The costs of each unit are based on the purchase of one unit for one vehicle with basic options. The manufacturers are listed in alphabetical order.*

### **Apollo Video Technology**

Apollo Video Technology was founded in 2004 for the purpose of manufacturing and selling in-vehicle video units. The latest unit available from Apollo is the Road Runner MR4 LE. The basic unit comes with the front mounted camera as well as a rear passenger camera and microphone for recording the actions of prisoners while in transport. The MR4 records in color and comes with a 3 year warranty on all parts and labor. The overall cost for the MR4 is \$3762.00. Installation runs in the \$250.00-\$500.00 range and can be done by a local contactor. The unit can also be customized to incorporate GPS and speed radar capabilities for around \$549.00 extra. Currently, the MR4 is being used by the Coca Beach, FL Police Department; Toledo, OR Police Department; Hays, KS Police Department; Franklin-Borough, CT Police Department and is in use with the United States Army in Iraq on its Striker Assault Vehicles.

### **Enforcement Technologies International, LLC**

ETI has been in business for 14 years, one year of which it has offered digital video units. ETI's video unit is known as the Eagleye MDVR-CF. The Eagleye can be GPS and speed tracking integrated. The video is recorded and stored on a Compact Flash Card and comes with an Ethernet port for web browser interface. The video is synchronized with the built in GPS to pinpoint time and location and be displayed upon video playback. The unit is made of rugged aluminum for increased reliability and comes with easy to use VCR-similar controls. The Eagleye is priced at \$4195.00 with installation extra. The MDVR-CF is in use with the Greencastle, TN police Department; Alberta, AL Police Department; Greenville, AL Police Department and the Calhoun, CA Police Department.

## **Integrian**

Integrian has been in business for seven years and has been selling digital video recorders for five years. Its latest video unit is the Digital Patroller. The unit is equipped with dual hard drives for backup and can be wirelessly transferred for storage. The Digital Patroller can also be configured to stream video live as it occurs for monitoring by supervisors or command staff. The unit also has remote control ability which allows a user at the station to pan the camera back in forth in real time. The unit comes with a 1 year warranty. The cost for the unit is \$4,000.00 and KCI will train department personnel in installation. The Digital Patroller is in use with the Dallas, TX Police Department; Tampa, FL Police Department; Santa Monica, CA Police Department; New York City and New Jersey Transit Authorities as well as the Sydney and Melbourne Australia Transit Authorities. Integrian offered to conduct a free demonstration for the IRP.

## **International Police Technologies**

IPT was created in 1994 and has offered digital recording systems since 2003 and currently offers the VisionHawk video system. The system comes with GPS tracking standard, a choice of Ethernet, Removable Hard Drive and/or Wireless transfer for information, and free software updates for the life of the system. The unit is also fully upgradeable when new technology is introduced. The VisionHawk also allows for real time monitoring of audio and IPT will provide a server for information storage if one is not available to the department. The VisionHawk is available for \$5600.00 and installation of the system is approximately \$200.00. In addition, the unit is offered though Government Service Administration (GSA) prices. Currently, IPT has over 600 systems in use at several law enforcement agencies such as the Fargo, ND Police Department; Omaha, NB Police Department and the Puerto Rico State Police.

## **KCI Communications**

KCI Communications latest digital video recorder is the Stalker Vision Digital. The unit comes with the visor mounted video camera as well as microphone that is attached to the officers lapel or belt loop. It also contains a docking station with charger and 60GB hard drive for storage. The recorded video can be transferred by USB card or wirelessly when the vehicle comes in range of network access point. Access to the information stored is controlled by user levels that can limit access to the information stored. A basic Stalker Vision Digital unit costs \$5200.00 with installation extra. The unit is in use with the Village of Lake Zurich, IL Police Department; Village of Oak Park, IL Police Department and the Village of Tower Lakes, IL Police Department.

### **Kustom Signals**

Kustom Signals has been in existence for 88 years and has been offering video recording units for 37 years. Its current video unit is the Ion. The Ion comes with multiple ports for information transfer and add-ons and a removable hard drive. The unit also comes with light bar, siren and microphone activation, as well as available GPS and crash-detection activation. The Ion is marketed at \$3995.00 with installation extra. The Ion is in use with the Germantown, TN Police Department; El Paso, TX Police Department; Norman, OK Police Department and the Hamilton, CT Police Department.

### **Martel Electronics**

Martel Electronics was founded in 1957 and has been offering video units for 15 years. The current unit offered is the Martel Digital MDE. The MDE offers over 10 hours of record time and use a compact flash card for storage. The unit is lockable to prevent officers or anyone not authorized to remove the video from accessing the information. The unit also comes with touch screen controls and users can search for specific traffic stops without having to view entire video. The MDE also has the option to configure for real time video viewing and is compatible with Linux operating systems. The MDE boasts that it is also field repairable drastically cutting downtime when units are damaged. The unit costs \$2995.00 with installation extra by a local dealer. The MDE is in use by the United States Air force and United States Army Military Police units in Baghdad. The MDE is also the video unit of choice for the new Dodge Enforcers police cruisers.

### **Northland Security Products**

Northland has been in business for 15 years and has offered video systems for five years. The latest model from Northland is the MobileEye in-car digital recorder. The system is fully configurable based on departmental needs and comes with Northland's ASET server for information storage. The MobileEye incorporates password protection to restrict access to the video information to authorized individuals only. The system also offers instant playback and digital stamping on the video for time and date identification. MobileEye also offers instant search in order to pull up specific events without viewing the entire video. The unit is priced at \$3800.00 with an extra \$700.00 for installation and Northland offers discounts for ordering in bulk. The MobileEye is in use with the White Bear Lake, MN Police Department; Hopkins, MN Police Department and the Camp Pendleton Marine Base Military Police.

### **Staff Findings:**

Staff found that the purchasing of video recording units would be an expensive endeavor, especially for a department the size of MDPD. However, each manufacturer offers discounts for buying in large quantity. The benefits of having the in-car video units are clearly evident. The units offer an unbiased witness to every situation it records. It can be used to both exonerate officers from frivolous complaints and to discover acts of impropriety by those who abuse the badge.

**Staff Recommendation:**

Staff recommends that a gradual phasing in of the video units would be cost effective and could provide an immediate impact in the community. In a matter of four to five years, every vehicle could be equipped with this technology and would allow MDPD to absorb the costs without dramatic impact on the department's budget. This would demonstrate to the community that the department is willing to be accountable for its actions and to its officers that the department is ensuring their safety in the field.