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## Product Feature: Body-Worn Cameras: What Are the Differences?

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**B**ody-worn cameras are commonly seen in the United States as a new tool to improve policing and public accountability. But are all body-worn cameras created equal?

Manufacturers and sellers alike agree that the interest in, and awareness of, body-worn cameras spiked following a string of events involving high-profile and controversial encounters between citizens and law enforcement.

Of the many things that emerged from the controversies in Ferguson, Missouri; Baltimore, Maryland; and elsewhere in the United States, one policy decision that met with significant bipartisan approval was the U.S. Department of Justice's Body-Worn Camera Pilot Implementation Program, which, by September 2015, had provided more than \$23 million in grants to local law enforcement agencies, primarily to help them purchase more body-worn cameras. These grants are the first step in U.S. President Obama's stated goal of purchasing 50,000 body-worn cameras for law enforcement agencies in the next three years.<sup>1</sup>

"With a body-worn camera, you get the best documentation you can get," said Joe Pioli, vice president of sales for VIEVU, a company based in Seattle, Washington, that has designed and sold body-worn cameras for law enforcement since 2007. "We used to have to write notes or stop and take a Polaroid. Now you have video evidence... Chain of evidence helps memory. You can write better reports. It protects the department, yourself as the officer, and also protects the citizens."<sup>2</sup>

### Demonstrable Results

Body-worn cameras—which typically take video recordings, but often can also take and store still photos if needed—have a proven track record in some areas of reducing complaints against police.

According to TASER, the Scottsdale, Arizona, company best known for its offerings in the weapons market, using the company's Axon camera model resulted in an 88 percent reduction in complaints about police in the city of Rialto, California, and a 74 percent decrease in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.<sup>3</sup>

Reducing complaints against officers is a clear benefit and opportunity for body-worn cameras, but evidence also shows that the cameras can improve an officer's ability to do his or her job.

According to a spokesperson for Huntersville, North Carolina's Reveal Media USA Inc., which manufactures body-worn cameras and other products, the presence of body-worn cameras can lead to a 50 percent reduction in use of force, a 90 percent increase in early guilty pleas, and a 22 percent increase in time available for patrol.<sup>4</sup>

### Features Make a Difference

On their faces, body-worn cameras all look much the same. Each one is a small camera that can be clipped to the front of an officer's uniform, sunglasses, or a similar location on the officer and turned on to record an officer's activities and interactions with the public. Generally speaking, many models are in the same price range, which tends to land most frequently between \$300 and \$400.

In addition, body-worn camera manufacturers typically adhere to the same strict standards that apply to in-car computer systems: restricted access to the devices and their recording systems; preventive measures against the user erasing, altering, or recording over previous recordings; password-protected software platforms; and generally high levels of security.

But there are some differences between the many models of body-worn cameras. One of the distinguishing factors for body-worn cameras is the extra features available on different models from different vendors.

"We definitely focus on features," said Mike Gramza, CEO of PatrolEyes, an affiliate of the Ada, Michigan, company StuntCams that specializes in body-worn cameras. "[They] definitely help provide accountability and help protect officers from being reported for wrongdoing."<sup>5</sup>

The SC-DV5, PatrolEyes' most recent model, features a built-in GPS function that can display location coordinates in a recorded video for added information and authentication. In addition, many different cameras on the market, including the SC-DV5, are splash proof and include night vision capabilities.

Patrol Eye's SC-DV1 can record up to eight hours of activity, one of the longest battery lives on the market.

However, VIEVU's newest body-worn camera, the LE4, may have the longest battery life, featuring power that covers an entire 12-hour shift. The camera also is able to provide wireless live video streaming, and includes a wider lens for a better field of vision without "fish-eye"—style video distortion. VIEVU also recently unveiled the LE4 mini, a smaller version that can record for up to three hours. The LE3, VIEVU's most popular model, is currently in use by the Oakland Police Department in California, among many other agencies.

"We come from a law enforcement perspective. It's made by cops for cops," Pioli said. "It's easy to operate; with the swipe of a hand, they can operate the camera."<sup>6</sup>

Perhaps VIEVU's most interesting new feature is Automated Video Redaction (AVR), a software technology that eliminates the need for manual redaction by automatically blurring every face. Users then "un-redact" faces as needed.

The VideoBadge line of body-worn cameras, created by Edesix, are small and resemble ID badges. Edesix is based in Edinburgh, Scotland, where many manufacturers exist, as Europe is considered a relatively early adopter of body-worn camera technologies.

