

Scott Smith

From: Jesse Young
Sent: Tuesday, September 11, 2012 2:22 PM
To: Scott Smith
Subject: Coban vs. Panasonic
Arbitrator vs. Coban

I, Officer J. Young, was asked by Lt. Vazquez in March of 2012 to test the Panasonic Arbitrator in car video recording system. I have religiously used the ICOP in car video recording system daily for the past three and a half years while employed with the Key West Police Department. I solely report my findings as a means to improve the video systems being used and help with the decision on which system would suit the department's needs.

Panasonic Arbitrator

My first impressions with Panasonic at the "Users group" in the E.O.C. were less than positive. I asked several questions I knew the answers to, as well as with questions I did not know the answers to. Some of my questions that may not prompt a positive answer towards the Arbitrator were not answered, but re-directed to other features which were irrelevant to the question. The Panasonic sales personnel were less than enthusiastic with the difficulty and frequency of questions from us. It appeared the Panasonic sales personnel lacked the desire to be at the police department and they wanted to be elsewhere. I noticed a severe lack of preparation (using a demo model with defective equipment installed) to where the demo model could not be touched or handled during the presentation.

On the first day of testing I was unable to use the test system because the lap top computer and the recorder would not connect to each other. After several attempts with the recorder and computer not connecting Patti McLaughlin was contacted and I had to leave my lap top behind to be worked on by IT. This rendered the system useless for day 1.

When the computer conflicts were resolved I resumed testing. I have composed a list of likes and dislikes I have seen during the month of testing this system.

Panasonic was informed of the concern about the poor resolution of the forward facing camera, lack of smoothness on the computer monitor and the extremely slow rate of download and Panasonic salesman, Adam, flew back to Key West to resolve some of the issues expressed. Adam was able to reduce the amount of jerkiness on the computer monitor. No other issues were resolved during Adam's visit.

Dislikes....

Video resolution is grainy and does not show sharp detail. During my travels, I noticed large business signs are unable to be read. With the low resolution a major piece of a case may not captured on the video.

- Microphone range is poor with a maximum operating range of approximately 300 to 400 feet. I noticed a reduction of the range of the microphone while inside certain buildings.
- Video recording screen interferes with CAD screen. This makes the CAD screen unable to read at a glance and the necessity to change screens. CAD screen always over rides the

video screen.

- Drastically slows down computer functions where citations take an additional 10 seconds for the computer to process.
- IR mode function does not function as advertised by the Panasonic team. I took the test vehicle to Government Rd. on a night where there was no light emanating from the moon. I saw in the IR mode it just makes screen darker, resolution not enhanced in low light situations. I only saw the screen on the computer had a slight change in brightness.
- Videos take an extremely long time to download. With the discovery of the slow downloading process, IT had attempted several different ways to speed up the process. With the introduction of NETMOTION the download process was still less than adequate. The server is unable to keep up demand for the download where I witnessed the system to take up to 53 minutes to download a single video.
- Lap top computer needs to be connected to the recorder to download videos. If the computer will be disconnected from docking station upload stops. All videos are stored on the recorder and videos are unable to be viewed while the two are separated.
- Video on display screen is jumpy where video does not appear steady or smooth.
- Menu screen is too busy with unnecessary options and some are not labeled. Several screen options are not labeled
- Functions take several seconds to respond (Zoom, close recording file and several others)
- No need to show camera activation triggers. With familiarization we know what triggers recorder
- Speed indicator reacts too slow, does not re-generate often. When rapid acceleration or deceleration occurs speed on screen is inaccurate. The speed indicator re-generates slowly to where the vehicle may no longer be in motion and the screen shows you are still traveling at speed.
- Video recording system can't be turned off after shift. Arbitrator is equipped with an internal shut down where the user can't access. This may result in dead vehicle batteries from vehicles with weak batteries.
- Must keep vehicle running near upload antenna. With the slow rate of download the system turns off after 30 minutes, resulting in partial videos so the need to keep the vehicle running (possibly unattended) may be necessary.
- Front camera is large and blocks viewing area on windshield
- If vehicle is in a crash and is disabled the vehicle must be brought back to station and hooked up to a power source and computer for upload so access to the last video may be accessed. A removable hard drive is not an accessory, thus extending the time of the crash investigation.
- Buttons are not user friendly. I had a high stress situation to where I needed to initiate the recorder manually. CAD had over ridden the recorder screen where the identifiable buttons were gone. I had difficulty starting the video from the microphone and I was unable to locate the button on the back of the camera. Since I was unable to locate the manual triggers and I had the Panasonic sales representative riding, he had to activate the camera because I could not.
- Lots of training or trial and error needed to learn how to properly use program
- Some computer updates can effect Arbitrator program (Leaving recording

program unusable)

* The lapel microphone requires the user to push the record button twice to activate the recording system.

Likes....

Video automatically uploads.

- Still camera feature with E-mail and save to computer capability.
- Back seat camera resolution is spectacular.
- Able to record and have vehicle stereo remain installed.
- Lapel microphone does not beep while in recording.
- Camera has LED back lighting
- Controls are installed on the back of the camera
- Microphone vibrates or beeps when battery is low or out of range
- Sight of camera LED indicates you are inside the recording area

I was unable to test the Coban recording system but I have attended the training during the testing phase, along with spending several hours with the sales representative while I worked an off duty detail. The Coban sales representative was extremely knowledgeable about the Coban product I perceived the sales representative to be enthusiastic and passionate about the Coban and he believed the Coban was a superior recording system.

I did like the fact the Coban was based on the Windows operating system where the system is user friendly. I really liked the Coban was a stand alone system to where a failure of the in car computer or other linking components in the car may be affected but the recording system still works as designed.

The removable secondary hard drive is extremely useful in the event of a crash to where the vehicle's electrical system is damaged, rendering everything useless. The secondary hard drive can be removed, downloaded into the server and viewed almost immediately.

FINDINGS.

I feel the Arbitrator system is not the ideal recording system for the Key West Police Department because it is not user friendly while in normal operation. During high stress situations where activation of the camera was necessary without the activation of the triggers of the emergency lights was extremely difficult. In order for the Arbitrator system to be used efficiently required a second person inside the vehicle, solely operating the controls. The forward facing camera's resolution is less than adequate where large signs are not able to be read and may appear blurry.

While in the IT user meeting with Panasonic they disclosed the Arbitrator (hardware and software) was updated about every 3 years. With that information given, the whole system should be receiving updates in about a year leaving the old system we should receive (if purchased) almost instantly outdated.

The event of the lap top computer crashing, software malfunction or even software updates may render the camera system still useable but what is recorded not viewable until the video is downloaded.

A known defect with the rate of the automatic download and its ability to download in a timely manner will increase the time an officer will spend at the station for the download to be completed. Therefore if the system is not downloaded often, the likelihood of running out of space on the hard drive is possible, eliminating the systems ability to record.

Coban seems to be the most logical choice of the systems tested during the trial period. Coban's head unit may be mounted at any location within the vehicle, adding familiarization and comfort to the user. Coban's head unit is a touch screen with extremely easy to read and use operational buttons. The rate of download for the Coban is extremely fast to where most, if not all of the stored recordings can be

downloaded during the time officers are in briefing.

The camera images attached to the recording system are sharp and crisp, adding details that may be missed by other systems.

Furthermore the Coban system is fully customizable to the departments needs, with many options available. Customizable triggers to activate cameras or other optional installed equipment can be tripped without input from the user.

Coban has an optional "Officer down" feature where the emergency button is depressed on the lapel microphone and a signal of audio and video can be transmitted from the vehicle in distress to dispatch or other units responding, reducing the possibility of an ambush.

With so many positive things Coban has to offer and the overwhelming negatives of the Arbitrator, I endorse the Coban system fully.