Edesix also provides VideoManager 6, a back-end solution that allows users to manage, edit, and share footage using only a web browser. Many vendors offer a software program that can help officers edit and disseminate footage, either for cameras made by that company or by a different manufacturer.

According to Pioli of VIEVU, body-worn cameras are now so widely used—and widely proven as effective tools in modern law enforcement—that they are viewed as essential gear in many police departments. "Everybody knows about body-worn cameras," Pioli said. "Even older officers realize the value of them now. For a long time, older officers didn't want them, now they won't go into the street without them. Everyone has a cellphone, and many people are videotaping you. You might as well get it from your perspective."<sup>7</sup>

## Storage Solutions Make a Leap

Features may draw attention and expand an officer's options, but the name of the game is storage. After all, once those hours of footage are recorded, they need to be managed.

Storage is often viewed as a potential stumbling block for police departments attempting to establish or expand their use of body-worn cameras. On average, a 30-second video can take up 800 megabytes of storage space, which adds up quickly when regularly recording and storing video files, even temporarily.

That may be why, when asked to highlight the most innovative attribute of VIEVU's new LE4, Pioli points to the company's new government cloud storage solution, which Viewu officials developed and implemented in partnership with the Microsoft Corporation. The resulting product, VIEVU Solution, is a fully hosted cloud platform on Microsoft Azure Government, the first cloud designed for government customers that directly supports security standards set by the Criminal Justice Information Services (CJIS). VIEVU Solution users can store data in the cloud without having to worry about CJIS compliance.

Sentinel Camera Systems, through its affiliate company, Sentinel Data Management, also provides the same service to customers. According to Sentinel Camera Systems' CEO David Wasserstrom, the company also utilizes Microsoft's Azure Platform, which stores the data at three separate Microsoft locations to

ensure the data will always be available in case one of the facilities is off-line for any reason.<sup>8</sup>

Reveal Media created its own storage solution, called the Digital Evidence Management System (DEMS). The latest version of the software, DEMS 3.5, allows users to generate reports, cloak files based on defined user levels and searches, and create and customize an unlimited number of retention policies. Reveal Media claims that the solution is able to securely store and manage any amount of digital data.

DEMS is also available for no ongoing fees and is accessible over the lifetime of any camera purchased from Reveal. The system can be customized as a stand-alone, workgroup, or enterprise installation, and features password-protected, 256-bit encryption.

If agencies are considering their options, looking to purchase their first body-worn cameras, and seeking data-storage solutions for the hours of video collected, they have an array of choices available to them. Body-worn cameras are generating a lot of interest among both police and vendors, and that interest doesn't show any signs of changing soon. ♦

#### Notes:

<sup>1</sup>U.S. Department of Justice, "Justice Department Awards over \$23 Million in Funding for Body Worn Camera Pilot Program to Support Law Enforcement Agencies in 32 States," news release, September 21, 2015, <http://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/justice-department-awards-over-23-million-funding-body-worn-camera-pilot-program-support-law> (accessed December 14, 2015).

<sup>2</sup>Joe Pioli (vice president of sales, VIEVU), telephone interview, December 8, 2015.

<sup>3</sup>TASER International, "The #1 On-Officer Video Platform," <https://www.taser.com/products/on-officer-video> (accessed January 20, 2016).

<sup>4</sup>Elodie McCartney (spokesperson, Reveal Media), email interview, December 7, 2015.

<sup>5</sup>Mike Gramza (chief executive officer, PatrolEyes), telephone interview, December 7, 2015.

<sup>6</sup>Pioli, telephone interview, December 8, 2015.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid.

<sup>8</sup>David Wasserstrom (chief executive officer, Sentinel Camera Systems), email interview, December 9, 2015.

## BODY-WORN CAMERAS

### Data 911

<http://www.data911.com>

### OnCall

<http://firevideo.net/index.php/oncall>

### Pro-Vision Video Systems

<http://www.seeingissafety.com>

### TASER/Axon

<http://www.axon.io>

### WatchGuard Video

<http://watchguardvideo.com/vista>

### Digital Ally

<http://www.digitalallyinc.com>

### PatrolEyes

<http://www.patroleyes.com>

### Reveal

<http://revealmedia.com/us>

### VIEVU

<http://www.vievu.com>

### Wolfcom

<http://www.wolfcomusa.com>

### L-3 Mobile Vision

<http://www.mobile-vision.com>

### Primal USA (DutyVUE)

<http://www.primalusa.com>

### Sentinel Camera Systems

<http://www.sentinelcamerasystems.com>

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